

LIBERATION

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The NDFP is the revolutionary united front organization of the Filipino people fighting for national freedom and for the democratic rights of the people. Established on April 24, 1973, the NDFP seeks to develop and coordinate all progressive classes, sectors and forces in the Filipino people's struggle to end the rule of US imperialism and its local allies, and attain national and social liberation.

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ABOUT THE COVER

The cover is about a red warrior who sees the countryside with delight, which comes from the comfort that hope is planted and grown.

His feet flat on the ground, humbled by the achievements of the people's war. These achievements are from the firmness of principles, steadfast like rocks; handling the masses with gentle care, like the softness of flowers; and connectedness with the people, like the roots of trees.

Rain can either come as friend or foe—in some cases, a drizzle is a “blessing” in fields that need watering. With consistent care for the masses in the countryside, the revolution is affirmed.

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At this juncture in our protracted revolutionary struggle, expanding and consolidating the underground mass movement must be, ever more, the core duty of every national democrat.

EXPAND, CONSOLIDATE

THE UNDERGROUND MASS MOVEMENT

The assumption into the presidency by Marcos Jr with Sara Duterte as vice president leaves no room for doubt that this regime is a fusion and continuation of the Marcos Sr. dictatorship and Duterte's fascist tyranny.

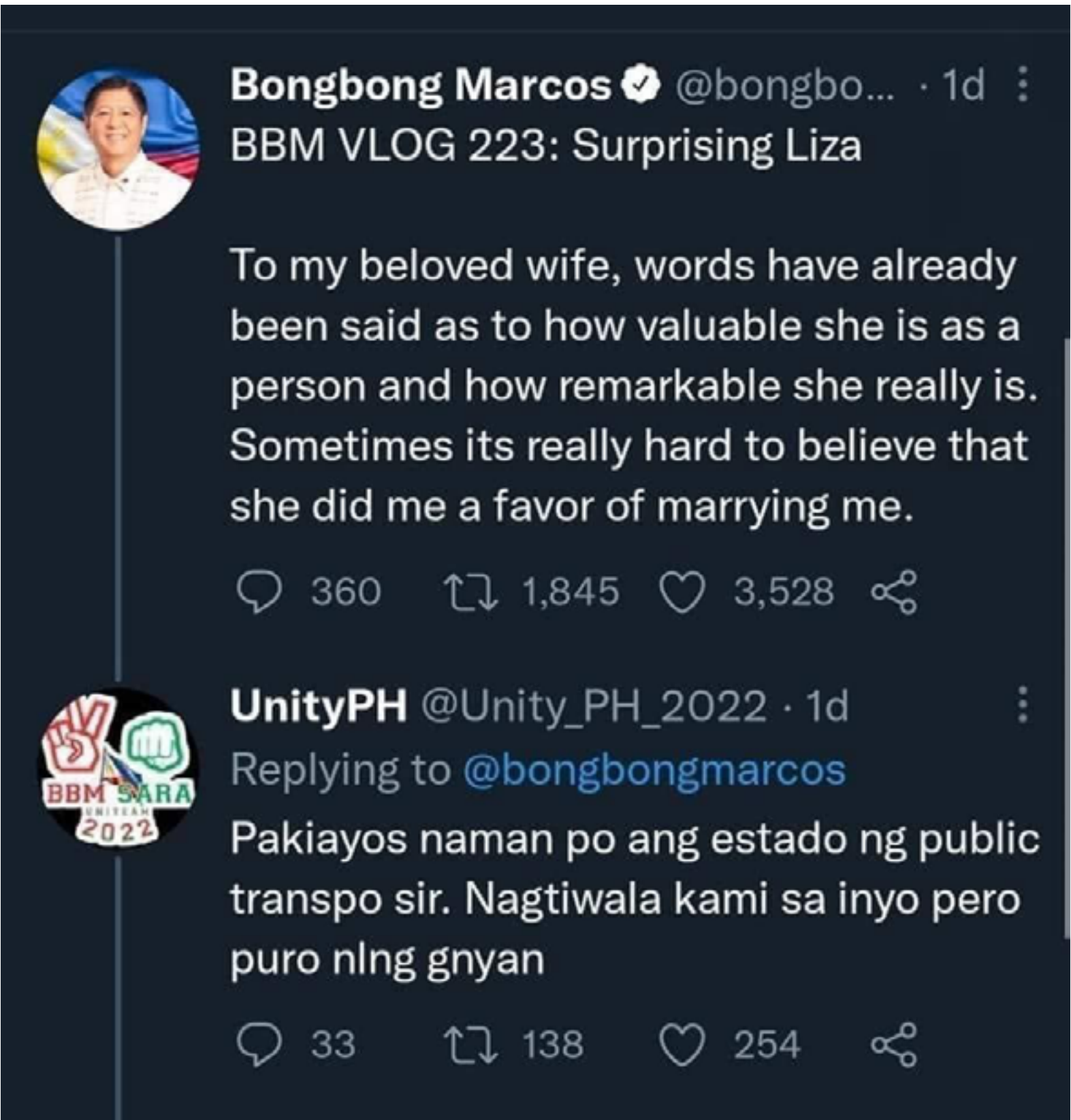
Coming into power with the combined elements of a gigantic electronic fraud, massive vote buying, decades of disinformation campaign, and repressive tactics, the Marcos Jr regime conjures the illusion of a massive popular vote and national unity backstopping its recouped power.

Almost three months into his rule, however, Marcos Jr finds himself already facing multiple governance challenges. The signs are evident. The country is deeply mired in economic and political crisis. The Filipino people, especially the toiling masses—and even pro-

BBM supporters—are restive. They are angry and bitter about high inflation, loss of jobs, unemployment, landlessness, homelessness, health concerns, import liberalization, corruption, smuggling, illegal drugs, and the perennial crimes.

Amid all these, human rights violations against the people persist with impunity.

The Marcos Jr regime’s response is a continuation of the neoliberal policies that big foreign business, landlords, and compradors have glorified during all previous administrations. Likewise, the repressive political climate appears like a copy-paste of Duterte’s undeclared martial law, with the Supreme Court-upheld draconian Anti-Terrorism Act of 2020 providing assurance to Marcos Jr he can readily draw from his father’s one-man-rule playbook that he keeps close to his chest.



There's little doubt, if any, that the Marcoses are out for more opportunities for plunder and power—the motivating force of their decades of plotting to recapture Malacanang. And even if Marcos Jr was known to be a lackluster politician before, the combined corrupt dynasties backing up his regime—the Marcoses, Dutertes, Arroyos, and Estradas—might blow out anyone's mind about how far and how fast the sacking of the country's remaining resources could be. Corollarily, the prospect of violent strife within this erstwhile ruling clique would not be farfetched as the dynasts fight and scramble for spoils.

Ultimately, all these would happen at the expense of the broad masses of the people, especially the workers and peasants, who primarily



produce the country's wealth. They would not allow another round of massive plunder. And the ruling classes would make

no bones about what to do: blame the revolutionaries for instigating the people to rise up in protest and call for suppressive action.

But that's not so easy for them.

Consider how the ruling regimes since Marcos Sr's dictatorship have failed to crush the revolutionary movement that has fought on for 53 years now. Nevertheless, these regimes have not failed in creating terror and wreaking havoc on the lives, peace and security of a greater number of people especially under Duterte's time, and now continuing under Marcos Jr.

The worst campaigns of state terror are unleashed both in the cities and the countryside, and every national democrat must see this as a task to deter, combat, and frustrate the attacks, not just aboveground and on the legal front but especially on the underground arena.

Mobilizing the legal and democratic forces to defend and counter state terror is thus urgent and important. It is not just the revolutionary movement that has come under attack but also anyone who has become critical of the regime. As conditions become more repressive, a wide underground network—of individuals, organizations, and alliances—is even more imperative to ensure and sustain the fight. More so when activists are threatened either by death or prolonged

detention, then they can opt to join the revolutionary armed struggle in the countryside.

The underground movement means having tighter organizations that are able to operate secretly, securely, and creatively eluding the prying eyes of the state, especially digital surveillance. Hence the need to hasten more recruitment, establish secret meeting places, do education and propaganda work, issue revolutionary calls, and make linkages to the armed revolutionary movement in the countryside. These organizations help not just to strengthen the legal mass movement. More specifically, they produce revolutionaries, not just mass activists, who could be relied upon to continue the struggle for national democracy until the basic problems of the country are solved.

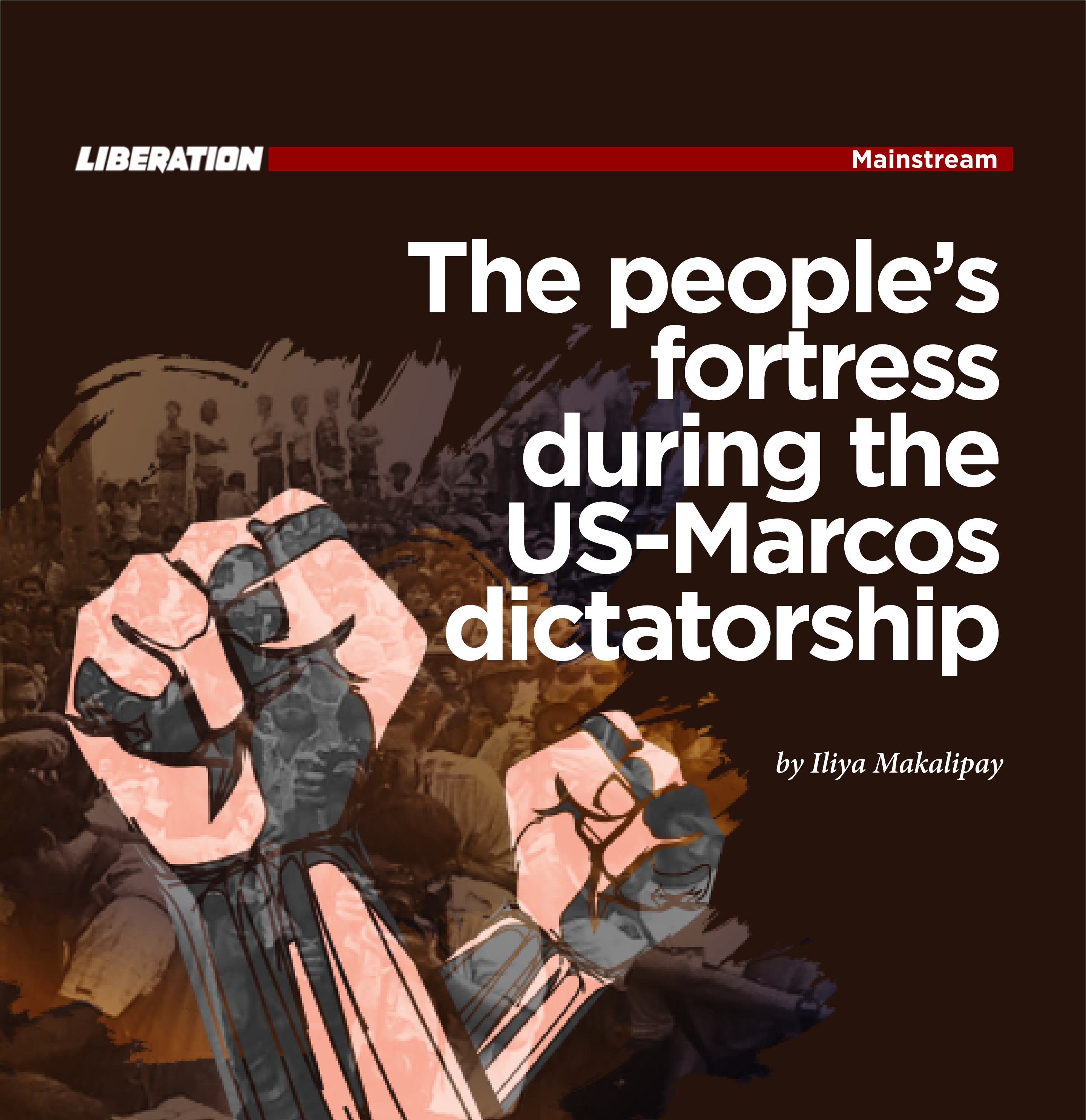
Trained and molded to protect, defend, and fight for the rights of the people, those who constitute the underground revolutionary corps carry with them a vision of societal change—a socialist perspective—that is tempered through the ups-and-downs of a protracted people’s war. Their persistence and sacrifices, despite all odds, are legendary. Hence, the more people joining the underground movement, the less tenable the existential situation becomes for the reactionary state and the scarier it becomes for the ruling classes and their defenders.

