

EDITORIAL

ON THE USE OF MILITARY ACTION AGAINST US PERSONNEL AND INSTALLATIONS

The bombing of a US communications station in Tuba, Benguet last April 10 and the ambush of a high-ranking US military officer on April 21 represent another step in implementing the policy of the Communist Party of the Philippines to use military actions that directly attack US imperialism for its intervention in and domination of the country.

These military actions against US personnel and military installations are an exercise of the highest national right of the Filipino people -- to assert the country's national independence, sovereignty and self-determination against US imperialism and to frustrate the schemes and maneuvers that seek to tighten US stranglehold over the nation.

For too long has US imperialism played with the fate and lives of our people while itself suffering little damage in the process. It would do well to remember that among its most heinous crimes is the masterminding and propping up of the Marcos fascist dictatorship -- a monster that wreaked havoc on the country for nearly two decades. But when the Filipino people rose up to slay that monster, US imperialism managed to escape having to pay for its role in creating it. And it even maneuvered to claim for itself and its new puppets the victory that should have been entirely the people's.

US occupation continues

Since its troops invaded our shores more than eighty years ago, preempting the final defeat of the Spanish colonial forces in the hands of Filipino revolutionaries, US imperialism has not stopped being at war with the Filipino people. There may no longer be any battlefields where American soldiers stand arrayed against Filipino patriots. But the plunder of our land, the trampling of our national rights, the abuse of our women, the insults to our national honor, the maltreatment of our citizens abroad, the dictation of our national policies, and the actual occupation of parts of the country by US military bases and troops have gone on.

US imperialism is engaged in a very real war of aggression against the Filipino people, conducted through the agency of Filipino puppet regimes and puppet troops. The name of the war has changed -- pacification campaigns have given way to counterinsurgency operations to today's "total war" -- but the essence of it remains: Filipino nationalists and democrats are killed to protect US interests in the country, to make the Philippines safe for US and other foreign investments, to ensure that strategic US military bases remain on Philippine soil.

Our hearts may bleed at the sight of Filipinos killing Filipinos, but in reality, US advisers devise the war plans, US arsenals supply the weapons, US counterinsurgency experts train Filipino officers and soldiers to hunt, torture and shoot their own countrymen, and CIA operatives map out psywar campaigns to make it appear that the war against our people is a war against communism.

This war ravaged thousands of Filipino lives during the entire period of fascist rule. The brutality of the dictator Marcos matched that of his imperialist master in their desire to nip in the bud the resurgent movement for national liberation led by the reestablished Communist Party of the Philippines and New People's Army.

Under the Aquino regime, the war continues and has even intensified to an unprecedented level. What can be expected from a president who equates the national interest with utter dependence on US political, economic and military support? With such a mendicant puppet holding the reins of government, US imperialism has become more brazen in its intervention in our national life. It openly flouts our national sovereignty and self-respect and is so cocksure of having its way in the country.

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The hand of US imperialism can be seen in every aspect of Aquino's "total war" -- in the heavy influx of new and more destructive weapons from the US; the deepening involvement of US military officials in counterinsurgency planning and operations; the instigation, indoctrination and arming of vigilante groups and anti-communist fanatic and evangelical sects by US warmongers like ex-Gen. John Singlaub; the accelerated training of AFP officers in US military schools; and open as well as low-profile US participation in intelligence work, psywar and patrols within the country.

Yet the US puppets declare that all these do not constitute any kind of US

intervention at all. Is it incredible ignorance that leads Mrs. Aquino to say that "mere" US assistance in training and logistics does not mean direct US involvement in the nation's affairs, or is this a clumsy cover-up of increasing US control over her government? In the same vein, her defense secretary Fidel Ramos boasts of the AFP's "self-reliant posture" in its counterinsurgency efforts while importuning Washington for more military aid. Her chief of staff Gen. Renato de Villa insists that JUSMAG's role is merely to "assist" and not to "advise" at the same time that he allows local police and military officials investigating the Rowe killing to report to the US Embassy.

When the highest officials of the land show only the vaguest notion of what differentiates the national interest from US interest, the insolent and abusive behavior of US imperialism in our country comes as no surprise. The recent torture of two farmers by Clark Air Base authorities and of six workers by puppet troops at Subic Naval Base are only the most recent examples.

All occupation forces: targets of attack

Little wonder that more and more Filipinos share the position of the revolutionary forces that all US personnel and installations in the country, whether military or civilian, particularly those involved or assisting in counterinsurgency operations, are forces and instruments of occupation that are legitimate targets of attack in a war of national liberation. In pursuance of the national war, the CPP and all other patriotic forces have the widest leeway in choosing the targets and forms of political and military action to be used against the US interventionist forces.

The anti-imperialist temper of our people revealed itself in the aftermath of the killing of Col. James Rowe last April 21. There was no public sympathy for a "victim of terrorism," the issue which the US government tried to project. Instead, what caused public concern was the extent of US interference in the country's affairs that was exposed by Rowe's involvement in the formation of the CAFGUs (civilian armed forces geographical units). No one could condemn the NPA action as "terrorist" without exhibiting his shameless subservience to US imperialism.

The revolutionary forces and people, however, are careful to make distinctions between US imperialism, its policymakers and its implementors on the one hand and the American people on the other. The Filipino people and the American people have a common interest in frustrating and defeating US interventionist and aggressive schemes.

The CPP started to implement its policy of using military actions against US personnel and installations last November 1987, when NPA units ambushed and killed three American servicemen outside Clark Air Base. Since then, it has developed its capability to strike at US targets both in the urban centers (the attack on Col. James Rowe near the JUSMAG headquarters in Quezon City) and in the countryside (the bombing of a US Navy relay station in Tuba, Benguet). This capability flows from and is a measure of the rapid advance of the revolutionary movement and forces on all fronts.

The US government has heightened protective and security measures for its personnel and facilities in the country, and the puppet regime and troops are scrambling to assure them of such protection. But no amount of security precautions, alertness or repressive measures can insure their safety, surrounded as they are by a people increasingly resentful of the US imperialists' trampling of their national rights and desirous of putting an end to it.

The CPP makes sure that its military actions are well integrated into the larger politico-military effort against US imperialism and the puppet reactionary state. Such actions are intended to puncture key and crucial points in the master-puppet tie-up. This is one way to expose and isolate US imperialism, the Aquino regime and other local reactionaries; and to weaken and frustrate every attempt by US imperialism to support -- and escalate its support for -- counterinsurgency programs and all other moves to stabilize the puppet regime. It can also help in raising the broadest possible unity of the Filipino people and developing their solidarity with the American and other peoples against US imperialism and its lackeys.

At the tactical level, our military actions are calibrated to the existing scope and depth of US intervention in the country and the level of strength attained by the revolutionary forces. Such operations as the attack on the three US servicemen in 1987 and the Rowe ambush are long overdue. In addition, we will respond to the people's demand to punish specific US personnel who have committed abuses against them.

