

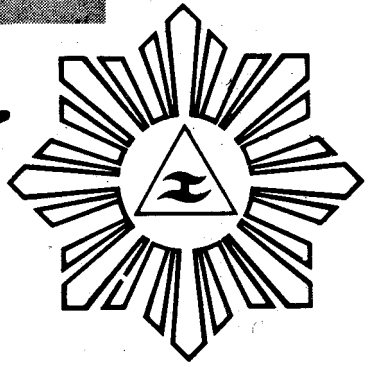
# Ang KATIPUNAN

SUMMATION OF  
MARTIAL LAW  
— 1976-1977

Supplement

September 22, 1977

National Newspaper of the Union of Democratic Filipinos (KDP)



## FIVE YEARS OF POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC BANKRUPTCY Marcos Regime's Instability Grows



Portrait of a dying order and a nation indignant: [counter-clockwise] Marcos holds up confiscated firearm while announcing the declaration of martial law on Sept. 22, 1972; Imelda casts her ballot in rigged Oct. 16 referendum; NPA guerrillas patrolling base area; demonstrators forced to lie on ground during

Oct. 10 rally; hungry children share meager meal; while the Marcos' and guest Gina Lollabrigida gamble and celebrate a sumptuous New Year; police rain blows on Oct. 10 rallyists. [AK file photos]

The Marcos dictatorship is in the midst of an ever-growing political crisis after five years of martial law. Even while relentlessly trampling people's rights and exacerbating their poverty, it has still failed to provide political stability to the country. The use of repressive measures has not enabled it to contain popular unrest, but has instead bred more resistance.

Faced with mounting opposition everywhere, Marcos has found himself constantly driven into artful maneuvering to consolidate his dictatorial rule but to no availing success. With his moves backfiring left and right, he has created less and less room to extricate himself out of untenable situations. In the process, he has put himself more and more on the defensive.

Because of a growing inability to cope with the resistance to his rule, Marcos has increasingly resorted to hard-fisted measures. Out of a need to maintain an appearance of stability, however, he has tried to match his coercive moves with steps to legitimize his rule. In an effort to cultivate an acceptable international image, Marcos has endeavored to project a semblance of power-sharing and popular support.

In September 1976, Marcos set up the *Batasang Bayan* (National Legislative Council) in response to the outcry of his political rivals for some accommodation in the government. Riding the crest of the popular demand for an end to martial law, these politicians began to clamor for the convening of an interim National Assembly, the legislative body which the Marcos 1973 Constitution had stipulated would replace the abolished Congress. To halt the campaign to convene this interim Assembly, Marcos simply abolished it, and in its place, created the *Batasan* whose only function was, as former Senator Jovito Salonga aptly put it, "to give Marcos' decrees the appearance of 'Acts of the Parliament'." The following month, he then conducted a referendum in the hope of legitimizing his rule by decree.

The subsequent massive opposition to this whole effort, however, quickly dashed Marcos' hopes to boost his regime's sagging legitimacy. A protest mass action, which turned out to be the first violent one since the imposition of martial law, effectively unmasked the Marcos regime for the brutal

dictatorship that it is. The resultant public exposure at home and abroad, immediately rendered the *Batasan* ineffective. And while Marcos for the time being succeeded in stemming the elite politician's demand for accommodation, he has failed to quell their opposition, which has since assumed new proportions.

### CRACKDOWN

The impressive show of popular opposition predictably impelled Marcos to react forcefully. He immediately unleashed his fury on the workers, urban poor and students. Reacting to bad international publicity, he verbally attacked the foreign media and deported Associated Press Manila Bureau Chief, Arnold Zeitlin. Then, Marcos instituted a major crackdown on the progressive clergy, whose role had been key in the open opposition to his regime.

Until then, he had exercised more prudence in handling the Church. Evidently he felt the time had come to take drastic measures on the Church in an attempt to deprive the resisting masses of a valuable ally, and to intimidate Church hierarchs into taking a more conservative stance and pit them against the more social action-oriented progressives.

Marcos' repressive tactics, however, backfired as the country's Church leaders closed ranks to condemn the State persecution in their strongest statement yet against the martial law regime. Moreover, instead of being cowed into toning down their criticism of the regime, foreign correspondents launched such a stormy protest that before Marcos could carry out the deportation of a second well-known critical journalist, Bernard Wideman, *Washington Post* correspondent, on the overused grounds of abetting subversion, Marcos was forced to recant the charges.

### MNLF

If Marcos' efforts to wield the stick to curb opposition have not met any substantial success, neither have his attempts to dangle the carrot. In the civil war in Mindanao, Marcos has consistently failed to crush Moro resistance with military might even with two-thirds of the armed forces deployed in the fighting. His regime has become increasingly

unable to defray the cost of prolonging the war. Moreover, the rapid expansion of the New People's Army throughout the archipelago has prompted Marcos to seek the redeployment of military forces from Mindanao. Under such pressure to seek an immediate settlement of the civil war, Marcos has thus resorted to the negotiating table. In December 1976, he consequently concluded a ceasefire agreement with the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) by promising to meet the Moro demand for regional autonomy.

But while negotiations between the regime and the MNLF were in progress in Tripoli, Libya, Marcos immediately began working assiduously to back out of his promises. Invoking Christian-settler chauvinism towards the Muslim minorities, he purposely whipped up a smear campaign against the Moro demand. As with his backing-out act on the elite politicians, he found the referendum to be very convenient. Marcos conducted another sham referendum six months after the previous one.

This inevitably led to a collapse in the talks. Although the ceasefire has officially remained in effect, tensions and hostilities have in recent months, been steadily building up. The military is still unable to disentangle itself from the area and move on to others. For well-armed MNLF fighters have not only stood their ground, but have also gained strength in numbers and in the areas they hold.

If Marcos' conciliatory gestures towards the MNLF has encountered utter failure, so have his attempts to undermine the Islamic Conference's support for the MNLF. In light of the monetary isolation of Libya, MNLF's backer, at the conference, Marcos hoped his ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations) allies, Malaysia and Indonesia, would be able to work for a cessation of Arab support for the Filipino Muslims. Instead, Marcos' allies were only able to push for a resumption of talks between the regime and the MNLF. Still in all, the regime was in fact fortunate for were it not for Libya's diminished influence, the Islamic Conference might have come out with sanctions against the regime for its continuing genocidal policies against Filipino Muslims.

The thought of such alarming possibilities as sanctions by the Islamic states or a cut-off of aid



Half-empty first class hotels stand as monuments to the regime's inept economic planning. [AK file photo]

by the U.S. Congress has made Marcos "image-conscious" and sensitive to adverse international press coverage. To prettify his regime's tarnished image, he has gone to great lengths to host international conferences lavishly.

The first of such moves in the last year came just before the October 1976 referendum.

#### INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND-WORLD BANK CONFERENCE

For the International Monetary Fund-World Bank (IMF-WB) conference held in Manila, the regime made extravagant preparations in a bid to impress the World Bank and the outside world just how thriving and prosperous the country was. Marcos constructed a massive \$80 million Convention Center for the occasion. He accorded the 1,500 delegates and their wives royal treatment. He provided a fleet of 300 brand new Mercedes Benz's to transport them around, an enticing army of "promo-girls" and 14 luxury hotels, all hastily erected with government credit amounting to more than \$300 million.

Far from impressing the World Bank of the martial law regime's prosperity, the Manila conference only proved to be an embarrassment since the extravaganza also provided an occasion for the popular opposition to expose the World Bank's collusive role in bolstering the regime's faltering economy. More than anything, the conference demonstrated clearly the regime's lopsided economic priorities.

#### HUMAN RIGHTS

Another crack in the regime's contrived facade of "benign dictatorship" is its gross violations of human rights.

Within the last two years, the International Red Cross, the Association of Major Religious Superiors in the Philippines (AMRSP), Amnesty International (AI), the Anti-Martial Law Coalition (AMLC), the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), and even the U.S. State Department, have all issued reports documenting the regime's widespread use of torture and prolonged detention without trial.

These reports have served to further expose and isolate the regime internationally. These documentations have also forced U.S. President Carter, who has posed himself as a defender of human rights everywhere, to keep at an arms-length from the regime. Moreover, they have greatly aided anti-U.S. aid lobbyists in Congress in their efforts to prove that the Marcos regime is repressive and should thus not be an aid recipient. Furthermore, they have compelled Marcos into desperately trying to counteract an unfavorable international image by proclaiming his commitment to human rights and promising some cosmetic reforms.

Among other things, Marcos has been forced to issue a statement against torture, with a vow to punish those guilty of torture, to charge or release detainees and not hold them indefinitely, and to transfer the case jurisdiction from military tribunals to civilian courts.

In so pledging he hoped to appease his critics and enable the Carter administration to oppose anti-foreign aid Congressional initiatives. But in so doing, Marcos also laid the groundwork for still further exposure. For given his regime's inherently repressive character, it was only a matter of time before practice would inevitably contradict rhetoric.

In fact, events within the last year have borne this out well. While Marcos was busily uttering these self-righteous pronouncements, his military took punitive measures against May Day and June 12 protestors. Around this time, soldiers also arrested and tortured Ms. Trinidad Herrera, a prominent civil rights and urban poor leader. Her torture promptly stirred up such public indignation domestically and internationally, that the U.S. State Department even had to intervene in hypocritical defense of human rights.

All these instances of exposure have predictably forced Marcos to react even more defensively. To cap his defense on the human rights issue, he again maneuvered his way into hosting another conference, this time the World Peace Through Law Conference, a meeting whose theme, of all things, was human rights. But within and without the conference, his regime did not escape being targeted for its callow disregard for human rights.

Dissenting delegates voiced strong protests within the conference, then later joined an alternative people's human rights conference in the streets where 8,000 workers, urban poor, students, and clergy gathered before being brutally hosed down, clubbed and dispersed. The subsequent international press coverage once again exposed the regime.

