

C O N T E N T S

AFTER THE QUAKE:
NATIONAL CRISIS INTENSIFIES p. 1

THE LUMADS OF NORTHERN MINDANAO
STRUGGLE FOR SURVIVAL AND DIGNITY p. 4

AFP: A BIG-TIME CRIMINAL SYNDICATE p. 11

NPA LAUNCHES DARING OFFENSIVES
IN CENTRAL LUZON p. 13

OPPOSITION TO ROH TAE WOO REGIME
IN SOUTH KOREA ESCALATES p. 14

CPSU HOLDS 28TH PARTY CONGRESS p. 17

AFTER THE QUAKE: NATIONAL CRISIS INTENSIFIES

The powerful earthquake of July 16 has not only wrought widespread death, dislocation and destruction across central and northern Luzon. It has also severely shaken the tottering Aquino regime and the economic and political system over which it presides, bringing the entire structure closer to final collapse.

By itself, the massive toll of the earthquake adds enormously to the country's economic burdens. The heavy damage to infrastructure, productive capacity and dollar-generating sectors -- initially estimated at 20 billion pesos -- will cause a further drop in the growth rate of the already sputtering economy.

All of it, however, could have been overcome by the positive qualities of the Filipino people, which came out as they coped with the terror of the quake. Their sense of national unity and purpose, their courage, tenacity and will to survive and their inexhaustible well of compassion and hope could well have been harnessed, not only to rebuild from the ruins, but also to reconstruct the economy and Philippine society on a firm foundation.

Once again, such opportunities have been lost on the Aquino regime. Its conduct in the wake of the disaster has once more demonstrated its complete inability to manage any kind of crisis, let alone turn the situation around for the better. Instead of rising from the rubble, it has buried itself ever deeper in crisis, unable to shake off the deadweight of its corruption and incompetence, subservience to imperialist dictates, destructive "total war" program and narrow factional interests.

Inept, elitist, opportunist

Aquino's immediate response to the national tragedy was a display of ineptness, elitist bias and opportunism. These exacerbated the suffering and trauma of thousands of earthquake victims and exposed the real character and thrust of the entire state apparatus.

Quick at mobilizing thousands of troops, vast amounts of war materiel and the most sophisticated equipment for counter-insurgency campaigns even in the remotest parts of the countryside, the state machinery moved at a snail's pace in responding to the needs for quick rescue and relief. Not only that -- government efforts, sorely inadequate to begin with, were concentrated only in the more affluent and accessible areas.

The very few, undermanned and underequipped rescue teams were fielded to such places as the Hyatt Terraces and Nevada Hotel in Baguio city, while hundreds lay trapped and dying in crumbled rural villages in La Union and Nueva Vizcaya, shattered urban poor communities in Baguio itself, and landslides along Kennon Road and Dalton Pass. Helicopters and planes were badly needed to bring help to places which had been isolated when roads cracked up and bridges collapsed. But the ones available were preoccupied with ferrying top government officials and their whole entourage.

Bringing relief goods and services swiftly to the distressed areas was not only hampered by the shortage in transport, ineffective communications system and lack of coordination in general. The endemic corruption in the bureaucracy, which has reached new heights under the Aquino administration, also reared its ugly head. Tens of thousands went hungry and languished in miserable conditions as food, equipment and medicine vital to their survival were stolen on the way to them or substituted with inferior goods. But this came as no surprise to people who see and read in the newspapers everyday how institutionalized and legitimized thievery has become a way of life under the regime, as exemplified by the Garchitorena land scam and the Petroskam.

Inept at rescue and relief, the Aquino regime was an expert at making political capital out of the disaster. In her State-of-the-Nation Address to Congress last July 23, Corazon Aquino harped on the need for "national unity" to meet the overwhelming demand for relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction in quake-devastated areas. She thought she had found the perfect line to silence the increasingly fractious members of Congress, throw the so-called "forces of destabilization" on the defensive and put down any criticism of her government.

On the other hand, her financial "experts" saw the whole thing as the perfect opportunity to cash in, literally speaking. As heart-wringing images of the disaster flashed on television screens throughout the world, they were getting ready to fly off and go begging for new loans abroad. For here was another chance for them to spark renewed interest in Philippine aid programs, which had so far failed to generate the financing needed to offset the tremendous outflow of resources from debt service payments.

At the same time, they could exploit the theme of "national reconstruction" to cover up their continuing failure to address the root causes of the economic crisis and their own responsibility in making it worse.

"National unity" -- mere rhetoric

But the Aquino regime's call for "national unity" did not go beyond mere rhetoric and failed to rouse any enthusiasm from any quarter outside its own apologists and hangers-on.

In the face of the terrible devastation of the July 16 earthquake, the regime has refused to rethink its "total war" program, even if only to conserve the huge government resources and energies being eaten up by the war and to divert these to national reconstruction. This is not to mention the fact that the war itself has been causing death, dislocation and destruction in the countryside on a scale far wider than the recent calamity, as well as creating deep national divisions.

Still hoping to crush the "insurgency" by 1992, Aquino and the AFP High command have repeatedly turned down any proposal for peace. They have been lukewarm if not downright indifferent to the temporary truce or ceasefire pro-posed by Sen. Wigberto Taada and other senators to give the nation a reprieve after the earthquake. The regime has also continued to reject more substantive peace proposals, such as the NDF offer of a unilateral ceasefire in exchange for an executive pronouncement to remove US military bases by 1991.

If the regime has shown that it cannot unite the whole people, neither is there any sign that it can hold together the ruling coalition and the entire ruling class. The erosion of ruling class consensus for the Aquino regime -- and the particular form of rule it represents -- has been swift and steady since the December 1989 failed coup. The Aquino faction, more and more perceived as incapable of governing, stands on an increasingly narrow political base. The regime's incompetence in dealing with the aftermath of the earthquake has further weakened its position substantially.

The cold reception by Congress of Aquino's State-of-the-Nation speech is indicative of the continuing and irreparable rift within the ruling coalition. The Kabisig movement which was launched last June 12 not only alienated the traditional politicians but also failed to draw in any new constituency outside government. It is widely perceived as a political vehicle to promote the interests of a small circle of Aquino advisers and bureaucrats. Aquino's Congress address merely offered more of the same, stirring up even more disaffection among the members of Congress.