The main underground mass organization is of course the New People’s Army, the military arm of the CPP which, through sustained armed struggle, can deal death blows to the enemy. Along with the people’s army come various underground sectoral mass organizations (among them workers, peasants, urban poor, youth, women, national minorities, teachers, scientists, artists and media, environmentalists, church workers, health workers etc.). These organizations perform myriads of work in support of organizing the broad masses of the people, the armed struggle, and the all-round advance of the revolution. They are united under the National Democratic Front of the Philippines.



The revolutionary movement has perseveringly gone through the ebb-and-flow of struggle. Over 53 years, it has persisted and grown sturdy because it sprang from and has remained firmly with the people. Refusing to acknowledge this fact, the reactionary state furiously attempts to denigrate the revolutionaries by designating them as “terrorists” and employs all means—mostly foul, brutal, and unjust—in its mad and futile drive to wipe them out.

While focused on frustrating the reactionary state’s attacks, expanding and consolidating the underground mass movement at the same time is the best way to continuously build up the people’s revolutionary capability to hasten the attainment of decisive victory. **LIB**

An illustration in a dark, moody style showing a large crowd of people. In the foreground, two fists are raised high, one in a light skin tone and one in a dark skin tone, both wearing black gloves. The background is filled with silhouettes of many other people, some with their arms raised, suggesting a protest or a moment of collective action. The overall color palette is dominated by dark browns, blacks, and a few highlights of light skin and red from the gloves.

The people's fortress during the US-Marcos dictatorship

by Iliya Makalipay

Dictator Ferdinand Marcos Sr bequeathed to his son Ferdinand Jr both his family's ill-gotten wealth and a world record of plunder, murder, and deception. He has also bequeathed the chronic crisis of the semicolonial and semifeudal system, ruled by bureaucrat capitalists, local landlords and big bourgeoisie, along with their imperialist masters. To this day, the system has continued to rot and weaken.

The laws enacted and policies drawn up during the dictatorship, all attempts to prop up the system, contributed to the continued impoverishment of the masses. The unresolved crisis has driven the people to join protests and embrace the national democratic revolution.

The advance of the revolutionary movement by leaps and bounds largely prompted the US imperialists to drop Marcos Sr in 1986— 21 years since he became its chief puppet in 1965, and 14 years since his US-sanctioned declaration of martial law.

Committed to dismantle the rotten system and all the structures that breed oppression and exploitation of the masses, the revolutionary movement bloomed and spread across the country, ironically for Marcos and the imperialists, under the dictatorship.

Spread of the revolutionary fire

Sad for Marcos Jr, his father's failure to nip the armed revolution in the bud now poses a major challenge to his regime, no matter how he might belittle its strength and resilience; and, no matter how the reactionary state functionaries and apologists attempt to gloss over its signal role in the long process of weakening and dismantling the dictatorship.

Right from its reestablishment, the founding leadership had set their sights on strengthening and expanding the Party and the armed struggle (focusing on mass-base building and agrarian revolution). Gradually the national united

front was built as a key element in dismantling the US-Marcos dictatorship and further advancing the national democratic revolution with a socialist perspective.

In its first plenum on July 1, 1969— six months after its reestablishment and three months after the New People's Army was founded—the Party spelled out its immediate task with the NPA: to launch armed revolution to build guerrilla bases and guerrilla zones in the countryside and eventually surround the cities. The NPA was also tasked to support Party building and in establishing the national united front.

A year later, on its first anniversary, four days before Marcos Sr's inauguration for his second term, the Party defined its urgent task for the coming years: "To enlarge and deepen the mass base of the Party through persistent mass work and concrete militant struggle." It was ready to disperse more seeds that Marcos Sr could not prevent from sprouting and blooming.

Determined to push the revolutionary armed struggle, the Party also laid out the immediate creation of the broadest national united front to isolate the enemy and put him at the weakest position for our mortal blows.

“We must make use of the national united front to create a revolutionary high tide on a national scale and to prepare the subjective conditions for linking up the several revolutionary base areas that we are bound to develop in the protracted course of the armed struggle.”

In time, as the revolutionary movement gained ground along its defined course, the Marcos regime headed towards its own destruction.

Marcos Sr's bogus land reform program (Presidential Decree 27) and Masagana 99, for one, only drove the peasants into further indebtedness. He incurred more national debts from international lending institutions, generated inflation, and worsened the balance of payments. He violated the people's national and democratic rights, perpetrated massive human rights violations, and plundered the country's wealth and resources.

As the nation fell deeper into indigence, the revolutionary movement won over more members and supporters, based on the correctness of its analysis of Philippine society and the national democratic revolution as the logical solution to the endemic crisis.

The Party and the red army launched agrarian revolution, built and consolidated guerrilla zones,

and expanded throughout the country, sowing seeds of people's revolutionary power. The Party and the NPA grew in strength as they implemented the minimum program of agrarian revolution, established barrio revolutionary committees, and revolutionary mass organizations towards developing the organs of revolutionary political power.

From Tarlac in Central Luzon, the revolutionary movement spread to the northern regions of Luzon—in Isabela, Nueva Vizcaya, Cordillera, and Cagayan Valley. Later, Party cadres and red fighters would be deployed in other parts of Luzon and on to the Visayas and Mindanao. In urban centers, the growth of the revolutionary underground movement and democratic forces gathered momentum. Protests were on the upswing.

The combined developments in the countryside and in the cities were presaged by the First Quarter Storm of 1970.

“The rigors and brutality of the Marcos fascist dictatorship failed to suppress the revolutionary movement of the people. Instead, this became stronger by leaps and bounds nationwide because the patriotic and democratic mass organizations went underground and formed the National Democratic Front in order to fight the regime of terror and greed.”

Exaggerating the strength of the NPA, which at the time was only a thousand, Marcos used the social unrest (falsely blaming it on a “conspiracy between the communists and the oligarchs”) as an excuse to impose fascist dictatorship. He declared martial law using the slogans of “building a new society,” and flaunting “constitutional authoritarianism” as deodorizer.

In his keynote speech at Tanggol Kasaysayan Conference: Martial Law@50 on February 22, 2022, Prof. Jose Maria Sison, founding chairperson of the CPP, said:

“The rigors and brutality of the Marcos fascist dictatorship failed to suppress the revolutionary movement of the people. Instead, this became stronger by leaps and bounds nationwide because the patriotic and democratic mass organizations went underground and formed the National Democratic Front in order to fight the regime of terror and greed.”

The last straw that worried US imperialism was the assassination of Benigno Ninoy Aquino Jr on August 21, 1983. Prof. Sison referred to the assassination as Marcos Sr’s fatal mistake. The US, he said, feared that the Aquino assassination would “exacerbate the socio-economic and political crisis of the Philippine ruling system and boost the people’s democratic revolution led by the CPP to advance by leaps and bounds beyond the ability of the US to control.”

Indeed, it was too late for the Marcos dictatorship and for all the regimes that succeeded it. All tried and all failed as they refused to acknowledge that the revolutionary movement is a result—not the cause, as they claimed—of poverty and underdevelopment of the country. Oppression and exploitation by the local ruling elite, with their imperialist masters complicit, are the cause.

CHANGE & CONTINUITY

from Marcos I to Marcos II

Marcos Jr has now taken over the governance of a disintegrating semifeudal and semicolonial system: the same system that his father tried to prop up but miserably failed. It is precisely because of this that Marcos Jr is in a mess, to say the least. The chronic crisis of the system he inherited has been turning worse more and more.

The debt crisis alone has probably become unmanageable. This year the public debt has risen fast to breach the 60%-of-GDP danger ratio threshold. The Duterte regime's nearly Php 13-trillion debt is now part of the onus that Marcos Jr has to manage (it's seen as likely to reach Php 14 billion by yearend). This starkly reminds the people that Marcos Sr, in his forced exit from power, left the nation with U\$28.3-billion debt—4,300 percent higher than when he assumed the presidency in 1965.

Expectedly, the new regime's "solutions" are the proven poverty-inducing neoliberal policies that have served the interests of the big-landlord, big capitalists, and bureaucrat capitalist ruling classes, while exacerbating the crisis of the semifeudal and semicolonial system. This system is bound to collapse. Clinging to their self-interests and thus refusing to recognize the roots of poverty and underdevelopment in the country, Marcos Jr and the corrupt dynasties around him face a crisis situation beyond repair.

Marcos Jr inherited the same system that breeds tyrants and dictators. Standing on the shoulders of murderers and plunderers, typified by his father and his immediate predecessor Duterte, Marcos Jr. will likely itch to also declare martial law. Like all the post-Marcos presidents, he would likely crave for the ease of looting and killing afforded by martial law.

But does he need to do so? With the Anti-Terrorism Act of 2020 in effect, the Marcos-Duterte tandem, which represents the most brutal and corrupt political dynasties that have ruled the Philippines, can do worse acts under this draconian law than under martial law.

Marcos Jr is at the helm of the same system that gave birth to the armed revolutionary movement that, for more than 50 years, the masses have

embraced as their own. The Party, the New People's Army, and the National Democratic Front have served as the people's refuge and fortress against the dictatorship.

