



Cover Story: *As martial law enters its 11th year, so does the resistance movement against the US-Marcos dictatorship. After the assassination of Aquino, the movement has broadened and intensified with the participation of more sectors and the complete polarization of the political spectrum.*

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EDITORIAL

Present prospects

The people have risen. Over a decade-long experience of gripping poverty, brutal repression, and bloody terrorism has burned up their hatred for the regime. Hatred turned into revulsion. Revulsion turned into upsurge of anti-fascist demonstrations unprecedented in scope and frequency. And the upsurge now rocks the dictatorship.

A storm in the national capital region has indeed begun. And in the midst of the current upheaval, a central question emerges to the fore: Can the urban-centered protest movement bring about a decisive victory for the people?

It must be clarified at the onset that the Marcos regime is neither a neophyte nor a pushover in the political arena. It is backed up by a 250,000-strong military force. It institutionalizes its coercive rule through the power of decrees, laws, and judicial fiat. It is propped up by the strongest imperialist world power which is also its main beneficiary -- the US.

The dictatorial apparatus of the US-Marcos regime dominates the entire nation. In the national capital region, the seat of the reactionary state is also found the strongest concentration of the regime's military forces. This feature defines the limits of protest struggle in this part of the country.

While there is a need for anti-dictatorship forces to persevere in militant struggle in Metro-Manila, it would be foolhardy at this point to encourage widespread armed confrontation. To do so is to invite disaster. Not until the people's armed forces in the countryside have gained enough strength to lay a siege around the capital and the city's population sufficiently prepared, will the outbreak of armed uprising lead to a decisive victory for the people.

Notwithstanding its defensive character, the urban struggle has to be fully developed to wring crucial democratic concessions, heat up the fighting mood of the people, and hasten the regime's political isolation.

Along this line, the current upsurge of urban protest struggles constitutes a great leap forward. National democratic forces must therefore seize this excellent opportunity to advance the Philippine revolutionary struggle.

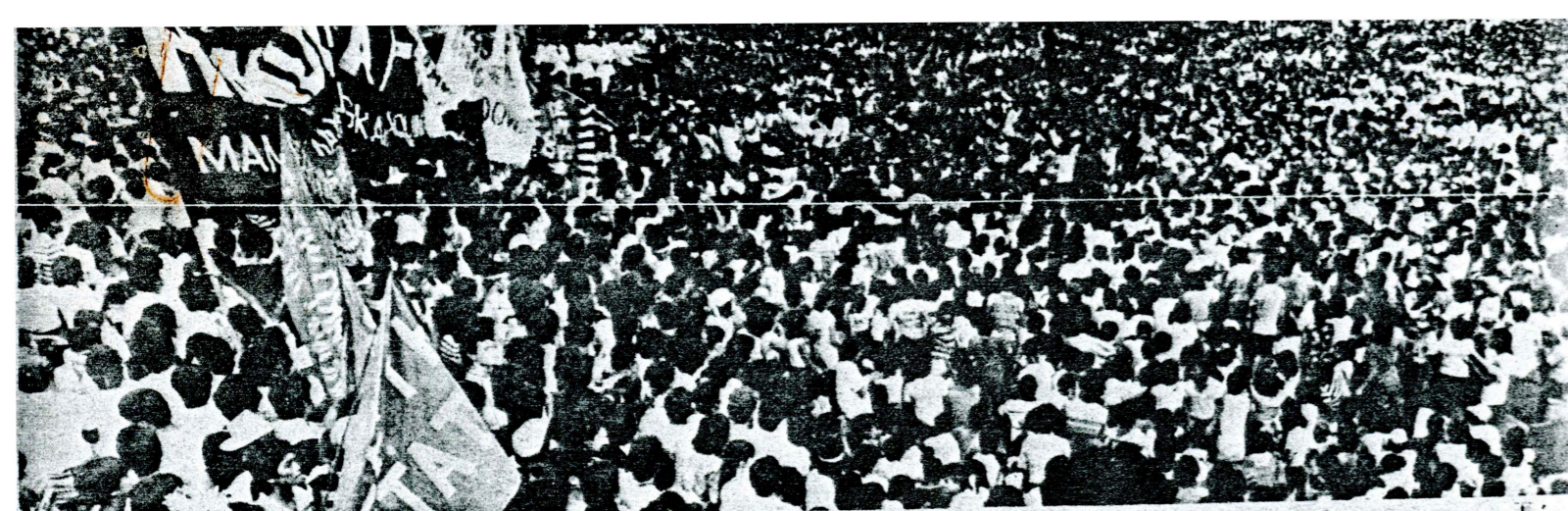
To sustain and heighten the open protest movement, the mental prowess of the people must be channelled towards vigorous organizing activity. Legal associations, clubs, societies, unions must mushroom in work places, offices and residential areas. Existing ones must be strengthened and imbued with a democratic political orientation. This must be accompanied with thoroughgoing studies of the basic problems of the Philippine society and the correct strategy in the struggle against the dictatorship. Broad legal organizations provide the channels for drawing the committed and disciplined participation of multitudes in democratic political activities.

Building the revolutionary underground is equally important. Secret cells, groups, committees are indispensable schools for training people in revolutionary work. They provide the medium too for organized support for the advancing guerilla war in the countryside and the fallback in case of a full-blown fascist terror in the city.

The need to forge closer unity of all forces fighting against the dictatorship must be emphasized. In the legal sphere, unity and cooperation can range from a common stand on a specific demand to a comprehensive program for the promotion of national freedom and democracy. In the underground sphere, the NDF program -- with its clear-cut anti-fascist, anti-imperialist and anti-feudal objectives -- can serve as the basis of unity. The door remains open, however, for cooperation among the various progressive forces on specific operations that could hasten the regime's overthrow. While differences in specific and long-range political viewpoints are bound to occur, actual performance in the struggle against the dictatorship and in advancing the people's interests should be the main gauge in distinguishing the pseudo anti-fascist forces.

How long will the struggle last? How soon will the US-Marcos regime fall? How soon will the people's democratic coalition government rise to replace the moribund dictatorship?

Nobody can exactly tell. But to be sure, in the city and in the countryside, in armed and non-armed struggles, in the homefront and abroad, so many gains -- and promises -- have unfolded lately in so short a time. People's victory is drawing closer, indeed much closer now than in any time past.



Sept. 21, Liwasang Bonifacio: A mammoth crowd of 300,000 whipping up a storm of struggle

COVER STORY

A fresh wind blows

Anti-dictatorship movement takes a dramatic turn following Aquino's murder

*Upang lalong marinig ang tinig ng sambayanan
Hindi ako magsasawalang-kibo
Makikimi o magtitimpi
Hindi ako papipigil sa takot.*

On September 21, the 11th anniversary of the declaration of martial law, under a heavy sky that threatened to break out in heavy rain, 300,000 Filipinos gathered at Liwasang Bonifacio and, with clenched fists and in one voice, recited the above pledge.

On that occasion proclaimed as a National Day of Sorrow, an unprecedented number of office employees, executives, businessmen, lawyers, doctors, artists, housewives—middle-class Filipinos—were united with workers and students in denouncing the Marcos regime which had for so long denied the people their freedom and democracy and which had just committed one of its flagrant crimes, the assassination of opposition leader Benigno S. Aquino Jr. The pledge captured the fighting mood of the Filipino people that flared up in the wake of the Aquino murder.

Each one had his reason to be there that early afternoon. For the students and workers, the Aquino slaying was the latest in the regime's long list of political murders. For the middle class, it was an eye-opener and bitter lesson on the unmitigated violence of the Marcos dictatorship. For the legal opposition, it was a blow to their hope for a fair and peaceful competition for state power. For all of them, it was the last straw that broke the years of silence and painful endurance of oppression. And for all of them too, it was the spark that inflamed each one's sense of patriotism and yearning for free-

dom.

The mammoth rally at the Liwasang Bonifacio made kindred souls out of the hundreds of thousands of people who had felt the iron hand of the dictatorship in various ways. Thousands of marchers who gathered in four points in Metro Manila were greeted by commuters who clapped their hands and shouted words of support and encouragement. Government employees, who were ordered to report for work on an occasion dubbed by Marcos as a "working holiday" came out of their offices to wave and clap at the jubilant marchers. Motorists, whose cars were decked with yellow ribbons, blew their horns in a gesture of solidarity. The demonstrators were socially diverse: young students and old matrons, workers and businessmen, nuns and socialites, the poor and well-to-do. This prompted one participant to comment: "Now Marcos should really start to worry."

At the plaza, the few hundreds of people who gathered at noon swelled to thousands, and then to hundreds of thousands as marchers flowed down from Quezon Bridge and the Sta. Cruz overpass, their streamers of red, yellow and black billowing like waves in a sea of humanity. They squatted on the plaza's pavement and those who could not find anymore space, climbed on the shoulders of the bridges and on the branches of trees. So thick was the crowd that none could move without stirring the others about him.

For four hours, the crowd listened

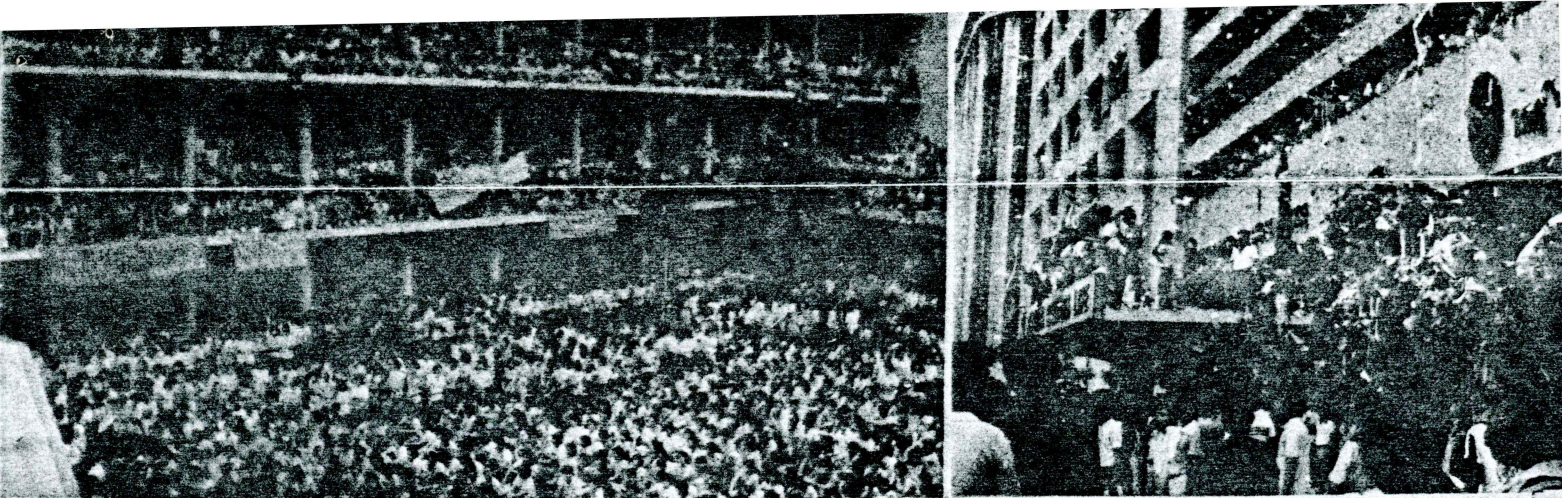
to the representatives of the workers, students, legal opposition, media, church people, artists and relatives of the victims of political repression as well as to Cory Aquino, the slain senator's widow.

Elsewhere in other main urban centers of the country, simultaneous mass actions were held. These demonstrations were just as historic as the Manila rally in the size and diversity of their crowds. In Cebu City more than 100,000 protesters assembled to vent their fury at the dictatorship. In Angeles City, 10,000 people held a prayer-rally at the city cathedral. After the mass, they marched around the city proper and converged in a sports complex to listen to political speeches of opposition and mass leaders. In Zamboanga City, a downpour did not stop 5,000 people from attending a memorial rally for Aquino. Students of the Ateneo de Zamboanga, government employees and concerned citizens ignored the rain and raptly listened to Mrs. Aurora Aquino, mother of the slain senator. Similar outpourings of grief and anger took place in Cagayan de Oro, Bacolod, Davao and Baguio City.

People vent anger

Although anger over the Aquino assassination rankled in many of the speeches at Liwasang Bonifacio it was striking to note that indignation was now turning to more fundamental and far-reaching issues principally the continuing rule of the repressive regime and the major ills plaguing Philippine society.

One by one, the speakers decried the various forms of injustices suffered by various sectors and called on the entire people to end Marcos'



UE campus: Rising student unrest; Ayala ave: Scene of new forms of protest

tyrannical rule. The representatives of progressive people's organizations with a more developed political orientation denounced the Reagan administration for precipitately absolving the Marcos government of guilt in the assassination. They pointed out that the government's intensifying repression of the people has always been abetted by the US whose overriding concern is the protection of its strategic military and economic interests in the Philippines and in the Pacific region.

Statement of various sectoral organizations strongly condemned the Marcos regime, said the Manggagawa Para sa Kalayaan ng Bayan (MAKABAYAN): "*Hindi na bago sa aming mga manggagawa ang ginawang pagpaslang kay Ninoy. Matagal na kaming biktima ng karabasan at panunupil.*"

Said a lawyers' group, the Movement of Attorneys for Brotherhood, Integrity and Nationalism, Inc. (MABINI): "The general, spontaneous and massive demonstrations of opposition to the Marcos government from all sectors of society signal the impending collapse of the present dictatorship. We could only hope and pray that its death throes do not entail further suffering to our already beleaguered nation."

Said the artists, who banded together under the organization of the Concerned Artists of the Philippines: "The bullet which ended Aquino's life has at the same time further exposed the gaping wound festering Philippine society."

Said the teachers through the Association of Concerned Teachers (ACT): "The arrogance of power displayed by the present regime is made possible only by the unflinching US government support in exchange for the subservience of our patrimonial rights to its big business and military interests. For this reason, the US government (cannot) exonerate itself from the acts of tyranny committed against Ninoy and our

people."

Said the businessmen who recently organized themselves into the Association of Businessmen for Aquino (ABA): "The reign of greed and injustice still goes on."

Rage heightens

Throughout the demonstration waved, placards and streamers, some of them outraged (Stop military abuses!; Marcos, killer!; Marcos resign!) while others were mocking (Fernando, magkano ang Commission mo?; Rolly Galman: A brief encounter with history; Bakit ako-Rolly; Marcos, Imelda, dalawa na lang kayo; Mamaga sana ang mukha ng nagpapatay kay Ninoy!) Punctuating the intervals between the speakers' speeches were the slogans, "Marcos, Hitler, Diktador, Tuta!" and "Ibagsak and diktadurang EU-Marcos!"

Towards the end of the rally, a military helicopter hovered over the crowd, provoking curses and other signs of defiance. As the chopper whirled a little lower, the people blurted out curses even more loudly to make sure that its passengers got their message.

After reaffirming the collective vow to end the tyrannical regime, the rally was declared close at 4:45 p.m. The people marched home, their tired bodies somehow assuaged by the sounds of "Ang Bayan Ko" that was playing in many downtown jukeboxes that late afternoon.

