

He's Not Dead Yet, But . . .

Ferdinand Marcos' failing health has set off a mad, and potentially violent scramble for succession.

By NANCY F. ROCAMORA

Evidence that Ferdinand Marcos is seriously ill has created another uproar in the Philippine political scene and lent new urgency to the search for a viable succession scheme.

Despite Malacañang's herculean efforts to prove that the president is well, leaks and rumors insist otherwise. Ironically, the very scale of the regime's public denials and the repeated contradictory statements of its spokespersons, only make the rumors sound credible.

Marcos was last seen in public on November 12 when he met with visiting U.S. Senator Christopher Dodd (D-CT). After that he simply dropped out of sight. Presidential orders continued to flow from the palace and file pictures appeared in the pro-government papers. But the absence of Marcos from TV and public events provoked a wave of rumors in Manila.

The most extreme insisted that Marcos was dead. Others suggested that he had been hospitalized for a severe heart, kidney or lung condition—or all of the above.

RUMORS FROM ALL DIRECTIONS

The first indication that Marcos was not well actually came November 9 when Aquilino Pimentel, recently ejected from the Batasan Pambansa, told a Manila civic club that Marcos was about to leave for the U.S. for medical treatment.

Former Information Minister Francisco Tatad, writing in the November 19 *Business Day* claimed that Marcos had undergone "a major surgical operation" at the Kidney Center in Quezon City.

The British Broadcasting System, on the other hand, reported that Marcos had been admitted to the local Lung Center for treatment, after which he had returned to the Malacañang hospital. The BBC story was confirmed by at least one other medical source.

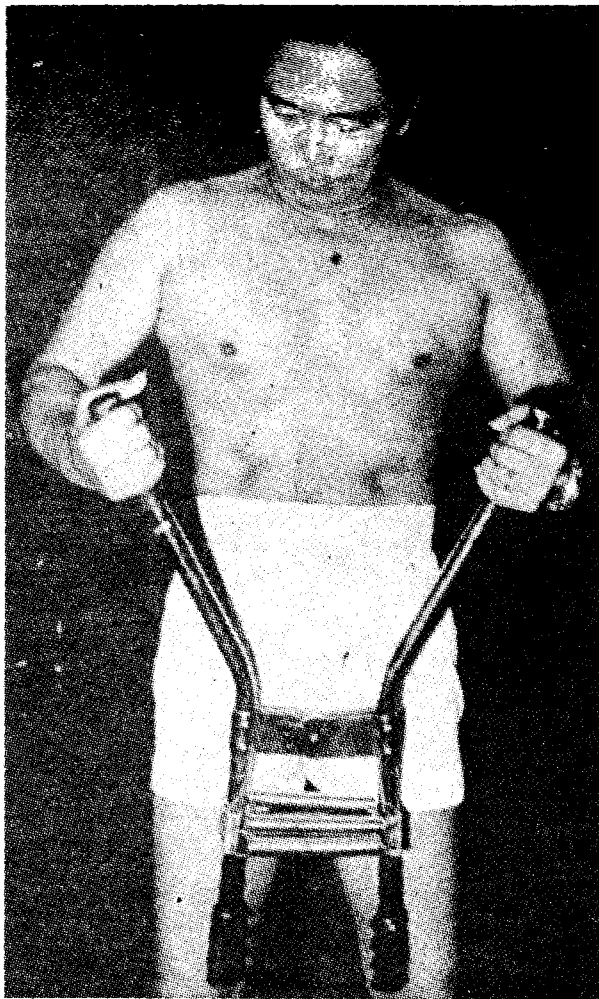
Other tales trickled in from a variety of directions. One insider claimed that Marcos was once again under the treatment of his favorite faith healer, Ramon "Jun" Labo of Baguio.

U.S. sources reported that two American specialists, one from Stanford University Medical Center and one from Georgetown in Washington, D.C., recently visited the Philippines to attend to the President. Others insisted that Marcos was in fact hospitalized either at Stanford or at the Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Beverly Hills to receive a heart and/or kidney transplant.

CONFLICTING REPORTS

Though some of the rumors were farfetched, they were not easily dismissed. Marcos is widely believed to suffer from lupus erythematosus, a degenerative disease which has severely affected his kidneys.

Malacañang nonetheless initially denied all rumors flat out. The President is "well and continues to perform his duties," a palace spokesman told the press November 19. Marcos himself issued a statement the



THEN (1981, allegedly)



NOW (1984, allegedly)



The Armed Forces of the Philippines: **THE SPLIT WITHIN**

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next day quoting Mark Twain (incorrectly): "The report of my death is an exaggeration."

One day later, however, the First Lady admitted that the President was, in fact, ill. Marcos, she told the press, was suffering from bronchitis and bronchial pneumonia. He was recuperating aboard his yacht in Manila Bay, she added, to avoid the polluted air in the Palace area.

Marcos' chest specialist, Dr. Eduardo Jamora, contradicted Mrs. Marcos the day after that. In a bulletin released by the government news agency, he reported that the President was being kept in "reverse isolation" because of "early signs of the flu." That night, all TV stations carried a brief video showing Marcos in his bathrobe meeting with Jamora and breathing into a respirator.

Meanwhile, Batasan oppositionist Homobono Adaza quickly but vainly pressed the Assembly to demand from the Palace a clear accounting of Marcos' physical condition and a definite plan for succession.

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Nicaragua Alert

An American invasion of Nicaragua is imminent not because Pentagon "crateologists" might find MiGs and other advanced weapons there. An invasion is likely because the Reagan administration is committed to overthrowing the Sandinista government. The only element missing in its plans is the "perfect excuse."

For this reason, peace advocates and anti-interventionists must expose the fraudulence of every "Gulf of Tonkin" justification Reagan has to offer. But they must never be trapped within the self-serving confines of Washington's arguments. MiG or no MiG, the Nicaraguans as a sovereign people, have the perfect right to get any type of weapon they need to defend themselves against U.S. aggression. This is the stand all advocates of peace must assert.

The Nicaraguans are quite prepared to meet the immediate thrust of Reagan's invasion which is to take Managua for the purpose of gaining a short-term political victory. "We must make them pay a high price for every inch of terrain, every block, every house, every tree, every stone in our city," said FSLN's Commander Luis Carrion. "We must organize the defense of our capital in such a way that if the Yankees succeed in penetrating Managua, they would only be occupying rubble and the blood of Managuans drenched over the soil of our homeland." Having fought for freedom and having tasted it for five years, the Nicaraguans are also quite ready to meet an ensuing long-term U.S. military occupation with guerilla warfare.

Still, a U.S. invasion would be extremely bloody and destructive. If direct U.S. intervention cannot be prevented, then its duration must be shortened. Peace advocates must therefore be prepared for both an immediate and long-term response to U.S. aggression and in every instance assert that Nicaragua has the right to be.

Filipinos must be part of the efforts to defend Nicaragua. New Nicaragua represents not only a look

into their own future but an important barricade against U.S.-sponsored tyranny all over the world. If Reagan succeeds in Nicaragua, his ability to undermine or crush the struggles for independence, freedom and social justice in Central America, and in countries like the Philippines will be greatly strengthened. □

The Ronald Reagan Battalion

Reprinted here from NACLA Report on the Americas September/October 1984 issue is a message broadcast a few months ago by Radio Venceremos of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN). Apparently, it was in response to the naming of a Salvadoran army unit as the Ronald Reagan Battalion:

"Whereas Atlacatl, Atonal, Gen. Ramon Beloso, Gen. Manuel Jose Arce, and the Lencas are part of our historical background and of our ancestors, who fought against foreign intervention and to defend our country:

"We declare that henceforth the misnamed Atlacatl Battalion will be known as the Paul Gorman Battalion;

—the Ramon Beloso Battalion, as the George Shultz Battalion;

—the Atonal Battalion, as the Henry Kissinger Battalion;

—the Jose Manuel Arce Battalion, as the John Dimitri Negroponte Battalion;

—the Bracamonte Battalion, as the Thomas Pickering Battalion;

—the Cuscatlan Battalion, as the Jeane Kirkpatrick Battalion;

—the Morazan Battalion, as the Caspar Weinberger Battalion;

—and the Ronald Reagan Battalion, which received this name from Col. Adalberto Cruz and has not yet won a single battle against the FMLN, will keep its name: the Ronald Reagan Battalion."

In a separate instance, a Nicaraguan contra unit named itself, rather fittingly, the Jeane Kirkpatrick Brigade.

To the Visiting Opposition

During the holiday season, a number of prominent opposition figures are expected in town. Assemblywoman Eva Estrada Kalaw; Jose Concepcion, head of the National Movement for Free Elections; and Agapito "Butz" Aquino of the Coalition for the Realization of Democracy to name a few, are expected to speak in various cities in the U.S. and Canada and seek the support of Filipinos for their various political programs.

They will find the Filipino community eager to hear their views of the Philippines' present and future, and happy to be considered an important component of the popular struggle against the Marcos regime.

Having risen to prominence as leaders in the broad movement of opposition to the regime, they must be prepared in these public meetings to explain their visions as public servants. In this regard, they would do Filipinos a service by answering such questions as 1) will they participate in a U.S.-directed succession plan and why? 2) How will their own plans advance the interests of the majority of Filipinos and not merely the concerns of a limited sector? 3) Are they willing to work with all opposition forces or do they reject certain forces as a matter of principle?

These may be construed as loaded questions. But the times are loaded with anxiety over what's in store for the Filipino people. Will there be opposition unity? Will change mean merely a return to pre-martial law conditions; a Marcos regime without a Marcos; or a democratic Philippines run by Filipinos for the interests of Filipinos?



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SEASON'S GREETINGS to our readers. Keep reading, keep subscribing and keep struggling for peace, freedom and justice everywhere.

WE'RE TAKING A BREAK

We want to see our folks for the holidays, be with our loved ones without the intrusion of deadlines—we're sure you'll understand. But we'll still be working; our year's work has to be assessed and our plans for making next year's AK better have to be drawn. AK will be back with a January-February issue on January 21. Thanks

—AK Staff

Litter from Manila

He's Not Sick, He's Just in Love



By INIDORO DELIHENCIA

If the rumor-mongers are to be believed, the only things holding back the flood of disorder and social chaos are the President's kidneys. Such irresponsible oppositionist talk really pisses me off, if you will excuse that American expression. It's about time we burst the opposition's balloon. So, I decided not to leave any stone unflushed to get at the real story. First stop, the anonymous Filipino heart specialist called in from the States—a loyalist by the way.

ID: "Well Doc, is it his heart?"

Doc: "Are you asking if he has one? Just checking your political leanings, sir."

ID: "I'm okay. What's your diagnosis?"

Doc: "Well, he hears singing but there's no one there, he smells blossoms but the trees are bare. All day long he seems to walk on air, I wonder why. His heart goes pitter-patter, now I know what's the matter—he's not sick, he's just in love."

ID: "Don't give me that tune, Doc. Is he really in love with another woman?"

Doc: "No. With the possibility of staying on after 1987. He gets a little depressed because he's not sure of his chances. The White House is not being very frank with him and has not answered his love letters. He thinks there's another man."

I can see why he has called in heart specialists—these affairs can be so complicated. But things seem altogether grim so I talked to another credible source, a member of the medical team from the spiritual side. The president always wants to make sure so, aside from the medical experts, he also called in the nation's number one faith healer, Ramon "Jun" Labo.

ID: "Jun, tell me the score. Is it as serious as the rumors have it? The press releases insist it's just the flu. What is it?"

JL: "Dominus Vobiscum, Doroy! He is as healthy as a carabao. Just today he ordered a demonstration teargassed, a convent raided, a radical student kidnapped and a provincial newspaper closed."

ID: "So, he is still a picture of rude health?"

JL: "Very rude. But I'll tell you this much: he is suffering from a severe case of hangnail, that's all really. And the chiropodist from New York is already here."

ID: "But why all the preparations if it's just hangnail? Why empty the kidney center and place it at the palace's disposal? Why is he in reverse isolation? Why call in heart specialists and surgeons?"

JL: "I called them in just to be safe. Once the chiropodist starts clipping you don't know what complications might arise."

ID: "But aren't you going overboard with the precautions?"

JL: "Dios de salve Maria, Doroy! If you studied the bible like I did you'd know what happened to Samson after he had a simple haircut."

Anyway, Jun assured me that all the vital signs are positive. Just at lunch he noticed that the tomatoes and onions in his pinakbet formed a perfect image of a smiling Jesus—definitely a good sign. On my way out I bumped into the First Lady. She looked worried so I

had to ask again about the President's health.

FL: "Poor nation. I pity the people. The people are beautiful. I don't understand the fuss about his health."

ID: "Well Ma'am, everyone wants to know if he can still govern."

FL: "What's the big deal? President Carter had flaming hemorrhoids, President Ford had chronic concussions from bumping into things, and President Reagan who kept forgetting his lines during the debate has a bit of amnesia. What does it matter if President Marcos has lupus, kidney disorders, heart complications and heaven forbid, hangnail?"

ID: "With due respect Ma'am, the public is just eager to know who will replace the President if he dies. Who will take his place?"

FL: "I think I've told you before in another interview. But let's see. Gen. Ver is in trouble, scratch him. Gen. Ramos is clean but he's no fun. Cojuangco likes to smear his fortune in coconut oil all over his hair, yecch. The field is really narrow. So like I said before, I think I'll stay single for awhile."

I got a little bit confused after all this so I consulted my family doctor as to who has the correct diagnosis—the faith healer or the heart specialist who says the President is just in love with the idea of staying in office and is having a mid-life crisis.

"The heart specialist was very close but didn't get it," my doctor said. "From all the symptoms—manic depression, a bloated face from lack of sleep, melancholia, megalomania, and fits of paranoia—I'd say it's mid-rule crisis to be more precise. I prescribe a career change. Like, he should resign right now if he still wants to die of natural causes."

I knew the subversives were gaining ground, but I didn't expect the protest bug to infect even my middle class doctor. Things are really going downhill. If you can't trust your family doctor, who can you trust? □

Armed Forces of the Philippines: The Split Within



Minerva Armitoso—Aslaweek

By NANCY F. ROCAMORA

There is no longer any hiding the fact: the Philippine military is in turmoil. The indictment of Armed Forces Chief of Staff Fabian Ver in the assassination of former Sen. Benigno Aquino shed a spotlight on his bitter rivalry with Vice Chief of Staff Fidel Ramos.

While the Ver/Ramos split has long been known to regime insiders, Ferdinand Marcos' failing health and the looming crisis of succession have added a new level of tension to the conflict and brought it out into the open.

The most recent clash came early in December when Ramos and defense minister Juan Ponce Enrile demanded to know why army Chief of Staff Josephus Ramas recalled all armored vehicles in the countryside and deployed them around Manila.

A worsening of this split could have serious implications. Who controls the military affects the entire country's future. Further, the ill feelings between Ver and Ramos reflect more than a personal rivalry between two ambitious generals. The differences between Ver and Ramos reflect divisions that permeate the entire officers corps and, in some cases, the rank-and-file as well.

Until very recently, Marcos was able to use the splits to his own advantage. Through what Aquino called "the Ilocanization of the AFP" Marcos managed to see the Ver faction grow and dominate the military while keeping the entire institution unified and under his control.

That was before the Aquino assassination and the pressures that followed. The murder was seen as the work of Marcos himself with Ver acting as executioner.

PMA graduates v. ROTC intregrees; overstaying generals v. impatient colonels; intelligence men v. regular military; Ilocanos v. everyone else—major factions riddle the armed forces. In each case, however, the differences now boil down to the Ver camp versus those whose only hope is Ramos—and in each case Ver is ahead by a long shot. The maturation of these divisions came with the phenomenal growth—in size and power—of the AFP.

ASTRONOMICAL GROWTH

The military, in the 12 years since September 21, 1972, has grown astronomically. Figures show a 379% increase between 1971 and 1980. Though the current size remains confidential, estimates are that the military grew from 55,000 in 1972 to anywhere between 190,000 and 400,000 today.

The latter figure includes, in addition to the army, navy and air force, the coast guard, the paramilitary Philippine Constabulary and Integrated National Police, and the militia or Civilian Home Defense Force.

Regular officers point out that only 82,000 are fully trained and battle-ready. Nonetheless, the figures are impressive and military analysts insist that they are probably conservative. In addition, they point to 124,000 in the reserve.

The increase in size demanded an increase in budget. Thus from ₱608 million in 1972, the military budget multiplied more than 14 times to ₱8.8 billion.

Military supporters, citing peso devaluations, etc., are fond of pleading poverty. To meet shortages, Presidential Decree 1177 allows the president to juggle funds from non-defense sources in the national budget. Further, Philippine defense expenditures increased fastest among the five ASEAN nations between 1971 and 1980 while the economy grew least.

