

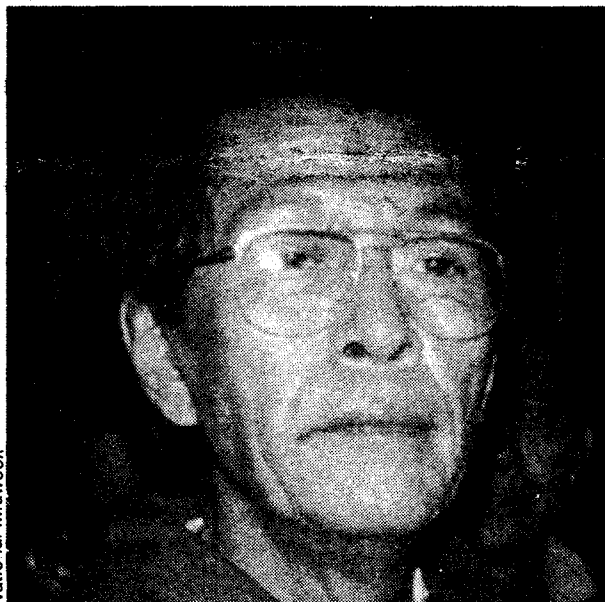
Human Rights Probe Acid Test of Rule



T. Rocamora



National Midweek



NY Times



Newsweek

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R.P. Foreign Policy:

Seeking New Options

By NANCY F. ROCAMORA

In a high-pressure drive to drum up aid for the bankrupt Philippine economy, a unified government of President Corazon Aquino last month pushed the reluctant U.S. to loosen its purse strings. At the same time, the Philippine administration took the first steps toward a much-needed diversification in economic and political ties.

Secretary of State George Shultz announced May 13 that the U.S. will act as an international broker for the Aquino government in an effort to put together a financial aid package of \$2 billion from a variety of sources. The move marked an abrupt departure from the earlier Reagan offer of \$150 million to top the \$350 million planned during the Marcos era.

Philippine Vice President and Foreign Minister Salvador Laurel ruffled Shultz' feathers when he announced April 29 at the Bali summit conference of ASEAN foreign ministers that \$150 million was "certainly not enough. The country is

broke." The irritated Shultz told reporters, "Vice President Laurel, I must say, gave the impression that his needs were infinite and we don't have an infinite capacity to provide money."

EMPTY COFFERS

But that was precisely the impression that Laurel wished to convey. It was echoed throughout the ranks of the Aquino government in time for Shultz' visit to the Philippines on his way home from the Tokyo summit of the world's seven leading industrial nations.

Ravaged by years of Ferdinand Marcos' graft and excessive spending, the Philippine economy is left with a foreign debt of \$26 billion while Marcos is \$8 billion richer than he was when he entered office. One half of the country's export earnings will be required just to pay this year's interest on that debt.

The national treasury contains a mere fraction of the government's budget for 1986. Marcos used most of the money in

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An Unnecessary Concession

There was obviously an attempt on the part of the Aquino government to get a broad representation of interests in the recently formed Constitutional Commission. As a result, the ConCom can be expected to produce a draft that infinitely would be better than the trash Marcos imposed on the people in 1973; it could even be better than the 1935 Constitution. But in reserving some slots for the noisy pro-Marcos forces, President Aquino reached out too broadly.

Among the first 44 people named are leaders of known commitment to democratic rights and nationalism. They can be expected to press for a strong bill of rights that would legally provide safeguards against abuses by the state. Present too, are activists who are expected to address the issue of social justice for the poor and propertyless majority. There are also known advocates of genuine national independence in the critical commission.

However, there could have been more of such people appointed. The representation of the poor and working people is relatively thin given the liberal-democratic administration's oft-spoken commitment to their well-being. In this light, President Aquino's decision to give five slots in the 50-person body to representatives of the "KBL and Ople opposition" was disappointing.

Perhaps Aquino considered the decision a tactical move to steal the thunder from the Marcos remnants who have refused to recognize the legitimacy of her

presidency. But Aquino's advisers are the first to assure supporters that they are not hurting from these contras who are basically being ignored by the administration. So, why the concession?

Perhaps it was an attempt to prove to the world the fairness of the present dispensation. But there are far better ways to show fairness than to provide these political dregs the chance to inject their fascist perspectives in the drafting of the highest law of the land.

These pests have had their chance at state power once and they used it to destroy even the nominal democratic rights the 1935 Constitution provided. Political pluralism should not include such criminals. It is "fairness" enough that the new regime did not throw them all in jail for their role in imposing on the people a 14-year prison sentence.

Instead of giving any concessions to Mr. Marcos' paid cast of thousands, President Aquino should have paid more attention to those who risked life and limb to make their voices heard when criminals had the run of the state. The five slots should have been used to add more people who are committed to the rights and interests of workers, peasants, fishermen, women, and the urban poor. Unfortunately, the seats will only be wasted on the irritating antics of known scoundrels who do not deserve a second chance in government.

Borrow from the Socialist Bloc

How can Corazon Aquino's government lead the country to economic recovery when it is saddled with billions in foreign debt from the Marcos era and has no

visible means of forging a national industry?

"Self-reliance," as proposed by some commentators who have become wary of U.S.-dominated lending institutions such as the World Bank and the IMF, is an attractive idea. But current economic reality argues that even to get to the point of self-reliance, the country would have to seek more borrowed capital. There is simply no avoiding it.

In a recent lecture at the University of the Philippines, Communist Party founding leader Jose Ma. Sison gave an important suggestion. The government, he said, should borrow from socialist countries and increase trade with "less demanding capitalist countries" to break its dependence on the United States. Socialist countries have been giving "soft loans for industrial development that are in sharp contrast to the loans for infrastructure and high consumerism which have sunk the Philippines deeper into the debt trap."

Sison is right. Even just from the point of view of self-preservation, it is in the interest of socialist countries to see more nations become industrialized and self-reliant. They view such development as an important part of their defenses against imperialist encirclement. The more independent nations there are, the more breaks in imperialism's political, economic, and military chain. This consideration has acquired even more significance in the present period of warlike Reaganism.

For the Philippines and other countries like it, better relations and mutually beneficial economic ties with the socialist bloc would be key economic resources. Good relations with the socialist bloc would also be a dramatic assertion of the Philippines' independence. Non-alignment—for economic survival and political independence—is a policy the Aquino government must choose. □

ALL we ARE SAY-ING...
...is GIVE WAR A CHANCE...



Litter from Manila

ACTING PRESIDENT



By INIDORO DELIHENCIA

On May 26, thousands of *antay*-Marcos (wait-for-Marcos) loyalists declared Arturo Tolentino Acting President of the Philippines. That was a lucky day for all Filipinos. Tolentino and his KBL colleagues have, in fact, already eased the country's unemployment crisis by giving ten thousand cheering people an honest-to-goodness regular job.

Now that he's Acting President, I'm sure Tolentino will make dramatic moves to erase the bitter effects of Cory Aquino's long and oppressive three-month reign.

For starters, Tolentino will probably sequester Cory's Times Street house and open it to the public to expose her wanton abuse of the people's trust. The people have the right to see for themselves that Cory Aquino actually has dresses in colors other than yellow; that she has secretly stashed three bottles of nail polish, two shades of lipstick and a whole make-up kit and that she has seven—count them—seven pairs of shoes while many of our people go unshod. Tickets will probably be available at the Ministry of Tourism. (Just one ticket at a time, please so everyone will get a chance.)

Tolentino will also probably replace the Presidential Commission on Good Government with a Presidential Commission for Goodtime in Government which will recover any of the hidden wealth that might have been recovered by Cory's merciless PCGG.

To see how the Acting President was preparing for his exciting though daunting tasks, I visited Tolentino in the temporary office he rents at the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. I found Tolentino in a tortured pose, obviously contemplating the heavy burdens he now bears as Acting President.

"To beeh, hor nhot to beeh, thaht is the questionh," Tolentino recited to himself.

Will he be what he ought to be or will he be only what he was to be before the exiled President Marcos called long-distance to tell him to be what he should be?

"'What will be, will be,' Doroy. Right now, I'm rehearsing so I'll be a good Acting President."

What are his qualifications?

"Well, I've been doing comedy for the past 14 years and now I'm ready for some serious roles. Did I tell you I've done some theatre and appeared in "Pacbet," the Ilocano version of . . ."

Of Shakespeare's "Macbeth?" Yeah, yeah but how can he assure the public of a sustained professional performance?

"Didn't you notice the presence of my council of advisers in many a loyalist rally? Imelda Papin, Amalia Fuentes, Joseph Estrada, Alona Alegre. Doroy, these are serious actors and award-winning, top-notch, cabinet-level movie stars who will be giving me, the country's Acting President, sound professional advice!"

Okay, but what will be his distinct performing style?

"I will give my all in tender backroom and under-the-table scenes.

"I will do all the risky stunts myself—like flip-flopping on issues, walking the political tightrope, jumping on the bandwagon, escaping from the horns of a dilemma, and hurling innuendoes in dangerous scenes of character assassination. No need to rely on doubles.

"I will also be a 'bold' actor without being pornographic. For example, I will shy away from frontal

nudity in depicting naked ambition. Everything will be artistic and in good taste."

Tolentino confided that as Acting President, he has a number of projects in which he plays the leading, if not a supporting role. Some of these are:

"*Gone With the Win.*" A president from the North wins an election against a contender from the South or wherever the hell she was from, but finds himself about to be ousted as a civil war looms. He seeks help from Washington but a U.S. senator tells him on the phone: "Frankly, my dear, we don't give a damn." A heart-rending tragedy.

"*The Town's Commandments.*" Tolentino as Moses leads the people of Batac in a long March to Manila in time for this year's June 12 celebrations at the Luneta. On the way, Moses miraculously turns the Red Sea into a subdivision and from the Burning Bush takes an extra tablet with this glowing message: "*Marcos pa rin! Marcos pa rin!*" Uplifting and inspirational.

"*Budget Goes Hawaiian.*" In a revival of the Sandra Dee movie series ("Gidget Goes . . . etc.") Ferd Dee takes the cue from financier Dewey Dee and takes the entire annual budget of the Philippine government with him to a holiday in Hawaii. Family fun and slight legal suspense.

"*Imelderella Goes Hawaiian.*" Fate turns a rich, beautiful princess into a poor, penniless maid stranded in a rented bungalow on a Pacific isle. But she becomes rich and beautiful again when 3,000 pairs of shoes fit her perfectly. Unfortunately, she keeps eating donated lechon and macadamia nuts past midnight and grows big like a pumpkin. No comment.

Best of luck to Acting President Tolentino. I think in a very short time the public will recognize his acting talents and the country can then proceed on that long road to recovery or the box office, whichever comes first. □

The Bumpy Road Toward a Ceasefire

By CHRISTINE ARANETA

With both the left and the Aquino government publicly pushing for a ceasefire, the prospects for a cessation of hostilities between the Philippine military and the New People's Army might well become reality for the first time in nearly two decades. But recent events also suggest that the last mile in the road toward a ceasefire remains extremely bumpy with the outcome far from guaranteed.

In a major policy statement May 16, the political bureau of the Communist Party of the Philippines unanimously declared that ceasefire talks with the government should be pursued and acknowledged that the boycott posture towards the February 7 presidential election was the "party's biggest political blunder in the history of the entire national democratic struggle."

The politburo meeting, the first in many years, departed from the position adopted by the executive committee March 12 which opposed calls for negotiations and maintained that the armed struggle should continue. And, in an apparent move to conduct an assessment and self-criticism of its boycott blunder, the politburo plans to circulate an internal document critiquing the party's "defective stand" and the leadership's "anti-democratic" practices.

'WARMONGERING GENERALS'

The Party also hinted at the possibility of declaring a unilateral ceasefire and decried the obstructionist stance of the military towards peace talks. In a May 13 statement, the NPA said that President Aquino must discipline her "warmongering generals," and denounced Armed Forces of the Philippines Chief of Staff Fidel Ramos for provoking a "virtual declaration of all-out war." Ranking National Democratic Front official Antonio Zumel also said his group's only condition for talks with the new government is the minimal requirement that the Armed Forces troops remain in the barracks.

Despite the party's formal declaration, Aquino, on tour of the South at the time, said she still expects a response from the top Communist leadership and spoke sternly about the terms to which she would hold the insurgent movement to. Aquino rejected the notion that the armed forces should return to the barracks and "leave the insurgents a free zone within which to operate with impunity."

She also said that she would hold the rebels to strict compliance with the terms of any agreement, and that she would take any gross violations on their part as "a signal of the failure of negotiations and the resumption of hostilities." Aquino stated that she expects the Communist Party to begin negotiations no later than six months from now.

During the tour, Aquino also hinted at the possibility of dual amnesty for both soldiers and insurgents and endorsed 60-day regional ceasefires as a means of establishing a local atmosphere of mutual trust. To demonstrate her point, Aquino met with a group of returnees who had come down from the hills for a "look-and-see" foray. The NPA fighters established a gentlemen's agreement with the local military: the NPA forces would resume fighting—and the military would return their firearms—if they remain dissatisfied with the new political order. In exchange, Aquino is holding southern Regional Commander Gen. Jose Magno responsible for the personal safety of the insurgents.

ESCALATION BY THE MILITARY

When Aquino began making ceasefire proposals shortly after she assumed office three months ago, the left's initial response included many mixed signals. But now that the CPP and the New People's Army are pursuing a ceasefire in earnest, the principal obstacle is the recalcitrance of the Armed Forces. The left blames the



Samar NPA: Waiting for reprieve from "warmongering generals."

military for "countermanding" the president's call for national reconciliation and for exploiting the ambiguities in her proposal.

In the May 13 statement, the NDF affirmed that the question of peace can be solved now but denounced "warmongering and anti-democratic interests here and abroad" which are "attempting to make Aquino abandon her avowed objective of seeking reconciliation and peace based on justice." The NDF also argued that while an official ceasefire has yet to be declared by the government, the Armed Forces "have not eased but rather escalated their offensive actions against the masses and the revolutionary movement."

The lack of a definite process for a national dialogue between the government and the left has left a vacuum which objectively has given the military a free hand in determining the strategy and tactics for dealing with the left. And from all indications, the military has not been idly standing by, waiting for the outcome.

From the military's own accounts, massive operations are now underway in Cagayan and parts of the Visayas, including aerial strafing missions. The military has also reported "prize catches" of local insurgent leaders in Batangas. And while the local press has given prominence to the military's version of NPA-inflicted "human rights abuses," the casualty tallies tell another story—officially placing NPA deaths at 414 and the military at 123 in three months of fighting.

Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile and Ramos formally support the president's national reconciliation policy, but Enrile in particular has remained cynical about any ceasefire "that will only be agreed to by the insurgents if it is to their advantage." And while Enrile originally proposed the concept of regional ceasefires, an idea the president has now endorsed, he has lately downplayed the proposal and stated that until such time as a national ceasefire agreement is in place, the fighting will continue.

This calculated double-talk has left many uneasy over whether Enrile will actually comply with the military's end of the bargain should a truce be struck. On top of being the premier advocate of pardoning soldiers accused of human rights abuses during the Marcos era, Enrile is the most vociferous anti-communist figure in the government.

There is also reason to fear military retaliation against NPA fighters returning from their mountain sanctuaries. In one

documented incident in the *New York Times*, a woman commander from Samar arranged a surrender for her squad. When the team reached the appointed site, they were fired upon by their would-be custodians. The squad commander is now in hiding, fearing retribution from her comrades who believe that she set them up and having neither the resources nor the security clearance to resume a civilian life.

In another incident, three ranking military officers and Noynoy Aquino, son of the president, were negotiating the surrender of a detachment of rebel forces. When the first batch of negotiators drawn from residents of Capas, Tarlac arrived, they were fired upon and killed by members of the 5th Infantry Brigade of the Philippine Army. Despite the treachery, the Tarlac NPA command has continued to observe an informal ceasefire and is awaiting government action on the incident to inform its future moves.

AQUINO'S 'MIDDLE GROUND'

Against the hardliners who advocate a "scorched earth" policy toward the rebels, Aquino is attempting to find a "middle ground" which would "uphold the honor" of the Armed Forces and still address the grievances of the insurgents. But beyond the offer to engage in a dialogue and the promise of a future "free from the fear of being hounded by the military," the president has yet to outline a clear program to resolve the 17-year conflict or the mechanisms for reintegration.

Aquino's government—accurately described by the left as an "elitist democracy" with some progressive elements—has yet to establish its track record on the thornier social issues, such as land reform. While the left will undoubtedly push for progress on such questions as part of an overall framework for a ceasefire, amnesty and reintegration, Aquino will just as clearly seek to impose her own terms.