#### LIKELIHOOD OF COUP?

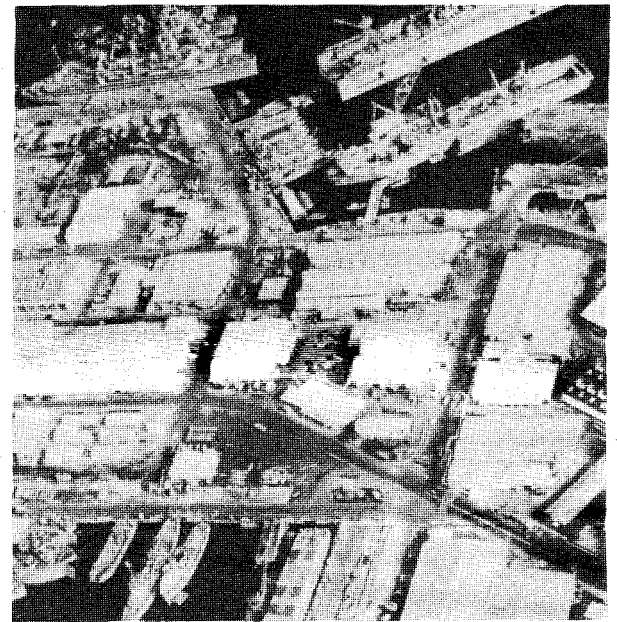
All of the internal moves thus far only go to show how Marcos has failed too consistently in his legitimization drives. His reckless responses to tight situations over the last year have indicated that far from being a smart and wily tyrant that some conceive of him, Marcos is actually a desperate dictator whose regime has become more isolated by the day. Such increasing isolation has, in turn, made him more and more dependent on the military to cope with an ever-growing opposition to his rule. His mounting reliance on repression has in the process driven more and more of his erstwhile supporters into disenchantment with his rule. As a result, his base of support has progressively narrowed down. As this trend grows, Marcos will soon be left with no one but the military to fall back on. Soon, even Marcos' millions might not even be sufficient to bribe the military with any longer. For the military might simply seize power and wealth for itself. Should a coup ever take place, however,

the military would have to have the strong but tacit approval of the U.S.

For the U.S., the Marcos regime is merely a short-term asset, but a long-term liability. The U.S. supports Marcos for as long as he effectively safeguards strategic U.S. interests in the country. Conversely, the U.S. will have no qualms about abandoning him in favor of another if he proves to be less of a boon and more of a burden.

At present, for all the occasional cold exchanges between the two, the U.S. still regards Marcos as the most competent candidate to back. His policies after all make further American penetration of the economy as conducive as possible. Between the U.S. and the Marcos regime, there is thus more collusion than there is contention. This is the essence of the State Department's report issued last January. While conceding Marcos repression recommending that the U.S. continue to support the dictatorship because of overriding "national security" considerations.

On the one hand, U.S. policy makers and the Marcos regime are united in a common aim to preserve American hegemony in the country. Both have basically reinforced each others efforts to ensure a continuing flow of aid to the regime in the face of anti-aid lobbying efforts in the U.S. Congress. On the other hand, because of Marcos' increasing inability to deal with the country's instability, strains have evidently developed in U.S. Philippine relations.



Subic Naval Base, a sprawling U.S. installation in Zambales, captures the essence of the U.S.-R.P. relationship: one of interdependence to safeguard mutual economic, military, and political interests. [AK file photo]

It is in this light that Marcos has attempted to seek more strategic commitments of support from his main backer the U.S. in the talks around the status of the U.S. bases in the country, he has tried to extract more aid in the form of bases rent, a kind of support which technically is beyond Congressional scrutiny. His insistence of more aid, however, has led negotiations into an impasse even as accord has already been reached on most other issues.

If only to improve his bargaining position vis-a-vis the U.S., Marcos has sought closer ties with Third World and socialist countries. His persistent bid to join the ranks of the non-aligned nations however, has repeatedly been frustrated as the presense of U.S. military bases and his unabashly subservient policies have been all too glaring for even his nationalistic rhetoric to hide.

In the region, Marcos has taken on a leading role in ASEAN. In a frantic quest for strong external security, he has assiduously cultivated military alliances with neighboring pro-U.S. client states, such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand, under the guise of closer regional cooperation. In addition, he has tried to draw Japan into playing a more dominant role in the area to bolster such a security network.

For its part, the U.S. under Carter has hesitated to commit itself on a more strategic sense to the regime, not only since it prefers to keep as many options (i.e., alternatives to Marcos) open to it as possible, especially in light of the regime's growing instability. Moreover, because powerful internal and international pressure have forced the U.S. to put up a facade of being a defender of human rights, closely indentifying with such a repressive regime as the Marcos dictatorship has become inimical to its image. U.S. international influence has suffered a decline following its defeat in Indochina, making necessary such a significant readjustment in U.S. foreign policy to take place. In light of prevalent anti-war sentiments among the American people, at this time, U.S. policy-makers

continued on page 3-bottom, first column



Despite a fragile ceasefire in the South, tensions hover over Mindanao as Marcos' political maneuvers have set back the chances of a long lasting peace. BMA forces make their rounds of MNLF territory. [AK file photo]



# Economy . Alien Domination , Mass Poverty Increase

In every regard, this last year (Sept. 1976-Sept. 1977) has witnessed growing dependence of the Philippine economy on the international capitalist system and increased hardship for the Filipino people. The American stranglehold over the Philippine economy this year has grown tighter and tighter. A glance at the economic indicators reveals the severity of the situation.

## FOREIGN DEBT

By the end of June 1977, the Philippines foreign debt reached \$6 billion, an amount not forecast to be reached until 1980.

In 1976, the Philippines borrowed more money from international lending institutions than in the three previous years combined. Most of this went to finance the \$1 billion nuclear reactor project and the Manila hotel-building spree.

By early July 1977, the Philippines had used up 96.9 per cent of the country's International Monetary Fund-set allotment for medium-term loans. A four-man team had to be hastily dispatched to Washington, D.C. to negotiate adjustments to the country's loan ceilings.

Philippine monetary officials assure both foreign credit sources and the media that the country's debt service ratio — the percentage of total foreign earnings used to pay debts — remains at 17 per cent, well below the 20 per cent ceiling set by the Central Bank. Independent analysts, however, point to government manipulation of statistics and suggest that the actual ratio is well past the 20 per cent mark.

Between Jan. 1 and May 31 this year, the Philippines borrowed \$1.2 billion, \$660 million of this was used to pay the country's debts.

## BALANCE OF PAYMENTS

Although at the end of July, the country had registered a balance of payments surplus of \$245 million, the balance of trade, as of June, was still negative, with a deficit of \$240 million. The government itself, forecasts a trade deficit of \$970 million for the year. Most of the cash influx reflected in the balance of payments figure comes from foreign loans.

Philippine exports, the country's chief foreign exchange earner, are still in trouble. Both copper and sugar exhibited downward trends between June and August. Recent reports indicate that coconut products are also going down. Marcos remains unable to find a stable market for Philippine sugar.

## MONEY SUPPLY

Over the last year, the Philippine money supply has skyrocketed, going from P11.118 billion in Sept. 1976 to P38.453 billion as of March 1977. The Central Bank sets a minimum for money supply increases of 15 per cent over the previous year. This minimum has been surpassed every month this year according to the government's own statistics.

## ANTI-NATIONAL POLICIES

In an attempt to rescue the desperately-slipping economy — and keep the loans from international funding institutions flowing — Marcos and his economic planners have been forced to enact a string of anti-national policies this year to further



Marcos holds up sample of crude oil to prove exaggerated government reports of a substantial oil find in the South. The rumors set off frenzied bidding and a distant relative, Herminio Disini, came to sudden wealth in the biggest stockmarket swindle in the history of the country. [AK file photo]

satisfy the interests of foreign multi-nationals.

Responding to the tendency of multi-nationals operating in the Philippines to finance their projects with local credit rather than bring in cash from abroad, early this year the Central Bank issued a policy of restricting their easy access to local credit. The move was undertaken "to force them to bring more money into the country."

His effort, however, was nipped in the bud when departing American Ambassador William Sullivan openly objected to the policy during his farewell address last April. He suggested pointedly, that this might lead major international lending institutions to move out of the Philippines. By late July, economic planners announced they were "re-thinking" the policy and even hinted at further liberalization.

Pressure upon local banks to raise their paid-in capital to P200 million, double the current level, continues. This suggests that the second set-up on capital bases since September 1975, when the amount was raised to P100 million, is in the works. At that time, a number of smaller banks were forced to close or merge with multi-national banks, principally from the U.S. The new increase will lead to even stronger foreign control over the domestic banking system.

The most recent pro-foreign development — not yet even finalized — is a concession to the IMF in exchange for adjusting the country's loan allotments for this year. The Philippines promised to further liberalize rules on imports. This move will benefit the multi-national corporations that export finished products at the expense of the few national industries left in the country.

## HIGHER TAXES FOR FILIPINOS, LOWER TAXES FOR MULTI-NATIONALS

The most far-reaching effects of these anti-national policies, however, is the new set of taxes introduced this year. As early as last October, immediately after the IMF-World Bank Conference in Manila, the World Bank issued a country report on the Philippines insisting that "the share of (tax) revenues in the GNP will have to continue to rise if the government is to achieve its development goals." Translated, this means that local revenue has to be generated to cover the rising government debt. 1977 has witnessed the slow playing out of this policy.

The oil price hike of April 22 has been widely blamed by the government as the cause of current inflation. The government has deliberately obscured the fact, however, that less than one-half of this price hike goes to the oil companies. Sixty per cent of the added fuel cost goes to the government as additional tax revenue. This tax was passed on to the Filipino people in terms of raised costs of transportation, haulage, and production.

Then in June, the regime announced a new tax package under the guise of "taxing the rich." In fact, the new taxes will weigh heavily on all sectors of Philippine society, while providing a five per cent reduction on profits remitted abroad.

The package imposes an additional five per cent tax on the incomes of "family-owned or closely-held corporations" — a move which will hurt Filipino business. In a blow aimed at the small merchants and shop-owners in the country, the new measures raise the fixed tax on certain businesses. Whereas the former range in this category was P10-P18,125, the new range is increased to P20-P38,000. This is likely to hit even the smallest sari-sari store owner — hardly to be categorized as among the "rich."