'CIVILIANS IN UNIFORM'

The rapid growth in size and budget meant new problems and worsened old ones. There was a need for new blood in the officers corps to command the swelling troops, especially as raw recruits and new officers were dying like flies against the Moro National Liberation Front in Mindanao during the early years of martial law. One source of manpower to fill the top echelons was reserve intregrees.

Historically, there has been a conflict between regular officers trained at the West Point-style Philippine Military Academy and those trained in college via the Reserve Officers Training Corps.

The rift widened with the declaration of martial law when thousands of ROTC-trained officers were integrated to cope with the rapid expansion. They were mostly Ilocanos and political henchmen of Ferdinand

Marcos carefully balancing Enrile's men against Espino's and Ver's against Ramos'.

At a certain point, however, the scales began to tip. By 1980, it was clear that the two most powerful military figures—for vastly differing reasons—were Ver and Ramos. Espino was a mere figurehead. By 1981, Marcos felt confident enough to make the controversial decision. He retired Espino and selected former bodyguard Fabian Ver for the post.

THE RISE OF FABIAN VER

The decision did not go over well with professional soldiers, the business community or Marcos' U.S. backers. They viewed Ver as a Marcos hatchetman with nothing going for him beyond blind loyalty to the president.

Ver's origins are unimpressive enough. An ROTC product and law student, he quit school to fight the Japanese, beginning as a third lieutenant. He finished law school after the war and went on to study intelligence in the United States.

Nothing much happened in Ver's military career until distant cousin, fellow Ilocano and new Congressman Ferdinand Marcos selected him as his personal chauffeur and bodyguard. Still, Ver remained stuck as a Constabulary captain for 11 years until Marcos became president and promoted him.

It was then that Ver's star began to rise. Marcos put him on top of the Presidential Security Unit, which was transformed into the battalion-sized PSC, now known as "the elite of the elite." Shortly after that, Marcos created NISA, which is something like the FBI and the CIA rolled into one.

Thus Fabian Ver, top bodyguard and chief intelligence officer, became one of the country's most influential generals. Once appointed AFP chief, he moved quickly to consolidate his power.

Ver appointed son Irwin chief of staff of the PSC in order to maintain operational control while he handled the whole military. Meanwhile, PSC and NISA alumni were posted elsewhere to form Ver's own internal network. As one observer put it, "In some ways they don't seem to be deactivated from PSC—they're more like PSC moles in other units."

Ver took over personal supervision of all troop movements. Meanwhile he was given final authority on appointments, allowing him to undercut Ramos and Enrile still further. Loyalty to the president became the main criterion for advancement. Those promoted to general in the last three years are almost all Ver's men and the majority have intelligence rather than battlefield backgrounds.

VER'S TIGHT CONTROL

In July 1983, defense minister Enrile was deprived of operational control when Marcos stressed that the Chief of Staff was his direct link to the military. Both Enrile and Ramos offered their resignations a month later but these were rejected.

The final step in strengthening Ver's hand came early this year with the institution of the Regional Unified Command structure. This places army, navy, air force, PC and local police in each of the 12 regions outside Metro-Manila under the authority of a single regional commander rather than that of their military branch.

The Regional Unified Commanders are all Ver men who report directly to him. This not only undercuts the various division chiefs, it deprives local mayors of authority over their own police. The results have been an increase in military casualties, a depletion of

'Both Enrile and Ramos offered their resignations but these were rejected.'

Marcos. A disproportionate number went into intelligence.

Today the intregrees predominate in the upper layers of the hierarchy, from brigadier general up—"civilians in uniform" who earn stars by pushing paper. Predictably, there is much resentment among the "professionals" on the battlefield who remain colonels forever.

OVERSTAYING BRASS

Members of the top brass traditionally maintained their bases of power by extending protege's tours of duty past retirement age, thereby creating the phenomenon of overstaying generals. Under martial law, the phenomenon became an epidemic.

During the early years, Chief of Staff of the AFP Romeo Espino, himself way past retirement, jockeyed with Defense Secretary Juan Ponce Enrile, Constabulary Chief Fidel Ramos, and the rising chief of the Presidential Security Command and the National Intelligence and Security Agency Fabian Ver to retain supporters.

This caused much resentment among the colonels who would have preferred to see the overstayers retired, and promotions stepped up. But extensions and retirement had become highly political matters with

resources, duplication of functions, and, in some areas, problems of seniority.

But the new structure certainly tightened Ver's control. Furthermore, none of the flag officers of the four major divisions are PMA graduates (Ramos of the PC, trained at West Point, is an honorary graduate). Even PMA head, Gen. Jose Zumel, is a PSC/NISA alumnus and a staunch Ver man.

But beneath the topmost level of the command structure, Ver is thoroughly disliked. "Ver is an outsider from intelligence," as one western diplomat put it. "And military people don't like intelligence people."

Not surprisingly, such feelings are strongest among PMA graduates. Last March, Air Force officers of the PMA class of 1969 boycotted the annual alumni parade to protest the promotion of one officer over others ahead of him.

But the prevailing sentiment among officers seems to be one of resignation. A group interviewed by *Business Day* expressed discontent due to "unfair promotions" and corruption. But, they added, "We see ourselves as powerless to change the situation."

FIDEL RAMOS—U.S. BET

If there is anyone upon whom Ver-haters pin their

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He's Not Dead Yet

Continued from front page

November 26, Marcos once again appeared in public, meeting with the cabinet and signing the 1985 budget. Once again a short video appeared on the evening news with a voice-over narration.

But observers reported that Marcos was so weak that aides had to move the book-bound budget legislation under his right hand so he could sign it. His left hand was absolutely immobile. Since then, he has appeared several times on TV briefly, but always seated, never standing, walking or talking.

OLD FILM; EMPTY HOSPITAL

Other aspects of the campaign to prove Marcos well were even more suspicious.

Colleagues of Jamora at the Makati Medical Center insisted that the film showing Marcos and the doctor was at least two years old because they showed Jamora wearing a moustache which he has long since shaved off. He has also gained a significant amount of weight and is nowhere near as slim as he appeared in the film.

The physicians further revealed that Marcos had undergone a tracheotomy a week earlier which may explain his failure to speak on his TV appearances. The tracheotomy was probably performed to assist the president in breathing and suggests a serious medical condition.

Finally, the Kidney Center, reported by Tatad to have been the site of Marcos' surgery, has been empty since late October when the entire staff was placed on leave allegedly while repairs were made on the hospital's electrical and plumbing systems.

JUNTA BEING PREPARED?

But the contradictions on the medical scene were nothing compared to the suspicious signs that were cropping up on the political front. Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile, told a group of businessmen and professionals November 23 that Marcos is not the only answer to the nation's problems. It was the first time that a government official has departed from the standard government line that only Marcos can hold the nation together.

Even more suggestive was the decision by army Chief of Staff Josephus Ramos, a follower of Gen Fabian Ver, to call back to Manila all tanks and armored vehicles from the countryside, prompting agitated inquiries from Enrile and acting armed forces Chief of Staff Fidel Ramos. Was the scramble for succession already on?

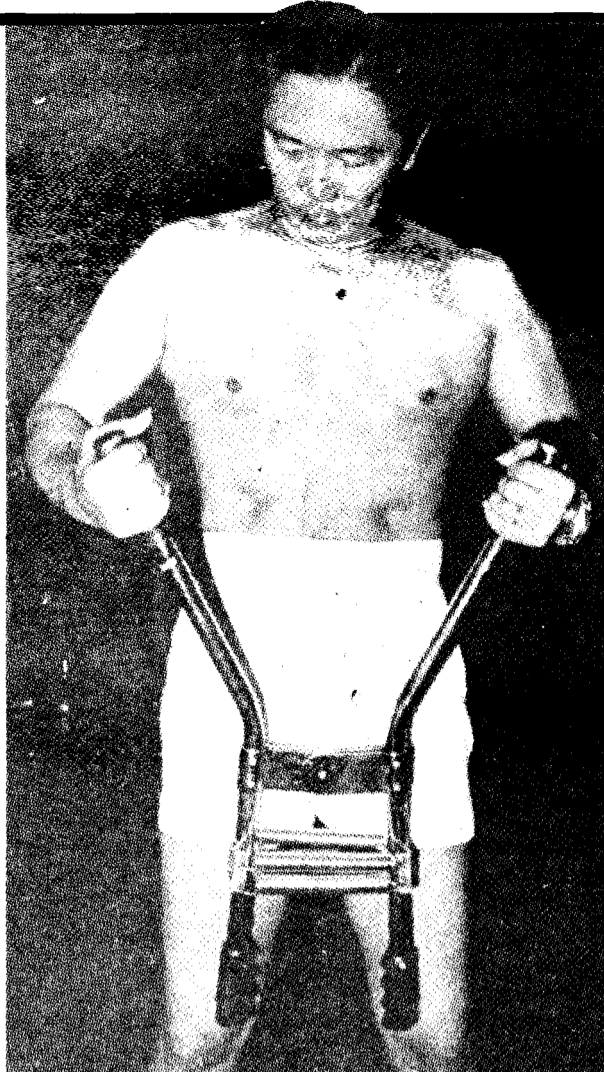
A number of signs suggest that it has already begun. Ramos' name has cropped up repeatedly in Manila as head of a "working committee" to guarantee a peaceful transition. Ramos was also named in Pimentel's original announcement as the future chief of a temporary junta to rule the country in Marcos' absence.

Manila sources report that other possible members of a succession junta include Prime Minister Cesar Virata, Defense Minister Enrile, Foreign Minister Arturo Tolentino, former Executive Secretary to Marcos prior to martial law Rafael Salas and opposition Assemblyman Ramon Mitra.

BLOODY CONFLICT AHEAD?

Others claim that a bloody conflict over the nation's leadership is not impossible. The contending factions they report, are already moving.

The Marcos group, not surprisingly, includes Chief of Staff Fabian Ver, currently on trial for the murder of Benigno Aquino, and the family of the First Lady. This faction is reportedly backed by the Presidential Security



Command and the crack Tabak Division of the Philippine Army.

The far weaker Ramos camp is reportedly backed by multimillionaire businessman Enrique Zobel and the Ayala family. An observer predicts that Jaime Cardinal Sin and the now disgruntled Marcos crony Roberto Benedicto may go with the Ramos faction. Businessman Benedicto reportedly has kept a large private army.

Also spoiling for a crack at the country's leadership is Marcos crony and businessman Eduardo Cojuangco



Francisco Tatad



Eva Kalaw



Jose Concepcion

whose private army reportedly numbers roughly 3,000. Cojuangco may sit out the first round of any succession conflict and take on the winner, according to a Manila source. In doing so, he may align himself with Mitra. Meanwhile, Enrile and Salas, fraternity brothers, may form their own alliance or they may go with Cojuangco.

U.S. JOINS THE FRAY

But an armed battle over succession is precisely what the U.S. wants to avoid. It has thus jumped into the fray in an attempt to establish a formula for a smooth transition.

On the one hand, it is encouraging more independent-minded members of Marcos' ruling Kilusan Bagong Lipunan to run as opposition forces in the coming presidential election. A support group is thus reportedly

already forming in the U.S. to back Foreign Minister Arturo Tolentino who plans to run in this capacity.

At the same time, the U.S. is attempting to win over members of the legal opposition to its peaceful change-over schemes. Journalists report intense interaction between Embassy officials in Manila and oppositionists. Meanwhile, a string of U.S. "visiting firemen," from the State Department and the Pentagon, have been busy probing just how acceptable Ramos, a U.S. favorite, would be to opposition mass organizations.

Meanwhile, members of the legal opposition are popping up in Washington for chats with the State Department. Zobel recently passed by for a talk, and Assemblywoman Eva Estrada Kalaw is due December 3 to meet with State and the National Security Council. Jose Concepcion, who headed up the National Movement for Free Elections earlier this year is slated to show up a few days later.

TESTING MARCOS' SUCCESSORS

The U.S. is hoping for a succession that would install a Marcos government without Marcos—a coalition of pro-U.S., anti-communist forces with a dash of acceptable oppositionists. The key requirements are cooperation with U.S. interests and a commitment to keep the left in check.

The grapevine suggests that Kalaw, Mitra and others may be willing to participate in such a venture, if other factions are willing to allow a peaceful transition.

The final loss of Marcos to such a coalition will inevitably generate a collective sigh of relief from the Philippine populace. After years of living under a tyrant, Filipinos will tend to give any new form of leadership the benefit of the doubt, at least for a brief amount of time.

The true test will be whether the new combine moves toward genuine democratization or not. Will it release political prisoners? Will it toss aside the Marcos constitution and write a new one? Will it hold free elections to new, democratized institutions? Will it punish the military torturers and goons responsible for "salvaging" prisoners? Will it allow the left to function openly? Will it tolerate freedom of the press?

Although it is unlikely, some observers hope that the combine that succeeds Marcos will meet at least some

of these criteria.

Most of the legal opposition hopes to settle the succession question via elections. Reportedly it has jointly determined a list of eight possible presidential candidates who, among themselves are to determine a single candidate to run for president in 1987. If the group cannot decide among themselves, a committee of three consisting of Lorenzo Tañada, Cory Aquino and Jaime Ongpin is to make the final selection.

Appropriately, only last November 16, the National Alliance for Justice, Freedom and Democracy held an assembly to launch its program for a coalition government. In doing so, it set out a list of standards for genuine democracy. It forthrightly rejects U.S. interference in the country's internal affairs and the notion of cooperating with Washington's transition ploys. □



Marcos and cabinet: Still in control?

Asiaweek



No, I don't believe that is one of the conditions imposed by the IMF!

By NENE OJEDA

Torture, Political Deaths on the Rise

'A New Job—Matching Heads with Bodies'

Participants in current demonstrations are warned to stay close together, inside the ropes used to define the perimeters of the march. The reason? Those who stray away are sometimes never seen again.

With popular opposition to the Marcos government rising, so too is government repression. Nowadays, quieting the opposition no longer means just the generous use of water cannons, tear gas, smoke bombs or even random gunfire. Tortured, mutilated bodies now seem to turn up regularly following major protest actions.

Three bodies—all men between 23 and 25 bearing stab wounds—were found November 6 in Malabon, Rizal. Two others were found in Balintawak, Quezon City November 7 and 9. All five showed signs of heavy torture. Local police cannot explain the killings but residents strongly believe that the five were demonstrators "salvaged" or summarily executed.

STUDENT ACTIVIST SALVAGED

The death of 20-year-old student leader Immanuel Obispo, also remains unexplained. Obispo, a third year La Salle student and member of the militant League of Filipino Students, was last seen October 17 as he left the Taft Avenue La Salle campus. He was found that evening, barely alive, in San Pablo City, over 75 kilometers south of Manila.

Obispo's right leg was severed from the knee joint and was never found. There were three round black marks on his right rib cage and severe bruises covered his face.

Residents of Barangay San Francisco who found Obispo brought him to the San Pablo City Hospital where he died the following day. Police claim that Obispo jumped off a southbound train, although his body was found in a dark secluded area some 300 meters off a dirt road.

Friends and relatives insist Obispo was salvaged. In addition to being in LFS, the La Salle student edited *Sulyap*, a campus literary magazine.

FARMERS STABBED, TORTURED

Far from the major cities, country folk bear the brunt of a military presence stepped up to ward off the growing popularity of the outlawed New People's Army. Many suspected guerilla sympathizers have been taken to military headquarters for questioning. A number end up detained indefinitely or dead.



Exhuming salvage victims: Tortured, mutilated bodies seem to turn up following major protest actions.

Veritas

Barangay secretary Ben Dizon, 42, and Pio Rivera, 51, both farmers in Barangay Maliga, Aurora, Quezon, were found dead by their wives October 21, one day after having been taken from their homes by military men. Their bodies, dumped one kilometer away from their homes, bore stab wounds and signs of torture. Both had missing ears.

The previous day, Dizon's house was surrounded by soldiers with guns at the ready. The house was ransacked with the troops taking away a typewriter, a stapler, a jacket and some old coins as well as eggs from the chicken coop.

Dizon and Rivera had participated in recent anti-government protest actions in their province.

Days before their apprehension, both received letters from the 187th Company camp in Maria, Aurora, ordering them to report for "investigation."

'ENCOUNTER' OR MASSACRE

In Butuan City, the church-based Justice and Peace Action Group insists that a

national newspaper account of rebels killed in an October 17 encounter is untrue. The October 17 "raid" conducted by the Philippine Army 19th Infantry Battalion was actually a "cold-blooded massacre," according to the JPAG.

