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A DIRTY ROAD TO 'CLEAN ELECTIONS'

Fraud, Killings Mark FM's Campaign



Asiaweek

By NANCY F. ROCAMORA

For most observers of the Philippine election campaign, the writing is on the wall—and on the floor and ceiling and just about anyplace else one cares to look: President Ferdinand E. Marcos is not prepared to lose. He has mounted his nastiest campaign to date to insure victory for his *Kilusang Bagong Lipunan* in the all-important May 14 parliamentary elections.

An idealist few continue to talk wistfully about open and honest elections to select 183 candidates for the *Batasan Pambansa*. The exercise, notes the remaining group of oppositionists who choose to participate, allows the opposition to work for change "from within." Election boosters within the U.S. government, on the other hand, speak glowingly of the "democratic process." They are the same people who speak enthusiastically about the recently-concluded "democratic process" in El Salvador.

But murders of opposition candidates and their supporters, kidnappings and

"salvagings" of pro-boycott demonstrators have already tarnished the image of Philippine democracy reborn. Meanwhile, flying voters, irregularities in registration procedures and ballot printing continue to surface by the score, taxing the enthusiasm of the most eager election supporters such as the National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections which plans to field 200,000 volunteers on election day to monitor the proceedings.

RASH OF ELECTION VIOLENCE

Election-related murders number at least 20 to date and seem to be well on the way to surpassing that figure. Mayor Recaredo Castillo of Bislig, Surigao was shot April 9. Castillo was one of many former KBL members who bolted the party and chose to run independently when not chosen for the official slate. President Marcos warned of "disciplinary action" against those who chose to take this path, but his words apparently did little to stem the tide.

Killed two days later by a single bullet shot to the back of her head was Deputy Mayor of Camarines Sur, Rosita Villafuerte. Villafuerte had just concluded a

campaign speech for her brother-in-law Luis Villafuerte, former Trade Minister under Marcos. Villafuerte made waves a few months ago when he broke away from the KBL to run with the United Nationalist Democratic Organization. Killed along with Mrs. Villafuerte was a village chief and one of 300 spectators.

In the same rash of election violence, five were killed April 15 when armed motorcycle-riding men opened fire on the party of Bacolod City Mayor Joaquin Fernandez as the mayor returned from a KBL caucus. The government immediately blamed the New People's Army, but observers pointed out that Marcos supporters nationwide were embroiled in conflicts, some of them severe enough to provoke violent solutions.

Also shot was Vice Mayor Eduardo Moreno Alba of Cervantes, Ilocos Sur. Two others were killed along with him by perpetrators whose identity and motives remain unknown.

In Zamboanga del Sur, schoolteacher/pollwatcher Onofre Paran, 35, died during

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INS Raids: State Terrorism

The recent U.S. Supreme Court decision upholding the legality of INS workplace raids is a major step in the legalization of the growing attacks on immigrant rights. The ruling opens the floodgates for intensified pogrom-type raids and will definitely give momentum to the national chauvinist and racist consensus for the passage of the Simpson/Mazzoli bill now pending in Congress.

In brief, the court ruled that the immigration authorities' practice of swooping down on factories and workplaces, blocking the exits and checking the legal status of "illegal looking" workers do not violate constitutional guarantees against illegal searches and detention.

This ruling is an endorsement by the highest court of the discriminatory and inhumane INS practice of rounding up Mexican workers whether they are documented or undocumented. The racist practice is

driven by the assumption that anyone who looks alien is suspect. It is a practice that has attracted wider publicity lately, but it has been going on for years in neighborhoods and workplaces that are predominantly Mexican. Immigration authorities have openly stated that they have increased these raids in response to the lack of Congressional action in passing the Simpson/Mazzoli bill. The high court endorsed state terrorism.

These raids and the threat of raids set up the repressive climate and mechanisms necessary to keep the undocumented labor pool under control and meagerly paid. Many employers admit they cannot survive without cheap undocumented labor and some have protested the disruptive raids and the employer sanction components of Simpson/Mazzoli.

But they are not for immigrant rights. They mainly want a new Bracero program, for example, in the form of the Panetta Amendment to Simpson/Mazzoli which would facilitate the use of one million temporary workers whose low-pay and limited rights would be

blessed by the law. In other words, employers will eventually have a way out of the Supreme Court-endorsed raids, immigrant workers will not.

Recently, INS raids have caught the attention of Filipinos when in San Jose, California, a Filipino immigrant worker was beaten up by INS raiders. In addition, immigration authorities also vowed to crack-down on fraudulent marriages—a method of gaining legal status "largely associated" with Filipinos. The community has reason to protest the harassment that results from these crackdowns. Filipino groups who are resisting INS-induced employment discrimination and the denial of democratic rights deserve full community support.

However, we should be aware that Filipinos are being caught in a "net" that is being thrown at all non-white (non-European) immigrants. Mexicans inevitably become the main target of the tighter and more repressive INS regulations. Because of their numbers and relatively "easy" access to the U.S., they form the main pool of cheap labor required for agricultural and other highly competitive and intensive industries such as electronics and garments. Although we are a smaller minority, Filipinos are often in the same work situations as the Mexican undocumented.

As raids and crackdowns increase so will the number of Filipino victims. We cannot ignore the broader and more significant message: the raids and Simpson/Mazzoli represent a wholesale attack on immigrants and Filipinos should not respond as if we were the only victims. We have a stake in linking up with other communities, particularly with the Mexican community, in defense of all immigrants. □



ANG KATIPUNAN

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Letters

Send Me More . . .

I find your April issue very informative. Enclosed is \$3 for which please send me as many as you can spare of your April issue. I am sending these copies to my friends in Bicolandia to boycott the May 14 elections. I am shocked that some Manila sounding boards are proposing Juan Ponce Enrile, Eduardo Cojuangco or Roberto Benedicto as potential presidential candidates after Marcos. Very odd. Because most Filipinos assume they would be prime candidates for a Nuremberg-style trial in Manila against the Octopus Gang.

Juan G. Frivaldo
Sunnyvale, CA

'Big Barbaric Bear'

First of all, congratulations for your commitment to the Filipinos' opposition to the U.S.-backed Marcos regime in the Philippines, and your struggle against racial and national discrimination in the U.S. I agree that we should criticize and condemn U.S. imperialist policies in the Philippines and other Third World countries. But I disagree that you remain silent on or even justify Soviet and its satellites' imperialist/hegemonist intervention (Afghanistan, Vietnam, etc.) And why are you so anti-China? Is it because China exposes USSR's hegemonistic policies which threaten the peace in Southeast Asia and throughout the world? We Filipinos should condemn any form of imperialism and hegemonism, whether by the superpowers or by satellites of superpowers. We should not be in any bloc. We should be able in time to stand on our own—non-alignment is our ultimate goal. We should never allow any country to control any part of our life. You see many Filipinos are just as apprehensive, if not more, of Soviet presence in Asia, than of China or even the U.S. Of course today it

is the U.S. eagle that is preying on our country and people but the Big Barbaric Bear is just around the corner.

Ceres S.C. Alabado
Santa Clara, CA

It is precisely our "commitment to the Filipinos' opposition to the U.S.-backed Marcos regime" that makes us critical of China's political alliance with the U.S. China recently vowed to support Marcos' bid for more loans in the IMF and even gave the dictator emergency loans; this while the Filipino opposition is busy campaigning against such bailouts and while even in the Japanese Diet, the Japanese Socialist Party is opposing proposed loans to Marcos. More than once, China indicated its support for the continuance of U.S. bases in the Philippines in the name of frustrating the "Big Barbaric Bear." It is a position completely identical to Washington's and to Marcos'. China's continuing efforts to destabilize Vietnam and Kampuchea (to Reagan's delight) in support of the murderous Pol Pot forces and their anti-communist allies can hardly be considered an anti-imperialist

cause. *Re Afghanistan: Not all rebellions are progressive—especially ones that are openly funded by the CIA—this one to the tune of \$70 million so far. The Afghan rebels are motivated by their dislike for the Kabul government's anti-feudal policies, and since Afghanistan shares a strategic border with the Soviet Union, the U.S. is only too eager to support them—especially after it "lost" its sophisticated espionage and destabilization facilities in Iran. The content of Reagan's recent visit to Peking confirms that U.S.-China relations have exceeded what to anti-imperialists are politically acceptable bounds of state-to-state relations between two different social systems. The U.S. and China are deepening an alliance for a common reactionary cause. That Reagan too, says the "Big Barbaric Bear is the threat to Southeast Asia" (ergo, the bases must stay, Marcos must be supported, etc.) should be enough to make you re-examine your views. China can regain its lost prestige among independent Third World nations and movements only if it rejoins its politically estranged friends behind the anti-imperialist barricade—* Editor.

Litter from Manila

Lenten Thoughts



By INIDORO DELIHENCIA

There they go again. The opposition is spreading malignant rumors that the First Lady went to the U.S. for three weeks last March to sulk because the President didn't allow her to run in the May election. They say that was why she cried so hard at the KBL rally at Rizal Park. There's not two grains of truth in that gossip. Mrs. Marcos herself said, "I am not blinded by ambition . . . my vision for the future does not include me holding public office again." Why did she stay in the U.S. for that long? The Malacañang press office already explained this several times: "To get an eye treatment."

The First Lady has been very quiet lately because, as everybody knows, she is somebody who speaks her mind. Sometimes she gets in trouble. Like the time right after the Aquino incident when she told foreign correspondents that Cory Aquino wouldn't have been a good first lady anyway "because she is not beautiful." Well, it's true she said that, but she was quoted out of context. To set the record straight, she was probably explaining that to serve one's country well, Presidents must have beautiful first ladies because they represent the country to the whole world (it's also good for tourism), and that it was her and her husband's duty to stay on indefinitely because no one else was beautiful enough. She didn't just say "because she is not beautiful." Again the racist foreign media twisted her words. She did not mean to insult Cory because Ninoy is no longer around to be president anyway.

The opposition keeps complaining that the President's KBL party is using fraud, murder, etc. in the campaign but the UNIDO itself is resorting to very dirty tricks. Imagine, threatening to make activist beauties Aurora Pijuan and Tingting Cojuangco run for office if Mrs. Marcos becomes a candidate at the last minute. This is the height of low political tactics. Vote-buying and flying voters is one thing but this threat cheapens the

democratic election process. Nevertheless, the President should prepare for all eventualities. For example, my only criticism of the administration is that it is not implementing thoroughly the First Lady's commitment to "the true, the good, and the beautiful." Did you see the pictures of the KBL candidates? Some have faces Darwin could be proud of. People might think it is a party of goons, grafters, yes-men, embezzlers, lechers, ne'er-do-wells, and other forms of low life, though of course, on beautiful days, there's not a grain of truth in that impression. Frankly, it hurts tourism.

Speaking of tourism, let's talk about religion. Here are some Lenten thoughts. Tourists come here to see the Moriones Festival or the flagellants and the live crucifixions. They don't come here to see priests and nuns demonstrating for boycott along with the CORD people. Holy Week! When will the clergy ever stop mixing religion with politics? The Bible did not say the followers of Christ should boycott the May 14 elections. They are wasting their time because You-Know-Who is on President Marcos' side. The President wouldn't have said two months ago, "I DO NOT INTEND TO DIE" if he hadn't yet landed a deal with the Almighty. And God, as we all know, isn't the type to commit a breach of contract. Happy Easter to all of you in the U.S. of A!

By J.V. BAUTISTA
Reprinted from Philippine Signs

Beyond the Boycott

Toward a Democratic Coalition Government

The keen interest generated on whether to boycott or participate in the 1984 Batasan elections can already be considered as a moral victory for the Opposition. What appears to be the bone of contention is the political option of how to end the existing regime, and not who the candidates for the position of assemblyman will be. The challenge for the Opposition at this point is how to transform this apparent discord among their ranks into a lethal blow that will achieve their common objective of dismantling the structures of authoritarian rule.

The different parties and groups in the Opposition camp, however, have left their quarters open for any future agreement among themselves. The Coalition of Organizations for the Restoration of Democracy (CORD), composed of several cause-oriented groups and sectoral organizations like the Nationalist Alliance and Justice for Aquino, Justice for All, has given more emphasis on the struggle for the restoration of democratic rights, citing boycott as but a step in the fight for democracy.

Central to the success of either the boycott or participation is the def- (line missing from original copy) election. The main weakness of the participation advocates is their premise that they can do battle with the regime in the Batasan Pambansa. There they hope to initiate impeachment proceedings or repeal the laws unilaterally issued by Marcos, conveniently overlooking how innocuous the Batasan is before the immense powers of the president.

Contrary to fears that the (line is missing from original) where, there exist programs of action outlining new political structures.

One move to evolve an alternative is the COMPACT signed in January by several organizations. The COMPACT provides for the formation of a Preparatory Committee to work for the resignation or ouster of the Marcos government and its replacement by a Transitory Government.

Earlier, the National Alliance for Justice, Freedom and Democracy, on the other hand, had resolved to work for the establishment of a coalition government "based on a truly democratic and representative system." This plan adopted in the People's National Congress last November is contained in a 21-point Program of Action covering the political, economic, cultural, and foreign relations fields.

The Nationalist Alliance predicated the formation of a coalition government on the dismantling of the U.S.-backed Marcos government. Substance and procedure, however, have remained largely unelaborated, its drafters preferring to leave the full development of the concept through the course of the people's struggle.

A coalition is a temporary alliance of groups, factions, parties, etc. for some specific purpose, usually of political parties during times of crisis. Hence, the political forces comprising the coalition may have conflicting or even contending interests and methods, but they work together for the realization of mutually desired ends.

In continental Western Europe and Scandinavia, where the so-called multi-party political system operates, the formation of coalition governments is a common and accepted practice. This is especially so where one party is unable to acquire a majority of the seats in the legislature. Hence, to be able to form the government, parties coalesce to form a majority.

Different conditions existed in China in the mid-40s when that country was invaded by Japan. There, a coalition government was forged by the Chinese Communist Party under Mao Zedong and the Goumindang Party of Marshall Chiang Kai-Shek. Mao Zedong wrote of the urgency for the Chinese to unite and form a provisional democratic coalition government "for the purpose of instituting democratic reforms, surmounting the present crisis, mobilizing and unifying all the anti-Japanese forces in the country, to fight in effective coordination with the allied countries for the defeat of the Japanese aggressors, and thus enabling the Chinese people to liberate



themselves from the latter's clutches."

The Chinese experience is undoubtedly closer to our own. The system of forming coalition governments in Europe in the first place assumes the effective operation of democratic processes like free elections, which is absent in our political milieu. On the other hand, the experience in China was situated in an environment of crisis (although we are not situated in a crisis of such magnitude).

Since the process of dismantling the dictatorship can take some time (even after the regime is no longer in power), there arises the need for a mechanism to decisively effect change. The mechanism can be a coalition government that shall exist provisionally and effect the necessary democratic reforms pursuant to the objective of dismantling and to set the grounds for democracy.

Any meaningful change sought by the people can only be achieved by fighting the system outside its rules and framework.

Besides, the present constitutional order will not provide legal refuge. The structure of government under the 1935 Constitution has been completely obliterated, and there appears no convincing reason for its reapplication. On the other hand, the 1973 Constitution, which has never been validly ratified by the people, has been mangled by Marcos beyond the recognition of even its drafters through numerous bogus referendums-plebiscites. As it stands, this Constitution exists as the legal justification for the autocratic and anti-democratic structures and practices.

What the people can create, it can very well set aside. If a sovereign people undertakes direct successful political action to change an existing regime without regard for procedures laid down in the basic law, the act is absolutely lawful. In legal parlance, this is called "direct state action," an act directly attributable to the state and therefore legal.

Therein lies the legal basis for the establishment of a democratic coalition government. It is a direct creation of the people themselves.

The use of this concept by the Marcos government to justify the results of the referendums and plebiscites, by ascribing them to the people, is different from the overt political action undertaken by the great organized mass of the Filipinos to bring about meaningful change. The former is an attempt at deception; the latter, the genuine expression of a people's will.

THE PROCESS OF OUSTER AND DISMANTLING

The dynamics of ousting the regime and of setting up a coalition government are infinitely more complicated and difficult than finding its legal basis. Strategy and tactics would depend upon a wide range of variables and imponderable factors. The most that can be done at this point is to

outline the moves that can be taken that will culminate in the collapse of the Marcos regime.

It must be made clear at the outset that the people shall strive to oust the regime through peaceful and nonviolent, but militant and vigorous means. Various tactics of civil disobedience can be adopted. The active and organized boycott of the May polls is a first step. This shall be followed by general strikes by workers, teachers and other professionals; boycott of classes in schools and of certain establishments; and, other acts of civil disobedience such as the nonpayment of taxes.

Simultaneously, the people will hold mass actions like rallies, long marches, and sit-down strikes, to further dramatize their grievances and demands.