But for a big number of rallyists, the ventilation of anger against the regime was not yet over. About 15,000 marchers proceeded to Mendiola to let the dictator know firsthand what the people truly felt about him. The march started out peacefully but soon broke out into violence, when the demonstration ended, at least 11 persons had been killed, more than a hundred injured and over 60 people arrested, many of them beaten up even before reaching police headquarters. (See

related story)

But the mass actions were not confined to Mendiola that night. While the carnage was being perpetrated by the regime's fascist troops on the streets leading to Malacanang, many Metro Manila residents ventured out of their houses and sounded out their hatred for the regime in a noise barrage that lasted until the wee hours of the morning.

Major roads were lighted up by blazing tires while protesting residents lined the streets. Government vehicles sent to monitor the situation could not get through any street without waving yellow ribbons or displaying posters of Aquino.

At Espana St. in Manila, angry residents stoned the Kadiwa center, an impact project of the dictator's wife, Imelda. The people disarmed the security guard and brought out the goods. "The government called it looting but we were just retrieving what have been taken from us," one resident said. However, while government properties like the Kadiwa building, traffic lights and signs and iron rails were attacked or destroyed by angry crowd, privately-owned grocery stores and business establishments did not suffer a single scratch that night.

The gathering storm

Some said that the rash of protest actions and marches started with the slaying of Benigno Aquino Jr. Most, however, correctly pointed out that the Aquino murder provided the spark that turned an accumulating heat into a deadly explosion. It would be recalled that immediately prior to this upsurge, open mass campaigns against the regime's repressive policies and laws like the Presidential Commitment Order and against the renegotiation of the US-RP military bases agreement had already started to draw broad participation and support.

For years, the Filipino people have been the victims of the most vicious forms of political violence that were covered up and refurbished with the

most outrageous lies. Kidnappings and killings were straight-facedly explained away as the handiwork of the communists; bombings were instigated and consistently blamed on the "radicals"; forced evacuations of entire barrios were denied and dismissed as malicious rumors.

The capricious and arrogant use of power by the husband-and-wife tandem spared no one, not even their prospective son-in-law Tommy Manotoc who was ordered kidnapped last year in an attempt to block his marriage to a Marcos daughter. Meantime, key government and military officials including their lowliest "alalay" could avail of immunities from the law so long as they have access to the powers-that-be. And the ordinary citizen? He can be shot down like a dog with nary a fuss.

So well-known is the regime's underhanded tactics that when news of the murder at the airport on Aug. 21 broke out every Filipino knew who did it. Unfortunately for the regime, the people were not to take its latest and most brazen crime lying down. The murder snapped, their last thread of patience and with it, the dictator's lease on life. As one protester's placard aptly put it "Nagalit ang bayan sa baba ng loko-ban."

The endless line of mourners that trekked to the wake of the slain senator augured the immense turnout of participants in the funeral processions in the following days when the body was transferred to the Sto. Domingo church in Quezon City and then to Tarlac and then back. And when the late senator was finally buried, two million people -- the biggest crowd in the nation's history-- lined up the street not just to mourn but to voice their anger.

They let the rain pour freely on their bodies, shunning umbrellas ("Si Imelda lang ang nagpapayong") and stayed on. It was the anger in the people's eyes, the willingness to

walk the 10 miles from the church to the burial ground, that set the Aquino funeral apart from all other past funerals for national leaders. The Magsaysay funeral procession, which many recalled was also attended by a large number of people, was easily overshadowed by the procession of Aug. 31.

Days after Aquino was buried, a fresh wind of revolutionary vigour swept the ranks of the students. Protest boycotts were declared in several schools: The University of the East, University of Sto. Tomas, National University, University of the Philippines, Lyceum University, Far Eastern University, Manuel L. Quezon University, Mapua, Ateneo, Maryknoll, San Beda College, De La Salle University, Arellano University and Feati. Not since the First Quarter Storm had students from so many schools launched one boycott after another over a burning issue.

Even as the people grieved and protested, they closed ranks and took steps to organize themselves for the purpose of ending once and for all the dictatorship. Organizations that represented various sectors and political beliefs got together and formed the Justice for Aquino, Justice for All movement.

In its Sept. 21 statement, JAJA said it was pursuing its quest for justice and retribution, holding the Marcos regime accountable for the murder of Aquino and all other victims of political repression.

The alliance presented the following demands: 1) the end of Marcos' rule and in its place, the establishment of a truly democratic government; 2) a halt to militarization and all acts of repression and terrorism; and 3) the assertion of the people's full sovereignty and resistance to all forms of alien control and domination.

JAJA, whose 64-strong affiliate organizations ran the gamut of students, workers, professionals, and legal opposition parties as well as business groups and housewives' associations, was convened on Aug. 28. But efforts towards its formation started five days back when concerned citizens took the initiative to mobilize a targetted 10,000 people to participate in the transfer of Aquino's body from his house on Times st. to Sto. Domingo Church.

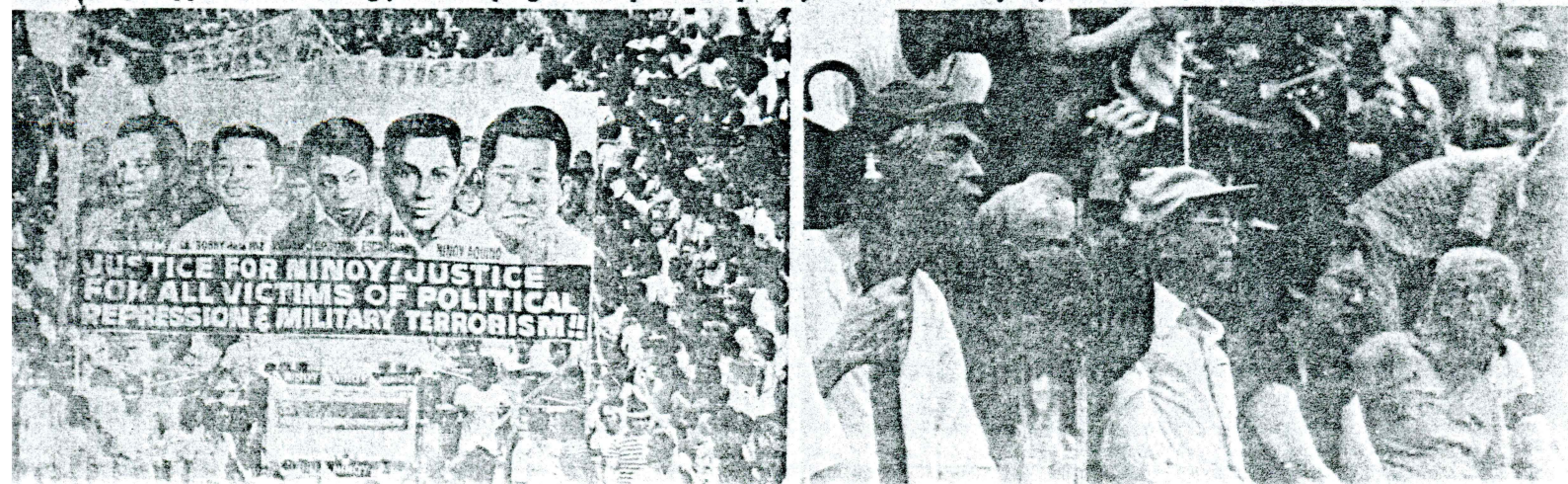
A phone brigade was launched and press dispatches were issued. On Aug. 25, 9 a.m., organizers were astounded to see tens of thousands of people waiting out in the streets, ready to take part in the procession. The crowd rapidly thickened as thousands more walked to the church. By the time the body reached Sto. Domingo, the participants' number had swollen to at least 80,000.

As the number of people in the mass actions grew, so did JAJA's membership. Diverse as the alliance's members were, they agreed that Aquino's murder should propel a movement that would seek the restoration of democratic rights. They also stressed the importance of achieving this goal in a peaceful yet militant way and saw to it that every rally, symposium and procession was conducted in a manner that would not give the military room for precipitating violence.

The worsening political isolation of the regime took another dramatic turn as managers, middle-level executives and rank-and-file employees of private corporations-- with the approval of their employers -- joined the open protest movement.

While a Press Freedom March was being held in Intramuros, Manila, an unexpected massive and novel show of protest erupted for the first time in Ayala ave., the business and financial

Legal opposition: Heading for more progressive options; Aquino funeral: A march for freedom and justice



hub of the country. Thousands of Ayala employees took to the streets demanding justice, the restoration of democracy and the resignation of Marcos. As they marched past swanky offices, confetti shredded from the yellow pages of telephone directories and ribbons cut out from toilet paper were strewn from the tall buildings. Like captives rushing out to freedom, the ebullient demonstrators had a festive time lambasting the dictator and his wife. They marched down the streets, flashing with their fingers the L-sign, meaning Laban or Fight -- a gesture that has come to describe their temper more than the political party it originally stood for.

In a desperate effort to soften the impact of anti-government rallies sweeping all sectors of the people in the metropolis, Metro Manila Gov. Imelda Marcos directed the holding of a pro-regime rally. The rally, set for Sept. 20, was to be attended by government employees dressed in civilian clothes to make it appear that they were ordinary citizens. Families of military men from East and West Rembo, a community adjacent to Fort Bonifacio, were also conscripted. Money equivalent to a two-day salary (about P60) was the come-on for attending government employees.

Rally organizers, however, made the dire mistake of holding the demonstration in the same place which just saw the most feverish protest action in recent years, Ayala ave. in Makati. The rally leaders, were unprepared for shouts of "Tuta! Tuta!" and "Magkano ang ibinayad sa inyo?" Some of the rallyists like coerced Metro Manila Commission employees and metro aides were distracted when coins and xeroxed copies of paper bills were thrown at them. Bags of water and urine, garbage and cigarette butts soon followed and in a few minutes, the demonstration was over as the paid rallyists scampered away.

Anti-government demonstrators then took over the streets. They marched around the business center shouting their disgust for the regime. The following day, Sept. 21, a delegation from Makati joined the assembly at Liwasang Bonifacio.

No turning back

Thus far, as proven by the long string of heavily-attended rallies, processions and marches, there has been no turning back for the people. Not even the bloody massacre at Mendiola on

Sept. 21 and the tear gas cannisters lobbed at the Makati demonstrators on Sept. 23 could dampen the fires of protest now searing the regime at every turn. Dissent has refused to die down. Guns, truncheons, and tear gas bombs have only fanned greater indignation and protest.

On Sept. 23, students planned an indignation rally to protest the Mendiola carnage. The site of the rally was to be at the US embassy along Roxas blvd. Ironically, the students who had opted for the embassy instead of Mendiola so as to avoid giving the regime another excuse for instigating a bloody confrontation found themselves being truncheoned by anti-riot policemen.

The police-instigated violence drove home a sharp message to everyone: that the regime is just as hell-bent on protecting an important symbol of the

Following is the account of a participant in the demonstration in Mendiola and a witness in the noise barrage on the night of Sept. 21, 1983.

Mendiola-- There were about 20,000 of us gathered here -- students, workers, executives in barong, some office employees and media men covering the event -- the crowd winding like a huge dragon all the way to Recto ave. and on to Quezon blvd. It was around 5:30 p.m.

At the foot of Ayala bridge, there were about a thousand policemen in riot gear, their holsters empty (although newspaper photos the following day would show them with guns tucked in their waists), forming the first line of defense. Behind them were men in fatigue uniforms carrying armalites. At the corner of San Rafael st., which intersects Mendiola and leads to Malacanang, were more cops standing behind their shields, their truncheons by their side.

On Mendiola were two Metro Manila buses and by the side of the road was a big crane. They were obviously there to block the demonstrators' way and the crowd did not like it.

Later, I was to receive an eyewitness report from someone who was watching from Centro Escolar University. He said the trees in Mendiola were full of snipers.

When we arrived, several youths were already throwing rocks, but every one else was shouting, "Walang bato! Walang batuhan!" As they said this the rock-throwers put down their weapons. In any case, some of the rock-throwers did not look like students or workers but "istambays."

Shouts of defiance to the Marcos

US government as it is from protecting itself from the wrath of the people.

Faced with growing opposition, it was time for the dictator to pound his iron fist at the people. Before a captive audience, Marcos warned the "radicals" and the legal oppositionists: "Do not test the will of the government." The warning was addressed as well to the "arrogant rich," the religious who "teach children to hate Marcos and the government," and even parents who have allowed their children to take to the streets. He also announced the end of his "maximum-tolerance" policy and threatened to use his army to its last muscle to quell disorder.

At another time, the threat would have stopped the demonstrations, even temporarily. But as if to show Marcos where he stood with



Sept. 21 Mendiola Battle: Police brutality at it

regime filled the air. "Marcos resign!" "Marcos magnanakaw!" The crowd's temper was rising and soon, some youths were setting the crane on fire. As this was happening, rocks and bottles were being thrown -- from the side of the anti-riot forces. The rocks hurled at the demonstrators did not look like they were picked up from the roads; many of them looked like bits of hollow blocks.

Somebody told me later that truckloads of rocks, the kind that were probably salvaged from construction sites, were transported by soldiers and sent to Mendiola and other possible demonstration sites.

A group of demonstrators started pushing the burning crane towards the phalanx of anti-riot squads. Seeing the approaching crane, the cops retreated behind the buses. This emboldened the crowd, and soon, some demonstrators were also setting the Metro Manila Transit buses on fire with the flames from the burning crane.

More violence followed. Pillboxes were hurled by the policemen and the demonstrators answered in kind. All of a sudden,

them now, the people kept up their protest actions, each time with more creativity and always, with intensity. In Makati, employes and executives relentlessly continued to hold "confetti rallies," a protest activity unique to the area and which had captured the imagination and support of many other employes and people.

The situation was more than enough to alarm Marcos who hastened to refurbish his faltering image with his benefactor, the US. Marcos acceded to every interview requested by American television networks. In the interviews, he invariably denied any complicity in the assassination and bullyingly told them that he still had control over the protesting Filipinos. "You just watch me in the next few days, the next few months,

and I'll show you how we have always succeeded in meeting these Communist threats," he taunted. On the whole, the interviews were a flop as Marcos assumed a defensive posture that often verged on desperation and irrationality ("You want Jaime Cardinal Sin to become president? You go ahead. You want Mrs. Aquino to be president?")

Various political options

The last four weeks saw an unprecedented political awakening of the people, most especially those in the national capital region. The upsurge swept millions and drew the sustained participation of hundreds of thousands. Inevitably, the mass actions met stiffer reaction from the dictatorship. With the dramatic development of the urban legal

anti-Marcos movement and the intensification of urban confrontation with the fascist regime, clarifications of political goals and options have come to the fore.

To date, three diverse political frameworks for effecting change have become distinct in the current upsurge. Members of the Church hierarchy, led by Cardinal Sin, have tended to moderate the rising militance of the people and have proceeded the formation of an advisory council to the president so as to diffuse the mounting social tension. To many, this current, while still being critical and opposed to the authoritarianism, represents the line of least resistance among the present anti-dictatorship forces.

On the other hand, some legal opposition and big businessmen have demanded Marcos' resignation

thrown from behind the buses and one of them hit and killed Cpl. Conrado Angeles of the Sta. Ana fire station.

At around 7:30 p.m., anti-riot squads in platoon formation ran from behind the buses. They shot in all directions and the crowd scattered.