The nine casualties were farmers picked up at dawn from their homes by unidentified men. Eight were found dead of stab wounds. The ninth was reportedly shot as he tried to jump out of a window to escape his captors. One victim's wife told the JPAG, "My husband and his companions were unarmed." The newspaper account, however, reported the seizure of handguns, a typewriter, and "subversive documents" from the alleged rebels.

UNIONISTS BEWARE!

Workers and union organizers in Metro Manila and the provinces face double jeopardy: repression comes as often from their employers as from the military.

Union organizer and former Globe Corp. worker Edgar Catinday, was stabbed and critically injured November 1 by goons

believed to have been hired by his former employers. He sustained three stab wounds in his chest and arms and was given a 50-50 chance of survival.

Catinday was laid off by the Malabon firm some months ago for actively participating in a strike protesting unfair labor practices. Union leaders in the area believe that Catinday was marked for liquidation by his former employers because he continued to organize Globe workers.

In Davao City, Mindanao, the mangled bodies of three labor unionists were found November 11. The bullet-riddled bodies also showed signs of torture. The three unionists worked for the Lapanday Development Corp. which runs a banana plantation in Davao del Norte. Their bodies were dumped only a few hundred meters from the plantation offices.

Sr. Mary Radcliffe of the church-backed Task Force Detainees reports that recent cases of military abuse have been particularly grisly. "Our people in Mindanao say they have a new job now—matching heads with bodies for identification." □

Split Within . . .

Continued from page 3

hopes, it is Fidel Ramos. He is considered the best trained, most battle-seasoned, and professional among the top officers. Together with Enrile, Ramos currently represents the only, though extremely weak, alternative to Ver.

Ramos moved quickly to reinforce his image as Mr. Clean upon assuming the position of Acting Chief following Ver's indictment. The military is "mistakenly perceived as not the protector of the people but their oppressor," he told a group of regimental commanders. "Help me to reverse the trend."

Ramos is very popular in the business community. But his strongest admirers by far are U.S. officials who are delighted to see him in his new role. It is no secret that the U.S. government pushed to have him appointed Chief of Staff instead of Ver in 1981. With his West Point training, reputation for professionalism and relatively modest personal ambitions, the U.S. feels he is a far more stable gamble than Ver for running a tight ship and is likely to serve U.S. interests better.

ISOLATED AT THE TOP

Manila observers report that U.S. dignitaries, both military and civilian are actively probing the opposition, attempting to find out just how acceptable Ramos might be to the mass opposition movement.

But most agree that Ramos and Enrile remain almost totally isolated at the top of the hierarchy. As recently as October 15, Marcos retired 17 generals, most of them close to Ramos, and extended the tours of 15 Ver men.

The day Ramos assumed the position of Acting Chief, the commanders of the Navy, Army and Air

Force were conspicuously absent. Pointedly, in his letter to Marcos requesting temporary leave, Ver said Ramos could execute existing military plans "using the same personnel that I have used."

Underscoring Ramos' isolation, 68 generals published a manifesto declaring their faith in Ver's innocence one day after he stepped aside. Among the only 15 generals who did not sign were Ramos and two aides to Enrile.

Although it was later revealed that a number of signatures had been forged, the message still placed Ramos on the defensive. He told the press on October 30 that the absence of his signature did not mean disloyalty to Ver and later published his own full-page ad praising Ver and expressing full faith in the country's judicial system.

'DIABLO'—THREAT TO MILITARY STABILITY

Meanwhile, unsettling stories began cropping up in the newspapers immediately after Ramos took over about an organization which calls itself the Diablo Crime Busters. The "secret" organization later proved to have registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission in 1982.

Nonetheless, much was made of a potential threat to the military's command structure posed by this 20,000-strong network. Marcos immediately ordered Ramos to investigate the matter.

The full story is not yet in, but there are two conflicting theories to date. *Newsweek's* Malacañang source claims that Diablo consists of reform-minded soldiers and that the story was deliberately leaked by Ver in an effort to discredit reformists like Ramos.

Another source claims that Diablo is a death squad under Ver with links to the notorious Lost Command of Charlie Lademora. Its source of armaments and command center is reportedly the PSC with Irwin Ver as operating officer.

Whichever is true, the "exposé" was well timed

to make it appear that the military is out of control. The implication that Ramos may be unable to pull it together once again placed Mr. Clean on the defensive.

LOOKING FOR A 'VER II'

Whether Ramos can hold his ground and eventually gain control is an open question. Most analysts are convinced that Marcos is bent on seeing Ver cleared. According to one retired general, "If he can get Ver back after the trial without causing too many ripples, he'll do so."

If he can't, according to the same general, he'll look for a "Ver II." The candidates include current army Chief of Staff Ramos, Gen. Roland Pattugalan ("a complete Ver creation" in the words of one retired general), and Imelda's brother-in-law, Gen. Edon Yap.

The Ramos-Enrile combine is at a clear disadvantage. Enrile has historically been disliked by the field commanders and Ramos may not have the stomach for the necessary fight. After all, his relative lack of political ambition is precisely the reason he is admired.

Still, the weak Ramos faction has a powerful backer in the U.S. Indications as to whether U.S. backing is lending any strength to the otherwise isolated Ramos are likely to appear later this month when a number of senior officers come up for retirement. Most are close to Ver. If they are retired or transferred to harmless positions, it will mean that Ramos has gained a bit more leverage and that the Ramos-Enrile camp, backed by the U.S., has a fighting chance against the dominant Ver-Marcos faction.

If not, it means that the U.S. plan to ease Marcos out gracefully has hit a rocky spot, that the junior partner in the formerly cozy U.S.-Marcos relationship is going to fight tooth and nail to remain in the political picture. But then again things may change completely and go Washington's way. After all, as everyone knows, even Ferdinand Marcos has his price. □

Crisis and Protest in Philippine Art



Malaya

By ED MARANAN

Above the surging mass of protesters, giant murals are held aloft. One of them shows the faces of contemporary Filipinos now revered as heroes of the people. Macling Dulag, the Kalinga chieftain. Bobby de la Paz and Johnny Escandor, doctors who served in the countryside. Edgar Jopson, former student leader. Ninoy Aquino, oppositionist.

All are dead now, but still they live in legend, in poetry, in songs, and in artworks such as these murals.

In front of a foreign embassy, huge papier mache effigies that a folk art museum would be proud to own go up in flames. Goodbye Uncle Sam and Mr. Strongman. Human beings do not have a monopoly of the dubious honor of getting burned in effigy. A few days ago, styrofoam facsimiles of the Philippine peso bill, blown up into a size deemed commensurate with the magnitude of the economic crisis, and again rendered so wittily—like some Warhol art object—went up in flames too before another foreign embassy whose government supports the Marcos government with loans.

In a certain gallery, a group of "social realists"—as those visual artists with a distinct political message in their works have come to be known—are displaying their latest works. The controversial Philippine nuclear plant transformed surrealistically into a giant skull; workers in revolt; peasants groaning under the yoke of fruitless toil but with fire in their eyes; a typical urban shantytown; hollow-eyed, pot-bellied, reed-thin children; and other similar themes, collectively portray the vision of these artists, who belong to the Protest Art movement in the Philippines.

Protest art made itself felt here in the early '70s, with the dramatic upsurge of student activism that radicalized many sectors of society. Academics and factory workers, teachers and students, petitbourgeois and urban poor, poets and painters took to the streets then to denounce what they considered as the basic evils plaguing Philippine society: imperialism, feudalism, bureaucrat capitalism, fascism.

Almost 15 years have since passed. The Philippine crisis is more malignant than ever, and millions more have been roused to action as economic conditions take a turn for the worse and human rights violations escalate.

For many Filipino artists, these developments are social realities processed out of neocolonial structures—thus, the inevitable main theme in their works is the sinister presence of an alien manipulator in the macabre puppet theatre of the Philippine ruling classes.

The visual artists are not alone in projecting this

interpretation of social reality. Poets, playwrights, song composers, and novelists have also focused on the neocolonial aspects of Philippine history from what has come to be known as the Third World viewpoint.

Their works, singly and collectively, are social analysis, criticism and aesthetic statement combined. But does the Establishment (both political rulers and taste dictators) see their art in this light? Certainly not. For social realism, they read propaganda. Confronted with revolutionary aesthetics and people's art forms, they cry Bolshevism. With each art group or movement that emerges, attacking the powers that be with ingenious caricatures, long-lasting murals or expendable figures, satirical poems, workers' and peasants' plays, the state perceives another cultural "front organization."

The CAP, or Concerned Artists of the Philippines, now the country's most important association of artists

from all fields of expression, has lately been so branded.

The Marcos government in recent years has shown itself violently allergic to the protest art movement. When celebrated playwright Boni Ilagan's *Pagsambang Bayan* (People's Worship) was performed some years ago, its outspoken director, Behn Cervantes was arrested and detained.

More recently, a street performance in one of the many protest rallies condemning the sudden and unjustified gasoline price hike was disrupted by the police and the performers harassed.

The vicious hand of the death squad has begun hitting at artists, too. Bong Medina, a dedicated and well-known actor of the University of the Philippines Repertory group, was killed some time ago. His body was found floating in the Pasig River, which bisects Manila. Like thousands of similar incidents, his murder remains unsolved.

Protest art in the Philippines, as elsewhere, is created under all imaginable conditions, in moments of hope or despair, in serene surroundings or amid squalor, in open spaces or in prison.

Yes, in prison. In fact, there are three Filipino painters who are languishing (nay, struggling is the better word) in prison, keeping the fires of art and protest burning. They are scheduled to hold a three-man exhibit (in absentia) on November 24, 1984, at the Sining Kamalig in Manila. The three are Fr. Edicio de la Torre, an SVD priest; Alan Jazmines, a former professor at the elite Asian Institute of Management; and Noel Etabag, a former fine arts student.

De la Torre and Jazmines are also poets, whose works are much published. These three political detainees are of diverse social backgrounds. As artists, they have rather contrasting styles. Their canvasses, however, have a unanimous statement to make: freedom.

The themes which they have fleshed out are familiar: elegy for the people's martyrs, the irony of showcase edifices juxtaposed with fenced-off slums, political assassination, human rights desecration, the united front of various classes and sectors against the forces of oppression.

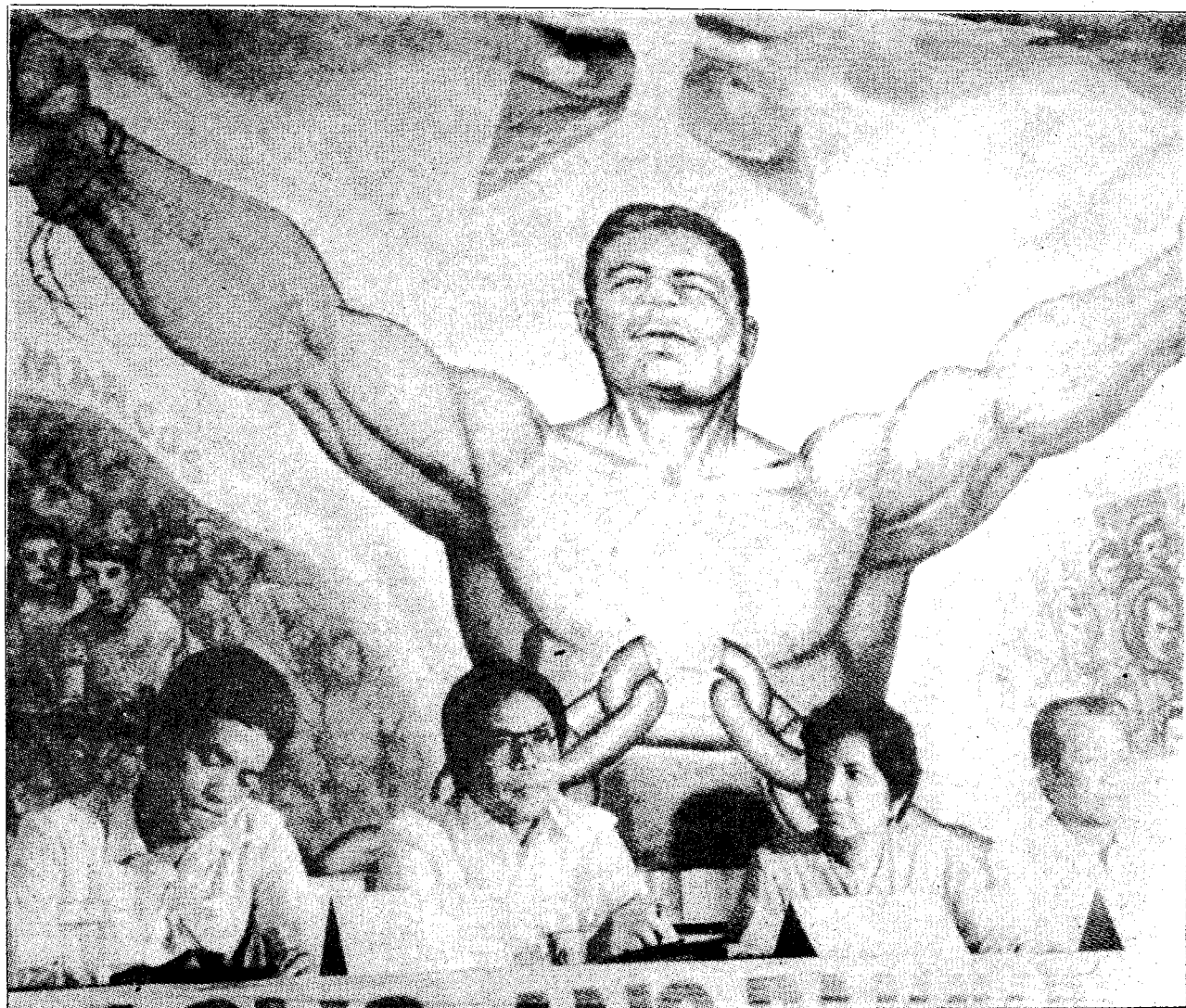
Many of the paintings are done in somber colors, a far cry from the chromatic and romantic ebullience of Filipino pastoralists, local-colorists and landscapists.

But no protest painting, however dark the colors or bleak the portrayal of reality, is ever bereft of hope. In these three painters' canvasses, the very act of criticism is an affirmation of art's vitality, a statement against social decay, a judgement in favor of life and liberty. There is thus a celebration of life in varying intensity, from a subtle glimmer of faith in the prisoner's eyes to the exuberant prophecy of victory by a people united.

Philippine prisons, in history, have made possible the writing of great literature. They may yet produce great works of art.

But the most staggering thought remains to be the awesome potentials of literature and art in a completely liberated society. Beauty shall come with truth, and both with freedom. This is the faith of protest art. □

Philippine News and Features





Mr. & Ms.



Mr. & Ms.

Many details of the Philippine protest movement have appeared in this country in print, but rarely do we have an opportunity to present them visually. Freelance photographer Ed Subijano recently returned from the Philippines where he had an opportunity to view firsthand the violent confrontations that have marked recent demonstrations.

Ed is also a student at Hayward State and a worker at National Semiconductor. The other pictures on this page are from *Mr. & Ms.*, an extremely popular alternative periodical.



E. Subijano



E. Subijano



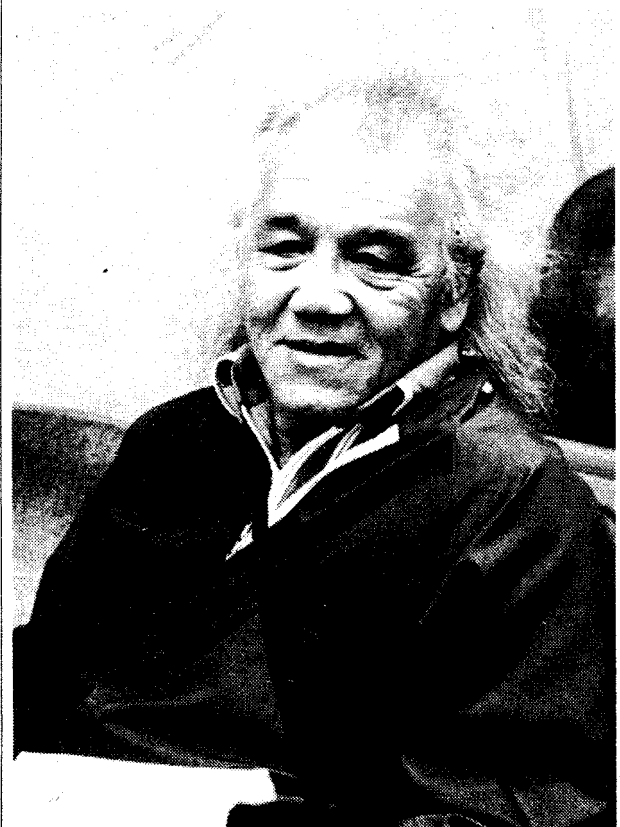
E. Subijano

Buod ng mga Balita

Zamboanga Mayor Gunned Down

CLIMACO LETTER TELLS OF DEATH SCHEME

The murder of opposition Mayor Cesar Climaco November 15, is beginning to reek of an Aquino-style rub-out. Thus far, the eight-member military investigating team headed by Lt. Gen. Fidel Ramos has not turned up any solid leads in the case other than to speculate that the assassin "was a hired gun," "not from Zamboanga," and "fled to Basilan afterwards." Climaco, a favorite son of the City, was an acerbic



The late Mayor: Zamboanga's battle-axe.

critic of the Marcos regime and a tireless crusader for peace and clean government.