Along the way, people's political education is attended to, while massive organization and consolidation of an awakened citizenry will insure victory and an orderly transition of political power from the ousted regime to the provisional coalition government.

Under such conditions, the precarious hold of the Marcos regime will inevitably loosen. As highly placed bureaucrats and cronies tend to abandon the sinking ship, its isolation will be pronounced than ever.

The military and civilian government service, definitely not a monolithic entity, may be neutralized by appealing to their sense of patriotism to stand on the side of the people.

In the meantime, the U.S. government will frantically search for a personality or bloc to replace Marcos, or refrain from openly antagonizing the emergent leadership. Its interests—the protection of its vast economic and military interest in the country.

As the government is increasingly isolated, unity of all democratic forces grows. In the end, the politics of mass pressure and the political will of an organized mass movement will succeed in ousting the regime. Simultaneously, political power in the local situs—the barangays, municipalities, cities and provinces—will be effectively wielded by a politicized and highly organized people. Transfer of political power, thus, takes place in a truly democratic yet orderly manner, and the grounds for the establishment of the coalition government are slowly but systematically laid down.

COALITION GOVERNMENT: MECHANICS, COMPOSITION, IMMEDIATE TASKS

Much headway has been made in identifying the crucial features of the coalition government. Aside from the NAJFD Program of Action and the COMPACT, there is Jose Ma. Sison's Message to Kongreso ng Mamamayang Pilipino (KOMPIL).

Sison, a member of KOMPIL's 15-man Council of Leaders, mentioned criteria for the designation of national leaders for KOMPIL but which are highly sug-

gestive of the composition of a coalition government. In his printed Message to KOMPIL, he enumerated the following: 1) commitment to the national and democratic interests of the people; 2) representation of major class and sectoral interests; 3) accommodation of various ideological and political trends; 4) consideration of regional distribution; and, 5) competence in political and organizational work.

These criteria make up the guiding principles for the composition of a coalition government itself, and should be given serious consideration by any Opposition leadership.

In addition, the various groups of democratic power and mass organizations which do not enjoy legal status must be reckoned with, as they are existing and numerically significant political forces, whose support or cooperation in a provisional coalition government may prove crucial, if not indispensable.

How about the actual procedure? Again, Sison's ideas could be useful: "On the eve of total victory or upon the final victory, there can be a people's consultative assembly to arrange the working unity of all patriotic and progressive classes, parties and organizations and facilitate the formation of a coalition government based on a truly democratic system of representation."

The composition of such an assembly may follow the criteria earlier enumerated.

The assembly would have a twofold function. First it will establish working unity, including the adoption of certain irreducible basis of cooperation. Second, it should facilitate the formation of a coalition government based on a truly democratic system of representation."

For its immediate tasks the democratic coalition government, will have to deal with at least eight, oft-repeated demands raised during mass actions as logical prerequisites of a more permanent democratic government. Culled from the more urgent tasks reflected in both the Nationalist Alliance Program of Action and the COMPACT, these are: 1) to draft a new constitution and call for a national plebiscite; 2) to revoke all anti-democratic and autocratic laws and decrees; 3) to restore all democratic rights; 4) general and unconditional amnesty for all political prisoners; 5) to reorganize the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the higher government bureaucratic levels; 6) to repudiate foreign loans that never benefitted the Filipino people; 7) to nationalize basic industries; and, 8) to dismantle the U.S. military bases.

The first three tasks will assure the eventual establishment of a regular democratic government. The fourth is a step toward genuine national unity and reconciliation, by this time, sans the Marcos dictatorship. The fifth task involves the stability, or even survival, of the provisional coalition government. The sixth and the seventh would assert economic independence, while pushing our economy from its crisis-ridden condition to a more progressive, abundant, stable and responsive state. The task helps assure our political sovereignty and physical survival.

To be realistic, the democratic tasks of any coalition government, multifarious and complex as they are, cannot be accomplished as long as foreign vested interests, particularly the U.S. government, continue to directly intervene in Philippine affairs. Political analysts have noted that the domination of foreign political, economic and military interests, with the collusion of the local ruling elite is a fundamental cause of authoritarian rule in economically backward countries, like the Philippines. The dictatorship serves the needs of foreign interests, which in turn, backs the dictatorship.

What is needed is the development of a strong political will capable of resisting the onslaught of foreign intervention. It is sheer folly to think that a truly democratic government can exist under the aegis of the U.S. government. Thus, it is imperative for any coalition government that seeks to build a truly democratic, just and free society to break away from the neo-colonial clutches of U.S. domination.

Only then will our country be for the Filipinos; only then will our government be for the people. □

Ver Testimony Booed

By MADGE BELLO

Armed Forces Chief-of-Staff General Fabian Ver's testimony before the Agrava Commission April 6 only weakened the government's already discredited theory that Rolando Galman killed Sen. Benigno Aquino and that the Communists were behind the plot.

Riddled with inconsistencies, Ver's five-hour long testimony was greeted with jeers and boos from a crowd of 400 that packed the room where the official panel investigating the Aquino assassination was holding hearings.

Ver told the panel headed by Justice Corazon Agrava that, a few hours before Aquino's scheduled arrival on August 21, 1983 in the Philippines, he reversed an initial order to have the exiled opposition leader returned to his originating country if he were found without a valid passport. Instead, he ordered Aquino's arrest.

The arrest order, Ver said, was in line with a military court's affirmation a month before Aquino's arrival, of a death sentence issued against the former senator in 1977. Aquino was sentenced to die before a firing squad but it was quickly suspended.

Ver's testimony revealed for the first time that the military had reaffirmed Aquino's death sentence. For the reaffirmation to be made final, President Marcos had to sign the order. But the *New York Times* found that this had not been done at the time of Aquino's arrival. Aquino was gunned down before stepping foot on Philippine soil.

STICKS TO 'RED PLOT' STORY

Denying any government complicity in the assassination plot, Ver told the Agrava panel that he had no knowledge of anyone in the Marcos administration, who may have had any motive to assassinate Aquino.

In an effort to deflate the widely held belief that the regime was behind Aquino's killing, Ver told the panel that he learned

of a "communist plot" to assassinate Aquino seven months prior to the latter's return.

Government agents, he stated, overheard two unidentified men, who were drinking and talking in a restaurant about a plan to liquidate Aquino. He added that threats also came from Aquino's personal enemies and rivals in the opposition.

The government requested Aquino to delay his return another month, Ver said, so it could foil the plot. He further stated that Imelda Marcos reiterated this concern to Aquino in May that year.

Despite solid information on the possibility of an assassination attempt, Ver, who was in charge of Aquino's return arrangements, failed to alert the 2,000 military men assigned to guard Aquino at the airport. He attributed the failure to an unsuccessful effort in identifying any possible assassin.

It was only after the identification of the assassin that a "communist plot" was uncovered, he said, contradicting his earlier assertion that the government already knew of such a plot.

ESCORT SHOT NINOY

In a testimony March 27, Jose Espino, an attorney whom Galman had retained while in prison, told the Agrava panel that Lt. Col. Arturo Custodio secured Galman's release in February 1983.

Galman was in jail in Camp Olivares in Pampanga in 1982 on unspecified charges and was under a Presidential Commitment Order. Custodio was identified by Galman's children as one of the three men who picked up their father on August 17 from their home in Bagong Silang, Bulacan.

Espino informed the board that he met Custodio again a day or two after Aquino's assassination. At that time, Espino said he did not know yet that the dead man alleged to be Aquino's assassin was his former client, Galman. Espino said Custodio told him that "he [the assassin] was already dead when they dumped him on the tarmac." Custodio allegedly said further that "it

may have been the military escort who shot the late senator." Espino concluded that Custodio must have picked up this information from conversations at the airport.

The Commission began calling each of the four military men who escorted Aquino out of the aircraft. At first, the military witnesses balked, claiming their lawyers were not ready. But the panel told them to appear, with or without lawyers.

Sgt. Leonardo Mojica was the first one asked to repeat certain phrases found in the tapes presented by *Time* Hong Kong bureau chief Sandra Burton. Mojica's lawyer objected repeatedly but was overruled by the panel. The voices are expected to be matched against those found in Burton's tapes. The tapes recorded voices ordering

someone to shoot as Aquino exited the aircraft.

The Agrava Commission is expected to conclude its investigation, with only about 20 witnesses remaining to be called. A planned trip to the U.S. to interview witnesses has been postponed, reportedly until after the May 14 elections.

With the government theory already torn to shreds it is likely that a sacrificial lamb will be presented by the regime. Already, the Agrava Commission has announced it will identify the real killer soon.

But it is certain that Marcos and his close associates will be spared. Regardless of the investigation's official findings, most Filipinos already made their conclusions—on the very day that Aquino was shot. □

Ex-Marcos Hit Man Seeks Asylum



Santos

A Filipino who says he helped murder 50 people—including eight councilmen in San Miguel, Tarlac—while working for the Armed Forces of the Philippines, sought political asylum April 24 in San Francisco. Jose Fronda Santos, Jr. who left for the U.S. January 16, also told a press conference that he concluded from his discussions with military superiors that the order to assassinate Sen. Benigno Aquino, Jr. "originated with President Marcos and General Fabian Ver."

The 34-year-old Santos worked as

Aquino's bodyguard in 1972 and "secretly remained loyal" to the senator even while working for the Marcos government. Santos claimed that last year his superiors told him to kill Aquino somewhere outside the U.S.—"in Hong Kong, Singapore or Tokyo"—but he never intended to carry out the order.

He assumed that Marcos knew of the plan to kill Aquino at the Manila International Airport last August because, "you cannot do that if the President doesn't know about it." Among others, Santos implicated Gen. Luther Custodio, intelligence chief for the presidential security command, in the assassination plans. Custodio, he said, at one point told him to kill Aquino in Hong Kong in January 1983. Santos said he was promised one to two million pesos as a reward if he killed Aquino without embarrassing President Marcos.

The Philippine Embassy in Washington dismissed Santos' allegations: "These are wild charges that have been repeated, and there is not an iota of truth to what they are saying." U.S. Immigration and Naturalization authorities said they will study Santos' request to see if he meets the legal requirements for political asylum. □

Manila Gets Even Tougher With Labor

By CARLA MARIANO

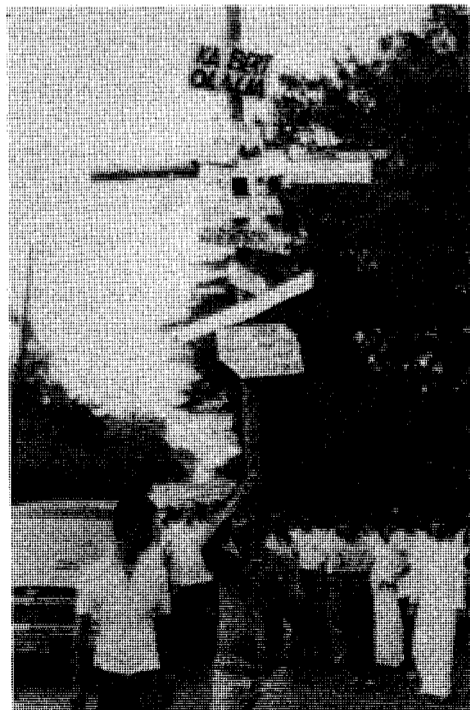
While claiming to exercise "maximum tolerance" in handling the demonstrations that have followed the Aquino assassination, the Marcos government seems to have very little tolerance for militant labor activities.

The latest wave of government attacks on the labor sector claimed the lives of two victims, Felipe Caracas, 22 and Antonio de Guzman, 24, members of the *Samahang Manggagawa ng Foamtex Industries* (Foamtex Workers' Union) in Valenzuela, Metro-Manila. The company's workers were on strike demanding higher wages.

Both were killed April 6 when approximately 500 heavily-armed soldiers and police anti-riot squads charged through the picket line, firing indiscriminately.

Caracas was hit in the forehead and died on the spot while de Guzman was hit in the stomach and died an hour later in the hospital. At least 15 workers were treated for gunshot wounds, while many others suffered broken bones and serious head injuries.

Two weeks prior to the Foamtex incident, strikers manning the picket line at the Interpolymer Corporation factory in Valenzuela were violently dispersed by club-wielding armed policemen. The cops later forcibly pulled the wounded and threw them into waiting police vans. Eighty-eight bloodied workers were arrested and



Labor protest.

detained by the police.

Earlier, some 100 truncheon-wielding policemen had attacked without provocation the striking workers at Balanced Foods in Valenzuela. Among those injured were strikers' children and wives who had joined the picket lines. More than 10 strikers sustained serious head injuries.

STRIKES INTO SLAUGHTERS

This latest wave of trade union repression and harassment was exposed and con-

demned in a rally at Plaza Miranda on April 8. The rally was capped by a march in front of the American Embassy in Manila.

KMU (*Kilusang Mayo Uno*—May First Movement), one of the rally's organizers, assailed the Marcos government for its "unbridled use of terror against the striking workers." The labor federation blamed the regime for having "created the conditions for trigger-happy military henchmen" to turn strikes into slaughters.

"The assault follows the same routine, the same regimentation, the same open and naked display of violence which is actually meant to break the morale, terrorize and sow fear among the workers, especially those poised to use the strike as a weapon against the capitalists and the government," read a KMU statement.

To counter the repressive climate, 13 labor federations and independent unions, including the KMU and the TUPAS (Trade Unions of the Philippines and Allied Services) recently formed the *Pambansang Koalisyon ng Manggagawa Laban sa Kahirapan*, a coalition for workers' rights and protection. Other labor unions have reportedly signified their intention to join the new coalition.

The new coalition vowed to carry out labor's struggles for higher wages, job security, humane working conditions, and democratic rights.

SOY SAUCE: NATIONAL INTEREST?

It is particularly demanding the repeal of labor legislations *Batas Pambansa* 130 and 227. These two pieces of legislation empower the government through the Minister of Labor to stop strikes; issue return-to-work orders; and "seek the assistance" of police and the military just by claiming that a strike adversely affects

so-called national interests.

In the case of the Balanced Foods strike, the "national interest" provision was claimed by the Minister of Labor to justify the issuance of a return-to-work order.

Many striking workers at Balanced Foods admitted they were dumbfounded as to how a strike in a company manufacturing Piñakamasarap soy sauce and vinegar could "adversely affect national interests."

According to KMU leaders, the government's back-to-work orders "smack of medieval slavery since they force the strikers to return to work against their own will under the backdrop of the very same conditions that led them to abandon the factory lines in the first place."

KMU pointed out that the "national interest clause . . . is in truth a cover to allow big foreign and local capitalists to rake in superprofits by depressing workers' wages, denying them benefits and suppressing their rights to organize and to strike." It charged that BP 130 and 227 have only emboldened "trigger-happy police and military elements to harass workers at picketlines."

But the KMU also noted that the strike breaking maneuvers of the regime have not dampened the "strike fever . . . openly raging all over the country."

As of March 1984, according to Ministry of Labor figures, 44 strikes were declared since the beginning of the year. Of these, 28 were staged in companies, firms and institutions situated in Metro-Manila. Out of the 44 strikes, 25 are still going on, 13 in Metro-Manila.

Since March 8, 12 more strikes hit Metro-Manila bringing to 26 (including one long-standing strike at Arnoldus Woodworks) the total number of strikes going on in the area alone. Various unions in Metro-Manila have announced that 15 more strikes are about to take place. □

By CARLA MARIANO

Economy Update

With the May 14 elections in mind, the Marcos government has stopped negotiations with the International Monetary Fund for the release of a \$630 million standby credit. Marcos hopes to temporarily avoid politically unpopular austerity measures, such as a further devaluation of the peso, that will be imposed by the international lending institution.

Instead, the government requested a third 90-day moratorium on its foreign debt principal payments. The request for the rescheduling of payments on external debts now estimated at between \$24 billion and \$25.6 billion was approved by a 12-bank advisory committee and is effective April 14 to July 12.

International lending agency and foreign commercial bank authorities have privately commented that the Marcos government may be able to survive through the May elections without an IMF agreement. But the same sources said that the austerity measures to be imposed after the elections will be much more severe.

Meanwhile, the regime has engaged the services of its loyal press in assuring desperate local businessmen that loans and grants are coming in from friendly countries. Supposedly, these loans and grants will provide much-needed foreign exchange earmarked for the importation of "essential raw materials."

BUSINESS SHUTDOWNS

However, the credits much publicized by the local press are still tied up in parliamentary debates in the source countries. For example, the \$224 million loan pledged by the government of Prime Minister Nakasone of Japan is encountering stiff opposition from Japanese parliamentarians. The Japanese Socialist Party—the biggest and most powerful party in the Japanese Diet (Parliament) in terms of number of seats—has opposed the granting of loans that could benefit the government of President Marcos.