## ANTI-PEOPLE POLICIES

In addition to the IMF-World Bank dictated anti-national policies, a number of the economic projects undertaken or completed this year run counter to the interests of the majority of the Filipino people. Most glaringly anti-people in character are a number of the infra-structure projects in which the regime is involved. The emphasis on infrastructure — to ease the production and transportation of raw materials — as opposed to primary industries — which might compete with foreign imports — is again an IMF "development" priority.

The most infamous of the current Philippine infrastructure projects is the Chico River Basin Dam. On the drawing boards for years, the project has had to be repeatedly postponed because of the fierce opposition from over 100,000 Bontocs and Kalingas of northern Luzon whose ancestral homes and meticulously engineered rice terraces will be submerged by the waters.

The project is slated to provide electrical power and irrigation for the Cagayan Valley. The Bontocs and Kalingas point out, however, that the Cagayan

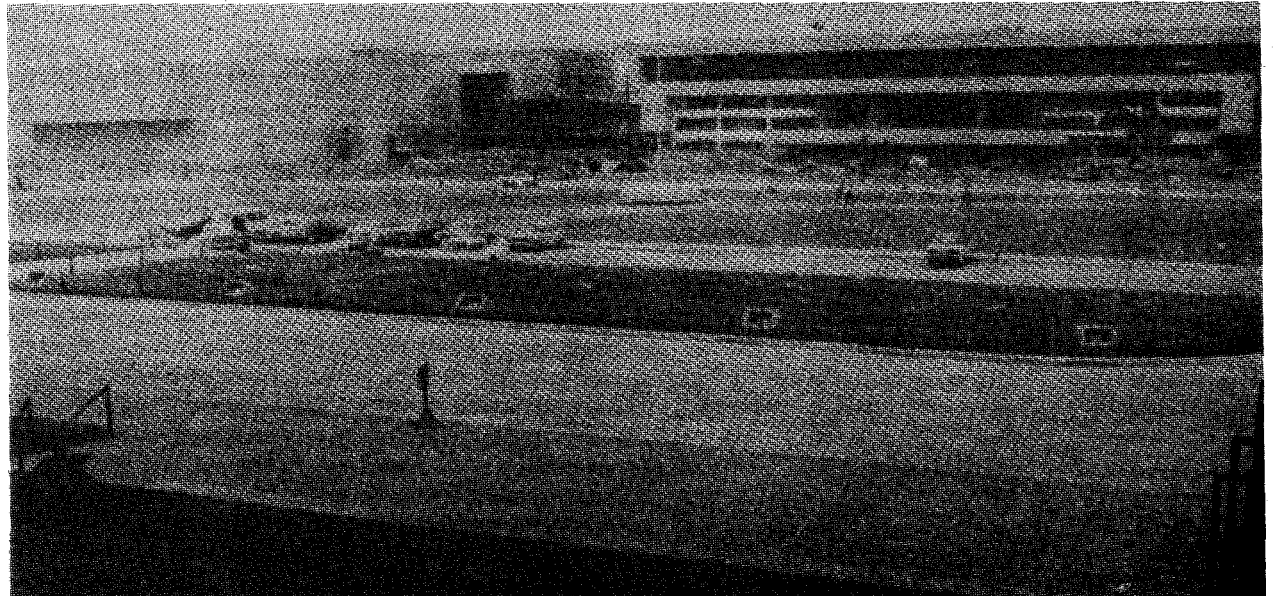
## Instability...

(continued from page 2)

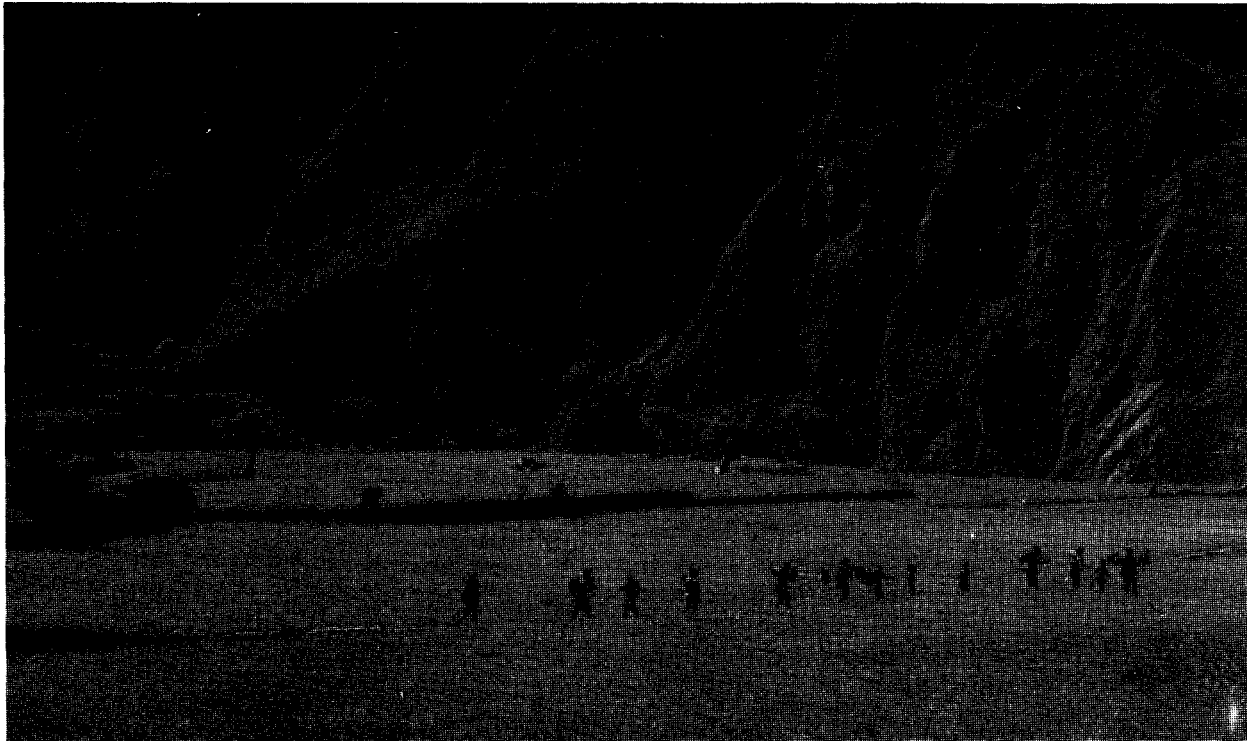
have opted for more indirect ways and less obvious means to perpetuate American hegemony.

Consequently, the U.S. has kept at a distance from the Marcos regime. At the same time, it has begun applying pressure on the regime to sanitize its repressive image. Carter has commenced exerting diplomatic pressure on the regime by leaving the next ambassador to the Philippines after William Sullivan unnamed. He has also started instituting economic sanctions such as imposing high tariffs, and threatening to cut U.S. purchases to Philippine sugar at a time when the local industry is still reeling from a severe crisis on the world market.

Such pressure serve only to further weaken the Marcos regime in the wake of internal political woes. They clearly indicate that Marcos' days are numbered. For with a steadily worsening economic crisis and a rapidly spreading popular resistance engulfing the country, his downfall is made ever more inevitable.



International Convention Center, Marcos' showpiece development project, revealed to IMF-WB officials how Marcos spent their loans. [AK file photo]



Lush ancestral lands of Bontoc and Kalinga tribes threaten to be inundated by the waters of the Chico River Dam. [AK file photo]

Valley is dominated by the estates of the Marcos, Romualdez (First Lady), Enrile (Secretary of Defense), and Puzon (powerful local politician) families. The project threatens to wipe out their self-sufficient economy and flood their homes for the sake of big landlords and compradors raising export crops. They have resolved to "fight to the death" rather than move.

Another infra-structure project which threatens the lives of thousands of Filipinos is the inaugurated Philippine Fisheries Port in Navotas, Rizal. This highly mechanized port facility is designed to accommodate deep-water Japanese fishing vessels. The project threatens to deprive 5,000 to 6,000 fish-haulers or "Batilyos" of their jobs, drive 6,000 to 10,000 urban poor dwellers of Baryo Boulevard, the adjacent community, out of their homes, deprive several hundred small businessmen of their livelihood, and provide impossibly competitive conditions for small and medium Filipino fishermen.

The increased fish productivity to result from the project is not meant to benefit the malnourished Filipino masses, but is designed to increase export to Japan. In fact, if past experience is any guide, the increase in export volume is likely to drive up the domestic price of fish, one of the few protein sources in the Filipino diet.

#### IMPORTING POLLUTION

An even more direct threat to the Filipino people is provided by the prospect of chemical poisoning from industrial pollutants emitted by a number of highly dangerous plants opened up this year. The best known of these, though by no means the only plant in this category, is the Kawasaki Sintering Plant in Misamis Oriental, Mindanao.

The owners of Kawasaki were forced to relocate the project in the Philippines after the people of Chiba, Japan, drove the company out of their city citing the terrible pollution threat the plant posed. The Marcos regime, however, was only too willing to import pollution and sacrifice the health and welfare of the Filipino people to the interests of the Japanese industrialists.

#### THE ADDED COST OF CORRUPTION

The policy of subservience to multi-national corporate interests exacts a heavy enough toll on the Filipino people. It is seriously exacerbated, however, by the corruption and insatiable greed of Marcos and his cronies. The two most notable cases of mismanagement in the last few years have been caused by this combination of corruption and greed. By now both—the sugar crisis and the hotel-building boom of 1975-76—have been revealed as serious mistakes. Their implications will be seriously felt for years by the Filipino people.

The sugar industry has never really recovered from Marcos' choice to withhold Philippine sugar from the international market just before the disastrous fall in world prices in 1974. The country still has a 1.5 million ton surplus and government planners have already announced their intention to cut back 15 to 30 per cent on production.

In spite of the industry's crisis, loans have been made and contracts entered into for five new sugar mills, including three owned by President Marcos himself, through his dummy Roberto Benedicto. As one Japanese industrialist (The zaibatsu Marubeni is supplying most of the new milling equipment) told journalist Bernard Wideman, in the sugar central business, "the name of the game is kickbacks."

