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MIDWEEK

PRESIDENT QUEZON & NONONG

By Quijano de Manila

AUGUST & ASSASSINS

By Gregorio C. Brillantes

SEX & SOLONS

By Melanie Manlogon

COMMUTERS & CHAOS

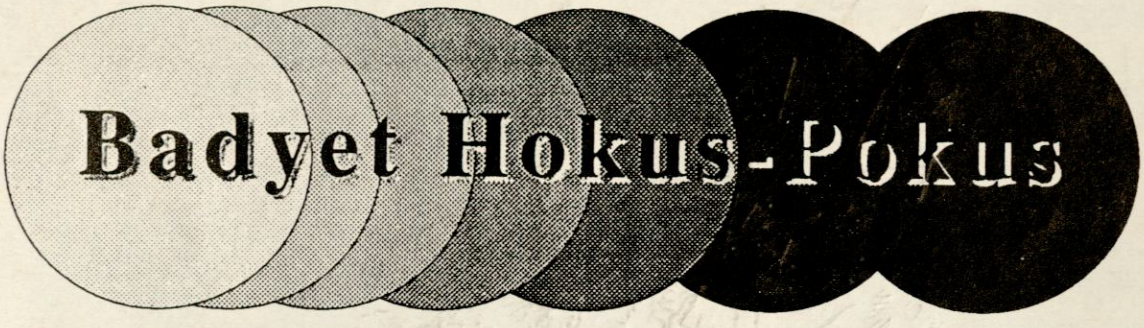
By Juaniyo Arcellana



QUEZON CITY MAYOR JUN SIMON

HOPE FOR THE HOMELESS

the NMCL
Bulletin Board
Vol.2 No. 1
Prepared by the Research Committee of the National Movement for Civil Liberties



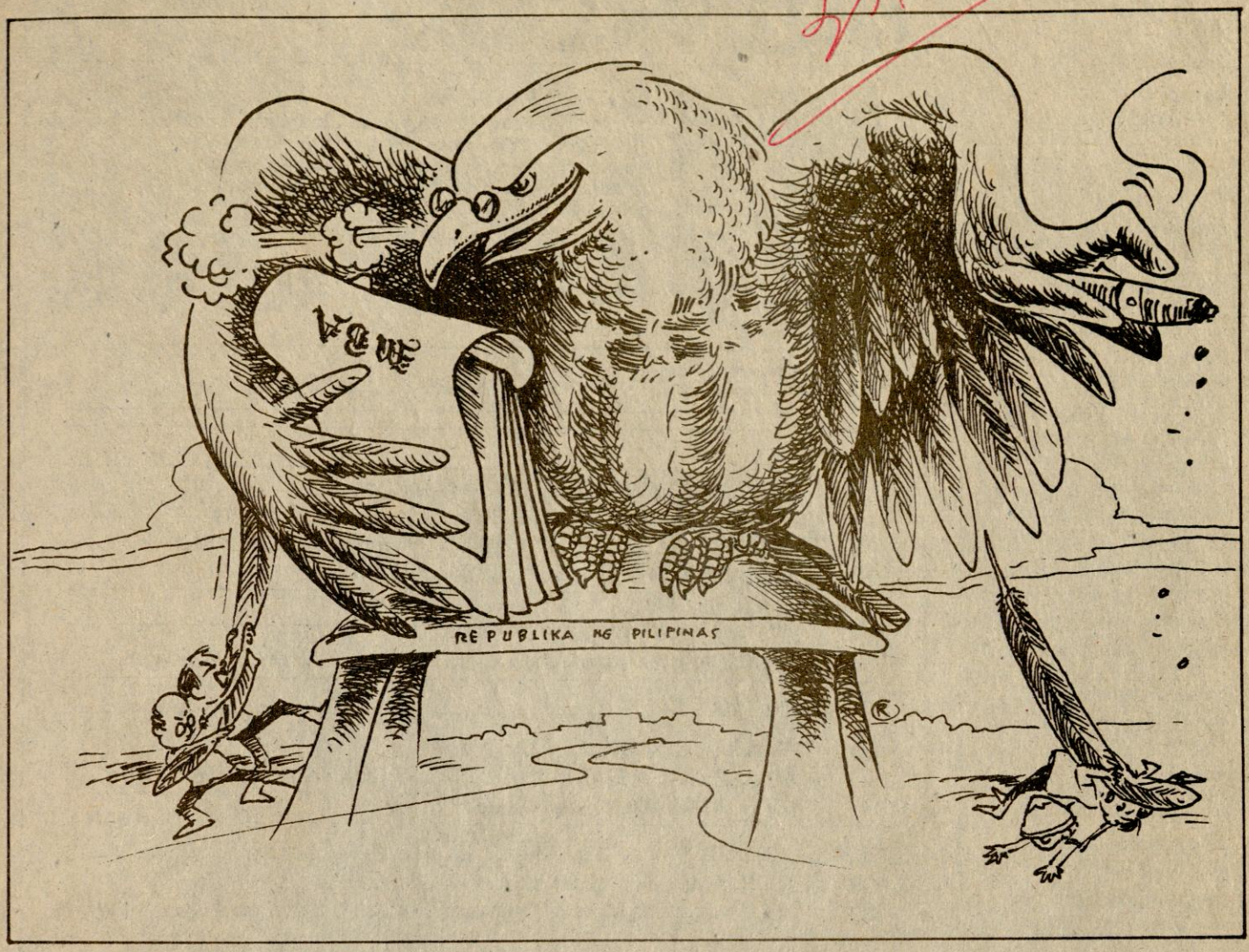
Bineto ng Pangulong Aquino ang bahagi ng badyet para sa 1989 na nag-aalis ng kanyang poder na maglipat ng pondong nakalaan para sa isang bagay upang gamitin ito sa ibang paraan. Ito'y isang kapangyarihang minana niya kay Marcos. Noon, mahigpit na tinutuligsa ni Aquino mismo at ng kanyang mga kasama sa oposisyon ang patakarang ito dahil pinagmumulan ng sari-saring abuso.

Ang kolumnistang si Luis Beltran ay nagbigay ng isang halimbawa: Sa badyet ng 1987, ang Departamento ng Repormang Pang-agraryo ay may pondong nakalaang ipahiram sa mga magsasakang nais bumili ng mga araro't suyod. Sa pahintulot ng Malakañang, ang pondong ito'y ginamit para bumili ng limang kotse para sa mga matataas na opisyales ng nasabing Departamento . (*Standard*, Disyembre 30, 1988)

Ito ba'y tama?