The revolutionary forces serve notice that any attempt to escalate US involvement in Philippine affairs, in the form of increased logistical support, training and

involvement in specific campaigns and operations of the AFP, will surely be dealt with. Within this framework, we hold US imperialism directly answerable for all violent attacks by puppet troops on all anti-imperialist actions by our people.

The Party has no illusion that if it refrains from military attacks on US imperialism, US acts of aggression and intervention will not escalate. As our history shows, the whole conduct of US imperialism in the country depends on the actual danger posed by the *entire range* of the people's revolutionary struggles to its strategic control over the country and to its puppet state. In the face of surging people's struggles, US imperialism and its local reactionary allies are bound to step up the war. They are in fact determined to do anything to crush the nationalist and progressive forces fighting for national and social liberation. And to do this by 1991, the year when the US Military Bases Agreement expires and US imperialism requires its puppet government to forge a new treaty to take its place.

But ours is a just cause and not even the worst that US imperialism can do, with all its economic and political might, can subdue a people yearning and struggling to be free. The revolutionary forces and people are fighting with all the weapons at their command and, with the revolutionary armed struggle dealing the most telling blows, fighting to win a decisive victory over US imperialism and its puppets.

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NPA SHOWS CONTINUING VIGOR IN MINDANAO

The New People's Army in Mindanao started 1989 with a demonstration of their renewed strength, putting to rest enemy claims that it had decisively turned back the revolutionary tide in that region. Based on initial reports from **Ang Bayan** correspondents in Mindanao, the NPA seized a total of 38 high-powered rifles and one M60 machinegun and killed 46 enemy soldiers in various armed actions throughout the island.

These tactical offensives are a continuation of the new vigor of the armed struggle in Mindanao which manifested itself in 1988. Last year the NPA launched some 200 military operations that added 200 high-powered rifles to its arsenal and killed the same number of military and paramilitary troops. (Refer to the statement of the Mindanao Commission in this issue.)

Offensives to start 1989

Most of the NPA actions at the start of 1989 were company-sized tactical offensives targetted at platoon-sized AFP and paramilitary units.

Last February 17 the NPA staged a successful ambush on a unit of the 2nd Scout Ranger Battalion in Dominga, Calinan, Davao City. The Red fighters exploded a landmine, then raked the enemy troops with gunfire. Nine AFP soldiers died on the spot. One M14, three M16s, one M203 grenade launcher and one carbine fell into NPA hands.

In another operation, an NPA unit assaulted and overran a detachment of the 58th Infantry Battalion of the Philippine Army in Bo. Boljoon, San Miguel, Agusan del Sur on February 6 at six in the morning. Six soldiers were killed. The NPA confiscated six M16s, one M14, one carbine, three .38 caliber pistols and three grenades.

Also in Agusan del Sur, an NPA company laid seige to a detachment of CAFGU forces in sitio Loring in Anoling, Rosario, on February 23. For more than one hour, the guerrillas exchanged fire with the paramilitary forces, who were all Tadtad fanatics. Fifteen fell on the enemy side while two Red fighters were slain. The offensive netted four M16s, one FAL rifle, two Garands, one carbine and eight shotguns for the NPA.

In an encounter in Misamis Occidental, on the other hand, the NPA displayed a form marked by daring, initiative and flexibility. On February 16 an NPA unit encountered forces of the 44th IB in Siloy, Calamba. At first, the guerrillas were on the defensive. AFP soldiers aboard a truck had come upon two Red fighters playing in the Siloy basketball court. The enemy opened fire killing the two.

The fascist troops were not aware of the presence of other guerrillas in the area. The latter returned the enemy fire. A woman guerrilla was able to climb aboard the military truck, take hold of an M60 machinegun and turn its muzzle on the fascist

troops. Eleven troops were killed and many others were wounded.

The NPA got the machinegun and two boxes of ammunition for it, seven M14s, one pistol four radio transceivers, and a lot of food and medical supplies.

Davao City partisans

In Davao City, the armed strength of the NPA partisans is making itself felt once again. Last February 15 at 9 a.m., in the heart of the city, the partisans punished two policemen of the Davao Metrodiscom.

The two policemen were active in fighting against the revolutionary movement and were long-time extortionists. Most of their victims were small peddlers, jeepney drivers and traders.

This was the second partisan operation within Davao City since September 21, 1988, when they raided an Alsa Masa detachment in Lanang. Five elements of the PC and Alsa Masa perished in that raid.

These daring actions sent tremors of fear among the fascists and reactionaries who had boasted of having crushed the revolutionary forces in the city.

There is reason for them to fear. The NPA has returned to and recovered the areas it was forced to leave in Davao City. And the enemy's much-vaunted Alsa Masa, their instrument to drive away the NPA from the city, has been exposed as rotten to the core and is in the process of fragmentation.

Meanwhile, the NPA taught a lesson to the Banahaw Mining Corp. (BMC), an Australian company which owns a gold mine in Bo. Bayugan Tres, Rosario, Agusan del Sur. The company was operating its mine without instituting safety measures for the residents and the environment, particularly in its use of the

toxic chemical mercury. Apart from this, the BMC forced out the small gold panners in the area and deployed hired goons against the revolutionary movement.

Last January 16 an NPA unit raided and overrun the mine site. Three security guards were killed when they fought back against the guerrillas. The rest fled. The NPA seized six M16s, two Garands, three shotguns, five .38 caliber pistols and two radio transceivers. They also set fire to the barracks, plant, warehouse and machinery worth millions of pesos.

Based on a recent Party assessment, it is true that the revolutionary movement in the island has not reached the peak it attained in 1983-'84. But the NPA has enough capability to deliver sustained blows to the enemy in Mindanao. The Party is paying close attention to mass work and other kinds of political work as well as to internal consolidation, while it continues to launch tactical offensives.

Radio in Northern Mindanao

In another development, the revolutionary movement in Northern Mindanao is experimenting with the use of the VHF (very high frequency) radio as a means of countering enemy intrigues.

Last January 3 VHF Propaganda Network started its broadcast in the region. Five provinces -- Misamis Oriental, Bukidnon, Agusan del Norte, Agusan del Sur and Surigao del Sur -- already have their own programs on selected frequencies.

The listeners usually ask questions on religion, democracy and communism, revolution and human rights. Of course, the agents and troops of the AFP butt in to spread lies about the revolutionary movement or jam the signals.

Based on an initial survey, there are about 8,000 VHF radio transceivers in Northern Mindanao. These are in the hands of loggers, businessmen, professionals, church people, AFP units and government agencies. Some of these are also in the hands of the revolutionary movement and are being used as a channel for the radio broadcasts to reach a part of the population and to hear their views.