#### MONUMENTS TO MISMANAGEMENT

Dotting Manila's skyline as monuments to the economic mismanagement of the Marcos regime are 14 new or renovated first class tourist hotels built for the IMF-World Bank Conference in Manila last October. The number of first class hotel rooms available in Manila has, as a result, risen from 4,000 to 11,000.

The new hotels require 65 per cent occupancy merely to break even and are currently running at 50 per cent or less. 1,000,000 tourists yearly are required for the hotels to make money. The forecast for 1977 is 600,000. A Central Bank study reveals that six or seven hotels of 500-600 rooms each "would have been more than enough for the needs of the conference."

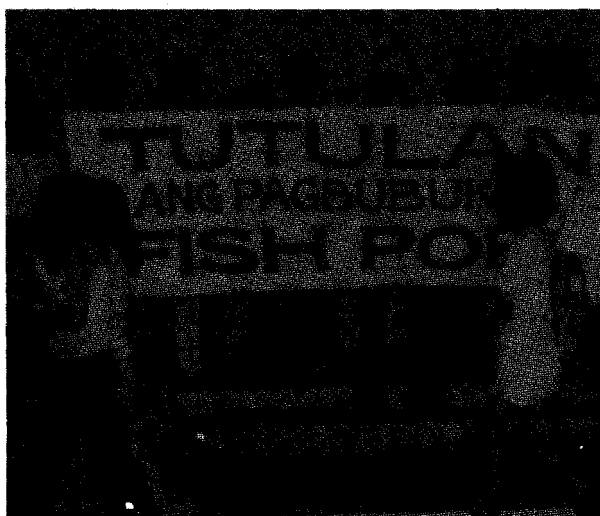
The problem was that regulatory bodies were unable to narrow down the field of contenders all of whom were eager to lap up the easy loan money made available to hotel-builders. Too many groups had strong political ties and could not be told, "No."

With a city full of half-empty hotels, whose builders have already missed their initial loan payments, the government has been forced to scrounge madly for tourists. A number of schemes have been concocted, including the attempt to build Manila as a "convention center for Asia."

#### MARCOS' PERSONAL CONTROL OVER ECONOMY

The most insidious form of corruption under the present system, however, involves the dictator's increasing personal control through corporate dummies over huge portions of the Philippine economy. Although there are a number of separate corporate empires fronted by the president's men, the most widely discussed this year was Herdis Industries. Owned by Herminio Disini, a cousin of the First Lady, Herdis appeared from nowhere in 1970 and has grown to become one of the country's biggest corporate conglomerates today.

Herdis hit the public spotlight in October 1976 through what is now called the "Seafrost Scandal." This was a case of blatant stock-market manipulation which climaxed the speculative oil boom of 1976. The president himself seems to have actually participated in driving up stock prices through sweepingly inaccurate statements and carefully timed appearances on T.V., examining oil speci-



Demonstrators oppose opening of Fish Port Project, another "development" scheme which promises deeper entrenchment of Japanese interests in the country. [AK file photo]

mens and visiting drilling rigs.

More recently, in May, Herdis announced that it had acquired the various branches of U.S. industries in the Philippines. This includes USIPHIL, Koppel, Inc., Equipment Credit Corp., and USI Pacific Apparel Corp. The Herdis takeover represents part of a deal negotiated between Marcos and Westinghouse over the purchase of the \$1 billion nuclear reactor. Marcos agreed to buy from Westinghouse on condition that he receive a large kickback and take over Westinghouse businesses. Disini was the designated dummy.

One last example of Disini's and Marcos' rapacity illustrates the extent to which Marcos is willing to sacrifice the welfare of the Filipino people to his own personal interests. Marcos granted two Disini pulp and paper outfits, Cello-phil Resources Corp. and Cellulose Processing Corp., a 200,000 hectare logging concession covering portions of Abra, Bontoc, Kalinga-Apayao, Ilocos Norte and Ilocos Sur in Northern Luzon.

The area consists of farms of Ilocano peasants and the traditional hunting and fishing grounds of the Tingguians, a national minority group. Company officials managed to deceive some farmers into selling their lands at P1.30 (20 cents) per square meter. For those who refused to leave their homes, the company resorted to force. Marcos allowed the military establishment to help Herdis remove unwilling peasants, calling in Defense Undersecretary Carmelo Barbero, an Abra warlord, to "persuade" them to leave. Finally those who wouldn't sell were driven off their lands, their fields were fenced off, their farms bulldozed, or mounds of earth dumped on their crops.

#### COST TO THE FILIPINO PEOPLE

The cost to the Filipino people of the IMF-dictated policy of dependent development, compounded by the Marcos brand of corruption, has been exorbitantly high. Since low wages are one of the key lures for foreign investment under this scheme, wages have barely increased in the past few years.

The minimum wage increase, (P8 per day to P10 per day) decreed May 1, 1976, was immediately eaten up by inflation. The P60 per month cost-of-living-allowance decreed May 1, 1977 has not, in most cases, been implemented and is the source of a number of strikes.

Inflation, according to official and thus highly conservative figures, ran an average of 20 per cent per year from 1970 to 1976. After being held down by recession in 1976, the rate of inflation again began to climb up in 1977. By the end of the year, it is expected to soar past the 20 per cent mark.

The oil price hike put into effect April 22, 1977 immediately raised transportation fees by 30 per cent. A study conducted by Balita ng Malayang Pilipinas (BMP) a few days later found that vegetable prices had already risen an average of P.05 per kilo and meat products had risen P.50 per kilo as a result.

At the end of May, in spite of a so-called socialized pricing policy, Marcos lifted price controls from poultry, selected cuts of meat, animal feeds, and plywood. The price on all manner of protein foods thus rose immediately. The consumer price index for the first quarters of 1977, the latest figures available, according to the government's own conservative figures was up to 182.3, using 1972 (100.0) as a reference point.

The result of this rampaging inflation has been that the workers' real income has continued to decline drastically. Between 1970 and 1976, real wages declined at least 40 per cent. At the same time, the rate of profit in Philippine industries has risen.

#### RISING RATE OF EXPLOITATION

A study in the May 1, 1977 issue of *Liberation*, documents the rate of exploitation during the Marcos years. Defining the rate of exploitation as the amount of pure profit realized by the capitalist as opposed to the wages paid to the workers (i.e., profits/wages), the study revealed that the rate has risen by 180 per cent between 1971 and 1975.

In manufacturing industries, by 1975, the worker spent 44 minutes to earn his wage and worked the remaining seven hours and 16 minutes creating profit for the capitalist. Put another way, for every peso of total net output, the worker took home P.09.

In multi-national controlled industries, the rate of exploitation was highest. The most extreme example was the petroleum industry. Between 1973 and 1975, the rate of exploitation increased by 290 per cent. By 1975, for every peso of net output produced, P.99 went to the imperialist and P.01 went to the worker. In terms of his time, the worker spent seven hours and 57 minutes producing profits for the imperialist and three minutes producing his wage. 1976-77 witnessed a continuation of this



trend.

The result of this situation is that the urban worker, on his P10-per-day wage takes home one-fourth of what is needed for a family of six (average Filipino family size) to subsist. For the rural areas, the Dept. of Labor itself admits that 90 per cent of sugar planters in Negros and Panay do not pay the minimum wage. Here the worker earns one-sixth of what is needed to keep his family alive.

#### RISING UNEMPLOYMENT

1976-77 witnessed a great swelling in the ranks of the unemployed and underemployed. Although the regime refers repeatedly to a 4 per cent unemployment rate, Ang Bayan estimates that there may be as many as 7,000,000 unemployed and underemployed among the Filipino population of 43,000,000. Since the Filipino population is very young, this figure means that a full one-third of working age people are insufficiently employed.

This year's most dramatic employment drop was in the sugar-growing areas where tens of thousands of sugar workers lost their livelihoods while planters shifted to alternative crops. The government admits that 75,000 farm and mill workers out of 135,000 in Negros Occidental are now jobless. The true figure, according to Ang Bayan may be as high as 400,000 throughout sugarland. Counting their families, this would bring the number of affected people to 2,000,000.

The government's response to the sudden loss of jobs for the sugar workers has been to warn of a rise in criminality and to institute an "emergency employment program." As of June of this year, the program has found jobs for a total of 357 workers.

#### FAILURE OF MASAGANA PROGRAMS

The Filipino peasantry suffers as much from the rise in commodity prices as the workers. The government has artificially held down the price of rice they produce which is their only source of income.

Hopes for an increase in productivity and correspondingly standard of living for the peasantry through the government's Masagana 99 and Masagana Maisan programs have been dashed. In terms of productivity, the Philippines, with its 31 per hectare yield, was number 69 on a list of 70 rice-producing nations compiled by the Food and Agricultural Organization of the U.N. before the Masagana programs took effect. Since that time the yield per hectare has increased by only one cavans to 32 cavans per hectare in the best irrigated areas.