Kung nais ninyong ipaskil ito at ang mga susunod sa iba pang mga bulletin board sa inyong komunidad, sumulat sa:

Lupon ng Pananaliksik
Pambansang Kilusan para sa Karapatang Sibil
38 Panay Avenue Lungsod ng Quezon



HOW TO SCRAP THE BASES

Short of sponsoring a giant David Copperfield act with genuine, permanent results, not the old American trick with money and mirrors, how can Filipinos, in 1991, or, at the latest, by the year 2000, hope to get rid of the US bases—which claw at our national sovereignty, independence, dignity and prophylactic peace of mind, even as they expose all 60 million of us to the horrors of nuclear war?

There are a number of ways, approaches—options, which should be kept open, as President Aquino continues coyly to say, although an option that remains open for so long could cease to be one, just as a mind that's so broad might as well be a pancake.

First, the government which she now heads, in forthcoming talks with Washington, could serve firm, unalterable notice to the Kano that, as decreed by the Constitution, the Filipino nation shall not allow on its soil any foreign military bases after the termination of the present bases agreement—except by a treaty ratified by the Senate. The national interest dictates, our leaders could likewise affirm, that no such treaty will be ratified, the bases will have to go. The US then would happily comply and not send in the 101st Airborne and the Marines, not even a tough-talking congressional delegation, America being the world's greatest champion of freedom, democracy, self-determination and so on.

But how expect the Aquino government to have the moral resolve and the political will to remove the bases in such forthright fashion? Has it not demonstrated often enough that it cannot even cope with far less apocalyptic problems, like crooks in the Cabinet or the daily plight of long-suffering commuters stranded along potholed streets?

Which brings us to the second possibility—down the same battered, cratered avenues of Metro Manila, a million nationalist militants (less than this number would be quickly dispersed by the anti-riot police) could march in a marathon protest against the bases, day after day, week after week, as at Tienanmen—until the powers that be either send in the APCs or see the cause-oriented light. Except that, in the real world, the organizers would most probably have trouble mobilizing 10,000 durable rallyists on a clear day, let alone finding bus rides to converging points around the metropolis.

There is the less peaceable option, which is people's war, as it is called by the Communist-led guerrillas who, from reports, are waging it on behalf of the people. Instead of just gunning down an American or two around McDonald's in Angeles, the NPA could start plastering the bases with mortars and rockets on a regular basis, with

Turn to page 45

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ON THE COVER

In a MIDWEEK exclusive, Quezon City Mayor Brigido "Jun" Simon talks about alleviating the the squatter problem in his city via innovative and ambitious housing projects. Cover photo by Gil Nartea. Cover dsign by Neng Torres-Yabut.

CONTENTS VOLUME 4 NUMBER 33

FEATURES

3 **SENATE SIDESHOWS** *by Melanie Manlogon*
6 **HAZARDS OF THE UNEASY RIDER** *by Juaniyo Arcellana*
9 **THE AUGUST OF THE ASSASSINS** *by Gregorio C. Brillantes*
13 **LIFE WITH DON MANUEL** *by Quijano de Manila*

INTERVIEW

18 **JUN SIMON** SHELTERING THE HOMELESS IN QUEZON CITY *by B.I. Pimentel*

FICTION/POETRY

24 **BATANG LANSANGAN** *ni Cyrus P. Borja*
27 **PITIK-BULAG SA MAKINILYANG DUWAG** *ni Nestor Abella de Veyra*
AKO'Y TATAWID *ni Israel Makaraig*

VIEWS/REVIEWS

28 **NOTES** KEGAL LEGERDEMAIN *by Jose F. Lacaba*
29 **NOTES** AN ARTIST'S RIGHT TO FAIR VIEWING *by the Concerned Artists of the Philippines*
30 **NOTES** IMAGINARY RABBITS *by Jose F. Lacaba*

DEPARTMENTS/COLUMNS

1 **EDITORIAL** HOW TO SCRAP THE BASES
23 **VANTAGE POINT** OUTHOUSE LOGIC *by Luis V. Teodoro*
31 **READINGS** WRITING, TEACHING, AND THE TEACHING OF WRITING (AND A BIT OF READING, TOO) *by Francisco Arcellana*
35 **DEMOCRATIC SPACE**
39 **HEADLINERS** CPP PURGE
40 **MIDWEEK MISCELLANY**
44 **WINDMILLS** SOMETHING HAPPENED ON MY WAY TO AND FROM A TALK SHOW *by Norma Japitana*
46 **FOR REAL** MARICEL FIGHTS BACK *by Lulubelle Lam*
47 **HAPPY HOUR** BED PAN ALLEY *by Inidoro Delihencia*
48 **SIYANGA PALA** LUMALAGAPAK NA P47 MILYON *ni Marra PL. Lanot*