Aquino's attempt to implement 60-day regional ceasefires has been criticized by the CPP as divisive. But Aquino has clearly indicated that her reconciliation policy is intended to win over the NPA rank-and-file, dealing with the left in its parts, instead of on the exclusive terms of the national leadership of the CPP. For those who refuse the offer, Aquino has explicitly reserved the option of waging war.

IS THE LEFT'S HOUSE IN ORDER?

The left, while showing strong signs of recovering from its "biggest political blunder," is still in the process of overcoming

its disarray. While the CPP leadership's commitment to a ceasefire gives its work direction in the current period, guiding the party cadre and the NPA fighters through such a complex process will not be easy. And while the leadership's self-criticism for anti-democratic practices is bound to be welcomed, the outcome of a wide-open debate remains uncertain.

By spelling out its policy on the ceasefire and the ill-fated boycott, the politburo evidently hopes to move the CPP in a unified direction and to forestall uncoordinated actions taken by groups or individuals. The most dramatic such action so far is the bolting of rebel priest Fr. Conrado Balweg from the NPA.

Balweg has reportedly organized a separate Cordillera People's Liberation Army that rivals NPA operations in the Mountain Province. The move came on the heels of a much-publicized expulsion of Balweg on charges of sexual and financial opportunism, but political differences were also certainly involved.

Former detainees Jose Ma. Sison and Bernabe Buscayno were rebuked publicly by the CPP, which indicated that they no longer have the authority to speak for the Party.

The statement also made a point of stressing that the current leadership has been responsible for the growth of the revolutionary movement.

Sison has been giving well-attended lectures on the fundamental problems facing the Philippines and his own prescriptions to the Aquino government for surmounting its immediate problems. Horacio Morales, also a former detainee, has advocated the establishment and strengthening of cooperatives as grassroots entities to encourage popular participation in government.

Meanwhile, various NPA regional commands have decided that their policy on armed actions should depend on government progress in cleansing the military and pushing back the role of the U.S.

While the left has accurately targeted Marcos loyalists, military hardliners and the pro-U.S. conservatives in the government as the main dangers to the new democracy, it has not yet developed or offered a positive program. Moreover, the left has yet to define the main aspects of its posture toward the Aquino government—is it an adversary or an ally?

Where the stress is laid may make a world of difference in shaping the political direction of the Philippines in the coming years. □

New Constitutional Body: Centrist, Nationalist

By WICKS GEAGA

Even her detractors have to admit that Philippine President Corazon Aquino, in her unassuming way, is managing to push ahead with her priorities, assert her authority and meet the goals she set for her administration.

On June 2 she called to order the Constitutional Commission charged with the awesome task of drafting the charter which will institutionalize the restoration of Philippine democracy.

Within precisely the 60 days she set for herself, Aquino announced her appointees to the 50-member body. To fulfill her promise, they must complete the task within the next 90 days. Until that time, she will continue to rule under the "Freedom Constitution" which she proclaimed shortly after taking office.

Aquino's decision to appoint the body rather than have it elected caused something of a flap. But Aquino insisted that the country could not afford an election—in terms of either time or money.

The president appointed 45 individuals, among them former senators, members of the convention that drafted the last constitution, an activist film director, a student leader, members of the clergy, a peasant leader and two prominent Muslims.

EXCLUDING THE LEFT

In a gesture challenged from a number of quarters, Aquino set aside the remaining five seats for the pro-Marcos opposition. Former Labor Minister Blas Ople and four members of his splinter party were



Aquino has appealed for time to legitimize her government.

quick to jump for the positions.

The body attempts to represent the Philippine political spectrum, but leans strongly toward the center-right. Aquino deliberately excluded any openly communist personalities. Thus neither Jose Ma. Sison nor Bernabe Buscayno were included in the body. Sison had made his interest in serving widely known.

Nonetheless, the left-leaning *Bagong Alyansang Makabayan* praised the ConCom for including a "good number of progressives and social democrats."

Others were less satisfied. Many felt

that setting aside the five seats for the opposition was an unnecessary concession. BAYAN chairman, former senator Lorenzo Tañada, pressed for their disqualification. He charged that the five oppositionists did not meet the president's criteria for serving: probity, nationalism, independence, patriotism, and integrity.

'YELLOW' LABOR REPRESENTATIVE

Tañada also criticized the underrepresentation of workers, peasants, urban poor, and ethnic minorities within the constitu-

tional body.

Others on the left were concerned that the only representative from the workers' movement came from the Trade Union Council of the Philippines, known widely as a "yellow" and pro-U.S. organization. Throughout the Marcos years, the TUCP served the dictator obediently and, in turn, was recognized as the legitimate representative of workers' interests.

In addition, observers on the left felt too many seats had gone to the religious—

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Right Revolts – Aquino Responds

By WICKS GEAGA

The pro-Marcos diehards who have been rallying in front of the U.S. Embassy, hoping for Marcos' return, are more vocal than they are numerous. But given their command of vast financial and material resources, they continue to have the capacity to wage a campaign aimed at destabilizing the new democratic government—and they intend to keep at it.

With seemingly unlimited funds at their disposal, the loyalists have picked up where the Marcos campaign for the February 7 elections left off: wielding "goons, guns and gold" to mobilize scores of poor squatters and unemployed to anti-Aquino demonstrations. But in a grudging concession to Aquino's victory, the reactionaries now feel obliged to claim their thugs are just exercising "People Power."

In late April, military authorities reportedly uncovered a "well-funded plot" to undermine the Aquino government and pave the way for Marcos' homecoming. Some speculation at the time traced the plot directly to the former dictator himself.

Vice President Salvador Laurel cited intelligence reports showing that a number of oldtimers in Hawaii have been busily shuttling back and forth between Honolulu and Manila, delivering stacks of newly-minted ₱100 bills. The money is suspected to be part of the millions that Marcos ordered printed to finance his campaign and which he hauled away to Hawaii when he fled the country.

While sharply denying connection to any plot, Marcos exhorted his followers in Manila to rise up in protest against the Aquino government, which he charged with "the biggest robbery in political history."

"I am your legitimate president," Marcos reminded his supporters, and then vowed to "get even" with the new regime.

In the wake of the reported plot, U.S. Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs

Michael Armacost urged Marcos to keep his hands off Philippine politics and warned him of violating U.S. law if he tried to export firearms into the Philippines.

A few days later, and with more authority, Secretary of State George Shultz underscored the point. In an interview with NBC "Today" show, Shultz criticized Marcos for meddling in Manila's politics: "He is causing trouble, and some of it goes beyond argument."

REGROUPING THE KBL

Marcos' railings across the Pacific do have an audience at home. Marcos is banking on reorganizing the *Kilusang Bagong Lipunan*—the pervasive nationwide political network that for years served as a scaffolding for his fascist rule. This would be an essential step if he is to ever regain power, but it would serve as a necessary vehicle for the restoration of the old order under any other leader.

In an ironic spectacle, many staunch supporters of Marcos' rule are now taking advantage of the current democratic conditions to wage public battle to bring down the Aquino government by force. But regrouping the KBL once again will nonetheless be a formidable challenge.

Since Da Apo fled, the once-monolithic party has splintered into four factions: the *Partido Nacionalista ng Pilipinas* formed by former labor minister Blas Ople; the Group of Independents, led by former senator and member of parliament Alejandro Almendras; the revitalized Nacionalista Party, under the direction of former MP Rene Cayetano; and the remaining KBL loyalists headed by Marcos' vice presidential running mate Arturo Tolentino, who anxiously await Marcos' return.

While Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile denies any link to any political party, it is believed that he secretly inspired his associate Cayetano to revive the old NP, giving him a fallback position in case the campaign by the Human Rights Commission to prosecute abuses in the military goes after him and his base within the Armed Forces.



Marcos loyalists: "Rent-a-crowd" and rightists seek revenge.

Both the PNP and the NP reportedly subscribe to the opinion that Marcos should no longer directly involve himself in the country's politics, while the Group of Independents has not maintained any firm position.

With or without the dictator, these vying factions have their eyes trained on the former provincial governors, mayors, baranggay captains, and KBL foot soldiers throughout the nation's 42,000 townships that formed the bulk of the KBL apparatus—and who are currently up for grabs.

AQUINO GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

The Aquino government's initial posture toward the pro-Marcos demonstrations was one of "maximum tolerance." Government restraint seemed to evaporate, however, when the pro-Marcos demonstrators resorted to violent action, such as abusing passing motorists and physically assaulting foreigners in front of the U.S. Embassy.

After pro-Marcos loyalists attacked a Labor Day workers' rally Aquino was about to address at Rizal Park May 1, resulting in 34 injuries, she immediately fired Manila's police chief for failing to

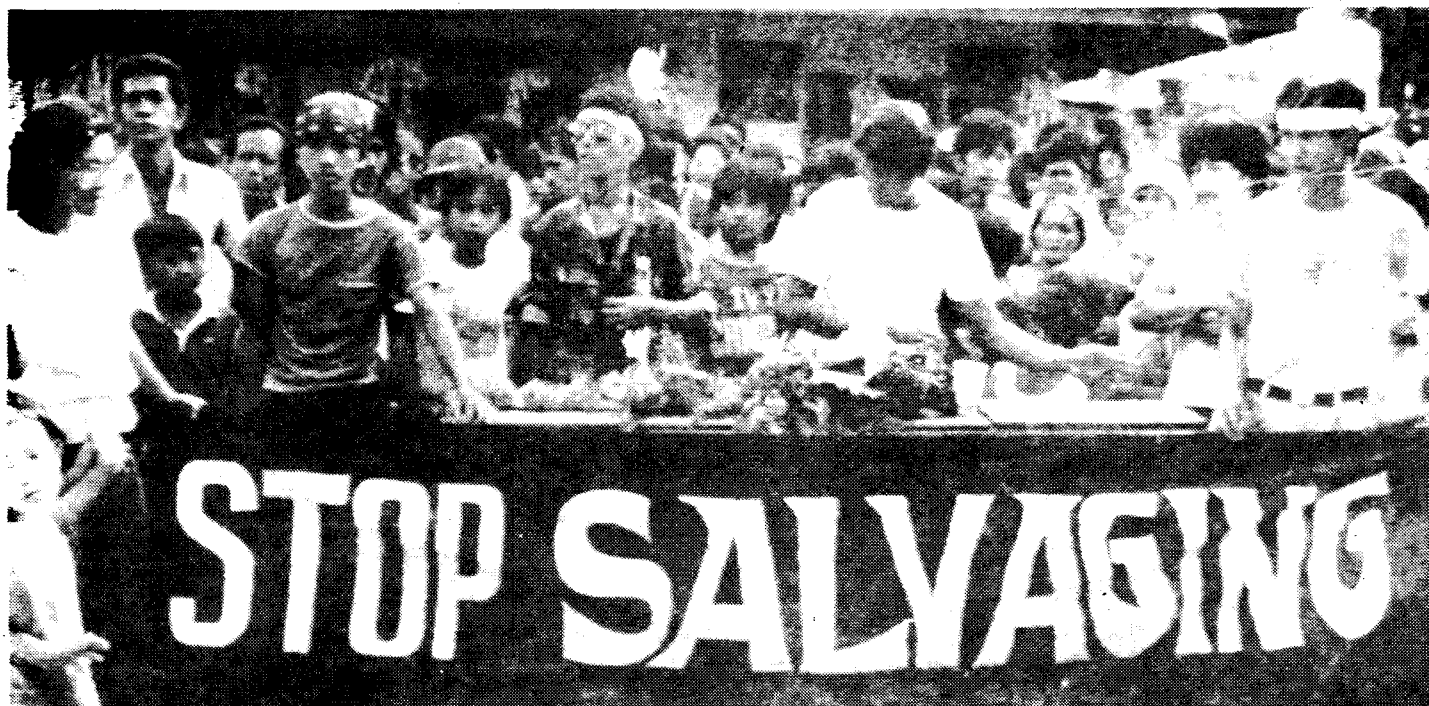
contain the provocateurs. The sacked official, Gen. Narciso Cabrera, was well-known for dispersing anti-Marcos protests since he took over the office in 1981.

Recognizing that the diehards are not yet prepared to recede into history, President Aquino vowed to use government force as a last resort on those who "insist on using force to overthrow the government."

At the same time, Aquino is employing the age-old divide-and-conquer tactic. Her gesture of offering the opposition five seats in the Constitutional Commission is seen by some observers as precisely such a maneuver. The move appeared to succeed when Ople nominated himself and four other opposition associates to the ConCom posts, further separating themselves from the loyalists and Tolentino, who vowed to boycott the Constitutional process.

After an initial period of dismissing the diehards' actions as merely the "noises of democracy," the new government has now begun to take steps to counter the threat from the right. But alongside the rightist bloc lodged within the government, the diehards in the streets are not likely to go away soon. □

Justice for Philippine 'Desaparecidos'



Before, ending the murders was their top concern. Now, it is justice for the victims.

By CHRISTINE ARANETA

As the recently appointed Human Rights Commission headed by former Senator Jose Diokno launches its investigations of human rights violations during the Marcos era, it embarks upon a dangerous journey. Some say it may either make or break the government of Philippine President Corazon Aquino.

For the victims, the Human Rights Commission at last spells retribution after 15 years of arbitrary arrests, indefinite detention, salvagings, and denial of due process by Ferdinand Marcos and his military.

But for the military, still a powerful force under the Aquino government, the commission represents a serious threat. For 20 years, fascism was a matter of state policy and soldiers were the rewarded enforcers of absolute rule. Suddenly those who were "simply following orders" of their higher-ups may be forced to answer for their actions.

For the fledgling Aquino government, the search for justice marks an acid test of rule. To succeed in building democracy, Aquino must ultimately prove the supremacy of civilian rule over the military and quash all crypto-fascist movements. But moving too quickly, alienating the military at this delicate stage could rip the regime apart at the seams, provoke a takeover and push everything back to square one.

SOLDIERS AS VICTIMS?

Not surprisingly, the "New" Armed Forces of the Philippines is less than happy with the affair and has demanded "double amnesty." If rebels against the government can be forgiven in the president's drive toward reconciliation, so can their torturers, they claim.

"If the military committed atrocities, the other side did too. To be fair, that should be investigated," one colonel requesting anonymity insisted. Ranking officers of the NAFP have requested specifics on human rights abuses and have urged the classification of violations by the Diokno commission. The unclarity, the officers claim, has led to paralysis in field operations against the New People's Army. Further, the officers decry the lack of a government body to investigate NPA attacks on the military.

Emerging as the most vocal opponent to the Human Rights Commission, Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile labelled the drive an "inquisition." Sounding disconcertingly like his former boss, he abruptly dismissed charges of human rights abuses as "based on rumors." "The combatant should be equally and justly treated as well . . . otherwise [reconciliation] will come to naught," Enrile told a breakfast forum attended by alumni of prestigious

U.S. universities.

The statements represent a backpedalling from earlier pronouncements of the defense minister who originally welcomed the investigation as an opportunity to cleanse the image of the military. He was particularly offended by a recent offer from the Nobel-Prize-winning organization Amnesty International to educate the military on human rights issues.

"We will do what is to be done, no one needs to tell us what to do," Enrile tersely told a delegation of AI officials headed up by Secretary General Thomas Hammerberg. The AI team was set to discuss the training of military personnel in human rights standards, review procedures for investigating human rights abuses and propose reforms which might be relevant to the promotion of human rights. It hoped to suggest a division of labor between the Defense Ministry and other government agencies in ordering arrests and pursuing investigations of military personnel thought to be responsible for violations.

Enrile's reaction contrasted sharply with the AI contingent's warm reception at Malacañang. Aquino promised to sponsor an international convention against torture. Diokno earlier welcomed the organization's assistance in the commission's functioning.

500 DETAINEES

The military's unwillingness to bend to the civilian authority is evident elsewhere—particularly in the continued detention of prisoners accused of political crimes.

"In theory, the question is resolved," said Fidel Agcaoili, former political prisoner and Commission spokesman, in reference to political detainees. "In practice," he continued, "it is not because the military is setting up all sorts of obstacles."

Sister Marianni Dimaranan, chair of the Task Force Detainees and a commission member, agrees: "The further away you are from Manila, it seems the less chance you have of being released." Returning from a rural tour which turned up prisoners whose names were not listed on the official rolls, she contended there are still 500 detainees imprisoned in provincial jails.

Military custodians testify the continued detention on the grounds that the detainees are really common criminals or that the official release papers have not yet been processed. Bureaucratic inertia is fed by resentment at the pardons of communist rebels. One army colonel spluttered, "Imagine releasing a communist without due process!"