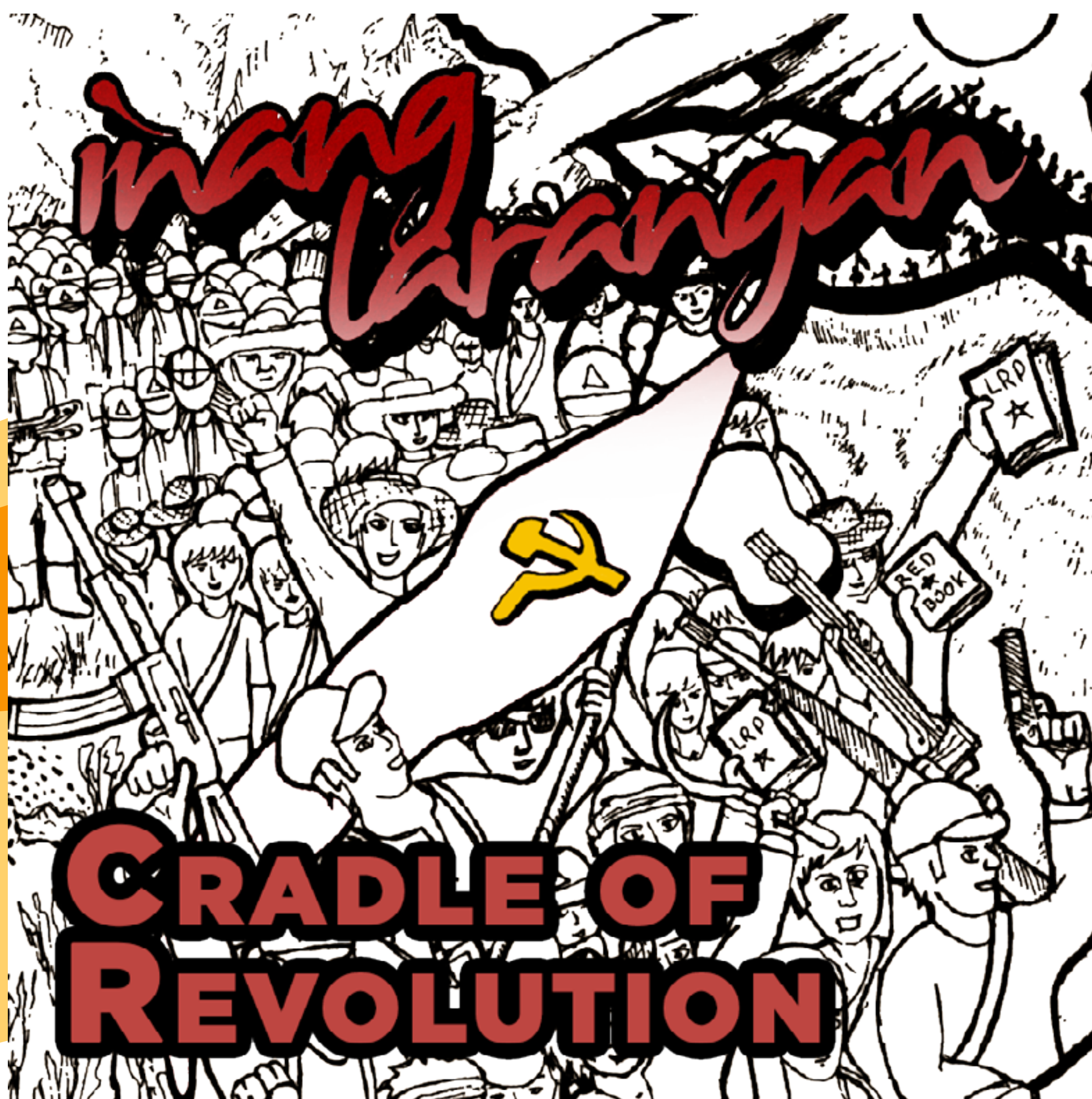
These were also the people's source of strength in dismantling the dictatorship and in pushing forward the national democratic revolution to victory. From the barrio organizing committees at the time Marcos Sr started his second term, there are now hundreds of organs of political power nationwide, performing quasi-governmental function. Alongside the Party and the people's army, these organs continue to serve the masses.

Marcos Jr. now faces the people who are more politically conscious, patriotic and nationalist—people who have learned the lessons from the past and who would not allow a comeback of the dictatorship.

In 1986, the decades of people's resistance against the US-Marcos dictatorship culminated in its ouster, consequently delivering a hard blow on the semicolonial and semifeudal system that Marcos Sr had perpetuated and benefited from immensely.

The score: 1-0 for the Filipino people. They are ready to score anew.

LIB



by Priscilla Guzman

This is not your usual launch pad. No steel bars, no concrete towers— just some mango and bamboo trees, huts, and piles of scrap wood. Still, it provided firm support to the communist-led revolutionary movement that was ready to blast off in its fight against the then emerging US-Marcos dictatorship, and to win the national democratic revolution with a socialist perspective.

This is the *Inang Larangan* (literally, mother front) in Capas, Tarlac in Central Luzon—the mother of all guerrilla fronts that gave birth to the New People’s Army, shortly after the Communist Party of the Philippines was re-established. This is where the revolutionary movement’s many firsts astounded and inspired the masses. Here are some historical landmarks —among them the famous, legendary mango tree in barrio Dolores where Jose Maria Sison and Bernabe “Dante” Buscayno first met.

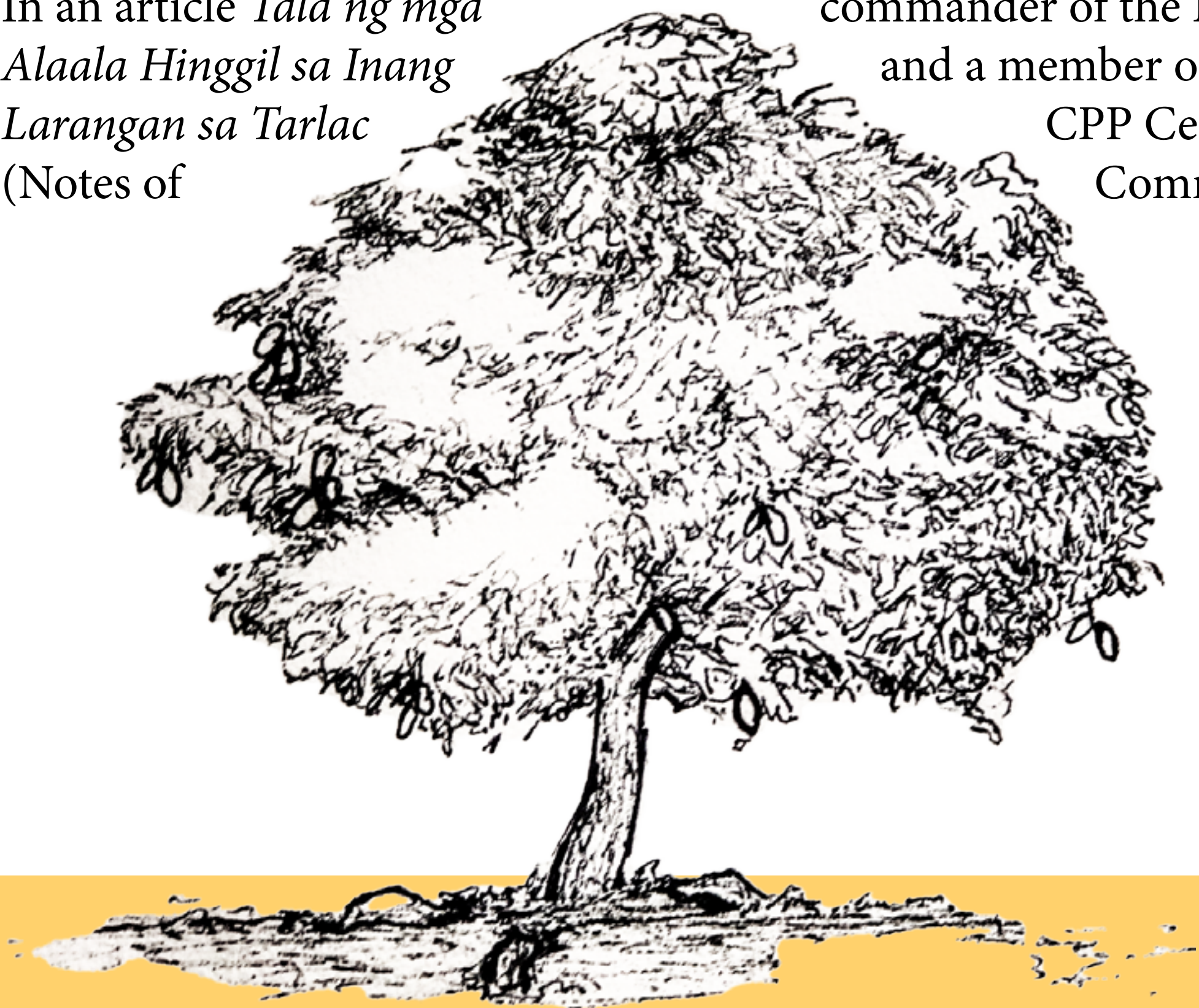
Today, only the twisted part of the original mango tree remained. But, like the revolutionary movement that was planted here, the tree's roots are still firmly planted on the ground; the tree's fruits itself have been carried by winds and storms to drop seeds and spread throughout the country.

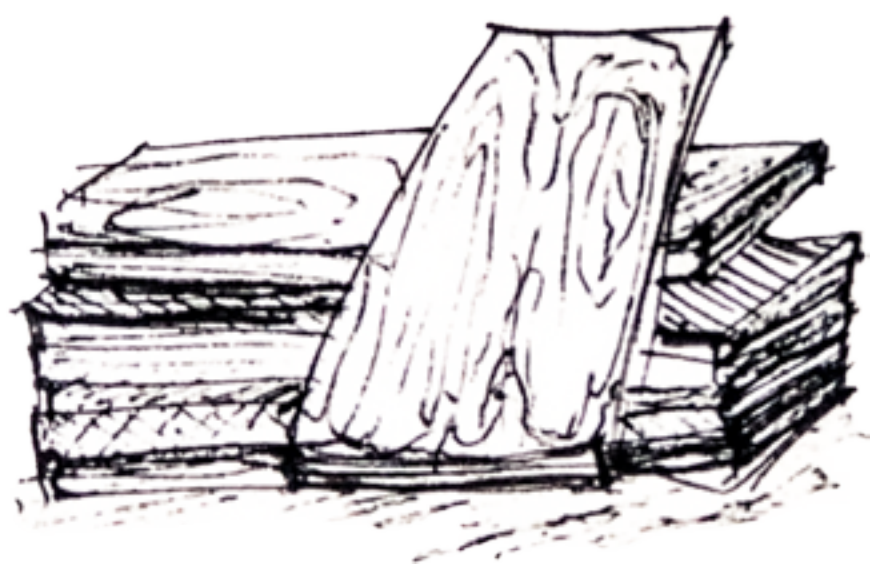
The meeting of Sison and Buscayno in November 1968 was historic. During that meeting Buscayno decided to withdraw the units he led from the *Hukbong Mapagpalaya ng Bayan* or HMB (then under *Kumander* Faustino del Mundo aka *Kumander Sumulong*), and merge it with the New People's Army, which will be founded four months later.

In an article *Tala ng mga Alaala Hinggil sa Inang Larangan sa Tarlac* (Notes of

Remembrance on *Inang Larangan*), *Ka* Amado Guerrero, Sison's nom de guerre at the time, wrote that it was under the mango tree where he explained to Buscayno the need to repudiate the old Party led by Jesus Lava and Luis Taruc, and the need to re-establish the CPP with Marxism-Leninism-Maoism as theoretical guide.

Said meeting was earlier arranged by KM or *Kabataang Makabayan* (Patriotic Youth) stalwarts Nilo Tayag and Arthur Garcia. They met with some members of the HMB, also under the shade of a huge bamboo tree, a few meters from the house of *Ka* Juaning Rivera. A known peasant leader in the village, Rivera was with the HMB and later a commander of the NPA and a member of the CPP Central Committee.





In his retirement years (he died in 2020 at the age of 89), *Ka* Juaning would often tell young activists that it was the sincerity and commitment of the KM activists to wage a peasant war nationwide and win for the peasantry their democratic right to the land they till that prompted them to join the re-established Party and help in building the people's army. He lamented that the HMB had for years been confined in Tarlac, with scattered units in Bulacan and Pampanga provinces.

Immediately after the founding congress of the CPP in December 1968 in Dulacac, Alaminos, Pangasinan, Amado Guerrero stayed in barrio Sta. Rita (Talimundok) to prepare for the establishment of the NPA.