Without the injection of new foreign exchange, local businesses are forced to shut down their operations or at best, run their factories at half their normal capacity.

Raul Concepcion, head of the Philippine

Harder Times After May Polls



Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said that 80% of the 1,000 largest companies in the Philippines, including his own air-conditioner manufacturing firm, is adversely affected by the scarcity of foreign exchange.

Another consequence is the increased cost of money. "The prime rate has gone up from 22% last year to 30% today," Concepcion estimated.

"Interest now constitutes one-third of manufacturing costs... at this cost it will be difficult for manufacturing enterprises to be profitable," he complained.

BLEAK SITUATION

Even huge companies like Ford Philippines are not immune to the economic plague ravaging the country. Recently, the Philippine subsidiary of the U.S. automaking giant permanently shut down its car and truck assembly plants in Metro-Manila and its car body stamping unit in Mariveles, Bataan. A total of 1,165 Ford workers lost their jobs.

Despite the undeniably bleak economic situation, Trade and Industry Minister Roberto Ongpin attempted to paint a rosy

employment and exports picture for the country.

He was immediately rebuffed by a Center of Communications and Research report which revealed that workers laid-off for the first quarter of 1984 alone totalled 300,000.

The report also revealed that:

- 90 logging concession were cancelled, dislocating thousands of workers;
- Since February of this year, more than 100 sawmills have already closed shop;
- Major newspapers in Metro-Manila are laying off personnel;
- Countless factories have been reducing their work shifts and have asked their workers to report for work only three or four days a week;
- The economy is still plagued by serious capital flight and business expansion is almost nil.

MORE SACRIFICE

Meanwhile, the Central Bank released March 31 its year-end report, barely meeting the statutory deadline for submission. If the report is any gauge of things to

come, it does not bode well for the Filipino people.

The report announced four major measures for the coming period:

- "Continued exchange rate flexibility," meaning further depreciations of the peso;
- "A reduced public sector deficit through the adoption of additional revenue measures and the reduction of government expenditures" or increased taxation coupled with cuts in public services;
- "An improvement in the finances of government-owned or controlled corporations"; and
- "Close adherence to a financial program designed to achieve stability and growth objectives through prudent monetary and credit policies," meaning tighter credit.

These measures closely resemble the standard austerity programs imposed by the IMF for their clients.

The Central Bank year-end report emphasized that the economic adjustment called for "would be an enormous task and would certainly entail a significant degree of sacrifice." On the part of the public, that is. □

Press Statement

NDF MARKS 11TH YEAR OF STRUGGLE



On April 24, 1984, the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDF) celebrates the 11th anniversary of the proclamation of its 10-point Program. It marks the occasion amidst an unprecedented upsurge of the struggle against the U.S.-Marcos dictatorship under conditions of a severely worsening political and economic crisis. It enters its 12th year of struggle for national freedom and democracy with significant gains achieved in the year past built on top of solid achievements won through a decade of hard struggle and sacrifices, and faced with an immediate political battle of big importance—the forthcoming elections to the National Assembly (Batasang Pambansa) on May 14.

The past year saw the emergence of a broad and militant anti-dictatorship front in the wake of the Aquino assassination which outraged the Filipino people into a continuing mass movement of protest calling for the end of dictatorial rule and of U.S. support for it. The national democratic forces have been in the forefront of this movement, working broadly in both the cities and the countryside, mobilizing the masses of workers, peasants, students, teachers and other lower strata of society while being among those who lead in organizing those from the higher strata, and stressing armed struggle while continuously leading the open mass movement. This has been made possible by the gains achieved through the years in the armed struggle and in building the broad united front of the Filipino people against the U.S.-Marcos dictatorship. The upsurge of protest against the dictatorship has continued, frustrating the attempts of the regime to regain the initiative.

In the countryside, the armed struggle led by the New People's Army (NPA), the NDF's fighting force, rages and continues to intensify. Its guerilla forces, now numbering 20,000, including part-time fighters, are now spread strategically throughout the land in 45 guerilla fronts in almost all provinces of the archipelago. The present situation has made it more favorable for the further intensification of the armed struggle, which now attracts the active participation and support of more and more people and puts the NPA in a position to inflict heavier blows against the armed forces of the dictatorship and contribute to the rapid advance of the revolution.

In the international scene, support groups in Europe, the Americas, Asia, Australia and New Zealand have contributed to the isolation of the U.S.-Marcos dictatorship by launching their own protest actions and by resolute solidarity work which has won significant political and material support for the Philippine struggle.

To extricate itself from its defensive position of extreme political isolation, to restore its credibility both at home and in the international front, and to divide the growing anti-dictatorship forces, the Marcos dictatorship, at the direction of U.S. imperialism, is staging elections on May 14 for the National Assembly. The struggle of the broad anti-dictatorship front is therefore now focused on this latest deceptive scheme of the regime through the militant boycott movement. As the biggest organized anti-dictatorship force and with strong mass forces in different parts of the country, the national democratic forces are playing a leading role in this movement, battering and exposing the Marcos regime before the world as totally lacking in popular support and legitimacy to rule. The success of the boycott movement will not only inflict a stinging blow on the U.S.-Marcos dictatorship but could result in a significant advance in the struggle to overthrow the dictatorship and establish a revolutionary coalition government.

The position of the U.S.-Marcos dictatorship has rapidly and irreversibly deteriorated while the advance of the overall revolutionary movement has accelerated. While the regime is not about to collapse entirely because it continues to enjoy the support of the U.S. and because its military, bureaucratic and media machinery remain intact, its eventual disintegration is now in process. On the occasion of its 11th anniversary, the NDF calls on all freedom-loving and democratic forces of the world to further accelerate this process by withdrawing support for the Marcos dictatorship, condemning continuing U.S. support for it, and extending all forms of direct political and material support to the revolutionary forces fighting to establish national freedom and genuine democracy in the Philippines.

NDF International Office
Utrecht, The Netherlands April 13, 1984

By NANCY F. ROCAMORA

Boycott Barrels On

The U.S. government has every reason to push hard for "participation" in the coming Philippine election. For it is up against a highly popular boycott movement which appears bound to succeed in exposing the entire affair as an empty exercise in legitimizing Marcos' rule.

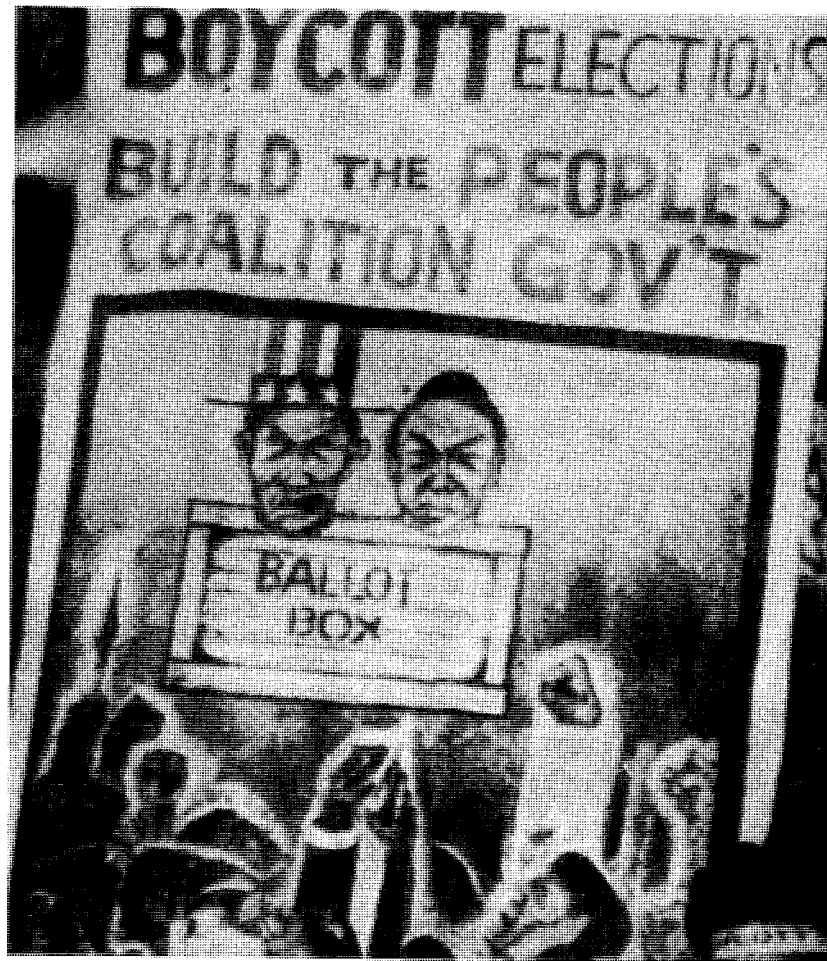
"The number one priority of the opposition is not to win elections," insists one of the more prominent boycott advocates, former Senator Lorenzo Tañada. "It is to remove Mr. Marcos from office." A successful boycott, notes the Coalition of Organizations for the Restoration of Democracy, is the first step toward that end. CORD is the umbrella group of all opposition forces that are campaigning for the boycott.

The coalition thus urged that people register in "People's Boycott Centers" set up throughout the country, instead of registering to vote. This itself was a form of non-violent protest since Marcos threatened imprisonment for all who failed to register.

MILITANT NON-VIOLENCE

These advocates of militant non-violence staged a variety of activities ranging from *pulong-bahays*, or house meetings, to forums, marches, and rallies of thousands. At the funeral march of four slain activists (see story, page 1) on April 10, 2,000 protested in front of the U.S. Embassy "to remind America what kind of regime it supports."

Another 2,000, all women, marched April 13 through the streets of Makati, demanding Marcos' resignation and calling for a boycott. Coming from all sectors—professionals, religious, academics, students and workers, they used street theatre to expose the military abuses of the Marcos regime. They called themselves WOMB, for Women for the Ouster of Marcos Through Boycott.



Reports on demonstrations elsewhere barely made it to the western press except for a march of 500 held in Cagayan de Oro City in mid-April. Again, the group called for boycott and denounced government torture of dissidents.

TEACHERS REFUSE

On April 15, 138 boycott advocates led

by Agapito "Butz" Aquino, brother of the slain Senator Benigno Aquino, launched a Holy Week fast. The group vowed to take only salt and water for eight days to express their protest against the regime and support for the boycott.

More sectors are recoiling from the elections, some indirectly and some directly supporting the boycott movement. The

Association of Concerned Teachers, with a membership of 30,000 announced, following the registration irregularities (see story, page 1), that they do not want to serve in their traditional role as pollwatchers "in the interest of protecting our lives and restoring our dignity as teachers and public servants."

ACT appealed to Education Minister Jaime Laya to respect their constitutional right not to serve. They recalled how a number of teachers were forced to tamper with ballots in the past and cited continued threats and intimidation.

TRANSITION GOVERNMENT

"... The boycott movement, which already has the sympathy of the great majority of the people," wrote political prisoner Alan Jasmires from his cell, "will turn into a powerful force that will certainly hurt the regime and also point to what may well turn out to be a more reliable and unequivocal path for change."

Making it clear that the boycott movement is the beginning of an even broader popular movement to bring down the Marcos regime, six opposition figures met in Hong Kong April 5, to form a preparatory committee for a transitional government. Joining former Senators Tañada and Jose Diokno were Butz Aquino, Abraham Sarmiento representing former President Diosdado Macapagal, and exiled former Senators Jovito Salonga and Raul Manglapus.

The group declared its opposition to continued U.S. military bases and warned that any aid to Marcos, military or economic, would be considered "an unfriendly act."

The product of the meeting is a document entitled "An Appeal for Unity and a Pledge of Solidarity." The paper calls for boycott, declaring, "Our people must unite in mass, militant, non-violent actions."

"No country moves from dictatorship to democracy via the electoral process," noted Manglapus. "The dictatorship must fall first." □

Dirty Road . . .

Continued from front page

the voter registration drive at the end of March. Paran was trying to defend registration materials from a group of armed men which descended on his poll site to confiscate materials.

KIDNAPPING, 'SALVAGING' BOYCOTT SUPPORTERS

An April 10 funeral march in Metro-Manila mourned the loss of four boycott activists kidnapped by government agents from the massive Lakbayan boycott march in Manila on March 7. The bodies of the four were discovered in shallow graves 30 miles south of Manila on March 31.

Three, their arms tied behind them with green nylon rope, had been stabbed to death. The cause of death of the fourth remained unknown because all that remained was his skull and legs.

Activists for the Justice for Aquino, Justice for All Movement reported ominously that three more were kidnapped from the April 10 funeral march itself. Plainclothes police in an unmarked car suddenly tried to apprehend five activists, two of whom got away. There is no word to date on the remaining three.

CEBU NAMFREL DISSOLVES

Meanwhile, election irregularities are popping up all over the country. While regime and opposition sides furiously blame each other, understated NAMFREL spokesmen ask, "Who has the capacity?" One disillusioned representative told the *Christian Science Monitor's* Paul Quinn Judge, "It's very unlikely that this could be done by the opposition. They just do not have the machinery in place. We have to look at KBL candidates or the party itself."

The biggest problem of them all are the flying voters who took off during the registration period which spanned March 23-25 and March 30-April 1. Their num-

bers surpass even the most dire of the cynic's predictions.

The Cebu NAMFREL Executive Committee dissolved its chapter altogether following registration. "Under the existing atmosphere, the platform of free, clean and honest elections can no longer be pursued in Cebu," it explained.

The Davao del Norte chapter sought the exclusion of 8,000 flying voters. The suspects, it reported, were illiterates who had been "assisted" in registering by government officials. In response to the request, government supporters in the area labelled the local NAMFREL chief "pro-opposition."

MULTIPLE REGISTRATION—A LUCRATIVE AFFAIR

But by far the greatest number of irregularities were reported in Metro-Manila.

NAMFREL, based on projections from the 1980 census, insists that 1.3 million more registered to vote in Metro-Manila

'If you don't have inspectors on hand, you're like Don Quixote against a windmill.'

than there are people of voting age. In other words, the number of voters has been inflated by 37%—this in spite of an extremely popular and successful boycott movement which was urging people not to register at all.

Things are particularly bad in Makati, home of the well-oiled machine of Mayor Nemesio Yabut. While the number of voting age residents here is 234,379, 434,065 registered.

In one spot, NAMFREL chief Jose Concepcion reported 27 different people registered giving the same address and birth date. In another incident, COMELEC and NAMFREL nabbed 14 boys, residents of Manila, trying to register in Quezon City.

The going rate for multiple registrants in one part of Metro-Manila was reportedly ₱2.50 for the first eight times and ₱5 for each thereafter. In another place, people were overheard boasting of earning ₱50 per.

In some places, NAMFREL found piles of registration forms, pre-signed by COMELEC and local party representatives. All they lacked was the name of the voter. A source close to NAMFREL insists that 15,000 registration forms were filled out in the office of Vice Governor of Metro-Manila and KBL candidate Ismael Mathay, Jr. Two of the boys nabbed trying to register in Quezon City signed affidavits targetting KBL Assemblyman Estanislao Alinea.

FACILITATING BALLOT-BOX STUFFING

Registration chaos was bad enough. But, pointed out observers of the process, registration is only one of three weak areas under the new Philippine election laws. The other two, ballot printing and vote counting also allow for potential mass fraud and cheating.

Echoing this concern, even U.S. State

Department officials, staunch election backers, recently expressed worries over the Philippine government's decision not to have all ballots printed in one place. Multiple sites, they pointed out, could make it difficult to keep track of ballots and facilitate ballot-box stuffing.

UNIDO Campaign Manager Ernesto Maceda in early April charged COMELEC with purchasing 50 rolls of ballot paper in excess of what was required, enough to allow printing of up to 10 million extra ballots. Outraged, COMELEC demanded that Maceda substantiate his charges. NAMFREL staffers, however, reported as early as mid-April that some ballots had already been printed without

NAMFREL supervision in private printing houses.

Complicating matters and facilitating potential vote-counting fraud, COMELEC recently granted another brand new citizens poll-watching organization rights identical to those of NAMFREL. According to the opposition press in Metro-Manila, the moving spirit behind the Movement of Voters for Enlightenment and Reform or MOVERS is a former Malacañang staffer.

POLLS REMILITARIZED; UNIDO DEPRIVED

Flying in the face of an earlier promise, COMELEC used the incidents of violence and irregularities as an excuse to deputize the Philippine Constabulary and Integrated National Police to act as peacekeepers on Election Day. One of Marcos' earlier scant concessions to the opposition was to keep the military away from the poll sites, allowing instead ROTC members to police them.

At the same time, UNIDO recognized by most as the main opposition party that is participating in the polls has been deprived of that designation in six of the country's 13 regions. In five of the remaining regions, a breakaway wing of the Nacionalista Party has achieved that status. UNIDO chief Salvador Laurel sarcastically refers to this wing as the "NPA"—Nacionalista Party of the Administration.