BOILING OVER

Amnesty for political detainees is not the only issue gnawing at government-military relations. The government's push of reconciliation over confrontation, military reforms, and the conduct of soldiers in

combat zones, remain serious points of contention. Moreover, the composition of the Human Rights Commission galls the military. It is essentially left-liberal with a number of members who, in the past, made waves over human rights issues.

This resentment boiled over in late April when Col. Hernani Figueroa of the Reform the Armed Forces Movement angrily confronted Executive Secretary Joker Arroyo and Presidential Spokesman Rene Saguisag and threatened to lynch them. Arroyo brushed the incident aside. But Saguisag reminisced, "We stood up to the military during those long years of martial law. We in the human rights movement have always been threatened. And we have been afraid for the past 15 years or so, but we pretend not to be."

The outburst was another grim reminder of the military's inflated clout as a result of martial law. Relinquishing this privileged role is exacting a heavy toll on the military establishment. Key players in the four-day revolt that brought Aquino to power somehow hoped that their participation might exonerate the military of its wrongdoings.

But for many, beginning with the president, the cleansing of the military and retribution for victims of abuse, did not end with desertion of the former commander-in-chief. To emphasize her point, the President reminded graduating cadets of the Philippine Military Academy: "This revolution began with a bullet—a bullet fired by a soldier into the head of my husband."

'OUR DESAPARECIDOS'

It is unlikely that this strained chapter of Philippine history can come to a complete close until the victims and their survivors receive justice. This is precisely the role of the Commission: "We are serving a cathartic role by looking into human rights violations during the Marcos years," explains Diokno. "People want reconciliation but there should also be justice. We are like the Argentinians in the sense that we are going after the same cases—our Filipinos who disappeared, our *desaparecidos*."

In addition to the 500 remaining detainees, there are an estimated 900 persons who have disappeared under martial law. One hundred are believed alive, according to organizations active among political prisoners, their families and supporters. SELDA, a group of former political prisoners, and KAPATID, a group of detainee relatives, expressed surprise at the continuous surfacing of persons who were believed dead. Many of them were never accounted for by groups monitoring arrests. Six hundred complaints have already been filed with the Diokno commission which is expected to prioritize the Aquino assassination, the murders of U.S. labor organizers Silme Domingo and Gene Viernes,

and suits filed in U.S. Courts on behalf of political detainees. Groups have called for a re-opening of the investigations of the Guinyagan, Quezon massacre and the Daet, Camarines Norte massacre which both occurred in 1981. The revival of these cases is a grim reminder that whole towns and provinces remain bitterly conscious of the effects of militarization during the early '80s.

'FORGIVE AND FORGET'

Reversing the effects of a polarization which reached an irreversible point under Marcos burdens the new government. During a swing through the South designed to impress hard-line military commanders critical of the government's negotiation approach to the dissidents, President Aquino indicated that she is considering an amnesty to some soldiers who committed human rights violations. Speaking before a huge turnout in Cebu, Aquino also admonished the public to follow her example and "forgive and forget" the past abuses of the military.

Explaining the pragmatic rationale underlying her selective amnesty proposal for erring soldiers, Aquino said: "I am of the opinion that if ever the country gets going, most of us, if not all of us, will just have to forgive and forget. . . . I am one of the victims of the military establishment. But I am not prepared to condemn the entire military establishment. I have said time and again, there were just a few misguided elements."

However, when the President arrived in Davao, one of the most polarized cities in the nation, her position was criticized. "I'm afraid the victims will not forget so easily," said the local representative of the Task Force Detainees. A banner at the rally read: "Justice for all martyrs and victims of state terrorism."

COMMON GROUND?

Whether the public is willing to accept justice tempered by compromise remains an open question. For now, the Human Rights Commission is serving notice that the military has to pay its dues first. Diokno elaborated: "The idea behind all this is to instill in soldiers more awareness of human rights, to prevent abuses and to emphasize civilian supremacy in our government."

Diokno also remains convinced that only a small percentage of soldiers were involved in abuses. As to the standard defense that they were simply following orders, Diokno responded, "If they [were] 'following orders,' all these officers have to do is tell us who gave the orders and be ready to stand up in court and say so." Diokno expects much of the military in fact to favor a clean-up especially of Marcos loyalists still safely ensconced in positions of authority.

At least on that count, Diokno and Enrile can be expected to see eye-to-eye. Target number one is the now defunct National Intelligence and Security Agency run by former Chief of Staff Fabian Ver and the Ver-controlled regional command structure.

The addition of Judge Advocate General Samuel Soriano, a close associate of Enrile, is expected both to soothe Enrile's ruffled feathers and benefit the Commission's knowledge of the inner workings of the defense establishment. Soriano claims he will be just as rigorous as his civilian colleagues on the Commission, quipping: "Let the axe fall where it may, even in the highest echelons."

Meanwhile, under the Presidential Commission on Good Government, a board composed of retired generals has been constituted to investigate officers who enriched themselves during Marcos' tenure.

But whether or not these tentative steps towards cooperation will prove lasting depends greatly on the military's willingness to break its fraternity-like code of silence towards the outsiders now reasserting their authority. Incomprehensible as it may seem, public forgiveness awaits soldiers willing to admit their culpability. Former political prisoner Bernabe Buscayno explained that amnesty to soldiers who committed human rights violations is plausible but only if the soldiers confess to their wrongdoings and produce missing persons believed abducted by the military. □

Marcos' Fall Sends Ripples Through ASEAN

By NANCY F. ROCAMORA

Salvador Laurel and the administration of President Corazon Aquino received a warm welcome into the family of ASEAN when the Philippine Vice President arrived in Bali April 29 for a foreign ministerial conference and a meeting with U.S. President Ronald Reagan.

For several years the Philippines has been the odd man out in the Association of South-East Asian Nations. The next summit conference of the group, which includes Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore, and Brunei, has been postponed since 1977. It is scheduled for Manila, and the Malaysian Prime Minister refuses to attend until the Philippine claim to Sabah is resolved.

But Laurel arrived with a promise to settle the Sabah issue promptly, with no

palabas. He also made it clear that the Philippines intends to make relations with its neighbors a number one concern in the years to come. His colleagues evidently took him seriously. He left with plans for the summit to take place in Manila next year—10 years late.

IBU TIN PERCENT

Beneath the cordiality, however, was a visible concern. For the lesson of Ferdinand Marcos' fall had been lost on no one.

The similarities between the Marcos government and those of the remaining ASEAN countries are inescapable. Many are ruled by aging autocrats who rely heavily on the military to keep themselves afloat. Suharto of Indonesia came to power in 1966, the same year as Marcos.

Many of these dictators enriched themselves substantially via corruption while in office. Suharto's wife, *Ibu* [Mother]

Tin, is known popularly as "Ibu Tin Percent." Like Marcos, some ASEAN rulers legitimized themselves by creating pseudo-constitutional bodies with little real power.

Few of the ASEAN autocrats have established credible transition techniques. To all appearances, some expect to stay on indefinitely. "Long rule brought economic stability," adds the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, "but buttressed by economic successes, it also tended to make the rulers overconfident, out of touch and less responsive."

OVERCONFIDENT AUTOCRATS

Many of the ASEAN strongmen pointed to a period of economic prosperity that swept the region through the '70s to justify their extended sway. Malaysia, Brunei and Indonesia struck and started exporting oil. In the process, they vastly expanded

their vast national treasuries, enriched their elites and broadened their middle and working classes. Thailand became self-sufficient in rice and began to export it.

But things are changing in the region. Economic growth has slowed, simultaneously providing a formula for social unrest and depriving the dictators of their leading excuse for authoritarian rule. The expanded working classes mean a broader base for progressive ideas. Meanwhile, the newly emergent middle classes are champing at the bit, eager to have their say in government affairs.

The sight of the Philippine urban masses confronting the military with flowers, the electric phenomenon of People's Power which swept Corazon Aquino to office can only have struck a sympathetic chord in ASEAN news viewers, some of whom

Continued on page 15

Moros Rush to Resolve Conflict

By CHRISTINE ARANETA

Full-scale battles may not have erupted between the Bangsa Moro rebels and the Aquino government, but judging from the heated words coming from the Muslim side, a war of nerves is fully underway. Virtually all factions of the Moro struggle have stepped up the pressure on the government, adding another volatile question to President Corazon Aquino's already packed agenda.

Macapanton Abbas, head of the reformist wing of the Moro National Liberation Front announced that his panel of negotiators is leaving the country because it is tired of "the dilly-dallying tactics of the office of the president." Abbas also warned that if negotiations fail to commence before the convening of a Constitutional Commission, his faction will resume hostilities, because "that means that we are no longer going to be bound by our commitment to autonomy."

The Moro Islamic Liberation Front headed by breakaway leader Hashim Salamat staged a demonstration of 20,000 April 14 to prod the Aquino government to start peace negotiations immediately.

Evasive MNLF chair Nur Misuari is still officially awaiting overtures from the government; but according to military reports, Misuari is regrouping his forces in the country in preparation for a new offensive.

MORE PRESSURES

A Bangsa Moro Congress also convened April 20 and petitioned King Fahd of Saudi Arabia to put pressure on the Aquino government to negotiate an agreement that would give Moros virtual independence in vast regions of Mindanao.

And while the pressure has been building up on the political, diplomatic and propaganda fronts, plans are also afoot to strengthen the bargaining position of the Muslim resistance militarily. The Philippine military claims that sophisticated, Soviet-made military hardware has recently been shipped to the South, coinciding with a report that 600 highly trained commandos, not all of whom are Moro, have landed and are deployed at various strategic sites in the South.

In the wake of these reports, the U.S. Embassy in Manila has requested additional police protection, suggesting that the Libyan-backed MNLF faction was behind the military maneuvers. A bomb was found at the building where President Aquino held office before moving to Malacañang; an anonymous caller tipped off police that the Moro Al Fatah was behind the bomb threat. The caller said, "We are *mujahadeen* (freedom fighters). If you remain callous and indifferent, then soon we will be at your doorstep . . ."



Schoolgirls gather in front of public school built with Saudi Arabian aid.

Beseiged by a host of urgent political and economic problems, the Aquino government has reacted to the Moro threats as demands for too much too soon. Explaining the delay in getting on top of the problem, Agapito "Butz" Aquino, brother-in-law of the president and unofficial troubleshooter, said the president is busy now consolidating her government and that she cannot be expected to get to the Muslim problem for several months. Aquino begged for patience: "You have waited for 400 years, surely you can wait another four months." The government wants to talk, Aquino asserted, because "once we settle this one, we can tackle the really big problem—the communist insurgency."

AUTONOMY VS. SECESSION

While all the Moro factions have expressed a willingness to sit down with the new government, the Moros are far from unified on the points to be negotiated, and not even clearly united on whether the goal is autonomy or secession. During her campaign, Aquino advocated implementation of the 1977 Tripoli Agreement, which promised to grant the Moros autonomy within a large section of Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago, but it is no longer clear whether that would satisfy the Moro factions.

The legacy of distrust stems from the failure of the Marcos government to abide by any of the provisions of the Tripoli document it signed. Before the text had even been made public, Marcos moved to gut its meaning, appointing his own Muslim stooges to official posts and pushing through a bogus plebiscite effectively nullifying

the agreement. While the Tripoli arrangements would, if actually carried out, be quite generous toward the Moros, it is not surprising that Aquino's revival of the concept is met with initial skepticism in sections of the Moro movement.

Nur Misuari, who is perceived by the government as the key, if not critical player, in the Moro struggle, has discarded the Tripoli Agreement. In an interview with the *AK*, Misuari emphasized the Tripoli Agreement ended with the Marcos regime.

If Misuari decides to reject the Tripoli Agreement, negotiations will have to start from scratch. As Butz Aquino said, "We cannot have peace in Mindanao without Nur Misuari." If he is amenable to talks, Aquino continued, "Nur Misuari can choose who sits beside him and behind him."

Aquino's endorsement of the Tripoli Agreement has, however, encouraged the Salamat faction to clamor for strengthening the ceasefire committee called for under the accord, a body which would proceed with the assistance of the Islamic Conference. The Abbas faction also expects the Islamic Conference to play a pivotal role in any future negotiations, and has pressed for the government to deal only with that section of the MNLF—its own—recognized by the Conference.

FRACTURED MOVEMENT

The MNLF, which has been factionalized for nearly 10 years, apparently does not consider unity within its ranks a precondition for talks. While hostilities between the Armed Forces and the MNLF have visibly ebbed during the '80s, various

factions with the assistance of different foreign patrons have built up their respective political and economic clout.

Misuari, who lives in Libya, is backed by Libya and Saudi Arabia, and has built a Middle East operation capable of supporting frontline fighters financially and logistically for prolonged periods. Abbas also claims some Middle Eastern backing but is primarily based in Malaysia. Salamat is reportedly influential among the 200,000 Moro refugees created by the war who are now living in Sabah.

The Moro communities dispersed during the war have managed to regroup and rebuild, largely with the assistance of their Islamic brethren. "People feel grateful to Libya because Libya has done so much for us," said one Marawi youth. A modern hospital, scholarships for young Moros and continued stipends for alumni of Libyan schools attest to the bonds of pan-Islamic friendship built over the years. Thus for some factions the key issue may be not so much autonomy as a ceasefire.

'INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT'

Amidst the insistent demands of the various Moro groups, President Aquino is simultaneously confronted with demands for the newly constituted Mindanao Independence Movement. The movement, which was founded in late April is headed by former *Batasan* member and Marcos Deputy Minister of Information Reuben Canoy. The MIM is pushing for either total independence or a federated status within the context of the Philippine state, and purports to represent all the peoples of Mindanao, Moro and non-Moro alike.

The movement has been brushed off by the military as insignificant since it was not endorsed by any of the major Moro groups or the pro-Marcos Mindanao politicians. Canoy, on the other hand, claims that when his movement gathers the targeted three million signatures on a petition declaring Mindanao an independent state, the government won't be laughing.

TIME RUNNING OUT?

For all the hot rhetoric, the rebels appear to be keeping to an undeclared ceasefire. Only two armed confrontations have occurred in the South: one between pro-Marcos warlord Ali Dimaporo's followers and the military in Marawi, and another between a Moro group and the military in Sulu.

Some say the unofficial truce is deceptive, permitting time for the rebels to regroup and regain strength. And while the Aquino government is trying to buy time, resentments against her government and its alleged failure to keep its promises are building.

For Aquino, the problems are mounting for the Moros, patience is wearing thin. □

Aquino Strikes a Note for Workers' Rights

By WICKS GEAGA

Despite cries of betrayal from the business community, the Aquino government is sending strong signals that it intends to uphold the rights and welfare of workers and their unions across the country.

In a significant shift away from the business-oriented and repressive labor policies of the Marcos regime, President Aquino announced sweeping changes in labor laws before a large workers' rally in Rizal Park celebrating International Workers' Day. Aquino drew thundering applause from the crowd as she pledged to appoint union representatives to all policy-making bodies of government.

The dramatic changes presented by Aquino are not, of course, designed to overhaul the existing economic system or the prevailing class relations. Nonetheless, they represent an effort by the new government to strengthen labor's bargaining position, especially against extremely abusive employers. The labor code revisions also aim to restore some basic workers' rights that were simply abolished by Marcos decrees.

"You are not only the backbone of industries, but the vanguard of democracy as well," Aquino told the rally, underlining her view of the importance of worker support for the success of her administration and explaining why she is willing to grant major concessions to labor over the objections of her supporters in the business sector.

Since Aquino assumed power, the number of strikes nationwide has not declined but has actually kept pace with the trend set during Marcos' last years in power. Aquino realizes that her economic recovery program can only succeed with broad support from workers, and her government further recognizes that such support has to be earned by concrete measures of reform.



Labor Minister Sanchez and President Aquino: Creating new jobs a top priority.

LABOR LAW REVISIONS

Among the major changes presented by revision of the strike law to allow strikes based on a simple majority vote of workers, as opposed to the previously required two-thirds vote. While the new provision strengthens the right to strike, Aquino appealed to the workers for restraint in their use of this weapon.

Especially during this period of economic reconstruction, Aquino pleaded with the workers to "use [the strike] only as a last resort and only after exhausting all other means to resolve your disputes with management."

As part of the campaign to promote and protect the right of workers to establish unions of their choice, the government reduced to 20% the amount of the total Aquino to the May Day rally was a

work force needed to petition for certification election or to register a union in a non-union establishment.

The "one-union-one-industry policy" which severely restricted unionization efforts in any particular industry was scrapped, while security guards in the private sector and employees of specific government corporations were finally given the green light to unionize and bargain with their employers.

In a blow to union-busting practices, the government repealed Letter of Instruction No. 1458, which allowed replacement of striking workers who defy return-to-work orders. Aquino also instructed unions to ignore the 15-day cooling off period and to go on strike immediately, in cases where union officers are dismissed arbitrarily or when the existence of the union is threatened.