Many demonstrators were able to find refuge in nearby buildings and private houses while some hit the pavement. Others were cornered by pursuing policemen and were beaten up.

In a matter of seconds, the number of policemen had swollen to thousands as they filled the Legarda and Recto intersection fronting the Mendiola bridge. Uneasy silence descended on the demonstration site. But inside the nearby buildings and private houses, cries of pain and anger could be heard from the wounded demonstrators who were being sheltered by the residents.

Those who escaped the blows and bullets of the anti-riot forces in Mendiola ran to Legarda but cops rushed out of their hiding places to beat them up while the demonstrators pressed against the doors and windows of shops along the street.

"Walang kikibo! Walang kikibo!" one of the demonstrators shouted, so there they crouched and huddled while the cops gave vent to their fury, each blow delivered with a grunt for added strength. All you could hear were the wallops of rattan truncheons on skulls, flesh and bones.

At 9 p.m., the frail silence was broken by rounds of gunfire coming from approaching vehicles on Legarda St. "Dumating na ang mga NPA!" a voice suddenly shouted. Pandemonium broke loose within the ranks of the police. Many of them turned back and ran. Others, stricken by panic, stumbled to the ground.

"Mga kasama n'yo kami!" shouted one of the gun-toting men from the vehicle, their marine and airborne uniforms barely visible in the darkness.

Even then, some policemen were still scampering for safety. One of them who cautiously came out of hiding, in relief, said, "Ay, p—, mga airborne pala kayo."

The main roads were cleared of demonstrators but from the dark alleys came shouts and curses taunting the soldiers and policemen who shot back in the direction of the voices. But the anti-riot forces refused to come closer.

Out and away from Mendiola and Legarda, the sky was being lighted up by burning tires hauled to the middle of the roads. Along Taft and the other streets, groups of people had massed up in several intersections, urging motorists to blow their horns.

Cars zigzagged their way through the streets to avoid the burning tires. Black smoke rose in huge curls to blend with the dark skies. But it was the sound of mixed fury and anger that reigned that night, with the people blowing their horns, their vehicles donning yellow ribbons and passengers and residents who lined up the streets flashing the Laban sign with their fingers. Not a single policeman was in sight.

Occasionally, we would hear the sound of stone against metal and we knew that a government vehicle had just passed by. Children ran out to the streets, singing and beating pots, pans and steel posts to the rhythm of their chants. By the time the last firecracker crackled, it was already dawn.

A day-long tribute to freedom had just ended but the sound of the death knell for the dictatorship had begun.



there was the pop! of a gun. Seconds later, a victim was being carried through the crowd. More pillboxes and seconds later, another pop! — and one more victim was rushed out.

Firemen, in the meantime, tried to put out the fire that was consuming the buses. Demonstrators drew back as some of the water hoses were trained at them and spewed out, not water, but a kind of smokescreen gas. But as soon as the air cleared, the crowd closed in again. They turned to a police outpost at the foot of Mendiola bridge and set it on fire. A 14-year-old boy carrying a can of gasoline ran towards the tires of the buses, poured it over the tires and set them ablaze.

As he ran back to the crowd, the fire caught his pants. About 10 demonstrators came to his rescue and with their bare hands, tried to put out the flames on the boy's leg. The scene triggered another round of applause from the crowd.

At that point, police violence escalated. More pillboxes were

and the formation of a caretaker government as the key solution to the present crisis. This option clearly rejects any deal with the dictator and opens options for militant and sustained struggle against the dictatorship.

The option suffers though from certain flaws, notes leaders of the national democratic movement. "Obviously, the crisis in the Philippines today is not reducible to the rule of a dictator or his clique," says a spokesman of the National Democratic Front. "Neither is the solution reducible to a mere replacement of one or a few top government men." Historical ills of US imperialist domination, of backward agriculture compounded by strong vestiges of landlordism and of a self-aggrandizing government bureaucracy servile to the interests of foreign monopoly capitalists and local elites lie at the root of the people's woes, explained the NDF spokesman.

"A basic socio-economic restructuring is required. No less than a complete overthrow of the US-Marcos dictatorship can bring this about," he added.

Still, other groups have continued to put forward the slogan, "Dismantle the US-Marcos dictatorship! Fight for national freedom and democracy!" The message of the slogan differs strikingly from the aforementioned options by not having a quick cure-all promise. While concerned with winning substantial tactical democratic concessions for the people, these progressive groups attempt to transform and advance the current upsurge in the city towards building up the organized strength and the heightened political awareness of the people. These are necessary components to ultimately win in the struggle against the dictatorship.

However, even as there are important differences among the three main currents, all of them flow parallel to each other: all advocate an end to the present tyrannical rule.

Notwithstanding the tremendous advance and impact made by the broad anti-dictatorship open mass movement in the city, recent political developments clearly point out that it takes more than a purely legal and city-based mass movement to force down the armed dictatorship. By itself it cannot seize and hold political power for the people. More than ever, recent events show the decisive importance of a nationwide advance—most especially in the vast Philippine countryside—of the forces of armed resistance in order to achieve total victory. As a popular adage goes, "Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun."

-Minda Rodrigo

Sept. 21, 1972: An infamous day

The Palace coup d'etat came in a blitzkrieg. Armed men in fatigue uniforms broke into houses and establishments in a massive crackdown against known Marcos oppositionists.

Thousands were arrested and thrown into prison. Many were tortured; some were shot. Radio and television stations were closed down as were the newspapers and other publications.

Schools were padlocked and offices ransacked. In Manila, the country's capital, soldiers in full combat gear secured the domestic and international airport, occupied the north and south pier harbors, and installed road blocks on major streets and thoroughfares.

Amid the fear and confusion that gripped the nation, the official announcement finally came: martial law had been declared.

It was Sept. 23, 1972, the day when the Filipino people first learned that Ferdinand E. Marcos, the republic's 13th head of state, had signed Proclamation 1081 placing the entire archipelago under martial law. The proclamation, dated Sept. 21, rang the death knell for the American-patterned liberal democratic government and ushered in an American-backed full-scale military dictatorship.

It was a well-crafted move by the Marcos ruling elite and its American imperialist patron. It was a move designed to check a deep-seated crisis which threatened to undermine the neo-colonial and elite-dominated Philippine republic.

At the heart of the crisis was a tottering Philippine economy characterized by a tight financial squeeze, eroding peso value, ballooning deficits, rising inflation, widespread unemployment and business slowdown.

As a result of this general economic turmoil, a furious scramble for economic dominance emerged between the Lopez-led old oligarchy and the Marcos led new oligarchy.

While the old oligarchs derived their power from their monopoly of land-based agricultural industries such as sugar and coconut, the new oligarchs drew their strength from their control of key financial and agricultural institutions and all-out support for foreign capital.

This conflict erupted into open hostility, resulting in the outbreak of violent vendettas staged by private armies of feuding warlords.

While factional bickerings rocked the elite-run Philippine-style democracy, a nationalist ferment was sweeping the country. A series of flashpoints marked this nationalist upsurge: the formation of the revolutionary Kabataang Makabayan in 1964; the re-establishment of

the Communist Party of the Philippines in 1968; the outbreak of sustained and intensified anti-imperialist and anti-fascist mass struggles capped by the First Quarter Storm of 1970; and the growth and expansion of several nationalist groups and organizations, including the Muslim Independence Movement.

Even traditional bastions of conservatism and pro-Americanism were not spared from the impact of the surging nationalist tide. Congress began to articulate certain nationalist demands; the Supreme Court started to express anti-American sentiments as exemplified by the famous Quasha and Lustevenco rulings which dealt sharp setbacks to US efforts to consolidate its economic stranglehold over the country.

With the Parity Rights Agreement due to expire in 1974, the growing nationalist awakening created a sense of crisis for American imperialism.

As the economic and political situation rapidly deteriorated, it became clear for the US and the Marcos ruling faction that they could no longer rule in the old liberal way. To break up the political stalemate, they moved to demolish the liberal democratic setup in favor of a highly centralized political leadership. They saw martial law as the only viable solution.

For the US, martial law would answer the need to protect its strategic military bases in the country, guarantee its huge investments estimated at \$2 billion in 1972, and secure a favorable climate for further US imperialist expansion. Martial law would also serve US defense requirements in Asia as enunciated by the Nixon Doctrine which called for the establishment of native military dictatorships as a response to the crisis sweeping US client regimes in Asia.

For Marcos, whose term was due to expire on Dec. 31, 1973, martial law would mean an added lease in power and a chance to destroy the popular opposition to his regime, including the economic threat posed by the old oligarchs.

To pave the way for the eventual military takeover, a massive military buildup was launched. From P740 million in 1971, the military budget rose to P800 million in 1972. Over the same period, military troops expanded from 50,000 to 80,000. Task forces and paramilitary units were fielded in several cities and rural areas; home defense forces' training was intensified.

To justify its resort to martial law, the regime created a scenario of terror and anarchy, anchored on a so-called

remembered

urban terrorist plot hatched by radical left-wing elements. This drive gained dramatic headway on Aug. 21, 1971 with the bombing of a mammoth opposition rally at Plaza Miranda which left nine persons dead and 700 wounded. In the wake of the widespread hysteria and panic triggered by the incident, Marcos swiftly declared the suspension of the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus. As later events would show, the suspension was the dress rehearsal for the full-scale implementation of military rule.

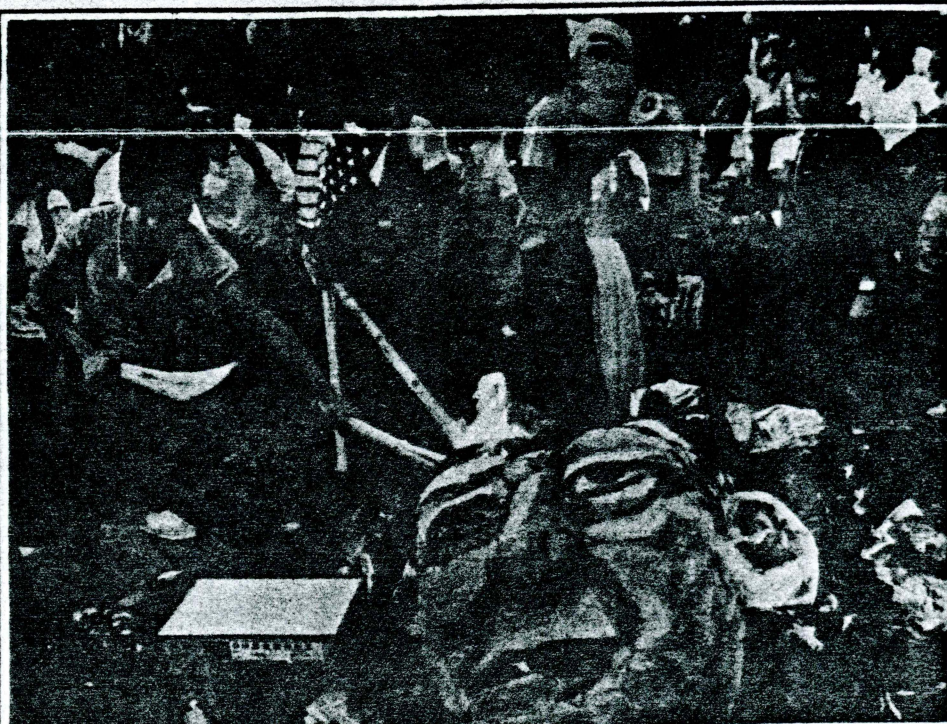
Soon after, a rash of bombings followed until the November 1971 elections which resulted in a whopping defeat for the Marcos ruling party. In the following year, another wave of bomb explosions hit several government and private buildings in Metro Manila, totalling 16 from Mar. 15 to Sept. 18, 1972. Adding further drama to the unfolding scenario of public confusion and anarchy were the reported "discoveries" of bombs at Congress and the Department of Foreign Affairs, a casualty-less ambush on a Metrocom car, and another casualty-less ambush on Defense Secretary Juan Ponce Enrile.

After every incident, Marcos and his top military minions would stage a verbal rage against the Communist Party of the Philippines and the New People's Army. To fuel the red scare hysteria, Enrile claimed that the series of bombings was part of a "July-August Plan" of the CPP-NPA for Metro Manila.

The noose of militarization tightened as other repressive moves were staged against progressive groups and individuals. Headquarters of national democratic mass organizations were raided. Leading activists were rounded up. Checkpoints and the "zona" system were set up in Tondo and other parts of the country. Military agents and soldiers poured into campuses and factories which were known hotbeds of activism.

As the military drive shifted to a higher gear, the US also increased its military aid to the Marcos regime. On the eve of the declaration of martial law, Marcos paid his respects to the US government in a two-hour meeting at Malacanang with US Ambassador Henry Byroade. Marcos outlined to the US official how martial law would enhance US economic interests. Byroade, on the other hand, assured Marcos of full American support for martial law.

The following day, Sept. 21, 1972, Marcos signed Proclamation No. 1081. The rest is now history.



Effigy burning at Linares. Signs of mounting anger at the regime

Battered and besieged

Marcos regime goes up against worst crises in years

The August 21 airport tragedy has grown into a nightmare for the beleaguered Marcos regime. Anti-government outrage has swelled; protest actions have mounted. From school campuses, demonstrations have spread to the Makati business center in a general upsurge of anti-government outcry.

As the military continue to bungle over its "explanations" for the Aquino murder, the clamor for justice and an end to Marcos' dictatorial rule has reached fever pitch. Aquino's assassination has indeed turned out to be a disastrous blunder for the country's top criminal, the Marcos fascist regime.

The situation has become volatile. As more details of the murder are brought to the fore, the regime is also finding it increasingly difficult to hide its blood-stained hands. Its all-too-expected "communist rub-out" theory has done nothing except to fan the anger of the people.

Even within government ranks, the Marcos dictatorship is fast losing face. To forestall widespread demoralization and dissension within the government, Malacanang came out with a 24-page primer on the Aquino assassination which was secretly distributed to governors, mayors and other local executives.

In an attempt to parry direct public denunciation, Marcos created

the Fernando Commission to investigate Aquino's death. But far from easing public tension, the body's creation only caused the tide of protest to swell even more. Like the regime, the Fernando Commission became the butt of jokes and was practically hooted and booed out by the people.

To boost the commission's credibility, Marcos drafted former Supreme Court Chief Justice Concepcion to act as member. Concepcion, however, turned down the offer. The post was then offered to Jaime Cardinal Sin. Again, it was turned down. The names of former Supreme Court Justices JBL Reyes, Cecilia Munoz-Palma and former Sen. Ambrosio Padilla came up. But before the dictator could even send the formal invitations the three had rejected the offer. Cory Aquino, the senator's widow, herself refused to make any nominees. "My experience with military courts makes me cynical about the commission," she said. Under the people's watchful eyes, no right-thinking public official would dare touch the commission with a 10-foot pole, lest he be denounced as a willing tool in another Marcos-style mockery of justice.

Political isolation

By killing the former Tarlac solon,

the regime has further polarized the political spectrum and hastened its own isolation. The murder has not only become a rallying point for unity among fragmented legal opposition groups; it has also served as a catharsis for a broad segment of the urban population signalling their political awakening as well as that of the highest ranks of the upper class.