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**PERSEVERE IN STRUGGLE
AND WE WILL SURELY WIN!**

The Mindanao region is a major front of the revolutionary armed struggle that

has been the target of the most intense military attacks by the US-Aquino regime over the past three years. The region has also been beset by internal problems related to enemy infiltration and the way this was handled.

In a statement issued last Dec. 26, 1988, the Mindanao Commission of the Communist Party of the Philippines speaks about what the revolutionary movement there has gone through -- and what it has achieved in the midst of enormous difficulties.

We are reprinting an abridged version of this statement which is originally in Cebuano for all comrades, and the masses who have been deeply concerned about the fate of the revolutionary forces and people in Mindanao. We added subheads in accordance with **AB's** style.

We hope that the publication of this statement will give impetus to other regions to speak in their own voice about the conditions and victories of their own revolutionary struggles.

The Communist Party of the Philippines in Mindanao has completed 16 years of thoroughgoing struggle in behalf of the people's democratic revolution. It continues to reap victories in its struggle. Such victories result from its firm grasp of the correct line of national democratic revolution, wholehearted and faithful service to the interests of the people, and correct leadership over revolutionary struggles.

As in all revolutionary movements, we went through numerous difficulties -- and even some setbacks. The most serious were the problems related to enemy infiltration and the way in which it was handled. But we have overcome all these.

The road of revolution is never straight. Victory is attained only after many twists and turns. The important point is this: that the problems and weaknesses within our movement are only temporary and can be solved in time, while those of the ruling classes and the reactionary state have deep roots and no solution.

From its beginnings up to 1980, the Party in Mindanao established and maintained wide mass bases and fronts. In 1981 the revolutionary forces under its leadership rapidly accumulated strength, and in 1983-'84 they gathered momentum. But starting mid-1985, the pace of the revolutionary movement slowed down and it even suffered reverses due to a variety of factors. The weakening continued till 1987.

In 1988 we began to regain our strength. We have not only recovered but have also made noticeable gains in almost all fronts of struggle.

Armed struggle

Within the year we reorganized and sustained the company formations of the New People's Army. The number of companies will soon reach the level in 1983-'84 throughout the island. There are platoon-sized full-time guerrilla units among the front and district guerrilla units, and armed propaganda units in the districts. The semi-legal teams and armed propaganda teams are also multiplying.

This renewed building up of our army units is a mark of our progress. A considerable number of new recruits are coming in. They are of better quality than those in 1986-'87, who turned out to have certain weaknesses which created some problems for us.

This year we also launched more than 200 tactical offensives and acts of harassment and sabotage -- a big leap from the past two years when only a few were undertaken. We confiscated more than 200 high-powered rifles, while our haul in 1987 was no more than 50. Those killed on the enemy side number about 200; our losses were few, not reaching 50.

These successful tactical offensives show the improvement in the capabilities of our army. The Red commanders and fighters are more experienced. Their tactics and techniques of warfare have developed. We have learned to use explosives to full advantage.

Base-building

The shrinking of our mass base has been stopped. In fact, we are taking back many areas and expanding in others. The revolutionary movement is now active in some 2,000 barrios. This is less than what we had in 1985 but much more than in 1986-'87. What is significant there is that there are no longer any sharp and rapid reductions in our areas.

There are still quite a number of barrios to which we have not returned, but based on our experiences in those we have recovered, a great number of the barrio folk remain steadfast

in their support of the revolution even in our absence.

The masses which we have organized and over which we have influence today reach one million in the countryside.

Many chapters of the Pambansang Katipunan ng Magbubukid (PKM), Samahan ng Makabayang Kababaihan (SKM) and Kabataang Makabayan (KM) are still functioning. There are also barrio revolutionary councils that operate as organs of political power of the people or local provisional revolutionary governments. In some areas, there are revolutionary councils at the municipal level -- a higher level of development.

We have launched agrarian struggles in more than 100 barrios and more than 1,000 families are reaping the benefits. The struggle to raise the wages of farm workers and to lower land rent goes on. In some places, land has been distributed free to the peasant masses. Compared to 1986-'87, where practically no struggles were launched, these are large strides in this aspect of our revolutionary work.

Furthermore, more and more barrios are participating in open political mobilizations. These actions are often in protest against fascist abuses of enemy troops while others are related to the economic struggle.

The masses within our organizations and under our influence actively support the armed struggle. And their numbers continue to rise.

At present there are 20 guerrilla fronts. Less than in 1985, but large enough and sufficient to meet our needs in the current situation, and more consolidated than before.

All our fronts have been subjected to enemy bombings that make use of 105 mm howitzers, Tora-tora planes and Sikorsky helicopters. Some barriofolk have been forced to evacuate and abandon our areas. But others stay on and launch protest actions against the enemy. Many more return and resume supporting and working for the revolution. And some choose to stand their ground and brave the bombs of the enemy.

The sea of mass support for the revolution cannot be emptied. Despite all the intrigues and attacks of the enemy, the great majority of the masses do not turn away from the revolution and from their own people's army. Instead, the tempering they go through builds up their strength and courage and fires up hatred for the enemy that has destroyed their livelihood. It is clear to them that the revolution stands up for their interests, and they support it even in the midst of adversity. So deep are the revolution's roots among the masses.

Urban mass movement

Meanwhile, in the cities and town centers, the revolutionary mass movement led by the Party is back on its feet. This year we launched larger mass mobilizations. Last May 1, Labor Day, marches, rallies, and symposia were held in leading urban centers such as Davao City, Cagayan de Oro, Iligan, Pagadian, Zamboanga, Gen. Santos, Butuan and other towns. A total of 26,000 were mobilized.

We have retained our strength in many labor unions. The progressive forces are still the biggest bloc in the ranks of organized workers throughout the island. We also helped launch a number of successful strikes.

Last October jeepney drivers in some cities staged strikes. In Davao City, they were able to paralyze 60 percent of transportation. Likewise, we were able to win back several urban poor communities which we had been forced to leave in 1985.

The opening of classes last June saw student boycotts and pickets in some large universities. In Davao City, more than 10,000 students from various schools held mass actions and classes were paralyzed in some schools for a few days.

Among the middle forces, we see an increasing number joining national democratic and human rights organizations. A good sign is the expansion of the teachers' organization. The progressive forces in the churches were assiduous in linking up with and supporting mass struggles. Membership in some organizations went up by a few hundreds. In other sectors such as the medical profession, artists and lawyers, the number of those supporting the revolutionary movement also grew.

In general, the revolutionary mass movement in the cities and town centers has gained ground, though not at the same level as in 1983-'84. Compared to 1986-'87, however, the situation has markedly improved.

Among our achievements in the cities is the resurgence of partisan warfare. The partisan units that had been almost dissolved or had become passive have been reactivated and have resumed their operations at various levels in Davao City, Tagum, Butuan, Cagayan de Oro, Iligan, Pagadian and other towns. We have strictly prohibited indiscriminate killings. Only those enemies whose names are on the list are punished.