Aquino further pledged to amend the restrictive and repressive provisions of the Labor Code and immediately banned police forces from picket lines unless actual violence occurs.

UNEMPLOYMENT PROBLEM

While the Labor ministry has been preoccupied with labor-management disputes since assuming office, Minister of Labor and Employment Augusto Sanchez says that attention is being redirected to the monumental unemployment problem.

The ministry is exploring the idea of "using Filipino capital" to generate employment in small-scale and medium-sized industries. Sanchez stressed that, in developing a domestic capital investment program, the ministry will carefully avoid using foreign capital. Sanchez argues strongly that a nationalist mode of economic development is "the only way we can develop... and break out of the imperialist hold."

Pointing to the striking lack of domestically owned industries, despite the country's abundance of natural resources, Sanchez identified multinational corporations as a major culprit. "We cannot develop into a fully independent and sovereign nation if we go on relying on MNCs and foreign capital," said Sanchez.

Besides targeting the problem of foreign monopolization, Sanchez is equally critical of the exploitation of workers by MNCs. He cites unjust wages and poor working conditions at the job site as the two main forms of worker exploitation on a long list of "malpractices" committed by MNCs as well as local firms.

BUSINESS REACTION

Not unexpectedly, the business community has expressed its alarm at Aquino's announcement of radical changes in the labor laws, predicting "dire consequences" for the nation if the government proceeds with these new policies.

Venting their hostility towards Aquino's announced revisions, employers described the move to reduce the required strike vote to a simple majority as "an act of legalizing what otherwise is illegal" and as a step which would pave the way for the "tyranny of the minority."

Business leaders are no less critical of Aquino's proposals on profit-sharing and the integration of cost-of-living allowances into the minimum wage, warning of drastic

Continued on page 15

Flap Over Marcos Graft in Japan

By EDDIE ESCULTURA

Ripples from Ferdinand Marcos' corruption continue to widen well beyond the shores of the Philippines and the United States.

A crisis in Philippine-Japanese relations is brewing over the Aquino administration's probe into alleged misuse of Japanese aid money by the ousted president. Reportedly, Japanese yen loans, usually tied to specific projects, served to line the pockets of the Philippine president and his cronies via overpriced contracts with private Japanese companies.

More explosive than the kickbacks are the charges that some of that money went back to Japan in the form of Marcos' political contributions to leading Japanese politicians. Accepting political contributions from foreign sources is illegal in Japan.

Japan has placed on hold two new loans worth \$280 million that the Japanese government previously indicated it would extend to the Philippines. This has created discord within the Aquino Cabinet mainly between Finance Minister Jaime Ongpin and the Presidential Commission on Good Government's Chairman Jovito Salonga. Ongpin blames the non-release of the loans on the PCGG's probe into the scandal.

COOPERATION 'RATHER SLOW'

While Japanese officials have assured the Philippine government of continued

cooperation, a different tune is coming from them privately. At the Japanese Cabinet's April 18 meeting, two ministers had sharp words for the Aquino government's ongoing probe. The Japanese weekly magazine, *Shukan Shincho* May 1 quoted Construction Minister Takemi Eto as saying, "misuse of yen loans was done by [Filipinos]... If the Aquino government is going to investigate the workings of the yen loans, let them do it in the Philippines. Why should those who receive money come to those who gave the money and investigate?"

Quoted also was International and Industry Minister Michio Watanabe who added, "If the Aquino administration admits that Japan's yen loans were misused... the money should be returned to Japan or paid back." Watanabe also criticized the fact that the Japanese government's decision-making on official development aid is done by only four ministries—Finance, Foreign Affairs, Trade and Industry, and the Economic Planning Agency. Officials of these ministries, according to Watanabe, were entertained almost every night by private companies with Philippine contracts before the last decision on Philippine aid under Marcos.

Though Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone and other leaders of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party told Cabinet officials to keep mum on these matters, word about the discussion was leaked to the press within half an hour.

Despite statements by Salonga and other Philippine officials indicating their willingness to cooperate in investigating the alleged anomalies, "there has been no

official invitation from the Japanese government or special parliamentary committees for these officials to go to Japan," said Mamuro Tsuda, associate professor of Philippine Studies at the Osaka University of Foreign Studies. Tsuda also claimed that the progress of the studies into the over 2,000 pages of documents taken from the Marcos party in Hawaii has been "rather slow" and that "the corporations mentioned in those papers have not been summoned."

BAD NEWS FOR THE LDP

Delays in the parliamentary investigation may seriously hamper the PCGG efforts. Japanese elections are coming soon and the special committees of both the lower and upper houses of the Diet investigating the alleged anomalies are meeting before they occur. Since these are temporary bodies, they may not be reconstituted by the new parliament. This may thus be the last chance for these committees to look into the matter.

The disclosures of the alleged kickbacks before the parliamentary elections is bad news for the LDP. The LDP was in control of the Japanese government from 1965-1985 when Japan extended hefty financial assistance to the Marcos regime. From 1971 to 1985 alone, yen loans extended through the overseas Economic Corporation Fund amounted to \$2.25 billion. But even Filipinos are unclear as to the benefits derived from this huge sum.

A recent interview with Marcos by the weekly journal *Shukan Banshun* did not help the LDP situation. Recounting his personal relations with past and present Japanese Prime Ministers, Marcos said

that they were "very, very good," especially with Nakasone.

'TAKING CARE OF THEM'

Marcos revealed that he had set up a "hotline" with the successive prime ministers through which they conferred frequently. Marcos explained that when the Japanese Prime Minister was going to attend an international conference or a summit, "he didn't fail to report to me the content of those [meetings] through the hotline."

Asked to evaluate those prime ministers, Marcos replied, "all of them are very capable politicians. In fact, I have always been taking care of them, even from the period they were still up-coming. I knew they will one day become great in politics."

Despite the political difficulties the Aquino government is bound to reap from the investigation, Tsuda stressed that correcting such anomalies would be in the interest of both the Philippines and Japan. He suggested that the PCGG officially submit the relevant documents to both the Japanese government and the probe committees so that an official inquiry can be made. Another option is for the Salonga Commission to appear at the hearings of the Diet investigating committees.

The Philippine finance authorities are apparently wary that the investigation may upset their efforts to secure loans. But some quarters point out that the best way for Japan to extricate itself from this flap is to go out of its way to express support for the new regime by offering as much assistance as the Philippines needs. □

BUOD NG MGA BALITA

PRIVATE AGENCY EXPANDS R.P. AID

As part of the rush to provide aid to the Philippines, International Human Assistance Programs is undertaking renewed and enlarged initiatives throughout the Philippines. IHAP is a New York-based Private Voluntary Organization engaged in Third World Development. Dr. Myles K. Ren, Executive Director of IHAP, recently announced that IHAP is seeking to expand its efforts in the Philippines, building on ten years of successful operations there.

IHAP operates on funds from several sources, including contributions from individuals, corporations, and foundations, as well as the U.S. Agency for International Development. It has long worked in the Philippines. Dr. Ren noted, "Our program has traditionally been aimed at 'helping people to help themselves.' We are prepared to expand [it] significantly." The IHAP director informed the press that his organization is looking for additional resources to increase its efforts.

IHAP's Program Director, Dr. Jon D. Holstine, visited the Philippines in early March to assess needs and opportunities to undertake additional efforts there. According to Ren, "He came back tremendously impressed with both the task facing the Philippines and the energy and positive attitude of the people with whom he talked."

Both USAID in Manila, and Minister of Natural Resources Ernesto Maceda asked IHAP to undertake new projects in the provinces. "Negros and Mindanao were two areas mentioned by AID," Dr. Ren noted. "Negros has been hit terribly by the disappearance of the market for Philippine sugar, and we understand that there will be 80,000 unemployed as of May 1 of this year. IHAP/Manila is planning cooperation with local groups to improve that situation, and we hope the new projects there will be in place quickly." With the assistance of Chase Manhattan Bank, IHAP has made almost P80,000 available to assist an emergency rice planting operation in Negros Occidental.

Minister Maceda has begun preliminary plans for a nationwide effort to reclaim denuded lands. He proposed to Dr. Holstine and the head of IHAP Philip-

ines office that the group undertake reforestation of privately held lands.

Dr. Ren said that IHAP was prepared to do as much in the Philippines as it can, and want to build on its ten years of experience in the country. However, AID's substantial increase of funds for the Philippines also imposes new burdens on private organizations. "Because AID requires a private voluntary organization (PVO) to obtain at least 20% of its budget from private sources," Dr. Ren said, "large infusions of AID money to PVOs in a situation like that in the Philippines require increased private contributions. And, on each project the PVO must contribute 25% of the cost. Therefore, critical situations such as that in the Philippines require us to look for new contributions."

"Because we want to help in the Philippines, we are undertaking the necessary effort," Ren said. The organization is currently canvassing corporations. "In a way," Ren pointed out, "it's a bargain for the private sector, when you think that for every dollar we receive from private donors, we obtain four or five dollars from AID to put work on behalf of the Philippine people."

Such donations are also tax deductible, no small boon to the corporations and fit neatly into the U.S. government's plan to win the hearts and minds of the Filipino people in order to retain its friendly ties and military bases. □

CORY BARES P10B EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

President Corazon Aquino last night confirmed that the government will soon launch an emergency employment program designed to provide temporary jobs for one million Filipinos.

In her bi-monthly Channel 4 program, the President told guest host Tina Monzon-Palma that the program, patterned after the New Deal public works project embarked on by U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt to lift America out of the Great Depression, might cost P10 billion.

The President said she has asked her cabinet ministers to submit each ministry's proposals.

The President also said:

- The government will encourage farmers to shift from rice and corn to other non-traditional crops since the country now produces the cereals more than it can consume. Farmers, she said, have been finding it difficult to sell the cereals at fair prices;

- That manufacturers and sellers should charge less for their products with the further lowering of gas prices;

- That Gen. Fidel Ramos, New Armed Forces of the Philippines chief, assured her that the insurgency problem is under control. Ms. Aquino ruled out a military solution to the insurgency, saying that the economic recovery would be more effective in restoring peace and order in the countryside;

- She has approved that the Societe Generale de Surveillance S.A. conduct customs valuation for six months in view of the success of the system in Indonesia. All imports below \$5,000 will be handled by the Bureau of Customs, she said.

- She has instructed officials of the Presidential Commission on Good Government to coordinate with Central Bank Gov. Jose Fernandez on any sequestration or examination of any bank so as not to alarm depositors;

- She has rejected proposals to allow the members of the Constitutional Commission to run or be appointed to public offices. "There are enough Filipinos qualified in the ConCom who have no desire to run in any election," she said. The primary concern of ConCom delegates is the interest of the nation and not to use the commission to protect themselves, she said.

- The Marcos loyalists march from Batac (Ilocos Norte) to Manila is being monitored. They are not a threat, she said.

- She has asked the ministers to work closely together, citing the move of Trade and Industry Minister Jose Concepcion and Labor Minister Augusto Sanchez on labor and industry policies.

- Despite the lowering of oil prices, Meralco has sought an increase in electric rates because of poor collection and high interest payments.

The President was joined by four representatives of women's groups during the second half of the show. They were Emelita Lambojo, a vegetable vendor from Industrial Valley, Marikina; Nora Protacio, a laundrywoman from Novaliches; Petit Peredo, a community worker and organizer of *Samahan ng Kababaihang Nagkakaisa*; and Amparo Yulo, an exporter of shell craft. □



"Pay attention to Cory's agenda," Fr. Edicio de la Torre told about 150 participants of the founding congress of the Alliance for Philippine Concerns on May 24 in San Francisco. De la Torre said there are many possibilities in the Aquino government but the struggles are difficult. "The people's struggles continue but under new conditions," he told the group. In hindsight, the boycott position was a mistake, he said. "However, we have to catch up with the momentum and nurture the political revolution that took place in February."

Gemma Cruz told the APC to use this occasion of their founding not only to strengthen their bonds but to renew their commitment with a determined perspective. "The new situation in the Philippines calls for greater solidarity. People's power is still under threat... we should be committed to defend the gains of people's power."

Filipinos in the U.S. are showing their support for the Aquino government by participating in people to people aid projects and volunteering in the Philippine Commission on Good Government offices throughout the U.S. Volunteers like Sandra Soto, Cora Fratelli and Marilou Kahn (l-r) of the New York PCGG are taking on new challenges in uncovering Marcos' hidden wealth in the U.S.



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Poll Boycott an Error

Reprinted from *MALAYA*, May 30, 1986

The Communist Party of the Philippines has officially admitted that it missed out important political and military opportunities by boycotting the February 7 snap presidential poll.

This admission and a call for "rectification" are contained in the May issue of *Ang Bayan*, the official publication of the CPP, released to *Malaya* yesterday.

While admitting its error, the CPP, however, is optimistic it will continue reaping the people's support.

When Marcos announced the presidential elections, a memorandum by the executive committee of the CPP Central Committee saw it as a "noisy and empty political battle among factions in the ruling classes," and launched an active and vigorous boycott campaign.

During the February 22-25 political revolution, the CPP admitted that the party and its forces were not at Camps Crame and Aguinaldo to lead the people who spontaneously moved to overthrow the regime.

In a recent assessment conducted by the Political Bureau of the CPP, they pointed out the following mistakes of the radical left:

- It did not correctly understand the character and operation of U.S. policy toward the Marcos regime. It overestimated U.S. capacity to impose its subjective will on local politics and misread the U.S. dilemma over the conflicting needs it had to simultaneously attend to. It failed to appreciate the possible effects on U.S. policy of local developments over which the U.S. did not have full control.

- It underestimated the bourgeois reformists' capabilities and determination to engage the Marcos regime in a decisive

contest for state power.

- It ignored the fact that the Marcos clique had become extremely isolated and its capacity to rule was fast eroding. It failed to look more deeply into the contradictions developing within the Armed Forces of the Philippines; and,

- It misread the people's deep anti-fascist sentiments and readiness to go beyond the confines of the electoral process in their determination to end the fascist dictatorship.

The CPP analyzed that the election and other major events it unleashed constituted the climax of the people's long-drawn struggle against the Marcos regime.

They admitted that the boycott policy directly and openly went against the desire of the broad masses to pursue the anti-fascist struggle, and concentrated on addressing the advanced section of the people.

"This showed an insufficient understanding of the tasks of political leadership during such a time, as well as a lack of appreciation of the current level of mass participation in revolutionary struggles, and confusion regarding the actual needs of the revolutionary armed struggle," *Ang Bayan* said.

To rectify these errors, the CPP leadership urged leading party organs to sum up their experiences regarding the boycott policy. The results would be circulated within the party to develop a common understanding of the lessons from the boycott campaign.

At the same time, the CPP will undertake steps to strengthen its ideological foundation and raise the theoretical knowledge. This will also encourage and develop the democratic spirit in the CPP, the paper said. □

New Options

Continued from front page

an unsuccessful effort to win the February presidential election. The government does not have the cash for essential new programs to serve the needs of a population 70% of which is below the poverty line. Many government officials serve as volunteers because there is no money to pay their salaries.

Thus the essential message of the Aquino government to the developed world over the past month has been: "Put your money where your mouth is."

Responding to a message of support from the Tokyo summit, Aquino's Executive Secretary Joker Arroyo quipped, "We trust that performance will very soon match rhetoric." A day later Aquino in a televised comment on U.S. praise for the Philippine "peaceful revolution," commented, "I would hope this admiration means they would help us in every possible way and that the assistance they are providing will be massive."

'SYMPATHETIC NOISES'

Once in Manila for his May 8-9 visit, Shultz was barraged with the message. He blamed the U.S. Congress and its budgetary restraints for the Administration's inability to provide more than the promised \$150 million.

Everywhere the response from the Aquino government was the same. The president herself and her various cabinet ministers were correct and cordial. But the amount said the President, Information Minister Teodoro Locsin, Economic Planning Minister Solita Monsod, and Trade Minister Jose Concepcion, "fell short."

Further, Monsod and Concepcion turned the screws on Shultz and demanded that the U.S. give Philippine clothing and sugar exports more access to its markets. But, "all we heard from Shultz," according to Monsod, "were sympathetic noises."

The unrelenting posture of the government officials was inspired by the country's desperate need. But that was reinforced by Ronald Reagan's promise to Marcos earlier this year of an unspecified aid increase if he undertook reforms. The Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs said at the time that \$900 million would not be out of the question. But in spite of having engineered a much-praised revolution and removed a dictator, the Aquino administration was being offered nothing of the sort.