During the series of demonstrations that engulfed the regime right after the assassination, people who never participated in any rally against the government were seen marching with the militant sectors. Employees belonging to the government's most sensitive and important offices, such as the Central Bank, trooped to the rallies to take part in denouncing Marcos' rule. Middle-level executives, lower government officials, the rich—all heretofore politically indifferent groups—not only took to the streets but even wore and displayed visible signs of protest such as mourning pins, yellow T-shirts, yellow and black ribbons and protest car stickers.

The regime's instability has also caused grave concern among the members of the ruling Kilusang Bagong Lipunan, Marcos' political party, who have started thinking twice about their status and the uncertainty of their political future. Already, two leading members of the KBL have resigned: Minister for Foreign Affairs and Region 10 Chairman Emmanuel Pelaez and former Public Works and Highways Minister Vicente Paterno. On certain occasions in the past, the two have held and expressed views that went against the grain of Marcos-inspired policies and acts; and were consequently punished for their independent positions. With the obvious isolation of Marcos today, Pelaez and Paterno have finally summoned the courage to leave the discredited political party.

Even as their resignations may spark similar moves by other KBL members, these have already caused a tremendous amount of anxiety even among avid followers of Marcos and Imelda. In an attempt to save their political necks, officials like Metro Manila Vice Gov. Ismael Mathay Jr., Labor Minister Blas Ople and University of the Philippines President Edgardo J. Angara, have all gone out of their way to feel the pulse of the people and have started to constantly test the political waters. In various informal discussions, they have been trying to find out "what the people are saying."

In the international community, the Marcos regime also suffered equally stepped-up isolation. In no uncertain terms, international



"SHHH... THE COMMUNISTS
KILLED HIM!"

publications carried banner stories on the murder and issued editorials laying the blame on Marcos and describing the Filipino people's heightening opposition to his rule.

Human rights groups and activists abroad launched protest actions to denounce the killing. The US-based Friends of the Filipino People decried the regime's tendency to whip up the communist bogey in every political crisis and to use it as an excuse to restrict civil liberties, to justify the arrest and imprisonment of dissenters and to carry out acts of terror such as hamletting and salvaging.

In Japan, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, the United States, Australia, Spain, France and other European countries, statements by private groups and also public officials were issued condemning the August 21 murder. Further contributing to the collapse of the regime's credibility abroad was the move by the International Court of Justice, a respected organization, demanding an internationally-supervised inquiry into the Aquino killing. (See related story)

The economic morass

Compounding the Marcos regime's predicament is the rapidly deteriorating economic crisis. Even before the Aquino murder, the economy already occupied top priority in the

government's agenda of headaches. As early as January this year, many critical signs pointed to greater economic troubles.

By June, the economic dive reached a level critical enough to force the government to devalue the peso from P8.45:\$1 last year to P11:\$1 in June this year. In its mid-year report, the Central Bank virtually admitted the government's failure to bail the economy out of its worst crisis since the post-war period. Foreign debt swelled from an official level of \$1.9 billion in June last year to a record high \$18.4 billion in the first half of this year. The regime's insatiable hunger for loans was such that as of June 1983, the Philippines ranked sixth in the World Bank-International Development Agency's list of big borrowers.

Also, as of June this year, the balance of payments deficit hit a staggering \$562 million mark because of the continuing slump of Philippine exports in the world market. The \$300 million structural adjustment loan (SAL) wangled by the regime from the World Bank has not alleviated the BOP deficit. To bridge the yawning deficit and ease the tight economic crunch, the World Bank and International Monetary Fund pressured the regime to devalue the peso and impose more and higher taxes.

The regime's economic woes were further aggravated by the slackening of foreign investments as a result of the dwindling confidence of foreign big business in Marcos' ability to restore stability in the country. Their growing anxiety is reflected in the recently released BERI Report, published by a top US financial consultancy firm that regularly conducts studies on the prospects and hazards facing international business.

The report painted a bleak forecast for the Philippines, describing the country as entering an era of instability, worsening economic blight and growing political risk. According to the report, on a scale of zero to 100, the political risk index for the Philippines dropped from 56 in 1976 to 34 last year. As a result, BERI came out with a blunt advice to transnational corporations: don't increase investments in the Philippines.

Even local businessmen have grown more restive. A recent survey by the elite Makati Business Club among its 500 members showed a rapidly eroding confidence in the Marcos government: 62 percent said that government credibility was poor, 67 percent felt that peace and order have deteriorated and 69 percent believed that graft and corruption have

worsened. Anticipating a dim economic environment, 67 percent said they have no plans of expanding business operations.

The specter of a crippling financial dislocation finally caught up with the business sector after the Aquino assassination. In a two-page letter to Marcos, the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry -- the cream of local business -- complained about the severe economic setbacks suffered by the business community as a result of the increasing political instability that followed the Aquino murder. Foreign businessmen drew out \$200 million in the third quarter of 1983, according to government estimates. Tourism, the much-vaunted source of foreign exchange, was in a slump as tourist arrivals plummeted, based on reports by Tourism Minister Jose Aspiras. Commercial and credit lines tightened, making it almost impossible for tottering businesses to recover.

Reflecting the ebb of confidence in the local business climate, the general manager of the General Bank of Tokyo declared, "Frankly, the Japanese banks are worried about Philippine social and political conditions."

To revive the interest of the business community, Marcos and Imelda swiftly held a series of press conferences dispelling fears of an econ-



omic squeeze. Imelda made the dubious claim that the economy grew faster in the first months of 1983 than at any other time since 1974. But she conveniently left out one important detail: that the "growth" was made possible by the transfusion of a total of \$500 million loans in the period June 1982 to June 1983.

Having gotten used to the regime's rosy but empty reassurances, the business sector was not relieved. Aquino's death even released an outpouring of long-harbored grievances against the Marcos government ranging from cronyism and widespread corruption to the overall mismanagement of the economy. Marcos quickly reacted to the spreading angry mood among businessmen, accusing them of being "traitors."

The US-Marcos regime's dilemma

With the escalating protests in the Philippines and worldwide, the US has been caught in a dilemma: how to avoid open endorsement of the Marcos regime at this time without jeopardizing the US' continuing support of its client state. In the past, despite the regime's glaring human rights violations, the US has consistently and unqualifiedly endorsed Marcos' fascist rule. Recently, however, the US has been coming increasingly under fire in its own homefront for continuing to support Mar-

Japanese groups express solidarity

As massive outpourings of grief and anger engulfed the US-Marcos dictatorship in the Philippines, similar protest actions were being waged by Japanese groups as an expression of their solidarity with the Filipino people. Reports reaching *Liberation* show that from Aug. 30 to Sept. 24, at least six such rallies and meetings were held in various places in Japan and attended by people from various walks of life. These events were recorded as follows:

Aug. 30. Thirty students belonging to the National Student Alliance (NSA) picketed the Philippine embassy in Tokyo to condemn the assassination of former Sen. Benigno S. Aquino Jr. and the Marcos regime's policy of salvaging dissenters. The NSA, which has chapters in 50 universities in Japan, also denounced the complicity of the Reagan administration in the Aquino assassination.

Sept. 4. Two hundred people, among them 50 Filipinos, held a memorial mass for Aquino and all other victims of human rights violations. Dr. Jose V. Abueva, Filipino academician and secretary to the United Nations University in Japan,

read a poem and prayer during the occasion. The mass was organized by the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace, the Philippine Task Force of the National Council of Churches in Japan and the Buddhist Alliance for Philippine Concerns.

Sept. 20. A press conference called by leaders of the various political parties in Japan was held in the National Diet (Parliament). It appealed to the Japanese people to support the Filipino people's struggle for justice, freedom and democracy. They also demanded a review of their country's aid policy to the Marcos regime "to ensure that Japanese official aid does not contribute to political repression and military terrorism in the Philippines." The event, regarded as a high point in the solidarity campaign, was attended by Hideo Den, chairman of the United Socialist Democratic Party; Tokuma Utsonomiya, chairman of the Shinsei Club and former Liberal Democratic Party elderman; Ms. Takako Doi, vice chairman of the Japan Socialist Party; and Yohei Kono, acting chairman of the New Liberal Club.

Sept. 21. The date of the declaration of martial law in the Philippines was observed in Japan with the holding of pickets in front of the Philippine Embassy and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The pickets, which were organized by the Movement for Peace and Democracy (MPD) and the Association to Support Philippine Struggle (KAI) called for the overthrow of the US-Marcos dictatorship and an end to Japanese aid to the regime. Solidarity mass meetings were also held in Tokyo, Kyoto, Osaka, Sendai and Morioka.

Sept. 23. About 400 representatives attended the second national congress of the MPA and approved a resolution expressing solidarity for the Filipino people's struggle for justice, freedom and democracy and against the US-backed Marcos dictatorship. After the congress, MPD members marched to the Philippine embassy, shouting protest slogans calling for the overthrow of the dictatorship and an end to Japanese assistance to the Marcos government.

Sept. 24. Some 170 people from the MPD held a march and picket in front of the Philippine Embassy.

ops despite many evidences of his guilt.

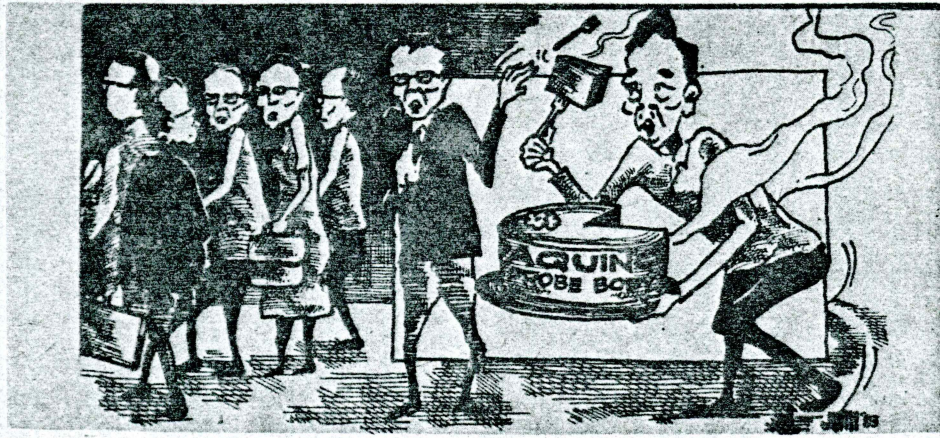
For the US, however, Marcos' guilt in the assassination is not the issue. What is more important for the US is that under present conditions, Marcos remains as the most reliable hatchetman of US imperialist interests in the Philippines. So far, he alone has the capability to hold the military intact, to neutralize the bickering factions within his coterie, and most importantly, to ensure the indefinite stay of the US military bases in the country.

In fact, top US officials minced no words in pointing to the US bases as the US' most important consideration in bolstering the faltering Marcos regime. (see Lib, Aug. 30) It came as

unrest, the intensifying armed struggle in the countryside as well as his crumbling political image abroad.

To ease his predicament, Marcos could choose to handle first the current urban unrest which has been hitting him very hard lately. But recent measures have so far bogged down. A velvet glove treatment of the massive protests immediately following the Aquino slaying was shaken off in favor of an iron-handed policy. The regime shifted policy upon realizing that its "maximum tolerance" failed to take the steam out of the people's anger but instead, only emboldened and heightened protests even more.

Renewed repression, however, is bound to compound the massive urban upheaval. Already, the Mendiola massacre



no surprise then to many when the US swiftly tried to absolve Marcos and his military brass of responsibility for the killing.

At present, US officials are in a tight fix regarding Reagan's forthcoming visit to the Philippines in November. To push through with the visit could bring tremendous risks as it could spark renewed tensions and full-scale anti-imperialist demonstrations. To cancel it, on the other hand, could also prove costly since this could be interpreted to mean that the US has junked Marcos, thus emboldening opposition efforts to immediately oust him.

Former Secretary of State and right-wing hawk Henry Kissinger has called for the continuation of the visit, asserting that Marcos is still the US' strongest ally in Asia. In any case, regardless of whether the visit pushes through or not, signs remain strong that the US will stick it out with Marcos notwithstanding the mounting risks involved in maintaining the regime's eroding stability.

But the real pincers of the dilemma are still particularly tightest around Marcos. He is increasingly being besieged from all sides by various crises of heightening dimensions. Solutions to his dilemma are tangled by the sharp economic deterioration, the rising urban

and other violent acts have further isolated the regime from all classes and sectors in Philippine society. To stem the tide of unrest, Marcos is mulling over some concessions to the legal opposition, banking on its inclination towards the parliamentary and electoral options of struggle. Such concessions, of course, will in no way threaten Marcos' grip on the reins of government.

Should the legal opposition bite the bait, Marcos hopes to drive a significant wedge in the broad movement against his regime. He also hopes to neutralize some groups that are beginning to consider the more militant option of mass struggle.

But so far, Marcos' old ploys no longer seem to work. The legal opposition is not jumping to his bait of elections. His old tricks like the communist bogey are so worn-out they are no longer being swallowed by the people. Marcos either has to look for new tricks or grant far more significant concessions than he is willing to concede at present.

Meanwhile, the political and economic dilemma of the US-Marcos dictatorship grows more complicated by the day. It is like a whirlpool sucking the regime deeper in its vortex, trapping it with little hope of survival.

—Marco Bonifacio

Church

Bishops' reconciliation

They streamed down the street in the afternoon sun in their white cassocks and habits, chanting prayers and patriotic hymns. A white-robed youth led the procession, holding up a 10-foot bamboo cross entwined with barbed wire. White and red streamers carried by marshalls boxed in the marchers like a moving wall from infiltrators.

They were 150 priests, pastors, nuns, seminarians and lay people caught up in the fever of protest inflaming the entire country following Aquino's assassination. They had just come from a mass at the Ellinwood Church in Malate, Manila and were on their way to the Gomburza monument in front of the old Congress building to continue their protest. One streamer boldly bannered the general thrust of their demonstration: Oust the US-backed Marcos regime!

Earlier that day, at precisely 12 noon, church bells pealed 21 times for five minutes across Metro Manila. Work braked to a halt in schools, offices and homes. Conversations were stopped, typewriters were hushed, and spoons and forks put down as the Catholic faithful, inspired by Jaime Cardinal Sin's pastoral letter, prayed for "justice and peace."

Why 21 times? "It was on Sept. 21, 1972 when democracy died in our country. Hopefully, it was on Aug. 21, 1983 that it began to come to life again," explained Sin, the Archbishop of Manila, to his friends about the significance of the number 21.

The two mass actions on Sept. 19, though different in purpose and demands, were clear political declarations of protest against the Marcos regime. They revealed the depth of unrest sweeping the church sector, majority of whom hold the regime responsible for Aquino's murder as well as for a multitude of crimes against the people. Aquino's killing has acted like a flashpoint, binding church people together, uniting them with the rest of the country—in Sin's words—"no longer as timid and scattered sheep, but as men and women purified and strengthened by a profound communal grief that has made them one." Fittingly, on Sept. 21, the 11th anniversary of martial law, about 900 church people returned in droves to Liwasang Bonifacio in a show of solidarity with other sectors against the regime.

at the crossroads

proposal amid mounting unrest stirs dilemma

Sin takes center stage

The 55-year old Sin, who heads the powerful Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, has occupied a central place in this turn of events. He wields strong influence over the recently politically active middle class who have comprised to date the bulk in current political actions in urban areas. To a large extent, the middle class shares Sin's open dissatisfaction with the government regarding the Aquino murder.