The party granted such status in Cebu, the Pundok Sugbuanon, broke up April 15 after its leading candidates for the two vital Cebu City seats left the party accusing their chief of pro-government leanings.

Official status entitles the party to have its own inspectors on hand to observe the vote-counting. Thus 96 of UNIDO's 183 candidates remain without watchdogs.

On that basis alone, the betting in Metro-Manila is that UNIDO won't win more than 40 seats. Even Maceda told *Asiaweek*, "If you don't have inspectors on hand, you're like Don Quixote against a windmill." Though his group entered the race claiming it would win a majority of votes and impeach Marcos, Maceda confided, "I'll be satisfied if we get 50 seats in the Batasan."

Continued on page 13

Congresses Back RP Boycott Drive

By VINCE REYES

"The Marcos regime must be dismantled even before we can think of having clean and honest elections," asserted Alex Padilla, an attorney and a national executive officer of the Nationalist Alliance for Justice, Freedom and Democracy, at a congress on Philippine elections held in San Francisco last April 14. He gave the same message to a similar congress in New York the next day.

The son of former senator Ambrosio Padilla was touring the U.S. with another prominent oppositionist Rene Saguisag to gain support from the Filipino American community for the boycott of President Ferdinand Marcos' National Assembly Elections on May 14. Saguisag, also a lawyer, is the vice president of the Movement of Attorneys for Brotherhood, Integrity and Nationalism, Incorporated (MABINI).

'COMING TOGETHER'

The gathering at the Dimasalang House in San Francisco drew nearly 150 participants. In New York, some 200 people came to hear Padilla and Saguisag. Participants in both congresses represented a cross-section of the opposition movement in the U.S..

Among the events' sponsors were the Alliance for Social Justice (Los Angeles), Church Network on the Philippines, Coalition Against the Marcos Dictatorship/Philippine Solidarity Network, International Movement for a Democratic Philippines, League of Filipino Students (USA), Movement for a Free Philippines, Philippine Support Committee, Solidarity with the



Philippine oppositionist Rene Saguisag (l) brings boycott message to U.S. Filipinos.

Nationalist Alliance (Los Angeles) and Pagasa.

Gaston Ortigas of the Movement for a Free Philippines said the congresses were "part of a process" towards unity. He explained that although the U.S. opposition has traditionally been "fragmented," they are now "coming together, influenced by what happened in the Philippines, particularly after the assassination of former senator Benigno Aquino."

Saguisag and Padilla gave vivid descriptions of the political climate in the Philippines and focused on the broad support that the boycott movement is gaining.

Padilla, who was detained by the Immigration and Naturalization Service authorities in Hawaii for six hours because he

was wearing a Boycott button, delivered a sobering assessment of the Philippine economic situation, explaining that 80% of the Filipino people fall below the poverty line.

FM'S POLICY OF FORCE

"They can't pay rent, afford to send children to school, cannot afford food, medicine, and new clothes for an average family size of six," cited Padilla. He also added that "in 1981, ₱1,800 a month was needed to live on—now it takes ₱3,400 a month. Yet most people earn only ₱40 a day."

He blamed the country's economic problems on the unrestricted remittance of profits by foreign (especially U.S.) in-

vestors; government payments of loans which now total ₱43.5 billion as compared to ₱2.2 billion in 1972; huge foreign trade deficits; and the "cronyism and scandals within the Marcos dynasty."

Padilla emphasized that the Marcos regime has consistently used force and has arrested 9,750 people since 1977. The regime, he charged, is using summary executions more and more to "cut down on expenses involved in arresting and detaining" suspects. According to Padilla, 1,166 people have been "salvaged" or secretly executed since 1974, adding that "the figure may be 50 times more since these numbers are only reported figures." He stressed that the abuses are not isolated incidents. "They are part of a consistent policy of the regime to suppress, use force and even to kill political dissenters."

'ONE-MAN CON-CON'

Saguisag clarified the boycott movement's posture by saying, "We're not against elections, but we are for meaningful, not meaningless elections." He proceeded to describe in detail how Marcos changes the laws anytime he wants them to suit his needs.

Saguisag called Marcos a "one-man Constitutional Convention," citing that there are over 2,000 Presidential Decrees, most of them not publicly known and are not even published.

Subversion, Saguisag said, is loosely defined by Marcos that even "prayer rallies are considered a threat." The penalty for subversion is stiff—up to 20 years in prison "and only Marcos himself has the

Continued on page 8



By VINCE REYES

AK writer Vince Reyes buttonholed Nationalist Alliance leader Alex Padilla after the latter delivered an enthusiastically received speech at the boycott congress in San Francisco's Dimasalang House. Reyes wanted to get the personal side of Rene Saguisag too, but lost him in a crowd of well-wishers.

Tell me about yourself and how you got involved in the movement.

I'm 27 and single. My first political experience was during my students days at the UP College of Law in 1977. I came from a rich background—I could care less about politics before—but some of my friends at the college introduced me to an urban poor community. That was my first political awakening.

But the impact really came when I joined a demonstration fighting against the Education Act at that time—1979-80. I joined this rally in front of the Ministry of Education and we were attacked by a Crowd Dispersal Unit. The members of this riot control unit were drunk, and they were hitting us with truncheons. They were really enjoying it and they were shouting at us. That was the first time that I actually experienced what fascism really meant.

Did you get injured?

Yes, I was hit several times. After that, I got down to serious work, studying on my own and with friends the root causes of our problems. Since I was in law, I started relating with legal problems by attending paralegal seminars with Senator Diokno. But I also started going to the different provinces talking to the minority peoples and church groups.

Interview with the Nationalist Alliance's Alex Padilla

'The Struggle is Where I Belong'

Was this with FLAG (Free Legal Assistance Group)?

Yes. So my involvement came just one right after the other. Finally, I decided that the anti-dictatorship struggle is where I belong. I could have lived differently—I could have been rich and all that—but this is where I find satisfaction and enjoyment. I've dedicated my whole life to this. To the point that I was issued an arrest warrant in 1980. It was an Arrest, Search and Seizure Order and I went into hiding for three weeks.

It was never fully implemented because my father filed an injunction suit in the Supreme Court which prevented the military from enforcing the arrest order. Technically the arrest order is still there and it can be implemented at any time.

Are you highly visible in the opposition movement?

Yes—mainly in speaking engagements. That's probably where my talents are—speaking. I'm not much into organizing, there are other people with more organizing capabilities, so I speak in a lot of rallies, symposiums, forums. I average something like four or five times a week, so it's that hectic—especially after the Aquino assassination.

We go to the different parts of the country, not only Metro-Manila. I've become one of the official speakers not only of CORD (Coalition of Organizations for the Restoration of Democracy), but also of JAJA (Justice for Aquino, Justice for All) and the Nationalist Alliance.

What are your immediate plans?

To return to the Philippines. My work is there, the struggle, the protest is there, so I feel that I have to be there as a part of it. Of course, it is clear to me that you can be arrested at any time and that no one is really a sacred cow, that Aquino was shot just like that. But those are the risks, the sacrifices you have to take.

You made some strong statements against the elite oppositionists. Do you think they are not legitimate oppositionists?

I hope that I'm not misinterpreted. I do believe that Laurel is in the opposition. What I am questioning is his motives. For example, in these coming elections, he is not himself a candidate, but he is supporting candidates. He has come out with statements threatening to boycott but he has never come through. He comes out with a statement today, but he will change it tomorrow. All this leads me to the conclusion that he has political ambitions for 1987, and if you have political ambitions for '87, necessarily you would have to compromise with Marcos' electoral system one way or the other.

But the sad part about it is that a lot of the opposition, even within UNIDO sincerely and honestly believe that the best way to remove Marcos is through elections. We probably cannot change their minds at this particular time. Maybe they will realize after May 14. I am only questioning the leadership, particularly Laurel and Eva Kalaw. I think they still belong to the opposition—as to what kind of opposition, I don't know.

There are of course other so-called oppositionists like the Nacionalista Party faction of Senator Roy. He acts like the opposition but of course, he's a Marcos man. Former Minister Tatad who is with the Social Democratic Party is supposed to be in the opposition also. But even UNIDO does not recognize Tatad or SDP because they still feel he is with the government. These are what you may call loyal opposition groups.

What is the role of the left in the boycott movement, particularly the NDF?

Well, it is clear that the left, is for a boycott of the coming elections. But it does not follow—as Kalaw would want us to believe—that if you're for boycott, you're necessarily a communist. Because the boycott position is really, for all of us, the practical and moral alternative. □

Spied on Philippines and Filipino Activists? Hawaii Firm Exposed as CIA Front

By VENNY VILLAPANDO

HONOLULU—An investigative report aired on British television last month disclosed that in the last five years, Hawaii "has become a perfect base for spies," from where the Central Intelligence Agency conducted major spying operations on foreign countries including the Philippines.

Produced by the British Broadcasting Corporation, the 30-minute program reported that a Honolulu-based investment firm headed by a longtime CIA agent used its global network of 17 offices as a front and "did everything from spying on the president of the Philippines and selling arms to Taiwan, to stealing the plans for a Japanese high-speed train."

In addition, the report disclosed that the now-bankrupt company was "spying on Filipino dissidents at the University of Hawaii and feeding that information to the Marcos government."

The startling revelations made by the British television program added fuel to the U.S.-based Philippine opposition movement's charges that the U.S. government's highly sophisticated intelligence agencies are directly involved in espionage against Filipino activists in the U.S.

"We are not at all surprised that Hawaii, a major center for the U.S. military, has been actively used as a launching pad for intelligence gathering," remarked Rene Ciria Cruz, KDP spokesperson and co-plaintiff in a civil suit against the U.S. and the Marcos governments for the 1981 double murder of KDP activists, Silme Domingo and Gene Viernes.]

CIA COVER EXPOSED

The series of events that led to the rise and instant decline of the investment firm Bishop, Baldwin, Rewald, Dillingham & Wong, Inc., and Ron Rewald, 43, the firm's chairman stunned Honolulu's business community.

A day after seeing a local television newscast on July 29, 1983 which reported that state consumer protection authorities were investigating Bishop, Baldwin's financial standing, its dapper chairman reportedly tried to commit suicide in a Waikiki hotel room by slashing his wrists.

On August 4, a federal court in Honolulu declared the investment firm "involuntarily bankrupt" and froze the company's assets. Bishop, Baldwin was found to be owing more than 300 of its investors an estimated \$12.6 million. Subsequently, two investors filed theft charges against Rewald, who was arrested upon his release from the hospital.

On January 30 this year, Rewald was released from prison and shortly thereafter, he slapped the CIA with a \$671 million lawsuit. The suit charged that not only was the CIA heavily involved with Bishop, Baldwin, the firm itself was set up upon specific instructions from the CIA in the late 1970s.

WHO IS RON REWALD?

With the CIA cover blown wide open, Rewald's own cloak and dagger activities came to light.

A native of Wisconsin, Rewald's alleged links with the CIA dated back to the mid-60s, when as a Milwaukee Institute of Technology student, he spied on student activist groups at the University of Wisconsin's Madison campus.

After accomplishing several assignments that proved his skills and talent to the agency, Rewald became a fulltime covert CIA agent in 1977 and moved to Hawaii. In 1978, Bishop, Baldwin was formed with the CIA allegedly funnelling "several million" dollars to get it going.

Since the investment firm's formation, Rewald claims he has accomplished the following assignments as a CIA operative:

- stole secret plans for a Japanese High Speed Surface train;
- met with an Afghan rebel (at a



Ron Rewald



Enrique Zobel

Waikiki cafe) who was soliciting arms from the U.S., just after the coup in Afghanistan;

- went to Argentina during the Falkland Islands war to find out if the repayment of U.S. loans was in jeopardy;

- successfully completed a massive arms deal with Taiwan, with the CIA still owing him \$10 million in commissions.

PHILIPPINE CONNECTION

The incident has also spotlighted the CIA's interest in the Philippine situation, and Rewald's close relationship with Enrique Zobel, considered one of the 10 wealthiest bankers in the world.

The intelligence agency apparently wanted to get a closer insight into the Marcos government, especially after the dictator bought two estates in Honolulu's fashionable Makiki Heights, fanning speculations that he might be planning an early retirement. Rewald cultivated a relationship

with Zobel, who "provided a window on the inner workings of the Marcos regime that was unparalleled," a Hawaii business publication reported.

With the CIA's help, Rewald was scheduled to join President Reagan on his planned visit to the Philippines last fall. Had the visit not been cancelled due to the series of protests that rocked the Marcos government following the Aquino assassination, Rewald would have met privately with Marcos while in Manila, through arrangements made by Zobel.

Aside from sharing the wealthy financier's enthusiasm for the gentlemanly sports of polo, Rewald formed a partnership with Zobel in an international land development company called Ayala Hawaii Corporation. Media reports do not say whether Zobel knew of Rewald's CIA links.

MORE CIA COVER-UPS?

Despite the clear involvement of three

is secretly supporting the boycott.

Padilla gave a scathing criticism of the participationists. "I question the sincerity of Laurel . . . he resigned from the Batasang Pambansa, calling it useless, a rubber stamp and here he is advocating participation . . . I believe his statements were meant for the American Congress to support the moderate opposition . . . he cannot make those statements in the Philippines because he would be criticized by people like Senator Tañada and by cause-oriented organizations."

POLITICS POLITICIZED

When asked who should lead the Filipino people Padilla replied that it was not a matter of who but a matter of program.

"If there is one good result of martial law, it politicized politics—principles, not one person, will lead. Cause-oriented movements have gained more support than the traditional politicians because they deal more with issues of poverty, unemploy-

of the CIA's former Honolulu section chiefs in the investment firm—including a man from Seattle who is described by his resume as a senior intelligence career officer—the CIA stubbornly denies any role in the Bishop, Baldwin case. The firm's documents also showed that several other CIA employees invested money in the company, including Jack Kindschi, 56, a former CIA bureau chief and a \$185,000-investor.

The bankruptcy judge was quick to label the investment firm a "Ponzi scheme," where investors' funds were siphoned off for various ulterior purposes, and paid back only to keep up the semblance of legitimate investments. Acting on the CIA's request, the federal bankruptcy court sealed many of Bishop, Baldwin's records, and slapped a gag order on matters contained in the sealed documents.

Rewald is reportedly extremely worried that the man in charge of prosecuting a possible federal case against him, U.S. Attorney John Peyton, was formerly chief of the litigation section for the CIA in Langley, Virginia. Peyton said he is no longer connected with the CIA and that his assignment to the case is "purely coincidental."

Recently, the U.S. Senate Committee on Intelligence examined the CIA's involvement in the Rewald case. "The findings did not seem to indicate the involvement was significant," according to Senator Dan Inouye. Meanwhile, it was learned that the U.S. House Committee on Intelligence has begun a similar probe.

As the Rewald/CIA story continues to unravel, a nagging question, according to *Wall Street Journal* reporter Jonathan Kwitny, remains unanswered: how was Rewald's firm able to maintain an investment scam for three years, while some active and retired CIA officials looked on as investors and consultants?

"Even if Mr. Rewald fails in portraying himself as a CIA pawn," Kwitny wrote, "his former clients will probably argue that the CIA lent credibility to his business dealings and that the agency knew—or should have known—what was going on." □

Boycott Congresses...

Continued from page 7

authority to release you."

The young lawyer told of how Marcos' people asked him to run in the elections and gave him assurances that "we will make sure you will win." Saguisag refused, knowing that the regime would only use him as "Exhibit A—Saguisag, the oppositionist who won—proving the elections were clean."

Saguisag's and Padilla's remarks on the upcoming polls were in sharp contrast to those made by another oppositionist who visited the U.S. in recent weeks. In February, Salvador Laurel told Filipinos here that the elections are "an opportunity to give democracy another chance." He also told the San Francisco newspapers that Marcos

ment, peasant bondage, labor—these groups have more mass appeal."

Padilla also said that National Democratic Front forces, although illegalized, are a legitimate part of the opposition. Regardless of the differences some people have with the NDF, he said that they have been "the most consistent and dedicated fighters against the regime. They have even given their lives for what they believe in."

The congresses passed resolutions calling for a National Lobby Day sometime in April when Filipinos will be organized to visit their congressmen and urge them to stop U.S. aid to Marcos, and a National Day of Protest on May 14, coinciding with the expected boycott protests in the Philippines.

Saguisag stated that "Solidarity between the Philippines and Filipinos in the U.S. plays an essential and crucial role and is part of the process for achieving justice and democracy in the Philippines." □

Seattle Opposition Congress Held

With the theme of "Power and Knowledge, Strength Through Unity," Seattle anti-Marcos groups convened in a "First Filipino American State Congress" on April 28 at the Pacific Western University in Tacoma, Washington.

It is the first such formation in Seattle and follows a nationwide trend of increased opposition activity within the Filipino community.