The accumulation of wealth by Aquino relatives and cronies has also been causing more and more sections of the ruling elite to become disgruntled. What they find even more galling is that this is happening while the whole economy is on a downhill slide -- foreign investments dropping or being taken out of the country, business confidence at its lowest point and a severe financial crisis looming. Even the national reconstruction program is viewed with scepticism: the business community has expressed fears that funds and priorities may again end up being enjoyed by a favored few. It has reached a point where large sections of the ruling elite are actively seeking other political options.

Sabotage of "national reconstruction"

On the other hand, "national reconstruction" has been sabotaged by the regime's overriding desire to satisfy the demands of imperialist banks and governments, in total disregard of the people's welfare and well-being.

The only way to relieve the intense pressures on the economy and accumulate the needed resources for national reconstruction is to cut payments on the foreign debt, either through a debt moratorium, debt cap or debt repudiation (or a combination of all three). Without this, the country can only resort to heavy foreign and domestic borrowings, thereby further ballooning the public debt. This is the biggest cause of ever-widening deficits in the national budget -- a situation that gives rise to the scourge of runaway inflation.

In the light of this, there has arisen a broad national consensus for a debt moratorium, even in the halls of Congress. The strong popular clamor has made Aquino publicly back down from her initial rejection of a debt moratorium, but her financial "experts" swiftly laid to rest any doubt that there has been any change in the regime's debt repayment policy.

On the eve of his departure for talks with the country's creditors, finance czar Jesus Estanislao torpedoed any kind of debt moratorium and clarified that they were going to negotiate for a "refinancing facility"

(in other words, new loans and debt rescheduling). Talk of debt suspension will jeopardize new loans, he argued. But isn't the whole idea of a debt moratorium precisely meant to obviate the need for new loans that would only sink the country deeper into the debt quagmire?

At about the same time, Aquino herself announced the floating of reconstruction bonds to raise some P3 billion from domestic sources and overseas Filipino communities. Yet, the single act of stopping interest payments on the foreign debt for only one year would release nearly P40 billion for rehabilitation and reconstruction! (In 1989, interest payments reached \$1.9 billion.)

The height of puppetry to imperialist interests and of brazen disregard for the people's welfare can be further seen in the regime's determination to push through with a package of economic measures which Estanislao had promised the IMF and other foreign creditors.

These measures include: 1) raising taxes on soft drinks and selected non-alcoholic beverages (in addition to those already imposed on tobacco and alcoholic drinks); 2) increasing the fees and charges of government-owned and -controlled corporations by ten percent (including power charges by the NAPOCOR); 3) "deregulating" oil prices (which would give oil companies the freedom to raise oil prices whenever they wish); and 4) changing the ad valorem tax on oil to a specific tax **"indexed to the rate of inflation"**. The only objective of such measures is to raise more revenues in order to narrow down the huge government deficit. Yet, the deficit will inevitably widen as the regime seeks fresh loans from abroad.

The regime's insistence on continuing debt service payments, which already eat up 40 percent of the national budget, and on imposing "new" economic measures demanded by the IMF-WB will make the economic situation after the earthquake infinitely worse.

The aftershocks of the July 16 earthquake are coming with lesser and lesser intensity and in due time, the nation will recover from its trauma.

But the political and economic aftershocks generated by a regime unable to cope with crisis will gather in force in the days, weeks and months to come, bringing down times of extreme hardship, suffering and misery on the broad masses. Only by wielding their collective revolutionary strength can the Filipino people rise from the ruins and throw off the decaying reactionary system that is crushing them.

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THE LUMADS OF NORTHERN MINDANAO STRUGGLE FOR SURVIVAL AND DIGNITY

The past years have seen the methodical destruction of the lumads in many areas of the island. Massive militarization, landgrabbing, poverty and political incursions into their social life have caused a rapid decline in the number of compact indigenes

communities.

In northern Mindanao (Agusan and Surigao provinces, parts of Misamis, Davao and Bukidnon), for example, continued military strikes by the AFP on mountainous areas have put undue pressures on the lumad people. But, alongside the CPP and the NPA with which they have forged a strong bond for many years, the lumad masses defy constant danger in a terrain as fierce as their present-day struggle to regain their lost ethnic rights and to win genuine self-determination.

The article below is an abridged version of a preliminary study conducted by Party cadres who have lived with the lumads of Northern Mindanao. The paper presents the nature and history of these indigenous people in their continued struggle for survival and dignity. It also provides some insights into current Party efforts at developing the lumads' own revolutionary mass organizations and self-government in the region.

Ang Bayan hopes that similar investigative studies on the country's ethnic groups would stimulate more efforts at developing our revolutionary work among these people of our "roots."

I. The Lumads of Northern Mindanao

There are approximately 700,000 lumads in the provinces of Bukidnon, Agusan and Surigao. If we include the lumads of Misamis Oriental and some parts of Davao, whose numbers have yet to be verified, there may be about 800,000 or close to a million lumads in the entire region. Party cadres working in lumad areas have identified six main ethnic tribes: the Manobo, Talaandig, Higaonon, Banwaon, Matigsalug and Mamanwa.

The Manobos constitute the largest concentration of lumads widely dispersed in the interior mountain areas of Agusan, Surigao and Bukidnon. However, in an ongoing study which is about to be completed, initial findings show that the Higaonons, some of whom are confused with the Talaandigs and other tribes, may number more.

There is no common name to bind these indigenous people of the different Mindanao tribes -- unlike the tribal people in the Cordillera region of Northern Luzon such as the Kalingas, Ifugaos, Tinggians and Isnags who are commonly called Igorot, or the Moro people who encompass particular Muslim sub-groups of the Maguindanaos, Maranaos, Tausugs and others.

LUMAD in Mindanao means "native of the place." The lumads generally refer to the ethnic groups of indigenous people who belong neither to the Christian nor to the Moro communities. Because they are relatively few now, the lumads are often collectively known as "minority groups," compared with the predominantly Visayan-speaking populace who compose the "majority Filipinos."