A personal friend of the slain ex-senator, Sin has minced no words that he is "not entirely satisfied with the explanation given by the government in the wake of the assassination." In an interview with an Australian TV outfit and in a pastoral letter, he said: "People are asking questions but so far are getting no satisfactory answers." But the most evident sign of Sin's displeasure is his rejection of Marcos' offer to join the Fernando Commission, using as an excuse his attendance at a synod of bishops in Rome at the end of September.

However, much as many church people and other quarters would like, Sin has not yet directed such dissatisfaction toward far-reaching and more militant demands. So far, he has vetoed basic demands to topple the regime and some opposition groups' reformist call for Marcos' resignation. Instead, the Cardinal has been preaching "national reconciliation," the cause Aquino had vowed to pursue upon

his return to the Philippines.

There is much difference, however, between Sin's and Aquino's notions of national reconciliation. While Aquino had defined that "national reconciliation and unity can only be achieved with justice (but) there can be no deal with a dictator, no compromise with dictatorship," the prelate seems to have extended the olive branch to that same dictator. His proposal, aired in February this year, calls for the formation of a "national reconciliation council" to achieve the reconciliation of the government and the people. The council shall be composed of three representatives from the government, three from the Church, two from the opposition and two from the private sector.

Sin has set some preconditions for the council such as the full restoration of the rights to free election, free press, etc., and a thorough and impartial investigation of Aquino's death. He has also urged Marcos to release the estimated 900 political prisoners in military jails all over the country. "The council is the last feasible alternative to avoid the violent confrontation and bloody revolution made imminent by the temper of the times," Sin warned in a statement.

To show that he means business, the prelate has been projecting the moderating policy of national reconciliation in every available opportunity this month. His apparent objective is to clamp the lid on a volatile political situation. On Sept. 11, he officiated at the mass in the Manila Cathedral

sponsored by the Manila mayor to celebrate Marcos' birthday. Defending his action, Sin said: "To refuse would be to put the lie to the message of reconciliation." He wept openly in church as he pleaded for national reconciliation. In another move, he declined to endorse an opposition-planned civil disobedience campaign, saying this was "against the Scriptures." In a further effort to heal the Church's widening rift with Marcos, he talked to the latter in Malacanang on Sept. 23 in order to mediate in the current crisis. Sin, however, has carefully reminded Marcos that "reconciliation is not a one-way traffic."

Like a pipedream

Progressives, however, charge that under the present regime, any proposal for reconciliation genuinely based on justice is a pipedream. Church people themselves have vociferously pointed out the weaknesses of such proposals. "Aquino's murder belies the regime's calls for national reconciliation," noted the Kapisanan ng mga Madres Kamaynilaan (KAMAY), a legal inter-congregational organization. "It is not the government that will give us a democratic society. We will create that society we want through unity with the poor and struggling people."

The revolutionary underground mass organization of church people, the Christians for National Liberation (CNL), has also sharply criticized the plan. "As Christians, it is senseless for us to even think about unity and reconciliation with the regime when there is massive oppression, exploitation and tyranny of the broad majority of the people," said a CNL manifesto. "There can only be unity in the struggle of the people for the overthrow of the dictatorship and in putting up a people's coalition government. The challenge of faith is indeed the people's democratic revolution. It challenges all Christians to participate in the people's war against its enemies typified by the US-Marcos regime."

Awakened by the Aquino murder to the violent character of the state, an increasing number of the country's 7,500 nuns and 14,500 priests are evidently pressing for a more militant posture against the regime. Even prior to the murder, progressive clergy and laity were already gaining more adherents for the struggle to dismantle the entire apparatus of the US-Marcos dictatorship. Some have picked up the more limited call for Marcos' resignation. Given these bold moves in the church sector,



Sept. 16 church rally: Facing up to the call of the times

Sin's conciliatory policy uneasily puts the Church in a dilemma.

The danger in this dilemma is that the Church hierarchy is made to lag behind the progressive current fast developing among church people and the entire middle forces as well. It undercuts the Church's moral leadership at a time when much of the middle class look up to it for effective guidance. Because of its vast ideological influence, the Church commands substantial sway over 45 million Filipinos, even if it only issues statements on moral grounds. But with its reconciliation move, the Church hierarchy stands in danger of falling behind the snowballing people's movement against the dictatorship.

There are other pitfalls in this dilemma of reconciliation, say seasoned observers. By entering into a compromise with the dictatorship, the Church hierarchy could easily fall into the trap of Marcos and become an uncritical collaborator of the regime. And by confining itself within the framework of the fascist regime, the Church could be reduced to upholding an illegitimate authority which, as the recent massive protests show, has been overwhelmingly spurned by the people.

Some observers have expressed surprise at Sin's renewed assertion of his reconciliation proposal. For in recent months, Sin has been increasingly critical of the regime rather than collaborationist. Although politically conservative, Sin had been speaking out more and more boldly on various issues ranging from the condemnation of the root causes of social unrest to the Presidential Commitment Order (PCO) and to US arms aid. This no doubt was largely prompted by popular protest against the regime's exploitative and oppressive policies and actions. Last February, Church-State relations sunk to a new low with the formal withdrawal of the Church hierarchy from the Church-Military Liaison Committee. Church leaders branded the committee, organized in 1973 to handle thorny problems involving the military, as an "anachronism."

But in the wake of the mass actions unleashed by the assassination, the same observers say that it is striking to note that Sin seems to be intent on holding back the people's militance. This has raised criticisms that the Church hierarchy could be obstructing the people's struggle at a time when militant mass action is most needed to hasten basic changes in an oppressive social order. Sister Ruth, a CNL member, says this could be due to the Church hierarchy's fears of powerful mass struggles which could destabilize Church interests.

"The Church does not want to risk diminishing its significant institutional

power as well as its vast material interests," notes Sister Ruth, referring to the Church's huge assets in banking, industry and land. "But I think the Church will just have to face the truth that the breach between the people and the regime has widened into a chasm and no plank can ever bridge it." So far, Sin seems to be bent on putting that plank across.

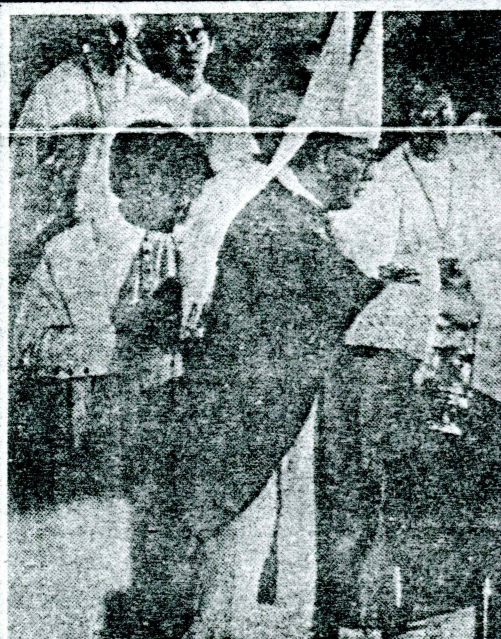
Yet, while Sin has been frantically sending signals of conciliation to the regime, Marcos has showed little interest in the plan. Although Sin's council would be merely advisory and not legally binding, Marcos has coldly received it, an indication of his continuing resistance to sharing political power with any of the opposition. Even then, Marcos has not totally rejected Sin's proposal, which is the least threatening of opposition demands. He sees it as a fallback when things get tight and he is forced to grant concessions to placate the legal opposition.

Church insiders, however, say that privately, Sin is pessimistic about the acceptance of his plan. A well-informed source close to Sin said the prayer standstill which began on Sept. 19 was in fact organized after Sin received no response from Marcos regarding the council. Sin has much reason to be pessimistic. The regime has shown no signs of budging an inch, even on the issue of political prisoners. Contrary to Marcos' announcement on the release of 470 political prisoners on his birthday, the Task Force Detainees of the Philippines (TFDP) revealed that many in the first batch of detainees were actually released last year, while some were issued PCOs which have not been served. The TFDP said the second batch of detainees were not political detainees but common criminals.

Church repression continues

The regime's hardening stance towards protesting sectors and groups, including church people, has heightened the Church hierarchy's dilemma. Since the clampdown on progressive church people in the second half of 1982, the state has not relented in its campaign to suppress pro-people Church programs, institutions and personnel. Last Aug. 23 and 24, in a measure of the regime's deepening antagonism to the progressive trend in the Church, the military raided the residence of Bishop Miguel Purugganan, the CFIC sisters' convent, the diocesan social action center and chapel in Ilagan, Isabela, allegedly to arrest NPA priest Conrado Balweg and six other religious activists. The raid, however, yielded negative results.

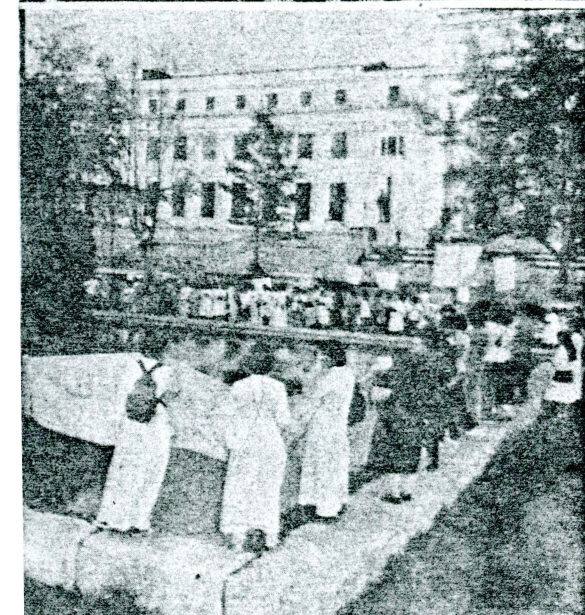
Purugganan, an outspoken critic of



Last farewell: Sin officiating at Aquino funeral

the regime and the military in his diocese, described the raid as "plain harassment." Said the bishop, "It is a test case to see how far the military can go with the Church, how much the Church can stand and how far the Church will also go." The raid, the first in contemporary history against a bishop's residence, was also strongly condemned by Sin, other bishops and church organizations. "It was a fishing expedition by the military in the hope that they can find compromising evidence," charged the Luzon Secretariat for Social Action.

Strong words, however, have not been enough to restrain the military's iron hand. In the same month of August, the regime's soldiers arrested Fr. Leoncio Evasco with 14 other people, including two Protestant pastors, three lay workers and a three-year old child in Libuagan,



mass (above); religious showing their commitment

Northern Cotobato. Four of those arrested were later summarily killed ("salvaged," in military parlance) and their bodies displayed at the Metrodiscom headquarters.

Evasco's arrest brings to over 78 the number of priests, pastors and nuns arrested since the declaration of martial law, according to TFDP figures. About 51 lay workers have been arrested in the same period, nine of whom were found salvaged. In 1982 to 1983 alone, the military raided at least 10 Church establishments. Coupled with these outright repressive measures is the systematic campaign to malign and discredit Church grassroots organizations and workers through extensive black propaganda.

Even Sin has not been spared from the vicious smear campaign. Government officials have accused him of being a

"Filipino Khomeini," to which he bitingly retorted, "Then there must be a Filipino Shah." Church programs directly under the Archbishop's office have also been included in the state's sweeping suppression measures. Recently, the state-owned Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office withdrew its sponsorship from the Church-owned Radio Veritas in an ill-disguised move against the station's full coverage of the Aquino slaying and successive protest demonstrations. Earlier, the Office of Media Affairs had officially "advised" the station to "tone down" its broadcasts. A delegation from the Kapisanan ng mga Brodkasters sa Pilipinas (KBP), the government watchdog committee, had also called on station general manager Bishop Teodoro Buhain "in the interest of self-regulation." When the station failed to heed the continuous "advice," its broadcasts were jammed.

The government financial squeeze spurred Sin to announce a special collection for Radio Veritas during Sunday masses. Parishioners in many churches enthusiastically backed his call. At the elite Magallanes Village parish church, the radio station received a whopping P35,000.

Marcos' latest tirades against the "radical clergy" has tangled the Church's knotty dilemma even more. Ignoring the denials and pacificatory gestures of Church leaders, the dictator warned the clergy "not to engage in demagoguery and to stop utilizing the facilities of the Church and Catholic schools in mounting a hate-campaign against Marcos and the government." He warned that the government is ready to meet "force with force."

The intensifying friction between Church and State has alarmed certain government quarters. Last May, the coterie of Presidential spokesman Adrian Cristobal, some of whom are discredited former activists, released a paper recommending some options to ease the friction. Published under the title *Crisis Papers*, the document contains prescriptions for splitting the Church hierarchy and the Church rank-and-file that are identical to those of the insidious military-backed Kintanar Paper and Banzer Plan. Cristobal's paper proposes a two-pronged approach: 1) soft line, e.g. verbal and legislative guarantees to protect Church material interests and the playing down of ideological differences between Church and State while emphasizing those between the Church and "rebel-clerics" and 2) hard line, e.g. exposing the material interests of the Church, capitalizing on the anti-clerical sentiments of the intelligentsia and isolating the Sin group by projec-

ting Church officials friendly to State reform.

Such sinister ploys and outright repression have only served to turn off many church people from attempts to reconcile with the moribund regime. For them, reconciliation can only mean taking part in a grand scheme to confuse and deceive the people about the real nature of the regime and being coopted into the repression campaign against the people. It also means limiting the options of struggle of other sectors. Such sectors include the masses in the rural areas as well as some clerics who have made a "leap of faith" by embracing the revolutionary option of armed struggle as the correct solution to national problems.

To be sure, the Church hierarchy has the devil of a task in facing up to the dilemma of which way to go in the crossroads of the present turbulent situation. The people on the whole, including the Church rank-and-file and the middle sectors of society, are already taking the path of militant struggle. Their move forces the Church hierarchy to take a stronger position than simply disagreeing with the regime but clarifying its posture regarding the changing of the hated dictatorship. It virtually narrows the options of compromise with the regime and makes the choice for the Church more sharply drawn: to side with the regime or to side with the people in ousting it.

"The Church situated within this social context has to identify which cause to share lest it be reduced to irrelevance," says the nuns in KAMAY. Yet irrelevance is not the only problem nagging the Church hierarchy. There is also the equally grave problem of being isolated from the Church ranks and from the entire anti-dictatorship mainstream of struggle. Since it views its paramount duty to lead its flock as the "shepherd of souls," the Church hierarchy is therefore pressed to seek the unity of all forces pursuing the broad struggle to fight for national freedom and democracy and to end the US-Marcos regime.

But so far, the spiritual leader of the country still seems to be trying to go the way of reconciliation with the regime. Everyday, the airwaves of Radio Veritas incessantly drone Sin's call: "You cannot be able to achieve national reconciliation unless you know the art of stooping down." The dictator's unbending get-tough policy, however, may just force the Church and other groups to realize that in the one-way traffic of autocratic rule, only the people's collective and armed strength will force the dictator to stoop down - and, more especially, to step down from power.