United front

In the united front, a number of NDF councils at the provincial level up have remained active while others have not. This is due to the fact that we have decided to give more attention to such major lines of work as the reorganization of armed units, overhauling of the Party organizational structure and others.

What is important is that the different member organizations of the NDF are operative and continue to advance. These organizations are expanding and are diligent in fulfilling the tasks drawn up in the Mindanao NDF conference of February 1987.

Our own forces among the Moros also made headway. A wider section of the Moro population is accepting the national democratic line.

We maintained our linkages and relations with other political forces fighting the US-Aquino regime. In some areas, there has been close cooperation and coordination in the launching of political and military actions. We have agreed on the principles to govern such coordination.

Overall, the united front has gone forward in the past two years. Its scope has become wider. Although not in such numbers as in 1983-'84, our allies grasp the correct line of struggle more firmly than before.

Party

All these victories of the revolution cannot be separated from the leadership of the Party. The Party has been in the center of mass struggles and provided the guidance for advances in all lines of work. These victories are therefore also victories of the Party.

It is a mark of the Party's strength that even in the midst of difficulties and problems, it has been able to move forward.

Party membership has increased. Not dramatically, but in a more selective manner. The main stress has been on quality.

More members have been given Marxist-Leninist education. Progressive works are being disseminated. Studies on the theories and principles of revolution are being given impetus. All these have deepened the ideological and political understanding of Party members. Our determination to give emphasis to education work within our ranks has borne fruit.

Party discipline has likewise improved. The arrogance and liberalism of some comrades are being corrected. The excesses that had been committed in meting out punishment have been analyzed and rectified. We have accepted our responsibility for specific weaknesses and errors. We have learned to be more strict and more selective in recruiting members into the Party. We have been able to restore the atmosphere of trust and faith among comrades.

On the other hand, a few problems related to the effects of earlier internal problems persist in some areas. We are exerting every effort to solve these. The Party stands for truth and justice while alert to the enemy's intrigues and acts of sabotage.

The Party has adjusted to the new situation. It stands firm on its principles at the same that it is flexible in its tactics and methods.

On the whole, the Party in Mindanao and the revolutionary movement which it leads have reached a level of maturity and accumulated enough strength to advance the people's war to the next higher stage. We are capable of surmounting the attacks and deceptions of the reactionary US-Aquino regime.

The unshakeable unity of the entire Party and the solid gains achieved in 1988 are what we will build on and stand on to win even more victories in the new year and the years to come.

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**AQUINO REGIME: ILOCOS
WARLORDS' NEW PATRON**

The days when warlordism raged in the Ilocos region are still etched in the national memory. Who can forget those images of villages put to the torch and barrio folks driven from their homes, armed confrontations and bloodshed in the streets, elections decided by murder and terror, and masses of people held in utter fear and subjection?

During the years of fascist rule, the dictator Marcos claimed to have broken up the power of the warlords and disarmed the private armies which they commanded. In reality, warlordism entrenched itself even more deeply in Ilocos politics and formed one of the strongest bases of support for the Marcos fascist dictatorship.

With the installation of the Aquino government and the "democratic restoration" it promised came the hope that the days of warlordism in the Ilocos region would be finally brought to an end. But the exact opposite happened. The Aquino ruling coalition entered into an unholy alliance with the warlords, has allowed them to consolidate themselves further and is enlisting their private armies in its campaign of "total war" against the people.

More than ever, the people in the Ilocos provinces continue to groan under the increasing exploitation, oppression and violence of the warlords. But no longer in helpless submission to their oppressors. A steady political awakening -- and movement of resistance -- are taking place within their ranks.

The revolutionary movement that is fast taking root in many parts of the Ilocos region is developing the forces that will eventually dismantle warlordism there and free the people from this long reign of terror in their lives.

A carryover of feudal mode of rule

The Communist Party of the Philippines in the region has made a deep study of warlordism and the methods of dealing with it and destroying it.

Warlordism in the Ilocos region is a carryover of the feudal mode of governing that fits into and thrives within the framework of reactionary politics. It is an inseparable part of the rule of US imperialism, the big comprador capitalists and big landlords over our country.

Warlordism is based on the landlord-tenant relationship and arises from the feudal and semifeudal exploitation and oppression of the peasant masses. The warlord usually belongs to a family with big landed estates and/or industrial, commercial and other economic interests that are closely linked to the land.

The warlord combines both economic and political power in his hands. He himself occupies the main seat of political power (the position of governor or congressman of a province) while the rest of the important positions in government are distributed among the members of his immediate family or his close relatives. The largesse of high office flows down to the masses through the network of feudal ties. Thus warlordism rests on a patron-client relationship cemented by feudal bonds and loyalty.

In Ilocos warlordism, the local state machinery is transformed into the private preserve of a succession of factions of the ruling classes. The warlord use the state apparatus itself to rapidly expand his economic interests. In this sense, warlordism may be said to be a particular expression of bureaucrat capitalism in a semifeudal society.

The distinguishing feature of the warlord is that his primary instrument for acquiring and maintaining political as well as economic power is his private army. The members of this private army owe their loyalty exclusively to him -- a loyalty that is based not merely on monetary considerations but on feudal obligations and even clan and blood ties.

The private army is an extralegal armed force but it straddles the state apparatus, operating both within and outside it. Most of its members are placed on the payroll of the local police or such paramilitary units as the CHDF (civilian home defense forces), with additional remuneration coming from other sources. It may even include parts of the

regular armed forces -- officers and soldiers of the AFP who render their services to the warlord in exchange for political and material favors (many of these owe their recruitment into or promotion within the AFP to the warlord).

Such are the ties of the warlord to his private army that its members would risk their lives for him. The clashes between the private armies of rival warlords are often bloody and fierce though, by an unspoken rule of the game, the warlord himself is not the target of attack. Only his pawns and followers suffer, especially the masses within his domain, who cannot defend themselves when his enemies launch retaliatory actions against him.

It is the use of the private army which, more than anything else, decides the outcome of electoral contests in the Ilocos region. The electoral process merely serves as the shadow of the armed competition of political rivals and the results on the ballots only reflect what has been accomplished by armed force.

Thus, electoral terrorism in the Ilocos is particularly prevalent. A warlord seals his electoral victory by killing off the main supporters or leaders of his political opponent, the way Floro Crisologo did to win the congressional seat in Ilocos Sur in 1962.

Massive cheating is inevitably accompanied by terrorist measures, such as ballot-snatching, surrounding polling places with armed goons, cutting off electricity while the counting is going on, and others.