Semi-primitive society

Up to this day, the lumads live in semi-primitive societies. They traditionally depend upon hunting, limited farming and gathering forest products. They sell or barter whatever they produce for salt, oil and

soap from the lowlands.

Majority of the lumads inhabit interior uplands in communities called *pondok*. They lead a semi-nomadic life, regularly building houses as they wander from place to place to open new agricultural plots. Their houses are made of wood from wild trees, like the barks and trunks of the sturdy *lawaan*, leaves of the *anahaw* and bamboo.

Natural and autonomous self-government

Long before the Spanish *conquistadores* came, the lumads had already developed their own form of social organization and had lived peacefully in their communities. An indigenous system of self-government administered to the basic social needs of the people. A group of *datus*, usually the most upright, senior and brave among them, served in the highest decision-making body or council headed by a "supremo" or "presidente."

There were armed defenders of the community, which today form the self-defense units of the lumads. Their own "soldiers" were called *alimaong* and the leader, *bagani*.

The lumads were organized according to their political as well as economic roles or functions in society, depending on their individual abilities. Their self-sufficient economy was run by the *babasol* (farmer), *tumanod* (hunter), *palayagon* (honey gatherer) and *mamumuhi* (livestock raiser), who contributed their labor to and derived their share from communal production. To this day, they still practice a primitive type of cooperative farming known as *hunglos*. The *pamalandi* centralized the produce and took care of its equitable distribution among the members of the community.

The lumads pay no taxes and even now retain some form of political autonomy in their own communities.

Classless society

Under semi-primitive conditions, there is a notable absence of social classes; thus, no class exploitation exists in lumad society.

Many existing lumad tribes, like the Higaonons, have no known internal antagonisms. The social organization is not controlled by any coercive power other than what is known as the *BUNGKATOL*. The Higaonons have their *Bungkatol na Bulawan Dau Nangkatasa nga Lana*, an unwritten code of wisdom and laws of nature extolling the basic lumad teachings of justice, equality and brotherhood.

Justice is dispensed, through the *Ininay* or the *Inimay* who are most knowledgeable of the *Bungkatol*. Disputes and quarrels among the natives are resolved through democratic consultation, negotiations and dialogue -- known by such various names as the *bagua*, *tampuda*, *sandugo* or *singampoo* -- which mete out retribution or exact payments in the form of animals or other materials.

No concept of private property

For the lumads, property has little significance. In fact, there is no concept of private ownership among them, if at all. However,

personal rights over weapons and instruments of production, like the *gona* and the *de-bomba* (airgun), and individual ownership of clothing, radio, petromax or similar objects are recognized. Hunting grounds, the land, food and animals are held and enjoyed in common. The lumads believe that land and nature's rich bounty were given by the *Magbabaya* for the benefit of the *pondok* and the whole human race. They consider everything that *Magbabaya* has provided them as sacred, such that they are ready to punish anyone who irreversibly destroys the environment.

Culture

The lumads do not have a written language but a spoken language. Through stories, they pass on to their children the wisdom and laws of nature, as well as the history and development of their lives. The *limbay* is the song, *dasang* is the narrative poem told in rhythmic fashion, while the *batbat* is the oral method by which lumad adults teach their children about good morals and respect for nature and the *Magbabaya*.

Festivities led by the *datus* are held on grounds held sacred by the lumads. A communal spirit prevails once the lumads gather together to observe these rites, among which are the *kaliga-on*, the collective prayer for good health and the *talabugta*, for good harvests.

A number of lumads who have abandoned their *pondok* to work in town and city centers have learned to assimilate bourgeois and feudal practices. They have been exposed to more advanced culture and technology but, at the same time, many of the inducements of a modern civilization extremely different from their own have grievously harmed their individuality and their nature as a people. Vices such as gambling, prostitution, excessive drinking and illicit relations -- all taboo in traditional lumad society -- have seeped in and contributed a great deal to the erosion of the people's moral values and culture.

A noteworthy bourgeois influence, however, is formal education but, because of dire poverty, only a handful of lumads have benefitted from it.

Notwithstanding these outside influences, the natural government and semi-primitive social system of the lumad in many areas remain to this day.

II. Brief History

The *panod* is the lumads' oral history which tells of their roots and development as a people. It traces the people's beginnings many centuries ago, during the Great Flood when the first human beings in the coastal areas of the island were washed out and only a few survived. The remaining natives led by an old woman named Entampel brought forth the new generation of lumads in the region.

Among these lumads were the Higaonon people whose *panod* greatly resembles that of the other ethnic tribes in the region.

According to these unwritten accounts, many Higaonons resettled along coastal areas beside rivers and streams like Tagoloan, Cagayan and Agusan. They engaged in fishing aside from farming and gathering foodcrops on mountain slopes nearby.

Historical accounts from the *dasang* and *limbay* tell of an advanced Higaonon community under Datu Pabuloson. It is said that in Pabuloson's community, there existed a self-sufficient economy and democratic form of government where justice and equality reigned. It was Pabuloson who convened the first conference of Higaonon datos, which discussed common problems and arrived at solutions regarding migration. This conference came to be known as *DUMALONGDONG*, now considered the most important gathering of datos among the lumads.

Landgrabbing

The first brutal attempts to drive the lumads away from their settlements were undertaken by the Spanish *conquistadores* who coveted the rich and fertile land inhabited by the people.

Despite the shimmer of the sword and the cross, the Spaniards never succeeded in subjugating the indigenous people. Rather than be conquered, the lumads resisted bitterly and decided to move deep into the mountains.

But the Spaniards were not content with confiscating lands in the plains. In conspiracy with the Dumagat merchants (Filipinos from Luzon and the Visayas), they opened up logging concessions, expanding their territory in the uplands. Under the devious cloak of the Regalian doctrine, they forced their way into lumad communities and began the merciless exploitation of the forests. The so-called Regalian doctrine decreed that all lands discovered and subsequently seized by the Spanish *conquistadores* belonged to the Spanish crown.

The entry of the occupation forces of US and Japanese imperialists gradually drove the lumads further up into dangerous mountain interiors. These invaders seized former Spanish concessions and turned the lands they occupied into mining and fruit plantations. On many sacred ancestral lands, foreign corporations dominated and set up pineapple and banana, rubber and palm oil plantations.