Congress members include SANDIWA (United Ideals for the Restoration of Democracy); New Aquino Movement, Washington Council; International Longshoremen and Warehousemen Union, Local 37; Coalition Against the Marcos Dictatorship/Philippine Solidarity Network; Mochord Filipino Airmen's Group; and the Ft. Lewis Filipino Soldier's Group.

Among the guests who spoke to some 60 participants were Lupita Aquino Kashiwahara, sister of Benigno Aquino; Heheron Alvarez, National Chairperson of NAM; Geline Avila, National Coordinator of CAMD/PSN; Joe Pascual of SANDIWA; Romeo Capulong, chair of the Filipino Lawyers Committee for Human Rights; and Cindy Domingo of the Seattle CAMD/PSN.

The Congress' objectives are to provide a continuing educational forum for the Filipino community and to "find common ground for working together to support the anti-Marcos movement in the Philippines."

The group believes the May 14 elections are "an attempt to legitimize the Marcos regime and to lend credibility to its standing before the international community" and

believes that "free elections cannot take place in an environment devoid of freedom."

Among the group's resolutions were to work for a democratic and representative coalition government; the stopping of all U.S. aid; and release of all political prisoners. It opposes all forms of foreign military and political intervention and wants a "U.S. foreign policy based on mutual respect and sovereignty."

Additionally, the Congress, after a presentation by ILWU Local 37's John Foz, lent its support to the *Kilusang Mayo Uno* (May First Movement), the largest opposition labor union in the Philippines, and demanded the full restoration of worker's rights to strike. The Congress will also join the National Day of Protest on May 14 against the Batasan elections. □ VR

Open Season on the Undocumented High Court OKs Factory Raids by INS

By VINCE REYES

In a deadly blow against undocumented workers, a Supreme Court ruling has given the Immigration and Naturalization Service the green light to conduct factory raids and randomly check workers' legal status.

The court's 7-2 decision overturned a 1982 San Francisco Court of Appeals ruling which made "factory sweeps" in which INS agents blocked exits to arbitrarily check workers' immigration status illegal. The new ruling said that such activity is not in violation of the U.S. Constitution's prohibition against unreasonable searches and seizures.

The ruling also reversed the Court of Appeal's previous order barring INS agents from questioning workers unless agents have a "reasonable suspicion" that the employee is undocumented.

Justice William Rehnquist defended the decision stating that "the factory surveys did not result in the seizure of the entire work forces and the individual questioning of the employees by INS agents concerning their citizenship did not amount to a detention or seizure under the Fourth Amendment."

However, Justice William Brennan strongly

objected saying, "Indeed it is only through a consistent feat of legerdemain that the court is able to arrive at the conclusion that the [workers] were not seized," in reference to evidence that employees had been unreasonably detained. Justice Brennan and Justice Thurgood Marshall were the only dissenters.

LICENSE TO DISCRIMINATE

Bay Area INS officials welcomed the ruling saying that it restored the "most effective tools" for seizing illegal aliens beyond the U.S./Mexican border. Almost immediately, the newly-opened INS office in San Jose announced it would conduct at least two raids a week in the Santa Clara Valley. The "Silicon" Valley's electronics industry employs thousands of workers, 40% of whom are Asian and Hispanic.

"They've finally given us back our authority and untied our hands," proclaimed John Senko, head of the San Jose INS office.

Immigrant rights and civil libertarian groups were outraged by the decision. Attorney Bill Tamayo of the Bay Area Committee Against Simpson/Mazzoli described the Supreme Court decision as a "license for the INS to raid the Hispanic and other immigrant communities" and warned that workplace sweeps "may become an everyday occurrence." Tamayo added that the ruling "legalizes the sys-



Immigrants detained at a Texas processing center prior to deportation.

Northrup

tematic discrimination of minorities."

BOLSTERS SIMPSON/MAZZOLI

Another danger is that since the raids are aimed mainly at people who appear to be Hispanic, it is likely that citizens and legal residents could be mistakenly arrested and deported during factory sweeps.

INS raids have been conducted on the ground that undocumented workers are displacing American workers. "Nothing could be farther from the truth," asserted Tamayo.

"For example, one reason that thousands of Silicon Valley workers have lost their jobs is because computer and electronic companies like Atari have relocated overseas to take advantage of lower wages and to escape the unionization of workers."

Mila De Guzman, BACASM co-chair noted that many undocumented workers have fled persecution from U.S.-backed dictatorships such as those in Central America and the Philippines and that the government also has other reasons for halting the flow of immigration from these countries.

"These people," said De Guzman, "are evidence of poverty and repression in their homelands and their exodus highlights the unjust character of U.S. foreign policy."

De Guzman added, "But regardless of the reasons why people come to the U.S., many become part of the work force and for the sake of survival are forced to take on low-paying jobs with terrible working conditions."

This situation she said makes people extremely vulnerable to exploitation. "As part of the U.S. work force they should be guaranteed protection and rights as any other worker," De Guzman said.

The Supreme Court ruling comes just before the controversial Simpson/Mazzoli bill (S. 529/H.R. 1510) is brought to the House floor in May for debate. The decision could strengthen the hand of pro-Simpson/Mazzoli lawmakers who argue that the U.S. needs to exert stricter control over the number of immigrants entering the country. □

Filipino Beaten Up by INS Raiders

Filipinos in California's Silicon Valley were already talking about the INS in hushed tones even before the agency's official April 16 opening of its 31-person San Jose office.

On March 12, Joven Ladgamen, 26 of Milpitas became the victim of an alleged attack by INS agents.

Two INS agents came to his home, saying they were looking for another couple. While Cynthia Fulgado, Ladgamen's sister, answered the door, another INS agent followed Ladgamen who was boarding his car with his brother-in-law.

The agent allegedly put his arm around Ladgamen's neck and said "Stop the car or I'll punch you." The agent allegedly punched Ladgamen several

times until he was dazed, pulled him out of the car and forced him against the pavement. Even though Ladgamen agreed to cooperate, the agent allegedly kept hitting his head against the pavement.

According to Fulgado, the agents then pulled their guns on Ladgamen and her husband. She claims one agent punched Ladgamen in the stomach even after he was handcuffed. Her brother was allegedly denied medical treatment in jail until the next day. He presently awaits a deportation hearing.

In protest, members of the Filipino community joined a demonstration against the INS on April 10. Representatives of the Filipino American Political Alliance also met with INS

officials to protest Ladgamen's treatment.

Meanwhile, at the opening of its San Jose office, INS regional commissioner Harold Ezell said, "Our officers will be freeing up jobs for U.S. citizens and people who are here legally. Probably 25% of the working population in this area is here illegally, particularly in the Silicon Valley."

Ezell vowed that a minimum of two raids a week will take place to reduce the alleged 200,000 undocumented immigrants. The raids affect mainly the 226,388 Hispanic men, women and children the 1980 Census said resided in the region. One week prior to the opening, 50 supposedly illegal immigrants were arrested. □

Keep informed of developments . . .

- in the Philippines
- in the U.S. Filipino community
- in the U.S. and around the world!

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I WAS AFRAID OF THIS.....



For those concerned readers who waited for their March issue—don't despair. Through a mailing error on our part, the March issue was sent out late. Readers should have received that issue by now—but if not, drop us a line and we will correct the problem as soon as possible.

MOVING? Send us your new address as soon as possible so that you don't miss a single issue.

By INDAY REFI; RENE CIRIA CRUZ
KDP National Executive Board

Jesse Jackson's candidacy is creating sympathetic stirrings even within a Filipino community that does not view itself as a key player in this country's electoral contests. With the Democratic convention nearing and the California primary just a month away, most politically active Filipinos (especially on the west coast where our people are concentrated) are at the very least, compelled to ask the question: "What has Jesse Jackson's candidacy got to do with us?"

A number of community organizers have decided to work for Jackson's campaign, while some of those who belong to community organizations supportive of the Democratic Party privately admit that though their groups most likely will endorse Walter Mondale, they prefer to vote for Jackson.

There is really no way Filipinos can ignore Jackson, no matter how many of them try to believe that they have successfully blended into the mainstream of electoral politics. Jackson's message somehow touches a familiar chord and cannot simply be ignored. Deep down, Filipinos realize that no matter what, they are still part of the voiceless, powerless and disregarded sectors of the population that Jackson speaks for and about.

Many Filipinos may have forgotten that their predecessors in the 20's and 30's were exploited in back-breaking jobs in Californian and Hawaiian farms, forbidden to marry outside their race and confronted by "No Filipinos Allowed" signs in restaurants and hotels. The truth is, even today race and national oppression—a system that has victimized Blacks, Native Americans, Mexicans, Asians and other minorities—are still part of the Filipino experience in America. Only the forms have changed.

JACKSON IS ABOUT US

No one can deny that the majority of Filipinos are workers trapped in relatively low-paying, and unprotected dead-end jobs in the clerical and service sectors. Our people are discriminated in hiring, job security and promotions. We are direct victims of President Reagan's attacks on affirmative action, social programs and welfare benefits. And the fear of harassment by immigration authorities constantly seeps into our household conversations.

Filipino nurses, doctors and other professionals are systematically blocked from fully practicing their professions by unfair licensure procedures. Even the most successful Filipino professionals will have to admit that despite their talents they will not be promoted beyond certain levels in their various fields—because they are foreign-born and non-white.

We Filipinos come from a country that is now under a one-man dictatorship. Over the years, we have grown frustrated over the American government's callous disregard for our people's human rights in pursuit of its narrow military and economic interests in our supposedly sovereign nation. We share this frustration with immigrants from other nations whose Marcoses are kept alive by American weapons, training, and handouts in exchange for services rendered.

Who among the Democratic candidates recognize our frustration? There is good reason why to the U.S.-based Filipino opposition to the Marcos regime, a

Commentary

Filipinos Have A Stake In Jackson's Campaign



Evan Morris/Frontline

movement whose ranks have grown after the assassination of Senator Benigno Aquino, Jr., Jesse Jackson's foreign policy is a breath of fresh air. "I've heard Jesse Jackson and I like what he has to say about our country," exiled opposition leader Jovito Salonga stated recently.

Indeed, the Reverend Jesse Jackson's campaign is saying something about us and even the most cautious and conservative Filipino community council cannot pretend that his candidacy has no significance.

'PEACE ABROAD, JUSTICE AT HOME'

Jackson's campaign has already registered an important success. For the first time in many years, issues and interests that are close to the hearts of the minorities and the disenfranchised are being raised effectively before the public. Mondale may beef about Gary Hart's new ideas but both of them cannot evade the longstanding issues that Jackson keeps flinging into the debate. The terms of this debate are being altered so, by the injection of the poor's agenda that Jackson is now the target of an insidious and racist smear campaign. What are the traditional politicians, the privileged, and the powerful media afraid of? They fear Jackson's platform and the forces he is galvanizing behind it.

Jackson wants "Peace abroad." He has pledged a "no first use" policy regarding U.S. nuclear

weapons and is committed to an immediate halt in the arms race and improved relations with the Soviet Union. He wants the U.S. to normalize and establish diplomatic relations with Cuba. He believes the U.S. should stop supporting the counterrevolutionaries who are trying to overthrow the legitimate and popular Sandinista government in Nicaragua.

The U.S., Jackson says, should stop supporting the death-squad government of El Salvador as well as other dictatorships allied with U.S. interests. Underterred by prevailing pro-Zionist and anti-Arab sentiments, Jackson wants the U.S. to recognize the right of Palestinians to their own state.

The character of his foreign policy, Jackson vows, will be "negotiations over confrontation." Thus, he has been quite explicit and very consistent in proposing deep cuts in the military budget—up to one-third of Reagan's—so the funds could be rechanneled to jobs and social services.

On the domestic front, Jackson speaks even more directly to the interests of the underclasses of this society. He wants "Justice at Home." He wants the strict implementation of the civil rights laws that the Reagan administration is now systematically destroying. His platform calls for more protection against discrimination; the strengthening of affirmative action; the legislation of equal rights for women and of abortion rights; and the adoption of fair immigration policies.

Jackson emphasizes the need for government to generate more jobs by investing in public works—railroads, bridges and mass transit—which would help rebuild cities and foster better economic conditions for the working class. Unlike Reagan, Jackson sees no reason why the rich should pay less taxes than the poor, and why the poor should have to shoulder the privileges of the corporate rich.

Clearly, in Jackson's program, there is a stake that we share with other minorities and oppressed sectors of this society. Aside from this, Jesse Jackson is the only candidate who has spoken to issues that are of particular importance to Filipinos.

At the Pennsylvania debate and in a special statement, Jackson said:

"The Marcos government remains in a state of tyranny as it is now, does not deserve our support. We cannot pay that government \$900 million for five years of U.S. military bases in the Philippines especially if these monies are used for weapons to suppress the people. We must use aid as a method to help humanize, not terrorize.

"We must make adjustments in U.S. policies towards the Philippines now. And we should begin by supporting free and democratically elected leadership and seriously re-evaluate our support for President Marcos. Because when people rebel, seeking to be measured by one set of human rights rules, civil strife is inevitable. We want to be on the right side of history. . .

"We have no right to determine the quality and kind of government in the Philippines. We have no role interfering with or legitimizing an electoral process that

Pinoys for Jackson Meet

"This will be the first time I'll vote since I've been in this country," said the *manong*. "I like what he has to say, he's talking about our needs. He should be in our country."

The "oldtimer" was attending a community meeting called by the Filipinos for Jesse Jackson at the



Filipinos build support for Jesse Jackson campaign.

Dimasalang Hall in San Francisco, April 29.

Forty-five people heard Oakland City council member Wilson Riles, Jr., Jackson's Northern California campaign director, who explained why Filipinos should be part of the Rainbow Coalition.

"There are a lot of critical issues that only Jesse Jackson is talking about. Jesse is the real difference between Reagan and the other Democratic contenders. . . . If you vote for Hart or Mondale, you've wasted your vote. They're not talking about your issues, your concerns."

The forum emcee, Luisa Blue of the Service Employees International Union Local 390/400 said, "The Filipino community has never really been involved in this type of political initiative, nor have the traditional parties attempted to draw us into the political process."

Leni Marin, co-chair of Filipinos for Jesse Jackson said, "While we've been becoming more visible, we're still invisible in the political process. The present parties don't put focus on the issues of the disenfranchised."

Enos Baker, chair of the Get-Out-the-Vote for the 5th Congressional District (San Francisco) fielded questions from the audience on the intricate components of the California primary in June.

In Los Angeles, 15 people attended the forum-meeting of the Filipinos for Jesse Jackson April 7 at the Filipino-American Community of Los Angeles.

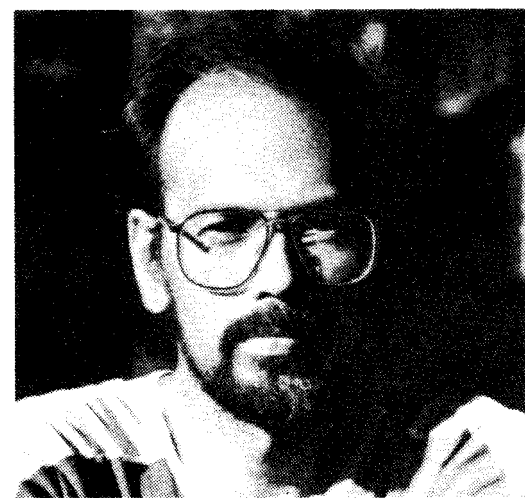
FJJ committees in Los Angeles and San Francisco are stepping up their mailouts, leafletting, voter registration drives, community forums, and house meetings in the five weeks left before the primary. For information in the Bay Area, call (415) 282-1360; for Los Angeles, (213) 250-0602. □

Voices

ESSAYS POEMS ESSAYS POEMS ESSAYS POEMS ESSAYS POEMS ESSAYS POEMS
SHORT STORIES SHORT STORIES SHORT STORIES SHORT STORIES SHORT STORIES

Interview with Master Painter/Printmaker Ben Cabrera:

BENCAB: The Artist as Social Commentator



statements on subjects such as American colonialism, ethnic minorities, workers' oppression, or the lives of Filipino migrants abroad.

The following personal statements were extracted from a series of informal, and quite lengthy, discussions with Bencab—Venny Villapando, AK Honolulu.

GROWING UP AS AN ARTIST IN MANILA

I began drawing when I was a child, growing up in Mayhaligue and Bambang. These are poorer sections of Manila. And because I came from these neighborhoods, I became aware of social problems at an early age. Later, during the '60s, I worked as an illustrator for the *Manila Times* which was at the Santa Cruz district then. There, I had the opportunity to observe closely the lives of derelicts and scavengers as they went through garbage cans and refuse heaps along the streets of Misericordia and Tetuan

'There are no Black or Indian artists whose works are displayed at the prestigious Tate Gallery—only Caucasian artists.'