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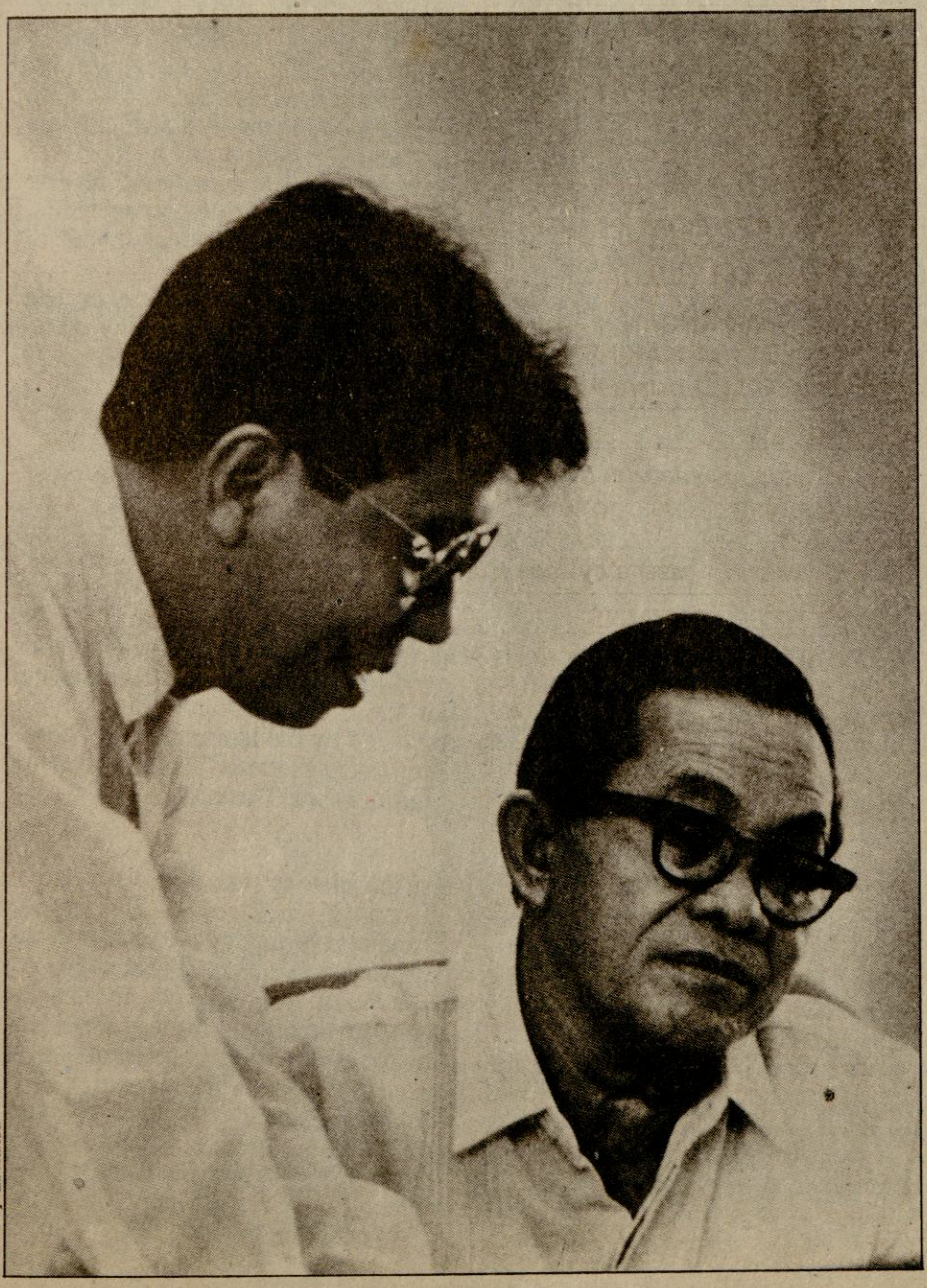
SENATE SIDESHOWS

Sex rumors, a rigodon of positions, a probe of alleged scandals and "Operation Big Bird" rock the august chamber.



Photos by Gil Nartea

By MELANIE MANLOGON

The Senate of the Philippines, like its legislative other half, the House of Representatives, opened its third regular session last July 24 against a backdrop that had Manila snickering—scandals!

Firstly, "blind items" in a newspaper column about a senator's peccadilloes with a senior colleague's daughter led the majority floor leader, Orlando Mercado, to give up his important Senate post.

On the front pages of July 15's newspapers were splashed pictures of the hapless Mercado, a somber expression on his face, as he read a prepared statement.

"I categorically deny these rumors," the mediaman turned legislator said. "But in public life, perception—and more aptly, misperception—can seriously diminish the effectivity of a public official.

"The situation will hamper my effectivity as part of the Senate leadership and definitive steps should be taken to prevent further institutional damage to the chamber."

Less than a week later, the Senate's ex-number three man left for the United States with his wife Dorothy who was to undergo treatment for cancer in New York.

And then the Senate was thrown into a dither, to put it mildly. After Mercado, whom Senator Alberto Romulo

Former majority floor leader Mercado with Senate President Salonga: Hapless



Senator Shahani: An apology from columnist Yap-Daza

described as "efficient, effective and fair," who could be the chamber's next "workhorse"?

For a time, the chamber seemed divided. A bloc led by Romulo declared it would press for Mercado's retention as majority floor leader. Another group thought otherwise and said the matter ought to be decided in a caucus.

But the agitated solons did decide. Senator Agapito Aquino was one of the first to break the news to the public. In a multi-sectoral workshop on the national rice policy in Makati last July 22, Aquino digressed from the topic and said, "In case you're interested, the new majority floor leader is now Senator Tito Guingona." The crowd, made up of government representatives, farmers, rice traders and consumers, broke into laughter and someone shouted, "That's what I call poetic justice."

What followed was a rigodon of Senate posts. With Guingona now majority floor leader, someone had to take the number two post he vacated—that of Senate president pro-tempore—and still another had to take up the reins of the blue ribbon committee which Guingona chaired.

Wigberto Tañada, head of the justice and human rights committee, was later pinpointed as Guingona's successor to the blue ribbon post while trade committee chair Sotero Laurel was selected as pro-tem. More post-partings are in the offing.

Hardly had the kinks in the Mercado affair been ironed out at the Senate when another "scandal" burst open.

Indignant over a "blind item" in a column in the *Manila Standard* written by journalist Julie Yap-Daza about a woman senator having an affair with her driver, the only two women members of the Senate, Santanina Rasul and Leticia Ramos-Shahani, demanded that the chamber's ethics committee open an investigation into the matter so that they could clear their names.

It was a probe that ethics committee chairperson Rene Saguisag seemed reluctant to call, probably in deference to the so-called "Salonga doctrine," which a journalist-legislator said stipulates that "the private lives of senators and congressmen cannot be encroached upon unless their acts are demonstrably injurious to the public interest."

But since the women legislators, Senator Rasul, especially, were fuming over the news item—the furious Muslim senator delivered a privilege speech demanding a probe—Saguisag eventually decided to begin an "initial review simply in aid of legislation" of the "sex scandals."

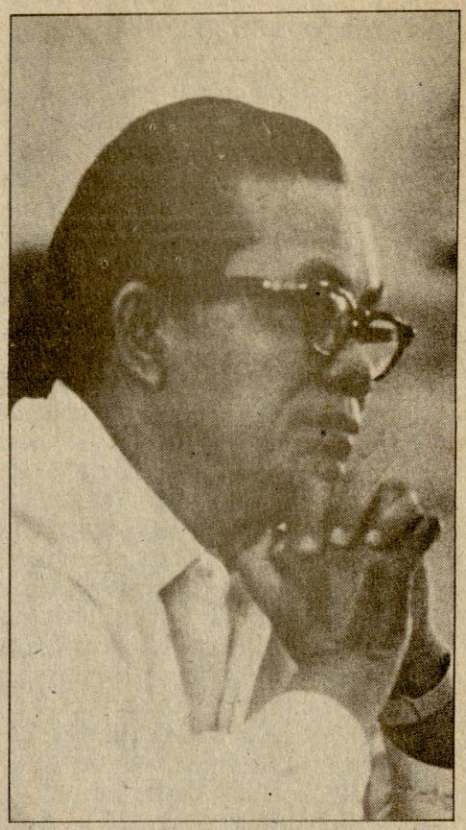
Saguisag's eight-man panel opened the probe last August 3, an investigation which Saguisag was reported to have described as "the last thing I wanted to do when I ran for the Senate."