On the other hand, big landlords and bourgeois compradors established the NALCO, NDC, KALILID, PTFI, LBLC, PICOP and the Puyat, Valderrama and Roa logging concessions. Since then, logging has become a major industry and source of revenue both for the greedy capitalists and corrupt government officials.

As further encroachments on ancestral lands were made by big business, the lumads' natural habitat deteriorated. Hunger and disease began to stalk the populace. Rivers began to dry up and the fish that abounded in them began to disappear. Wild animals ran away deep into the wilderness. Many of the lumads' self-sufficient economies were soon dislocated.

Chauvinism

Like other minority groups in the country, the lumads suffer from extreme government neglect, wanton disregard of their rights as a people and discrimination.

Many Filipinos look down on the *natibo* as second-class citizens. This condescending attitude -- that began during the Spanish period and

became widespread in the era of the Americans -- stemmed from grave historical distortions about the lumad people. For the colonizers, the diminutive ash-colored aborigines were "beasts of the jungle" who were good only as slaves and wards of the whites. They were called *Nokoy*, *Gali*, *Usi*, *Kongking* and *Manggahat*, terms which more aptly describe animals than human beings.

This and the lumads' low economic stature and lack of education have left them more marginalized and exploited than before.

Exploitation

In many mountain- and forest-based firms, the lumads are the cheapest source of labor. They are hired to do the dirtiest and the heaviest kind of manual work. Yet, they receive the lowest wages and live under miserable conditions inside enclosed bunks.

Aside from economic exploitation, the lumads also suffer from cultural exploitation. The ruling class has degraded the native culture and traditions, turning them into entertainment, a lucrative business or a tool for deception. For example, the natives' dances, songs and solemn rituals have been transformed into major tourist attractions and money-earners, especially during yearly government-sponsored festivals like the *Kaamulan*, *Kaliga* and the *Ati-atihan*.

Fake lumad organizations like the MINDAHILA, BAKUDA, Royal Council of Datus, PANAMIN, and TRICAP have also been formed by the government and the fascist AFP without due consultation with genuine lumad councils. As a result, a number of reactionary and fascist individuals of ill repute have been "baptized" as datos without undergoing appropriate traditional processes.

Among the more notorious of those who sport their own lumad titles are Manuel Elizalde, former PANAMIN chief and Marcos crony, and Col. Alexander Noble, renegade AFP officer. The latter was the architect of a region-wide counter-insurgency campaign codenamed "Task Force *Naybusayan*," which employed lumads as human shields in the AFP's war effort against the revolutionary movement beginning in the early 1980s.

Struggles of the lumads

Lumad history is replete with the struggles of the people against foreign and local invaders. Datu Lagawlaw, the legendary *bagani* warrior, gained fame for having fought the Spanish conquerors in Gingoog with an exploding device at a time when such devices were not yet in vogue. In World War II, many lumads also became part of the guerilla forces who went to war against the Japanese with vintage rifles confiscated from their enemies.

From early 1960, logging by foreign and local capitalist concessionaires became rampant, and abuses by armed security and forest guards, especially on women, became widespread. To defend themselves and preserve their communities, the lumad people rose up in arms. Armed uprisings erupted in Agusan, Bukidnon, Surigao and other Mindanao provinces.

In 1971, the Higaonon tribes in Agusan Norte fought heroic battles against big capitalists of NALCO (Nasipit Lumber Corporation) and their

hired armed goons and soldiers. NALCO, one of the biggest logging companies in Mindanao, was greatly responsible for the denudation of forests and massive dislocation of Higaonon and Manobo settlers in the region. One of the brave Higaonon datu who led the struggle was Datu Bangkalasi. Despite the awesome show of armed might by their enemies, the lumads through sheer determination succeeded in temporarily stopping logging operations in expanded zones.

In their armed confrontations with the loggers and their armed force, the lumad warriors employed guerilla tactics such as sniping and ambush to advantage. They also proved adept at another war tactic now being used by latter-day guerillas -- combining concentration and dispersal of their forces in defensive and offensive actions against the aggressors.

On the other hand, their enemies used divide-and-rule tactics, force and deceit to subjugate them as a people. For example, the fascist AFP uses the traditional forms of tribal revenge like the *pagpangayao* or the *manggahat* to pit lumads against brother lumads of another tribe. They do this by fueling armed conflicts between tribes through bribery, sabotage and warmongering.

Under the "total war" of the Aquino regime, the lumad areas have become militarized zones, always the constant target of aerial bombings by the military.

Betrayals

In recent times, the lumads have been witness to betrayals by a few of their acknowledged leaders who were lured by false promises and hopes of the ruling class. Among them: Datu Levi Manpatilan and his children in Esperanza, Agusan Sur; Datu Gawilan in Quezon, Bukidnon; and Datu Mabalaw, a.k.a. Dick dela Camara, in Misamis Oriental and part of Agusan Norte.

At first, these leaders fought hard against big capitalists and bravely defended their communities from encroachments of capitalist firms. But in the end, they surrendered, collaborated with criminal elements and loggers and became part of the fascist apparatus which has ravaged their lives and culture.

Through these few paid traitors, the reactionary government and the fascist AFP maneuvered the formation of a 1,000-strong CAFGU-lumad in the region. They initiated the corruption of the simple-living lumad warriors and youth by offering financial rewards in exchange for their services in counter-insurgency operations which are often launched in the lumads' own areas. Lumad recruits are reportedly paid 500 to 1,000 pesos a month and provided with combat uniforms and a garand or armalite rifle.

III. The Revolutionary Movement among the Lumads

In 1971 before martial law was declared, Party cadre Ka Ben Esparagoza and his comrades began organizing among the Higaonons in the mountains of Northern Mindanao.

In 1972, a preliminary social investigation on the lumads was carried out by the Party in Mindanao. Initial contacts were made. A group of activists from the Kabataang Makabayan (KM) and the Khi Rho went to the mountain interiors and integrated with the B'laans of Davao Sur.

The first teams of the NPA lived among the Atas in the mountains of Bukidnon and the Subanons of Zamboanga Norte.