I had been fascinated by their instincts for survival, and I chose them as the subject matter of my early paintings. I wanted so much to capture the type of sufferings they go through . . . it was my way of making a statement against the dehumanizing manner by which they live, and the indignities they undergo.

. . . After I did a whole series of paintings in 1972 based on old pictures of our colonial past, a whole new set of artists started doing similar investigations, which was good. Before, a lot of artists were into the genre tradition, for example, Galo Ocampo's *Brown Madonna* which simply was the Filipinizing of archetypal European paintings. Or, Manansala's *Madonna of the Slums* . . . they're still take-offs, modernizing it in the cubist tradition. In any case, I wasn't afraid to even literally copy the images of the past . . . I'm nationalistic but at the same time I use Western mediums. I'm not the type who throws away everything for the sake of ethnicity. Some anthropologists get disappointed when

Continued on next page



1081, etching/aquatint

Ben Cabrera is one of the Philippines' foremost contemporary artists. Bencab, as he is more popularly called, has exhibited his paintings and prints widely in Europe and in the Philippines, beginning in 1969 when he represented the country at the sixth Paris Biennale. His works are on exhibit at the Honolulu Academy of Arts until May 20. Bencab will proceed to the mainland, hopefully for more exhibitions.

Among U.S. Filipinos active in the opposition movement, "1081" is perhaps his best-known work. The title is from Presidential Decree 1081, the martial law proclamation. Happily surprised that a well-known painter would dare register his protest in such a bold manner, activists here proceeded to use "1081" to illustrate calendars, cards, posters, and even leaflets.

Born in 1942 in Manila, Bencab received his fine arts degree from the University of the Philippines. In 1969, he made his residence in Hampstead, an artists' quarter in London together with his English wife, Caroline. He makes frequent trips to the Philippines.

While his artistic reputation initially rested on his paintings, Bencab excels in the medium of printmaking, a medium that highlights his strong political



TURN OF THE CENTURY COUPLE, 1977 acrylic/pen and ink

Bencab . . .

Continued from previous page



HEROES OF THE PAST II, color etching, aquatint

they see ethnic minorities wearing jockey shorts . . . but that's us, you have to accept that . . . There's no such thing as pure Philippine painting.

ON BEING A FILIPINO ARTIST ABROAD

The idea of going to Europe at first compelled me to change my style, to suit what is called the international style of painting—non-committal, formalistic and all that. I tried working on that style, hoping to be at par with western artists. But I soon found my work was becoming empty . . . I realized I could not relate just on pure aesthetics. But western art is so strong, so imposing that it can engulf you.

. . . In London, I took pride that my work showed my identity as a Filipino, that it showed our cultural identity. . . at least, the people there became aware there's such a thing as Philippine culture. I became more aware of my background perhaps because I was living in a foreign country, but I was also exposed to Asian and Indian art. So I tried to Filipinize my art through the use of nationalistic subject matters. Un-



MIGRANTS OF EUROPE, 1982 acrylic

fortunately there are no Black or Indian artists whose works are displayed at the prestigious Tate Gallery—only caucasian artists! Even David Medalla, a well-known Filipino artist who was a leading exponent of kinetic art in London . . . none of his works are in the gallery, and they deserve to be.

. . . I felt a lot for fellow Filipino expatriates and the cultural alienation they have to go through in order to provide for their families back home. Being an expatriate myself, has given me a lot of insight into our own heritage. I believe we have to have a strong grasp of our past, in order to understand the present. Acquiring old books and prints on the Philippines in London's antique bookshops gave me a whole new insight on the Filipino. As a result, I did a whole series in 1972, entitled *Larawan*, or Photograph, focusing on our

colonial past, mostly during the period of the American occupation.

. . . I find us Filipinos very communal, in things that we do. Unlike in Europe, you find yourself isolated, people do things individually . . . by themselves. And us, we think as a group, as a collective, we do things together. In the Philippines we could just sit down in a cafe, talk about all kinds of things, and before you know it, we've got a project already going! You get really involved, unlike in Europe, you're just an on-looker unless you have your own "pakulo."

ON MERGING POLITICS AND ART

It is quite difficult—having a good painting and having equally something good to say. In my work, I

'I did a painting for a women's group involved in political matters. They used the painting as a banner—I didn't mind, at least I got involved.'

always try to marry the two into works of art. "Art is a reflection of society"—that's been a subject of debate as far back as I can remember. But a famous print-maker and a person who had a lot of influence on my work, is Leonard Baskin who said: "The communication of an artistic idea is also an act of propaganda."

So, marrying the two is always my biggest challenge—I don't consider my work purely as propaganda. My background in abstract photography helps a lot . . . I look for abstract elements—more design, compositional—which helps me combine both elements so my paintings are not just pure storytelling, but you have the elements of space, color, composition so I guess that's a big reason why my works are appealing: they have clear content and yet they're organized artistically . . . it's a combination.

. . . But it is not easy to survive through art that is also social commentary. In the Philippines the tendency was to do paintings that are pleasing to investors, those who can afford to buy paintings. You have to focus on usual subject matters like landscapes, churches, realistic still lifes, in order to earn a living. Catering to buyers is in a way, a form of self-censorship. There are a number of painters who are also social commentators—Pablo Baen Santos, Egay Fernandez, Habulan, Cajipe, and a few others.

. . . I was once asked by the [Philippine] government to do a painting for them and I said yes, provided I chose the subject matter. The topic I chose was prisoners of war; they rejected it. No, I will never do something that's against my principles.

I know of prominent Filipinos who were caught up with the establishment. They did murals, more pro the New Society like H. R. Ocampo who did one depicting

'It is not easy to survive through art that is also social commentary . . . Catering to buyers is, in a way, a form of self-censorship.'

the Green Revolution . . . that's a way of catering to the establishment, I think. There were other artists who were pressured, like Manansala when he did a mural for the Heart Center, depicting Imelda Marcos as a saint. And there's Blanco who did a painting of Marcos with his medals. I don't know if one really gets pressured to do things like these. I have yet to see a painter put in jail for refusing to cooperate.

ON FILIPINO IMMIGRANTS IN ENGLAND

Filipino immigrants in England go through a lot of hardship, because most of the Filipinos who go there work as domestic help or hotel workers . . . I call them the "new *sacadas*." At one time, there was a hotel-boom and a lot of agencies recruited Filipinos—mostly women—to come and work in hotels and even hospitals. It's a status symbol for British families to have Filipino maids, did you know that? Many of them come directly from provinces in the Philippines.

Their problems become even bigger when they try to claim their relatives, husbands and children. The British government would refuse, and even these workers' status are questioned! Because there would be a slump in the tourist industry later on, many of these workers are not needed anymore.

I got involved in a newspaper for Filipinos in London, called *Balita*. While it lasted only a year, it

gave me a chance to go around and meet Filipinos in other places. The hardships they faced were almost the same—many of them were threatened with expulsion from England. We campaigned to give them the right to stay and bring in their families . . . after all, they've already settled themselves in England. We sent appeals to members of the Parliament, sought publicity through a BBC program, and even held demonstrations. We also got a lot of support from migrant action groups who are nationals from other countries, mostly Central Americans and Jamaicans. They are really well-organized and very supportive of other nationalities. . . .

ON PHILIPPINE POLITICS

I'm glad I went back to the Philippines recently. I felt I was losing my sense of awareness while I was in



TWO FILIPINAS IN THE ERA OF MULTINATIONALS, 1983 acrylic

England. I was getting sucked in a comfortable life. I was vacationing in Mallorca [Spain] in my mother-in-law's rest house, when I heard about Aquino's death. It hit me hard, and I asked myself questions like, what am I doing here? Enjoying life, engaging in empty, polite discussions . . . I needed to go back, to be part of what's happening.

I think what's happening in the Philippines now is very exciting. I was there for five months before I came to Honolulu, and I witnessed a lot of excitement. Everywhere I went, people were talking about politics as if it were part of their daily routine. Instead of playing *mahjong*, they'd talk politics . . . what direction is our country taking? What should we do about it? Or, how can demos be more effective? It's a very refreshing feeling!

. . . I believe we need to establish our sovereignty, that's important for our country. To be independent, to be able to determine what kind of government we want, involving all kinds of people who have a stake in that sovereignty. And it's important that no one meddles in what we do. Just like in Nicaragua, America has no right to be mining its ports—that's meddling in their affairs, and I'm afraid the same thing will happen in the Philippines once we gain our sovereignty.

. . . I support the boycott—there's no way honest elections can ever be held in our country if people can get killed, or salvaged, and everybody knows who did it, but can't do anything about it. Just before I came to Honolulu, I did a painting for a women's group involved in political matters. They used the painting as a banner—I didn't mind, at least I got involved! Also, a demo sponsored by WOMB—Women for the Ouster of Marcos Through Boycott—included in their program a display of protest paintings, which also included my works. □

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.

Dirty Road . . .



Participating in May 14 elections: Cory Aquino and Doy Laurel announce opposition candidates.

Continued from page 6

ROUND ONE A 'DISASTER' —CONCEPCION

In the wake of registration irregularities, other would-be participants are changing their tunes. Former University of the Philippines President Salvador P. Lopez withdrew from the race as an UNIDO candidate for Quezon City. "Fairly clean and honest elections cannot be held on May 14," said Lopez, who still supports the UNIDO slate.

Demoralization was widespread within NAMFREL as well. The organization ruled, following registration, that *barangay* officials would have to be kept away from the polls on election day. In some areas of Metro-Manila, poll-watchers withdrew after being "threatened with bodily harm by goons."

Even Jose Concepcion, the determined NAMFREL chief, looked upon the first weekend of registration as a "disaster." The second round was improved only slightly by roving bands of NAMFREL, COMELEC and police who dropped in on the sites.

THE INDELIBLE INK SOLUTION

The ebullient Concepcion seemed to have been ready to turn in his badge until saved by an American election specialist who "happened" to be "passing through Manila" at the appropriate moment. William Kimberling, a Federal Election Commission staffer who has advised foreign governments such as El Salvador and Nicaragua in the good old days, was lecturing in the Philippines on U.S. elections at the time.

"Serendipity in action," U.S. Embassy officials called it, when Kimberling bumped into the downcast Concepcion and provided the indelible ink solution. The idea, explained Kimberling, is to mark each voter's hand with ink that won't wash off for at least 48 hours and fair elections are insured.

A reborn Concepcion rushed eagerly to obtain \$42,000-worth of the stuff from Colombia via its Cardinal. In addition, he hopes to import indelible felt-tipped pens from the U.S., which, says Concepcion, won't spoil as easily as other types.

Concepcion is not the only one revived by indelible ink. It has meant a new burst of life for UNIDO which was a little green around the gills following registration and its accompanying irregularities. "Our candidates feel they have a fighting chance now," remarked Laurel. "With indelible ink, the chances of flying voters riding roughshod have been reduced."

ANGERING BENEDICTO

Thus the mad scramble continues. The

number of smaller, splinter parties and slighted KBL members running as independents has created ballot chaos. The resulting scene has led to raging debates in some areas as to which opposition bloc is the real opposition and which is a "hollow block."

Further, Marcos seems to have surrendered his earlier, much-publicized "anti-dynasty" stand and joined the trend himself. Daughter Imee, 28, is running as a candidate from Ilocos Norte where son Bong-bong reigns as governor. Vice Governor Roque Alban explained apologetically: "There can be a dynasty only in cases of appointive positions."

Elsewhere the family remained in charge. Brother-in-law Benjamin "Kokoy" Romualdez called the shots on ballot selections not only in Leyte and Samar, but in much of the Central Visayas as well. Marcos himself put in his own choices for the Western Visayas.

This trampled on the toes of Roberto Benedicto, ordinarily kingpin in the West and Central Visayas, who abruptly departed the country. Some claim Marcos and Kokoy were aiming to check Benedicto's vice-presidential ambitions which he made known too early for his own good. Meanwhile, disappointed KBLs who didn't make it to their own ticket are running on any one of the opposition blocs: UNIDO, NP, Liberal Party, Social Democratic Party, *Lapiang Manggagawa*, etc.

IRATE MAYORS, GOVERNORS, ABANDON SHIP

Things are not all that different elsewhere. Not all are happy with Kokoy's

'After all, if they can continue to speak glowingly about the recently concluded "democratic process" in El Salvador, why should the Philippines be any different?'

choices close to home. In Eastern Samar, the KBL mayors are campaigning against official candidate Vice Governor Vicente O. Valley. Valley, they claim, is not the "real choice" of the provincial leadership.

The sour notes extend well beyond sugarland. Luis Taruc, longtime supporter of Marcos, turned against the KBL when it failed to place his son on the Pampanga slate. Romeo Taruc is now running as an independent backed by the local farmers'

groups his father heads. Also in Pampanga, KBL Assemblyman Ella Duller, rejected this time around, joined the opposition.

In Pangasinan, two KBLs left off the ticket, Victor Agbayani, son of Gov. Aguedo Agbayani, and Agerico Rosario, launched their own campaign. Others in Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur, Abra, and La Union announced plans to do the same. Twenty-seven of 33 mayors in Ilocos Sur, angered over the selection of Godofredo Reyes, insisted the selection "does not reflect the sentiments" of their constituents.

Mayors, KBL chapter chairmen and



"Com'on this will be good for your health!"

other local leaders of the towns in the First District of Albay all threatened to resign over the inclusion of former Gov. Jose Estevez on the KBL ticket. Sorsogon Assemblyman Socorro de Castro meanwhile is running as an independent.

The Oriental Mindoro Mayors' League and members of the *Sangguniang Panlalawigan* announced that the KBL slate for their province is "incredible and therefore unacceptable."

Aklan Mayors' League chairwoman Maria Carillo-Zaldivar protested the selection of Banga Mayor Sergio Rigodon and reaffirmed the choice of Assemblyman Jose Tumboken who agreed to run—even as an NP.

UNIDO—TAKING THINGS SERIOUSLY

But UNIDO barrels on. While both Laurel and Aquino widow Corazon continue to insist that their position is "participation if" Marcos gives into a list of demands such as demilitarization of the polls, amnesty for political prisoners, UNIDO accreditation and press freedom—the "if" is getting decidedly fainter.

Indelible ink having done away with many of its worries, UNIDO is taking the election very seriously. As further protection, on April 14 Laurel called on COMELEC to replace the traditional metal ballot boxes with transparent ones to control stuffing.

Meanwhile, UNIDO is only partially

accredited, the polls have been remilitarized and political prisoners continue to moulder in jails across the country. Yet Laurel politely withdrew a challenge to Marcos to debate him on television. Marcos, he explained, "is very sick." Instead an UNIDO team agreed to a televised debate with the KBL.

UNIDO had a few political gimmicks of its own up its sleeve. Promising to find a beauty queen to run against Imelda in case she chooses to run, the group decided to go ahead and run one anyway even after the First Lady dramatically announced her intention to sit this one out.

Their choice for the dreaded Yabut territory of Makati from which two of their candidates had already withdrawn for lack of cash to counter the Mayor was none other than Aurora "Au-Au" Pijuan-Manotoc, formerly Miss Philippines and Miss International. She also happens to be the former first wife of Imee Marcos-Manotoc's husband.

U.S.—PUTTING ON THE PRESSURE

The other party taking the contest quite as seriously as UNIDO remains the U.S. government. Once again Ronald Reagan decided to skip the Philippines on an Asia trip lest an embrace of Marcos at the moment prove embarrassing. He did send a hand carried letter via former Ambassador Michael Armacost stressing the importance of "free and open" elections and essentially expressing support for the regime.

But while Reagan's letter insisted that the elections were "a purely Philippine affair," others on his team are putting sufficient pressure on those advocating a boycott to earn repeated charges of "meddling" and worse.

Phillip S. Kaplan, Staff Director for Secretary of State George Shultz' Political Planning Council, told a group of Philippine diplomats in Manila, "a lot of attention is being given by the U.S. to the election. It is important to us." He added bluntly that the U.S. bases in the Philippines are "the most important factors keeping the American presence in the country."

Other State Department officials met with pro-boycott figures and grilled them on their stance. Country Director Ulevich Strauss along with James Nach of the Embassy Political Affairs section met in Manila with Joker Arroyo, Abe Sarmiento, Fr. Joe Dizon, Jojo Binay, and Jun Factoran.

U.S. INTERESTS DOUBLE-EDGED

"The whole theme of that meeting was participation," claims Arroyo. "The Americans were asking, why are we for boycott, what do we get out of boycott, and so on. Toward the latter part of the evening, *napeste na kami*, we got fed up and we told the Americans, why do you keep pressuring us to participate?"

Doing some travelling, Strauss and Embassy Political Councilor Scott Hallford met in Mindanao with members of Justice for Aquino, Justice for All and other opposition forces there. "The Reagan administration," they told the group, "is not willing to abandon Mr. Marcos without risking U.S. interests in the Philippines."