First headquarters of CPP Central Committee

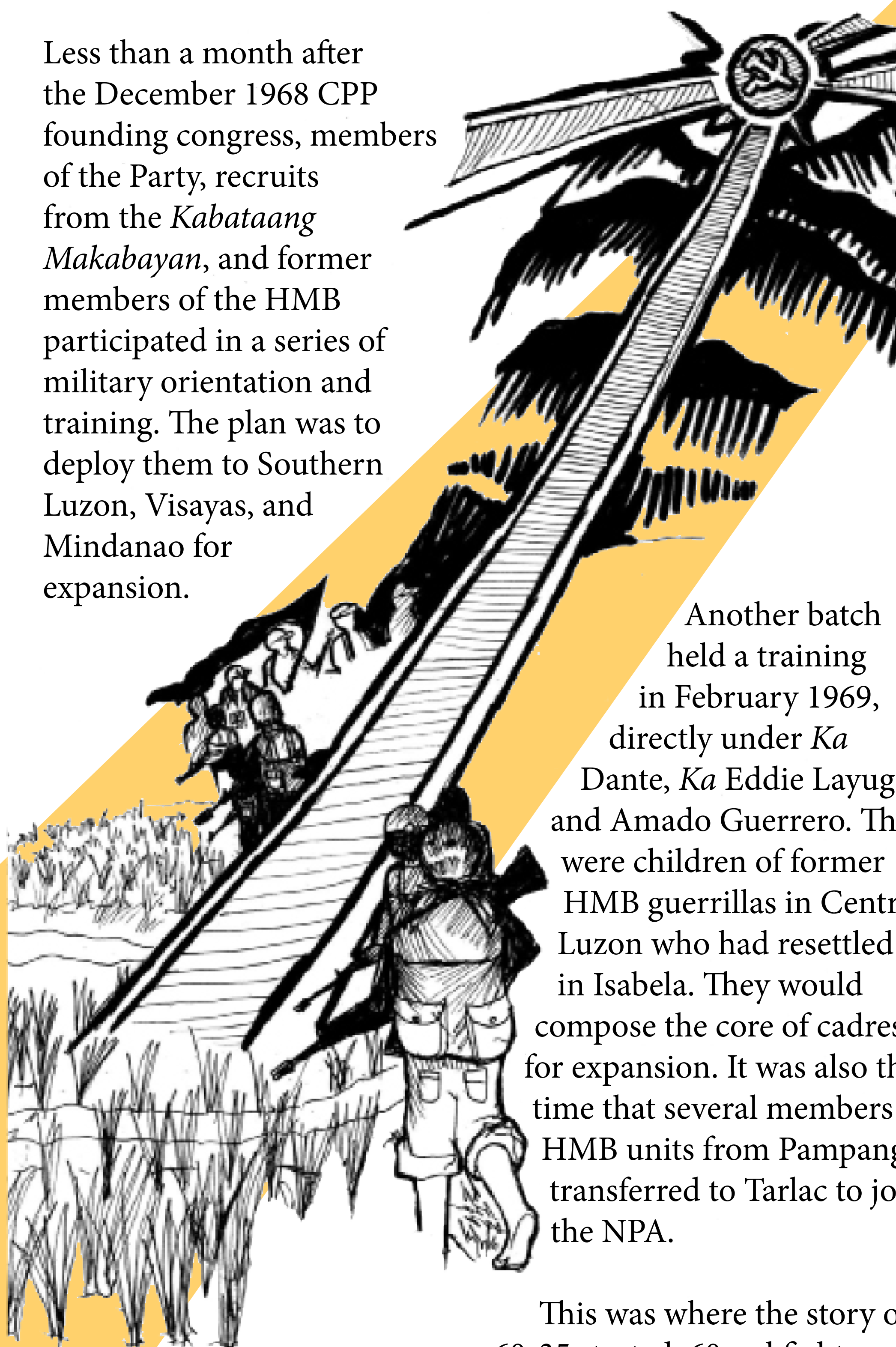
From mango to bamboo trees to scrap wood. Both *Ka* Juaning and Amado Guerrero (in his *Tala ng mga Alaala...*) recalled how they used scrap wood gathered from the compound of the Voice of America station in Concepcion, Tarlac to build the first headquarters of the Central Committee of the CPP.

Important documents were written and printed there. The drafts of the NPA Declaration (the need to establish the NPA) and guidelines (principles, line and strategy, its relationship with the Party and the masses, the role of the militia and self-defense units) were all produced in the headquarters. Later, copies of these important documents would be hidden in man-made tunnels; two of them are still intact at the backyard of *Ka* Juaning, covered and inconspicuous. Even in his senior years *Ka* Juaning would bring activists around to show where the headquarters once stood.



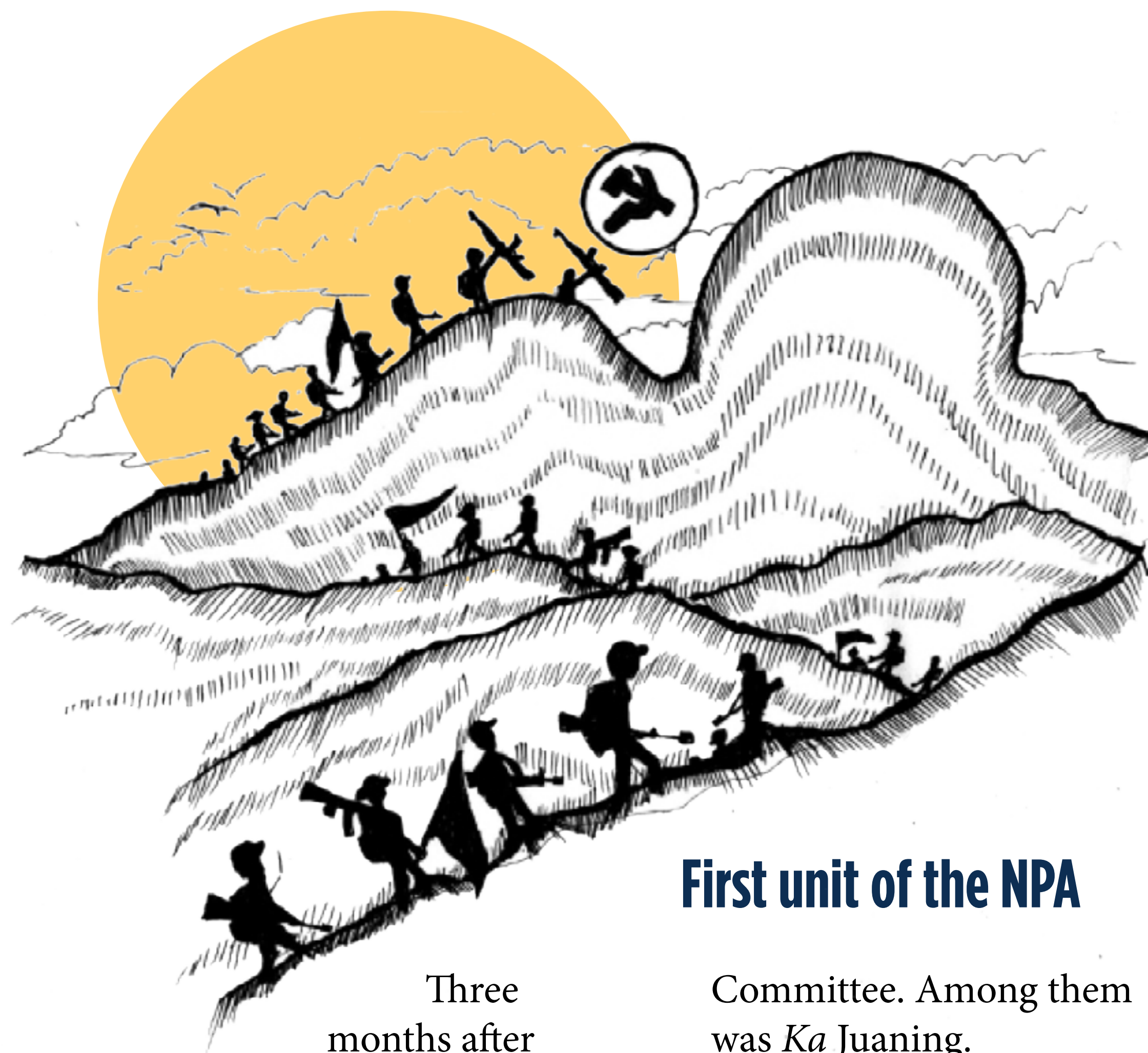
First military training

Less than a month after the December 1968 CPP founding congress, members of the Party, recruits from the *Kabataang Makabayan*, and former members of the HMB participated in a series of military orientation and training. The plan was to deploy them to Southern Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao for expansion.



Another batch held a training in February 1969, directly under *Ka* Dante, *Ka* Eddie Layug, and Amado Guerrero. They were children of former HMB guerrillas in Central Luzon who had resettled in Isabela. They would compose the core of cadres for expansion. It was also that time that several members of HMB units from Pampanga transferred to Tarlac to join the NPA.

This was where the story of 60-35 started: 60 red fighters who initially composed the NPA armed with 35 rifles—only nine of which were automatic and the rest were revolvers.



First unit of the NPA

Three months after Marcos Sr was inaugurated for his second term as president, the New People's Army was born in March 1969.

In a small hut near *Ka* Juaning's house in Tarlac, the second plenum of the Central Committee of the Party ratified the NPA Declaration and guidelines after it was approved by the Military Commission. Also, nine Party members—mostly from the peasant class and cadres and commanders of the people's army—were elected to the Central

Committee. Among them was *Ka* Juaning.

The plenum decided to maintain Central Luzon as center of Party leadership while expanding to other regions nationwide, preferably in mountainous areas more favourable for guerrilla war compared to the mostly flatlands of Central Luzon.

By this time, 60 red fighters were ready to compose the *Sandatahang Yunit Propaganda* or SYP (armed propaganda units) for deployment in the towns of the second district of Tarlac.

First revolutionary committees

The SYP units immersed in the villages to form barrio organizing committee (BOC) among some 80,000 people; majority were poor and lower-middle peasants forming the mass base of the old HMB. The BOC was tasked to establish revolutionary organizations, and from these, develop local organs of political power.

Organizing focused on strengthening the revolutionary organization of the poor peasants to enable them, with

the people’s army, to implement the minimum land reform program of the revolutionary movement: to demand from the landlords a cut down on land rent, increase the wages of farm workers, reduce interest rates on loans, increase farm gate prices.

From these initial efforts, the mass base in Tarlac expanded; and as the mass base were consolidated, NPA tactical offensives intensified. Amado Guerrero recalled that couriers would awaken them in

the wee hours of the night to inform them of the successful tactical offensives launched by the red fighters in nearby towns.

One of the signs of growth and strength of the people’s army, albeit no news was written about it, was the seizure of M16 rifles in the armory of the US Naval Station in Camp O’Donnel. In Amado Guerrero’s account, he said the red fighters took away almost all of the 200 M16 rifles at the armory.