By integrating with the people, the revolutionary forces learned about their lives, their culture and their history. They also initiated mass campaigns in literacy, health and sanitation and farming technology until these developed into revolutionary schools run by the lumad masses themselves.

The communist spirit of selflessness, collectivism, simple living and hard struggle of the Party forces won them the highest respect of the lumads, whose own way of life bears the same qualities.

Revolutionary mass organization

In due time, the Party grew with the people. The natural affinity that existed between the Party's principles and the lumads' own culture and social system soon crystallized into higher revolutionary unity. The *Rebolusyonyong Kalihokan sa Lumad* (Revolutionary Movement of the Lumads) or RKL was formed from the most advanced lumads in the area who came to grasp the interrelationship between their own struggle and the struggle of other revolutionary forces fighting for national and social liberation.

The RKL coordinates and supports revolutionary efforts of other revolutionary mass organizations. It believes that armed struggle is a just and correct path to achieve genuine social change in their lives and in the whole of Philippine society.

The RKL is organized at all levels -- sitio, barrio, town, province and region -- in all areas where there are lumads. It is basically structured according to the lumads' own natural social organization.

In a *pondok*, sitio or barrio, a revolutionary committee is composed of the enlightened datos and active, loyal and upright individuals. The most advanced among them form an administrative type of committee which coordinates the various groups under it. This committee is headed by the most respected datu or traditional leader of the area.

Sectoral groups -- men, women and youth -- are organized under the area's revolutionary committee. Auxilliary groups are set up to take charge of various community functions such as defense, production, literacy, health and medical work, cultural and political education. In the Higaonon areas, the self-defense forces are collectively called the *Pulang Bagani Yunit* (PBY), which coordinates with local NPA units.

Revolutionary organizing among the lumads is always done in consultation with the datos and the traditional leaders, without whose help and support a large majority of the lumad populace cannot be effectively mobilized.

The tasks of the lumads' revolutionary mass movement at the present stage of the national democratic revolution are inseparably linked with the tasks of advancing the armed struggle in the region, developing guerilla bases and establishing revolutionary governments in the countryside (see box).

The revolutionary government

The lumads' own revolutionary government is set up once a district-wide RKL (of approximately 20 lumad communities) has been organized. The coverage of the revolutionary government is often the entire area in the domain of the "supremo" or the "presidente." It is not initiated on the sitio or barrio level.

Based on the Program of the NDF, the general program of the Revolutionary Movement of Lumads (RKL) is as follows:

1. *Unite all lumad people in the revolutionary struggle against imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism, which are the three basic problems of Philippine society;*
2. *Wage armed struggle to defend the lumad people against the armed incursions of the reactionary ruling class;*
3. *Build and develop the revolutionary government according to the existing traditional social system of the lumads;*
4. *Unite with the struggles being waged by all peoples and tribes for national liberation and democracy;*
5. *Study, document and disseminate the history and the culture of the lumad people;*
6. *Expand and consolidate the RKL;*
7. *Preserve and develop the traditional lumad social system.*

The RKL's urgent tasks in the present tactical period are:

1. *Arouse, organize and mobilize all lumads in all forms of struggle against armed incursions of the US-Aquino regime in the countryside;*
 2. *Build appropriate formations of NPA units among the lumads and develop modern guerilla and regular tactics and techniques of fighting;*
 3. *Expand and consolidate Party units among the lumads;*
 4. *Launch regular political and ideological education to raise the level of consciousness of Party elements;*
 5. *Expand and consolidate guerilla zones and bases by expanding and consolidating the RKL and establishing the revolutionary government in the areas;*
 6. *Train lumad revolutionary forces and develop revolutionary work in all lines;*
 7. *Deepen the social investigation on the lumads and draw lessons from their history and experiences;*
 8. *Dismantle fascist and reactionary groups and organizations that are being utilized in counter-revolutionary activities, like the PANAMIN, CHDF, CAFGU, ALSA MASA and others. Isolate the diehards, neutralize and win over the majority through the traditional methods and revolutionary principles and policies;*
 9. *Frustrate all enemy attempts to divide the lumads and all military campaigns and operations in the countryside;*
 10. *Support the agrarian revolution being waged by the peasant masses and all anti-imperialist and anti-reactionary struggles within and outside the country.*
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The revolutionary government is established through a conference

or congress participated in by all lumads of voting age (i.e., at least 18 years old) who elect their officials and representatives. In the Party's own revolutionary practice in the region, the *dumalongdong* is the closest equivalent to the highest governing body among the lumads.

At the level of the *dumalongdong* or the conference, a higher form of organization is set up: revolutionary committees serving as the basic units in the community or barrio level; an executive branch implementing the laws and policies approved by the conference; a judiciary or a People's Court with the *Inimay* or the *Ininay* or other appointed datus of reputable stature; and committees or ministries on defense, education, economy and health.

Other requisites before the lumads' revolutionary government is set up are:

> a full-pledged defense unit composed of the armed masses and militia with sufficient combat experience;

> a group of tested officials and leaders who are capable of leading the lumads not only in times of peace but also in times of enemy attacks;

> relatively high level of political consciousness among the lumads and a relatively developed war economy, particularly in the production of basic foodcrops.

The essential characteristics of a lumad revolutionary government are: 1) it is an autonomous unit within a national revolutionary government which recognizes the lumads' right to determine the laws, policies and systems that shall govern their daily existence; and 2) it respects and gives due recognition to the right of non-lumads to join organizations of their own choice.

The vanguard role of the party

Through the implementation of the multifold tasks of the RKL, the Party provides leadership for the advance of the revolutionary struggle of the lumads.

It helps preserve and develop the fine features of the traditional lumad society, especially those that better serve the revolutionary aspirations of the people. In so doing, the Party gives full play to the richness of our people's historical roots and the wide range of possibilities for self-reliant and self-sustained development in the country.

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AFP: A BIG-TIME CRIMINAL SYNDICATE

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) is no longer just a fascist, puppet army. It has been transformed into a big-time criminal syndicate. There is hardly any crime listed in the Penal Code of the reactionary government that hasn't been violated by members of the AFP.

In fact, soldiers are the ones who lead in the commission of such crimes. Who are the brains behind the rampant carnapping in the metropolis and other parts of the country? Military men in the Anti-Carnapping Task force. They have even set up a national network for transporting and selling stolen vehicles from Luzon to the Visayas and Mindanao.