-Leon Fortaleta



Sept. 16 picket at Bulletin office: Media under seige

Unmasking the myth-makers

People denounce servile media and demand press freedom

It has been a stormy morning after. But the establishment media have told otherwise about the aftermath of the Aquino assassination: that confidence not mistrust, grief not sympathy, sobriety not rage, have overwhelmed the people after the slaying. True, the people have taken to the street, said the media, but only in a few thousands and not in millions, in mourning and not in protest. True, the people have cried out for justice, said the media, but for Ninoy's murder alone and not for all victims of military terrorism and political repression. And yes, many sectors are now astir, but merely to seek redress of specific issues and not to demand the Marcos government's total ouster.

So while a real political upheaval has been gathering the last three weeks, thus has the Marcos-controlled media vainly tried to reduce all the public furor to a mere storm in the teacup, allegedly being brewed by a bunch of communist and radical plotters.

These recent fabrications of course are nothing new. Lies and deception have been the trademarks of Philippine media in the martial law era. This time, however, people have not only refused to believe the fabrications but are now turning against the fabricators themselves. The Aquino killing unleashed their long pent-up anger at the establishment media which for so long

has hidden the regime's anti-people crimes.

In Tarlac, Tarlac on Aug. 27, a part of the huge throng welcoming Aquino's remains tried to overturn a mini-cruiser of the *Times Journal*. During the funeral procession on Aug. 31, a crowd gathered at the EDSA-South Superhighway interchange, upon noticing card-bearing press photographers positioning their vehicles at a vantage view, shouted: "Mga bwisit! Huwag na kayong magpagod at hindi rin naman ninyo nilalabas ang totoo sa dyaryo!" And again on Sept. 20 at Ayala Avenue in Makati, demonstrating executives and employees in polo barong rocked a *Daily Express* cruiser and almost set this afire.

The people's fury in some instances was so worrisome for media men that during the tension-filled night of Sept. 21, some of them purposely covered the emblems of their press vehicles for fear of inviting untoward incidents. In covering the violent confrontation between the soldiers and demonstrators, many media personnel chose to position themselves at the decidedly stronger—though not necessarily the safer—side of the soldiers since they felt ill at ease with the mass of angry demonstrators.

The rise of unfortunate incidents of booing and physical harassments of media personnel is not hard to under-

stand. A great number of people, greater than at any other time, have just been awakened to the gravity of the insidious thought control function assigned by the regime to the establishment media. This newly aroused section of the population, numbering millions, view the media men covering their beat as the most visible targets of attack. At present, they are still unaware of the difference in political status of big publishers and their highly-paid chief editors, on one hand, and the rank-and-file media personnel, on the other. They are also unaware of the significant pro-people and militant tide that has started to grow among some media people who since last year have been campaigning for their own democratic rights through individual and collective efforts.

JAJA's press freedom drive

Even as the people's valid anger at the establishment media took the form of misdirected invectives on the persons and vehicles of the more visible field reporters, various organizations sought to undertake a more rational and systematic raising of the press freedom issue.

The Justice for Aquino, Justice for All (JAJA), a multi-sectoral alliance of about 64 organizations, released a statement on Aug. 29 demanding "the lifting of all forms of control and censorship on the media coverage of the Aquino slaying in keeping with freedom of expression and the people's right to know." JAJA took this step in order to counteract the regime's imminent whitewashing of the Aquino case. In addition, to underscore the significance of press freedom, the alliance formed a press freedom committee to take charge of subsequent press freedom campaigns.

Powerful organizations of the private business sector have also taken up the issue. Recently, the Philippine Chamber Commerce and the Makati Business Club demanded the full restoration of press freedom. According to them, the curtailment of press freedom has aggravated an atmosphere of uncertainty and speculations that hurt an already sluggish domestic business.

On Sept. 11, JAJA spearheaded a day boycott of the major dailies to dramatize public repudiation of the conspiracy of the government, big publishers and obsequious chief editors to perpetuate a no-press-freedom situation in the country. In its statement on media repression, JAJA cited stark "instances of government repression of journalists because they articulated the interests and needs of farmers, workers, students and Filipinos other than the President, the First Lady, a few generals, local cronies and foreign big business."

The alliance called for the defense of press freedom, the cancellation of all subscriptions to government-controlled newspapers as well as letter-writing and phone-calling campaigns to the editors of pro-Marcos dailies.

As early as July, following a renewed drive by the government and big publishers to harass progressive journalists and the imposition of a near total ban on critical articles, the plan for a newspaper boycott had already been floated. Subsequently, as the government and big publishers deliberately downplayed Aquino's assassination as a non-event, things came to a head.

"Starting today please stop our subscription of *Bulletin Today*, *Times Journal* and *Daily Express*." This sign posted on subscribers' gates greeted many newsboys in the morning of Sept. 11. Some subscribers were considerate enough though to give their newsboys a few centavos mark-up so as not to unduly hurt the latter's modicum income during the campaign.

Though exact figures to quantify the extent of the boycott were difficult to gather, various signs pointed success. For example, all dealers interviewed by JAJA monitoring teams in Greater Manila confirmed a significant downturn in the sales of the three major dailies and an upswing in the sales of independent or anti-Marcos tabloids. The *Bulletin*, for one, experienced sales declines from 20,000 to 30,000 copies during the boycott, a sharp drop from its circulation peak right after Aquino's murder. In Cebu City, the Associated Press reported a 30 percent sales deduction in the major national dailies. In Cagayan de Oro and Davao City, significant newspaper boycotts were also reported.

More than the immediate economic losses incurred by the big publishers, the newspaper boycott generated a powerful political impact. It stripped bare the major dailies' role of mending the badly tattered public image of the fascist regime. The unprecedented mass action also instilled in many hitherto passive newspaper readers the message that collective action is an effective weapon against the suppressors of press freedom and the purveyors of untruth.

Confrontation

Another major highlight of the mounting people's protests against the subservient press was the Sept. 16 protest march of newspaper consumers, dubbed as the Press Freedom March. The mass action, organized by JAJA, reeled off in front of the National Press Club with nearly a thousand teachers, church people, students and professionals participating.

"*Bulletin* Ibitin! *Times Journal* Pang-imburnal! *Express* I-suppress!"

The marchers feverishly chanted as they negotiated the streets of Intramuros and made stop-over at the offices of the *Bulletin*, *Times Journal* and *Daily Express* to publicly ventilate their grievances. Though modest in size, the march instantly drew sympathetic applause from bystanders.

A five-man panel composed of student, teacher and church leaders sought the publisher or editor of each office and discussed with them the demands of the protesters: enforcement of independent editorial policies based on fair, truthful and accurate reporting and un beholden to Malacanang's dictates; adequate coverage of issues, demands and struggles of the people; job security guarantees for reporters, columnists, correspondents; lifting of policies banning articles critical of the regime; an end to the name-

other major dailies-- a challenge which, to many, is as nonsensical as identifying in a garbage heap the rubbish that stinks least. At the *Daily Express* office, publisher Juan Perez was frank enough to concede the regime's control over the press: "We have to have a modus vivendi with Malacanang in order to survive."

Notwithstanding their loud disclaimers to charges of being the regime's apologists, big publishers and chief editors of the major dailies were pressed to bend down, even momentarily, to popular pressure. On the day following the demonstration, in an attempt to assuage the public and also perhaps to dispute critics, major dailies began to cover anti-dictatorship rallies, press releases of people's organizations and the resistance of squatters to the government's demolition drive.



Free the press: Bold streamers denouncing media censorship

calling and labelling of legitimate people's organizations fighting for democratic rights and just causes; prioritization of public welfare over the advertisers in cases of interest conflicts; and, providing full support for journalists who have been harassed, arrested and detained by the government and military on fabricated and flimsy charges.

In one of the confrontations between the demonstrators' panel and the newspaper bosses, *Bulletin* editor Pat Gonzales outrightly denied obvious political motivations behind the harassment of progressive and anti-regime writers in his newspaper. He claimed that all past shufflings of personnel were due to "administrative measures" which are the management's prerogatives. Visibly hurt, he showed the panel a bunch of "insulting" letters his office had been receiving. Gonzales was quick though in hectoring the demonstrators to compare his own newspaper's integrity with that of

Dissent and apprehension

To be sure, there is much difference between the mass media of pre-martial law years and of today. Laments Noel, a national democratic activist who participated in the historic First Quarter Storm of 1970, "Nowadays, media people have become alienated from the mass of rallyists and the broad public. This is so different from the turbulent days of the '70s when youth activists considered the man with the press badge as a sympathetic big brother and his vehicle, the activist's sanctuary from the swinging truncheons of Metrocom soldiers. Demonstrators and the people then had a very high regard for the press and those in the press were aware of this."

True enough. The martial law regime, in complicity with the big publishers, bears direct responsibility for the dramatic change in the public attitude on the media people. But recently, especially after Aug. 21, the situation has swiftly taken a new turn.

With the dramatic surge of the broad open mass movement fighting for nationalist and democratic demands, political activism among media people has likewise heightened. Journalists and production workers alike have become more intent in actively campaigning not only for their economic welfare but also for broad political demands like press freedom. During the Press Freedom March, many media personnel loudly cheered the demonstrators from the windows in a gesture of solidarity. Others joined the march as it moved to other newspaper offices. At the Sept. 21 rally at Liwasang Bonifacio, nearly a hundred media people flocked to the mammoth gathering, displaying their own mural and streamers for press freedom alongside the streamers of other sectors.

Evidently, shared experiences of the much-worsened economic sufferings and of intensifying struggles against the dictatorship are galvanizing a significant section of the media rank-and-file with the broad masses of the people. In this newly found pact of political unity and cooperation, lost comradeship and lost confidence would certainly be restored.

Another significant trend in these recent developments is the unfolding polarization of forces in the media front, a trend which reflects that in the larger society. With the support of the media rank-and-file, the people are exerting immense pressure on big publishers and their highly-paid hacks to dissociate the media from a moribund and unpopular regime. Amid the accelerating economic and political crisis, the pressure is building up daily.

The regime is getting fidgety about this trend. On Sept. 17, Marcos reportedly called a meeting in Malacanang of trusted editors of the major dailies in order to gather first-hand accounts of the dwindling public confidence on the press. In the meeting, he offered police protection for the troubled editors which the latter declined. At the height of the newspaper boycott campaign, an apprehensive Palace official was also saying: "If the people won't believe the present media anymore, how else will they believe the government?"

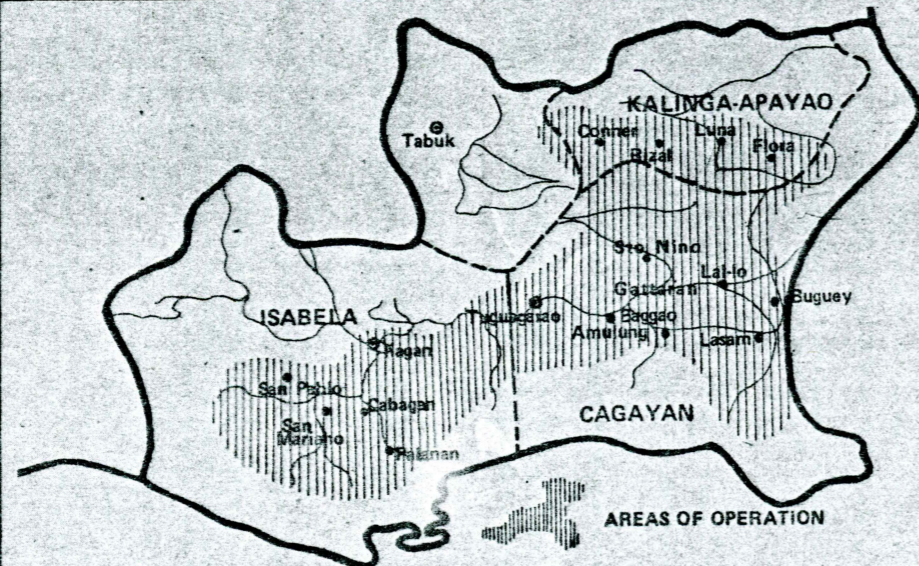
Indeed, now that the US-Marcos dictatorship is strongly being rocked by political and armed assaults of the people, the establishment media cannot anymore conjure pro-regime propaganda and gimmickry with the same liberty as it used to during the heyday of martial rule. To continue to do so will only invite stronger public repudiation. On the other hand, to put a stop to its aggressive pro-regime drive will surely break an important crutch of a badly politically-crippled regime.

-Alfredo Amuyao

MAINSTREAM

Marching onward

NPA in Cagayan Valley scores more victories against regime's troops



As the urban mass movement gained ground in the wake of the Aquino assassination, the revolutionary armed struggle has continued to steadily advance in the countryside. In Cagayan Valley, part of the dictator's northern bailiwick, the New People's Army (NPA) notched new gains in the first seven months of this year against the regime's military forces. This report is a sequel to the article on the NPA in Cagayan Valley published last month in Liberation.

Cagayan Valley is a land of startling contrasts. It is a land of vast verdant fields and lush forests. Yet it is also a land of hunger and poverty and is one of the most depressed regions in the Philippines. It is also a land where the old chains of feudal bondage are particularly tightest and most oppressive. It was not then surprising that when expansion teams of the New People's Army arrived in the province of Isabela sometime in late 1969, they were welcomed with open arms by the poor peasants.

Soon after, Cagayan Valley, particularly the province of Isabela, became the "standard bearer of armed revolution." Armed struggle in the region escalated to a level not achieved elsewhere. It became a training ground for many political and military cadres of the Communist Party of the Philippines who later opened new NPA territories in other parts of the country. It was also the region where the first Red companies were established.

Because of the rapid development of guerrilla warfare in the region, the Marcos government in 1971 began to concentrate massive troops there, reaching to as high as 15,000 soldiers at one time. The region became a land of torment and misery as the government's encirclement and suppression campaigns forcibly relocated and hamletted thousands of peasants in the manner of "depriving the fish (NPA) of its water (the people)."

The systematic and sustained repression campaign continued under martial law. For the next four years, the NPA suffered tremendous losses due to massive enemy operations which were compounded by big errors in policy committed by some leading cadres in the region. These cadres' reliance solely on physical terrain in an effort to preserve the guerrilla army from the encirclement and suppression campaign had spawned passive defense and also limited NPA areas of operation to already depopulated forested areas.

In 1977, the NPA launched a rectification campaign. New priorities and new tactics enabled the Red fighters to break out of the enemy encirclement and expand into virgin territories. In this way, the guerrilla army was able to preserve its diminished forces and increase manifold. From the forested areas of Sierra Madre, it reached the populated plains of Cagayan Valley and neighboring Apayao.

Today, by its exemplary display of resiliency and perseverance, the NPA in Cagayan Valley has made steady

advances in both military and political fields. It has built up a hard-earned reputation in solid mass organizing and in the resolute implementation of revolutionary agrarian reform (e.g. deduction of land rent) as well as in sustained guerrilla warfare which surpasses even its previous peak level.

January-July gains

In 1983, the NPA continued to make significant headway, according to *Liberation* correspondents in the region. From January to July 15 this year, the guerrilla army captured 78 firearms in 15 tactical offensives, 10 partisan operations and two defensive fights staged in 14 towns of Cagayan Valley. In the same period, 61 enemy troopers and forces were killed while the Red fighters sustained very few losses in its ranks.