The Philippine government's firmness was also a response to the Reagan administration's refusal to provide it with unqualified support. Reagan's personal affection for Marcos colored diplomatic relations. The State Department managed to talk the U.S. President out of a personal meeting with Marcos while passing through Honolulu on his way to Tokyo. But Reagan did insist on a much-publicized phone call to the dictator and had to scamper to phone Aquino first in order not to violate protocol altogether.

The remaining "cobwebs of doubt," as Laurel called them, were skillfully turned



Laurel meets Shultz: Long on sympathy, short on aid.

into yet another pressure point by the Philippine government. The demand to clarify U.S. posture toward the Aquino government became part of the campaign to get the U.S. to cough up.

CLEAR MESSAGE

But the U.S., which has been practicing diplomacy far longer than the Aquino government, proved itself the ultimate master. Shultz' request to Laurel that his government issue Marcos a passport was a deliberate expression of sympathy for the exiled tyrant. Marcos has made it plain that, if he were able to travel again, he would return to the Philippines and attempt to seize back his position as president.

Finally, despite soothing words of full support, Shultz went out of his way to look up former Marcos government ministers Blas Ople and Jose Roño and three representatives to the dissolved *Batasang Pambansa* from Marcos' old party. It was a clear message that the U.S. is not fully comfortable with Aquino and is keeping its options open.

'INTERNATIONAL GOODWILL'

Observers were thus surprised when, only four days after his return, Shultz turned around and, on NBC's "Today" show, rebuked Marcos for harassing the Philippine government from his base in Hawaii. He further announced the plan to drum up \$2 billion from "Japan, the European countries, Australia, and various international financial institutions."

At least partially responsible for the change was Congress. During Shultz' visit, Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Richard Lugar (R-Ind.) announced an interest in raising the aid level beyond that offered by Reagan. Shortly

after the Secretary's return, a congressional hearing revealed that a number of top lawmakers felt the Reagan offer was, far too low.

But observers suspect an even greater incentive may have been indications that a financially desperate Aquino administration intended to diversify its economic and political relations.

There is "tremendous international goodwill for the Aquino administration," claimed Bert Gonzales, the recently returned chairman of the *Partido Demokratiko Sosyalista ng Pilipinas*. Via an interview in *Business Day*, he urged Aquino not to limit the country's sources of foreign aid to the U.S. and Japan. "They're just waiting to be asked," he said of a number of the European governments.

PHILIPPINE-GERMAN COOPERATION

West Germany and Sweden, Gonzales pointed out, have donated funds to Nicaragua—"Why not the Philippines?" Austria, he added, recently doubled its aid and Spain gave the Philippines preferential trade treatment.

As if on cue, ten days later the Foreign Minister of the Federal Republic of Germany passed through Manila. Meeting with Aquino, he offered assistance to the country "within the framework of Philippine priorities." A more extensive discussion of Philippine-German economic cooperation was scheduled for a conference at the end of the year.

But most unsettling to the U.S., no doubt, was the strong message of support coming from the Soviet Union and Aquino's openness to expanding Philippine-Soviet ties.

As early as mid-April, Soviet Ambassador Vadim Shabalin, accompanied by

two high-ranking consular officials, called on Aquino to discuss "international issues of mutual interest." These reportedly included the U.S. bombing of Libya. Observers read the move as a Soviet attempt to set matters aright after years of warm relations with the Marcoses and the short-sighted *faux pas* of having congratulated the dictator upon winning his blatantly rigged presidential election.

'ALL-PACIFIC FORUM'

Only two days after Ronald Reagan invited Aquino to visit the U.S., Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Kapitsa passed through Manila for a six-day stay. Not only did he stay an unusually long time and invite Aquino to visit the Soviet Union, Kapitsa used the occasion as an opportunity to articulate Soviet policy for the Pacific region.

The Deputy Minister called for an "all-Asia forum" to counter reputed U.S. and Japanese plan to form an "Asian NATO." He pushed for an "all-Pacific forum" as well to discuss forming a non-nuclear zone in the area, reducing the naval presence and broadening economic relations.

Kapitsa urged the Philippines to abolish the U.S. bases. "We don't have bases in Vietnam," he explained. "We have facilities, stations . . . for our ships and our planes." He offered increased Soviet aid and pointed to the potential benefits of joint economic enterprises.

Aquino responded favorably, accepting the invitation to visit Moscow without setting a specific date. She promised to mark the 10th anniversary of Philippine-Soviet relations by appointing a new ambassador. The post has remained vacant for the last four years.

Aquino and Kapitsa also discussed increasing trade. To date, coconut oil remains the Philippines' sole export to the Soviet Union.

BEGINNING OF THE END?

Kapitsa's visit suggests that the Soviet Union has finally awakened and smelled the coffee with regard to the Philippines after years of toasting Ferdinand Marcos as a "nationalist." But though Soviet relations with Marcos were warm, they were entirely superficial.

Marcos used his supposed friendly ties with the Soviets to flaunt at the U.S. each time he failed to get what he wanted. But at the same time he allowed the ambassadorial post to remain empty for four years. Soviet-Philippine relations during the Marcos years thus can be characterized as pragmatic at best—from both sides.

But the U.S. has reason to be nervous with the dawn of the Aquino era. At long last the potential may exist for the Philippines to reposition itself within the world and take a few steps toward the non-alignment that some Aquino backers seek. Desperation has forced the new regime to cast its net as widely as possible in the effort to save its tottering economy. The reward may well be the beginning of the end of the economic—and therefore political—dependence upon the United States which has characterized its history as a nation. □

Anti-Asian Sentiment on the Rise

From California to Texas, to the East Coast cities of Philadelphia and Boston, violence against Asians has reached alarming proportions.

The most visible of the attacks have been on the newest Asian immigrants—Southeast Asian refugees. Vietnamese fishing boats along the gulf coasts of Texas have been burned by white fishermen, often with the support of the Ku Klux Klan. Cambodian refugees resettled in poorer sections of Boston have had their windows smashed by bricks and bottles. Some of the Cambodians have been beaten up and told to “go back home to China.”

The scope of the problem has drawn the attention of national, state and local groups. In its draft report released in late April the U.S. Civil Rights Commission said that “whatever its cause, anti-Asian activity in the form of violence, vandalism, harassment and intimidation continues to occur across the nation.” The study found that racism was one of the underlying factors for the current rise of anti-Asian behavior.

After a two-year study of the problem, the California Attorney General's Commission on Racial, Ethnic, Religious and Minority Violence recommended the strengthening of the state's civil rights. It also proposed the development of a system of information to monitor incidents arising from racial hatred.

From the federal to state and community level, the assessment of the problem is similar: race is a contributing factor. Other factors identified include the decline of the U.S. economy which impacts local resources and international trade, increases in Asian population, misconceptions of Asians, the media's role in stereotyping Asians and the lack of enforcement standards.

VIOLENCE IS NOT NEW

“The 80's is marked by the re-emergence of violence against Asians. The murder of Vincent Chin and the attacks on Vietnamese fishermen are all vivid reminders of the violence directed at Asians at the turn of the century,” said Michael Wong, an attorney with the Asian Law Caucus and one of the organizers of the May 10 conference on violence against Asians in Berkeley, California.

In her report to the California special commission, Judge Alice Lytle, a Sacramento municipal court judge said, “Throughout the 18th and 19th centuries there were outbreaks of violence motivated by bigotry against all minority groups in the state.”

Lytle cited the creation of the first KKK in California in the 20s, the attacks on Hispanics during the so-called “Zoot Suit Riots” in 1943, the internment of Japanese Americans during WWII and the increase in anti-Black and anti-Semitic attacks in the 1950s as low points in California history.

Dr. Allan Seid of the Asian Pacific American Coalition in San Jose, California viewed the repetitive occurrences in Asian American history as economics related. “During economic booms, Asians are recruited actively for cheap labor and employment exploitation but during bad fiscal periods they are scapegoated,” he said.

JAPAN BASHING NOT JUSTIFIED

The negative stereotyping of Asians and the campaign to make English the official U.S. language are other manifestations of the attacks against Asians. The roots of this problem can be traced to the country's economic woes, which others have conveniently blamed on foreign imports and immigrants.

Organized labor as well as the Reagan administration have propagated a “Buy American” campaign as a solution to the country's economic woes. In so doing, Japanese products, and by extension Japanese Americans and Asian Americans have been portrayed as creating unemployment. Many of those affected by plant shutdowns and layoffs take their anger out on Asians, who they see as a more visible target of their frustration. The 1982 murder of Vincent Chin, a Chinese American mistaken for a Japanese by two unemployed auto workers in Detroit, Michigan, drew national attention to this growing hysteria.

The Reagan administration is much to blame for this country's racist practices, noted Jan Sunoo, a Teamster Union organizer, speaking at the Bay Area conference.

Sunoo said that sentiments against Japanese products are so intense in his union that he had to buy an American car when he was hired as an organizer three years ago. “How could I drive my old car there when a big sign greets you at the union hiring hall: “Park Your Foreign Made Cars in Tokyo.”

While recognizing that imports tend to drive wages down, Sunoo said the matter is not as simplistic as organized labor claims. “Is the issue that Americans should patronize union-made products, or products made in the U.S. even if they are not union-made?” he asked. If the former is the case, European industry beats American industry hands down, with 60% of its workers unionized compared to only 17% unionization in the U.S. “Unions have to realize the social consequences of the flag-waving zeal that has characterized the ‘Buy American’ campaign,” he cautioned.



Southeast Asian refugees are the latest targets of racial violence.

Contrary to popular notion, America's industrial decline has its roots in the U.S., not in Japan, according to MIT economics professor Lester Thurow. He said that American business has to upgrade its antiquated technology if it hopes to compete in the global economy. Productivity in the U.S. has increased at only 0.7% per year, compared to a growth rate of 2.5% to 4% per year in other major industrial countries. Another disparity Thurow sees is America's low number of science and engineering graduates. Last year they were only 7% of all college graduates in the U.S. compared with 40% in Japan and Germany.

OTHER CAUSES OF PROBLEM

The American media has much to do with the increase of racial violence against Asians, activists who gathered in the Bay Area charged.

Movies like “Year of the Dragon” promote the image that Asians do not value life and are terror-happy, said Robin Wu of Chinese for Affirmative Action. Wu argued that there are not enough movies with positive portrayals of Asians which could offset the negative stereotypes seen in films like “Dragon.”

“The media has been saturating the public with the same sinister stereotypes of Asians for years,” she continued. In addition, the American ego embodied in movie heroes like “Rambo” only reinforces the false patriotism that the Reagan administration has been promoting through its campaign against so-called international terrorism.

“The cumulative effect of racial conflict and discrimination directed toward Asians in the last century, both domestically and internationally, has implanted a deeply rooted convention of anti-Asian sentiment,” said Stanford law professor Bill Hing. “We [different Asian groups] look, act, and talk differently, but because of the American racist legacy, we are viewed as a homogeneous group.”

“Xenophobia increases when there is a perceived increase in the Asian population,” Hing argued stating that Asian population has tripled since 1970 from 1.4 million to 5.1 million in 1980. Three out of five Asians in America are immigrants. In 1985 alone, according to the Center for Immigrant Studies in Washington, D.C., Asians made up 40% of legal immigrants to the U.S. Filipinos top all Asian groups with 41,978 out of 225,254 in that year, followed by Koreans with 35,253 and Vietnamese with 31,895.

INTERRACIAL CONFLICTS

The problem appears to know no boundaries. From white working class neighborhoods in South Boston to Black ghettos in Philadelphia and Oakland to affluent suburbs like Monterey Park and Los Altos in California, anti-Asian sentiments are running high.

The presence of Asians has been viewed as disrupting old neighborhoods. Some see it as an encroachment on social services and funds that are already too little for the existing poor.

The problem baffled Bishop Herzfeld of the Association of Evangelical Bishops and a member of the California commission. “You expect to find it somewhere else like Alabama or Mississippi. You know it exists, but after getting involved we found it was right here. That was really shocking.”

“It's one of the most familiar and meanest stories in American history,” writes *Newsweek* in recounting

fight that erupted between Hmong refugees and Black teenagers who had vandalized their car. By the time the fight ended, one refugee lay unconscious with a fractured skull and broken legs. These types of confrontations led to a mass exodus of Hmong refugees from West Philadelphia.

The tension in Philadelphia was magnified by the popularization of a Black rap song in which the narrator goes to a Chinese takeout restaurant, quarrels with a squeaky-voiced “Chink” and pulls a gun on him. The song reached No. 1 on the local charts until protests forced it off the air.

But the tensions between Blacks and Asians appear to be primarily a matter of economics, claims Samuel Cacas, a project coordinator at the Asian Community Mental Health Services in Oakland. Cacas is working with groups of refugees, the Oakland police and leaders in the Black community to resolve some of the tensions in the area.

Most of the incidents involve burglaries. Walter Chinn, an administrative aide to Oakland vice-mayor Frank Ogawa, said he doesn't believe the issue is racially motivated. “Laotian and Cambodian refugees have become easy prey, being new in the neighborhood. They live in the city's poorest and most crime-infested neighborhoods.”

Along the coastal areas of Galveston Bay and Seabrook in Texas, however, the conflict has taken a sharper racial edge as local fishermen have turned to the Ku Klux Klan for protection of their fishing privileges. The Civil Rights Commission reported that Vietnamese fishermen have had their boats sunk, fishing nets cut, and have been physically assaulted, harassed and threatened in their efforts to earn a living.

In 1979, a white fisherman was killed in a conflict between Vietnamese and local fishermen. Within hours of the man's death, three boats belonging to the Vietnamese were burned, and one of their dwellings was firebombed. An attempt was later made to bomb the crab packing house which employed a large number of Vietnamese. The violence caused two-thirds of the Vietnamese community to flee to another town.

In affluent neighborhoods the attacks are more subtle. When large numbers of Chinese Americans moved into Monterey Park, a suburb of Los Angeles, bumper stickers such as “Will the last person leaving Monterey Park please bring the American flag” became popular. In Alhambra, Los Altos and Alameda, cities in California, “English-Only” resolutions have been passed.

INSTITUTIONALIZING ANTI-ASIAN SENTIMENTS

Legally sanctioned forms of discrimination become more pervasive, entrenched and supported by the general citizenry during hard economic times, charged Hing. Linking the current Simpson-Mazzoli-Rodino immigration reform legislation to this country's past exclusion laws, Hing said there is a renewed attempt to reduce the number of new immigrants.

The 1885, 1920, and 1934 exclusion laws were enacted to explicitly curtail the entry of Chinese, Japanese and Filipinos, respectively, into the U.S. The laws were established precisely because Americans were reacting to economic lows of those periods and viewed immigrant labor as a competition and threat to the economy.

This hysteria led to other anti-immigrant legis-

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Seattle Suit Gets Help From Aquino Gov't

By VINCE REYES

The civil suit on behalf of murdered union leaders and anti-Marcos activists Silme Domingo and Gene Viernes received a positive boost when Bonifacio Gillego, executive director of the Philippine overseas Commission on Good Government pledged his support to the plaintiffs' quest for justice.

Gillego was the keynote speaker for the fifth annual memorial for the slain activists held in Seattle last May 31. The second highest ranking official of the Philippine government in the U.S. said he was there "as an act of contrition, to extend my apologies to you because I was once a non-believer that Marcos ordered the murders of Domingo and Viernes . . . but after studying the evidence and with my first hand, in-depth knowledge of the Philippine intelligence network under Marcos, I now know that all the allegations are true."

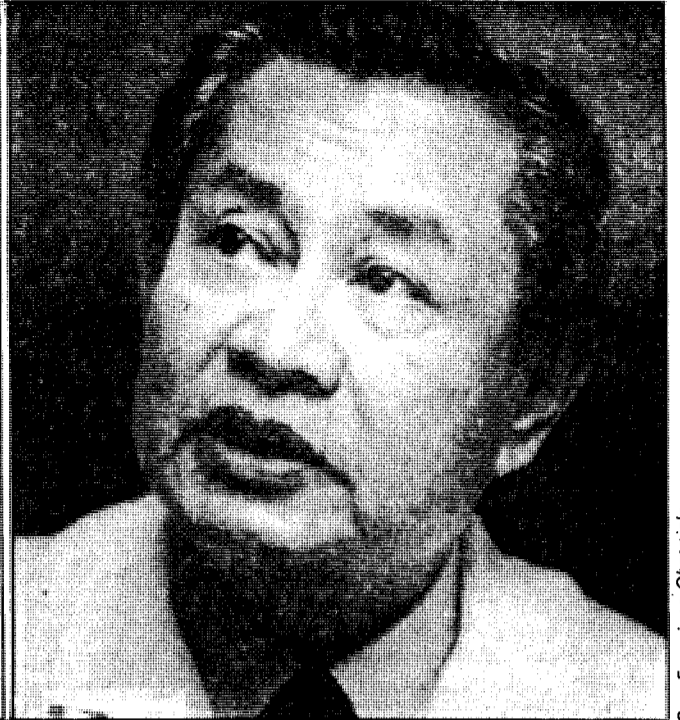
Gillego's "first-hand" knowledge is credentialed by his 20 years of service as a military intelligence officer in the Philippines. He conducted extensive work under the Marcos regime until he left the armed forces in the mid-70s.