First to be invited for questioning was Julie Yap-Daza, who admitted that she had no proof when she wrote the item in her July 25 column—she was merely relaying a rumor, she confessed, that had been going around lately. Yap-Daza had earlier apologized to the two ladies of the Senate, but Rasul and Shahani did not seem mollified by the letters she sent them. They said the letters did not say that the blind item was baseless.

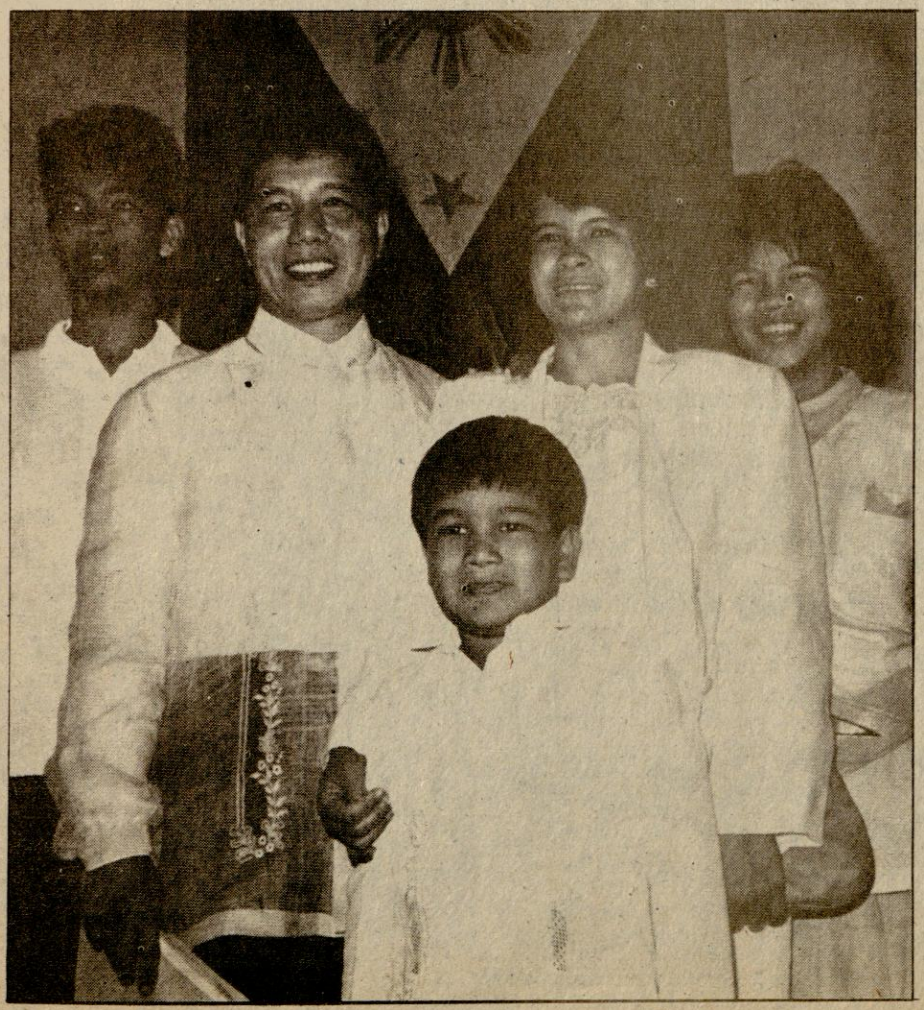
In the spate of scandals related to the Senate, not even the upper chamber's top man, Senate President Jovito Salonga, has been spared.

A House probe of an aborted attempt to recover ousted President Marcos' ill-gotten wealth in at least a dozen Swiss banks—an operation curiously nicknamed "Big Bird"—has brought out claims, by two persons who appeared before the Chaves committee, that Salonga was somehow involved in the bungled deal.





Rasul (above left), Salonga (right), Orly Mercado and his family: Bungled deals and blind items



Commissioner Jose Almonte of the Economic Intelligence and Investigation Bureau and banker Michael de Guzman have blamed Salonga for the government's failure to recover at least $213 million of the $7.5 billion identified Marcos assets in Swiss banks as of July 1986.

Almonte has asked Salonga to "voluntarily" submit himself to Representative Victorico Chaves' panel for "questioning in the interest of the Filipino people and for the sake of truth and justice." Salonga, however, has yet to come up with his version of the story of "Big Bird."

The battering the Senate is receiving now isn't the first. Remember the "ABC" scandals (arms, buko, cars) which rocked the legislature early this year? Well, after that series, one of the senators, Ernesto Maceda, called for a snap election for the Senate and the House of Representatives to get a new mandate from the people. Maceda's colleagues, however, merely dismissed his bright idea. They must have thought he was just "grandstanding."

Halfway into its tenure and with more than 1,200 bills pending, and with the US bases and other crucial issues coming up, what can the electorate hope to get from the Senate aside from these sideshows? M

Hazards of the Uneasy Rider

A commuter's reflections on Metro Manila's transport mess.

By JUANIYO ARCELLANA

The waiting is the hardest part. During rush hours, which, according to one commuter, seem to be getting longer, the wait can take an hour or even twice that when the rains and floods come in. The number of public utility vehicles—buses, jeepneys, taxis—is inversely proportional to the number of rain clouds unleashing monsoon madness on the gray cities and suburbs of Metro Manila.

The hazards of commuting are innumerable. Aside from the rare rides, there's the carbon monoxide to contend with; and if you survive the pollution there's still the pickpocket and free-for-all traffic lying in ambush. Even if you're cruising insouciantly down the expressway, you still have to be on the lookout for PAL planes that overshoot the runway, to plow through motorists and lay their metal snouts on the tracks of the already hardup Philippine National Railways.

Let's take a look at the various aspects of this transport mess, then, work our way to the center, as it were, where emerges the face of Rainerio Reyes in the bull's-eye of a kind of dart board.