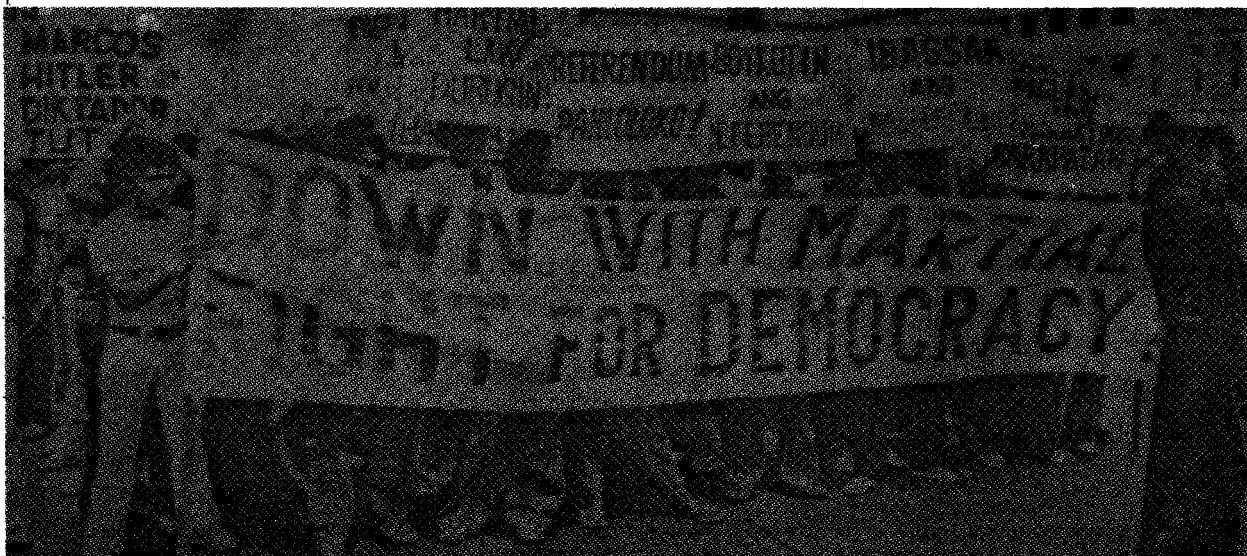
As a result, peasants now find themselves saddled with heavy loan repayments on top of increased commodity prices with no corresponding rise in income. The percentage of those unable to pay can be measured in terms of the number of people who managed to borrow in 1977. In 1973, the first year, 640,000 people borrowed. Only those who repaid were allowed to borrow again. By 1977, only 180,000 people were borrowing.

In Jan. 1977, the government announced its intention to prosecute loan defaulters and revealed its intention to charge at least 52,400 farmers in agrarian courts. Many were arrested and harassed.

The Masagana loans are largely in the form of certificates to be exchanged for fertilizers, pesticides and other agricultural chemicals sold by Planters Products, an affiliate of Esso Philippines at inflated prices. Since Planters' is owned by Marcos, numerous peasants have begun to realize that the Masagana programs are less aimed at increasing their welfare than in enriching Marcos. Thousands, with the encouragement of the NPA, have decided that repaying is cooperating in their own oppression and have refused to pay. This may in fact be the reason why, just a month ago, the regime in an abrupt change of policy, announced its intention to go easy on loan defaulters.

Economic conditions in the Philippines have made it increasingly hard this last year for the workers and peasants to subsist. More and more are jobless and even those with jobs cannot support their families. The level of exploitation has risen and with it the workers awareness of their exploitation. Professionals and small businessmen are finding themselves unable to cope with the combination of rising prices and higher taxes. Meanwhile, because of Marcos' total subservience to IMF-World Bank policies, local industrialists and financiers are losing what little grip they have had over the Philippine economy. Voices of protest over these oppressive conditions are rising from all sectors of the Philippine economy. Never before in recent times have so many people in the country been so hard pressed and so angry about their situation. □

## RESISTANCE SURGES FORWARD



Oct. 10 rallyists numbering some 6,000 demonstrate against the sham Oct. 16 referendum. [AK file photo]

The worsening economic crisis and the escalation of political repression has inevitably bred the very condition for the dictatorship's downfall — widespread resistance. All over the country today, the masses of Filipino people are stepping forward and valiantly resisting the martial law regime, notwithstanding the savage repression that follows every act of defiance. Simply put, repression as a method of rule, has reached its limitations, and can no longer exact from the Filipino people the type of subservience and fear required by the dictatorship for its continued rule.

This past year in particular, has witnessed dramatic gains for both the rural and urban resistance. In the cities, passive forms of protest have been supplanted by more militant and broad forms. This dramatic stride can be easily recognized from the massive demonstrations which have hit Manila's streets in recent months. October 10, March 12, May 1, June 12, and August 25, will be marked in the peoples calendars as dates when the Filipino people turned out in record numbers to denounce the martial law regime and demand genuine freedom and democracy.

These events further signify the growth of the united front against the fascist dictatorship, in terms of numbers, composition and above all, unity.

The unity of purpose which has bonded and inspired various oppressed sectors to close ranks and act decisively testifies to the degree of organization and political awareness of each exploited sector. An American who recently visited the Philippines was astounded by this phenomenon. Not only was the urban underground extensive and superbly organized, but each person she talked to — student, worker, or religious — linked their particular problems and the issues confronting them with the broader ills of Philippine society. All of them agreed that only the overthrow of the Marcos dictatorship and the protracted struggle for national freedom and democracy was the solution to their problems.

To ensure that struggles do not remain scattered and spontaneous, peoples organizations have been painstakingly built among various sectors. The Bukluran ng Manggagawang Pilipino (Association of Filipino Workers) established in 1975, has led the struggles of the working class against the anti-

labor policies of the dictatorship and has challenged the leadership of bankrupt, pro-management labor federations. The Alyansa ng Mararalitang Tagalun-sod (Alliance of the Urban Poor) has effectively linked various urban poor communities in a collective struggle against the First Lady's eviction schemes. More recently, the Samahan ng Nagkakaisang Batilyo (Association of United Fish Haulers) was founded to lead the struggles of workers dependent on the fishing industry from the imminent takeover of Japanese capital. Lastly, the Alyansa ng mga Estudyante Laban sa Pagtaas ng Tuition Fee (Alliance of Students Against Tuition Fee Increases) has emerged to demand the rollback of tuition fee increases and oppose the undemocratic character of Philippine education.

In addition to being well organized, these groups have openly asserted and identified themselves with the cause to overthrow the Marcos dictatorship. This heightened political awareness is reflected in their marching slogans. "Down with US Imperialism", "Overthrow the US-Marcos-Dictatorship", "Forward in the National Democratic Struggle" and "Long Live the New Peoples Army have reverberated in the streets of Manila, recalling the turbulent early '70's, when youth activism and the resurgence of nationalism swept the nation.

Another noteworthy advance has been the increased opposition of known personalities, civil libertarians and former government figures. Bankrupted by the anti-national economic policies of the regime and Marcos' monopolistic takeover of government, these forces have had no recourse but to organize themselves into such groups as the Civil Liberties Union of the Philippines and the Philippine Human Rights Organization, Inc. These groups and individuals have been active in the campaign to boycott the Oct. 16 referendum, and have lent their voice to such causes as humane treatment of political detainees, an end to the Mindanao war, and an end to the privilege of multinational corporations.

By his own doing, Marcos has narrowed his sphere of influence, cultivated the conditions for more resistance against his dictatorship and in time, will ignite the powderkeg of protest that will topple his regime. □

## WORKERS LEAD URBAN STRUGGLE

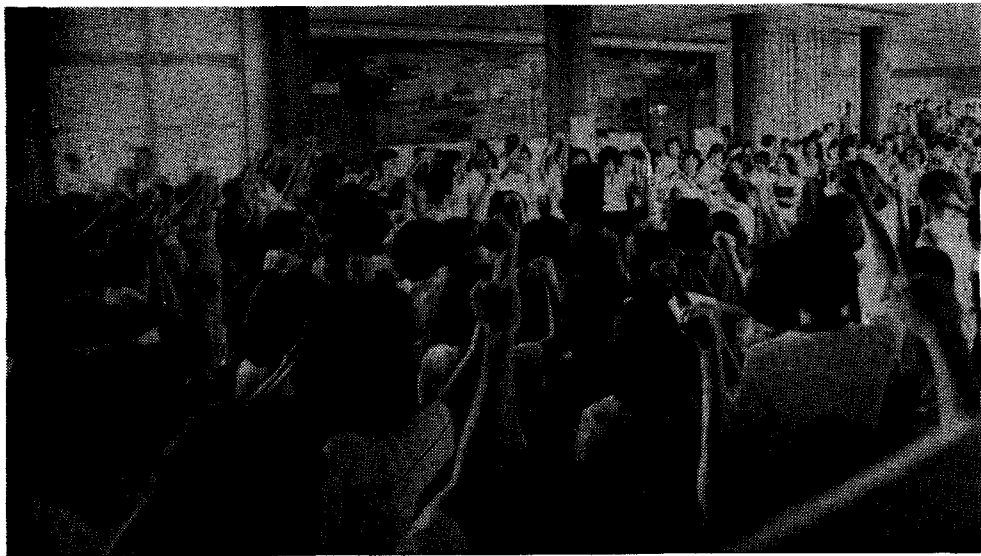
#### WORKERS

Faced with deteriorating living standards, the working class this year continued to persevere in winning more victories and consolidating the gains won during last year's tumultuous struggles. 1975-76 signified a historical turning point for labor under martial law, marking the end of a period of relative inactivity on the labor front. Manacled by various anti-labor decrees which reversed labor legislation won after decades of hard struggle, workers in the Greater Manila Area launched a series of protest actions and strikes. Breaking the climate of fear, the historic La Tondena strike in Sept., 1975 touched off some 87 strikes involving 68,241 workers in 1976. These strikes, along with

massive worker led demonstrations in Nov. and Dec. 1975, forced the dictatorship to make several important concessions. A presidential Decree which affirmed the total ban on strikes and forbade foreign religious to support the workers' cause, was lifted. Furthermore, Marcos ordered employers to pay a yearly bonus, equivalent to one month pay in wages, for workers in the private sector. Government employees also experienced a hike in wages.

However, the pro-business Dept. of Labor immediately moved to undermine these gains. The DOL issued a directive prohibiting strikes before the collective bargaining process is completed. This move, enforcing long and expensive negotiations or compulsory arbitration proceedings, generally works against the interests of labor and is seen as a strike-breaking tactic. This directive did not stop

# PLAZA MIRANDA REMEMBERED: WORKER, STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS ROCK MANILA



Students at the University of the Philippines raise clenched fists to signify their struggle against the dictatorship's undemocratic, anti-national policies. [AK file photo]



Workers, students and urban poor rally on March 12 to demand an end to the Fish Port Project and martial law. Placard reads, "Dismantle U.S. military bases." [AK file photo]

312 strike notices from being filed at the Dept. of Labor towards the beginning of 1977.

These minimal gains have not been uniformly implemented, but such economic concessions like the one month's bonus has been virtually eroded by the inflationary rise in consumer prices, triggered by the oil price hike last January. Thus, widespread skepticism met Marcos' May Day "gift to labor", which decreed a P60 monthly cost of living allowance for workers in private industry.