A number of boycott supporters are convinced that U.S. interests are double-edged. Nach, in particular, has earned a reputation for himself as a snoop. *Business Day* reported that "Nach entered the office of JAJA and was seen going over the organization's files. He was recently singled out at a rally in front of the U.S. Embassy for "snooping in our files."

Indeed, for all of Reagan's disclaimers, followed by a few on the part of Armacost, the U.S. has every reason to be deeply interested in the elections. For the exercise is part of its three-pronged program to ease out a dictator past his prime, the other parts being a credible investigation into the Aquino assassination and the formation of a transition government.

Although mildly concerned about some of the grosser examples of fraud recorded to date, on the whole the State Department remains unfazed. Elections are part of the recipe for the Philippines, no matter how dirty. After all, if they can continue to speak glowingly about the recently concluded "democratic process" in El Salvador, why should the Philippines be any different? □

By EMIL DE GUZMAN

Movie Review

El Norte: Delicate But Devastating

"El Norte is a rare and compassionate film whose emotional impact is devastating. It will compel all but the most hardened racists and anti-immigrant chauvinists to seriously question, if not abandon, their hostile and condescending attitudes toward refugees and undocumented workers.

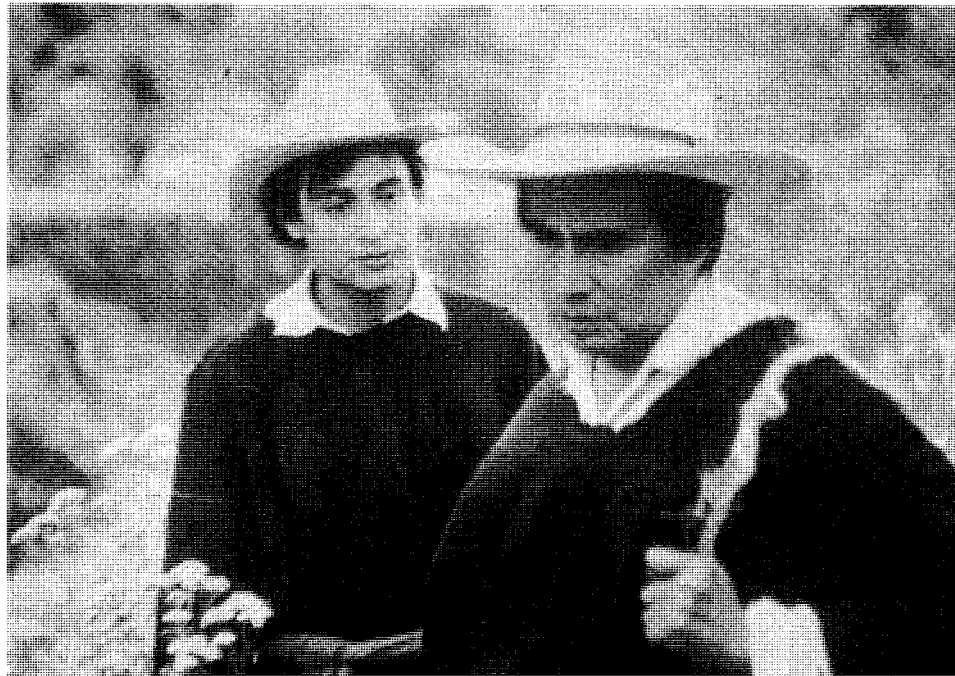
For this reason alone, El Norte is a high achievement in American social commentary.

In part one of an expertly crafted three-part film, Enrique and Rosa Xuncax (the main characters) played by David Villalpando and Zaide Silvia Tutierrez, two of Mexico's leading stage actors) are forced to flee from their small Guatemalan village after the murder of their father and subsequent abduction of their mother by government troops.

In the brief episode, where the father is brutally beheaded for calling a peasants' meeting to discuss their subhuman working conditions, the viewer is given a glimpse of the Guatemala that is known to many as the "Land of eternal repression."

Like most refugees from Central America, Rosa and Enrique escape north toward "El Norte"—or the U.S.. They know the U.S. only through their godmother's 10-year old collection of Good Housekeeping magazines.

Through luck and sheer wit, Rosa and Enrique elude the ever-present danger of deportation from Mexican and then U.S. authorities, are almost victimized by a huckster who preys on unknowing refugees, and finally crawl their way to "El Norte" through a mile-long rat-infested sewer pipe.



Cinecom International Films

Their final destination is Los Angeles, where as a housemaid and waiter, Rosa and Enrique encounter the harsh realities of worker exploitation, anti-immigrant chauvinism and racism—a far cry from their enchanted vision of the land of the flush toilet, electric lights, where even the poor own their own car.

In the film's sad ending, Enrique is

deprived of his last family tie with the death of his sister. He goes to live, almost with ritualistic acquiescence, in the sub-human world of the refugee: Enrique arises the very next day to search for a job, his need for compassion and emotional regeneration denied.

Being an American production, El Norte's most noteworthy accomplishment is that

it survived Hollywood's financiers who had doomed it to failure even before production began. Because director Gregory Nava and his wife Anna Thomas (who co-wrote and produced the film) were committed to a film where Latinos carry the main roles and Spanish is the main language of dialogue, it took two years to secure the remarkably low financing.

As a result, not only are Rosa and Enrique treated with a rare depth and humanity absent in American portrayals of Latin Americans, most of the secondary characters are likewise presented through their refreshingly diverse and unique personalities.

Even such progressive films as "Missing" and "Under Fire" about Chile and Nicaragua respectively are films where, according to Nava, "all the major characters are American and you don't get to know the people to whom things are really happening down there."

Through the magic realism inspired by the works of eminent Latin American writers (Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Carlos Fuentes, Miguel Angel Asturias) "El Norte" conveys the richness of Mayan culture. Butterflies, mists and vibrant and dream-like imageries color the severe poverty of everyday life.

Another dimension barely or superficially depicted in American films but effectively handled by El Norte, is the portrayal of the social and cultural differences between Guatemalan Indians, Mexicans and American-born Chicanos. The choice of Spanish as the film's primary language greatly aids this portrayal and enables the viewer to enter more fully the world of the Latin American refugee. □

Jackson . . .

Continued from page 10

the Filipino people reject. . . We cannot have our dignity when our aid goes to kill Filipinos when the Filipinos want us out of their political affairs and our bases out of their land."

Jackson has also given a lot of stress to the rights of immigrants, particularly in the realm of U.S. immigration law which he considers to be unfair and oppressive. He opposes the Simpson-Mazzoli bill and wants an immigration policy that does not discriminate against immigrants from Asian, Latin American and African countries while favoring those from European countries.

DEMOCRATIZING THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY

As a result of his platform and his stinging criticisms of the mistreatment of the underprivileged, Jackson has been able to mobilize a dynamic and promising "rainbow coalition"—a broad political alliance of peace forces, anti-interventionists, anti-imperialists, civil and human rights advocates, religious leaders, environmentalists, the disabled, women, gays, lesbians, Native Americans, Hispanics and Asians. It is a coalition that has the Black movement for justice and equality at its core. For the first time in many years, the voices of the disenfranchised are being heard throughout this country.

With the rainbow movement as a base, Jackson's immediate goal is the empowerment of minorities within the Democratic Party itself. Blacks and other discriminated groups traditionally have been a part of the Democrats' base and are crucial to the success of the Democratic Party as a whole. However, their interests have always been downplayed by the Party's programs and policies. By mobilizing a rainbow coalition Jackson hopes to force the Democratic Party leadership to adopt policies and principles favorable to the interests of minorities and other constituents who have been historically ignored.

To complete his drive for the political empowerment of the have-nots, Jackson is pressing for the democratization of the electoral process. The Voting Rights Act, passed in 1965 as a fruit of this historic civil rights movement, is meant to remove all legal barriers to the full participation of Blacks and other minorities in the electoral arena. However, certain Democratic rules, such as the dual primary system in effect in Southern states, make the Voting Rights Act meaningless. The dual primary requires that a second election be held if the nominee wins by less than 51% of his or her party's primary vote. This system is a means of discrimination against Blacks because it allows defeated white candidates to band together against the Black nominee in the second runoff. Since most of those states are essentially one-party states, it is estimated that doing away with the dual primary system would lead to the election of between 12 to 20 additional Blacks to

Congress and of many hundreds of Blacks to state and local offices throughout the South.

Jackson's platform and his attempts to democratize the Democratic party through the empowerment of the powerless are already making the powerful nervous. This should be a signal to all minorities, including Filipinos, that an important trail is being blazed for our political future.

VOTE ON ISSUES, VOTE WITH ALLIES

It is said that Filipinos rank second highest among immigrant groups who opt for American citizenship after meeting residency requirements. It means that every year more and more of our 1.5 million population acquire the right to vote. In some states, such as California where we are the fastest growing Asian community or in Hawaii where we constitute 20% of the population, this could mean a potential of some significance at the polls. On the whole, however, as a minority, we are too small to influence change simply through our own numbers. The lesson we must grasp as we acquire voting rights is to vote on issues and to vote *in alliance with* other communities on the basis of interests that we share in common.

There are few Filipino leaders who, believe it or not, are initiating Filipino Republican clubs. While this may bolster their false sense of economic stability and social mobility, this is certainly a misguided project that could only confuse Filipinos into voting against their own interests. Most Filipinos unfortunately, still do not study the issues or, remain passive altogether. Our votes will only be squandered that way. Jesse Jackson's candidacy is an important opportunity to change this practice.

His platform gives us the basis to cut through the greasepaint and banality of the other candidacies. For the first time we have a political standard against which the content of the other candidacies can be tested. New and old Filipino voters alike should scrutinize Jackson's platform and honestly ask themselves whether Hart's and Mondale's reflect their deepest sentiments as foreign-born workers and non-whites.

Jackson's platform also gives us the opportunity to act in concert with our natural allies. Acting alone, we will not get anywhere as a community. But by linking up with a "rainbow movement," we can bring about changes that benefit us and everyone else.

UNWARRANTED HESITATIONS

To be frank, however, even among those who realize that by far Jesse Jackson has the best platform and that he best represents our concerns as a community, there is still some amount of hesitation.

Foremost is the question, "Since Jesse is not expected to win the nominations, shouldn't people go with the likely winner who has a real chance of running against Reagan in November instead?"

How many times has the American public gone for the "winner" and as a result, lost? Reagan's rise to the presidency is a prime example of going for the winner and losing. No, pragmatism is no substitute for our interest in forcing the powers-that-be to confront our

aspirations.

Ironically, the fact that Jackson knows he is not going to be allowed to be president of the United States is the strength of his campaign. With nothing to lose and everything else to gain, Jackson can afford to stick his neck out, speak his mind, and most importantly, amplify our concerns freely. To support him means to give his campaign more muscle in altering the terms of the political debate—in our favor.

However, the record number of Blacks registering to vote for the first time because of the Jackson candidacy is, even now, giving the "sure winners" very real worries. For example in New York, 160,000 new voters have been added to the voting population, an increase registered mainly in districts with high Black concentrations.

Political analysts note that if Black voter participation increases by 25% by the time of the general elections, Reagan could lose several states that he won in 1980 like Alabama, Mississippi, New York, and South Carolina—even if he gets the same percentage of white votes he did then!

Earlier efforts to downplay Jackson's bid as "merely symbolic with no real teeth in real politics" are now crumbling in the face of Jackson's successes: in New York, Jackson got 89% of the Black votes; in Illinois, 75%; Pennsylvania, 75%; Georgia, 63%; Alabama, 54% and Florida, 51%. Most of these are voters that are newly registered or, if previously registered, have not gone to the polls for over 10 years. To date, Jackson has received more than 1.5 million individual votes in the primaries and caucuses. No, this rainbow campaign is not a pushover.

Already, the massive support for Jackson is giving a clear signal to traditional politicians that there is emerging a new class of voters who mean business. We may not win in '84, but we will certainly be around for the next bout.

Among Filipinos, there is a hesitation more serious because of its backwardness: the hesitation to support a candidate who is Black. The fact that the best representative of our interest as a minority is a Black person is not an accident in the context of this society. We must deal with this racism among us and remind ourselves that just as we expect others to respect our color and/or national origin, we must learn to respect theirs. We have a lot more in common with the Black people of this country than with the powerful white capitalists and bureaucrats who rule this society, and surreptitiously, the Philippines and the rest of the world.

Our political involvement, as Jackson has stressed, must begin now. We must exercise our right to vote and use it wisely. The candidacy of Jesse Jackson is giving us a chance to examine our role as a minority not just within the limits of this presidential campaign but in the political life of this country as a whole. More than participating in Jesse Jackson's campaign, we are participating in a movement for meaningful social change. "Win Jesse Win" means we have to win the battle for political empowerment not only in 1984 but in the years ahead. □

America Is On An Overspending Spree

Who's Afraid of Reagan's Deficit?

By WICKS GEAGA

For decades we have piled deficit upon deficit, mortgaging our future and our children's future for the temporary convenience of the present," Ronald Reagan warned self-righteously in his 1981 Inaugural address.

But after just three years in office, Reagan himself has piled up another \$547.6 billion deficit on top of the now \$1,300,000,000,000 (trillion) national debt. His 1985 budget if passed will add roughly \$180 billion to that debt.

If Reagan is reelected, even his administration's conservative budget projections show that he will double the present debt to \$2.6 trillion, far outstripping—in his second term alone—the deficit ran up by all past presidents combined.

Meanwhile, the interest on the debt continues to devour larger portions of the budget itself. From 13% of the outlays in 1980, interest payments are estimated to top 20% in 1988 and, according to economist John Paulus of Morgan Stanley, could be more than double the administration's projected \$152 billion deficit for that year.

DEFENSE

As if immune to the deficit delirium sweeping the entire financial community, Reagan recently submitted his \$925.5 billion 1985 budget, up 8.4% from this year's \$853.8 billion.

As expected, Reagan proposed another massive \$33.4 billion or 18.1% increase in military spending, the largest budget item and the biggest contributor to the deficit.

Billed as the largest peacetime military expansion in U.S. history, Reagan's program calls for spending \$264 billion in 1985 and includes \$8.2 billion for the B-1 bomber, \$5 billion for the MX missile, \$4.2 billion for the F-16, and \$3 billion for nuclear submarines.

For the rest of the decade, out of an additional \$1.4 trillion targeted for the Pentagon, \$585 billion will go to build an assortment of ships, aircraft, missiles and other weapons. The frenetic build-up is meant to be the basis for a renewed drive to recover from political losses abroad in the hands of "Soviet-inspired" liberation struggles.

But the massive military outlays and interest payments on the debt are not the only sources of Reagan's monstrous budget shortfalls.

The huge business and personal tax cut that Reagan pushed through Congress in 1981—which disproportionately shifted the tax burden onto the middle and lower income sectors—is depriving the U.S. Treasury of an estimated \$846 billion over the five years 1983 to 1987.

Reagan has repeatedly rejected any proposals to reinstate these taxes in order to absorb some of the red ink. "To those who say we must raise taxes, I say wait," was Reagan's recent response. "Tax increases pile unfair burdens on the people, hurt capital formation and destroy incentives for growth."

WHERE PLACE THE BURDEN?

The burden for balancing the budget, as Reagan's budget-slashing record shows, lies on the social programs that benefit the nation's poverty-stricken sector. While these programs have already suffered the worst cuts, they are still slated for further "modest" trimming. Welfare, health, education and public works are all targeted for more reductions.

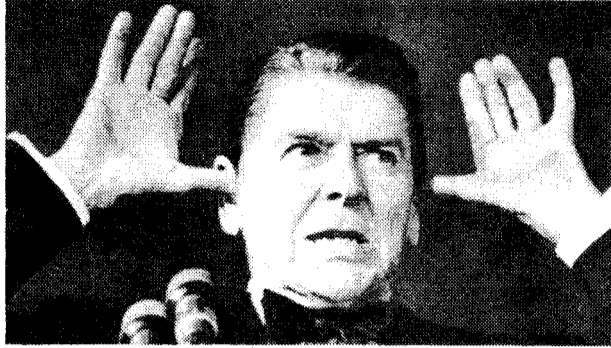
But even administration budget analysts realize that these cuts will yield little. The drastic reductions already effected by Reagan have been more than offset by the increase in interest payments for the spiraling debt.

ENTITLEMENTS NEXT TO GO

Administration officials, therefore, are looking to entitlement programs as the only substantial item in the budget that could generate part of the critically needed funds.