But to a large extent, the private army is directed against the toiling masses. It is an instrument to enforce the feudal and semifeudal exploitation and oppression of the people. The warlord does not hesitate to use maximum violence to protect his economic and political interests and the interests of the semicolonial and semifeudal system where he thrives. The threat and application of violence, along with the systematic and widespread use of deception against the people, have become so institutionalized as to form part of the way of life of people under warlord rule.

Factors in rise of warlordism

Warlordism is highly developed in many parts of the country but it is perhaps in the Ilocos provinces (Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur, La Union and Abra) in northeastern Luzon that it has become endemic and reached its height.

Certain economic and cultural peculiarities of the Ilocos region made it fertile ground for the rise of warlordism and explain its pervasiveness there.

The four Ilocos provinces, which not a few political observers have characterized as "warlord territory," have a narrow land area, hemmed in as they are by the Ilocos ranges and Cordillera mountains in the east and the China sea in the west. Not only are the agricultural lands limited, they also get the sparsest rainfall of any region in the country. Industrial development is almost non-existent. This makes agriculture the mainstay in the people's livelihood (60-70 percent of the Ilocanos depend on agriculture for their living).

Much of the arable land is planted to rice, tobacco and some sugarcane. Much of the rice and sugarcane produced is enough only for local consumption. It is the tobacco that is sold outside the region that brings in the most cash.

The rise of the post-World War II warlords in the Ilocos provinces and their consolidation of power came with the upsurge in the planting of Virginia tobacco in the 1950s when the Garcia regime imposed controls on tobacco imports.

Political power and connections determined control over the flourishing tobacco industry and the profits that it generated. The tobacco monopoly arose from the close collaboration between big government bureaucrats -- high elective officials and those in government agencies managing the industry (such as the National Tobacco Administration) -- and the multinational tobacco companies.

They controlled the export-import, manufacturing and trading of tobacco. They also exerted a big influence on the production process through their tight link-up with the corporations supplying the agricultural inputs such as fertilizers, pesticides, machinery and implements and through their extension of credit. Through such means, they were able to appropriate much of the wealth produced by the labor of the worker and peasant masses and even part of the profits of small traders.

However, the general poverty of the land and the fact that the tobacco industry was not itself capable of generating the superprofits that prime export commodities like sugar

did, made the struggle for the spoils particularly intense.

The struggles among the reactionary factions of the local ruling classes worsened, especially in Ilocos Sur which became the largest producer of Virginia tobacco in the whole country, until they broke out in armed confrontations in the first half of the 1960s.

During this period such warlords as Floro Crisologo of Ilocos Sur rose to power through the widespread and systematic use of terrorism. He imposed a monopoly control over the tobacco industry in the province and, from its profits, was able to build his own cigarette factory, Fortune Tobacco, which became the biggest in the whole of Ilocos. But a young upstart, Luis Chavit Singson, rode on the popular hatred against this haughty warlord and was able to depose him.

In La Union, two clans battled it out for political supremacy: the Ortegas of the Nacionalista Party (NP) and Manuel Cases of the Liberal Party (LP). But with the support of his patron, the dictator Marcos, Aspiras emerged as the prime political figure in La Union.

In Ilocos Norte, reactionary politics had long been dominated by the Marcoses and the Ablans. Another big political leader in the province was Antonio Raquiza, who used his close connections to Marcos to amass land and set up businesses.

In Abra, the big names were Valera and Paredes -- big landlords in the province. But both were overtaken by Carmelo Barbero, a high-ranking military officer with family connections to the Paredes clan but who allied with the Valeras to win the gubernatorial seat in 1965.

The prevalence of warlordism in the Ilocos region owes much to the extreme poverty of the Ilocanos. This situation has made them cling for survival to such feudal values as *utang na loob*, clannishness and regionalism. The warlords exploit and distort these values to keep the Ilocano masses from becoming aware of their class interests and to ensure their submission. That is why some warlords, no matter how brutal, were often perceived by the people as their "apo" (father-image).

Consolidation of warlordism under fascist rule

When Marcos declared martial law in 1972, he used his absolute powers as dictator to effectively control the warlords in the region. With his massive apparatus of repression and elections abolished as a means of legitimizing which political faction would rule over a locality, personal closeness and loyalty to the fascist dictator became the basis for entry into the corridors of power.

Marcos turned Ilocandia into a powerful political base. And he accomplished this by consolidating warlordism in the region.

He regulated the internecine conflicts among the warlords and their private armies. Relieved of violent attacks from their political opponents, the warlords favored by the dictator were able to build stronger bastions in the region.

A striking example is the Singson clan of Ilocos Sur. By aligning themselves firmly with Marcos, the Singsons were able to fortify their political base in the entire province, their economic power and their private army all throughout the period of martial rule.

So did the warlords in the other provinces. In La Union, Aspiras' supremacy was unchallenged. In Abra, Barbero consolidated his hold over the province by declaring his son Arturo governor in 1977 and systematically building up their armed force.

It was only in Ilocos Norte, the dictator's own homebase, where the dominant warlord family, the Ablans, had their power diminished. One member was arrested while those holding positions in the local government were replaced with Marcos favorites and relatives. This was probably because the Ablans had their own independent strength, and the dictator saw them as capable of independent action and as potential threats. However, so long as the Ablans did not resist the attempts to put them in their proper place, the foundations of their power -- their economic holdings and private army -- were not attacked.

It was this factor which enabled Farinas, a political non-entity close to the dictator's son Bongbong, to rise (he became mayor of Laoag City) and build up his own following and private army in Ilocos Norte.

Like their patrons, the private armies were retained and were found useful by the fascist dictatorship. Far from having been disarmed or disbanded, they were used in the ruthless suppression of the masses. They were able to maintain a low profile because their depredations blended into the general repressive atmosphere and the repressive activities of the fascist AFP.

The warlords, particularly those in power, served as the most vicious counter-revolutionaries. They actively implemented the anti-people policies of the fascist regime. This was done not only out of loyalty to the dictator but out of their own realization that the revolutionary movement was a direct threat to their rule. They collaborated closely with the AFP in the launching of counterinsurgency campaigns. They helped in the formation and propagation of paramilitary units such as the Civilian Home Defense Forces (CHDF).

Unholy alliance between Aquino and warlords

Under the Aquino regime, warlordism in the Ilocos region has not only continued, it has even been reinforced, together with the private armies.

From the start, the Aquino regime has never been able to assert its authority over the Ilocos warlords. Their consolidation of power during the nearly two decades of fascist rule, coupled with the instability of the post-Marcos political arrangement, has enabled them to defeat the attempts and maneuvers of the Aquino administration to reduce their power and influence.

Their first test of strength with the Aquino regime came when the latter attempted to remove the reigning warlords from their seats in the local government and replace them with Aquino's allies. The warlords fought hard to prevent their replacement by OICs (officers-in-charge) and only yielded upon the grant of certain concessions by the Aquino administration. During the plebiscite on the new Constitution, the warlords again made their power felt by campaigning for a strong "no" vote.