Resisting this erosion of their hard fought gains, workers in a number of companies went on strike this year, including vital industries where the strike ban is still in effect. At the Engineering Equipment Inc. in Mandaluyong, Rizal some 3,000 workers struck on March 29, the first strike to hit the steel company in 46 years. The workers demanded the release of P36,000 from the strike fund, the implementation of the P60 emergency cost of living allowance, the effecting of wage increase pursuant to PD 928, and the reinstatement of dismissed workers under preventative suspension. The strike received material and moral support from workers at the Atlantic Gulf and Pacific, Philippine Blooming Mills, Integral, Liberty Flour Mill and other companies. By threatening to follow the EE example, workers at the Columbia Tobacco Corporation and Concepcion Industries easily compelled company owners to meet their respective demands. Meanwhile, the labor-intensive textile industry was once more beleaguered by strikes. 3,000 Eastern Textile workers from Meycauayan, Bulacan staged a successful strike last March after shutting down the entire operation. Last July, 2,500 workers at the Solid Mills Inc. one of the largest textile firms in the country, forced management to pay them the P60 emergency allowance. Resorting to bolder tactics, Solid Mills workers stormed the office of Acting Labor Sec. Amado Inciong, who, while feebly insisting that he "will not submit to mob rule" finally ordered management to comply with the decree.

## BATILYOS

Another workers struggle which forecasts stronger protest in the months ahead, is the batilyo struggle (fish haulers) in Malabon, Rizal. The Association of United Fish Haulers is leading a multi-sectoral protest against the P88.7 million Philippine Fisheries Port Project which was inaugurated last March to assume full control over the fishing industry. Once operational, the project, employing the policy of "minimum labor, maximum machinery" threatens the sole means of livelihood of some 5,000-6,000 fish haulers, and other sectors dependent on the fishing industry. Furthermore, the entire adjacent community of North Bay Blvd., comprising some 6,000-10,000 people, are threatened with eviction and dislocation as soon as the expansion of the new port complex is completed.

The batilyo struggle is not only a conflict between labor and capital but more significantly a conflict between national interest and Japanese imperialism. The construction of the Fisheries Port Project was financed by a P5.5 million loan from the Japanese dominated Asian Development Bank. The underlying motive for the loan is clear. By virtue of two decrees, the R.P.-Japan Treaty of Amity, Commerce, and Navigation and the Fisheries Decree, Japanese fishing fleets are allowed to roam freely

in Philippine waters and deplete the country's marine resources. Through expanding the fisheries port and "developing" the fishing industry, huge Japanese fishing fleets could berth, and fish production, for the purpose of export to Japan, would increase.

Because the project is so thoroughly anti-national and has been the focus of many recent protests the regime has escalated repression of the North Bay community. A special Navotas Inter-Agency Action Center, a para-military unit, was established in the heart of the urban poor community to conduct surveillance and arrests of militant batilyo leaders. Last April 23, batilyo leaders were arrested. Last June, under the pressure of an anti-crime campaign, Metrocom troopers staged a pre-dawn raid in Bo Boulevard Navotas, rousing some 5,400 male residents to flush out their "subversive leaders."

## MAY 1

The most impressive advance in the workers movement has been the leading role it has played in the urban resistance. Not confined to struggles for economic demands, workers have broadened the scope of their political activities. Many worker activists now organize in urban poor communities and have been spearheading the various protest actions for democratic rights.

This advance in the political consciousness of the working class, is most eloquently expressed in the statement of the May 1st Committee to celebrate International Workers Day:

"Never have we been as hard-pressed as today. How can we expect to attain respite — however little — from our hardships and suffering? We ask for wage raises and they shout at us. We launch strikes and we are kicked out of work. We protest and we are harrassed and arrested. Company workers, the Dept. of Labor, the police and military — they conspire to destroy our life and our future.

of urban poor squatters are being bulldozed, students are muzzled and stopped from spreading the truth, priests and nuns serving the people are persecuted, land tilled for so long by peasants are being grabbed and the dogs of war are unleashed on cultural minorities seeking to live peacefully according to their customs and traditions.

"Fellow workers, suffering heavily weighs upon us. Our country is in turmoil! Crimes committed against us by the few ruling Filipinos in leagues with foreigners have gone to the extreme. Let us put an end to this. Unite and close ranks! The time has come for us to act not as workers of different factories but as a class — one whole class united by one aim and future. No power on earth can free us unless we ourselves move, stand firm and dare to lead a decisive struggle against our oppressors. . . We are the life-blood of the nation. If all of us rise as one class and decide on a general strike, the nation's economy will be paralyzed. That is power . . . clear and undisputed power . . . Let us all go out and do all we can on May 1 — the day of decision for the working class. Let us go out on this day, unite, declare with all our strength, shout to all the people, to the whole country and to the whole world, that we Filipinos are ready to advance and lead the struggle, that we are a reliable force . . . not only for producing the things that man needs, but above all in building a new tomorrow. Let us lead millions of others to close ranks in the struggle."

## STUDENTRY

After several years of disquieting calm on the campus front, major colleges and universities in the Greater Manila area suddenly became the hotbed of student protests towards the middle of the year. Inflamed by the annual 15 per cent increase in tuition fees (in some colleges, fees increased by as much as 200%) nearly 200,000 students or the total combined enrollment of Manila's 10 major schools, have been boycotting their classes since the semester began in June. Under the banner of the Alyansa ng Magaaraal Laban sa Pagtaas ng Tuition Fee (Students Alliance Against Tuition Fee Increases), the students have won a partial victory by forcing Pres. Marcos to suspend all tuition fee hikes pending an investigation of the proposed utilization of the tuition fee increases by various school administrations.

The students have found that, in most cases, the annual 15 per cent hike in tuition fee has been unwarranted. The justifications for the fee increases like the supposed hike in teachers' salaries and the improvement and expansion of facilities, have not taken place. Thus, the students argue, that the only possible explanation for the tuition hike must be attempts of privately run schools to realize a profit.

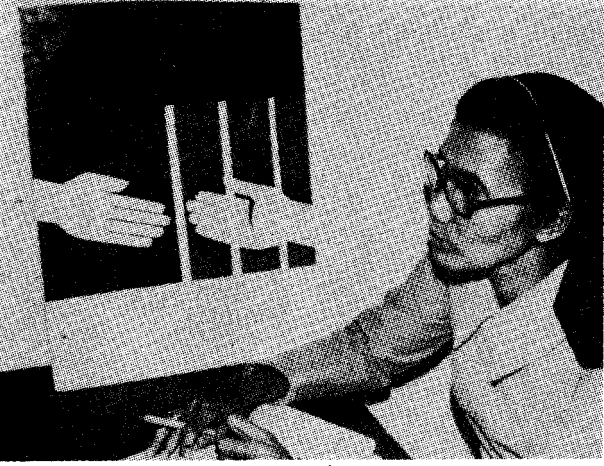
Despite threats by the Dept. of Education and Culture and university officials to expel students who continue to miss classes because of the boycott, the Alyansa stood firm on its demands. These demands include the immediate rollback of tuition fees to their previous levels and refunds of excess amounts collected, removal of all troopers and spies of the Armed Forces from campuses, the withdrawal of letter of expulsion to student leaders, an end to the arrest of students, and the restoration of free student councils.

The prevailing optimism that the resurgent student movement will be victorious can be gleaned from the supportive role of faculty members in a number of schools. At the University of the Philippines, Arts and Sciences Dean Francisco Nemenzo, threatened to resign if military force was used against the students. At the Feati University, sympathetic teachers circulated a letter of support, endorsing the students demands and decrying the tuition fee increases "in light of the alarming drop-out rate of students due to poverty." The Feati teachers also exposed the false justification for tuition fee increases, adding that they have never been given salary increases despite the consistent rise in tuition fees over the past four years.

Like the other oppressed sectors, the political dimensions of the student movement has not been confined to its immediate demands. Linking their plight to the overall hardships of the Filipino people under martial law, the students have been active in protest actions calling for the overthrow of the U.S.-backed Marcos dictatorship. Symposiums and rallies which serve to politicize students about the problems of Philippine society have constituted the hub of campus life. Participation in protest actions of other oppressed sectors and in community work has made real to the students the relationship of serving the people with one's educational background and resources. This has added meaning and new challenges to the committed students pursuit of knowledge and freedom.



The TFD calls public attention to the plight of prisoners held without charge for as long as two years.



Sister Marianni Dimaranan, head of the Task Force Detainees, staffs information table on political prisoners. [AK file photo]

#### CLERGY

The past year has been a trying one for the committed members of the clergy. Arrests, raids, deportations and the closure of church-run media, threatened to stifle the progressive clergy and split the unity of the church in its task of evangelization. November marked a series of reprisals against the church, beginning with the deportation of Fr. Edward Gerlock and Fr. Albert Booms, two foreign missionaries who worked in urban poor communities. Next came the closure of two radio stations run by the Davao City archdiocese and the clamp down on two religious newsletters, the informative *Signs of the Times* and the *Communicator*. Capping the wave of repression, 114 lay leaders were arrested and the Mindanao Sulu Secretariat for Social Action was singled out for attack.

Initially, this action polarized the conservative and progressive wings of the church, with the former led by the hierarchy, advocating an apolitical role for the church, away from "conflict-oriented" issues, and the latter, advocating active participation in peoples struggles. However, this anticipated conflict, which Marcos hoped to ripen by launching repressive actions, was shortlived. Instead of irreparably breaking the unity of the church, the military through its unrestrained attacks on the clergy, only served to heal the breach.

A report that the military has in its possession a black list of 155 clergymen, including bishops, incurred the ire of the church. A strongly worded pastoral letter signed by 66 bishops, attacking the Philippine government for interfering in the church's work of evangelization, was read from every pulpit in the country on Feb. 6.