JEEPNEYS. Once there was a disc jockey named Jim, but the announcer preceding her was nervous so she blurted out, "Coming up next, Jeep..."

The jeep—the jeepney in its Pinoy incarnation—is easily the most abused public utility vehicle in the country today. Clogging the main thoroughfares with their smoke belchers and blaring stereos, this World War II relic weaves in and out of highway lanes like a mayfly in heat. It is also most overrated as it can sit an average of only 16 persons of medium size build, so woe to the jeepney and its boundary should a heavyweight or two choose to appropriate, *derecho,* precious seat space.

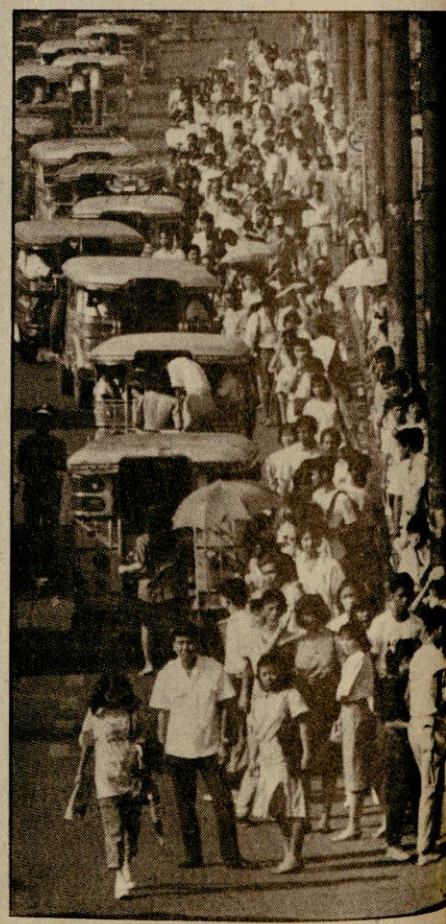
When the jeepney is already full, commuters can hang on to the back railing (wave fist up and down) as happens during the worst crush, which is more often than not, leaving absolutely no room to cling for the *People's Tonight*—Stork-yosi vendors and other like-minded daredevils.

But since everyone must earn a living and get an education and go to school or work, the jeepney is still very much around to inspire artists and bohemians, a la Tence Ruiz and Rock Drilon, to come up with their latest oil on canvas series or installations. Speaking of oil, the prices of which are bound to rise in spite of the Madame's promise of yet another sleight of hand, expect an artificial shortage should the Oil Price Stabilization Fund not be replenished by the mid-August.

Then there are the necessary absurdities like round trip, wherein one has to pass through Pier from Quiapo to get to Philcoa, and trip-cutting, wherein the driver unceremoniously asks the minority passengers to get down, *hanggang dito na lang po tayo,* because the majority have already gotten down the short route. So when Reyes says that it's a free-for-all for jeeps from 7 p.m. to 4 a.m., where they can charge any fare and ply any route, where has he been? One only has to pass through Lerma going south during rush hour to know that it's plain and simple chaos.

Photos by Gil Nartea





Commuters scramble and wait for rides: Artificial shortages and necessary absurdities

Doubtless there are heartwarming sights like passengers patiently lining up for rides at Pantranco and Crossing. The Filipino can, why not?—the drum-beaters make so much of it that it sounds like we've only recently discovered the queue.

Now there have been essays about how the jeepney reflects the Filipino's flamboyant, happy-go-lucky personality, and an added mystique to the jeepney driver, no thanks to Erap, but there is no arguing the fact that the vehicle is best for short distances only. And they can keep the 25-centavo change, small token for their heritage of smallness.

BUSES. The latest is that 20 imported buses have arrived from China, with another 20 due before long. That's the good news. The bad news is that rival organizations of bus operators are quarelling over who gets custody of these buses, which unconfirmed reports go are smoke belchers.

The bus is the most effective means of going long distances in the city; not only is it faster, but its mere elevation makes it seem that there's less pollution to cope with up there. The bad news is that they come so few and far between, and when they do they're practically bursting at the seams. There used to be a fair number of double-decker buses—lovers of yore remember the Motorco on Roxas Boulevard—but they seem to have gone the way of an endangered species.

The reason given for the shortage of buses is that it costs a fortune to maintain them. The taxes imposed on spare parts are simply too much. What we get is the spectacle of more buses languishing in the terminal junkyards than plying their routes. Those that are on the streets also appear to observe a



The Light Railway Transit (above), an overloaded jeepney: Vicious cycle



certain curfew, unless it is a historic highway like EDSA where mass transport is practically round the clock.

The advent of the bus as one of the premier solutions to the transport mess is all well and good, but what alternative employment can government provide for the jeepney drivers who will most likely be eased off the road's shoulder? What could ensue here is a typical survival of the fittest; the buses being able to carry at least four times as many passengers as the jeep should hold sway—if their engines hold out long enough. Even if the engines conk out, there's this Phil.-Trucking concept, however accident-prone according to some quarters, which would arrange buses like train cars joined by steel links.

Good manners and right conduct should be taught to conductors who oftentimes act like barkers in a carnival sideshow. Something must also be done about the sound of overworked bus engines that resemble the cry of animals in the slaughterhouse.

Critical areas: Pascual Liner's Baclaran-Novaliches route and G. (as in *gapang*) Liner's Quiapo-Cainta trip. Also, buses going to southern suburbs like Parañaque and Alabang, where commuters wait for as long as two hours on Ayala for a ride home.

CONDUCTOR'S COMPLAINTS. Mostly they complain about passengers acting like street toughs on the *estribo*, obstructing the inflow and outflow of passengers. *Pasok muna kayo kung malayo pa ang babaan n'yo*, is a common line heard during rush hour, ditto *maluwag pa sa gitna*. A common bellyache: sometimes the pokerfaced commuter will pretend he's deep in contemplation or plain absent-minded, and therefore neglect to fish out the precious fare even if the conductor is already waving the wad of tickets and bills, jingling the coins in front of the commuter's face. This type of passenger is wise, and is on the constant lookout for boarding inspectors, whose arrival will presage his getting off at the next stop. This is one reason why operators have hired inspectors in civilian dress.

Another complaint is how some passengers insist on getting down on the very doorstep of their destination, even if it's not a legitimate bus stop. Commuters getting down at stoplights in the middle of the highway is permissible, so long as they *tingin muna sa kanan*, which happens when the driver is in the midst of a monstrous snarl and has no room to *kabig*.