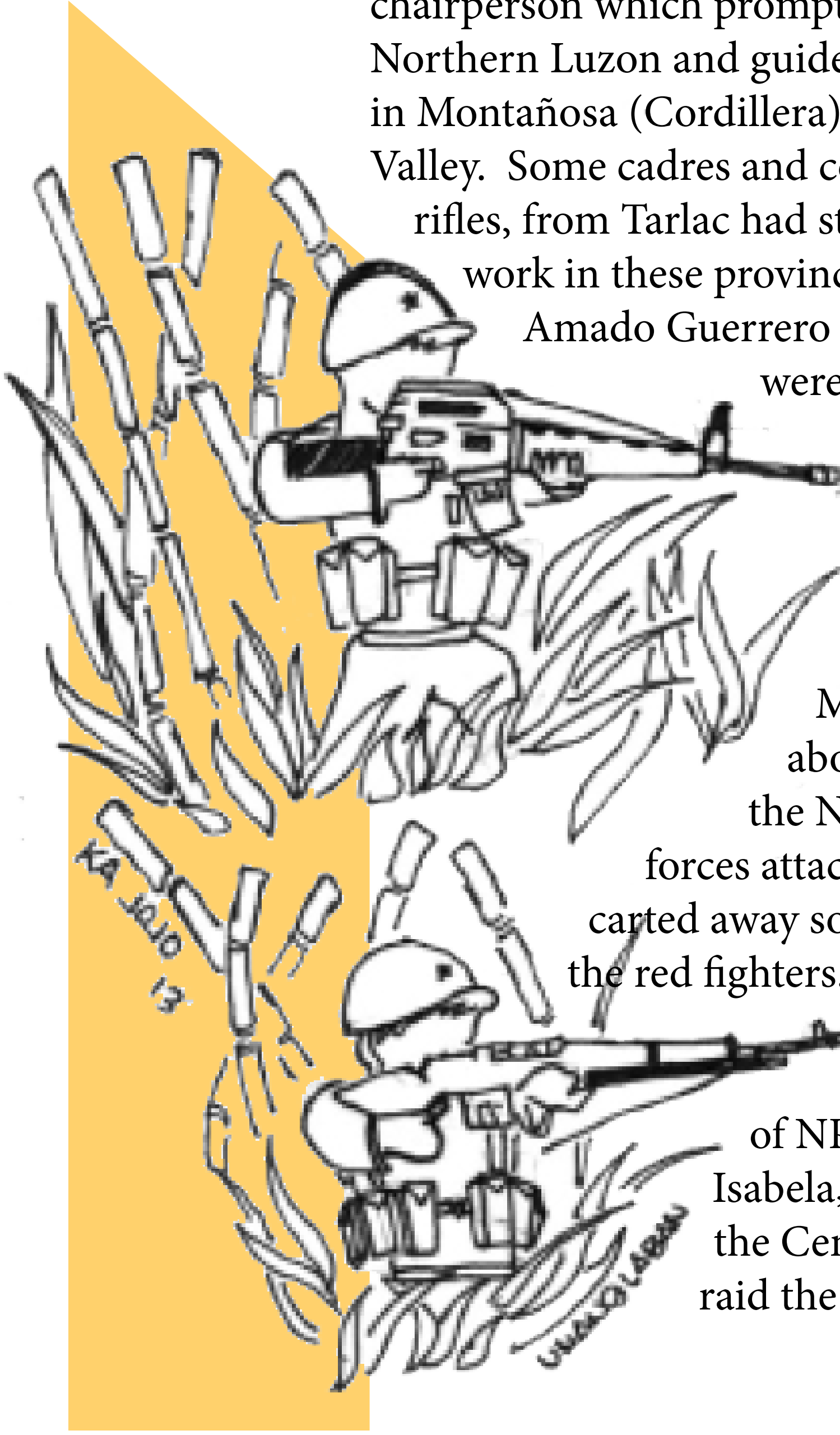


Forward march

Sensing the growth and expansion of the Party and the people’s army, Marcos Sr hastily formed Task Force Lawin, composed of some 5,000 soldiers from the Philippine Constabulary, to quash the NPA. Marcos Sr launched the *Oplan* Prophylaxis. While the people’s army was still in Tarlac, its firearms grew—from the nine automatic rifles when it started to more than 200 before it started to expand to other regions.

On June 9, 1969, enemy forces raided the village of Sta. Rita and almost captured the Party’s chairperson which prompted him to transfer in Northern Luzon and guide the expansion work in Montañosa (Cordillera), Isabela, and Cagayan Valley. Some cadres and commanders, with 20 rifles, from Tarlac had started the revolutionary work in these provinces. By the end of 1970, Amado Guerrero said the enemy forces were blind to the extent of the revolutionary movement’s growth in Isabela and Nueva Vizcaya.

Marcos Sr even bragged about the annihilation of the NPA in 1970 when enemy forces attacked an NPA camp and carted away some 30 M16 rifles from the red fighters. Little did he know that before the year would end, a team of NPA from Tarlac and Isabela, under the direction of the Central Committee, would raid the armory of the Philippine

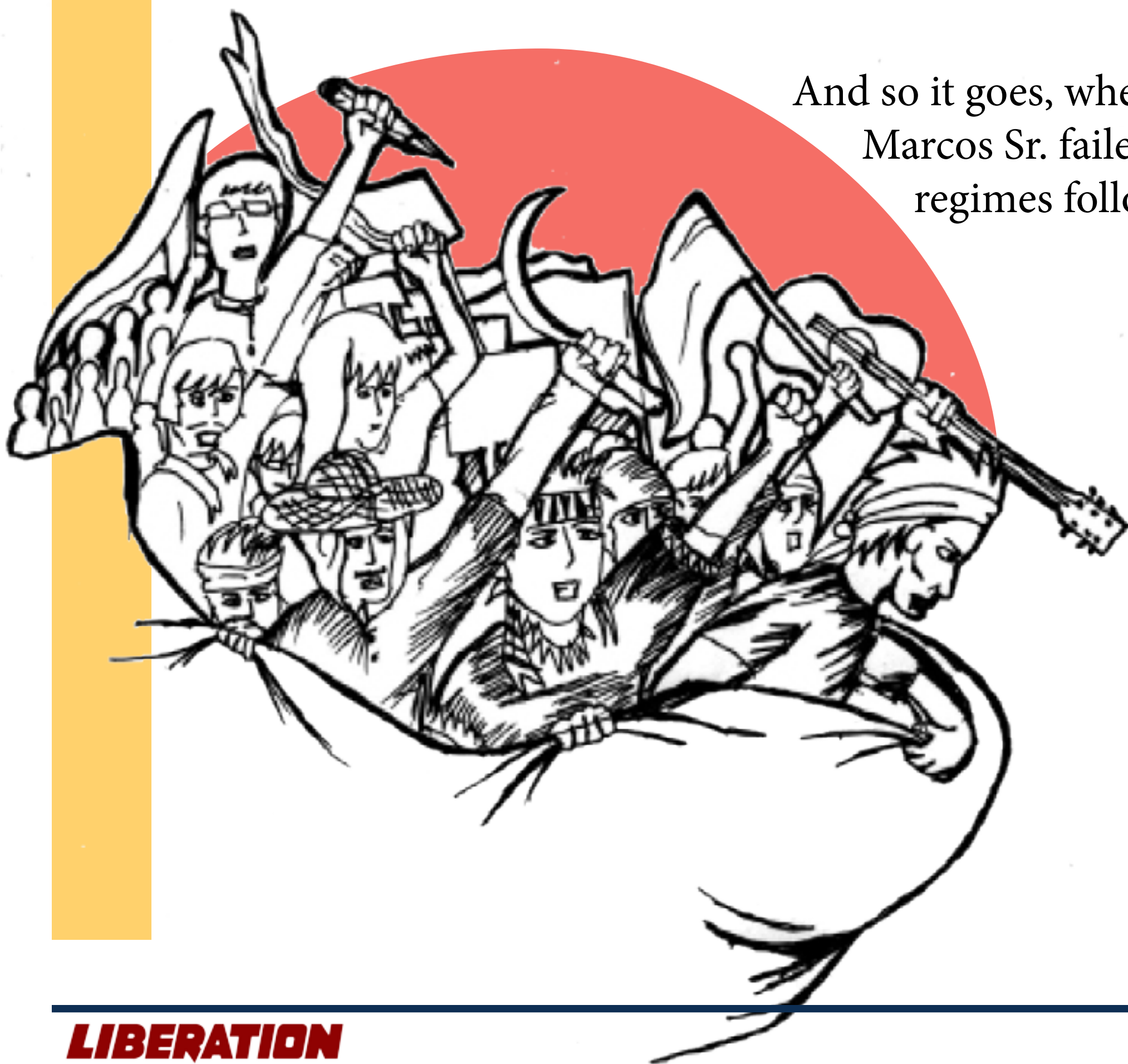


Military Academy and get all the rifles stocked there. It was only after reported sightings of the NPA using the Browning Automatic rifles that Marcos Sr felt the extent of NPA presence in Northern Luzon. Thus, from Task Force Lawin in Central Luzon, he formed the Task Force *Saranay*, now with a bigger deployment of 10,000 troops.

As history has shown, Marcos Sr's *Oplan* Prophylaxis failed. The Party, the people's army, and the revolutionary mass organizations continued to grow and strengthen.

And despite setbacks suffered by *Inang Larangan* years ago (revolutionary forces erred at untimely implementing the maximum program of agrarian revolution), this has not diminished its role as the springboard of the revolutionary movement in the country. Many were trained, and most importantly martyred here, to spread the fire of the revolution nationwide to fight the Marcos Sr's dictatorship. The dictatorship and all the unprecedented excesses it committed only served to further weaken the semicolonial and semifeudal system, rousing more people to fight, and in turn contributing to advance the national democratic revolution.

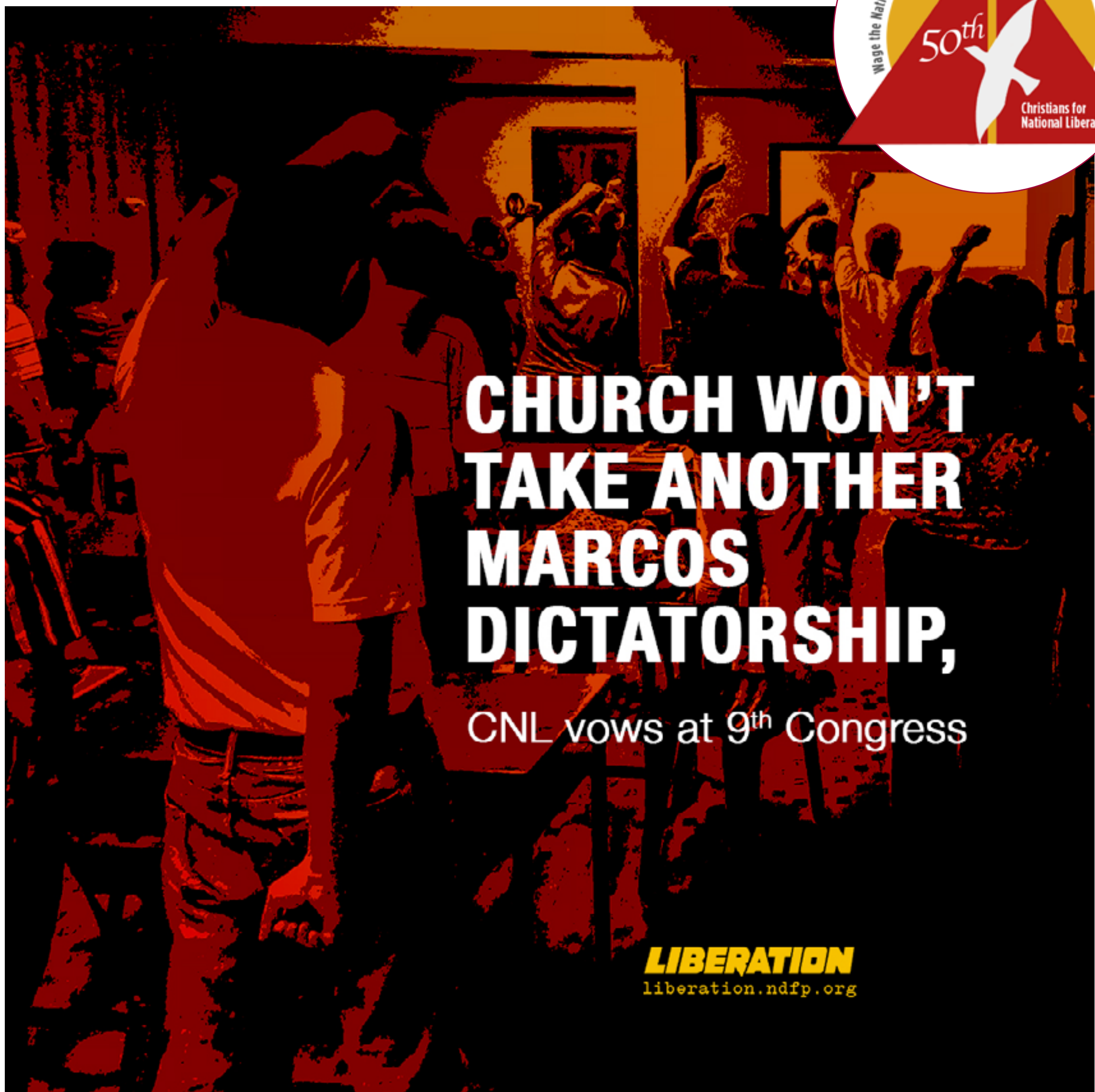
And so it goes, where
Marcos Sr. failed, other
regimes followed. **LIB**



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2013



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by Pinky Ang

Coming from nearly all regions of the Philippines plus chapters overseas, the delegates of Christians for National Liberation (CNL) successfully held their 9th Congress within the 100 days of the fraudulently installed Marcos Jr. Renmin Malaya, spokesperson of CNL, excitedly shared with *Liberation* the highlights of their Congress. He praised the good attendance and thanked God they did not encounter any security problems this time.