Local authorities, however, are tentatively laying the blame on one Rizal Alih for the murder of the popular three-term mayor of Zamboanga City. Rizal is the brother of Lt. Abdurassad Alih, head of a military unit, who was killed during a gunbattle with a rival group a short distance from Climaco's home on October 10.

Climaco's murder was the latest in a string of unsolved killings over a two-year period, most of it related to political executions and local rivalries over lucrative businesses and government contracts. The rash of random murders has made Zamboanga, an ancient picturesque city in the south, a dangerous place to live.

On the other hand, Zamboanga, like other militarized cities of the south, provides excellent stalking ground for the elimination of political dissidents. At any given time, the city is filled with 1,000 to 5,000 military officers on active duty, or furlough from surrounding combat zones.

A prophetic letter to Gen. Ramos written by the mayor before his death almost foretells the circumstances of his assassination, and establishes the fact that Climaco was not the unfortunate victim of random violence between lawless groups.

Worried for some time about the clashes between the Alih group and another gang, Climaco wrote: "The military is spreading the gossip that because Abdurassad Alih's ambush and the Atty. Alam shooting incident took place near my residence, the brains of the shoot-out is Mayor Climaco, so that if and when Mayor Climaco is assassinated, the secret marshalls or agents of the ministry of dirty tricks can conveniently point the accusing finger on the Alih or Alam group as the assassins—much in the same way as Rolly Galman was made the scapegoat in the Aquino murder."

When Lt. Alih was killed, Climaco visited his brother Rizal, embraced the latter and declared: "I did not do it."

Meanwhile, in what critics decried as an effort to deflect attention from the real culprit, the military is raising a hue and cry over how the late mayor ignored warnings from prominent citizens and the military on the threats against his life.

Although tensions were mounting in Zamboanga weeks before his murder, Climaco dispensed with security guards and travelled alone on scooter. He was confident that the townspeople would protect him. According to residents, an order to kill him could only have come from higher-ups, that even corrupt operators would not have dared kill him without a handsome offer from national figures. Climaco's presence and record

provided a crucial counterweight to warlordism which even his enemies begrudgingly respected.

Meanwhile, in a practice that is becoming customary in the Philippines today, a three-member civilian committee headed by Assemblyman Teodulo Natividad is conducting a separate investigation.

Climaco's death brings to four the number of political executions in Mindanao over an eight-week period. Alexander Orcullo, editor of *Mindanao Weekly*; Jacobo Amatong, a lawyer and oppositionist; and Zorro Aguilar, head of Mindanao Coalition for the Realization of Democracy, were similarly killed in close-range executions.

"We expected our father would be killed long ago," said Dr. Augusto Climaco, the mayor's son. "I'm only glad he lived as long as he did, and served his people longer." □

FOLKS BACKED NPA SURIGAO RAID

MANILA (PNF)—If any of the 8,000 residents of Diatagon village, Lianga, in Surigao del Sur, had warned soldiers of the Philippine Army's 28th Infantry Battalion about the presence in the area of guerillas of the Communist-led New People's Army, the incident would not have happened.

But no one did. In one of their boldest attacks in the southern Philippine island of Mindanao, some 200 NPA guerillas assaulted the headquarters of Alpha Company on the afternoon of November 3.

After a four-hour firefight, during which the guerillas initially had the advantage of surprise on their side, 15 government soldiers lay dead, while 10 others were seriously wounded. Also killed were 12 civilians, mostly relatives of soldiers living in the army camp.

Military authorities later reported that 32 NPA "rebels" died in the raid. However, reliable reports forwarded to PNF stated that the guerillas suffered only two dead and two wounded. Five more government soldiers, the report said, were slain when an NPA blocking force ambushed soldiers sent to reinforce the beleaguered army camp.

The NPA guerillas made off with nine M-16 and M-14 rifles, an M-60 machinegun, two M-79 grenade launchers, and plenty of ammunition, the reports said.

Acting Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Fidel Ramos himself led a fact-finding group to investigate the incident and to assess the peace and order situation in the Surigao provinces.

In a briefing given to Gen. Ramos and his group, which included reporters from Manila-based newspapers, Lt. Col. Gregorio Camiling, commander of the 28th Infantry Battalion, said that the NPA force which attacked the army camp was headed by a certain "Commander Yayang."

Just before the assault, the guerillas had commandeered five trucks and a service bus of a mining company and a logging firm. All passengers and drivers of the vehicles were taken to a secluded area and released unharmed after the raid had begun.

The NPA guerillas launched their attack at about 3:15 p.m.—almost eight hours after they had initiated operations in the area. Around 40 soldiers were in the camp when the guerillas struck.

When asked why the residents did not inform the soldiers about the impending attack, Maj. Cresencio

Maralit of the military's public information office said that "they [the residents] might also be afraid of the reprisal of the NPAs." The soldiers, Maralit said, had complained that "the people in the area were indifferent, or rather silent."

"But if the residents had some rapport with the soldiers, they could have given warning," the major said.

Maralit also said that this was the second time in the Surigao provinces that NPA guerillas had conducted an operation of such magnitude. □

'CHRISTIAN FAITH AND IDEOLOGY ARE COMPATIBLE'

MANILA (PNF)—Philippine Catholic theologian and religious leader Fr. Luis G. Hechanova, CSrR, said Christian faith is compatible with ideology in a recent three-day seminar in which 160 priests, nuns and seminarians at the Regional Major Seminary in Davao City participated.

The seminar had for its theme, "The Chinese Missions: Lessons for the Philippines."

Fr. Hechanova traced the Chinese missions to the Jesuit priest Mateo Ricci, who was later called the "Apostle of China."

Hechanova, head of the Association of Major Religious Superiors of the Philippines, explained that Ricci was able to realize that Chinese culture and ideology were not incompatible with Christianity. It was possible to live the Chinese way of life without losing one's Christian identity, he said.

He emphasized that Christian faith, in the strictest sense, "refers to an act of personal commitment either of an individual or of a community to the person of Christ."

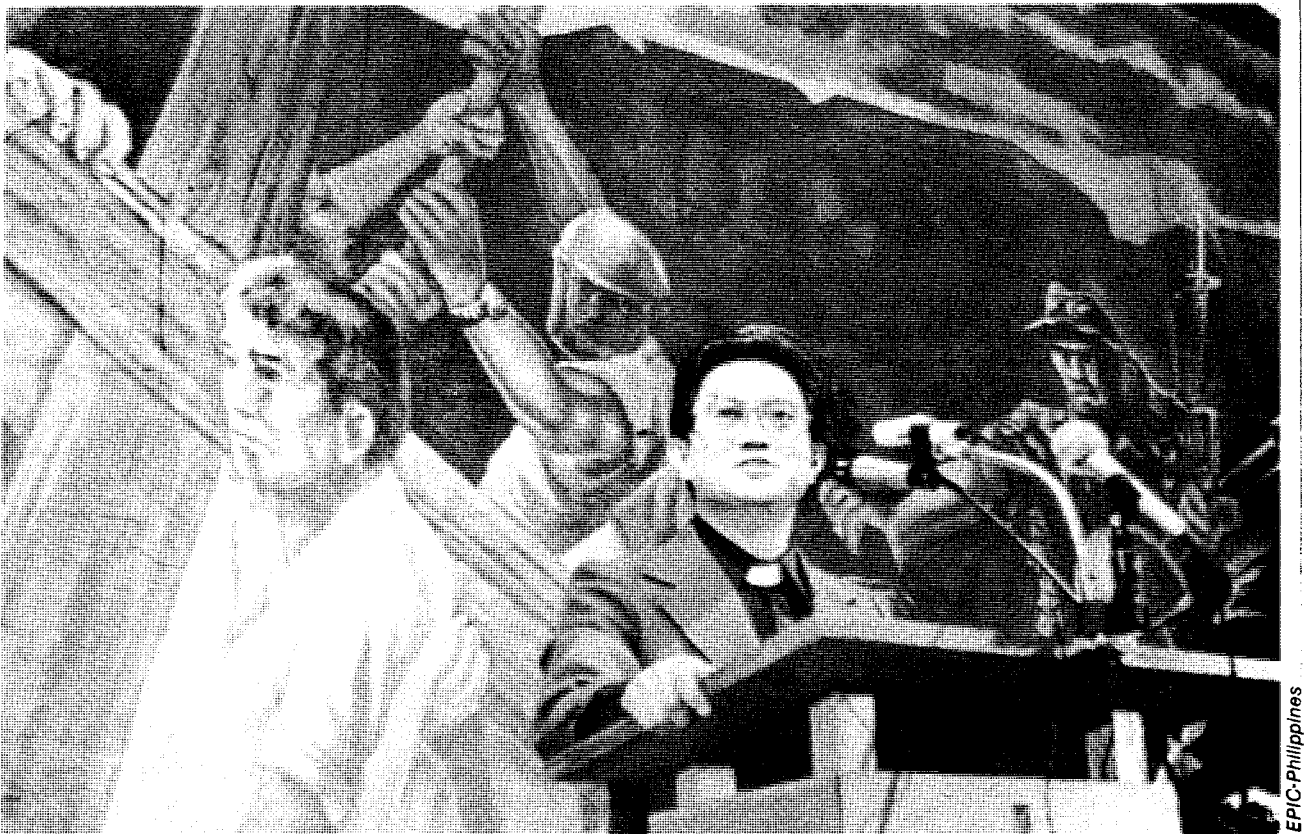
On the other hand, he pointed out that ideology, as defined in the World Council of Churches' *Information Letter No. 34* (Geneva, December 1981), is "a system of thought or blueprint used to interpret society and man's place in society, the function of which is either to stabilize the existing structures of society or to change them."

Hechanova said that both faith and ideology are actually existential acts because faith is a "personal commitment to the person of Christ" and ideology is a commitment or "option for a cause" in the socio-economic and political realm.

He explained that both these realities have rational explanations. Both also function by means of certain organizations. Faith uses religion, through which it expresses itself in human terms. Ideology, on the other hand, uses the political party or certain "support organizations."

Fr. Hechanova affirmed that "The Christian faith is essentially a religious option which does not per se rule out having a political option as well. Thus, many Filipino Christians are engaged in politics with a definite political option inspired by a certain political ideology." Filipino Christians may be found in all types of political parties and organizations, he said.

This is real, according to Hechanova, because "any Christian who wants to effect significant social transformation has to have an ideology." □



Fr. Luis Hechanova.

The Maneuvers to Save Ver Begin



The three-man Tanodbayan: Ernesto Bernabe, Manuel Herrera and Leonardo Tamayo.

Asiaweek

By CHRISTINE ARANETA

When President Marcos was asked whether the *Sandiganbayan* was the appropriate court to handle the trial of General Fabian Ver and 25 other co-accused in the Aquino assassination, Marcos tersely replied: "I can't change the rules in the middle of the game."

That the impending trial of Marcos' right hand man and other military conspirators has all the elements of a well-thought out game plan with the indictees making the rules, was evident after the Agrava report was submitted to the *Tanodbayan* in early November.

The *Tanodbayan* is a three-man team composed of presidential appointees charged with determining if there is sufficient ground to prosecute Ver and others. "There is probable cause," said *Tanodbayan* member Manuel Herrera in reference to the conclusions drawn by the minority and majority reports of the Agrava commission, leaving the impression that the prosecuting body will act impartially.

But, according to a prominent Makati lawyer, the question is not whether the prosecution will proceed but how long it will take before Ver and his cohorts are acquitted either during the preliminary investigation or the trial proper.

Despite the fact that the Agrava board has ceased to exist, Marcos was still employing political pressure to get board members to lend legitimacy to the *Tanodbayan*. Upon the request of Ombudsman Bernardo Fernandez, Marcos instructed board members to assist the *Tanodbayan* in the formulation of the charges or run the risk of discrediting "the validity of the charges against the indictees." Andres Narvasa, chief counsel for the board essentially said "no way," and that the board's function has ceased.

A LITTLE HELP FROM HIS FRIENDS

"We are afraid of a whitewash," said Atty. Luciano Salazar, a member of the Agrava board, who along with three other colleagues resisted palace pressures to compromise on the report. Observers note that the *Tanodbayan*, prosecuting arm of the *Sandiganbayan*, cannot be expected to follow the example of the Agrava board majority.

So, will the curtain close on Ver's career or will the final act of the Aquino tragedy end in a predictable whitewash? A brief glance at the *Tanodbayan* and *Sandiganbayan* suggests that Gen. Ver just may stage a comeback.

The *Tanodbayan* and *Sandiganbayan* are agencies firmly within Gen. Ver's sphere of influence. Both were created to handle graft and corruption cases involving government personnel. However, it is Ver's National Intelligence and Security Agency which has handled referrals of complaints from the *Sandiganbayan* for investigation and invariably, actions.

One *Tanodbayan* member, specifically Pasay City Fiscal Ernesto Bernabe, is a reputed Ver lackey and a sidekick of Col. Balbino Diego, Ver's notorious hatchetman.

The *Sandiganbayan* on the other hand, is headed by Justice Buenaventura Guerrero, a relative of Gen. Ver. Recently, the *Sandiganbayan* was boosted by three new appointees—all Marcos choices.

The appointments were the result of a secret consultation called by Malacañang Legal Chief Manuel Lazaro to discuss who should try the military suspects. Present at the secret meeting were Johnny Gatbonton, J.V. Cruz, and the principal suspect's son, Col. Irwin Ver.

SECRET DECREE

As if to be tried by friends would not be safe enough for Ver, still more friends

made a separate move to widen his options. After all, the *Sandiganbayan* might succumb to heavy public pressure. So, the law offices of Cagampang, Cipriano and de Castro, petitioned the Supreme Court to stop the *Tanodbayan* from prosecuting and to transfer the case to a *military court*.

Citing two presidential decrees which state that offenses committed by military personnel must be tried by a military court, the law firm asserts that the *Sandiganbayan* has no jurisdiction whatsoever over the case.

Marcos, to avert the embarrassing upshot of such a crude maneuver, surprised even his Supreme Court appointees by closing the legal loophole which would have ordered a military court to preside.

Justice Minister Estelito Mendoza announced in late November that a secret decree empowering Marcos to transfer cases from a military court to a civilian court, "was issued in September," a month before the expected release of the Agrava report.

The secret decree only came to light when Mendoza was compelled to respond to the law firm's petition.

WHERE IS LINA?

In the meantime, opposition forces face an uphill battle in challenging the *Sandiganbayan's* jurisdiction over the Aquino case. Opposition assemblymen have sponsored a bill to create a special people's court presided over by sectoral representatives.

The move was endorsed by the Integrated Bar of the Philippines chair Raul Roco, former Chief Justice Roberto Concepcion, retired Justice J.B.L. Reyes, and 41 other organizations counting professional, religious and business groups.

The Palace, rejecting the military court scenario, also rejected the special court request even as the Supreme Court agreed



Gen. Fabian Ver

to go through the motion of reviewing both pleas.

As the prosecution sputters along, and petitions pingpong between the Supreme Court and the *Tanodbayan*, the last piece of the puzzle is still being sought by Atty. Lupino Lazaro, lawyer of the family of Rolando Galman.