The Aquino regime soon shifted tactics. During the Congressional and local elections, the Aquino ruling clique entered into an alliance with the warlords and left its own allies, the anti-Marcos and anti-warlord politicians, in the lurch.

This accommodation to warlordism was trumpeted as part of Aquino's policy of reconciliation. What it really meant was that the Aquino ruling coalition, composed as it was of big landlords and compradors, had basically no conflict of interest with the warlords and was promoting the same kind of reactionary politics which nurtured them. Peping Cojuangco, Mrs. Aquino's brother, masterminded this policy and brought it to fruition.

With Cojuangco's support, the Ablans reasserted themselves into a position of dominance in the province of Ilocos Norte and are tying up with militarists like ex-AFP Col. Rolando Abadilla (now vice-governor). The Singsons of Ilocos Sur, Aspiras and the Ortegas of La Union and Valeras of Abra also have a renewed lease on their reign of tyranny under their new patron. On the other hand, such figures as Gov. Farinas, Bongbong associate now turned Shahani protegee, are trying to present a new breed of warlords with liberal and technocratic pretensions.

In return for their support, the Aquino regime has tolerated the existence of the private armies and the illegal activities of the warlords, and has even condoned their past crimes. Aspiras, for instance, widely believed to have played a role in the Aquino assassination, is no longer mentioned in the ongoing trial of Aquino's suspected murderers.

The private armies ride high once again. And they are even more important to the warlords today due to the political instability besetting the Aquino regime. Another factor which has enlarged their role is that the warlords have been turning more and more to illegal activities such as gambling and smuggling to make up for the declining profits from the tobacco industry.

The private armies of these warlords also serve as an important reserve force in the counterinsurgency campaign. They act as the intelligence arm of the warlords not only against their political rivals but also against the revolutionary movement. As in Marcos' time, the private armies are used to coerce the masses to form the CAFGUs (civilian armed forces geographical units), a new version of the CHDFs.

On the whole, Aquino and the Ilocos warlords are united on the issue of preserving

the reactionary system and fighting the insurgency. The reactionary character of the warlords has been heightened by the role they are playing in Aquino's "total war" against the revolutionary forces and people.

But their power-sharing arrangement is tenuous. The warlords recognize Aquino as president and support her administration at a certain level, so long as their power is not threatened or weakened. And they continue to have relations with their former patron, Marcos, and other anti-Aquino forces in order to gain leverage in bargaining with the regime and to increase their flexibility and options in case of a change in the political situation.

Factional rivalries among the warlords are also intensifying, and these mirror the struggles for power at the national level. There are conflicts between those being cultivated by the Aquino camp and those who plot for the return of the former dictator, and among those under the patronage of various national figures aspiring for the presidency in 1992.

These conflicts, between the Aquino clique and certain warlords and among the warlords themselves, threaten to erupt in even more violent forms in the future.

Revolutionary movement: determined to end warlordism

The revolutionary forces in the region are determined to put an end to warlordism and to all the hardships, bloodshed, climate of fear and distortion of values it has inflicted upon the people of Ilocos.

During the last years of the Marcos dictatorship, the revolutionary forces succeeded in laying the foundation for the armed struggle -- first in Abra, then in Ilocos Norte, La Union and Ilocos Sur. They were able to take root even in the very bastion of the fascist dictator, Ilocos Norte. Here, the revolutionary armed struggle made its most rapid advance starting in 1984.

Today the revolutionary armed forces have gained a foothold and established a wide area for maneuver throughout the Ilocos region. Guerrilla zones have been set up in parts of all four provinces. The revolutionary armed struggle has maintained its strength and momentum despite the recent intensification of enemy attacks since December of 1987.

The revolutionary movement in the Ilocos region is growing basically because it takes up and advances the antifeudal interests of the masses. This undermines the very foundation of warlordism. As the antifeudal struggle gains ground, it will have to call on the revolutionary armed strength against the private armies and armed forces of the reactionary state which defend the economic interests of the warlords.

More and more, the revolutionary forces will directly attack the power of the warlords. The warlords in power, their economic base and their private armies, will be the targets of the strongest attacks.

The entire revolutionary struggle is, of course, smashing the reactionary state apparatus to which warlordism attaches itself. The people can defeat all the warlords -- and all the other reactionary factions -- by persevering in revolution. Freed from their tyranny, the hardworking, thrifty Ilocano masses can make their harsh and arid land bloom and produce such bounty.

* * *

CPP COMMEMORATES VIETNAMESE PEOPLE'S GREAT VICTORY OVER US IMPERIALISM

The Filipino people and the Communist Party of the Philippines are one with the Vietnamese people in remembering and celebrating the 1975 Vietnamese victory over US imperialism.

On April 30, the Vietnamese people mark the 14th anniversary of their glorious triumph over the US war of aggression and neocolonialist rule. After a brilliantly executed general offensive, the Vietnamese people finally liberated South Vietnam on April 30, 1975. The victory was the culmination of more than a century of patriotic struggle waged by the heroic Vietnamese people against foreign domination -- first the French colonialists, then the Japanese occupation troops and lastly the American imperialist

forces.

Throughout their long and arduous struggle against the most powerful imperialist country in the world, the Vietnamese people have shown exemplary qualities of patriotism, courage, perseverance, selflessness and creativity. Their strong love for their country and steadfastness were expressed so eloquently by Ho Chi Minh, the great leader of the Vietnamese people and founder of the Vietnamese Communist Party, in his statement to the Vietnamese people before his death in 1969: "The war of resistance against US aggression may drag on. Our people may have to face new sacrifices of life and property. Whatever happens, we must keep firm our resolve to fight the US aggressors till victory."

True to the words of Ho Chi Minh, the Vietnamese people finally defeated US imperialist aggression. The defeat greatly weakened US imperialism, signalling its further decline in the world. The success of the Vietnamese people neutralized US moves to prevent the victory of national liberation forces in Africa, paved the way for the successive defeats of US imperialism in Iran and Nicaragua in 1979, and strengthened the anti-imperialist forces all over the world.

After the Vietnamese triumph in 1975, the Vietnamese people were confronted with a new and difficult challenge of rebuilding a reunified Vietnam along the socialist path. So much destruction was caused by the massive bombings and barbaric spraying of defoliants and other chemicals throughout Vietnam by the modern and brutal US war machine. Through the years new conditions and problems have cropped up. Errors were committed which added to the difficulties of socialist construction. In the face of these challenges and difficulties, the Vietnamese people under the leadership of the Vietnamese Communist Party have persevered in studying and searching for the correct and effective ways of successfully building a strong and prosperous Vietnam.

Today the positive step being undertaken towards a peaceful political settlement of the Kampuchean problem augurs well for the bright future of the Vietnamese people. With the prospects for peace in Indochina getting brighter, conditions are more favorable for the Vietnamese people to solve their economic problems, to build socialism in their beloved country, and to support other national liberation forces win their own struggles for independence, democracy, progress and peace.