The 15 tactical offensives were comprised of 12 ambushes, two raids and one sniping attack. Captured in these operations were 64 firearms made up of 41 M-16 rifles, one BAR, one M-14, one M-60, two M-203s, seven Garands, three M-1s and three shotguns. Fifty-seven soldiers of the Armed Forces of the Philippines were killed, including five lieutenants, while 15 others were wounded and eight surrendered to the NPA.

The latest tactical offensives as of June and July included those mounted at sitio Marimay, Lagac, Flora, Kalinga-Apayao on June 9 (five soldiers killed, five M-16s seized); Bo. Villa Imelda, Ilagan, Isabela on July 6 (three notorious Civilian Home Defense Force (CHDF) members killed, two wounded, two Garands seized); Palanan, Isabela sometime in early July (three M-16s seized from a jeep-load of policemen); and at sitio Matad, Bo. Salvacion, Luna, Kalinga-Apayao on July 12.

In the July 12 offensive, the NPA guerrillas sprang an ambush on 14 soldiers, killing nine of them and capturing 10 firearms including nine M-16s, one pistol, 1,250 bullets and 59 magazines. A corporal of the Integrated National Police who surrendered to the NPA was given medical treatment and released after the firefight. On the other hand, a CHDF member who surrendered was meted the death sentence because of his responsibility in a military encirclement of the NPA in 1982 wherein one guerrilla was killed.

In the 10 partisan operations, four die-hard enemies of the people were killed. Twelve firearms were confiscated (11 M-16s and one Garand) by NPA guerrillas while six M-16s were seized by mass activists.

In the two defensive fights, Red fighters successfully broke through enemy encirclement operations on June 3 and June 9, capturing one

Garand and one M-16. In the latter operation, a seven-man armed propaganda team daringly escaped from the clutches of a 32-man enemy force.

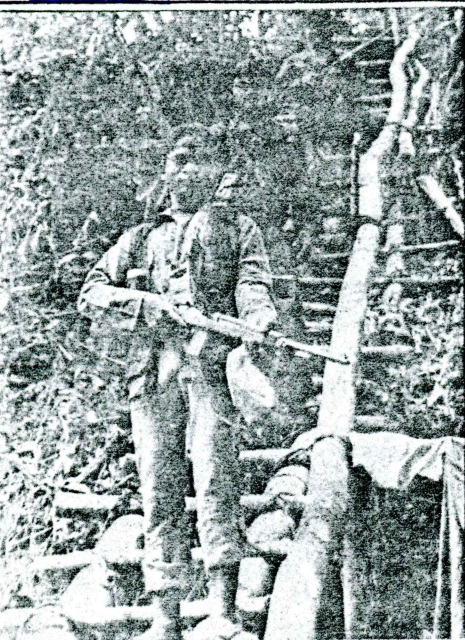
In a report given to *Liberation*, the NPA attributed its victories to the deep support of the people of Cagayan. "Without them, we could not have overcome the strong and fierce counter-offensives of the enemy who is much superior to us militarily." Vowed the NPA: "We will further improve our techniques and tactics in guerrilla warfare so as to intensify the people's war in the entire region. We will continue to strengthen the NPA by relying on the unity of the masses and the people's army, by relentless training and by resolutely crushing the enemy."

Mounting victories in Isabela

In the province of Isabela, one of the first cradles of the NPA, the guerrilla army scored its biggest victories. In a span of one and a half months, the NPA netted six firearms and killed and wounded 12 AFP troops in six military operations. Earlier, in the first half of 1983, the NPA confiscated 10 firearms and killed 17 enemy soldiers. Following are reports on some of the operations:

July 3. An NPA team broke through a combined PC-INP-CHDF encirclement in Palanan and captured one Garand rifle. To hide their embarrassment, the military beat up and shot dead three guerrillas whom they had captured.

July 5. In an encounter with a PC-CHDF unit in Bo. Tupa, San Pablo, Red fighters killed five enemies. The NPA suffered no casualties. In retaliation, the military arrested two barrio youths, faced them before a firing squad and shot them dead in front of the people of Bo. Dalena.



Guerrillas: Girding for bigger battles

July 6. NPA guerrillas ambushed a CHDF unit which was on their way to the rice mill at Bo. Villa Imelda in Ilagan in order to extort. The firefight erupted at 11:30 a.m. Three CHDFs were killed and one was wounded; two Garands were seized. After the NPAs left, reinforcements from the PC and CHDF arrived. They began firing at their comrades who were on the other side of the river, thus resulting in the wounding of one CHDF.

In neighboring Cagayan province, the NPA also chalked military victories. On July 4 in Bo. Centro West, Lasam, the guerrillas waylaid a PC jeep, killing one lieutenant, one sergeant and wounding two others including a Dr. Jacob, an agent of the National Intelligence Security Agency in Western Cagayan.

On July 28, an NPA team successfully penetrated a military cordon set up by the 52nd PC Battalion in Bo. Mambang, Rizal. Four soldiers were killed; the NPAs safely retreated without suffering heavy casualties. On July 18 in Bo. Sto. Nino, partisan guerrillas punished a notorious policeman and seized his .38 pistol. The policeman was setting up a spy network when he was shot in a dancehall.

Last May, an NPA partisan unit punished the INP station commander of Kasibu town in Nueva Vizcaya. The police chief was responsible for the salvaging of five mass activists as well as for the forced "surrender" of 200 barrio people.

To cover up the military losses, the PC provincial commander of Isabela reported in the newspapers and radio that it was the NPA which suffered heavy casualties. Barrio people, however, saw through the ruse as one of many attempts to hide the NPA's growing strength in the entire region.

Military reprisal and repression

In reaction to the escalating NPA offensives, the regime poured additional military forces into Cagayan Valley last May and repositioned some of the battalions. At present, there are three AFP battalions in Isabela alone comprised of 1,800 soldiers: the 21st and 17th Infantry Battalions in the eastern part of the province and the 52nd in the west.

To effectively combat these armed forces and the stepped-up repression, the *Nalabaga a Gerilya* (Red Fighter), NPA publication in Cagayan Valley, released a situationer on each of these battalions.

Deployed in Cagayan Valley in 1973, the 17th Infantry Battalion (IB) has long been hated by the masses of Isabela, especially in the towns of San Pablo, Ilagan and San Mariano where its abuses and stealing are well known. In Cagayan and some parts of the Mt. Province, it is notorious for its many

SPARKS

4 AMBUSHES STAGED IN SAMAR

Four ambushes were staged from May to August by the New People's Army and its militia in two Samar provinces, killing six troopers and two members of the Civilian Home Defense Force.

Five soldiers -- one of them an officer -- were killed on Aug. 15 in an ambush in Barrio Can-ato, Llorente, Eastern Samar.

Earlier last month, an ambush by the NPA in the same town resulted in the death of two CHDF members.

Two other ambushes were held last May and June, one by the people's militia in Mambog, Pinabacdao, Western Samar and another in Basey, Western Samar.

All tactical operations yielded several high-powered firearms.

3 KILLED BY NPA IN ZAMBOANGA

Three PC sergeants were killed when the passenger jeepney they were riding in was ambushed by the NPA last Aug. 20 in Barangay Mati, San Miguel, Zamboanga del Sur.

The vehicle came from Margosatubig and was on its way to Pagadian City when it was attacked by the Red fighters.

Several firearms were seized by the NPA.

NPA RAIDS POLICE ARMORY

Members of the New People's Army raided and placed under siege for one hour the Liangga police station in Surigao del Sur last Sept. 3.

The NPA soldiers reportedly converged at a nearby quarry while their two comrades rode a bicycle and monitored the town proper.

Afterwards, the guerrillas went to the compound of the Ministry of Public Works and Highways where they seized three vehicles, including a 10-wheeler truck. They proceeded to raid the police station and engaged the policemen in a one-hour battle.

Three policemen were killed and an assortment of firearms, 2,000 rounds of ammunition, and a pair of radio sets were seized.

GOV'T SOLDIERS KILLED IN KALINGA, QUEZON

At least eight men of the 51st Army Infantry Battalion were killed in an ambush by the NPA last Aug. 22 in Basao-Bugnay road in Tinglayan, Kalinga-Apayao.

The bodies of the slain soldiers were recovered only several days after their death because of the government troopers' fear of another ambush.

Meanwhile, an army sergeant and five CHDF members were killed by the NPA in Barangay Sta. Teresita, Guinayangan, Quezon.

EMPLOYEES HOLD SLOWDOWN, STRIKE

More than 2,000 employees of the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. and 400 employees of the Philippine Bank of Communications staged separate protest actions over their managements' failure to grant their just demands.

PLDT employees went on a slowdown last Sept. 7 during a deadlock in the collective bargaining negotiations between their union and management.

The workers trooped to the firm's clinic to obtain applications for a sick leave. Management approved only some of the applications but the time spent by the employees lining up for a check-up caused the firm many man-hours loss.

The bank employees, on the other hand, went on strike after management failed to follow an agreement with the union that provided for an automatic increase in their salaries every time the peso devalues.

Four hours after the office workers walked out, management agreed to grant a 7.8 percent salary increase.

MELBOURNE RALLY HITS H.R. VIOLATIONS

Members and supporters of the Philippine Action Support Group in Melbourne, Australia staged a demonstration last Aug. 22 to denounce the violation of human rights in the Philippines, the presence of US military bases in the country and Australian military and economic aid to the Marcos regime.

More than 200 people joined the protest action.

extortion activities as well as rape. In Eastern Cagayan, it is responsible for the salvaging of 15 farmers in 1980-81 and for the killing of five students in 1982. It is also liable for the Magugod Massacre in Amulong wherein six people were murdered in 1981.

The 21st so-called "Invincible" Battalion first saw action in Mindanao in 1973 where it was dealt severe blows. It was then transferred to Tarlac and Pampanga, then to Isabela and Cagayan in 1977. In Isabela, it became famous for the beheadings of NPA guerrillas and peasants suspected of being NPAs. The 21st IB was booted out of Cagayan in 1979 due to the people's pro-

tests against its abuses. Among these atrocities were the beheading of three farmers in Baggao in 1978; the mass arrest of the entire barrio population of Bunugan in Baggao, 80 of whom were beaten up and dragged to the military camp in Sentro Temblique, Baggao; and the salvaging of 15 people in Eastern Cagayan in 1977 to 1979.

The 21st IB had a short stint in Bataan and was then transferred back to Isabela in 1981. In the heat of the June 1981 presidential elections, the battalion served as the security guards of Eduardo Cojuangco's corporation (ANCA) in two haciendas until 1982. To clean up its stinking image, the

21st IB sponsored counter-insurgency operations in Isabela such as the Army Literacy Patrol System. Its public relations campaigns, however, did not last. From October to December 1982, it launched military operations in San Pablo, Cabagan, Isabela where it inflicted more sufferings on barrio folk already badly battered by a typhoon. In April 1983, the battalion forced 150 people in San Pablo to "surrender" as NPAs.

The 21st IB is due to be deployed to Eastern Cagayan as part of the military operation "Northstar" which is in turn part of the broader counter-insurgency Oplan Katatagan.



Growing solidarity ties: Australians staging demo in support of Philippine struggle

ARTISTS HIT CENSORSHIP

Members of the movie industry under the Film Academy of the Philippines denounced the "capricious, inconsistent, and arbitrary" implementation of the guidelines for movie censorship.

In a meeting held at the St. Joseph's College auditorium, Quezon City, the film artists also decided to stop the production and showing of Filipino films for a certain period if their demands for a liberalization of censorship rules are ignored.

The academy, which is composed of nine movie workers' guilds, two producers' associations and the MOWELFUND, decided to take action to prevent further losses to producers and to uphold the film artists' rights to freedom of creative expression.

HONORARY DEGREE OPPOSED

Teachers, students, parents and alumni of the Philippine Normal College (PNC) expressed last Aug. 31 their opposition to the administration's decision to confer an honorary degree on US Sen. Mark Hatfield.

In an open letter signed by representatives of the faculty and student organizations, the protesters denounced the administration's move granting a degree to a representative of the US government at a time of national turmoil.

They further pointed out that the compulsory attendance imposed by the college ran counter to their wish to join anti-government rallies denouncing the Aquino murder.

U.P. STUDENTS PROTEST FEE HIKE

About 350 students and faculty members of the UP College of Arts and Sciences in Manila denounced the proposed 100 percent tuition fee hike at UP last Sept. 8 in a symposium sponsored by the college student council.

The students blamed the government for refusing to shoulder the responsibility of giving free and quality education to the people. Explaining their opposition to the fee hike, the participants said that approval of the increase means the approval of the government's anti-people and counter-insurgency programs which receive the biggest slice of the national budget.

'EDJOP' REMEMBERED

Three memorial services were held last Sept. 20 in honor of former student activist Edgar "Edjop" Jopson at the Loreto Church in Sampaloc, Manila, the Ateneo Chapel at Loyola Heights and the Church of the Holy Sacrifice in Diliman, Quezon City.

Speaking in behalf of his family, Edjop's father spoke of his son's dedication to the national democratic cause. "Some of you may still not understand it, but my son fought and died for the national democratic cause, for he believed in its correctness and justice," he said.

Edjop, a former moderate who went underground and became a member of the Communist Party of the Philippines, was also honored in a huge mural made by the Concerned Artists of the Philippines.

While the 21st IB is famous for its beheadings, the 52nd PC Ranger Battalion on the other hand is notorious for cutting off ears. It widely practiced this barbarity in Samar in 1978, causing massive protests and leading to its transfer to Albay in Bicol in 1981 where it continued to sow terror and fear. Like the 21st IB, the 52nd also suffered heavy losses as a result of NPA attacks. In May 1983, it was transferred to Cagayan after undergoing retraining in Camp Castaneda in Silang, Cavite.

"One characteristic is shared by all these battalions, be they from the Army, PC, Rangers, police or CHDF," said the

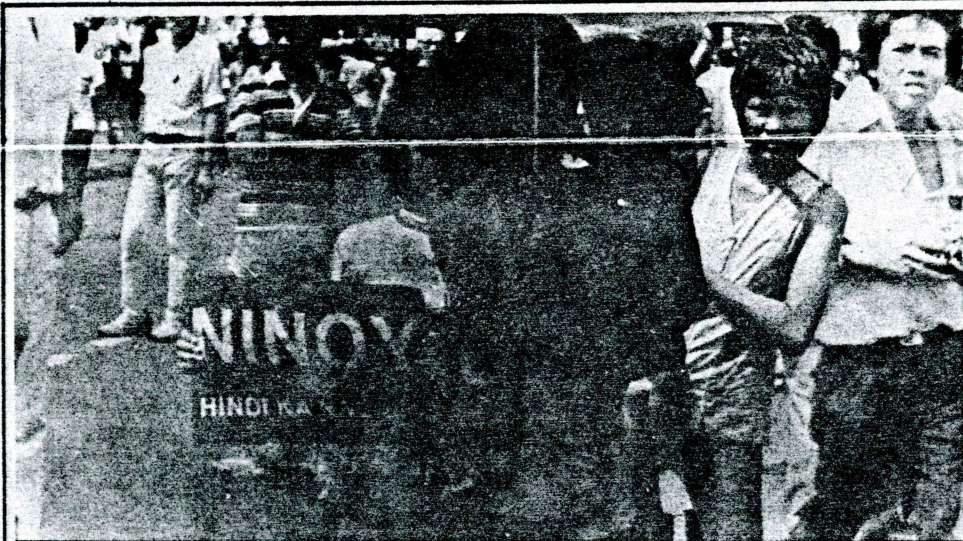
Nalabaga a Gerilya. "They are all anti-people." That is why, the NPA newspaper explained, the people have likened them to the Japanese soldiers who brutally oppressed the Filipinos during the Second World War.