If you are looking for hired killers, contact the Quezon City police force. They carried out the heinous kidnapping and murder of Ernesto "Cochise" Bernabe and Anna Lourdes "Beebom" Castano -- on contract by a big businessman.

AFP men are also the prime suspects in the series of ambushes and hold-ups of armored cars used by banks. These hold-uppers, usually dressed in fatigue uniforms and carrying such high-powered weapons as M203s and M16s, have seized millions of pesos, and killed or seriously wounded many security guards and bystanders. In cases where perpetrators are caught, they invariably turn out to be constables, Scout Rangers or army troopers.

The police and military are likewise neck-deep in protection rackets. They ensure "protection" for illegal drug dealers or engage in this themselves. One of those caught red-handed recently was Col. Rolando de Guzman, a counter-insurgency "expert" in Mindanao and northern Luzon, who was killed while attempting to pass \$10 million worth of heroine to a group of NBI men posing as buyers. When he was in Zamboanga, De Guzman was heavily involved in protection rackets and prostitution.

Members of the PC-INP and AFP also offer "protection" services to syndicates engaged in prostitution, gambling and other social vices.

AFP criminals grew under Marcos dictatorship

This kind of criminality within the AFP became widespread under the Marcos dictatorship. When Aquino came to power, the problem did not abate but instead worsened, until the reactionary army turned into a huge criminal syndicate.

All this can be rooted in the beginnings of the AFP in 1946 under the puppet republic. In spite of the AFP's much-vaunted "professionalism" -- the supposed loyalty to duty and clean service record of its members -- quite a number of military officials and enlisted men were in the payroll of politicians and warlords. In exchange for money and other favors, they were ready to commit abuses and to kill to promote the political ambitions and selfish interests of politicians.

Even then, it was common practice among Philippine Constabulary (PC) commanders to provide "protection" for gambling, prostitution and other vices which generated big profits. These examples vividly show how semifeudal influences penetrate the leadership of a modern national army.

Furthermore, this so-called "professionalism" covered up a long list of crimes such as mass murder, arson, robbery, rape, terrorism, extortion, forced evacuation and the like, all done by the AFP to suppress the people's struggles for national independence and democracy. This type of criminality was inherited by the present AFP from its

forebears -- the puppet Philippine Scouts which became the Philippine Constabulary set up by US imperialism in 1901 to defend imperialist rule in the country.

It is true that such political crimes are different in character from crimes in the Penal Code. But they clearly show the anti-people and mercenary orientation of the AFP and the process of brutalization it went through. This is the basic reason why it is so easy for the officers and men of the AFP to kill, to commit abuses and to become brutal. At the beginning, they did it for the sake of the system. Later on, they did it to advance their own factions and interests.

When Marcos declared martial law in 1972, he gave the fascist military wide powers it had never before enjoyed. Moreover, he made them partners in plundering the economy and seizing the properties of his political rivals. Military abuses against the people intensified.

The fascist dictator greatly enlarged the reactionary army in order to suppress the Moro rebellion and the growing armed struggle led by the revolutionary forces. To beef up the AFP as quickly as possible, the Marcos regime relaxed recruitment standards and lowered the quality of training, such that the AFP was flooded with new recruits who easily became drunk with the power symbolized by the gun.

In addition, the regime deliberately recruited those with criminal records or conscienceless goons merely interested in getting into a job which would quickly yield profits, no matter that it involved killing or hurting people. Such types were brought into the reactionary armed forces and especially the paramilitary forces. It is therefore not surprising that the cases of military men involved in social crimes shot up in number.

Take, for instance, what has happened in Negros Occidental. Those who volunteer for the CAFGU usually come from the ranks of security guards, most of whom are goons and killers. The landlords foot the bill for their uniforms, arms and wages. Their command and training are supplied by the Philippine Army.

Under the fascist dictatorship, the factors that led to the AFP's transformation into a criminal syndicate simultaneously developed and intensified -- the arrogance of absolute power, the brutalization spawned by widespread killings, abuses and torture committed against the people, the partnership in the spoils of corruption and economic plunder, the massive entry of criminal elements, and the collaboration with criminal syndicates for sheer profit.

AFP's rapid weakening and isolation

After the EDSA uprising in February 1986, factionalism grew within the AFP even as civilian control over it weakened. This paved the way for the rapid erosion of discipline and morale among the officers and rank-and-file. Ethics became an obsolete word. The rule of law no longer had any force. All this provided fertile soil for the proliferation of criminal activities within the AFP.

The multiplicity of political and social crimes being committed by the AFP attests to its rapid weakening, internal divisions and isolation from the masses. The whole armed forces are split into various factions, from top to bottom, and each one has the guns, including heavy weapons, to pursue its own objectives. They are ready to kill, to wipe out, even

their fellow soldiers. This is vividly exemplified by the Magallanes incident, where Col. de Guzman, Maj. Calanog and some PC Criminal Investigation Service agents were slain by combined forces of the Western Police District and National Bureau of Investigation. And it is even more amply proved by the failed coup d'etat of December 1989.

Increasingly, the AFP is isolated from the people instead of winning their support, which is the aim of the counter-insurgency campaign or total war launched by the Aquino regime against the revolutionary forces. The masses see that those who are supposed to protect them are the very ones attacking them. Those who are duty-bound to uphold the law are the very ones trampling on it. And when those who are in power and in uniform turn into criminals, they can undoubtedly be more dangerous and wreak more havoc than just plain criminals.

More and more sections of the people are fast learning that without arms, without a people's army to defend them against the army of hired criminals, they have nothing -- utterly defenseless and the easy prey of exploiters and oppressors among the powerful elite who wield the guns.

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NPA LAUNCHES DARING OFFENSIVES IN CENTRAL LUZON

The broad, flat plains of Central Luzon -- a most difficult terrain for guerilla fighters -- recently reverberated with daring offensives by the New People's Army. According to *Himagsik*, revolutionary mass newspaper in the **13** region, these military actions of the NPA were launched in the face of fierce counter-insurgency campaigns of the AFP.