The peaceful resolution of the Kampuchean problem will also help realize Ho Chi Minh's desire of seeing unity forged among socialist countries as expressed in his last will and testament to the Vietnamese people: "I hope that our Party will do its best to contribute effectively to the restoration of unity among the fraternal parties on the basis of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism, in a way which conforms to both reason and sentiment."

Just as they have emerged triumphant in their battle against US imperialist aggression, the Vietnamese people, with the all-round support of socialist countries and progressive forces all over the world, will certainly emerge victorious in their struggle to build a Vietnam that is "ten times more beautiful."

The heroic struggle of the Vietnamese people under the leadership of the Vietnamese Communist Party will always be a shining example to Filipino revolutionaries and anti-imperialist forces everywhere.

* * *

BOOK REVIEW

TATANG'S LIFE STORY, A STORY OF MASSES IN REVOLT

SA TUNGKI NG ILONG NG KAAWAY
(Talambuhay ni Tatang)
By Tatang
Published by Linang

Among other things, an autobiography seeks to inspire and to teach. *Sa Tungki ng Ilong ng Kaaway*, an account of the life of Tatang, is a book that fulfills both aims -- it is inspiring, and it brims with lessons drawn from the rich experiences of Tatang and the

people. It is a book worth reading by all Filipinos who yearn for freedom and democracy.

Tatang comes from the poor and common folk. He was born in a remote barrio in Bacnotan, La Union. When he was a child, his parents migrated to Tarlac and to other towns in Central Luzon to earn a living. Tatang early learned the meaning of hard work as a worker in a sugar mill in Pampanga. Here, he experienced oppression and saw the need for organized struggle to change the unjust society. Thus, at 18, he threw himself into the heat of mass struggles, and in 1931 joined the newly established Communist Party of the Philippines.

Tatang grew to be a revolutionary. He actively participated in the forming of mass organizations, the establishment of the Hukbalahap (Hukbo ng Bayan Laban sa Hapon) and the setting up of the CLO (Congress of Labor Organizations). Despite his humble origin, he was recognized by the masses as their leader because he took to heart the spirit of service to the people and was always ready to lead them. This is one of the book's messages.

In 1952 he was arrested by agents of the reactionary state and incarcerated for two years. When he was released, he continued in his work of arousing and organizing the masses, though the Party by then was on the verge of dissolution and could not give him any guidance. In the 1960s he was one of those who responded to the call to reestablish the Communist Party of the Philippines, and he was given an important assignment -- to take charge of the revolutionary movement's expansion in the North. He was instrumental in opening up many new areas for revolutionary work.

In his simple style of narration, Tatang gives us a vivid depiction of his experiences, intertwined with the experiences of the masses, as a rural poor boy, a sugar worker, an organizer, a guerrilla, a mass leader, a Party cadre. Tatang though seemed to have missed discussing the significant turning points in his life. For instance, why did he join the Party? How did he view the communists? Why did he decide to join the reestablished Party in 1968?

At the time Tatang wrote his book, he was 72 years old and had been active for more than 50 years in the movement. That he persevered in putting down on paper the story of his life is truly inspiring. But what is more inspiring is that in his account, he shows no weariness at all in the long and ceaseless struggle in which he had taken part. Instead, we feel his revolutionary enthusiasm, firmness, undying faith in the masses and in the triumph of the revolution, and the iron will to offer whatever strength remains for the struggle.

Tatang's story spans almost the entire history of the Party itself. It can be said that it is also the history of the Party according to the point of view of a living witness to and participant in the Party's birth, rebirth and decades of life-and-death struggles, who fortunately chose to write all of it down in black and white. One wishes though that Tatang could have delved more deeply into the important landmarks in the Party's advance or retreat, to give the readers, especially those who are not Party members, a historical summing-up of the Party's development. Still, the book as it is serves as valuable material for scholars who want to study the twists and turns of Party history.

By creating a literary piece, Tatang is a testimony to the fact that from the ranks of the masses, often derided by the bourgeoisie as ignorant and illiterate, can emerge writers -- as well as poets, artists, teachers and leaders. In truth, the masses are a wellspring of revolutionary writers, poets, artists, teachers and leaders -- people's intellectuals who may not have had the benefit of formal schooling but who hone their natural talents in the course of making revolution. The Party values them, helps them to blossom, and gives them a valuable role in the historic process of forging a new society. Tatang's book serves as a challenge to all those revolutionary intellectuals and cultural workers who seem to have slackened off in their creation of works of revolutionary literature.

In the final analysis, Tatang's autobiography is not just the story of his life. It is also a story of the Filipino toiling masses and their leaders who rose up in revolt against greed and tyranny. Tatang is an integral part of them, his experiences woven into the whole fabric of the people's revolutionary experience. In his book, Tatang talks about the lives and passions of the masses -- their suffering and hardships, unity in struggle, love of country, hatred for the tyrants and the invaders, contempt for traitors and many more.

Tatang also reminisces about some revolutionary figures with whom he fought side by side in the fire of the revolution. Reading these parts of the book evokes mixed emotions

-- one tinged with regret for such fine leaders as Capadocia, Del Castillo, Balgos and others. All that they labored so hard for, the victories they achieved in the 1930s and especially during the period of the second World War -- all these almost came to nothing, because of the serious mistakes and weaknesses of the old Party in its later years. On the other hand, there is a sense of pride in the Party's rise from the ashes in 1968, together with many of the revolutionary veterans who came forward once again to raise the fallen flag of struggle and sow the seeds of a stronger armed revolution and revolutionary mass movement. Today we glimpse the bright day of freedom ahead.

After reading Tatang's book, who can now claim that the reestablished Party is not the true heir to the tradition started by Crisanto Evangelista?

* * *

E R R A T A:

1. On page 5, last paragraph, February 1989 issue: "Misamis Occidental" should read as "Mindoro Occidental."

2. In the article "Long Live the New People's Army!" (March 1989 issue), it was said that Central Luzon formed its own NPA company in 1985. CL comrades clarified that this is an undersized company.

3. In the third paragraph of the NPA General Command's press statement (March 1989 issue), Rolly Kintanar was identified as "NPA commander-in-chief." His proper designation is "NPA chief of staff." "Commander-in-chief" is a civilian title and, under the present set-up, belongs to the chairman of the CPP.

* * *

Dear Tatang,

I've just finished reading your autobiography --*Sa Tungki ng Ilong ng Kaaway*. I did not stop until I had reached the end.

The story of your life in struggle serves as a good supplement to a study of the history of the Party. In a concrete way, your book showed me why the new Party is the true inheritor of the revolutionary cause of Crisanto Evangelista. It increased my interest in learning from the experiences of cadres like you. I wish we could have the opportunity to share stories.