Lina Galman, common-law wife of Rolly, the fall guy blamed for Aquino's

WITNESSES AND POTENTIAL WITNESSES KILLED OR MISSING

1. Rolando Galman—the supposed hitman who was killed instantly at the Manila International Airport on August 21, 1983:
2. Rosendo Cawigan—a discredited witness who testified about Galman's communist affiliations. The military announced on July 14, 1984 that Cawigan died of a heart attack in a military hospital.
3. Conde—first name unknown. His name was submitted to the Agrava board as a potential witness. He was supposedly a military informer. He died sometime last June before he could testify.
4. Eugenio Eugenio—a suspended Makati policeman who later surfaced as Col. Arturo Custodio's driver. He was shot and killed by an unidentified gunman towards the end of June. (Col. Arturo Custodio is a member of the Air Force Intelligence assigned to Gen. Fabian Ver. He picked up Rolando Galman on August 17. The next time Galman was seen was already on August 21 at the airport.)
5. Armando de la Cruz—spotted on the platform at the airport during the shooting of Aquino and was presumed to have seen the assassination. He died in a "road accident."
6. Lina Galman—common-law wife of Galman; disappeared on January 29, has never been seen since then. Roberta Masibay, her daughter, testified that Lina told her she was being summoned by Gen. Fabian Ver.
7. Rogelio Taruc—a Galman family friend, also picked up by the military around January 29 and has not been heard from since.
- 8-10. Ana Oliva, her sister Catherine, and a friend, Evelyn—on September 4, 1983 the three were picked up at a nightclub in Caloocan City by Seabees, an army word for construction battalion members. Ana was Galman's girlfriend and was seen with Galman the week of the Aquino assassination.

murder, disappeared on January 29, 1984, an apparent victim of the extensive cover-up. (See list of witness and potential witnesses killed or missing.) Lina had been privy to Galman's activities during the period he was allegedly recruited to play a role in the plot.

Lazaro recently petitioned the Supreme Court to order Gen. Ver to produce the person of Lina Galman. Twice, Ver associates admitted that Lina was in military custody. Col. Balbino Diego once promised to arrange a meeting between Lina and Lazaro. The date came and went but there was no Lina at the appointed meeting place. Diego blamed "countermanning orders from above."

Shortly afterwards, Manila Fiscal Jose Flamiano asked Lazaro "how much it will cost" in terms of money "to assuage the feelings of the Galman family," leading observers to conclude that Lina may have very well joined Rolly in the grave. □

Truth or . . .

Continued from page 10

Aquino's murder. This results from its policy and concrete measures of almost unqualified political, military and economic support for the Marcos fascist puppet clique at the expense of the anti-Marcos oppositionists headed by Aquino. . . By its policy, the Reagan administration has actively encouraged the Marcos regime to intensify its campaign of repression against the Filipino people. . . Not even the legal oppositionists have been spared. . . It was with the impunity encouraged by the Reagan administration that the regime later assassinated Aquino."

Sison, in his letter to the Aquino family, stated: "The administration of U.S. President Reagan cannot also wash its hands of responsibility for propping up a puppet regime of tyranny and colluding with it in persecuting Filipino political exiles. . . As revealed by Ninoy himself in his recent taped interview with Radio Veritas, he had wanted to return to his country not only

because of his sincere desire to participate in the struggle for democracy but also because his life was seriously in danger even in the United States. . . He was obviously caught in a pincer by the refusal of the Marcos regime to renew his passport as well as by the refusal of the Reagan administration to give him the necessary accommodation and protection. Like other Filipino political exiles, he suffered harassment from the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation and immigration authorities' restrictions on his freedom of movement and from his exposure to a possible Mafia contract."

The U.S. government and even big business also lobbied for a "reasonably credible" Agrava report just as they lobbied for "reasonably credible" elections. And much for the same purpose: to defuse the explosive situation.

The consequence of the Agrava report is just as important as the truth of the Agrava report.

The Agrava report is "reasonably credible" because it goes as high as Gen. Ver, even though, as we pointed out, he is being held responsible not as a plotter of the assassination but for its cover-up and also for negligence.

To many that would be high enough. Naming Ver is virtually naming Marcos—who would be admittedly extremely difficult to name under the circumstances.

But the indictment of Ver has already served to divert fire from Marcos as well as the more fundamental issue of his ouster or resignation. It has become a matter of sacrificing the rook to save the King and Queen. There is so much ado about the kind of tribunal to try Ver *et al*.

If anything, the turn of events proves Salonga's point that "There can be no thorough and independent investigation of the assassination as long as the Marcos-military regime is in power." Continuing, he said that "only a democratic government, representing not the will of one man, but the will of 53 million Filipinos, can do that; and this should come, it is hoped, after Marcos shall have honored the presidency by leaving it."

Under a regime of lies, a favorite biblical verse is "You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." (John 8:32).

The converse is also true. You will be free, then you will know the truth.

Eli Angeles writes from Seattle, Washington.

On the Agrava Report:

Truth or Consequence?

By ELI ANGELES

To take such an attitude is to seek truth from facts. "Facts" are all the things that exist objectively; "truth" means their internal relations, that is, the laws governing them, and "to seek" means to study.

—Mao Zedong

The Agrava board was, after all, a fact-finding board, not a truth-finding board. Under the circumstances, that was the most that it could be or do. The board majority in its report's epilogue stated, "We have done what is humanly possible to uncover the truth surrounding the killing of former Senator Aquino . . ." Yes, but is it the whole truth? For in the final analysis, the whole truth is *the* truth.

We deal here mainly with the second report not only because it is the majority report but because it is the better report. Better in terms of analysis.

The board majority and the legal panel deserve due credit not only for their analysis but also for their sincerity. Liberal Party President Jovito R. Salonga, in his post-poll analysis, described them as "sincere individuals doing their level best under the constraints of a dictatorship" even as he stated that "it [the board] cannot possibly satisfy the people who want an answer to the question—who engineered and masterminded the killing of Ninoy Aquino?"

After all, the board could conclude only on the basis of the evidence before it. As the board majority stated in its report's epilogue, ". . . we can only say that we did what the law mandated, using as basis nothing but the evidence, and, invoking as guide in our search for truth in the Aquino assassination, nothing but our conscience." Unfortunately, good intentions are not enough.

There is the particular difficulty in the case of conspiracy because, as the board majority's conclusion notes, "by its nature it is planned in utmost secrecy."

Jose Ma. Sison, whose testimony before the board did not push through, stated around New Year of 1984 that "under the present circumstances, not all witnesses and other evidence contrary to the military's version can be presented before the Agrava board for fear of those in power and because of the active cover-up by them."

More recently, sometime in September 1984, Salonga stated, "The Agrava Board cannot conduct a fair investigation because first, it is in no position to protect material witnesses, including those who saw the murder with their own eyes, and second, because the commission is either unwilling or unable to conduct an examination of the involvement of high-ranking government officials.

The board majority went as high up the chain of command as Gen. Fabian C. Ver, AFP chief of staff. But note that the specification against Ver is "that the evidence proves the complicity of Gen. Fabian C. Ver in this tragic affair, in attempting, like Gen. Olivias to cover up the crime, or hide the corpus or effects of the crime." In other words, Ver and Olivias are being held responsible not so much for the assassination as for its cover-up. Is this not some sort of cover-up itself?

The board's majority also implied that Ver did not as "he should assure the taking of the utmost precautions to prevent this eventuality [the assassination]." In short, Ver is at most being held responsible for negli-

gence.

Related to this is the following curious paragraph in the board majority's conclusion:

It does not appear unreasonable to postulate that ranking officers who formulated and approved the security plans should have felt special apprehensions and should have given clear and specific orders or instructions to prevent the slaying of any individual(s) who might attempt to threaten Aquino's safety. General Fabian C. Ver, a highly trained and professional intelligence officer, who approved *Oplan Balikbayan as a comprehensive security plan that should be effective if properly implemented*, apparently failed to give final guidance and appropriate orders to his subordinates on this vital aspect of the security plan. Had these special precautions and instructions been given and followed, then the assassination of Aquino would not have been shrouded with questions that place doubt not only on the military version of the assassination but also the more serious question of conspiracy. (Emphasis mine.)

Ver "failed to give specific orders to assure that, in the

'The Agrava majority says, "The conspiracy to assassinate Aquino is an act of tragic irresponsibility inspired by absolute power." But who has absolute power?'



Marcos receives Rosie Agrava's report.

event that should such a threatened assault actually occur, the assassin or assassins should be captured alive and made to reveal vital information." In effect, the board majority, like its Chairwoman, considers that "General Ver was not a plotter."

As for *Oplan Balikbayan* approved by Ver, what can be said? According to Chairwoman Agrava's conclusion: "But as it turned out, *Oplan Balikbayan including Plan Bravo*, was not designed to implement the Secondary Directive in a possible emergency, but *its Plan Bravo* became the tactical plan to effect the assassination." (Emphasis mine.)

In effect, the board, especially Chairwoman Agrava, holds Brig. Gen. Luther Custodio as "chiefly responsible" for the assassination, its planning and implementation.

Be that as it may, Salonga posits that a post-Marcos investigation commission "can avail of whatever relevant and useful evidence the Agrava Commission may have received, and begin where it left off, until the whole truth is found."

The board majority concluded that ". . . the principals in the conspiracy were persons who could exercise official authority or powerful influence over the involved military personnel . . ." Thus, otherwise responsible officers of the military and men of AVSECOM were persuaded to plan and implement the criminal plot in the belief that Aquino's presence in the Philippines would pose a serious de-stabilizing factor in the peace and order situation in the country."

Who could exercise official authority or powerful influence over Generals Ver, Olivias and Custodio? Who had moral ascendancy over them? Who was the persuader?

The board majority also concluded that, "It should

be clarified that participants in the exchange of messages to dissuade Aquino from returning to the Philippines and in the denial of travel documents were not parties to the criminal plot."

The board majority should not have discounted such participants. The exchange of messages to dissuade Aquino and the denial of travel documents were definitely part of the chain of facts and circumstances surrounding the Aquino assassination, as shown by their own report.

For instance, the board majority's conclusion notes that "A message was relayed from the President of the Philippines through the Defense Minister to Senator Aquino, advising *inter alia* that the government was 'convinced beyond reasonable doubt' that there were threats against Aquino's life, the message being apparently based on intelligence information furnished by Gen. Ver. But the nature of the information cannot justify such a dogmatically assertive conviction anent the threats . . ."

As Sison stated, "Marcos and Enrile are in public record as having warned Aquino of some serious assassination threat and trying hard to prevent him from exercising his right to return home. It is ridiculous if they say that they had never been consulted by General Ver on so serious a matter as security preparations for the Aquino arrival."

The board majority's conclusion included as an aid a brief discussion of five theories on the beneficiaries of the Aquino assassination. Conspicuously absent among these theories is ironically the most popular one.

Theory 4 refers to "Individuals within the present power structure whose present economic and political stature had been greatly improved under the patronage of the President . . . [who] might have aspirations for the highest office in the land." Theory 5 refers to "Individuals to Whom the President Dispensed High and Powerful Positions in Government and are Therefore Grateful and Extremely Loyal to the President." Theories four and five are interlocking. Their common denominator is the President, who should have been Theory 6.

Theory 6 has also evolved from statements of responsible and respected members of the community.

According to the board majority's conclusion, Theory 5, which it appears to favor, "is reinforced by the observations of many Filipinos that many individuals from the highest levels of government are wont to exercise absolute power in their dealings with the citizenry. The conspiracy to assassinate Aquino is an act of tragic irresponsibility inspired by absolute power." But who has absolute power?

Who controls the AFP?

As regards the Aquino assassination, the President too had his motivations, not to mention the means and the opportunity. The motive would be the permanent elimination of the strongest and most potent threat to his position and political hierarchy in the context of ruling class politics.

One must also consider the President's political record, style, character, temper and even health as well as the general climate at the time of the Aquino assassination.

Ang Bayan stated: "Given the fast deteriorating economic and political crisis, the regime could not afford to have Aquino multiplying its problems. . . In its desperation, the regime chose to assassinate him right at the airport, upon his arrival. True it was possible that Aquino could be eliminated 'with finesse' later, but if he were given the chance to regroup the legal opposition forces, and be in a position to effectively influence political developments in the country, this might be more difficult to do. Moreover, by then, the political consequences of murdering Aquino would be more immediate, direct and less manageable. There would be much political embarrassment for the regime by killing Aquino right at the airport, but in its view, it was the lesser of two evils."

The lack of finesse could even be a subterfuge for one who has made himself appear as a clever politician. Another clever move or a symptom of deteriorating political judgement affected by deteriorating health?

The board majority's conclusion notes that "At the time of Aquino's return there were widespread reports, if not belief, that President Marcos was stricken with a fatal ailment and might at any time leave an untimely vacuum in the national leadership." Another subterfuge?

As someone observed, "But Ferdinand E. Marcos was not really that sick, as has been shown . . ."

So much for Marcos. How about the U.S.?

If Marcos had moral ascendancy over the generals, who had moral ascendancy over Marcos?

Ang Bayan stated: "The Reagan administration in the United States has an indirect responsibility for

Continued on page 9

TO OUR READERS:

Send your essays, satires, poems, short stories, photos of your paintings, sculptures, or woodcuts, photo art, etc. Send also a brief description of yourself as a writer or artist.

1. Contributions must be generally progressive in content. However, all written materials accepted for publication are edited only for length. The contributors are responsible for the political opinions expressed in their work.

2. Essays, feature articles, or short stories, should not exceed 2,000 words. All articles must be typed double spaced and received by us within the first week of the month. Only articles with self-addressed stamped envelopes will be sent back if not accepted for publication.

3. Photos of art work will be sent back upon request by the contributor.

4. For now, AK cannot give monetary compensation for published material although we wish to do so in the future. But your contribution to the enrichment of the Filipino community's cultural experience will itself be a satisfying reward.

I will not bow

REFRAIN (repeat after each stanza)

*I was down on my knees
Because you forced me down
But I'm standing now
And I will not bow.*

Tell me your story, *Manong*.
Tell me about working the fields for 30¢ a day
And being called "monkey" and "goo-goo"
And being hunted by vigilantes
Because you were brown and different.

Your loneliness is mine, *Manong*,
As I think of you in the gambling houses
And taxi dance halls
And outside doors with signs that read
"Positively No Filipinos Allowed!"

Tell me the story of Carlos, *Manong*,
And Chris and Sencio
And of the old days
When the unions were born
And you struck so hard it froze them cold.

What is that glistening on your cheek, *Manang*?
Is the warbride's heart somewhere else
Where there was warmth and loved ones
And dreams of tomorrows
When second-class status would disappear?

They took away your land, *Kasama*.
They fed you lies and chocolate bars.
They used what you had

And forced you to buy the junk they dumped on you,
But you fought back and your fight continues,
And your fight is my fight!

Strike hard, child of the earth and sea!
Strike hard, child of unspeakable sorrows!
From L.A. to New York,
From Tondo to Samar
Arise and strike!
Strike hard—this is your day!

And I will not bow again!
I will not bow again!

Salvador Morano
Los Angeles, 1980

*Salvador Morano, poet, activist, and former disc jockey,
lives in Los Angeles.*

Inspirasyon ni Susan Bernas: Isang Detenido

Narito ako isang pusong
Umiibig.
Aruga ko ay pag-asa
Para sa iyo
At sa akin.
Sinta kong minamahal
Halika't iyong damhin,
Ang init ng labi kong
Ngalan mo ang inuusal.
Pilit ko mang ipikit
Mata ko sa iyong

Larawan,
Sa diwa ko naman
Ikaw lamang ang
Laman.
Narito akong muli
Pag-ibig kong tinatangi,
Puwing sa kawalan
Kayakap ay lunggati.
Hatinggabi na
At muli ako'y
Mag-hahabi,
Ng aking pangarap
At panaginip
Na anupa't tagpi-tagpi.
Katawan kong lupa
Sairin man
Ng lakas,
Puso't diwa ko sinta
Magpakailanma'y
Sa iyo ay wagas.

Marie Tungol
November 1, 1984

Bagama't ang kumatha nito ay hindi naging detenido, sa literal nitong kahulugan, gayunpama'y ibig ibahagi ang mga damdamin, karanasan, at pighati ng isang detenido.

Samakatuwid, ang tulang ito ay di lamang ukol kay Susan Bernas, manapa'y ito ay ukol sa iyo at sa akin, sa mga taong patuloy namumulat at nakikibaka laban sa pag-siil ng malupit na iilan. Sila na patuloy ang pagsulong sa isang tunay at makabuluhang kalayaan. Sila ang masa.

MARIE TUNGOL: "Ako ay beintecuatro anyos at isang baguhang manunulat. Sa pamamagitan ng "VOICES" ibig kong ibahagi sa inyong mga tagatangkilik at sa inyo AK Staff ang aking mga katha. Naninirahan ako sa Falls Church, Virginia. Maraming salamat po."

By VINCE REYES

I first saw jazz pianist Josef "Flip" Nuñez in a small nightclub in San Francisco's Japantown eight years ago as he interpreted the old rhythm and blues standard "Kansas City."

Nuñez had already built a reputation as a member of the popular Latin/Soul band Azteca in the early 1970s. Filipinos were, and still are, a rarity in the ranks of established musical artists.

I saw him again recently at a Jazz Festival in San Francisco featuring Filipino jazz artists and I couldn't resist an interview.

Nuñez has played and travelled with some of the best in the field—Charlie Parker, Sonny Stitt, Eric Dolphy, Wes and Cliff Montgomery.

How did you get into jazz? What was your background?