The comparison is further borne out by the spiralling trend of military atrocities in Cagayan Valley. As of July this year, 80 barrios in 90 towns of the region have been hamletted, heaping more sufferings on 50,000 barrio residents who were forcibly evacuated from their homes. At least 30 farmers have been salvaged this year.

There is good reason for the

masses of Cagayan Valley to turn against the regime's military forces and side with the NPA guerrillas, many of whom hail from the region itself. In words and deeds, the NPA is exactly the opposite of the AFP. It is therefore not surprising why the NPA has come to enjoy the people's abundant support while the military has earned the hatred of the people. This overwhelming political superiority of the NPA over its adversary has been the single biggest factor propelling its continuous growth in the region.

- Leon Fortaleza



Rallying point: Aquino's death uniting people from all sectors

VIEWPOINT

Aquino assessed

He was a martyr, patriot, liberal democrat and outstanding foe of regime

Because of the great impact of the assassination of ex-Senator Benigno Aquino Jr. on the country, his life and death call for an appraisal in relation to the people's struggle against the dictatorship. In this article, Liberation contributor Alma Rason assesses the political significance of Aquino and his martyrdom. Her article has been abridged for space considerations. We enclosed summarized portions in parentheses.

Benigno S. Aquino, Jr. gained nationwide prominence for the first time as a teenage *Manila Times* reporter in the frontlines of the Korean war. Subsequently, in his early twenties, he became the mayor of his hometown, Concepcion, Tarlac.

As mayor and then as Tarlac governor, he adopted a populist style and endeared himself to many people. Although he belonged to a landlord family, he knew how to befriend and relate himself positively to the peasants and even to the armed revolutionaries. Thus, he would be attacked as a "subversive" by rabid anti-communists, especially Marcos.

As senator, he often took a progressive liberal stand on outstanding issues involving national independence and democracy. He sympathized on many occasions with the democratic cause of the workers, peasants, students and youth, teachers and other people.

He advocated the solution of basic social problems and opposed Philippine involvement in the Vietnam war and the brutality of the military and police

against the outburst of mass demonstrations that came to be called the First Quarter Storm of 1970 as well as other mass actions in the 1970 to 1972 period. He was an outstanding opponent of the Marcos regime, especially with regard to its propensity to use terror and violence against the people.

(Aquino stood courageously against the rising trend of fascism under the US-Marcos regime, marked by unwarranted assaults on unarmed demonstrators and massacres such as the Plaza Miranda bombing in 1971. Marcos blamed the bombing on the Communist Party of the Philippines and Aquino but the people did not believe him. The Liberal Party swept the elections, with Aquino topping the senatorial slate. He became even more clearly the front-running presidential hopeful in 1973.)

But Marcos was cold-bloodedly fabricating incidents, especially bombings, and creating the conditions for the declaration of martial law in 1972 and for grabbing all governmental powers for himself. When fascist dictatorship began, Aquino was not only robbed of the chance to become president but was also arbitrarily arrested and detained on trumped-up charges. He was in solitary confinement for almost seven years.

The mode of his imprisonment was so inhuman that he had to undertake a hunger strike in order to expose the barbarity of the fascist regime. He defied the fascist dictator, his military underlings and the military commissions. He thus contributed greatly to the anti-fascist resistance by his moral

example.

As had been expected, Aquino was railroaded to a death sentence together with other patriots. This act of injustice aroused not only the just anger of the people but also the serious concern of major governments and appeals were made in his favor. Marcos had to backtrack, granting a retrial and cajoling him to give credence to the Interim Batasan Pambansa elections in 1978 by running as an opposition candidate. Of course, he was cheated in the rigged elections.

(In prison, Aquino suffered a heart attack in 1980 but was deprived of proper medical care for more than a month. Only after erroneously estimating that Aquino would die or become an invalid did Marcos allow him to leave for the United States. After Aquino's successful heart operation, Marcos explicitly allowed him to stay abroad so as to keep him out of the country. At the same time, Marcos tried to discredit Aquino as renegeing on a promise to return.)

As soon as his passport lapsed in 1982, Aquino asked for renewal but was refused to the very end. Not even entreaties through Marcos' wife Imelda could persuade Marcos to allow the renewal of Aquino's passport. Both Marcos and his wife were discouraging Aquino from returning to the country because supposedly his enemies were out to kill him.

After years of exile, Aquino developed an intense and sincere desire to return to his country in order to help work for democratization and to rebuild his political party and participate in the broad opposition. He wanted Marcos to dismantle his own fascist dictatorship and reconcile himself with the people whom his regime has intensively exploited and oppressed for an excessively long time.

(Aquino was keenly aware of the risk in returning home. To counter any assassination attempts, he made a sufficient number of political moves down to the advance meeting of US Congress Rep. Stephen Solarz with Marcos. To show beyond doubt that only Marcos would have the power and means to have him assassinated, he took care of technical details down to the choice of a carrier, being accompanied by foreign newsmen, airport welcome by relatives and friends and the wearing of a bullet-proof vest.)

Aquino knew very well that Marcos was capable of having him assassinated. But why did he still return? He had to make a choice between being killed in the United States like Primitivo Mijares without proof of Marcos' responsibility and being killed in his own country with proof of Marcos' responsibility. He would thereby die

in a far more meaningful way.

(In the US, Aquino was in a dilemma. He was already being treated as an illegal overstaying alien and deprived of adequate protection. Not close to the high officials of the Reagan administration and with only a few friends and sympathizers within the US Congress and US State Department, he was not yet in any position to make short shrift of Marcos. He was only in a position of starting to erode the illegitimate power of the regime, especially if he could return to the country.

The retention of absolute powers is a matter of life and death for Marcos. He reacted violently to the tactful suggestion of US congressmen (Solarz among them) that the pending \$900 million appropriation called for by the US-RP Military Bases Agreement would be rearranged (the military component being reduced in favor of the economic component) if Marcos did not ease his grip on the country and allow Aquino to return. Thus, Marcos' murderous hatred of Aquino came to a new peak when Aquino insisted on his right to return home.

Aquino sacrificed his life. But he triumphed. He succeeded in demonstrating the injustice and madness of the fascist puppet regime; and the need for the people to overthrow it. The Aquino assassination is one despicable crime where there is no ambiguity about the responsibility of the fascist regime. This is "salvaging" (summary execution) before the eyes of the world.

Benigno S. Aquino, Jr. will always be remembered as a martyr and patriot, an advocate of liberal democracy and an outstanding opponent of the fascist dictatorial regime of the US-Marcos clique.

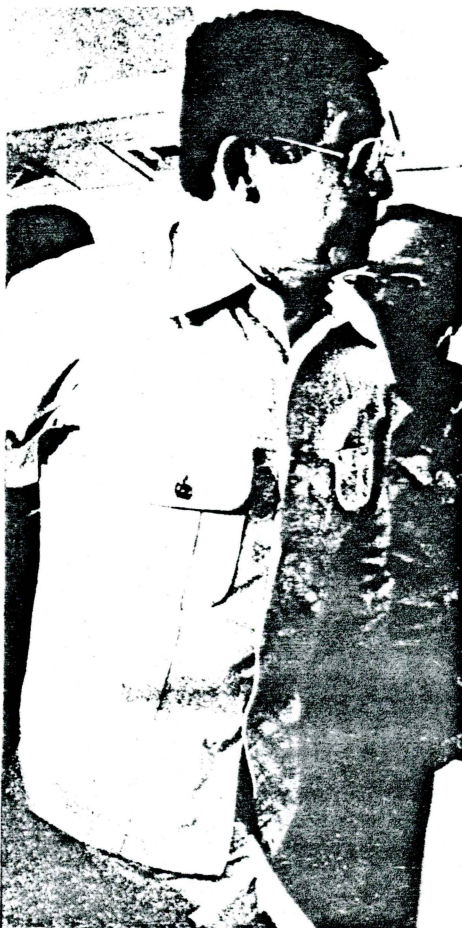
Since 1972, when his terrible persecution started, his suffering and struggle for freedom have been part of the Filipino people's efforts to liberate themselves. His martyrdom proves his sincerity in fighting for democracy and exposes the evil essence of the enemy. Aquino demonstrates that the enlightened and democratic strata of the wealthy classes are willing to stake and contribute not only material resources but even their lives for the common good.

The broad national united front and the entire Filipino people mourn his death in the hands of the treacherous fascists but are inspired and strengthened by his example of patriotism and courage to carry forward the struggle for national independence and democracy. As a result of Aquino's martyrdom, the united

front of all patriotic and progressive classes and organizations and persons will wage greater and more militant struggles for freedom.

Aquino was like Rizal. Despite the threats to his life by the enemy, he returned to his country with the honest desire of working for the improvement of the political, economic and social conditions of the people.

Aquino was reformist and was for nonviolent change. He held the idea that the fascist regime could be persuaded to depart from its evil ways and reconcile with the people. But the ruthless tyrant at the suggestion



Aquino: No deal with a dictator

of significant reforms and possible erosion of his despotic powers became more violent and odious. He plotted the murder of Aquino using his extraordinary powers.

Like Rizal, Aquino while alive could not realize his noble objectives under the shadow of the enemy but was persecuted and finally martyred. By his martyrdom, however, his name has become a battlecry for the entire heroes, assert the sovereign power of the people and extirpate the tyrannical regime.

The assassination of Aquino proves once more that the US-Marcos regime is antagonistic to any serious peaceful

attempts to democratize the Philippine situation and that the broad masses of the people need to use every form of revolutionary struggle, armed and otherwise, to dismantle the fascist puppet dictatorship and win victory for their just cause of national liberation and democracy.

The assassination of Aquino brings to public condemnation the responsibility of US imperialism in propping up the Marcos fascist regime and condoning its terrorist acts. The US government, especially the Reagan clique, persecutes Filipino political exiles and is morally responsible for Aquino's death in the hands of its puppet clique.

Marcos' plot to kill Aquino was abetted to the very end by the Reagan administration. Acting as a Reagan bootlicker, US Ambassador Armacost assured Marcos that Reagan was firmly behind him and that there was nothing to worry about regarding the approach of Rep. Solarz. Marcos took this assurance as a license to eliminate Aquino, strengthening his prior resolve to do so.

From the beginning, the Reagan administration has abetted the fascist dictatorship on the grounds of anti-communism and promoting US political and economic interests. Unwittingly, this US administration has also encouraged the peculiar criminal conceit and paranoia of the fascist dictator.

Marcos is utterly subservient to US imperialist interests because of the rapidly worsening economic crisis in the country and his desperate effort need for funds. The US can order him to democratize the Philippine situation and respect human rights. But the Reagan administration does not mind the despotism of Marcos so long as more privileges and profits are extracted by the US multinational firms and the US military bases are perpetuated.

The Filipino people are not cowed by the commission of murder in public by the Marcos fascist regime. It can even go fullscale in applying all the death decrees it has made for preserving itself. All acts of fascist terror can only stiffen the people's resistance and hasten the advance of the armed revolution.

The martyrdom of Aquino is not in vain and will not simply blow over. Already a movement is rapidly developing in his honor. This movement is an important component of the vast democratic mass movement that will soon shake the fascist dictatorial regime of the US-Marcos clique . . . until a democratic transition government takes over or the Filipino people go right ahead to win victory in the national democratic revolution and establish a revolutionary democratic coalition government.

-Alma Hason

"Joke only"

Protest can take many forms. Some of the more usual forms are the rallies, the strikes, the marches and the boycotts. Then there is also that unique form unconsciously yet enjoyably utilized by many - the joke. Nowhere is this most amplified than in the recent proliferation of jokes about the assassins of Aquino. In a massive outpouring of protest, people vented their anger at a common target - the Marcos regime - which became the butt of many a joke. As the *Sick of the Times* once said, if only jokes could kill, the regime would have long been slaughtered in the verbal guillotine of the people's wit and laughter. Lib presents here some of these jokes, some of which are published in their original Tagalog in order to retain their flavor.

Ninoy's Last Will and Testament, unearthed in a pocket of his travelling bag:

To Ferdinand, I bequeath my kidneys because he badly needs them.

To Imelda, I bequeath my heart because she does not have any.

To Virata, I bequeath my balls because he needs them to pluck up his courage.

To Ver, I bequeath my brains because even if it is badly damaged, it's better than having none.

Makati residents and employees have a sequel to the popular wisecrack "Marcos, nag-iisa ka na" ... "Yabut, naitsahan ka."

Physics professor Salvador Roxas Gonzales is in a quandary these days. Although he can easily explain to his students the theories of atomic fission and relativity, he just can't find any explanation as to how Aquino was shot from behind by a gunman who stood in front of him.

Paano nakapasok si Rolly sa airport?
Pinakita niya ang kanyang brief sa security guards.

T-shirt humor:

1. Front: Who killed Ninoy?

Back: Order ni Mrs.

(Baguio Oil)

2. Front: Kay Marcos Pa Rin Ako

Back: Joke Only

Placard humor:

Diktador ng Uganda: Idi Amin

Diktador ng Pilipinas: Di Aamin

By the way, Di Aamin has a middle name: Lahat-amin.

A KBL speaker was coaching the audience: "Sino ang ama ng bayan? Isigaw natin: Si Marcos!" "Sino ang ina ng bayan? Isigaw natin: Si Imelda!"

Then, he shouted: "Sino ang ama at ina ng bayan?"
The audience shouted back: "Sana maulila na kami!"

At the rate he is scraping up loans for the Marcos regime, people suggest that the Prime Minister should be renamed Virautang.

Marcos was looking for a chief of staff among his top generals. So he called Generals Olivas, Ramos and Ver to Malacañang and began asking them a test question.

"What is 4 + 4 + 2, Olivas?"

"10, sir," Olivas answered smartly.

"Very good. Now, what is 4 + 4 + 2, Ramos?" asked Marcos.

"Ummm ... 10, sir," said Ramos hesitantly.

"That's not fast enough. How about you, Ver. What is 4 + 4 + 2?"

"Easy, sir. 4 for you, 4 for Ma'am and 2 for me."

Guess who got the job?

NINOY, FERDIE, MELDY MEDLEY
(To the tune of *Atin Ko Pong Singsing*)

Killer ko pong tunay ay iyong hanapin
Sapagkat si Rolly ay isa lamang pain
Pag hindi nakita tunay na assassin
Ferdie, Meldy, Fabian dapat na alisin!

Aba ginoong Marcos
napupuno ka ng kuwarta
lahat ng salapi ay nasa iyo
bukod kang pinagpala sa lahat ng mga tuta
pinagpala ka din ng mga imperyalista.

Santa Imelda, kaaway ng Diyos
manalangin ka sana sa iyong mga kasalanan
lahat ng dolyar ay inubos mo na
kayang ang palitan ay fourteen to one na.