At the start of their 9th Congress, they reviewed through a film showing the CNL's historic 8th Congress. Held in a revolutionary guerrilla zone in 2017, it was their first Congress in 14 years. Holding it was complicated, the CNL secretary-general said during the 9th Congress. But despite the hardships, everybody was heartened to have held it with NPA and Moro fighters around. They expressed overwhelming gratitude to the New People's Army and Moro fighters who sacrificed much to secure and host the CNL's 8th Congress. The CNL secretary general recalled how the 8th Congress also turned into a series of memorable sharing sessions of life experiences with the red and Moro fighters.

The 8th Congress was historic not just because it was held in a revolutionary guerrilla zone with the Bangsa Moro. It also elected the first ever female chairperson of CNL, Ka Puah. And, it successfully laid down urgent resolutions and to-do's which the 9th Congress, five years later, would discuss, assess, and build on.

At the 9th Congress, the regional, national, and overseas delegates reported and discussed their situation, struggles, and challenges not just over the last five years after their 8th Congress. Some can't help recalling the experiences and lessons in fighting and surviving Ferdinand Marcos Sr's martial law, especially after they assessed the recent presidential elections which fraudulently installed the dictator's son and namesake.



Faith to wage revolution

The CNL's 9th Congress was substantive and timely, Malaya said.

“BBM (Bongbong Marcos) had just finished his SONA (State of the Nation Address) and we want to be prepared to face his rule as we foresee more human rights violations,” Malaya said.

In fact, even before Marcos Jr's fraudulent electoral victory, the revolutionary group of Christians had foreseen in their scenario building “that tyranny and dictatorship would unfold.” CNL already issued a warning even before Marcos Jr “won.”

Church people have done their share in bringing down the Marcos dictatorship. In fact they have been iconized in billboards and murals depicting the Filipino mass struggle for social justice. Pictures of the religious arm in arm with ordinary people blocking military tanks comprised some of the enduring images of the 1986 People Power Revolution.

The Churchpeople were also present and often at the

forefront of various people's struggle, including workers' strikes and struggles against demolitions of the urban poor. They helped shatter the false peace or enforced silence of martial law in the 1970s.

In 1975, they were among the workers of La Tondena when the first known strike was held under martial law. The strike broke the culture of silence that Marcos' Sr tried to impose especially in the urban centers. The action signalled the resurgence of the legal protest movement.

From the religious sector over the last five decades, “the CNL has produced a great number of revolutionaries, Party cadres, and red fighters who transformed their faith and vocation of service to a selfless dedication of their lives to the cause of the oppressed and exploited,” as the Communist Party of the Philippines wrote in its statement hailing the CNL's 50th anniversary last February. Indeed, some CNL members have become leaders of the CPP and commanders of the NPA. Some leading members of the NDFP also emerged from CNL.

Today, the unresolved social and economic crises brought by the worsening anti-people policies from the Marcos dictatorship down to the recent Duterte regime are bringing untold miseries to the Filipino people. Its multi-layered tragic impact is borne out in the reports on the ground shared by delegates of the CNL at the 9th Congress.

The people are unlikely to get a breather from these nightmares, the CNL warned. Because the new administration of Marcos Jr and Sara Duterte, by virtue of their class and being the worst of the worst representative of the bureaucrat capitalist class, have no plans or intent to institute changes, the CNL delegates concluded.



War footing, human rights footing

“We foresee that the Church which is known for opposing the Marcos dictatorship will be attacked further and harder,” Malaya said. In the face of that, he hoped the Church sector will be consolidated.

CNL delegates agreed to further develop the ways they arouse, organize, and mobilize, believing that “a constant drop of water can cut stones.” They also want to broaden their human rights orientation to increase the support to national democratic struggle. Mindful that the Church is a recognized moral force in Philippine society, the CNL delegates hope to encourage the Church to speak out more and take actions to defend the people from tyranny, lies, and exploitation of the few ruling classes.



The Marcos dictatorship and the post-dictatorship regimes that followed it had unleashed wars against the people but venomously scapegoat the people, the revolutionaries, and activists for the worsening crises which these regimes itself have caused. “From the point of view of the ruling class, those to be blamed for the unmitigated poverty are the masses, the legal opposition, and the national democratic movement,” the CNL delegates noted in discussing the political crisis afflicting the country.

But these US-backed regimes from Marcos down to Duterte all failed to crush the revolutionaries, despite their fierce boasts. The most recent to meet with failure was Duterte, though he had apparently exerted his utmost. Making use of the emergency situation foisted by the pandemic, he not only railroaded the process which led to the early

enacting of the Anti-Terror Law, he splurged on modernizing the weapons and equipment of the reactionary armed forces. He weaponized the civilian bureaucracy, blatantly using it to wage an unjust war against the people. But in the end, like his predecessors, he left a bloody trail of human rights violations and polarized the people.

Renmin Malaya of CNL observed that thanks also to the unremitting mass work of all revolutionary and activists including the CNL, the anti-left sentiments even in the Church have been shattered somewhat.

He noted that the conservative section of the Church (and even the evangelicals) have shed their previous anti-left misunderstandings “and united with us against the restoration of the Marcoses. They know that the left is a force to reckon with in the fight against the dictatorship and the Marcoses,” Malaya said.

Highly respected church people

The CNL delegates successfully concluded holding a Congress that at times resembled an extended ecumenical service, complete with revolutionary and Christian choir music. They honored their fellow CNL members who gave their time, resources and for some, their very life, to waging the new democratic revolution.

The CNL also amended their Constitution and By-Laws to recognize the existing chapters abroad. They united behind resolutions to strengthen the Churchpeople in pushing forward and advancing the new democratic revolution with socialist perspective.



“We are honoured with our new set of officers—they are composed of highly respected church people,” Malaya said.

The CNL assessed the status of their chapters, shared their situation during the pandemic amid the restrictions imposed with the lockdown.

Under the combined assaults of the pandemic-induced lockdowns, the Martial Law-like situation in many regions, the dangerous red-tagging and witch-hunting worsened by the Anti-Terror Law, the CNL delegates encouraged each other and vowed that amid the joys and challenges of waging the national democratic revolution, they must seek ways and means to persist.

The CNL 9th Congress put emphasis on the youth, saying there are many benefits and bright prospects in focusing on youth organizing. “Because the youth are indeed the key not only to the thriving continuity of the CNL but also the new democratic struggle, both armed and unarmed.” Malaya said that in fact, for leadership continuity they have already elected and welcomed Christian youths into their set of officers. **LIB**



Efren **Martires,**

**EASTERN VISAYAS
REVOLUTIONARY
TRAILBLAZER**

by Pat Gambao

The advance of the national democratic revolution has been drenched with the blood of valiant revolutionary martyrs who aspired and persevered for national and

social liberation. They contributed in the efforts to dismantle the rotten semifeudal and semicolonial system that has been sustained by the ruling landlords and big compradors, coddled by US imperialism for its own rapacious interest.

To honor their contributions and immortalize their memory, their names are lent to the various regional operational commands and combat units of the New People's Army (NPA).

**Among them
was Efren
Martires,
better
known as
Ka Popong.
The Eastern
Visayas NPA
Regional
Command for
Operations
was named
after him.**

Efren was a student activist who could not be deterred by prison walls to grow and bloom through the teachings of Karl Marx and Vladimir Lenin. He developed into an exemplary cadre of the Communist Party of the Philippines and a commander of the NPA. He confronted and overcame revolutionary morass to lay the foundation of a strong, indomitable revolutionary spirit and citadel of the revolution in the Eastern Visayas and in the whole country. Up to now the revolutionary zones in the region he took part in establishing persist.

Efren became a student activist and leader in a university in Samar at the height of the mass protest actions against US imperialism and the reactionary government

from 1970 to 1972. The protests began in Manila and soon spread out in other parts of the country.

He confronted and overcame revolutionary morass to lay the foundation of a strong, indomitable revolutionary spirit and citadel of the revolution in the Eastern Visayas and in the whole country.

On September 21, 1972, President Ferdinand Marcos declared Martial Law. He sought not only to thwart the growing opposition and nip in the bud a burgeoning armed revolution as he plotted to perpetuate his rule, which was supposed to end in 1973.

With absolute power, Marcos tried his utmost to deceive the people with a promised “New Society” utopia while he plundered the national coffers and buried the nation in debts. He wielded his fascist might against perceived enemies through his combined military and police forces and paramilitary units. He caused thousands to be illegally arrested and imprisoned, tortured, forcibly disappeared and killed. They included political opponents, student leaders and activists, civil libertarians, and media people.

Efren’s university campus was not spared from the onslaught of the fascist rule. He and three other activists were arrested and detained.

Meanwhile, the huge mass actions serially launched prior to the martial law declaration, capped by the First Quarter Storm in 1970, had gained traction. People were awakened to the fundamental issues badgering the country. People’s organizations proliferated, garnering popular support from the broad masses. The mass movement engendered the rise of militant activists and cadres. Many of them went to the countryside to pursue a higher level of resistance.

As Marcos, his family and cronies relished their extended stay in power, the people’s resistance and the armed struggle advanced. From the 65 red fighters with 35 firearms, of which only nine were automatic rifles when the NPA started in Capas, Tarlac, they increased by leaps and bounds. The spark of the revolution ignited in Central Luzon spread like wildfire across the archipelago.



In just five years after the declaration of Martial Law, the NPA possessed a thousand strong armaments, including armalite, carbines, and garrands. Guerrilla zones were established in strategic war zones in 10 regions of the country. Their mass base reached one million.

In Eastern Visayas alone, particularly in Samar, the revolutionary forces' mass base had significantly grown since 1974. Their armaments increased with every successful tactical offensive.

Martires' life and heroism

Efren was in his 5th year in Veterinary Medicine at the University of Eastern Philippines when the wave of activism reached their shore. He joined the Kabataang Makabayan and became a student leader. After the declaration of Martial Law he was arrested with three other activists.

Initially detained at the Catarman Provincial Philippine Constabulary (PC) Command, the four were later transferred to the Cebu Detention Center at Camp Lapulapu. There they met other political prisoners from the Visayas. Resolved to frustrate the authorities' attempt to weaken their determination to fight the dictatorship, they organized themselves and turned the prison cells into a school for Marxist-Leninist writings. It was there where Ka Popong joined the Communist Party of the Philippines.

Upon their release in 1973, he and comrades immediately trekked to the mountains to join the brewing armed struggle. Ka Popong was deployed to Eastern Samar. The pioneering work of building a revolutionary movement

proved arduous and difficult. They encountered mammoth burdens and challenges—limitation in communications, infantile application of revolutionary theories and practices, and numerous other practical problems.

Yet through more than 50 years, the foundations laid down by the trailblazers like Martires still benefit the poor peasants in the region. In a statement issued on the 53th anniversary celebration of the NPA, the Samar Regional Command noted:

“The people cherish their army because the revolution is deeply entrenched in their land. They reap the harvest of agrarian revolution over the past decades such as lowering of land rent and significant reduction of prices of basic commodities, among other antifeudal victories.”

The NPA in Samar also fought against a paramilitary group, called “Lost Command,” which protected then Defense Secretary Juan Ponce Enrile’s illegal logging activities.

Ka Popong proved to be a model Party leader and NPA commander. His keenness in analyzing issues and situations impressed his comrades; his revolutionary optimism inspired them. He passionately served the people and resolutely fought with them against their oppressors.

At one time, due to enemy harassment, his unit’s communication with the regional leadership was cut off and they lost guidance. But they managed to survive. Surmounting all adversities is a strong point of the NPA, ever resolved to deepen its roots among the masses and defend and promote their interests.