As for the perception that some drivers and conductors are in cahoots with snatchers and other lumpen elements, despite the "beware of pickpocket" sign on the ceiling side, the tandem wisely opt for their right to silence. Conductors are also upset at passengers who present 50-peso bills for 75-centavo fares, and yet demand immediate change or are angry when this is completely forgotten.

TAXIS. A dispatch from Task Force Detainees tells of the murders of two union leaders of Golden Taxicab. The labor group went on strike to demand more humane wages. Golden is, was, one of the few respectable companies around—their meters usually aren't shortcircuited. A pity that now only scabs drive for their badly depleted, of late less-than-respectable fleet.

Then follow reports that several taxi drivers have been fined and apprehended for "choosing" passengers. This occurs, or used to occur, at the shopping malls and big commercial centers where the drivers bargain for the best deal to transport you and your bags of perishable groceries, not to mention the baby in tow. Should you insist on their putting down their meters, witness them shake their heads and arrogantly shift gears.

Of course, this campaign led to the drivers' changing their ways, *opo, saan po tayo*? and meters miraculously charging reasonable rates. But why are so many taxis on the verge of breakdown? That's because a presidential *bayaw* has a monopoly of the spare parts business, we're told.

LRT. Filipinos seem even prouder of the LRT, another overrated system costing billions, than of the National Museum. When Balikbayans get a glimpse of the fast-moving elevated train, they can't help but feel a twinge of hope for the Third World. You pay P3.50 not only for the ride but also for a nostalgic view of the decaying, no longer noble and loyal city.

Now there are plans afoot for a second LRT to ply the Tutuban-Katipunan route, to be operational in the mid-90s or thereabouts. The whole LRT network consisting of four different lines, in fact, is projected to be functioning by the turn of the century. At about this time the Pinoy Everyman may have already been plastered to the tracks by the mounting national debt.

Congressman Orbos has volunteered that the second LRT be constructed "without government spending a single centavo." He plans to bring in foreign contractors to do the job; less than clear is how they'll recoup their investment short of tying the modern Juan to a light railway leash.

KING OF NINGAS COGON. Young Congressman Renato Yap is up in arms over the Traffic Batayan; their language, if translated and made intelligible to tourists, is downright embarrassing. Then, after the cocheros, we have the new kings of the road, the pedicabs, who defy all traffic decorum by negotiating busy intersections regardless of their passenger's life and limb. So when a pedestrian looks both ways before crossing a one-way street he is not necessarily a pessimist, but merely checking for a rampaging sidecar.

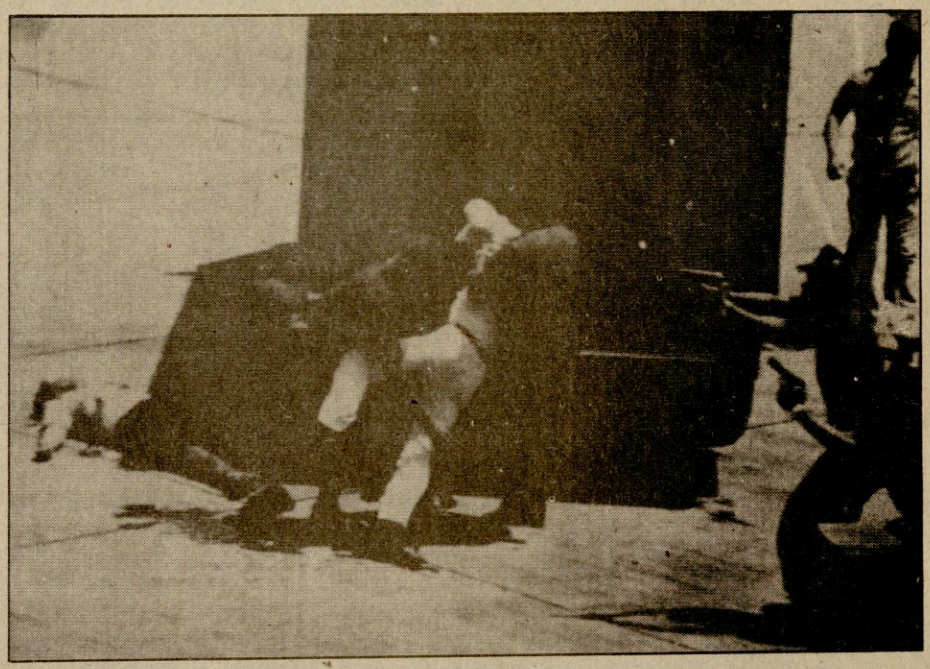
The equation for the transport mess is a relatively simple yet vicious cycle: more people in the city because there are no jobs in the country, fewer mass transport units because of poor maintenance due to taxes and bad roads. Taxes paid go not to the repair of roads but to counterinsurgency operations, making not only jobs but people scarce in the countryside. Verging on the simplistic, true, but doesn't it break your heart to find that the king of ningas cogon is a queen?

There are suggestions to reactivate the Pasig River as major thoroughfare. A bright idea for a landlocked populace. At least here we don't have to contend with oppressive traffic, only stare at the rainbow patterns of chemicals on the surface of the murky water for our right of way. M

By GREGORIO C. BRILLANTES

THE AUGUST OF THE ASSASSINS

Notes historical, political, journalistic and maybe hagiographic, about this month of humid heat, savage typhoons, dread tidings and disasters.



August 21 held little significance for us Filipinos—until the carnage at Plaza Miranda and then the murder of Benigno Aquino Jr. If the date meant anything at all, it was maybe because it happened to be our birthday, and in accordance with pious custom, we had been baptized Pio or Juana Francisca, which circumstance didn't exactly call for public commemoration.

In the Catholic calendar it is the feast of both St. Pius X, the Pope who lowered to seven the age at which children could first receive communion, and St. Jane Frances de Chantal, the virtuous widow who founded the Visitation of the Virgin Mary, a congregation for the education of girls, in the 17th century. For all their exalted status in the Church Triumphant, the Italian pontiff and the French baroness have inspired no fervent cults in these islands, unlike St. Alphonsus Liguori, founder of the Redemptorists and St. Dominic of the Order of Preachers, St. Augustine and his mother, St. Monica, as well as St. Clare, all of whom have their feasts in August. These popular intercessors must in turn give way to the honor and acclamation accorded the Mother of God on the 15th of the month, the glorious feast of her Assumption.