Last April 17 in Dipaculao, Aurora, an NPA platoon simultaneously raided two enemy detachments -- one, of the 70th IB of the Philippine Army at Bgy. Dimabuno and the other, of the CAFGU at Sapang Kawayan.

At eight in the evening, the Red fighters assaulted the detachments where more than 20 enemy troops were quartered. The fascist troops were able to fire back but, in the end, were defeated by the guerillas.

The NPA offensive resulted in the seizure of one M203, two M14s, two M16s, three Garands and a lot of ammunition. Two army soldiers and three CAFGU members were slain and six wounded. Two guerillas also fell in the fighting.

In Bataan, which has been battered by intense AFP operations, the NPA launched six military actions in April. Among these were partisan operations in the towns of Balanga and Pilar, and harassment of detachments of the 24th IB-PA in Limay and Orion. An army sergeant, two CAFGU members and an agent of the Military Intelligence Group (MIG)-PA were killed.

In Nueva Ecija, the NPA raided the house of businessman Eugenio Senaguinan in Bgy. Magtanggol, Bongabon, last May 5. They confiscated his cache of arms, which included two M16s, one shotgun, one .45-caliber pistol and one .38.

Also in Nueva Ecija, two mass activists grabbed an M-16 from a

soldier of the 71st IB-PA on April 12. They turned over the rifle to the NPA.

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OPPOSITION TO ROH TAE WOO REGIME IN SOUTH KOREA ESCALATES

The democratic movement against the regime of President Roh Tae Woo is intensifying in South Korea. More and more South Koreans are calling for an end to the Roh regime and for the holding of new general elections. The growing opposition inside South Korea comes in the wake of mounting problems in the economy and the recent unpopular political moves of the Roh government.

South Korea's much-publicized "economic miracle" -- achieved at the expense of the workers' rights and well-being in terms of low wages, long working hours and harsh repression -- is beginning to lose its luster. Growth rate in 1989 declined to 6.7 percent, nearly half the annual average of 12 percent registered from 1986 to 1988.

South Korea's export-oriented economy has been experiencing a slowdown in exports. After trade surpluses in the past years, a trade deficit is expected by the end of 1990. Average share prices in the stock exchange have declined by more than 30 percent since April last year, resulting in losses to many angry private investors.

For ordinary South Koreans, daily living is getting harder. The inflation rate has now reached double digits. Real-estate prices have greatly increased due to speculation by big business, driving up rental costs in Seoul (South Korea's capital) by an average of 30 percent as of the first quarter of this year.

On the political front, the merging of Roh Tae Woo's ruling Liberal Democratic Party with two opposition parties to form the new Democratic Liberal Party (DLP) early this year drew widespread criticism. The opposition forces charged that the creation of the DLP is part of a plot to keep the oligarchy in power forever by building a permanent parliamentary majority. The political opposition's fear was confirmed recently when the Roh government railroaded 26 controversial bills in the National Assembly through their hold on more than two thirds of the seats in the 299-member parliament.

Many South Koreans also decry the government's use of its police power to break up labor strikes as well as the continued existence of the repressive National Security Law and anti-democratic labor laws.

"Down with Roh Tae Woo!"

A recent opinion survey revealed that the approval rating for ex-general Roh Tae Woo, who received only 37 percent of the vote when elected president in 1987, has plummeted from more than 60 percent to less than 14 percent. The people's widespread dissatisfaction was clearly shown when workers, students, opposition politicians and other popular sectors of South Korean society held a massive protest rally in

Seoul last July 21.

News reports said that it was by far the largest protest action in South Korea since 1987, when a series of protest actions forced the military dictator Chun Doo Hwan to step down and to call for direct presidential elections.

Some 200,000 people joined the mammoth rally, calling for unity within the ranks of the opposition forces and the holding of snap general elections. Later some 15,000 protesters marched towards the central business and shopping district of Seoul. Shouting "Down with Roh Tae-woo" and "Dissolve the National Assembly," protesters clashed with riot police who used tear gas to disperse the marchers.

In a move that is expected to plunge the country into serious political crisis, the 78 opposition members of the National Assembly tendered their resignation en masse last July 23 to protest the railroading of 26 bills in parliament. The passage of the controversial bills, which included the bill designed to reshape the country's broadcast industry, was earlier criticized by 6,500 broadcast workers who conducted a three-day strike to express their indignation over the government's move to tighten its hold on the mass media in preparation for the 1992 general elections.

April-May upsurge

The mounting opposition to the Roh regime came in the wake of the courageous mass struggles spearheaded by workers and students in April and May this year. Some 5,000 employees of the state-owned Korean Broadcasting System staged last April a protest strike, denouncing its new president's links to the past dictatorial regimes.

Towards the end of April, about 24,000 workers of the giant Hyundai shipyard, the world's largest shipyard and a subsidiary of the Hyundai conglomerate (one of the state-sponsored giant monopolies called chaebols), staged a strike to demand the release from jail of four union leaders.

Both strikes were suppressed by the government's police forces. Arrest warrants were issued on the leaders of the broadcast strike, while thousands of riot police, firing tear gas from rifles and armored vans, ripped down steel barriers and stormed the shipyard by land, sea and air in a bid to end the workers' strike.

Hundreds of militant Hyundai shipyard workers, who have been in the forefront of the South Korean workers' struggle to create independent and militant labor unions, valiantly fought back, hurling firebombs, steel bars, rocks and pieces of metals at advancing police from behind barricades and buildings. The striking workers also used homemade cannons to resist the attacks of the police; they destroyed several police vehicles, buses and fire trucks in streetfighting.

The workers' steadfast struggle in the Hyundai shipyard drew popular support from other workers as well as students and other sectors of the population. On May 1, Labor Day, thousands of South Korea's workers in auto plants, subways, shipyards and broadcast stations staged protest rallies to denounce government suppression of workers' rights. They demanded more freedom to organize labor unions without government

interference. Militant students joined the workers' protest actions.

The May Day protest rallies were followed by protest actions in 17 cities nationwide last May 9, participated in by an estimated 100,000 people. The mass rallies and demonstrations throughout the country were directed against the South Korean president and his newly-formed Democratic Liberal Party, which was holding its first convention that day.