I was born in Stockton and then when I was nine years old we moved to San Pedro. My environment was different because I wasn't raised in the community.

I was living in the projects—real ghetto—we were poor people. My dad was a merchant seaman and my mom was a housewife. Seven of the kids died and there were six of us left.

I identified with Mexicans and Blacks because I liked the music. But I was a "pachuco" type—a bad boy. I had a nervous breakdown when I was quite young and that made me go within myself so I started practising the piano a little.

Although I always had a little thing goin' with the piano, it wasn't until after the service that I really got seriously into music.

When did you become a professional musician and did you start out playing jazz?

It was through a contest—a boogie-woogie contest at a rhythm and blues club. The prize was to work with a band—so I ended up playin' with the band and that got me into playin' rhythm and blues. So my roots were gospel and R&B 'cause I was playin' at a gospel church too.

How did you go from R&B to jazz?

I can only point out people in my life who helped steer me in that direction. Around 1955 I started meeting musicians from Los Angeles. In particular, Eric Dolphy, who was quite a well-known jazz musician. He came to visit his friend Lester Robertson who was a trombone player. They both worked with Gerald Wilson's band which was sort of like Count Basie's. They would come to my house and teach me—Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, that kind of stuff. At that time it was called Be-Bop.

As an R&B player, I understood the rhythm, a little more sophisticated, but all the harmonic structures threw me completely. I started embracing Be-Bop, and then I really got into it—so that happened for the rest of my life.

What would you say have been the highlights of your career?

This Jazzman is a Fil-Am

I'd have to identify it with some of the great musicians I've worked with like the Montgomery brothers—Wes and Cliff. Prior to them were Sonny Stitt, Dexter Gordon, Teddy Edwards, Dave Pike—all those guys, they're highlights because they helped shape my jazz playing.

Jazz and R&B have their roots in the Black community. Did you feel accepted right away being a Filipino?

At that time I wasn't so concerned about being Asian, but the facts were I was. Whether I realized it or not I was being treated in a different way. Well, there would be that thing that Blacks and whites would rather hire their own. The good thing was they had to accept me for my music.

I did travelling in the 60s. I got to feel my differences around people—mainly the audiences. It was unusual, they looked at me weird—"what are you?" They didn't even know what a Filipino was in some places—"Hey, are you a Chinaman or what? Show me some kung fu"—stuff like that.

I didn't like the part of not having any role models who I could pattern myself after. I couldn't imitate Chinese or Japanese. Who would we imitate? Manongs? A Filipino accent? So when we sang, we imitated Frank Sinatra or Joe Williams. Now Blacks can do that and they would be considered valid, whites could do that too. But if a Filipino went over and did that they'd say "not bad for an Oriental—they sound just like the real thing." It was always lesser than life—it was an imitation. That's the part that dragged me down.

Now, you've played with a number of important figures in the jazz scene. Seems like they had a lot of frustrations trying to get work or recordings because they were Black or playing music identified as Black. How apparent was that?

I would say in the '40s and '50s that was there because people weren't accepting jazz.

Black musicians weren't getting the breaks. They

didn't have Motown, they didn't have a lot of companies that were producing Blacks. They had a hard time.

When did that start to change?

I saw the change happening in the '60s—when Blacks became Blacks. They got out of being called "colored" and "negroes" and then all of a sudden they started establishing their contributions and doing more for their own rather than through the back door or side door.

When the doors swung open for Black artists did you see an opportunity for yourself?

When I saw the change happening—it was a thing Dick Gregory told me once. He said, "Flip, you gotta help us." And I said "Why?" He says, "That'll change things." I said "How so?" He says, "Well, if we make it, then your people can make it."

Were there times when you felt appreciated for being a Filipino?

Oh yeah. But I remember once when I was playing in Chicago in particular. The place was packed with Filipinos, this was in the early '60s. I thought, hmmm, they couldn't all be jazz lovers. I found they came in mainly to see a Filipino play in a context that was usually closed to Asians. I met a number of American-born Filipino musicians out there who were also into jazz. It was great.

What is Flip Nuñez's music right now and where do you want to go with it?

I'd say it's jazz with Latin influences. I have a lot of Samba and Bolero tunes. My music is the sum total of what I am and what I was. I want to get more ambitious right now—write more songs, make a living. I'm recording an album right now between San Francisco and Hawaii. Just an album of jazz standards I wanted to put down on tracks. □



Vince Reyes

A Filipina Actress-Activist in Hollywood

By VICKY PEREZ

There's a Filipina with a Japanese name in Hollywood who can't keep still when it comes to bucking inequities in the entertainment industry. She can smell unfairness a mile away, confronts it frequently but would rather fight than switch professions.

Just recently, actress and union activist Sumi Haru, 45, helped put a stop to the naming of an Asian street gang "The 442," in a T.J. Hooker segment. "The 442," was the name of the highly decorated World War II army unit composed of Japanese-Americans.

Sumi Haru is no longer shocked by such callousness. Her years in the industry and her work as a unionist have taught her to expect anything.

Haru is presently serving her second two-year term as National Recording Secretary for the Screen Actors Guild. She chaired SAG's Ethnic Equal Opportunity Committee, is a member of the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists and chairs its Equal Employment Opportunities Committee.

Haru also co-chairs the Interguild Ethnic Minorities Caucus and belongs to the Association of Asian/Pacific American Artists. In addition to these and many other responsibilities, she is senior producer and moderator of KTLA TV's "80's Woman" and "The Gallery."

NO FILIPINO ROLES

But it hasn't been all activism and organizing for Haru. Her acting experience includes roles in "Hill Street Blues," "M*A*S*H," "The Young and the Restless," "Fast Friends," "Sweepstakes," and "Krakatoa, East of Java." For ten years she served on the board of directors of the East-West Players, a drama collective that promotes Asian identity. She acted in many of the group's performances.

Haru attributes her involvement to "an aggressive personality" and to over 20 years of experience in the industry.

"There are just so few parts for people of color. I find myself getting involved in issues for Asian/Pacifics. I am not the typical 'sit back and let other people do it' person. I guess I took it upon myself to be aggressive and vocal."

Haru was born in Orange, New Jersey shortly after her parents' arrival from Ilocos Norte in 1939. Most of her childhood was spent in Colorado, where she majored in music. With two grown daughters, she has made Los Angeles her home.

She began her acting career in the '60s, casted mostly in Japanese roles. It was then that she decided to change her name to Sumi Haru from her original name, Mildred Sevilla.

"There were no Filipino roles at all. In the 20 years I've been in the business, I've only auditioned twice for Filipino roles on TV."

SCREEN ACTORS GUILD

"The performing arts only reflect society," she said. "Not only are there fewer roles for minorities but in recent years, we've seen more blatant racism on TV."

Three years ago, Haru became one of three nationally elected officers of the Screen Actors Guild whose head is actor Ed Asner. Conservative SAG members, often led by actor Charlton Heston, have attacked Asner's participation in progressive causes and his opposition to the U.S. role in Central America. Haru and other SAG progressives have been trying to strengthen Asner's wing of the guild.

"Right now, it's an uphill fight. It's going to be a lot harder, in the next four years . . . those of us who are active or progressive will just have to work harder than ever before."

Last September, Haru joined a 12-member labor delegation to Nicaragua to investigate the conditions in the country.

"It is obviously a country at war. I came away with a very strong feeling that the U.S. has no business there, that the people of Nicaragua should be allowed to select their own form of government."



Sumi Haru

As to Filipinos and other minorities who wish to work in the entertainment industry, her advice is "to be very, very assertive, to play the so-called white man's game until we're in a power position to make it our game."

"You always have to do better, whereas someone else who is not a minority could get away with only 50%. You have to have a lot of tenacity and be able to take a lot of rejection." □

State Without Grace

"State Without Grace" is playing until December 9 at the Actors' Outlet Theatre Center, 120 West 28th Street, New York.

For too many years, "Asian-American" organizations have reflected the interests of the largest subgroups: Chinese and Japanese Americans. Even after United States immigration laws were liberalized in 1965, bringing thousands from Korea, India, Vietnam, Cambodia, and the Philippines, not enough Asian American groups and individuals have made inter-ethnic pluralism a priority.

"State Without Grace," however, is a hopeful sign. It is a well-crafted play, written and directed by Filipinas and performed by a largely Filipina cast under the auspices of Tisa Chang and the Pan Asian Repertory Theatre Company. And, like any other excellent dramatic work, it provides insights into universal concerns about family, freedom and the search for personal identity while delving into one family's struggles with these concerns.

The scene opens with Celia returning to the Philippines in the mid-1970s after ten years as a bohemian in the United States. The tensions within her grandmother's (Lola) house reflect in microcosm the tensions still found in Philippine life: cousin Elise is searching for herself in indigenous roots that predated the Spanish colonialists; cousin Laura is in love with Estee Lauder

handbags and the worst aspects of American disposable culture; Uncle Leon can't find work because he is not part of a political patronage system; houseboy Ponce's subservient role continues a tradition begun under colonial rule; and the deep Catholic faith of Aunt Rosa and Lola continues another tradition that has permeated all aspects of life.

This play is more than a set of caricatures, however. And, in the end, Lola's desire to reintegrate Celia into the family and The Faith and the parallel struggle of Elise to break free are powerful vehicles to address one of the key issues of our time: the acceptance of change or the search for absolutes in one's *modus vivendi*.

The cast is uniformly excellent, with exceptional jobs in difficult roles by Mia Katigbak (Celia), Ching Valdes (Lola), and Luna Borromeo (Elise). Both author Linda Kalayaan Faigao and director Aida Limjoco have done their jobs well.

Once again, as with their last play about the computer age, "Chip Shot," Pan Asian is breaking new ground. Once again they have succeeded with this World Premiere production and deserve the support of all Asian Americans.

Philip Tajitsu Nash is a staff attorney at Asian American Legal Defense Fund in New York City. He is also a drama critic for the New York Nichibei where this review first appeared.

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Groups Here Join in Marking 'Political Prisoners Week'



KAPATID chairman Armando J. Malay welcomes the relatives of political detainees in a gathering.

To highlight the observance in the Philippines of "Political Prisoners Week" from December 3 to 7, the Coalition Against the Marcos Dictatorship/Philippine Solidarity Network has lined up a series of activities in North America focusing on the issue of political repression.

The week will be marked by photo exhibits in school campuses, churches and other community centers in seven cities in the U.S. and three cities in Canada, accompanied by petition-gathering for the release of individual political prisoners and for general amnesty of all political offenders.

In at least four cities, masses will be said "to commemorate the prisoners' sacrifice in the name of freedom," while all CAMD/PSN chapters will hold house-meetings and public forums throughout the week.

In Washington, D.C., a delegation will submit the Statement in Support of the Appeal for General Amnesty to the Philippine Ambassador and to the U.S. Congress. This statement has now been signed by over 85 human rights advocates, church officials, elected representatives to the U.S. Congress and the Canadian Parliament, civil rights groups, academics, trade union representatives, and solidarity organizations.

CAMD/PSN's Congress Task Force will also release during this week a petition for the release of journalist Satur Ocampo, a political detainee for the past eight years. This petition was initiated by Rep. James Oberstar (D-MN) and has been signed by at least 22 other congresspersons.

Together with the Movement for a Free

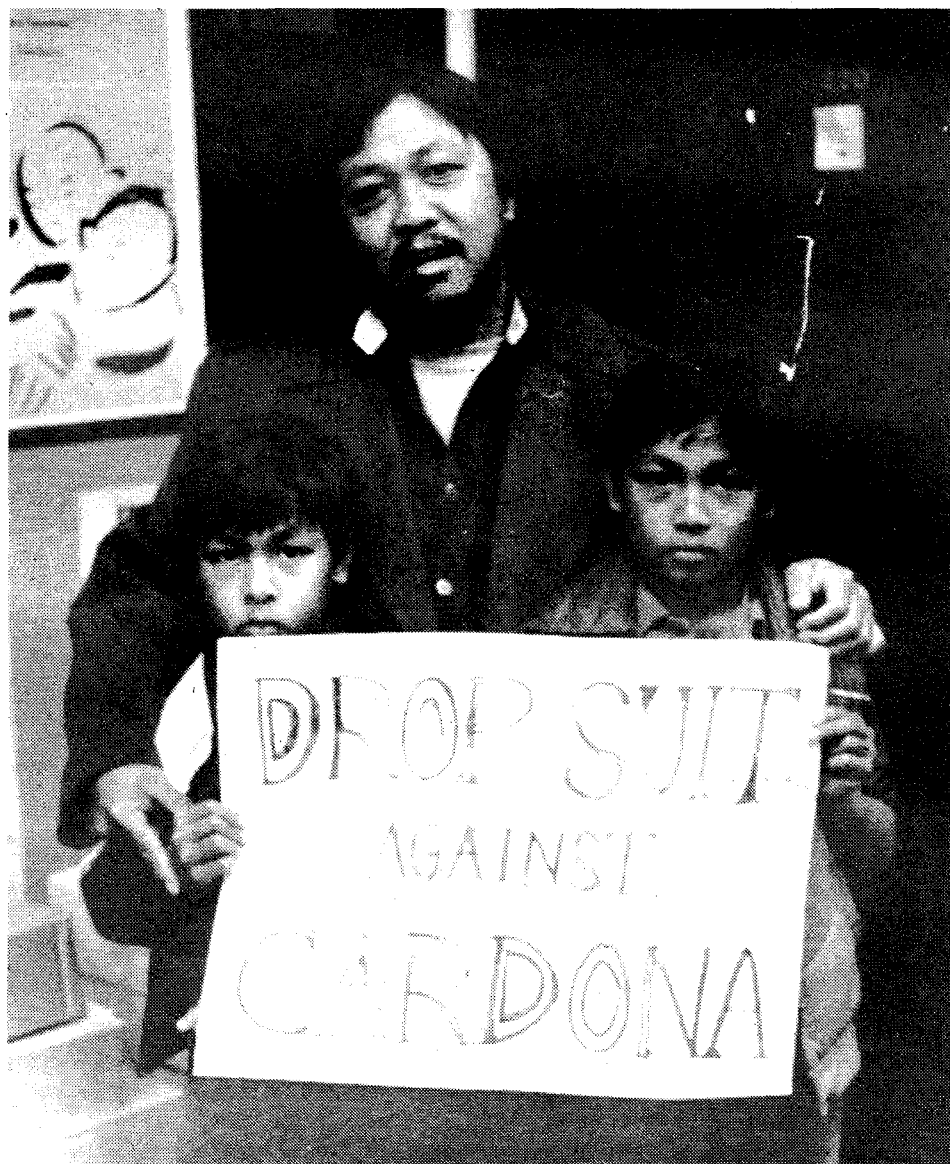
Philippines and the U.S. affiliate of the Concerned Artists of the Philippines, the New York CAMD/PSN chapter will sponsor a cultural program on December 10, Human Rights Day. The event has been endorsed by the Ninoy Aquino Movement.

In Sacramento and in Los Angeles, similar programs launched the adoption groups of Judy Taguiwalo, Fr. Orlando Tizon, and Jose Maria Sison on December 1. Adoption groups are formed to seek the release of political detainees. Toronto, Montreal, Seattle, Hawaii, and San Francisco will witness similar events. At San Francisco State College, the Filipino Students Club has offered to host the photo exhibit which will first be displayed at St. Andrew's Church on December 2.

Meanwhile, the CAMD/PSN transmitted the Statement in Support of General Amnesty to KAPATID, an organization of friends and relatives of political detainees dedicated to the task of working for their release.

Together with this Statement the CAMD/PSN sent a message on the occasion of Political Prisoners Week which said in part:

"We salute all the political prisoners in the Philippines whose unrelenting struggle behind prison walls symbolizes the firm determination of the Filipino people to achieve freedom, justice and democracy. "For as long as there exist political prisoners languishing in the fascist dictator's jails, no amount of propaganda lies, electoral maneuvers, and concessionary gestures from the U.S.-backed Marcos regime can cover up its repressive and criminal character." □



Emil De Guzman

Singled Out by Suit

Last November 14, the Oakland School District dropped the countersuit against two members of a parents' group who earlier sued the district for non-compliance with bilingual educational requirements. (See AK story, November issue.)

Latino parent Tomas Morales and the parents' chief attorney, Lois Salisbury, were dismissed as defendants upon a request filed by the school district's attorney. Filipino parent Carlito Cardona, president of the district's bilingual advisory committee was not dismissed and remains liable

for \$120,000 in damages.

Board of Education member Darlene Lawson opposed the Board's recent move: "It does not make sense to drop the suit against all but one person."

"It scares me a bit," Cardona said about the new situation. "I am a family man and have other things to worry about. They have chosen to isolate me but I know the parents and have faith in what the community is doing."