Outside of the religious or ecclesiastical, August 21 too hardly denoted anything of national significance until that Saturday night of the grenade explosions and that Sunday noon of the assassination—except perhaps to the scrupulous historian who might mark it down as the prelude to the Philippine Revolution. On August 19, 1896, the secret of the Katipunan was betrayed in a Tondo confessional. As the Guardia Civil moved to hunt them down, Andres Bonifacio and hundreds of his rebel followers fled the city, to regroup two days later in Caloocan. From there they marched, now more than a thousand strong, to the woods of Pugad Lawin, and tearing up their cedulas, shredding those bits of paper that had been the formal tokens of their colonial bondage, committed themselves irrevocably to armed struggle against their oppressors.

The Cry of Balintawak on August 23, the Battle of Pinaglabanan in the same week, the assaults on Spanish garrisons and convents throughout Cavite on the last day of the month: the same conscientious chronicler could say they all sprang, exploded with pent-up fury, from the anger and defiance that had gathered secretly in a forest in Caloocan that August 21 some 80 years ago.

Aside from those first assemblies and battles of the Revolution, the month does offer more than a fair share of history for our remembrance and, as nationalist hindsight would maintain, our somber instruction. Manuel Quezon was born August 19, 1878, and died as President-in-exile in the United States August 1, 1944. Ramon Magsaysay was born August 31, 1907. From the Quezon era to the Magsaysay administration the nation passed through decades of appalling change and turbulence, including a war not of our own making and its aftermath, a neocolonial kind of peace sown with all manner of crisis, deception and injustice.

August 30, the Day of Pinaglabanan, recalls Bonifacio's assault on the Spanish armory in San Juan del Monte: an encounter that saw the rout of his troops, cost him the leadership of the Revolution and led eventually to his assassination while in the military custody of his Caviteño rivals. The same day marks the signing in 1951 of the RP-US Mutual Defense Pact, which is more than a matter of mutual defense as it involves, like it or not, Clark and Subic and the prospect of this ever hospitable country's being turned into a radioactive wasteland in the event of nuclear war.

This doomsday threat had its beginnings in an August: 40 years ago this month, the Bomb fell on Hiroshima. An entire city was demolished, tens of thousands of its people slaughtered, assassinated, all in an instant—a very modest preview, we are told, of what could befall our world if a war between the superpowers were to break out tomorrow. Today, a single US Trident submarine can fire a cluster of nuclear missiles with the destructive force of "25 World War IIs," and so can its Russian counterpart, claim American antiwar activists. A demonstration of such firepower under actual conditions, the majority of the human species will agree, is a consummation devoutly to be prevented.

In the very name and nature of August, one may perceive the singular aptness of its role as a bringer of dread tidings. The month plagued by intemperate weather, spells of humid, stifling heat and savage typhoons, derived its name from that of the first Emperor of Rome. Augustus Caesar before he became dictator was known more modestly as Octavius, from the Latin for eight. Ergo, to perpetuate his authoritarian memory through the ages, he

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gave his honorific name, Augustus, to the eighth month of the year.

Besides an obsession with the opinion of posterity, he possessed certain enigmatic, contradictory qualities duly noted by his biographers, notably Dio Casius and Suetonius. Power was his dominant passion, and to achieve and expand it he had recourse to unscrupulous and brutal methods. When it suited him, he showed remarkable tact in manipulating public opinion and reconciling the classes of his realm. In the name of stability, he kept a firm hold on the army. To the dismay of his counselors, he was extremely devoted to members of his family, particularly his nephew Marcellus, whom he groomed to be his successor as he had no son.

It was an assassination that made Augustus, that enabled him to rise to power. He was the adopted son and heir of Julius Caesar, who was killed—by high-minded conspirators sworn to destroy tyranny and uphold the Republic—for demanding that the Senate proclaim him not only dictator for life, but king. Amid the troubles and enmities following the murder, Augustus moved with ruthless audacity to claim his imperial inheritance with the aid of a swiftly organized army.

Small wonder that the month of Augustus has been congenial to assassins.

The August of Ninoy Aquino's assassination began with an Asian nation in crisis, its capital racked by rioting and street battles, its economy shattered, its president ordering the arrest of opposition leaders, the outlawing of radical political parties and the imposition of strict press censorship—not the Philippines, but Sri Lanka.

The violence had devastated Colombo in the last days of July, after 13 government troops were killed in a guerrilla ambush near the city of Jaffna, in northern Sri Lanka. The incident was but one more episode in the ethnic conflict that had long troubled the island nation once known as Ceylon: the slain soldiers were Sinhalese belonging to the Buddhist majority; the guerrillas, or "terrorists," as the Colombo government, much like any other threatened regime, chose to call them, were of the minority Tamils fighting to set up a separate state in the Hindu north.