Gillego made it clear that the Marcos dictatorship extended its tentacles to the U.S. where intelligence officers conducted a broad range of activities against anti-Marcos activists. "They were allowed to operate with impunity because agencies in the U.S. considered them as friendly agents," charged Gillego.

President Corazon Aquino appointed Gillego to head the Good Government Commission's investigation and retrieval of Ferdinand Marcos' illegal holdings in the U.S. Gillego's visit to Seattle represents Aquino's posture of cooperation with the estates of Domingo and Viernes, plaintiffs who are in the suit. He will act as a special advisor to the legal team.

Philippine Minister of Justice Neptali Gonzales recently announced that the Domingo/Viernes murder case would be one of the three top priorities of his office. Other cases include of course investigating the assassination of Benigno Aquino and the disappearance of Marcos government defector Primitivo Mijares.

Gillego is in agreement with the Committee for Justice for Domingo and Viernes in that San Francisco-based millionaire Dr. Leonilo Malabed's Mabuhay Corporation served as a "slush fund" conduit for Philippine intelligence operations in the U.S. At the memorial, Gillego displayed documents believed to expose this link. "The middle-level conspirator [Malabed] stands at the nexus of our investigations of both Marcos' extraordinary wealth and his fascist activities in the U.S., including,



Bonifacio Gillego (l) has evidence linking San Francisco doctor Leonilo Malabed's (r) Mabuhay Corporation to the murders of union officials and KDP activists Gene Viernes and Silme Domingo.

murder," stated Gillego.

MALABED FINGERED

Meanwhile in San Francisco, Malabed has acknowledged that he indeed signed a document that appears to prove that his now-defunct Mabuhay Corporation received \$1 million in Philippine intelligence funds to pay for covert operations in the U.S. and possibly including the funds for the murder of Domingo and Viernes. The document was among 2,300 that U.S. Customs officials seized from Marcos on February 26 upon his arrival in Hawaii after fleeing Manila. The document could prove to be a key evidence in a number of state, federal and Philippine investigations and lawsuits of Marcos activities in the U.S.

CJDV lawyer Michael Withey said he is interested in the document because of an expenditure of \$15,000 on May 17, 1981, titled "Special Security Projects." The date coincides with a trip made from Seattle to San Francisco by Tony Baruso, another Marcos ally who was implicated in the murder conspiracy but was never brought to trial. Murder trial testimony established that Baruso's gun was used as the murder weapon and that he had promised to pay \$5,000 to the assassins, who are now serving sentences for the murders.

Malabed, however, claims that he was "victimized" because he was pressured to write and sign a message at the bottom of the already drafted document four years

ago to vouch for its authenticity. He asserts that he was told that he was doing a favor for his boyhood pal, Ferdinand Marcos. Malabed, fearful that public statements he makes may be used against him in court, spoke through his attorney Patrick Hallinan.

Nonetheless, the disclosure marks the first time that Malabed has admitted that he has personal knowledge of the document and that he wrote on it.

"This is a breakthrough for us," remarked Cindy Domingo, CJDV spokesperson, "even though Malabed claims he was under pressure to sign the document while he was at Malacañang, he is admitting he had previous knowledge of its existence."

THE PLOT THICKENS

Meanwhile, Malabed is claiming his innocence. Hallinan is alleging that the doctor was duped into allowing the Mabuhay Corporation and the document to serve as a cover for an embezzlement scheme concocted by other Marcos' supporters. The so far unnamed perpetrators of the plot supposedly used the phony expense sheet to "steal and double-dip" at least \$500,000 from the Philippine government, the attorney claimed. "Dr. Malabed didn't know anything about it," Hallinan said.

Between 1979 and 1981, the 63-year-old physician received an estimated \$500,000 from a Philippine government media fund to pay for pro-Marcos television and radio programs, social events, and

other "innocent activities," Hallinan said. "It wasn't intelligence money . . . and none of it was for hit-man stuff or spying or dirty tricks," he continued.

Hallinan further claims that Malabed agreed to act as the conduit for the funds because Marcos officials were afraid that the opposition would have a "propaganda field day" if it was exposed that the government directly paid for overseas pro-Marcos activities.

MORE HOT WATER

If Malabed can manage to wrangle his way out of the charges linking him to security related payoffs, he will still have to face another charge linking him to a cover-up of Marcos' hidden wealth.

He was subpoenaed last May 14 before a California Senate Select Committee on the Pacific Rim which is attempting to uncover the ownership of banks linked to Marcos, his key officials and business associates. Malabed was named as the owner on record of the Redwood Bank, Mission National Bank, Oceanic Bank and the California Overseas Bank of Los Angeles. Four other banks are under investigation to determine their actual ownership.

"It may be revealed that these banks were used to funnel Marcos' hidden wealth into the U.S.," speculated Domingo. "Malabed appears to have had a very special role with the Marcos machinery, the exposure of which is beginning to show the many illegal political and economic inter-sections Marcos had within the U.S." □

Anti-Asian

Continued from page 10

lations, such as the anti-miscegenation laws which were later found to be unconstitutional.

Today, the use by immigrants of social services and public benefits such as SSI (supplemental security income), public housing and medicare is increasingly being scrutinized.

With the government taking an active role in cutting back social services meant to serve the needs of immigrants such as bilingual ballots, bilingual education, and translation services in courts and hospitals, many see this as the institutionalization of anti-Asian sentiments.

The elimination of bilingual ballots in a city-wide proposition in San Francisco in 1982 sounded a danger signal, says Henry Der, director of CAA.

Der sees these initiatives as just the tip of the iceberg: "There are many more in both the public and private sectors." He cited a petition underway before Pacific Bell and AT&T to eliminate their bilingual services. A similar move is underway demanding that the FCC prohibit foreign language television programs.

Bilingual services have proven to be an effective

strategy to integrate limited English proficient citizens into American society. "Bilingual training programs have assisted immigrants to secure adequate employment instead of welfare assistance," Der added.

The attempts to eliminate bilingual education can prove disastrous for California's limited English students, said Lillian Galedo, director of the Filipino Immigrant Services in Oakland, an agency that worked with parents to make Oakland Unified School comply with bilingual education programs. There are over 524,000 limited-English proficient public school students in California, a population larger than the combined public school population of 26 states. Asian and Southeast Asian immigrant students constitute 20% of California's limited English proficient enrollment. Bilingual education has provided these students the opportunity to master English while continuing academic progress in other subject matters.

Laws and ordinances aimed at banning translation of government forms or prohibiting public signs in foreign languages are disturbing, said the California Attorney General's special commission. It points to the alienation and fear that cause racial violence in the communities where such laws are introduced. "The laws and ordinances are symptoms of a serious threat to the peace and safety of those communities," the report concluded.

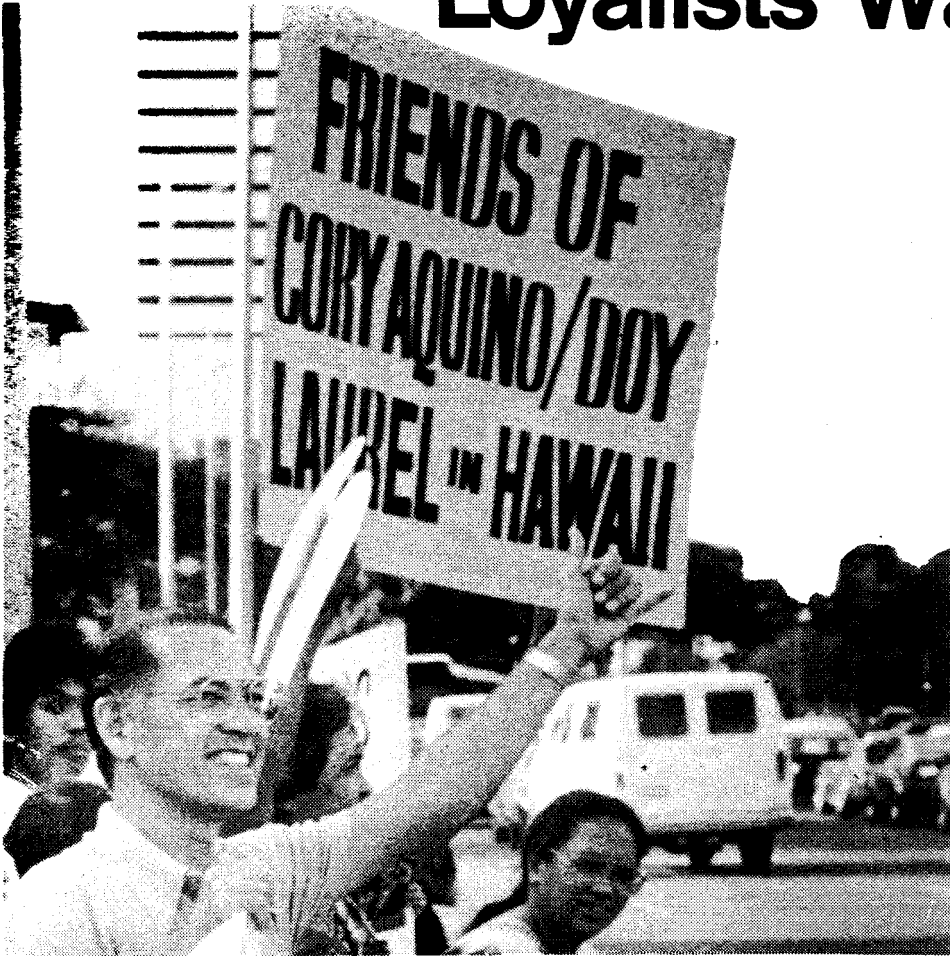
LACK OF ENFORCEMENT

Civil rights advocates cite the lack of strong enforcement as a contributor to the growing violence against Asians.

The Civil Rights Commission noted a pattern of light penalties for crimes against Asians. A Fort Dodge, Iowa man who assaulted a Laotian immigrant was given a suspended sentence and ordered "to write an essay of 25 words or more." A South Boston teenager who attacked a Cambodian refugee received 50 days probation. The murderers of Vincent Chin received only a fine and three years probation until community outrage forced the U.S. Department of Justice to charge them with federal civil rights violations. One defendant was convicted and sentenced to 25 years in prison; the other was acquitted.

Given the current right-wing climate in the U.S., fostered by the pronouncements and programs emanating from the White House, it is not surprising that anti-Asian violence is once again on the rise and that governmental authorities are doing little to curb it. It is a positive sign though that community activists and civil rights groups are increasingly publicizing and challenging this phenomenon and linking it to the achievement of equal rights for immigrants. □

Loyalists Want to Nip This Buddy



Buddy Gomez (l) actively organized with Filipinos in Hawaii for Marcos' overthrow.

By VENNY VILLAPANDO

The tidal wave of controversy over deposed dictator Ferdinand Marcos' presence in Hawaii had hardly receded when another political tsunami hit the islands' divided Filipino community. Still smarting from their idol's humiliating defeat, the islands' pro-Marcos loyalists reacted angrily to the recent appointment of a well-known Marcos critic to the top post in the Philippine consulate in Honolulu.

"I commiserate with the grief and the trauma of these people," sighed Tomas "Buddy" Gomez, the 51-year-old businessman and Aquino supporter who was selected to fill the top post of consul general. He replaced Raul Rabe who defected to the Aquino forces and was promoted to the Philippine Embassy staff in Washington, D.C.

"To begin with, the objections are coming from the various groupings of pro-Marcos Filipinos who are largely Ilocano," he said. "These are the very people who up to this moment refuse to accept the reality and the legitimacy of the Corazon Aquino government in the Philippines."

These people, according to Gomez, were suffering from the trauma of having witnessed the "sad spectacle of their hero and benefactor falling from grace of the people and being booted out of the country."

Gomez said his appointment was like "rubbing salt into their wounds" because they saw him as "the most rabid anti-Marcos voice in Honolulu."

BATTLE OF WORDS

Leading the attack against the new consul general was Francisco Ugale, a businessman and a perennial Marcos defender who, according to Gomez, "has been threatening to have his own demonstrations" against him. "Although nothing has happened, I think in his frustration, he'll do it one of these days—whether he'll stage a one-man barricade or not, he'll do it."

A shooting war has erupted in the editorial pages of local dailies and on the airwaves between Gomez detractors and supporters.

"He should go back to his boss and ask for another assignment outside Hawaii," wrote Andrea Baptista in a letter to a Honolulu daily newspaper. "For here, he [Gomez] is persona non grata. It's time to circulate a petition to oust Gomez from Hawaii!"

"Send the bugger to Libya!" charged an anonymous caller to a local radio station that caters to a largely Filipino audience.

Among the vocal critics of Gomez were a few local state legislators of Filipino ancestry who earlier refused to endorse a state resolution demanding that Marcos

leave Hawaii.

Senator Ben Cayetano, who is running for the lieutenant governor's seat in this year's election said Gomez "lacks the temperament to serve the entire Filipino community of Hawaii."

He was joined by State Representative Rey Grauly (also of Filipino ancestry): "To expect that Buddy could—all of a sudden—turn around from being a trouble-making sort to a diplomat able to bring together all the different factions of the community is very difficult for me to accept."

SNIPING LEGISLATORS

The legislators' statements to the press quickly drew fire from Filipinos who were angered by their "sniping comments."

"Cayetano is hardly the person to talk about the right 'temperament' for a particular job," wrote Maria Maynard, "because he himself is known to be impulsive, moody and occasionally short-tempered. For him therefore to criticize Gomez as not having the temperament to serve the entire Filipino community is hypocritical, to say the least."

She then aimed at Grauly saying, "his statement about Gomez being a 'trouble-making' sort is unwarranted and irresponsible. It implies that all those who oppose Marcos, especially in an outspoken way, are 'trouble-makers.'"

Maynard criticized the Filipino legislators for "fanning the divisiveness which they have indicated they would help resolve."

Another letter-writer, Abraham Ignacio, Jr., had this to say about Cayetano and Grauly:

"Like the proverbial ostrich, they did nothing and just hid their heads in the political sands. It was the non-Filipino legislators who had the moral and political courage to take the necessary stand against Marcos and all he stands for."

SUPPORT FROM MEDIA

Gomez drew strong support from the media as well.

Perhaps the most encouraging words he received came from the *Honolulu Advertiser* whose main editorial on April 23 said "Aquino's appointment of Tomas 'Buddy' Gomez as consul general here seems to be a reasonable step at a delicate time."

"To be sure," the editorial stated, "more unity in the divided Hawaii Filipino community is needed. But it is Marcos, not Gomez, or any other activist on either side, who is the main problem."

Gomez predicted that his detractors would see reason and accept his appointment as a reality "as the days go on."

He singled out as an example Joe

Lazo, a fervent Marcos supporter who has been leading the local pro-Marcos demonstrations. Lazo was among the first callers who congratulated Gomez for his appointment. According to Gomez, "Lazo has taken the attitude of 'I don't care if you love Aquino, I also love Marcos.'"

However, Gomez may have failed to notice that Lazo also told a Honolulu television reporter that he was "concerned that Gomez' appointment would further divide the Filipino community," and that he hoped the new consul general would not "take sides on the Marcos issue."

Judging from the array of well-wishers who have greeted him—including Hotel and Restaurant Union president Romeo Mindo—Gomez is confident he has won the backing of various community groups.

"The Visayan Club and the Association of Travel Agents have extended their congratulations," he enumerated. "I've been invited by the Ilocosurians to speak before their group. Another Ilocano club has asked me to join them, and I've been invited to Kauai for a speaking engagements by leaders of an Ilocano association there."

This, he said, showed that some people could not rise above their emotions. "But those people who have the capacity to reason and accept reality for what it is, are the ones over the hump."

As for his few vocal critics in the state capitol, Gomez said:

"They were under the impression our crowd was mad at them because they did not support the [anti-Marcos] resolution. The truth is I don't even give a damn whether they have a resolution or not."

"All I was concerned with was—you people are the duly elected leaders of the Filipinos in the Hawaiian community. Lead! And if by leading, they decide they want Marcos in Hawaii, so be it. At least, I'll respect them for the decision they've taken."

Prior to his appointment as consul general, Gomez had criticized the lawmakers for being "fence-sitters."