For me, you are a living example of the truth that the toiling masses will themselves produce their own leaders in the course of the struggle. Your continued devotion to the cause, even when the old people's army had been defeated, speaks of the great qualities of the masses.

I salute your readiness to take up heavy responsibilities though already advanced in age. As it is, you could have told our comrades: "I have served for a long time and now my bones are aching. I leave the work to those of you who are yet young and strong." But by your example, you showed what it is to be a true proletarian revolutionary.

Let me tell you about some of your contemporaries from the old Party and people's army who joined up with the new revolutionary movement in the Southern Tagalog and Bicol regions. I remember four of them.

Among them was Ka Fidel, who belonged to the Bagul-bagol family in San Antonio, Laguna. He fought together with Asedillo, who in the 1930s decided to go up to the mountains and fight against the reactionary government. Asedillo built his base in the Laguna-Quezon part of the Sierra Madre, covering the towns of Lucban, Sampaloc and Mauban in Quezon and also Cavinti, Pagsanjan, San Antonio, Pakil and other towns in Laguna. Ka Fidel kept in his care a red flag used by Asedillo.

When the new Party began to set up guerrilla zones in Southern Tagalog in 1970, the barrio in San Antonio, Laguna where Ka Fidel lived was among the first to be visited. It was in Ka Fidel's house where Ka Nestor Cruz, the first cadre deployed by the Party to the area, stayed. Because Ka Fidel was well respected in his barrio and the adjoining villages, it was easy to organize the masses there. When martial law was declared, he

became a full-time organizer.

Like you, Ka Fidel was well on in years. But even then, he could outwalk any comrade in the mountains. He knew like the back of his hand every secret passage and camping ground in the forest. One of his daughters, Ka Sylvia, became a Red fighter in the New People's Army.

In the Quezon-Bicol boundary, we were able to link up with three old fighters of the HMB (Hukbong Mapagpalaya ng Bayan) -- Ka Pater, Sendong and Tarsan. They had all been imprisoned at Muntinglupa (where political prisoners were mixed together with convicted criminals) until the mid-'60s. According to Ka Pater, Amado Hernandez was his teacher in the prison's high school.

Upon release, the three together set up homesteads in the forested part of the Quezon-Camarines Norte boundary. This was where an NPA unit got into contact with them in 1973.

Ka Pater is the son of an organizer in the Pambansang Katipunan ng Magbubukid (PKM) in Albay. His father volunteered him for schooling in a cadre school in Reco 5 (Regional Command-Bicol) of the HMB. After his schooling, Ka Pater became a courier in the old Party. He met Ka Mariano Balgos but only learned the latter's real identity when Balgos was killed by the enemy in Manito, Albay in 1954.

Ka Sendong and Ka Tarsan (from the Alvarez family) were from the northern part of Camarines Sur. The HMB got in touch with them during its expansion work in Bicol in the 1950s. Apart from the HMB forces from Central Luzon and Southern Tagalog led by Ka Mariano Balgos, the HMB was reinforced by recruits from Bicol itself.

According to these two, at the peak of HMB strength in Bicol, it had five field commands (each one not less than company size) which covered the territories from Camarines Norte in the north to Sorsogon in the south. Ka Sendong and Tarsan were among the first recruits of the HMB in Camarines Sur. Ka Tarsan was an ordinary Red fighter while Ka Sendong was a platoon commander.

In the early part of 1973, a Party cadre reached Ka Pater's barrio in the mountainous area of Tagkawayan, Quezon. Ka Pater immediately sent the news to Ka Sendong and Tarsan, who were then living in a barrio in Labo, Camarines Norte near the Quezon boundary. All three jumped with joy. They remembered the promise of the old Party leadership that it would once more link up with them when it resumed its revolutionary work. They had waited in vain. But they had heard news that the New People's Army had been born.

Like you, Tatang, these three comrades remained ready to accept revolutionary tasks. Ka Tarsan decided to move to Ka Pater's barrio in order to be in close contact with the comrades. The two of them joined the barrio organizing committee (BOC). Meanwhile, Ka Sendong started organizing in his barrio, which became the base for expansion in Camarines Norte.

In Christmas of 1973, their barrio was reached by the first armed propaganda unit (APU) of the NPA in the Quezon-Bicol boundary. A mass meeting was held in the barrio to celebrate the 5th anniversary of the CPP's reestablishment. The BOC to which Ka Pater and Tarsan belonged led in mobilizing the masses for the meeting and ensuring the security of the APU in their barrio.

Also like you, Tatang, these three comrades did not find it hard to understand the difference between the new Party and people's army and the old Party and people's army. They themselves laid bare their own sad experiences in the latter. That is why they were pleasantly surprised when the APU which arrived in their barrio did not only call for a mass meeting. Its members also helped in planting camote in an area in the mountains which had been reserved and cleared by the BOC to serve as a production base for the people's army.

Ka Tarsan found it painful to walk because of a knee wound he had sustained in a clash between his unit in the HMB and enemy troops. But he would still offer to carry the heavy sacks of camote for the comrades whenever the NPA unit would come to his barrio. He would regale us with stories of his experiences in the HMB. We spent many a pleasant hour listening to them.

"The NPA is truly different from the HMB," observed Ka Tarsan. "You give first place to organizing the masses. In our time, we lacked in our understanding of the masses. That is why they also lacked in support for us," he explained.

Led by Ka Pater, the masses in their barrio set up chapters of the peasant, youth and

women's organizations, and also the militia unit. Apart from its support for the activities of the people's army, their barrio also became a rich source of Red fighters and Party cadres.

Although they had been HMB fighters for quite some time, Ka Sendong and Tarsan never became members of the old Party. This was surprising, since Ka Sendong was already a platoon commander. One could understand Ka Tarsan's great joy when, one day in 1975, member of the Party branch in his barrio asked him to join the Party.

One time, the enemy conducted operations in their barrio and Ka Tarsan was arrested. As he was being walked to the PC camp by his captors, he grew depressed at the thought that he would not be able to complete the biodata for his membership application in the Party. "If I am killed by the enemy, I might be forgotten by the comrades because I am not yet in the roster" was his silent sorrow.

Fortunately, he was released from detention. And immediately after he had reported to his comrades on what had happened to him, he finished and submitted his biodata. Such was the value he placed on the Party.

In 1976 these three comrades became full-time cadres who helped in our expansion work in Camarines Norte and Camarines Sur. Together with Ka Pater, his young daughter, Ka Nelda, also went full-time.

Ka Fidel, Sendong and Tarsan were among the first to give up their lives for the sake of advancing the revolutionary struggle in the Southern Tagalog and Bicol regions.

I hope, Ka Tatang, that your having written down the story of your life serves as an example to other comrades to tell their own stories of life in the struggle.

A long life to you!

Comradely yours,

Ka Anton