While the reprisal continued to stir controversy over the role of the church, an issue that will understandably not be resolved in the near future, progressive cleric moved to cement their unity with the oppressed masses — a bond which is unlikely to be severed even with the worst repression. On January, the Nagkakaisang Aping Mamamayan at Taong Simbahan (Oppressed Citizens and Cleric United) was formed. The organization issued a statement condemning attempts of the government to split the unity of the church and the masses. It also pledged to continue the work of the *Sign of the Times* and the *Communicator*, through a weekly newsletter.

Despite more threats of repression, the committed clergy has remained consistent and active in the urban resistance. Sights of nuns battling with police during demonstrations are no longer uncommon. So are stories of nuns loaning their habits to workers on the arrest list. Whether negotiating for better treatment for political prisoners or serving as marshalls during demonstrations, the committed clergy has remained a valuable ally of the oppressed masses. □

#### POLITICAL PRISONERS

The political prisoners of the Philippines, numbering some 5,000 have been the motive force behind the exposures of the Marcos dictatorship's gross violations of human rights, both locally and internationally. Risking further reprisals on their lives and those of their families, many political prisoners have dared to expose their personal experiences of torture through smuggled reports or personal interviews. These first-person accounts have been the basis for studies conducted by the Amnesty International and the Association of Major Religious Superiors of the Philippines, and have even compelled the U.S. legislature to propose a 17% cut of military aid allocations to the Marcos regime this year.

In view of the growing international concern over human rights, and the subsequent rise in interest over the plight of Philippine prisoners, the risks taken by detainees in revealing their conditions have more than paid off.

But the detainees are the first to warn against complacency over these initial victories. With Marcos now posturing as the guardian of human rights, it is all the more necessary to remain vigilant and expose the empty promises of prison reforms and brutalities when these occur. Thus, the detainees have taken the initiative to bring to light a number of facts about political detention in the Philippines.

In a letter to the Friends of the Filipino People last June, prisoners at the Bicutan Reception center exposed that, contrary to the Marcos dictatorships assertions, torture is a clear policy of military interrogating units. The detainees point out that these interrogating teams are headed up by high ranking officials personally known to Marcos or his close advisors. Approximately 81% of all Bicutan detainees and an estimated 48% of prisoners nationwide have been tortured. Despite promises that prisoners may redress their grievances against their tormentors, no military officer guilty of torture has been appropriately punished, if they are indeed punished at all. The detainees also point to the growing numbers of missing political prisoners believed to have been liquidated or kept in undisclosed safehouses. Lastly, they point to the changing composition of the prisoner populace noting the increasing arrests of farmers, poor peasants, workers and urban poor.

Despite their incarceration, the political prisoners remain active in their opposition to the dictatorship. Whether demanding better prison conditions, or issuing messages of solidarity to protest actions outside, the prisoners have transformed an otherwise desolate existence, into a learning experience that will steel them for harder struggles in the years ahead. □

#### REPRISALS EXCALATE

As more and more of the Filipino masses step forward to denounce the injustices perpetrated against them, the Marcos regime has responded with ever greater ferocity and naked terror. Especially among the rural masses, the degree of repression has escalated. It is estimated that three million people have been victimized by the military's base denial operations against the NPA, rural development projects, or expansion of corporate farming.

Necessarily these activities involve the ejection of peasants and national minorities from their lands through brutal means.

It is in the areas, however, where the NPA enjoys

the greatest influence and scores impressive military gains, that the Armed Forces and the Philippine Constabulary unleash wholesale terror. Like mad hounds unable to stalk their pray, the bestial troopers vent on the rural folk their sadistic energies.

For instance, in Can-avid, Eastern Samar, last May 6, six peasants were gunned down by trigger happy PC soldiers even after they showed their police clearances to the soldiers. During the same period, ten peasants from nearby Dolores town were killed, and a number of the townswomen were molested. In Quezon and Camarines Norte, some 30 murders of civilian folk were committed from Dec. 1973-Oct. 1975 by AFP troopers.

The plight of the Igorot masses of the Montanosa region graphically illustrate the incalculable miseries of victims of a base denial operation. "For giving their best sons and daughters to the NPA" and for opposing the construction of a road leading to prospective mining areas, the Ifugao and Benguet masses have been coercively relocated to a lowland evacuation center over the last 5 months. Forced to march for some 12 miles down steep mountain passes, an 80 year old grandmother died of exhaustion. One man suspected of being an NPA was summarily executed; his mutilated body displayed.

While in the concentration camps, the people were fed measly rations of rotten rice, causing one child to die of dysentery. Unable to sustain the starving masses, the military allowed several to return to their homesteads to harvest and bring back food. Soon, this "liberty" was made a thriving racket, with the PC charging from P3-10 for each pass issued to leave the camp.

Back in the highlands, helicopter-borne PC soldiers continued to terrorize the masses, strafing and flinging hand grenades on their ricefields below.

These acts of terror, however, have not cowed the populace. On the contrary, these despicable crimes have merely fanned the hatred of the masses towards the dictatorship and have raised their revolutionary determination.

In Kabankalan, Negros Occidental, around 500 peasants led by sugar workers, confronted Brig. Gen. Emilio Narcisco on March 9, to demand an end to the abuses heaped on them by his men. The people six terrorized barrios presented a petition condemning the killing, imprisonment, and torture of barrio folk and the plunder of their property. In face of the peoples united opposition, the general was forced to promise an end to the repressive campaign, recompensation for what his soldiers took and the discipline of one notorious PC soldier.

Elsewhere in the country, the people are arming themselves, recognizing that only revolutionary force could put an end to reactionary terror. □

## PEOPLE'S WAR SPREADS

#### ARMED RESISTANCE

"With a ceasefire restraining the Muslim liberation forces in the South, the main arena of the armed resistance against the Marcos fascist dictatorship has been in the guerrilla bases and zones of the New People's Army. Led by the Communist Party of the Philippines and firmly supported by the peasant masses, the NPA has for nine years frustrated various military campaigns and has kept on steadily advancing."

This statement from *Liberation*, 6/30/77, newsletter of the preparatory commission for a National Democratic Front aptly summarizes the state of the armed resistance to the Marcos dictatorship this year. That the NPA has been able to endure, grow and launch spectacular military actions despite its limited strength, is indeed an impressive achievement. This victory is underscored by the concentration of a bigger military force against the NPA this year, re-deployed from the battlefields of Mindanao, and the successive encirclement and suppression campaigns against it.

Despite these odds, the NPA began its ninth year of armed struggle on March 29, 1977 with 20 guerrilla zones established in all eight regions of the country. The expansion of the guerrilla zones (or fighting fronts) from the previous stage of consolidating a few, speaks to the NPA's increasingly popular support among the masses. The expansion of the NPA's mass base, explains the ability of the NPA to launch and win tactical military offensives.

With the capture of the two "prized" leaders of the NPA, the legendary Commander Dante and

former AFP defector, lieutenant Victor Corpuz on August 1976, Marcos prematurely boasted, "Well, that just about eliminates the NPA." No sooner were the words uttered when a series of ambushes on AFP troops in Central Luzon shattered his pronouncements. Marcos generals were also quick in rebutting his claim. Dante and Corpuz "have been succeeded by more dangerous, educated and young men," said one. Another elaborated: "There's no use killing a (NPA) provincial commander. Once you kill one, another one takes his place."

Marcos' generals' more realistic assessment of the Dante/Corpuz capture, speaks to the truism that a revolution is not made by a few but is an undertaking of the masses of people. Thus, its success and ability to endure, depends on the correctness of its revolutionary principles and the translation of these principles into action by the oppressed millions.

#### STRATEGY AND TACTICS

Credit, therefore, for the NPA's spectacular military actions this year, is shared by the rural masses in the regions where these actions have taken place. Acting as the eyes and ears of the NPA, the masses gather information on enemy movements, enabling the NPA to plot its military tactics. When a huge enemy force is deployed in a certain area, the masses provide cover for the NPA to conduct a safe retreat.

Because the NPA is militarily inferior to the government forces, in both numbers and weaponry, the NPA only engages in selective military actions. The battlefield is the NPA's main source of arms, thus emphasis is placed on arms confiscation

missions. Self-reliance is a guiding principle of the people's army and for this reason, a movement to develop weapons and explosives from indigenous sources and deepen the science of people's war, has been unfolded. To frustrate enemy encirclement and suppression campaigns, the NPA engages in the artful game of "hide and seek," which forces big enemy formations to disperse or wear themselves out shooting at imagined targets. Once AFP troops have been dispersed, the NPA pits a stronger force on the scattered troops, decimates them and later, gathers their harvest of guns and ammunition from the battlefield.

The NPA also engages in the punishment or elimination of incorrigible elements, like cattle rustlers, rapists, landgrabbers, despotic landlords, hired goons and thugs, abusive soldiers and others who devote their lives to terrorizing the people. These punitive actions, meted after a people's trial is held, has restored peace and well-being to the masses of the affected areas.

The archipelagic character of the country, while posing as an obstacle to the rapid development of people's war, has been turned into a long term advantage. The NPA has emphasized building base areas along with provincial borders to ensure flexibility of movement, the development of coastal regions, and the concentration of work on bigger islands primarily and smaller islands secondarily.

A sampling of reports from the battlefields have borne out the correctness of the NPA's tactic and strategy:

- On Nov. 22, some 150 NPA fighters carried out simultaneous lightning raids in four barrios in Mabalacat, Pampanga, and confiscated 43 rifles and assorted firearms. The raids which were carried out in a disciplined, organized and precise fashion led military officials to believe that the action was well coordinated with local folk. A loyalty check of the barrio folk and 10,000 provincial officials and the Civilian Home Defense Forces was conducted shortly thereafter.

While Camp Olivias was still puzzling over the Nov. 22 incident, the NPA struck again, this time in Porac, Pampanga.

- In Eastern Samar, last June 5, NPA squads disguised as PC soldiers raided two towns, San Policarpo and Arteche, disarmed local police and confiscated 33 assorted arms, ammunitions, office equipment, and two radio transmitters. In Arteche, the NPA called a mass meeting to explain to the townspeople the aim of the Communist Party and the NPA which is to arouse and organize the masses to liberate themselves. Brought to trial were two incorrigible elements, Police Chief Samuel Nebrida and Councilor Mingming Koh.