BUSINESS BACKGROUND

Gomez said his business and social background as well as his close affinity to the Aquino political circle made him a prime choice for the top Honolulu post.

For a long time, from 1958 to 1983, Gomez was an executive with the Ayala Group of Companies. He is managing partner of AP&G Resources, a trading firm. He was also chairman of the Friends of Cory Aquino.

"The thrust of our diplomacy now is economic development and my background in business ties up very well in these efforts as expounded by Doy Laurel, the Vice President and Foreign Minister."

He said that Manila newspapers quoted Laurel as saying that 30% of all the new appointments in the ministry will have to come from a new breed and that the office will "call upon the varied talents of Filipinos both in the Philippines and abroad."

Gomez said Laurel singled him out as one of these new talents, saying that "Buddy has the expertise for business development and he has our trust."

That trust from the Philippine government inner circles is especially important given Marcos' presence here in Hawaii.

"I've served the cause with them for a long time," explained Gomez. "They can call me anytime to check on whatever rumors may be circulating as to the movements of the Marcos party in Honolulu, and I can immediately confirm or deny those rumors."

One of Gomez' first official acts was to tell Arthur "Tex" Balmaceda, a consulate information officer and a Marcos loyalist, to vacate his office. Balmaceda was widely reputed to be a National Intelligence and Security Agency agent.

As consul general, Gomez intends to involve himself in social issues affecting Filipino immigrants in Hawaii. "I know that new immigrants oftentimes suffer from job discrimination."

Wouldn't his post restrict him from taking up such domestic issues?

"It's a matter of attitude," Gomez replied. "I am not hamstrung by the strictures of diplomacy. I feel it emanates from my person because I'm an overgrown Boy Scout and a frustrated social worker so, I'll see what I can do about that."

He recalled that during his visit to Manila last March, he was already approached to assist the government although there was no definite assignment mentioned.

"I could have joined the R.P.-U.S. Business Development Council in Washington, D.C. as an adjunct of the Philippine Embassy," Gomez said. "I could have been appointed ambassador to some country some place just so they have a confidant in that part of the world. The last resort was Honolulu but they said, 'Since Marcos is there, you should probably stay in Honolulu.'"

The appointment started as a joke, he said. "I told them 'If you don't have any definite place for me and since Marcos is in Hawaii, I'll stay there for the meantime—Ako ang tutok! (I'll be the shadow!)—those were the exact words I used!"

Joining Gomez in the consulate is another activist, Horacio "Ducky" Paredes who has been designated as the new information representative. Paredes worked as a journalist for 20 years but left the Philippines a year ago "because I got very uncomfortable the way things were." He was elected a director of the Movement for a Free Philippines when he became politically active in Honolulu.

Upon his return to Honolulu, Gomez received a cable March 25 asking him to send his resume to the Philippines immediately. On April 8, he received a follow-up cablegram which read: "The Honolulu post is yours, must see Doy ASAP."

Gomez left for Manila in a haste, and the rest was history—and more belly-aching for the Marcos diehards. □

Celebrate People's Power

The Coalition to Advance the Movement for Democracy and Independence is again initiating Philippine National Day celebrations. This time, many of the activities are being done in conjunction with Philippine consulates throughout the country with the theme: "Celebrating People's Power in the Philippines."

Sacramento: For information, call Sonny Alforque, (916) 428-4415

San Francisco: June 15, 11am-6pm, Dimasalang House, 50 Rizal Street food, exhibits, cultural programs.

Seattle: June 12, 7-9pm, cultural program, Filipino Community Center, 5740 Martin Luther King Way South. For information, call: Vilma Fernandez, (206) 725-9917 or Esther Simpson, (206) 7230352

Los Angeles: June 13, 7:30pm, cultural program, Friendship Auditorium, \$12.

New York: June 7, 9am-6pm, Barrio Fiesta at Flushing Meadow Park (near Shea Stadium). For information, call (718) 805-3734.

Toronto: June 14, 11am-6pm, Picnic at Seton Park.

Hawaii: Reception at the Philippine Consulate. Call consulate for information.

Washington, D.C.: June 14, 9am-6pm, American University Campus, food, exhibits, cultural program. For information, call: (301) 933-5239.

Voices



Mila Aguilar, 35, poet and journalist, was freed along with 470 other political prisoners when the Marcos dictatorship fell to pieces in February. When Aguilar was arrested in August 1984, Norman Mailer, president of the American PEN Center, cabled Ferdinand Marcos to ensure her safety and PEN International pressed the dictator for her unconditional release during its meeting in New York last January.

Love Wasted

I.

Love can be killed
so easily,
knick after
painful knick.
Marvelling at each drop of blood
as it clusters round
some blade of grass,
adding color
to the greenery,
you fail to see
the paling of the victim,
until the knicks become
one great big wound
surpassing healing.
And then the love,
it goes so easily.

II.

Love's not
some substance
you can manufacture.
Nor a person that can be
repaired.
It flows,
like blood
in veins and arteries
and capillaries
intertwined.
That is why
a cut can make it
flow out so
and a thousand cuts
can waste it.
I speak not only
of strange, personal loves.
you hear,
but the greater love
of men and women
for the things they hold
most dear.

Sherlock and Shakespeare

Ah, so now we're back
to Sherlock Holmes —
reversed, I mean,
to wrecking lives,
unmaking loves
unblemished by
whatever fear.
But honestly, weren't his
characters and schemes

overwhelmingly so simple —
the red-haired plot,
the only woman that
he ever spoke of
with respect?
It was therefore with ease
that everything fell in place
always, *sans coups*.
For real life I would prefer

the dramatist William Shakespeare,
coalescing as he did
complexities oft unintended.
To this late date
I am still sure
that modern cad
shall execute
his Romeo and Juliet,
yet.

Researcher Reporting on the Dumagats*

1
Left alone,
the tribal *kainginero*
will not always seek new forests.
He merely moves
from one *kaingin* to another
to preserve the cradle
of his sustenance.

2
Dried up
by three whole days
of bright undiminished sunlight,
cut vegetative cover
burns rapidly,
leaving less damage
to the precious soil
than slow-burning fire
on half-dried vegetation.

3
Weeding is
not practised.
Left fallow
for years,
shrubs and trees
quite naturally reforest
the *kaingin*.

4
Ashes
provide food to the crops.
Look at the first harvest,
the ashes were still there
at planting.
Surely yield declines
with the memory of ashes
eaten up
or washed out by the rains
of time.

5
They let the sun
do the stamping
on baguntao seeds sown on a dozen-strong
in holes
left unhappily uncovered —
until the rains come.

6
Mayas are allowed
to feed on palay.
For once driven off,
their loud cries
bring more mayas
to the rescue, and the attack
destroys.

7
For supplement,
they gather honey.
A single beehive
could produce
anywhere from one to three gallons,
depending on
the magnitude of flowering:
fewer flowers
mean less honey.

So too
with people
I imagine.
We do not always seek new forests,
left alorte
unweeded
and uncovered.
Indeed we grow,
strengthened by the elements,
leaving less damage
than those who are continually
driven off, or shackled,
deprived of their
full flowering.
They leave no honey —
not even precious ashes,
I would have you know.

(*Kainginero*—slash-and-burn farmer; *kaingin*
—clearing in the forest)

* Dumagats — tribal group in the Philippines

Isang Masakit na Ngipin

Tila tikatik ng orasan
ang katok ng sakit
sa gilagid.
Tila anitong nag-uumalpas
sa aking balat,
tila sasabog
sa isipang nagdidildil ng sakit
sa katawan.

Pagpapanis,
pagpapapasta—permanente o hindi—
ay hindi na sapat. Ngayon.
Iyon ay kahapon.
Lahat ay nagamit na.
Wala pa ring solusyon;
masakit pa rin.

Kailangang bunutin na ito
at nang sa lugar nito
ay may isang bagong ngiping
sisibol.
Malusog.
Matatag.
Maputi.
Ngipin, hindi pangil.

*El Cuezon "always feared rejection slips" so
it took a while before he could send his poem to
us from the Philippines.*

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.

From the Other Side of the Sea

When you dance in the snow
Like a ball of fire
Lending hue to the sky
That's an ashtray
At three after noon,
Remember your coat
Was woven by us
Your sister in an
Inferno factory
On the edge of a shore
On the other side
Of the Sea
Where the sun
Lights the dawn.

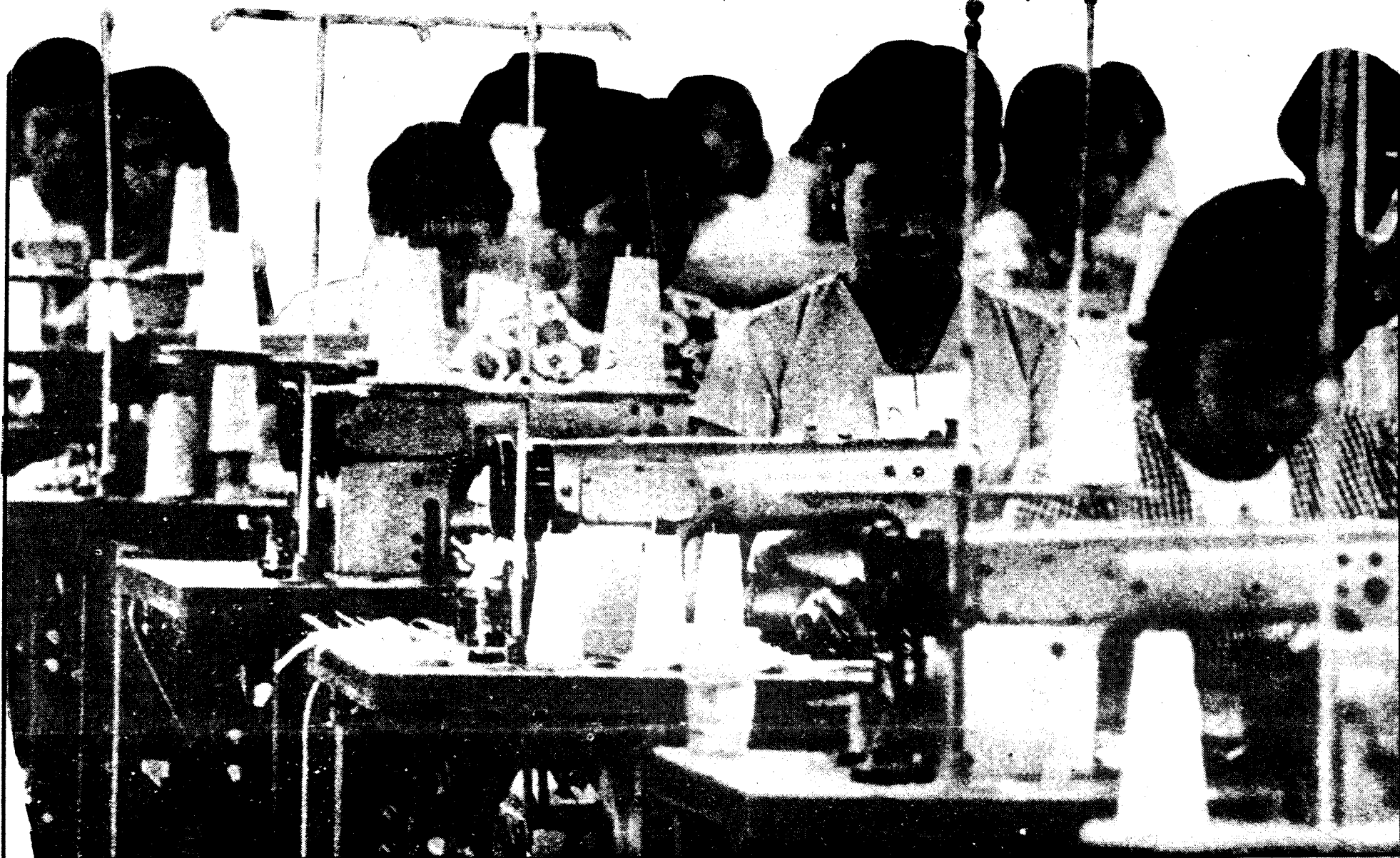
We gather the colors
Of our land's
Fishes and flowers
For your beautiful coat
Which everyone thought
Sailed in from Peru
Brazil or Mexico
And not from our
Penniless land.
Our fiery fingers
Stitch the seams
Sew the frills
Tick like the second
Hand of a clock,
Our fingers burn
For the infants we are
Not allowed to bear,
Our hands ache
To press our babies
To our breast
Where no milk flows
But we cannot for
We continue to thread
Sew and press
The sunset rays
For your coat
So that you may dazzle
In the snow.

And when heaven yawns
At five and skyscrapers
Glitter in the sky
As you dance, dance
Into the starless night,
Remember us
Your sisters who wove
Your coat so warm
And lovely as embers
Crackling in the hearth.
We lie silent
Dazed with fatigue
In our sardine-can shanty
With not a thread on
To absorb the sweat
Off our bare
Brown shoulders
Or to still the twitching
Of our tired fingers,
Not even a lover's
Arm for a pillow
Since we were torn
From our men who are kept
In their own inferno
And we're supposed
To be virgins
Pawed by supervisors
Managers, owners
Of the giant furnace
In this land that
Heaves to the sun.

We dare not dream
Of the mountains
Of our birth, then
Capped with trees
And the flames of dawn
But now a brown heap
Of smoking twigs,
We dare not recall
The purring stream
Of our un-lived youth
As we lie listening
To the crickets chirring
Like machines incessantly
Whirring, reminding us
That hours later
We have to wake up
To another day
Of a thousand coats
For our sisters
On the other side
Of the sea
Before the sun
Lights the dawn.

Marra Pl. Lanot

Marra Pl. Lanot, one of the Philippines' top bilingual writers, has won awards for poetry and essay from the Don Carlos Palarca Memorial Awards for Literature and the Surian ng Wikang Pambansa. Her published books are Sheaves of Things Burning (1967), Flowers of the Sun (1970) and Passion and Compassion (1981). All are poetry collections. She is a member of various writers groups including the Philippine Center for International PEN, the Writers Union of the Philippines, and Women Writers in Media Now. Lanot has written a number of essays, screenplays and teleplays.



ConCom

Continued from page 4

Catholic, Protestant, Muslim, and even *Iglesia ni Kristo*. Aquino's decision to award a seat to this well-organized indigenous church which voted for Marcos *en bloc* throughout his years raised a howl of protest from her followers.

LEAVING NOTHING TO CHANCE

As the ConCom sets out on its difficult task, an intense exchange is predicted on a variety of issues. These include whether the country's legislature is to remain unicameral as under Marcos or return to the old bicameral system; if the president should serve on a single six-year term or a shorter one to which he or she can be re-elected; the possibility of federalism or autonomy for Mindanao and Sulu; and the ease with which the president should be able to declare martial law.

Perhaps the most explosive issue is the question of the U.S. bases. The left would like to see a provision written directly into the constitution setting a timetable for their removal.

Not coincidentally, Washington is keeping a close watch on the ConCom process, for, in spite of the body's centrist tendency, its nationalist leanings are unmistakable.

Leaving nothing to chance, Washington has been conducting a vigorous campaign to influence the constitution-writing process in its favor. The main form of U.S. interference involves the channeling of funds reportedly through the Asia and Ford Foundations to finance research projects on major components of the constitution. The U.S. is also sending constitutional experts and legal specialists to the Philippines to "assist" in the research and writing process.

OUSTING THE OLD: APPOINTING THE NEW

On other fronts, Aquino seems to have exerted her unifying influence, in the process averting what some critics and supporters alike feared might erupt into full-blown national crises.

In particular, the replacement of Marcos-era governors, mayors and barangay captains with new officers-in-charge initially spurred a controversy which continues to simmer beneath the surface.

As expected, the most virulent reaction

came from the ousted officials themselves and their local supporters. Some barricaded themselves inside their offices and threatened to resist by force of arms.

The most immediate object of their wrath was Minister of Local Governments Aquilino Pimentel, charged with the dirty work of ousting the old and appointing the new. Pimentel proceeded to replace incumbents who he charged "were the tentacles at the local levels" and "the willing tools of repression" of the Marcos regime.

The situation threatened to deteriorate further when a dispute arose between Pimentel's party—PDP-Laban and Vice President Salvador Laurel's UNIDO over the party affiliations of the appointed OICs.

To prevent the in-house squabble from undermining the UNIDO/PDP-Laban coalition under which she ran in the February 7 elections, by late April Aquino herself stepped in. Insisting on reviewing all appointments before finalized, she transferred the ultimate authority from Pimentel to herself and, in the process, doused the fire.