Ka Popong was born to a lower middle-class family on July 21, 1951 in Barobaybay, Lavezares, Northern Samar. Being the eldest in a brood of eleven, he was tempered with responsibilities at an early age. To augment the family income, he toiled as a shoeshine boy, peddled bread, and engaged in fishing and farming. These experiences honed his skills and innate leadership capability.

On November 25, 1975, enemy forces raided their camp. Ka Popong ordered the immediate retreat of his fighters. With both legs rendered infirmed by an accident, he opted to stay behind. He fought it out with the attacking enemy forces to cover the withdrawal of the red fighters.

Before his Thompson machine gun ran out of ammunition, he was able to kill three fascist soldiers. He even dismantled his gun and threw the pieces away so that the enemy could not use it.

Up to his last breath, he continued to challenge and taunt the enemy. Ka Efren Martires died living up to his name: a martyr and a hero to the oppressed masses he loved so much, and whom he fervently served and died for.

LIB





THE FATAL COURSE OF

DICTATORSHIP

by Pinky Ang

We have heard of their bombast, their hubris, and their cruelty. But set against a timeline, strongmen who emerged and grew big through deceit and lies, committed perfidy and inflicted bloody trails of violence and crimes eventually shrank, shrivelled. And then, they shamefully get swept away to their deserved dustbins in history.

The ousted dictator Ferdinand Marcos Sr. was a prime example.

His two-decade rule was consistently depicted as disastrous to Filipinos. Ascending the presidency in 1965 with promise, he transformed his second term into a prolonged one-man rule that ended in ignominy in 1986. The country's first (and so far only) full-blown dictator, he declared martial law and imposed fascist rule. Yet he utterly failed to achieve his declared objectives: to install a "New Society" and to "extirpate" the nascent revolutionary movement for fundamental change.

His despised regime became associated with kleptocracy and corruption, torture and other human rights violations, the worst poverty, and recurring economic crises. It drove increasing numbers of enlightened youth, critics, and other citizens to join the burgeoning open democratic mass movement and the underground revolutionary armed struggle. The popular discontent, fired up by the assassination of Ninoy Aquino in August 1983, gathered Filipinos from all walks of life into peaceable street uprising in early 1986 demanding an end to the two-decade US-backed dictatorship. Within a few days the dictatorship crumbled.

As the nation marked the 50th year of Marcos' declaration of Martial Law, it is fitting to take another look into the dictatorship to identify the vulnerabilities that led to its ouster. That the late dictator's son and namesake now sits as president, owing to a rigged automated elections system in May, makes this appraisal imperative.

So, what were Marcos Sr's vulnerabilities? Let us pick out the biggest and most obvious.

1

DECREPIT
FOOTHOLD

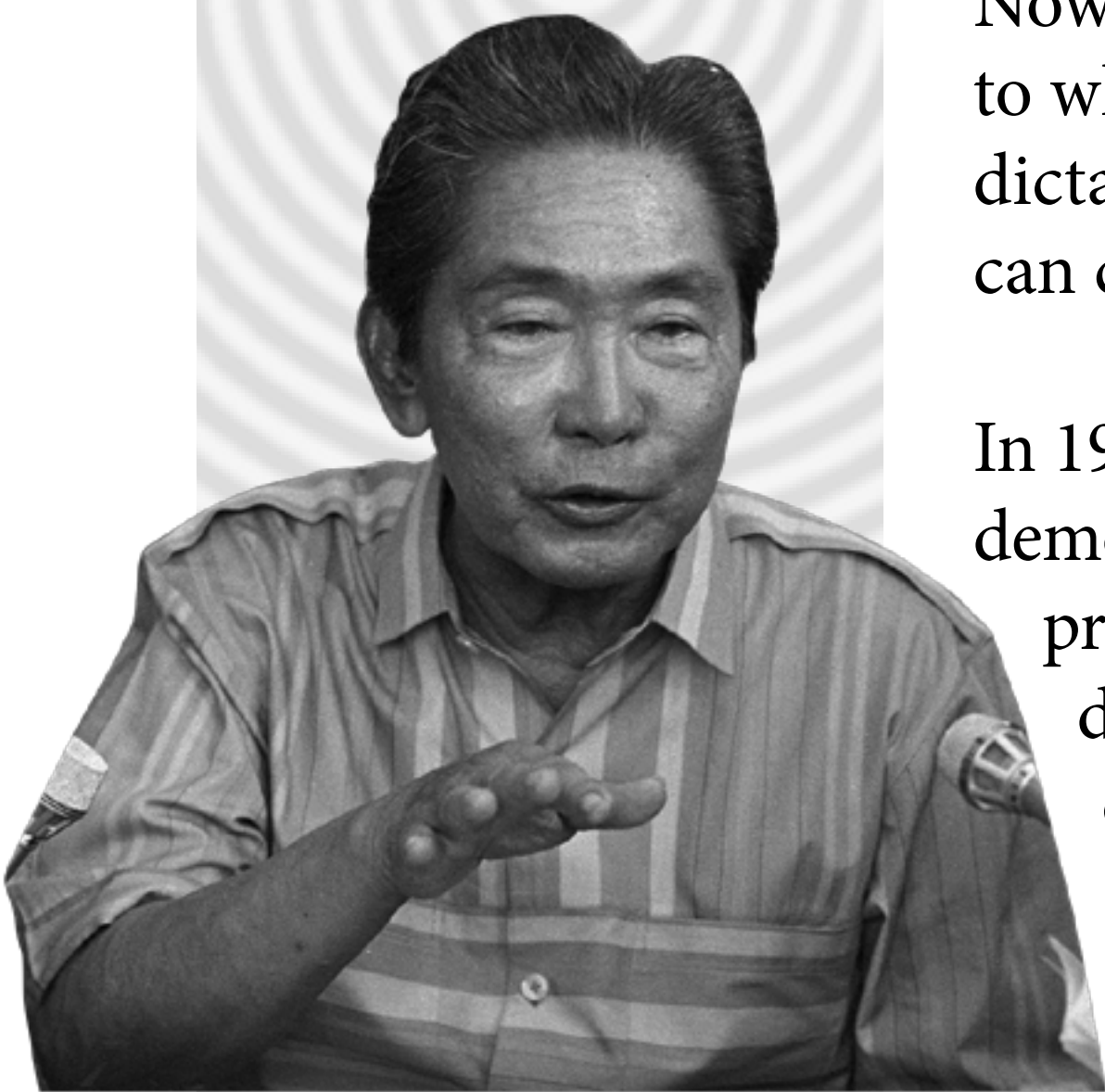
A dictator, or for that matter any president in semicolonial and semifeudal Philippines, could grasp and hold on to power by promising economic growth and development. But to the people these promises have proven to be either outright deception or repackaged illusions.

Marcos Sr had to impose Martial Law because, having been worsened by his misrule, the socioeconomic crisis could no longer be resolved through the normal ways of governance. By normal, we mean the seemingly democratically-held elections, the seeming observance of democratic rules and processes in running the government to serve (or appease) the people.

These pretensions of democracy no longer worked to sustain the semifeudal, semicolonial system. The bourgeois compradors, the big landlords, and the imperialist masters and their biggest monopoly companies could no longer freely exploit and repress the people to satiate their craving for bigger profits. Marcos’ boasts of a “new society” and its trimmings of a bogus nationwide land reform program, the promotion of various development aggression projects were all exposed as empty.

Now the Marcos descendants are striving hard to whitewash the dismal record of their father’s dictatorship. But no amount of embellishment can cover up the worsened hunger and poverty.

In 1986 the Filipino people resoundingly demonstrated their rejection of the dictatorship’s promised economic growth—and the dictatorship itself. The failures of post-dictatorship governments can mainly be attributed to their retaining, rather than definitely rejecting, Marcos’ footprints in many aspects of governance.



2 IMPERIALIST MASTERS IN PROLONGED CRISIS



US imperialism had much to do with Marcos' declaration of martial law and installing fascist rule. His Washington masters continued to prop up the dictatorship into its dying days. At the time, the US was relatively strong at battling cyclical economic recessions as well as its imperialist rivals. It was then emerging as the global superpower with a growing number of military bases and forward deployment of forces abroad.

Despite all these, the imperialists failed to prolong Marcos' happy days in power and had to airlift him and his family from Malacañang to Hawaii in 1986. Imperialist-propped dictators in other countries started tumbling down, too. The US itself had to contend with increasingly sharper contradictions of monopoly capitalism, and

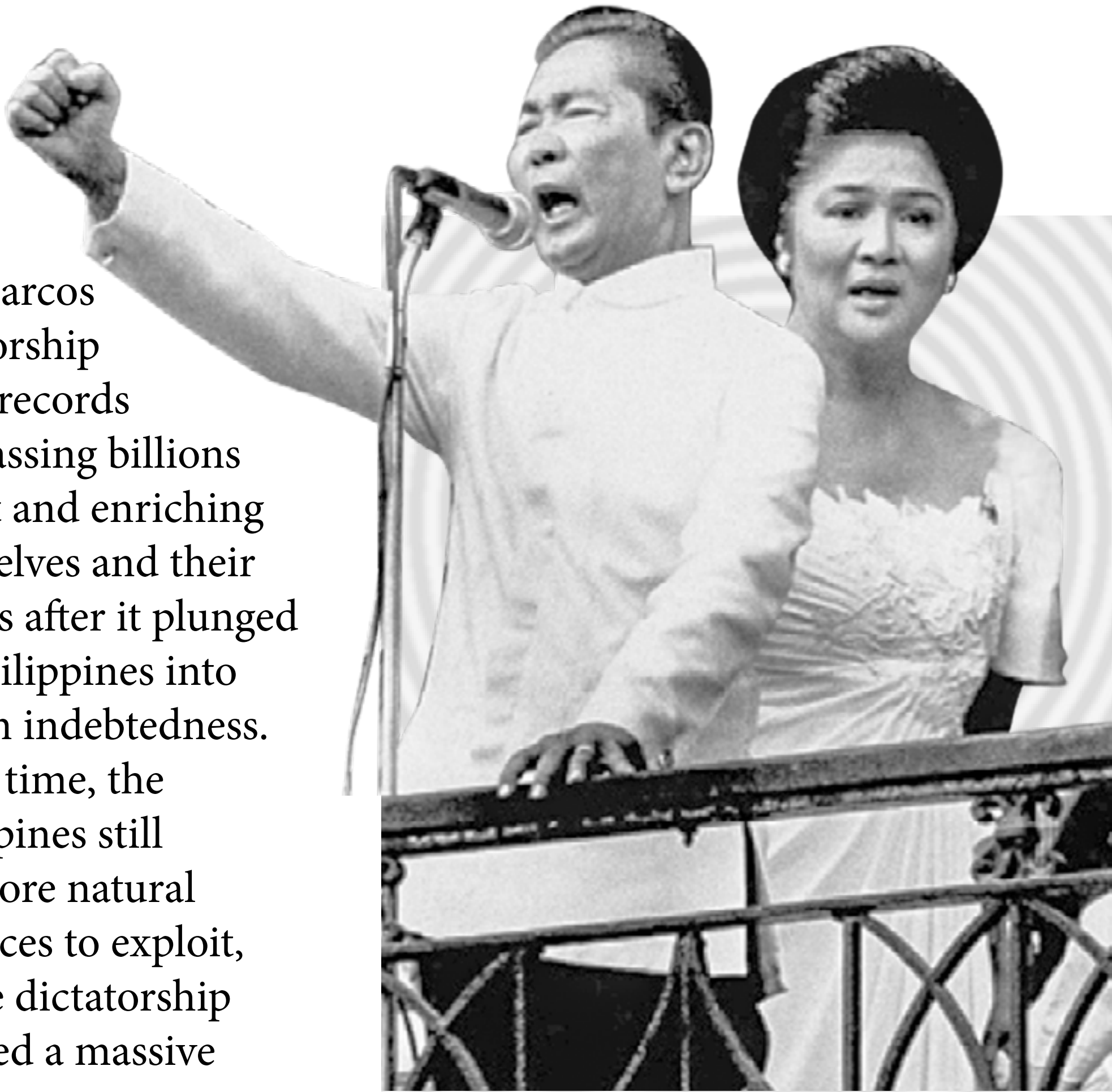
couldn't resolve the crises through neoliberalism and other fancy non-solutions.