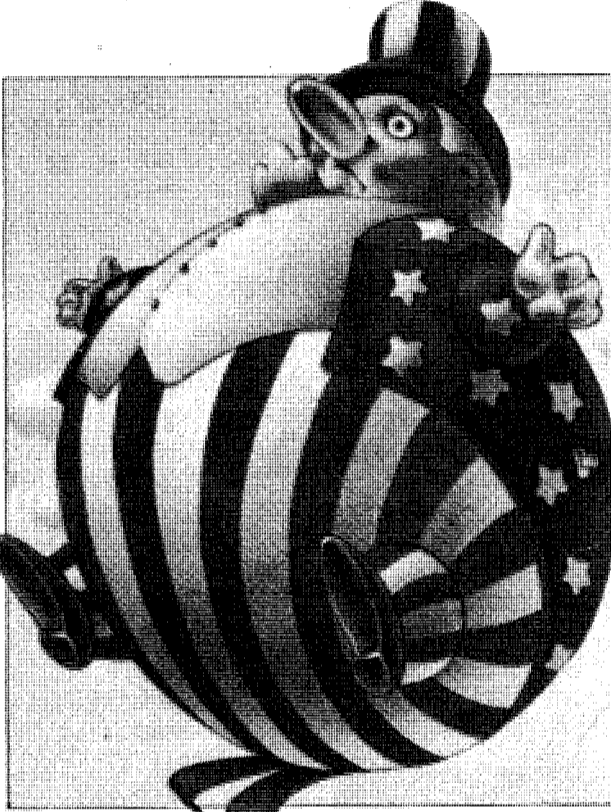
While Reagan's 1985 budget officially calls for inflation-compensating increases in Social Security, Medicare, and unemployment insurance, Budget Director David Stockman erased any doubt as to the administration's real plans when he stated: "We're going to have to look at entitlements. We're going to have to look at certain categories of domestic spending that haven't been trimmed very much thus far."

Stockman went on to imply that these cuts will have to wait until after Reagan's reelection. Why? The beneficiaries of these entitlement programs are mostly



the predominantly white and stable sectors of the working population. A good part of these sectors form the traditional base of support for the Democratic Party. Also, Reagan was able to draw sizeable defections from these sectors when he built the white patriotic consensus that elected him in 1980. To announce the cuts before the elections would amount to political suicide.

Despite Reagan's "brilliant" performance thus far in slashing social programs, taming inflation, cutting



taxes for the wealthy, eliminating the burden of federal regulation on the business sector, and projecting U.S. military power abroad, there is widespread anxiety within the ruling circles about Reagan's capacity to resolve the deficit crisis.

HIGH CLASS NIGHTMARES

Federal Reserve Board Chairman Paul Volcker feels that the situation has reached a critical point and that the administration cannot wait until after the November elections. Urgent action, he says, is called for right now. Volcker of course, is not the only one experiencing deficit nightmares, and for good reason.

Guatemala . . .

Continued from page 16

the guerillas took 15 towns in various provinces across the country, attacked economic and industrial targets, and took over the radio station at the University of San Carlos. Massive propaganda and frequent encounters have been launched since then.

BROAD POLITICAL FRONT

Hand in hand with the armed struggle is the development of legal and semi-legal work and the emergence of many popular and democratic organizations. Here, the gains are just as impressive. One of the most militant of these democratic organizations is the Popular Plan (FP-31) which was founded on the first anniversary of the January 31, 1981 slaughter of 27 mostly Indian protesters at the Spanish Embassy. FP-31 supports the URNG's program.

Perhaps the largest organization in the resistance movement is the Democratic Front Against Repression (FDCR) which has 150 affiliated organizations and includes Guatemalan social democrats. FDCR has the support of socialist governments and parties in Europe, Canada and Mexico.

The other important opposition forces in Guatemala are the Confederation of Trade Union Unity (CNUS), the Committee of Agricultural Workers (CUC), and the Committee for Justice and Peace. Large sections of the

Because the spiraling deficit and national debt are usurping a greater and greater portion of the available credit from lending institutions, correspondingly less capital is becoming available for new investments by the private sector.

Volcker has warned that the stagnation of investment in industry and the resulting hindrance to growth in the economy could well lead the current recovery to a grinding halt. Worse, the economy could plunge into another prolonged recession. He also warns that massive deficits could rekindle rampant inflation.

Another potentially devastating impact of the deficit is the spiraling of interest rates. With available capital depleted by government borrowing, the increase in demand pushes interest rates to higher and ever-dangerous levels.

High interest rates are credited for the high value of the dollar compared to other world currencies; the overvalued dollar, in turn, is blamed for creating the burgeoning U.S. trade deficit, which last year reached a record \$69.1 billion. Simply stated, an overvalued dollar lowers the price of imports, while inversely driving up prices of products the U.S. exports abroad. Higher export prices restrict the sales of U.S. goods abroad, as they become less competitive.

Higher interest rates also attract loans from foreign lenders. Understandably, foreign governments are hardly ecstatic over the flight of their domestic investment capital to the U.S.. Undergoing fragile recoveries of their own, these governments blame the dollar's strength for luring away badly needed capital from their domestic market.

Adding another dimension to the already bleak picture, some economists predict that if the trend of foreign capital inflow to the U.S. continues, this country could soon be a debtor nation—borrowing more than it invests abroad.

As grave as the situation is becoming, Reagan appears more concerned about his reelection than the deficit crisis. He has tried to assuage fears by reiterating his belief that it is "possible to grow our way out of these deficits."

Volcker, seen by some White House officials as a more serious threat to Reagan's reelection than any Democratic candidate, is not at all convinced by Reagan's assurances. In return for granting White House requests to ease up on the money supply and, therefore, avert a possible recession before election day, Volcker is demanding a compromise plan with Congress to reduce the deficit.

Already, Reagan has backed down somewhat from his initial stance of no compromise with the Democrats, who oppose cutting entitlement programs and favor certain business tax increase and token cuts in military spending.

But he still appears determined not to lop off the military budget and not to raise taxes for the corporate rich. This is in line with his program of bringing the Soviet Union to its knees while at the same time making American business competitive once more through incentives awarded to the private sector. Apart from repeated assertions of faith in his policies, Reagan has not offered any new plan that would ease the nervousness gripping more and more sections of America's business and political elite.

America's ruling circles had held that Reagan's military build-up just might defeat the Soviets even without a shooting war. They banked on the belief that the Soviet's "inferior" economic system cannot possibly keep up with the pace and volume of Reagan's build-up. But part of their deficit nightmares is the slow realization that it is the U.S. economic system which may not be able to survive the strain. □

Guatemalan clergy are active in both the armed and legal struggles.

Since the formation of these organizations, militant actions for reforms have been waged in rapid succession. Worthy of note were the paralyzing strikes by 75,000 workers in February 1980. Effective work stoppages were also conducted in 1979 by sugar cane cutters and coffee and cotton pickers who were mainly Indians.

Although the revolutionary upsurge is more recent, many resistance forces trace their roots to the only period of popular rule in Guatemala—1944 to 1954. The rise to power of the Democratic Juan Arevalo government in 1944 was the result of popular unity against the pro-U.S. Jorge Urbico dictatorship. The popular forces were beaten back by a U.S.-backed coup in 1954 but started rebuilding strength in the 1960s.

Today, Guatemala is comparable to El Salvador in the period before the Salvadoran revolutionary forces were able to lock the ruling junta in the current military stalemate. But the revolutionary challenge is moving fast and is being fueled by the intensified repression and economic crisis. While Washington still has room for political maneuvers, time is running out.

According to Comandante Benedicto, the leader of EGP and a member of URNG:

"No general, no government, not even support by the U.S. government can avoid the reality of an entire people determined to liberate itself, whatever the barriers and whatever the price." □

By EDDIE ESCULTURA

The real test of the Reagan administration will come in Guatemala, not El Salvador," American freelance journalist Marlise Simon predicts. The reason, he says, is simple. "In El Salvador, the administration has been able to disguise its raw anti-communism by pointing to the ruling junta's commitment to democracy and social reform. . . In Guatemala, the terror is institutionalized."

After El Salvador, Guatemala is indeed the next flash point for U.S. policy in Central America. All the ingredients are there—an economic crisis unprecedented in the country's history, a series of U.S.-inspired coups, a burgeoning revolutionary struggle and a human rights situation that makes El Salvador look like a fraternity hazing.

But as Simon says, the U.S. will have a tougher time justifying its support for the Guatemalan status quo in the name of democracy. For in Guatemala, only the repressors are free to do what they want.

MOST REPRESSIVE NATION

Amnesty International reported that more than 100,000 Guatemalans have been detained, persecuted, or have disappeared in the last 23 years.

Since the U.S.-engineered overthrow of popularly elected President Jacobo Arbenz in 1954, there have been 84,000 political assassinations and 35,000 disappearances. From March, 1981 to February 1982, 4,349 killings, kidnappings, and disappearances were reported.

The General Secretariat and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights of the Organization of American States, the Catholic Bishops of Guatemala as well as a host of other Church and human rights publications have provided graphic descriptions of the abuses suffered by the Guatemalans, especially by the Indian population.

The images evoked by these reports are vivid and horrifying: the decapitated bodies of peasants, the gouged eyes of an Indian, the smashed arms and testicles of a worker, the bashed head of a union leader, the disfigured face of a woman, the mutilated body of a student, or the slit throat of a church worker.

Repression has victimized even such "unexpected" targets as journalists, scientists, professionals and priests. In 1980, 700 students and teachers, 110 trade union leaders, 18 journalists and four priests were killed.

But most of the victims come from the Indian communities which comprise 53% of the country's population. It is in the Indian regions where "Operation Guatemala," a copy of the dreaded "Operation Phoenix" in Vietnam, had the most devastating impact. This counterinsurgency campaign claimed 20,000 lives in 1970 alone and earned for then President Gen. Carlos Aranas the title of "Butcher of Zacapa."

Secret tribunals, clandestine prisons, and death squads have been fixtures of the repressive apparatuses of the Guatemalan regimes. It is this level of repression that prompted Amnesty International last year to declare that "there is in Guatemala the worst repression in the world." Repression and military operations have created one million internal refugees and forced 250,000 people to become refugees abroad, mainly in Mexico and the U.S. But even refugee camps across the border in Mexico are not safe. Guatemalan troops make frequent incursions into Mexico to harass refugee settlements.

OVERRIDING U.S. INTERESTS

The human rights situation in Guatemala became so embarrassing to the U.S. that the Carter administration cut off all aid to the country in 1977. But despite a human rights situation that has worsened since then, the Reagan administration, claiming "U.S. national security interests" are at stake, has resumed military aid.

Guatemala is indeed strategically important for U.S. policy in the region. It is seen as the zone that buffers Mexico (and the U.S., by Reagan's logic!) from the revolutionary ferment in the rest of Central America. In addition, if the U.S. goes for direct intervention in El Salvador or Nicaragua, Guatemala, along with Honduras, is being counted on as an ally and a base for military operations.

Guatemala is no stranger to U.S. military adventures, having served as the launching pad for the ill-fated U.S. Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba in 1960.

Washington is also not willing to lose the most populous and industrially developed country in Central America where U.S. capital has considerable interests. Of all U.S. investments in the region, 81% is to be found in Guatemala.

There are 193 firms engaged in agribusiness, and extractive industries. Coffee, cattle, and sugar account for more than two-thirds of Guatemala's \$1.5 billion export earnings. American holdings represent 31% of all foreign investments there.

In the extractive industries, nickel is the main export and the most important for U.S. military purposes. Other strategic minerals include bauxite, copper, manganese, and cobalt.

Guatemala:

The Next El Salvador

Oil exploration is just getting underway but the drillings being undertaken by TEXACO and AMOCO are expected to supply 10% of U.S. needs. Food, textile, tire, construction materials, and pharmaceuticals are the principal manufacturing industries, all of which are U.S. dominated.

COUP AFTER COUP

Washington is naturally very sensitive to anything that could weaken its political position in Guatemala. The U.S.-backed coup which replaced the born-again Christian, Gen. Efraim Rios Montt, with Gen. Oscar Mejia Victores was a classic example of this sensitivity.

Rios Montt himself was installed by a U.S. instigated coup in June, 1982 which toppled Gen. Lucas Garcia. The coup was meant to defuse the growing radicalization of the church and to lay the ground for putting a quick end to the "communist threat."



Alain Keler/Sygma

But instead of reversing the rising revolutionary tide, Rios Montt only succeeded in exposing the true character of his regime to the international community with brutal public executions of "subversives" and intensified political assassinations. Even the Pope could not swallow this spectacle and castigated Rios Montt during his Central American sojourn.

Corruption and capital flight depleted the country's currency reserves and the IMF refused to grant loans except under the most stringent conditions.

There were at least 10 coup attempts against Rios Montt—all of which fizzled out obviously because they lacked U.S. support. What got Rios Montt in trouble, however, was his disagreement with U.S. policy in Central America.

He balked at a U.S.-designed plan to overthrow the Sandinista government with forces from allied governments in the region and refused to help El Salvador. While he agreed that Nicaragua was a "threat" he believed that the present U.S. policy was essentially handing Central America over to the left.

This was unforgivable and the U.S. response was swift: another coup just 14 months after Rios Montt was installed. The new U.S. boy, Gen. Oscar Mejia Victores, is more "sensible." He is also U.S.-trained.

Mejia Victores immediately vowed to cooperate fully with the U.S. in eliminating "Leninist-Communist subversion." He revived the secret tribunals which executed 15 Guatemalans in his first few weeks in power. He then unleashed more repression on the church which has become an outspoken critic of the regime.

FROM COVERT TO OPEN AID

Aside from manipulating Guatemala's political leadership, the U.S. has had to do some diplomatic dirty tricks to keep its clients afloat. Documents captured by Salvadoran guerrillas reveal that despite the formal suspension of all U.S. aid to Guatemala, aid continued clandestinely.

In fact, the aid ban was secretly lifted in June 1981, when the Reagan administration sent 100 military jeeps and \$2 million worth of spare parts for Guatemala's U.S.-supplied helicopters. Covert aid included conducting military training, sending U.S. military advisers, providing repair services, and extending loans and grants.

In 1982 alone, Guatemala received \$21.2 million in grants from the U.S. and a total loan guarantee of \$104 million. During the period of the ban Guatemala received assistance from Washington's surrogate, Israel. Together with Argentina and Spain, Israel provided \$270 million for Guatemala during this period.

The Reagan administration formally lifted the aid

ban in June 1983. Immediately, the U.S. sold \$6.3 million worth of arms and helicopter spare parts and delivered 845 radios worth \$2.9 million. The military and economic aid for 1983 amounted to \$55.4 million in addition to a loan guarantee of \$47.6 million and military support funds of \$20.35 million.

GLOOMY ECONOMY

Side by side with the dismal human rights situation, a persistent economic gloom has settled over all of this nation's 42,000 square miles.

Although Guatemala is the most economically developed country in Central America, this is only relatively speaking. Guatemala remains a classic case of underdevelopment. It has a \$1,082 per capita income; a 30% unemployment rate; 54% underemployment; an 80% malnutrition rate, and a 98% illiteracy rate.

While the bottom 10% of the population ekes out a living on 0.5% of the land, the top 20% controls 73% of it. Only 10% of the workers are unionized.

GUERRILLA FORCES UNITE

This state of affairs naturally engenders popular resistance. The year 1982 was a turning point for the liberation movement in Guatemala. Four major guerilla organizations formed the Guatemalan National Liberation Unity (URNG) on the basis of a five-point political program. In the same year, 26 leaders of popular and democratic organizations formed the Guatemalan Committee of Patriotic Unity (CGUP) which supports the URNG and its program.

The largest guerilla organization in Guatemala is the 10-year-old Guerilla Army of the Poor (EGP) which operates in the country's northern region. The oldest, however, is the Rebel Armed Forces (FAR) which focuses on urban and agricultural workers. Founded in 1962, FAR operates in the Pacific region and the Peten jungles.

The Revolutionary Organization of People in Arms (ORPA) puts emphasis on the Indian population. Indians constitute 4.2 million of the 7.9 million Guatemalans, or the majority. There are 20 Indian nations. Indians are the most oppressed and exploited segment of the population. They also bear the brunt of government and landlord repression.

The Guatemalan Workers Party (PGT), the fourth component of the alliance, is active among urban and



agricultural workers of the southern coastal region.

The guerilla operations cover half of the entire country and include areas of greatest economic value for Guatemalan society. With an estimated 6,000 fighters, the guerilla movement is pitted against Guatemala's 18,000-man armed forces.

What has galvanized the revolutionary movement in Guatemala is the coherence of the five-point program of URNG which consists of the following:

- An end to foreign political domination and the repressive rule;
- Nationalization of the properties of the very rich, agrarian reforms, and industrial development;
- Equality for the Indians, the first stage in this process being to ensure participation in political power;
- Equality for women and democratic representation of all sectors through free elections; and
- Upholding the principle of self-determination, non-alignment, and international cooperation.

That its program addresses the needs of the Indian population is verified by the impressive revolutionary gains made especially in the Indian populated regions.

Within two weeks of the announcement of URNG,

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