One childcare center administrator commented that Superintendent David Bowick was using the countersuit to punish Cardona.

'Have faith that the Christmas of our freedom will come....'

For the past nine years, friends and supporters of the Coalition Against the Marcos Dictatorship/Philippine Solidarity Network have opened their homes to our carolling teams to share their unity with the struggles of their kababayan in the Philippines for an end to the Marcos dictatorship.

More than ever, this Christmas season brings a promise of freedom closer to reality as we face the challenge, at this terminal stage of Marcos' rule, of dealing a final blow to his repressive apparatus—a government which is maintained

principally by the infusion of U.S. dollars and military hardware.

The current stage of the anti-dictatorship struggle is characterized by fast-breaking developments which demand of us the ability to respond quickly and comprehensively, and to the fullest of our resources.

We all have the responsibility of contributing to the end of the Marcos regime. Your contribution to our work helps meet this responsibility. You can make a difference!

Let us share with you our Christmas message of Philippine carols and resistance songs.



Namamasko ang CAMD-PSN!

For carolling appointments, call:
 Hawaii—808-847-6614
 Los Angeles—213-250-0602
 New York—212-592-7517
 Seattle—206-723-0352
 Sacramento—916-428-4415
 San Francisco—415-654-6934 or
 415-826-4287
 Washington, D.C.—202-396-8242
 Toronto—416-535-8550
 Montreal—write P.O. Box 1745,
 Stn. H, Montreal, P.Q. H3G 2N6

Camp Residents Battle Eviction Threat

By DEAN ALEGADO
Honolulu Correspondent

Ten years ago, the Ota Camp/Makibaka Association won one of the first successful struggles for low-income housing in Hawaii. Today, the residents who are all Filipinos and number close to 300 people are facing the threat of eviction from the 31 houses they won in 1974.

In the early 1970s, the story of 110 Filipinos—40 families and 15 elderly, single men—fighting eviction from their ramshackle plantation camp-style homes located at the end of the road less than a mile from the Waipahu Sugar Mill was an inspiration to low-income people and communities throughout Hawaii.

For socially conscious Filipino-American students and community organizers Ota Camp became a symbol of Filipino resistance to oppression and racism. Along with the International Hotel in San Francisco and the Agbayani Village in Delano, California, the Ota Camp struggle aroused the political imagination of the Filipino-American youth "identity movement" that was developing at that time on the West Coast and in Hawaii.

When in early 1972 the residents of Ota Camp wore headbands inscribed with the word "Makibaka" and boldly organized a car caravan from Waipahu to the State Capitol seven miles away in Honolulu to call public attention to their plight, the entire Filipino community and many people in Hawaii were jolted.

Carrying signs and waving a Philippine flag turned upside down to symbolize their determination to fight, the residents and their supporters jammed the gallery of the state legislature.

"We did that because we wanted to show the state and the landlord that we Filipinos are not afraid to speak out and fight for our rights," explained Pete Tagalog, president of the Ota Camp/Makibaka Association.

After two years of hard-fought battles, a relocation plan was worked out between the Ota Camp residents, the Amity of Waipahu (the landlord) and the city government in which a private contractor, Jack Ujimori, agreed to build 31 new low-income homes with state Hawaii Housing Authority funds. The units were built on city-owned land which is now Ota Camp's present location.

The plan's crucial section stated that the residents would have an option to buy the new homes after 10 years with the rent paid for that time counting as down-payment.

NO TALK, NO RENT

In 1981, however, conflict between the residents of New Ota Camp and Jack Ujimori, their present landlord, broke out when the latter raised the rent.

The tenants, who now number about 300, asked for a justification for the rent increase but Ujimori's lawyer replied that it was none of the tenants' business. With Ujimori refusing to talk about the rent increase, the residents reciprocated by refusing to pay it.



Ota Camp/Makibaka Association President Pete Tagalog

Hospital Workers Win Union

SEATTLE—Workers and labor organizers at Swedish Hospital scored a major victory last month when the employees voted for the Service International Workers' Union Local 6 as their representative. After an intense five-month drive by organizers, 409 workers voted for the union and 294 opposed it.

The drive succeeded after three previous attempts had failed to unionize workers at the 75-year-old hospital. Swedish Hospital is one of the most prestigious and largest hospitals in the Pacific Northwest.

Yet, according to the Washington State Hospital Commission, wages at Swedish are below the median for both unionized and non-unionized hospitals in the Seattle area.

"This year more and more workers became aware that their pay and working conditions were a lot worse than their counterparts at other hospitals," said Mario Suson, SEIU labor organizer.

Housekeepers at Swedish receive a starting wage of \$4.75 an hour and are eligible for merit increases based on the value of their performance after one year. Part-time workers at Swedish do not receive any medical benefits. In comparison, Providence Hospital workers start at \$5.65 an hour and Group Health workers receive \$7.13 an hour.

"Workers have complained recently of bad treatment by supervisors," said Suson, "such as unnecessarily rushing employees and yelling at them."

Three other unions already represent technical workers, nurses and operating engineers at Swedish. Local 6 will now represent service-maintenance workers who are most affected by low wage scales. The unit includes housekeepers, custodians, laundry workers, parking attendants, print-shop workers and secretaries.

Of 950 workers in the unit, one-third are housekeeping and dietary workers and one-third of that number are minorities and immigrants. There are 175 Filipinos in one unit.

After the successful drive, a Solidarity Potluck attended by 80 people was held in the Filipino community. Among those who gave solidarity messages were Zenaida Guerzon of the Filipino-American Educators; Leo Lorenzo, Local 37 vice president; Bob Santos, International District Housing Alliance director; Marc Earls, Local 6 president; and Fr. Ocaña.

"Now that the workers have won union representation, the next step will be to conduct a series of proposal meetings to develop the wages and benefits we want to bargain for," explained Suson. "After that, negotiations with the management will begin in January." □ VR

Last July, Ujimori sued the Camp Association for \$86,000 in back rent and other fees, and asked the Hawaii court to cancel the tenants' option to buy. The option to buy is to be exercised by the residents in 1985.

Because of the controversy, the Hawaii Housing Authority recently notified the tenants that it wanted to change the terms of the option plan which might make it more expensive for the residents to buy their homes.

"If there is a cancellation of our option to buy or if we cannot afford to pay what the HHA is asking for, that in a sense would put things back where they were in 1972," said Tagalog.

"MAKIBAKA, HUWAG MATAKOT!"

In preparation for the upcoming court and eviction battles the association began mobilizing support from civic organizations and activist groups.

"Ten years ago we were joined by other housing and land struggles in Waimanalo, Chinatown and Niumalu-Nawiliwili in Kauai. We were supported by the new Ethnic Studies Program that just got established at the University of Hawaii, and by various Filipino, labor and community

groups," explained Nora Gozon, a steering committee member of the camp association. "We will once again need their support."

Last November 17, the residents held their first rally/fundraising program at the camp and nearly 500 residents and supporters came to renew their support.

"Ota Camp today stands for the same things it did ten years ago," Tagalog told the rally. "Today, the cost of housing is just out of this world. Only a few people, the rich, can afford to buy or rent a decent home in Hawaii. You go to Waianae and Waimanalo, how many people do you see living in tents on the beaches today? They are not just there for recreation! They live in those tents!"

"Poor people like us in Ota Camp must show that we can do something, if only we organize. That is what is meant by 'Makibaka' We will not be evicted!"

As in the early 1970s, the people in Hawaii will again hear the familiar slogan "Makibaka! Huwag Matakot!" from the residents of Ota Camp. And it looks like Jack Ujimori and the Hawaii Authority will have more than their hands full with 300 angry workers who are determined to get decent shelters. □

Cannery Workers Mark 50th Year

Marking an historic milestone in its long struggle to represent Alaska non-resident seafood processing workers, Seattle's Cannery Workers Local 37, International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union celebrated its 50th anniversary November 24. The event also featured the union's installation of officers.

Rousing labor songs, poetry, and congratulatory messages from civic and labor leaders marked the celebration at the Langston Hughes Cultural Center. Local 37 gave an hour-long multimedia presentation entitled "1934-1984: Lessons of the Past, Visions of the Future," which depicted the bitter fight to organize cannery workers who were preyed upon by labor contractors in the 1920s and 1930s.

WRITTEN IN BLOOD

The presentation underscored this bitter struggle by noting that the Union's founder and first president, Virgil Duyungan, and its secretary Aurelio Simon were violently murdered by labor contractors in 1936.

"Many sacrifices were made to organize the union . . . [Its] history, not unlike many other unions', has been written in blood," said Terri Mast, Local 37's current president.

Also remembered were Silme Domingo (Mast's husband) and Gene Viernes, union leaders who were murdered in the union's office in 1981. A civil suit alleges that they were victims of a conspiracy to silence overseas opposition to the Marcos government. The two were also prominent leaders of a reform movement against the local's former leadership who were pro-Marcos diehards.

"If we fail to educate our members to this history, we weaken our organization and leave it unprepared for the future tasks," said Mast.

"Newcomers to the [seafood] industry often think wages and conditions have always been there, or that these things were 'given' by the companies; but of course that is not the case."

ORGANIZE THE UNORGANIZED

The evening's highlight was an emotional tribute to the union's pioneers, many of whom are now in their seventies. Most came to the U.S. in the 1920s and 1930s and some still work in Alaska. Two dozens of the more than 150 honorees received awards from Mast and Curtis McClain, ILWU International Secretary-Treasurer.

McClain congratulated Local 37's drive to recruit younger members. "Local 37 has been able to pass the work on from one generation to another, which has helped make the local great and strong," he said. McClain emphasized that the murder, arrest, and attempted deportation of the local's leaders in the course of its history were a testimony to its will to survive against all odds.

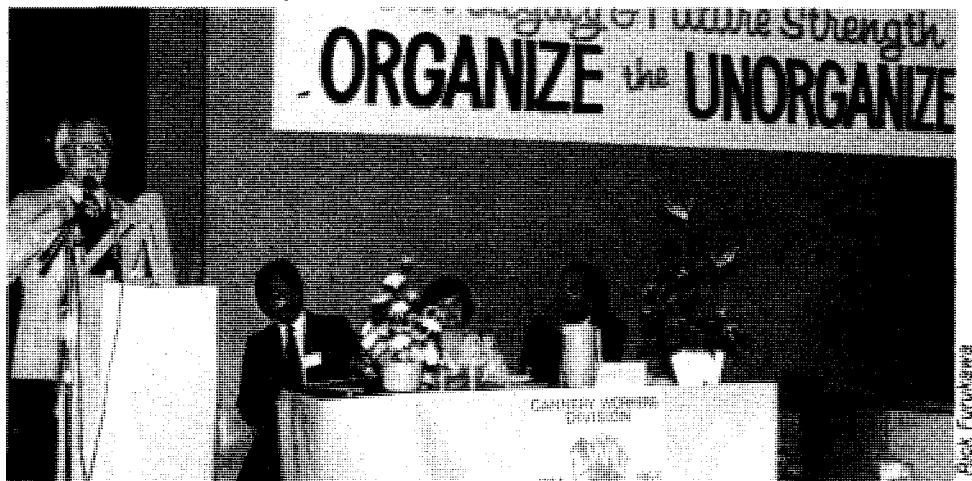
ILWU President James Herman sent a message saying: "We honor the memory of the leaders of Local 37—people like Virgil Duyungan, Ernesto Mangaoang, Chris Mensalvas (the latter two were arrested and threatened with deportation during the McCarthy period in the 1950s), Silme Domingo, and Gene Viernes—and we rededicate ourselves to the task of protecting and advancing the fruits of democratic trade unionism."

Mast explained that "organizing the unorganized" will be the central strategy of the union and that it must have the backing of a broader social movement. She noted that 80% of the industry's work force is unorganized.

"Only in explaining ourselves to the public can a better understanding of our history and our real aims gain us friends and supporters in the fight ahead of us," she said.

"A close relationship between our union and the public could build a fight back attitude against union busting, and against other attacks on working people."

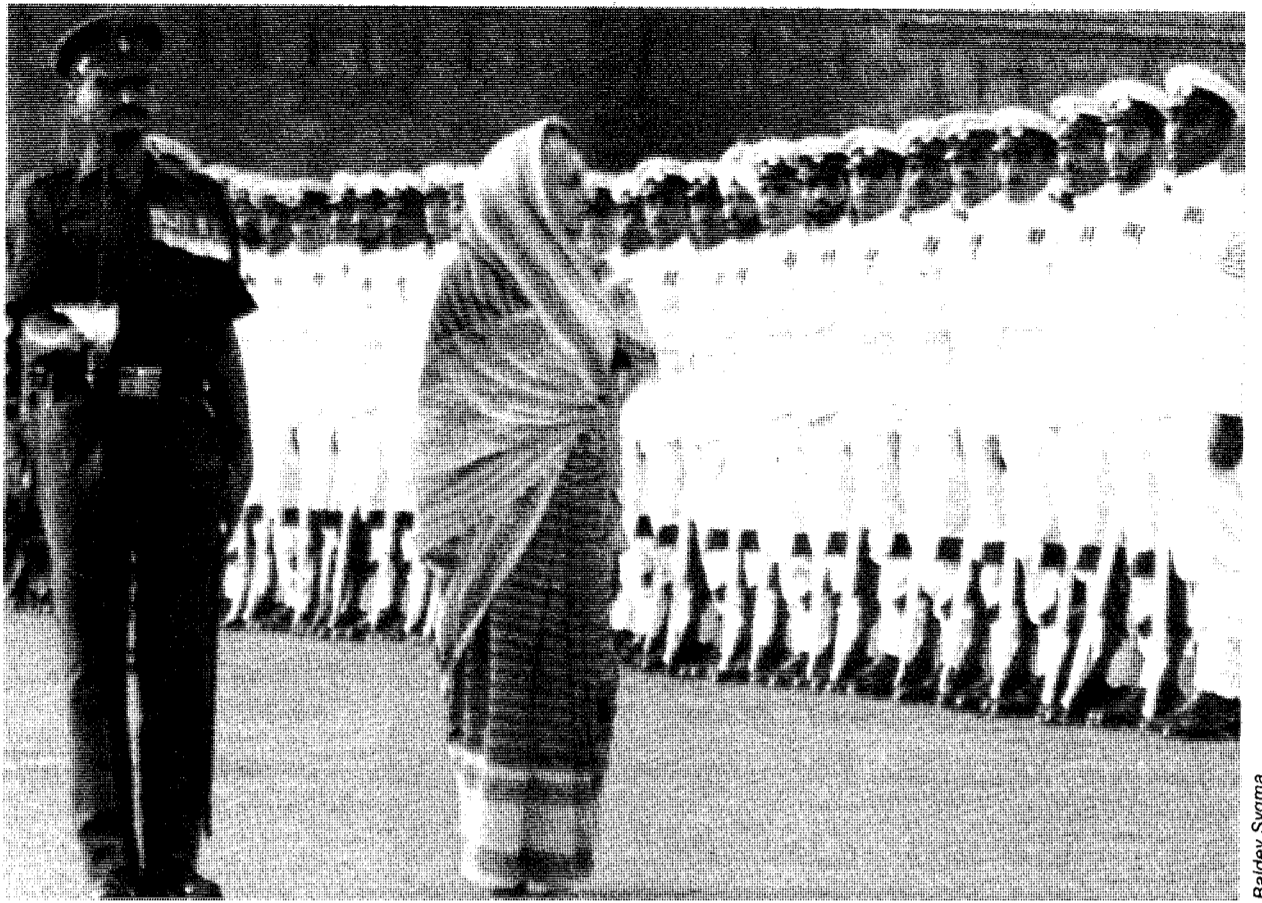
Mast criticized the Reagan administration for its attacks on organized labor and its war in Central America. □



(L-R) Bob Santos, David Della, Terri Mast and Curtis McClain.

By EDDIE ESCULTURA

Who Gains from Indira's Death?



Baldev Sygma

Even those who stood to benefit from Indira Gandhi's death expressed outrage at her assassination and heaped praises upon the fallen Indian prime minister.

It brought "shock, revulsion and grief" to Ronald Reagan who praised Mrs. Gandhi as "a source of global leadership." Reagan also used the occasion to denounce "terrorism" (an ironic twist in the wake of furor over the exposed CIA manual on the use of terrorism against the Nicaraguan government.)

British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher joined in saying India "had been robbed of a leader of incomparable courage, vision and humanity."

But as the official pronouncements gave way to a more sober appraisal of what the future holds for India, relief, and even a tinge of optimism, was sounded by these very same quarters.

RELIEVED

Of course, India's traditional enemies were much more openly relieved by her assassination. The daily *Nawai Wagt* of Lahur, Pakistan said, "Pakistan may now, after her death, feel somewhat more safe for some time."