Thousands of workers, students and other protesters marched in the center of Seoul and clashed with riot police who attempted to stop them with the use of tear gas and truncheons. Students, chanting "Yankee Go Home," attacked the building housing the United States Information Service office. Militant students charged the US government of perpetuating the division of their country and of masterminding the DLP merger in order to prolong authoritarian rule.

Following the end of the 19-day strike at the Hyundai shipyard last May 14, it was the turn of the 27,000 workers at the Hyundai Motor Co., another subsidiary of the Hyundai conglomerate, to walk out of their plants to demand more pay and a shorter work week. They also asked for greater voice in the company's management, including discipline and personnel affairs directly affecting workers.

Remembering 1980 Kwangju people's uprising

There was no let up in the protest actions. Workers, students and other opposition forces staged a series of mass actions to commemorate the May 18, 1980 Kwangju people's uprising, where hundreds were arrested, injured and killed by the martial law troops of dictator Chun Doo Hwan.

Shouts of "Crush Roh Tae Woo" and "Drive out Yankees" reverberated during the rallies and marches. The militant protesters accused ex-general Roh Tae Woo and the US government of responsibility in the bloody suppression of the Kwangju people's uprising against the martial law government in 1980.

Protesters demanded the resignation of Roh Tae Woo and the dissolution of his new ruling party. Militant students marched to the US Embassy to demand an apology from the US government for condoning the Kwangju massacre and called for the withdrawal of the US bases and 43,000 US soldiers in South Korea. South Korean farmers also criticized the US government for pressuring the South Korean government to open the country's market to cheap US agricultural products.

The valiant mass struggles led by militant workers and students have contributed greatly to the growth and intensification of the anti-imperialist and democratic movement inside South Korea. The Roh regime is facing economic difficulties and a worsening political crisis. What is needed now is the forging of a broad unity of all patriotic and democratic forces in order to hasten the final downfall of the Roh regime, the establishment of a genuine democratic government, the complete withdrawal of all US military troops and bases as well as the end of US interference in South Korean affairs, and the peaceful reunification of the two Koreas.

CPSU HOLDS 28TH PARTY CONGRESS

The Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) held its 28th Congress in Moscow from July 2 to 11, 1990. Some 4,650 delegates attended the Congress held four years after the 27th Party Congress affirmed its support for the reform program (*perestroika*, *glasnost* and democratization) initiated by Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev in 1985.

The Congress met at a time when intense debates are taking place in the Soviet Union over the correctness of the reform drive; the Soviet government is faced with serious economic difficulties as well as unrest among the nationalities and secessionist moves in some of its republics; and radical changes are taking place in Eastern European countries, highlighted by the downfall of the communist-led governments in many of these countries.

The "Political Report of the CPSU Central Committee" to the 28th Party Congress, delivered by Gorbachev as General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, raised the slogan: "Advance Further Along the Road of *Perestroika*."

"Comrades, the major distinguishing feature of the 28th Congress is that we are meeting at a turning point in the process of reform and radical change of our society within the bounds of the socialist option," Gorbachev told the delegates.

He declared: "In five years we have made a revolutionary stride in all spheres of life, and this has enabled us to reach the main watershed. The issue today is this: either Soviet society will go forward along the path of the profound changes begun -- and then, I am convinced, a worthy future is in store for our great multinational state, or else forces opposed to *perestroika* will gain the upper hand -- and then, let us face the facts squarely, dismal times are in store for the country and the people."

He posed the following questions facing the Congress:

"Was the turn begun in April 1985 warranted?"

"What do we today imply by the term 'socialism,' and what are the principles we intend to be guided by in domestic and foreign policy?"

"How are the crisis phenomena, which are affecting the people's life and causing justified dissatisfaction, to be overcome?"

"What is the destiny of our homeland, and how are we going to build up a union of sovereign states?"

"What is the role of the Party in the new conditions? What is it to be like politically, ideologically, and organizationally?"

"What do we have to do to revive the CPSU as a revolutionary organization of the working people, enjoying the nation's trust?"

Sharp criticisms and intense debates characterized the plenary meetings of the Congress and sessions of the working groups (a new feature of the Party Congress) on the Party's Revitalization; Agrarian Policy; Party, Soviets and Public Organizations; Ethnic Issues; Ideological Work; Social and Economic Policy; and International Policy.

Gorbachev was a target of biting criticism, denounced by "leftists" for not being radical enough and by "conservatives" for attempting to reform too far and too fast. In response, he called for the "unification of society's sound forces, both left-wingers intent on achieving changes for the better and sensible conservatives preventing us from embarking on the road of adventurism, in the main area of *perestroika*."

He asserted that "the concept of reform is in a state of flux or self-development, and it must be enriched with new ideas and conclusions as we move onward."

After being subjected to a thorough and critical assessment, Gorbachev and his reform program received the vote of confidence of the majority of the delegates. Gorbachev was re-elected General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, the first time a General Secretary was elected by the Party Congress and not by the Central Committee. In thanking the delegates, he said: "You elected me after hearing my positions, I take my election as support for my positions."

The Congress also elected Vladimir Ivashko, Gorbachev's nominee, as Deputy General Secretary and approved Gorbachev's proposal to revamp and decentralize the 12-member Politburo to include the Party Secretaries of the 15 republics.

In closing remarks summing up the political debate at the 28th Party Congress, Gorbachev said that "the discussion is only getting under way, and much is still ahead" and that "the discussion as a whole reflected the state of minds, the situation in the economy, the social sphere and political life, and the strains of *perestroika*."

He added: "The first thing that should be stressed is that with a few exceptions, the political course of *perestroika*, the course of updating our entire society in the context of socialist choice, is not doubted and is supported by the Congress."

"Despite the mistakes, miscalculations and foot-dragging, which delegates here were right to point out and sharply criticize because this cost a great deal to society and the Party, and despite the dramatic situation in the country, I consider the overall results of the changes to be substantial and positive," he asserted.

Gorbachev concluded his speech with a call to further move *perestroika* ahead. "We have entered the most crucial responsible phase of *perestroika*. The time has come for the most crucial reforms."

(Ang Bayan is preparing a follow-up article on the agreements reached during the 28th Party Congress on the major questions posed by Gorbachev. -- Editor)

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