- In Zamboanga and Western Mindanao, a new expansion area for the NPA, 250 bandits, cattle rustlers, thieves, rapists and spies and 100 Marcos troopers have been killed since 1974.

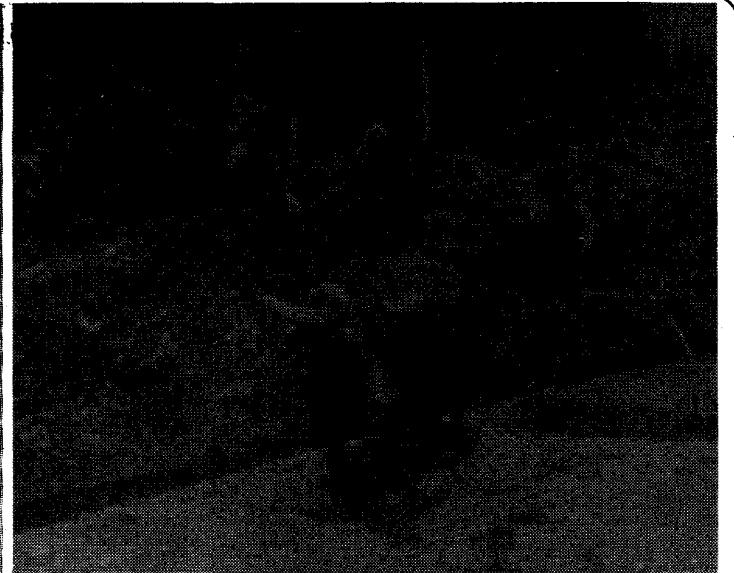
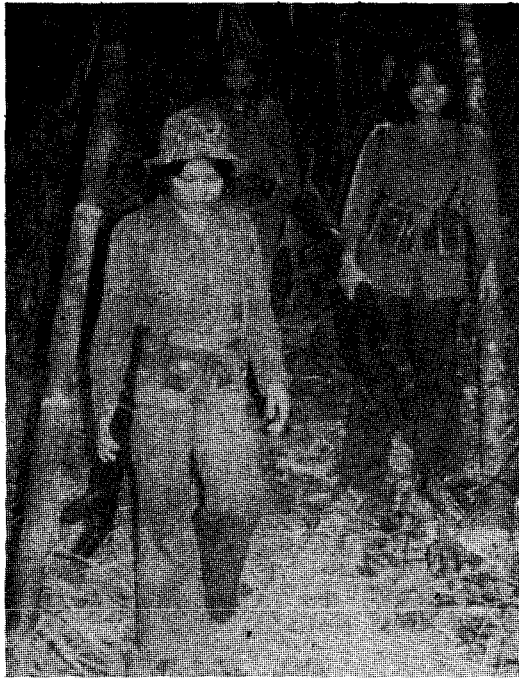
- In sition Maligaya, Bo. Maliwalu, Tarlac, last May 26-27, 80 members of the AFP were killed or seriously wounded and two armed personnel carriers were immobilized, by no more than 80 sharpshooting red fighters. U.S. forces at nearby Clark Air Base provided helicopters and combat rations for the embattled AFP troopers.

#### MASS WORK

"Don't think of us as saviours; we have come to help forge unity and to suggest what may be done about the problems we all have in common. The real power lies in the people." With these words of a Central Luzon red fighter, the NPA sets about organizing political power in the countryside and attending to the cultural, medical, economic, and military affairs of the people. Changing the political complexion of the countryside is no easy task, but with the guiding principle of from the masses to the masses, the NPA and the people have together scored appreciable gains.

Increasingly, in various parts of the country, the scaffolding of a new economic order is being laid through the implementation of the agrarian revolution. Thus, the semi-feudal character of Philippine society which rests on landlord ownership of land cultivated by 75 per cent of the population, is being slowly altered. With the ultimate aim of confiscating big estates of land and collectivizing agricultural production, the NPA encourages the peasantry to gradually break away from the present leasehold or sharecropping system. Thus, instead of paying landlords their "share" of the harvest or land rentals, the peasants simply withhold increasing amount of these payments, claiming bad harvest as the reason.

To boost production and alleviate the poverty and hunger of the peasantry, the NPA has introduced scientific methods of farming and encourages the cultivation of idle lands to subsistence crops. In



(Left) Women fighters of the people's army on patrol. (Above) NPA fighters take rest after hard day working in ricefields. (BMP photos)

Central Luzon, this campaign has substantially enhanced the people's diet in both quantity and nutritive value. Meanwhile, the regime's woes with regard to the failure of the Masagana 99 project can be largely attributed to the NPA's campaign for the repudiation of all debts to this project. With the nation's farmers unable and unwilling to pay these exorbitant loans, the regime has had no recourse but to write off the Masagana loans.

The NPA has also been key in curbing the powers of greedy middlemen who dictate the market prices and the price paid the farmer for various goods. In the Mountain Province, this campaign proved so successful that vegetable farmers even managed to force the local Sangguniang Bayan to take a position against vegetable retailers.

Campaigns to promote the peoples welfare are given foremost attention by the NPA. Government neglect of rural health is another factor which has endeared the masses to the NPA. NPA medical units, composed of doctors, nurses, and medical personnel dispense primary care and also emphasize preventative health care, teaching the barrio folk methods of sanitation, proper nutrition, and treatment of simple ailments. In Eastern Visayas alone,

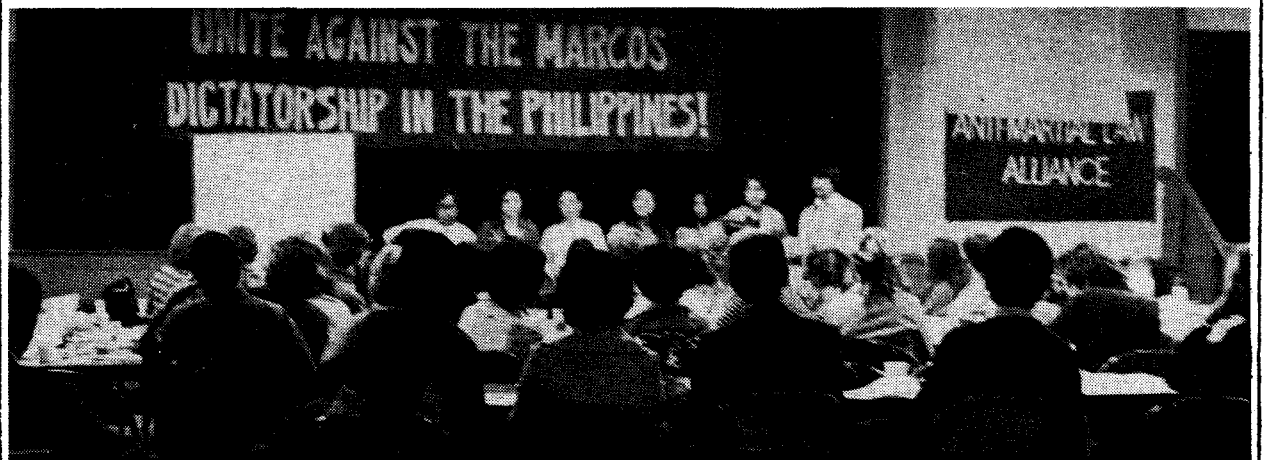
NPA medical teams estimate that they have served 12,000 ailing peasants in the last few months.

And while the government bewails the 20 per cent illiteracy rate of the country, the NPA has taken the initiative to correct this problem. Classes are given regularly and taught by NPA cadres with emphasis put on revolutionary theory. Barrio folk are also organized to demand better education from the local public schools.

The ultimate measure of the NPA's political work can be gauged by the peoples ability to organize their lives, exercise self-reliance, and become masters of their fate. The level of organization in NPA base areas provides a microcosm of how the nation will be run once liberated. Under the principle of collective leadership and individual responsibility, barrio wide committees for defense, education, economy and health are formed. Mass organizations of women, children, youth and other sectoral groupings are established. The all rounded planning of the peoples affairs is made possible.

Armed with the correct revolutionary strategy the NPA will undoubtedly win still greater victories in gradually dismantling the fascist army and building the peoples political power in the countryside.

## AMLC EFFORTS ISOLATE MARCOS REGIME ABROAD



Forum held in Chicago last year observing the fourth year of martial law.

[AK photo]

Internationally, the Marcos regime is also under intense assault. From a spontaneous outpouring of opposition in 1972, the anti-martial law movement abroad has grown into a sophisticated movement which the regime, by its own admission, now considers one of its major headaches.

Its maturity as a movement was exemplified by its latest propaganda coup against the regime. Through the combined efforts of the anti-martial law movements in the U.S. and in the Philippines, a human rights investigating team was successfully sent to the country. Composed of eight delegates to the World Peace Through Law Conference held in Manila, the team exposed the regime's disregard for human rights, thus further discrediting it.

This recent blow against the dictatorship as well as other anti-dictatorship projects have been possible because of the increasing organization of the anti-martial law forces internationally. In the U.S., this past year saw the consolidation of the Anti-Martial Law Coalition (Philippines), which coordinated nation-wide activities like the Christmas caroling-fundraiser for Filipino workers last December. The AMLC also continued its barrage of propaganda against the regime with the release of

two major publications: "The Refugee Crisis in the Philippines," documenting the anti-people policies of the Marcos government; and "Logistics of Repression," revealing the U.S. economic and military role in propping up this unpopular regime.

Through house meetings and neighborhood events, the local alliances have further broadened the base of support for the anti-martial law movement by bringing this important issue to the community.

This growing mass movement against the Philippine dictatorship in the Filipino communities in the U.S., as well as the broader American public, has served as the underpinning for anti-aid lobbying work in the U.S. Congress, which has pressured the lawmakers to reassess aid to the isolated martial law regime.

The development of the anti-martial law movement can also be gleaned from its expanding network of support groups outside the U.S. In major Canadian cities, in European countries like the Netherlands and Germany, and as far as Australia, anti-martial law groups are actively and creatively seeking ways to fulfill their vital role as rearguard of the Filipino people's struggle against the U.S.-Marcos dictatorship.