Aquino also made it clear that her determination to pursue the ill-gotten wealth of Marcos and his cronies has not flagged with three months in office. On May 7, she issued Executive Order 14 to strengthen the authority of the Presidential Commission on Good Government. EO 14 empowers the PCGG to compel a person to testify or produce documents that may be self-incriminating.

The order also authorizes the commission to grant immunity from criminal prosecution to any person who provides testimony indispensable to the prosecution of cases brought before it.

The government is studying the possibility of allowing holders of hidden wealth to retain a portion of their assets if only to accelerate the process of recovery. The amnesty scheme should also avoid lengthy and expensive legal proceedings.

Even those most skeptical of the new Philippine president in her first month or two have begun to admit a grudging respect. Initially concerned about her low profile, farming out of authority to cabinet members and long, drawn-out decision-making process, the *New York Times* has begun to change its tune.

"With Communists on the attack, Marcos loyalists chiding her in the streets, cabinet members speaking out of turn, foreign creditors breathing down her neck, and a constitution still to write," the august publication wrote at the beginning of May, "President Corazon Aquino has shown so far she can ride the whirlwind while directing the storm." Coming from the *New York Times*, that's saying something. □

of the struggle between workers and their employers. To balance off its concessions to workers, the government suspended the *Pag-Ibig* program—a compulsory deduction from pay to fund low-income housing—drawing praise from employers. Similar business approval was received for a measure to limit the length of a worker's apprenticeship period—which is viewed as a major cause of work stoppages and as a "source of abuse" by some employers.

To facilitate its role as mediator, Aquino directed Sanchez to convene a national tripartite conference that would negotiate a "Code of Industrial Harmony." The code is envisioned as the government's policy framework for promoting and maintaining peace between the traditionally warring interests.

In the long run, such a vision of "harmony" is bound to reveal the utopian illusions it contains. But for now, the shift in government labor policy is a step in the right direction. □

Furthermore, Indonesia failed to diversify and develop its productive capacity during this period of seeming prosperity. Meanwhile, oil and sugar, its top foreign exchange earners, are on the decline. This can only mean further hardship for the country's poor.

SUKARNO LEGACY

Finally, there is the continuing impact of the Sukarno legacy and its progressive overtones.

Sukarno's death in 1970 at 70 years old, inspired a massive rush of sympathy—pilgrimages to his grave in East Java and waves of books, articles and memoirs. The government was forced to erect a mausoleum in his honor and posthumously present him an award as

ASEAN

Continued from page 6

have known only one ruler in their entire lives. At the same time, People's Power sent chills down the spines of the autocrats grown overconfident of their hold on the reins. With elections on the horizon within the next 13 months in Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand, many must be wondering if the people's power phenomenon is contagious.

The role of the U.S. provided yet another shocker for the ASEAN rulers. They watched with distress as the western press—with a green light from Washington—made Ferdinand Marcos' corruption and repression into an international issue. Even more unsettling was the campaign involving various U.S. envoys to pressure Marcos to step down.

In private, ASEAN diplomats expressed disbelief at the boldness of the moves and compared U.S. tactics unfavorably to those of other former colonial powers such as Holland, Britain and France. Beneath it all, however, lurked the gnawing fear—"Are we next?"

TIPPING THE BALANCE?

With Aquino's ascent, the U.S. itself is experiencing new worries about the region. While the ASEAN bloc remained reliably pro-U.S. in the years following the Vietnam War, it contains sources of instability which Washington hopes to counter and keep under control.

Malaysia, Indonesia and Brunei, as Muslim countries, belong to the Islamic internationalist world, a force which follows its own logic. As oil exporters, the three are also members of OPEC, which gives them a degree of independence from the major industrialized powers. Indonesia meanwhile continues to play a prominent role in the non-aligned movement which it helped to found (*see story, page 16*).

Aquino remains an unknown quantity. During her campaign speeches, the Philippine president expressed a desire to see the Pacific become a "Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality." Given the continued strength of the left and the size of the movement opposing the U.S. bases in the Philippines, there is a real chance that this former top U.S. ally might shift toward non-alignment. This could tip the balance for the entire region.

ASIAN NATO

Washington is just as afraid as the ASEAN autocrats that People's Power might prove contagious—and uncontrollable. The *Far Eastern Economic Review* alludes to "fear that Southeast Asia will develop some Latin American characteristics" with all the instability that implies.

It was thus no accident that the U.S. turned its attention to ASEAN at this particular moment. The Reagan visit was symbolic more than anything else—nowhere was the content of the President's speech in Bali printed. But by dispatching the chief honcho to meet the gathered foreign ministers, the U.S. was sending a clear signal that it is concerned about the group and wants to firm up its ties.

The Soviet Union describes the overtures as part of a broader U.S. strategy for the region. Deputy Foreign Minister M.S. Kapitsa, making an ASEAN swing at the end of April, warned that the U.S. and Japan hope ultimately to create a military alliance in the Pacific region to consist of the U.S., Japan, Australia, New Zealand, and the underdeveloped Southeast Asian countries.

Herald of Indonesian Independence.

There remains a nostalgia for the Sukarno years. His real democratic achievements combined with the aims and ideas Sukarno claimed but failed to implement continue to draw the democratic forces in Indonesia back to his heritage.

The *Indonesian Observer* wrote in a July 9, 1979 editorial, "Nationalists of various shades agree in . . . such aspirations of Sukarno as political independence, self reliance . . . and national originality in culture." Parliament member Jusuf Hasyim stressed, "People are beginning to turn again to the ideas of national dignity, economic independence and political sovereignty. All this one can find in the concepts of Bung Karno." □



Mochtar and Laurel

Ultimately to become an "Asian NATO," the group would begin as an economic alliance to be called the "Pacific Economic Community."

The U.S. has a long way to go to accomplish this—at least as far as ASEAN is concerned. Bilateral relations with countries outside the region are more important to the members today than their ties with each other. ASEAN, in fact, is not a bloc. Step number one for the U.S., if it wants ASEAN to become part of a military alliance, will be to make it into one.

'ALLEGED' COMMITMENT

At this point, economics is precisely what ASEAN countries have in common. All poor and underdeveloped to varying degrees, they export raw materials in exchange for finished products. They are also hurting from U.S. protectionist trade policies and let Reagan and Secretary of State George Shultz know as much at the Bali summit.

Malaysian rubber, Philippine sugar and, in particular, Thai rice have been hurt by U.S. tariffs and subsidies to local growers. The ASEAN leaders' chief demand was for greater access to U.S. markets. They further asked the U.S. to import finished products or at least more highly processed raw materials from the region.

Indonesian Foreign Minister Kusumaatmadja Mochtar rattled Shultz when he referred to Reagan's "alleged" commitment to free market policies. Shultz insisted that there was nothing "alleged" about it and blamed the Democrats for all the trouble.

Still the summit proved to be a mixed bag. Though they confronted Shultz on the economic front, the foreign ministers lined up behind the U.S. on politics. The group approved a peace plan for Indochina which calls for the Vietnamese to pull out of Kampuchea. The ASEAN choice to recognize the Khmer Rouge as a legitimate party to a neutral Kampuchea was not in the U.S. game plan, but seems not to have bothered anyone either.

Both the summit and the Reagan visit suggest that the ASEAN region's political direction is not all that clear at the moment. The socialist camp and the U.S. have both rediscovered it and indicated their intentions to exert pressures on the question of alignment.

And one woman, Corazon Aquino, may have a great deal to do with just where this group ultimately pitches its political course. Thus the question of alignment—already under debate in the Philippines—becomes more serious than ever. □

Workers' Rights

Continued from page 7

increases in labor costs.

Officials of the Employers Confederation of the Philippines are especially resentful of Aquino's move, claiming that it was "the business sector that strongly supported her bid for the presidency and not the workers." While casually dismissing Aquino's working class support, ECOP officials were quick to emphasize the potential support of foreign investors—who, they explained, were still non-committal due to their "perceptible apprehension" over the stability of the new government.

MEDIATION AND LABOR PEACE

Despite its apparent pro-labor tendencies, the Aquino government's essential posture is that of a non-partisan mediator

Indonesia

Continued from page 16

time, the country's economic conditions cannot help but give rise to an organized opposition sooner or later.

For the growth of oil exports over the past ten years may have brought the Indonesian elite and upper middle classes up to a position parallel to those of the other countries in the region. But the impoverished peasantry has not budged, nor has the enlarged working class.

Repressive at Home, Progressive Abroad



Indonesian police arrests journalists Palfreyman (center left) and Middleton as they land in Bali.

NYTimes

By EDDIE ESCULTURA

When President Ronald Reagan stepped off the plane on the island of Bali last April, he opened up a topic long ignored by the U.S. press. Superficially a virtual paradise on earth, Bali is, after all, part of the country of Indonesia whose people have suffered from brutal repression for the last 20 years.

But while the people of Indonesia cower under a military dictatorship, this country of 13,000 islands and 170 million people in the Southwestern Pacific enjoys a certain respect and independence in the family of nations. The fifth most populous country in the world, Indonesia has remained an active member of the non-aligned movement for 31 years with the most progressive foreign policy among the ASEAN nations.

Over the last 20 years, other despots in the region dominated the news—notably Nguyen Van Thieu of South Vietnam and Ferdinand Marcos of the Philippines. Yet the hallmarks of dictatorship are no less severe in Indonesia. The absence of an organized opposition to the country's President Suharto and the U.S. policy of support for his government kept the U.S. press blithely unconcerned about the mass killings that brought him to power and the torture and imprisonment of Indonesians, the censorship and graft that continue.

When Suharto overthrew Sukarno, the country's first president and a founder of the non-aligned movement, he did away with a foremost liberation fighter, a close friend of the socialist countries, and a formidable obstacle to U.S. ambitions in the region. Sukarno stood out as a powerful voice for freedom and independence outside the socialist community while all the U.S. puppets in the region lived up solidly behind U.S. efforts in Vietnam.

'WE DON'T HAVE TO LIKE IT'

The arrest, detention and expulsion of Australian journalists Richard Palfreyman and Jim Middleton in Reagan's entourage and the expulsion of *New York Times* correspondent Barbara Crossette broke the pall of silence, however, and underscored the repression under Suharto.

Palfreyman and Middleton incurred the dictator's wrath when they published an article in the *Sydney Morning Herald* which compared the Suhartos to the Marcoses. The article claimed that the couple accumulated fabulous fortunes—some two to three billion dollars—during Suharto's 20-year rule. Ms. Crossette wrote an article asserting the journalists' right to cover the Reagan visit—the only visible reason for her expulsion.

The remaining journalists in Reagan's party were held and interrogated for five hours before they were allowed to cover the visit. Deputy White House press secretary Edward P. Djerejian registered a mild protest when he was initially barred from joining the reporters.

"The notion of press freedom is so different here that it is hard for Westerners to understand," explained Foreign Minister Kusumaatmadja Mochtar. "We are not against press freedom but we don't have to like it," he added.

These telling accounts of repression undermined the credibility of President Reagan who visited Indonesia on the theme "Winds of Freedom." His reception by

armed troops lining the streets was a fitting admission of the lack of freedom, but they were but a tip of the iceberg.

TORTURE, EXECUTIONS, MYSTERIOUS DEATHS

The Suharto regime was catapulted to power in 1966 by a military coup that toppled Sukarno and slaughtered 500,000 to 1,000,000 people. Fascism was unleashed with such fury that to this day the Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI) has never recovered.

Since then more than one million people remain in jail. Most are long-term political prisoners who are suspected of having sympathies with the left. Torture, executions and mysterious deaths have become facts of life.

Repression has been particularly harsh in territories the Suharto regime has occupied. In December 1975 Indonesia invaded the newly-independent republic and tiny former Portuguese colony of East Timor with U.S. approval and supplies. Tens of thousands were killed including the country's president, Nicolau Lobato. February 1976 alone saw 60,000 people out of a population of then 650,000 die in the fighting.

About one-fourth of East Timor's one million people have perished from the military assault and the famine that resulted. Torture, executions, large-scale detention and denial of human rights still characterize Indonesian rule in East Timor.

The same brand of repression is the lot of the people of West Irian, the western half of the island of New Guinea colonized by the Dutch but liberated and recovered by Indonesia in 1962. Amnesty International reported gross human rights violations there. As a matter of routine, political detainees are held in solitary confinement.

PKI POPULARITY

Censorship and the general absence of international awareness about Indonesian repression can prevail only because of the effectiveness with which Suharto managed to paralyze his opposition at home and abroad. The PKI has never recovered to take on this role.

The PKI reached the apex of its influence and prestige in the early '60s. A huge party, with a membership in the millions, the PKI's steady rise in popularity was confirmed by the leftward motion of the public mood as shown by the parliamentary elections of 1955 and 1957-1958.

The PKI's popularity stemmed initially from its contribution to the successful anti-colonial struggle against the Dutch in alliance with Sukarno. This was boosted at its 5th and 6th congresses of 1954 and 1959. At this time, the party launched and carried out a program to rally all patriotic and anti-imperialist forces in the country while maintaining full ideological, political and organizational independence.

FATAL WEAKNESS

Sukarno's progressive views made him a natural ally of the PKI. An anti-imperialist, he stood for national sovereignty, independence and economic self-reliance while maintaining close ties with the socialist countries. Known affectionately as "Bung (brother) Karno," he was a key initiator and host of the 1955 Bandung conference which gave birth to the non-aligned movement.

Sukarno recognized the potential of the workers' movement, accepting its right to have its own ideology and political party. He drew the PKI into his administration and in turn benefitted from its power and prestige.

But Sukarno had a fatal weakness that led to his downfall and that of the PKI. Insisting upon a method of resolving conflict which he labelled "gotong royong," Sukarno advocated peace at all costs. Correspondingly, he hesitated to involve the masses in key political struggles. In the interest of social peace and anti-imperialist unity, he held back on land reform and introduced a ban on strikes.

Worrying over the possibility of the PKI developing too much clout, Sukarno created an infrastructure that led to his own demise. To balance the communist influence, he allowed the military to develop its own political power, appointing generals to serve as mayors and provincial governors.

Thus Sukarno's policies restricted the PKI's political work and at the same time created the base for a military coup.

PKI FAILURES

The PKI in turn made its mistakes though its survivors have yet to come out with a complete critique. By unqualified support for Sukarno, it missed the opportunity to push him farther to the left and challenge his more backward political policies.

Sukarno's outlook meanwhile kept him from confronting the growing military conspiracy in spite of his awareness of it. Rather than polarizing the population at a time when his popularity was at its height, he continued simply to assert his authority. The PKI did not challenge this.

One of the major aims of the Suharto coup was the elimination of the left, above all the PKI and the left-wing nationalists. Accused of attempting to seize power, the PKI was wiped out in the earliest stage through a series of vicious massacres. Most serious of these were in Central and East Java and the deceptive paradise of Bali, though the islands of Sumatra and Borneo were not spared.

OPEC, ISLAMIC INTERNATIONALISM

But while the memory of the massacres, censorship and the fear of imprisonment dominate the lives of its citizens, Indonesia's foreign policy bears the imprint of Sukarno's progressive legacy. A member of OPEC and part of the Islamic internationalist world, Indonesia is still active in the non-aligned movement.

At the non-aligned conference that ended last April 19, Mochtar actively participated in the deliberations on apartheid, Namibian independence, the Palestinian cause, and the Iran-Iraq conflict.

In 1981, Indonesia supported the statement of the three Indochinese countries that was sent to the UN that year. The declaration asserts that the solution to the Kampuchean conflict and stability and peace in Southeast Asia should be guaranteed by an agreement on peaceful co-existence among nations in the region based on the Bandung principles.

Indonesia has actively sought peace in Indochina by initiating a 12-point proposal for the resolution of the Kampuchean problem and engaging in diplomatic efforts to resolve the conflict. The proposal urges the U.S. to establish normal relations with Vietnam and calls for the establishment of free and neutral Kampuchea. Indonesia's Commander-in-Chief Gen. L.B. Murdani even offered military cooperation with Vietnam.

Aside from participating in the ASEAN condemnation of the U.S. attack on Libya, Jakarta had a strong message of its own. Mochtar declared, "It is unacceptable for one country to attack another to eradicate terrorism." He noted that the attack on Libyan territory "was carried out despite appeals for restraint made by many countries." Stronger criticisms were heard from other Indonesian officials including members of parliament.

OPPOSITION INEVITABLE

At the moment Suharto remains so secure that he faces no serious challenge in next year's election for another five-year term. This state of affairs has pleased the U.S. to no end. In the last ten years Jakarta has received \$2 billion in U.S. military and economic aid despite the absence of any specific military agreement with Washington.

But the contradiction between repression at home and a progressive foreign policy ultimately must stimulate the country's population to apply progressive concepts to itself. It could even spur some economic independence and diversification of trade and economic relationships with countries of both social systems. At the same

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