Karachi's biggest daily, the *Morning News*, editorialized that "Her death will be felt more acutely by the Soviet Union than by any of India's other allies in the East or West because, as Western and Asian diplomats put it, she was regarded as a close friend by Moscow."

Pakistan, which had fought three wars with India since the latter's independence in 1947, never hid its disdain for Gandhi and support for the Sikh separatist movement that is responsible for her death. Now, Pakistani president Mohammad Zia ul-Haq has offered new Indian prime minister Rajiv Gandhi the olive branch.

During Gandhi's terms in office, Pakistani foreign policy had the full backing of the United States. Washington made Pakistan the biggest recipient of U.S. aid in the region (\$3.5 billion in military aid this year.) In return, the CIA was allowed to use Pakistan as a base for covert activities in the region.

China also perceived a silver lining behind India's grief. The border war that flared up in the 1960's between the two countries only worsened with Gandhi's opposition to China's support for the Kampuchean counterrevolution. With her gone, Beijing sees better possibilities for a "return to the friendly relationship to the level of the 1950's."

NON-ALIGNED LEADER

Though less effusive than its allies, the U.S. is well aware of the blessings of Gandhi's demise. As a key member of the non-aligned movement, India under Gandhi's leadership, resisted U.S. efforts to lord over third world countries, especially in the United Nations.

Gandhi undoubtedly benefited from the prestige of her father, Jawaharlal Nehru, who helped initiate the non-aligned movement which she chaired at the time of her assassination. But Gandhi earned international stature as a leading exponent of non-alignment in her own right.

In the contention between the industrial powers of the North and the poor nations of the South, Mrs. Gandhi stood for a new economic order to offset the inequitable distribution of the world's wealth and resources.

When the Soviet Union intervened in Afghanistan to bolster the Kabul government against a CIA-backed insurgency, India rebuffed the U.S. and refused to condemn the Soviet action. India was also the first non-aligned nation to recognize the Heng Samrin government of Kampuchea.

Demonstrating further India's independent course, Gandhi signed in 1974 a 20-year treaty of friendship with the Soviet Union. This soured her relationship with Washington which built even stronger ties with Pakistan.

NATIONALISM AND REPRESSION

Indira Gandhi's nationalist orientation was forged in the fierce anti-colonial struggle against Britain led by the late Mohandas Gandhi (no relation) and Nehru. It was this strong nationalism that pushed India toward the course of non-alignment.

Gandhi's foreign policy reflected her role in the domestic politics of India. Within the Congress Party, which ruled India for the most part since its independence and which she reorganized into the Congress-I Party in 1978, Gandhi represented India's national capitalists.

But ruling a country of 700 million people previously ravaged by British colonialism, and wracked with sectarian and political divisions, proved harder than the challenges of international diplomacy. Gandhi's tremendous prestige did pull India together and move it towards some measure of scientific, technological and economic advancement.

But the unity remained tenuous and Gandhi herself was increasingly driven towards repressive measures which culminated in the imposition of martial law in 1975.

For this she paid dearly. When martial law was lifted in 1977 she was voted out of office. She was arrested on charges of electoral fraud that same year. She was convicted and jailed for corruption in office but massive protests forced her release a few days later. In 1980 the Congress Party was voted back in power and Gandhi became prime minister once again until her assassination.

THE SIKH PROBLEM

The most troubling challenge for Gandhi, one which ultimately led to her assassination, had been the Hindu-Sikh problem.

There has been a growing polarization between national and regional interests in India since independence. National capitalists want a strong central government to unify India, promote technology and bold economic policies, and guard the country's independence. So far, such a central government has produced a mixed economy, described by critics as socialist, where state capitalist enterprises coexist with private capital.

Regional capitalists, on the other hand, being in control of their respective areas, are suspicious of the central government which they see as a barrier to the expansion of their political power. They are vehemently opposed to the nationalization of any part of the economy.

The Sikh challenge coincides with this tension between the national government and the regional power blocs. Among national capitalists, and in the central government, Hindus predominate.

Sikhs constitute only two percent of India's population but they control a large share of India's wealth and economic resources. Of the entire Sikh population, 80% live in the northwestern province of Punjab where they constitute 52% of the population. They dominate Punjab which is considered the breadbasket of India. Punjab's industries and agribusiness are relatively more developed compared to many other parts of the country.

The effort of Sikh capitalists to expand their political power and market has posed a continuing challenge to the central government.

In this struggle, Sikh capitalists have rallied popular support by making a religious appeal to the broad masses of Sikhs. Akali Dal, a political party dominated by capitalist farmers, has been mobilizing the Sikh

peasantry against both the communists and the ruling Congress Party.

A Punjab-based Sikh separatist movement has gained mass following and the support of outside industrial powers eager to weaken the central government's capacity to resist or limit foreign capitalist penetration.

As a result of the confrontation between the regional Sikh capitalists and the predominantly Hindu national capitalists, religious differences have sharpened and worsened the underlying economic and political antagonisms. The intensity and mass character of the conflict was exemplified by the massacre of more than a thousand Sikhs by Hindus avenging Gandhi's assassination.

INTERNATIONAL LINKS

Not surprisingly, the Sikh separatists have enjoyed the support of Pakistan and, indirectly, the U.S. A number of Sikh separatists arrested recently claimed to have been trained in Pakistan under CIA supervision.

While the Indian government accused the Pakistani president of supporting violence by Sikhs, a Soviet commentary also identified "Operation Brahmputra" as a CIA operation aimed at fomenting separatist unrest.

Gandhi's assassins had direct ties with the Sikh movement. Regardless of whatever role Pakistan or the CIA had in it, the assassination was a blow to Indian national unity and to the non-aligned movement internationally.

Within the wide spectrum of the Congress Party, Gandhi represented the progressive wing. Her opponents in the party were represented by those who want closer ties with the U.S. and a greater role in the economy for foreign capital. Only Gandhi's prestige kept the opposition at bay and held the party together.

Her son and successor, Rajiv Gandhi, does not have the same influence or a substantial personal base within the party. As domestic pressures and the expected U.S. courtship heat up, he is expected by observers to move visibly to the right.

Despite Rajiv's pledge to "carry forward" the foreign policy bequeathed by Jawaharlal Nehru "which Indira Gandhi so creatively enriched," his expected difficulties in dealing with extremely complex and volatile domestic politics, not to mention his own conservative leanings, do not bode well for India's renowned policy of independence. □

Free Elections...

Continued from page 16

dinadora, along with the opposition daily *La Prensa*, not only called for a boycott but openly allied itself with the contras. As an ultimatum to the Sandinistas, Cruz even warned of direct U.S. intervention if the FSLN did not meet several demands, the most notorious of which required the safe return of the hated contras to the country.

With the elections close at hand, and its abstentionist strategy failing, the U.S. resorted to desperate last-ditch efforts. Members of the PLI and the PCD reported that the U.S. embassy offered large sums of money to party leaders if they would withdraw from the race and salvage the boycott effort.

Two weeks before the election, the PLI national

leadership announced its intention to withdraw from the election but quickly retracted when the party's membership rose up in outrage. According to PLI vice presidential candidate, Constantino Perreia, the party's base feared that a successful boycott campaign would remove all the political barriers to a U.S. invasion.

Reacting to the Sandinista victory, Washington immediately charged that the elections were an "electoral farce." A U.S. State Department press release darkly warned that the "unjust and non-representative elections closed the door to any peace agreements in Central America."

A series of U.S. military provocations soon followed, signalling the Reagan administration's determination to overthrow the Sandinistas. Not surprised by Washington's war cries, the FSLN proceeded to escalate Nicaragua's defense preparations against a feared U.S. invasion. □ W.G.

Reagan Rattles Sabre at Nicaragua:

Looking for an Excuse to Invade

By WICKS GEAGA

Having failed to oust the Sandinistas through a CIA-directed "covert" war that has killed nearly 8,000 Nicaraguans and caused \$300 million in economic damage, the Reagan administration has apparently come to the conclusion that only a direct U.S. invasion can do the job.

Without even waiting for the full tally of the Reagan landslide on the night of November 6, White House officials started releasing invasion trial balloons over the supposed shipment of Russian MIG fighter planes to Managua.

Indeed, critics of the administration's foreign policy cite the president's landslide reelection victory as the most favorable condition for a Nicaraguan adventure. Reagan, they note, is now only looking for the perfect moment and the most credible excuse for launching an invasion.

According to retired admiral Eugene La Roche, director of the Center for Defense Information in Washington, D.C., "all the elements are present and in place."

INFRASTRUCTURE IN PLACE

With the recently-staged "MiG incident," the U.S. was able to discard "interdicting the Nicaraguan arms flow to the El Salvador guerrillas" as its justification for military involvement. That less than credible pretext has been replaced by "the Soviet-build-up-in-Nicaragua-is-a-threat-to-her-neighbors" storyline.

Such cold war rhetoric has disarmed even some staunch opponents of Reagan's military policy in Central America as Sen. Christopher Dodd who claimed that the U.S. has the right to take military action to keep MiGs out of Nicaragua. Nicaraguan officials have asserted that their country has the sovereign right to get whatever weapons it needs to defend itself against U.S. aggression. The U.S., however, has kept up its barrage of accusations despite the exposure of the MiG story as a hoax.

The military infrastructure for an invasion is in place. Over the last three years, the Pentagon has transformed Honduras into what some describe as a virtual U.S. "aircraft carrier."

In the course of massive and successive joint military maneuvers using tens of thousands of U.S. and Honduran troops, airstrips, radar facilities and hospitals have been built along the Honduran-Nicaraguan border. "Green Beret" training sessions for the Salvadoran and Honduran



Nicaraguans at a patriotic gathering.

armies have been held continuously.

Most recently U.S. and Honduran officials announced "Tall Pines III," the next major joint military exercise set to begin in early 1985 just 20 miles from the Nicaraguan border.

PROVOCATIONS

Meanwhile, there has been a flurry of secret activities in military bases in the U.S. involving the 82nd Airborne Division and the 24th Division at Ft. Stewart, Georgia; the 110th Battalion at Ft. Campbell, Kentucky; and the A-10 Bombers at Hunter Airforce Base in Georgia. Furthermore, Air Force Reserve units were recently mobilized, and 38 army medics were sent to Honduras.

Diplomatically, Washington's main client states in the region—El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Panama—have been cemented in the Central American Defense Council (CONDECA) revived a year ago. Reagan officials stated that a perceived threat to any of these countries from Nicaragua would be sufficient grounds for direct U.S. intervention. So would any "requests" for direct U.S. action by any of these states.

While the elements for an invasion are being keyed up, Washington has increased the tempo of provocations aimed at Managua. According to Nicaragua's Ministry of Defense, contra attacks between July and October were up about 500% from the January-June period.

Recent press reports indicate that the CIA is funnelling more sophisticated weapons to the contras, including mobile armored land vehicles, despite the aid cut-



It became necessary to destroy the country to save it.

off by Congress. According to military sources, these mobile vehicles are meant for a planned contra drive into Managua later this year.

As 40 U.S. warships estimated to carry 25,000 troops or the rough equivalent of five divisions lurk just off Nicaragua's coasts, high-altitude spy planes fly low and deliberately cause sonic booms as a form of psychological warfare.

Critics fear that Reagan might take advantage of a Congress recess and launch an invasion before sessions begin early next year, thereby skirting opposition from Capitol Hill.

COST STUDY

Despite all its preparations, the Reagan

administration is still seriously studying the political and military costs of a direct assault on Nicaragua. Some military analysts believe a successful invasion would simply require taking Managua largely by superior U.S. military firepower, and dispersing the Sandinistas to the hills. This scenario supposedly requires "losing" about 500 U.S. troops.

Other strategists, however, take a more sober view. Noting Nicaragua's extensive defense preparations, they tend to take more seriously the Sandinista warning that "entering Nicaragua will be a whole lot easier than getting out." They also realize that unlike Grenada, Nicaragua is a much larger country, its people are more consolidated behind the Sandinistas, and that the latter have considerable battle experience from their struggle against Somoza and the contras.

While Reagan officials agree that the consolidation of Sandinista power in Nicaragua is completely unacceptable, differences have emerged over the timing and scope of U.S. efforts to overthrow the FSLN.

On one side are hardliners linked with the Defense Department and the CIA who favor rapid U.S. intervention. They are vigorously pushing for the following measures: renewed financing of the contras; ending all negotiations; drastically reducing diplomatic ties with Managua; escalating provocative military activities and exercises and heightening the economic war already in progress.

PUBLIC OPINION

On the other side are the so-called moderates who see the overthrow of the Sandinistas as a more long-range process of applying military, economic and diplomatic pressures. They are especially worried about the potential backlash in international public opinion that a U.S. invasion would spark, especially in Europe and Latin America.

Regardless of these differences, the Reagan White House is waging a concerted effort to solidify U.S. public opinion behind whatever options it finally chooses. In this vein defense secretary Caspar Weinberger recently issued an unprecedented policy statement on the use of U.S. combat troops in conflicts abroad.

After implicitly criticizing the War Powers Act (which Congress adopted in 1973 after the Vietnam War to curb presidential use of military force without the declaration of war by Congress), Weinberger declared: "Once a decision to employ some degree of force has been made and the purposes clarified, our government must have the clear mandate to carry out and continue to carry out that decision until the purpose has been achieved."

When asked specifically about U.S. plans on Nicaragua, Weinberger declined to rule out a direct U.S. attack. □

Sandinistas Bolstered by Free Elections

Despite heightening CIA-directed counterrevolutionary attacks, hundreds of thousands of Nicaraguans danced and paraded through the streets in celebration after the country held its first democratic elections ever last November 4. But much of the euphoria also stemmed from the overwhelming electoral victory of the Nicaraguan's vanguard—the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN).

With 500 official observers from governments, parties and private organizations worldwide and over 1,000 foreign journalists witnessing the electoral proceedings, the FSLN handily won 68% of the popular vote.

A MAJORITY FORCE

The two right wing groups—the Democratic Conservative Party (PCD), and the Independent Liberal Party (PLI)—captured second and third places respectively with 14% and 9% of the vote. The small, centrist Popular Social Christian Party won five percent, while the Socialist Party and the ultra-left Nicaraguan Communist

Party and Popular Action Movement-Marxist-Leninist together took a total of four percent of the vote.

With its sweeping victory, the FSLN secured control of the new executive branch. President elect Daniel Ortega and Vice-president Sergio Ramirez will replace the junta that currently governs Nicaragua on inauguration day, January 10, 1985.

Directly based on the popular vote, the FSLN victory further guarantees the Sandinistas a 68% majority in the 90-member national assembly. Likewise, the remaining parties are guaranteed proportional representation according to their respective voting tallies.

When it convenes in January 1985, the national assembly will draft a new constitution which will refine and consolidate the revolutionary institutions that have been erected in the last four years.

TOTALLY FREE ELECTIONS

As confirmed by the significant number of observers present, the Nicaraguan elections were totally free and extremely well-

organized—hardly a reflection of the country's total lack of experience with the democratic process under the Somoza dynasty.

In a massive demonstration of support for the elections, 80% of registered voters (over 70% of all eligible voters) cast their ballots in nearly 4,000 polling centers dispersed throughout the country, including the most remote and isolated towns and villages.

Among the 20% who did not vote were tens of thousands of militia members constantly on guard along the country's borders against promised contra sabotage attempts.

Observers who had witnessed the Salvadoran elections earlier this year, were struck by the open atmosphere and lack of fear and intimidation in the Nicaraguan polls. It was a climate purposely encouraged by the FSLN which relaxed state-of-emergency measures nearly four months before election day. In contrast, the Salvadoran elections were preceded by an extended state of siege lifted only on election day.

Also frequently noted was the absence of coercion behind the massive turnout for the polls. According to Nicaragua's electoral laws, voting is voluntary. In the

Salvadoran elections, the same observers cite the mandatory requirement to vote as well as other coercive factors such as transparent ballot boxes, numbered ballots and stamped identification cards, and the fear of retaliation from the security forces for not voting.

U.S. SABOTAGE SCHEMES

The Reagan administration had been fond of using the "lack of free elections" as an excuse for putting military and political pressures on Managua. But once the Sandinistas launched the electoral process, the White House sought to discredit it by all means.

Realizing that its right wing allies in the country had no chance of winning, Washington adopted a boycott strategy combined with a widespread disinformation campaign to delegitimize the elections.

Assuming the main role for Washington's abstentionist strategy was the *Coordinadora Democratica Nicaraguense* headed by Arturo Cruz. Coordinadora was a coalition of three rightist parties, two small trade unions and the Superior Council of Private Enterprise (COSEP).

As the electoral process unfolded, Coor-

Continued on page 15