The imperialist masters and backers of dictators could arm their running dogs to the teeth. But seeing how peoples of many countries welcomed Marcos' ouster, they had, in the end, to bow to the mass struggle and collective will of the people.

The new US imperialist puppet in the Philippines can rely on relatively weaker props from US imperialism. The latter is in prolonged recession, increasingly engaged with imperialist rivals new and old, and casting about for another non-solution to capitalist crises while the global population has become increasingly wary of the destructiveness of imperialism.

The Marcos dictatorship broke records in amassing billions in loot and enriching themselves and their cronies after it plunged the Philippines into foreign indebtedness. At the time, the Philippines still had more natural resources to exploit, yet the dictatorship initiated a massive labor export program because of massive unemployment. Still, the majority of Filipinos have continued to live in worse poverty. Their worsening poverty and repression are driving them to join protests and embrace the national democratic revolution.

This is a huge vulnerability for a putative dictator because it becomes harder to maintain “peace and order” while he loots the country.

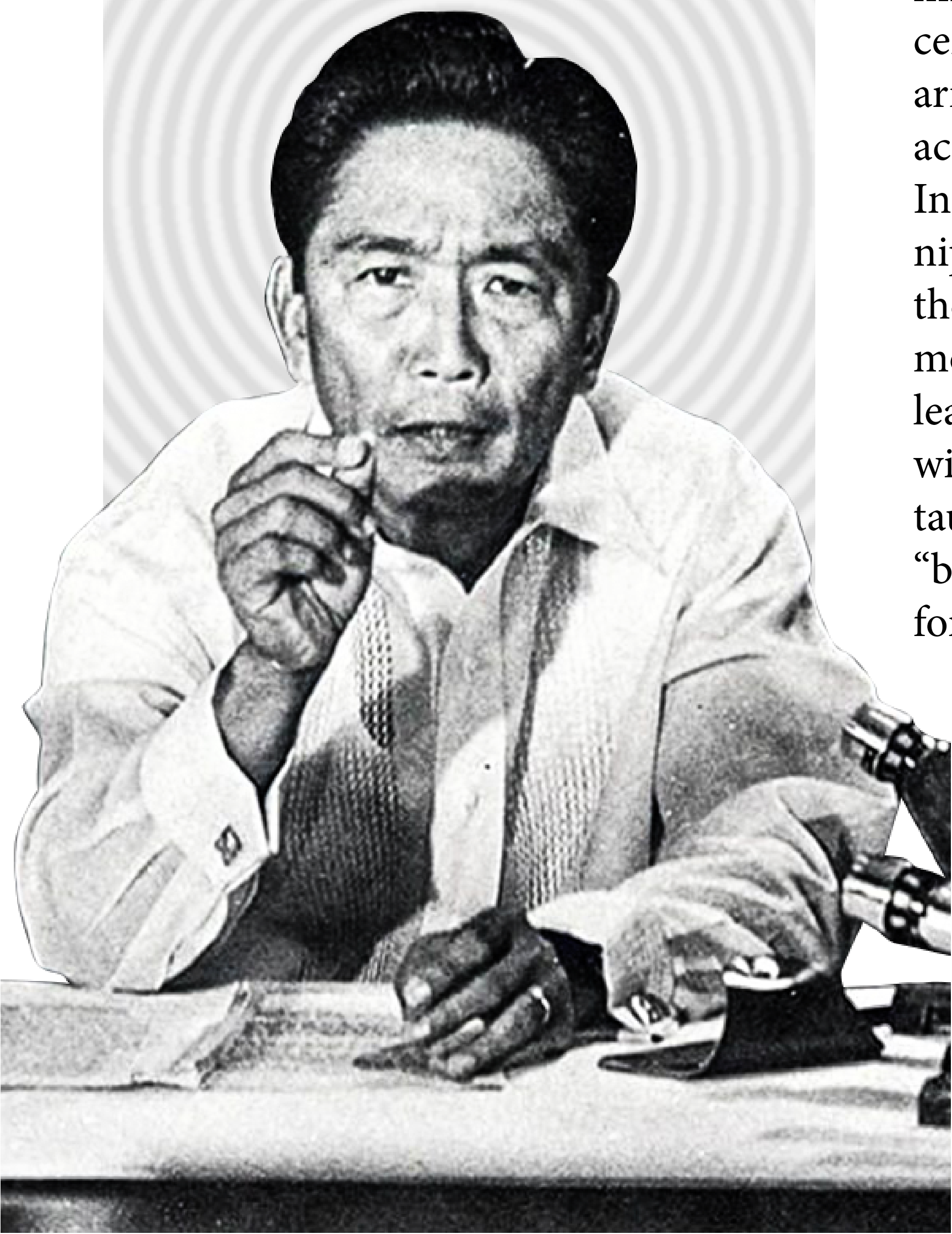


3

**SHRINKING
SOURCES OF
LOOT, FIERCER
COMPETITION
AMONG WANNA-BE
DICTATORS**

4 SHARPENING POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE MASSES

The Marcos dictatorship began at a time when the national democratic revolution was in its infancy. Marcos boasted he would nip it in the bud, and his armed forces backed by the US indeed tried through massive militarization, media censorship, illegal arrests and torture of activists and critics. Instead of being nipped in the bud, the revolutionary movement grew by leaps and bound, with the dictator taunted as the “biggest recruiter” for the people’s army.



Everything the dictator did to puff himself up, to ram his policies down the people's throats, to censor the media and perpetrate impunity left and right created the condition for his downfall. Indeed, the policies he imposed aggrandized the few big landlords, bourgeois compradors, their political dynasties—his family and cronies most of all. But these acts also sharpened the contradictions among rival political dynasties, exposing them further to popular opprobrium. Protest actions began to proliferate, both in the cities and the countryside.



For sure, Marcos Sr's can be a veritable example of the fatal course of dictatorial rule. The brutal conditions it imposed on the people's lives seemingly strengthened the dictatorship but it inevitably fueled the people's fury, which led to their taking his fascist rule down. **LIB**



Not A MOVIE Review

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Sulat kay Antonio Zumel

(10 Agosto 1932-17 Agosto 2001)

ni Gelacio Guillermo

Manong, hindi na bago sa iyo
Ang aking ibabalita: ang tagahatid ng balita
Ang siya ngayong laman ng mga balita
Kasunod sa Iraq ang Pilipinas
Sa bilang ng mga peryodistang pinapatay
Sa paggampan ng kanilang tungkulin
Bilang peryodista sa iyong panahon
Sa umpisa'y sa burgis na pamamahayag
At sumunod sa mga pahayagan ng rebolusyon
Sinuong mo ang mga panganib
Na kaakibat ng iyong tungkulin
Sa paglalantad ng katotohanan
Ipinaglaban mo ang mga Karapatan
Ng mga unyonistang sa mga pahayagang
Pinagsimulan mo bilang "printer's devil"
At ng mga peryodista sa loob at labas ng
Maynila
Na ginigipit ng mga warlord
At pamahalaan
Hindi bale kung objective o committed type
Ang peryodista, wika mo, basta't ginigipit
Kailangang tulungan ng kapwa peryodista
Sa rebolusyon lubos mong inialay ang iyong buhay
At sa pagsusulat para sa kagalingan
Ng lipunan at mamamayan
Nakapagpapagaan sa gawain mo
Ang paggunita ng mga kabataang peryodistang
Nag-alay ng buhay sa rebolusyon
Hanggang ngayo'y tinutugunan mo
Ang kanilang ngiti ng iyong mapagkandiling ngiti

Manong, ngayo’y wala nang inaaresto
Dinidemanda sa korte o tinotortyur
Objective o committed type
Mang peryodista, basta’t nagsisiwalat
Ng katotohanan, simula bukas
Ay hindi na lalabas ang byline
Nanganganib sila laluna sa probinsya
At hindi lang sila
Iniisa-isa rin ang lider
Ng mga militanteng union, party list
Organisasyong masa, NGO
Na nakalista sa dokyung “Knowing Your Enemy”
Ng AFP. Nasa order of battle ng gobyerno
Pati di armadong mamamayan!
Ikinatuwa pa ni Palparan
Nang tawagin siyang “butcher” ng *Ang Bayan*
Kung saan mo hinasa ang iyong pagsusulat
(Syempre, nauna pa’y sa *Liberation* din)
Para sa rebolusyon
Sa lansangan, korte at kongreso
Barbwayr at water canon ang B.P. 880, CPR
E.O. 464 sa tangkang hadlangan
Ang naghuhumiyaw na katotohanan
Parusa sa bayan
Ang VFA, ang MTDP, ang E-VAT
Ang panukalang batas laban sa terorismo
At iba pang utos ng imperyalismo
Sa presidenteng papet na’y ilihitimo pa
Siguro, bilang beat reporter sa Malakanyang
Sa panahon ni Diosdado Macapagal
“The poor boy from Lubao” kuno
Nakikita mo ang isang dalaginding
Na umaastang prizesita sa palasyo
Ngayo’y ilantaon na siyang nagrereyna
Nang iligal sa salang pagsisinungaling
Pandaraya at pagnanakaw
Nagpapatuloy ang kampanyang “Oust Gloria!”
At patuloy pa rin ang kanyang astring
“I’m the best person to lead,” bulastog nya
Pero hindi na siya makakapag-“Wow!”
Sa kanyang huling hirit
Ang no-el at cha-cha

Isang bagay lang, Manong, ang ipapaabot ko
Tungkol sa cha-cha
Sa panukalang amyenda
Ng mga pugita ni Ate Glue
Ang praseng “kalayaan sa pamamahayag”
Ay inunahan ng qualifier na “responsable”
Mukhang walang sukat ipangamba
Hanggang lumabas ang tanong
“Responsable para kanino?”
Sa umiiral na sistema, sa gobyerno ba
O sa mamamayan?
Ang mga karapatan ng mamamayang
Ginagarantyaan ng konstitusyon
Ay hindi maaaring unahan ng pasubali
Kwalipikasyon o pagpapakitid
Na kakasangkapanin ng bangkaroteng rehimen
Ang tanging responsibilidad ng kalayaan
Sa pamamahayag, tulad ng anupamang
Kalayaan, ay para sa pagsusulong
Ng katotohanan sa kagalingan
Ng sambayanan
Tulad ng lagi’t lagi mong iginigiit

Kaya, Manong, tulad ng sa mahal mong mga
peryodistang
Henry Romero, Antonio Tagamolila, Babes Calixto
Nona del Rosario, Jack Pena
Maging tanglaw ka sa ngayong mga peryodistang
Objective o committed type
Humahawi ng landas
Para sa katotohanan
Sa pagtatalo ng dilim at liwanag
Sila’y luwal ng iyong buhay at panulat

PS: Wala na si Nina Simone
At miss ko na ang Chima
Lumabas na ang libro mo, Manong
Otograp naman

Pebrero 2006

The dictator Marcos Sr bequeathed to Marcos Jr both his family's ill-gotten wealth and a world record of plunder, murder, and deception.

He has also bequeathed the chronic crisis of the semicolonial and semifeudal system that, among others, breeds tyrants and dictators.

But it is the **same system that gave birth to the CPP, NPA and NDFP** that for more than 50 years the masses embraced as their own. It has grown in number and in strength.

Marcos Jr now faces the people who are more politically conscious, patriotic and nationalist — people who have learned the lessons from the past and who would not allow a comeback of the dictatorship.