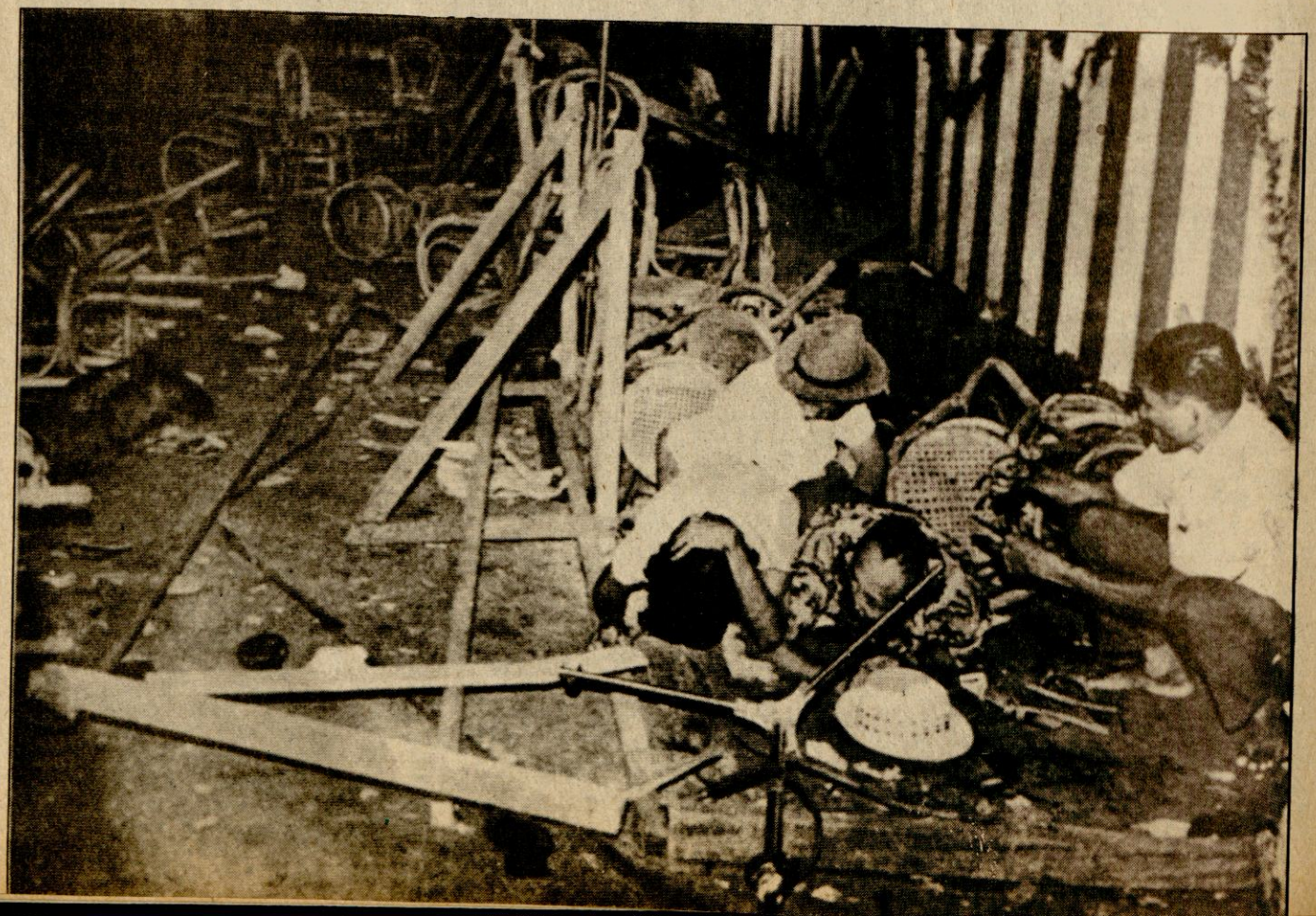
The ambuscade sparked a frenzy of mob violence against the Tamils in the Sinhalese-dominated south. Marauding gangs killed Tamils on sight, burned and looted Tamil homes, shops and factories in the capital. By the end of the first week of August, the murderous racial rampage had claimed over 300 lives, left 100,000 people homeless and turned entire districts in Colombo into smoldering ruins.

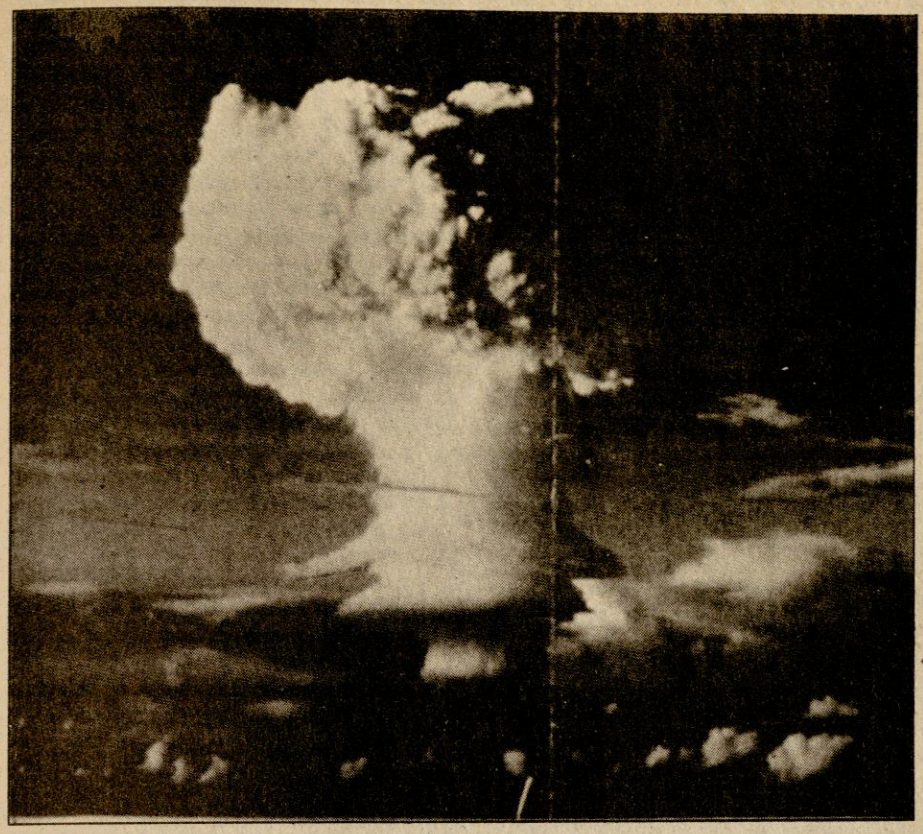
Sri Lanka's President Jayawardene in an emotional address to the nation expressed "boundless sorrow" over the bloodbath but would not condemn it: "Because of the violence by the terrorists, the Sinhalese people have reacted... The government now accedes to the clamor of the Sinhalese people that we do not allow the movement for division to grow some more..." To that end, the Colombo parliament on August 5 approved a constitutional amendment banning separatist activity.

Having appeased the Sinhalese majority, Jayawardene proceeded to deal with other problems confronting his regime: 60,000 refugees in Colombo alone, food shortages, epidemics, mass unemployment and a plot, allegedly involving the armed forces and instigated by either India or the Soviet Union, to take over the government. The conspiracy proved to be more rumor than fact. What could not be discounted was the economic crisis brought on by the riots, and in a dismal scenario not unlike that in which Filipinos would soon find themselves entrapped, Jayawardene's ministers set out on a frantic search for foreign loans.

President Mohammad Zia ul-Haq of Pakistan also had to contend with nationwide strike that month—triggered by protests against martial law.

Twice since the bemustached general seized power in 1977, scheduled elections for both national and provincial assemblies had been cancelled. Once more, on August 12, Zia pledged to hold an election, but as drafted, his proposal only convinced opposition leaders that—no surprise here, either—he was intent on running as the only candidate. On August 14, Pakistan's Independence Day, 30,000 demonstrators marched through the streets of Karachi





despite a ban on rallies, to denounce the newly announced electoral scheme and demand an end to military rule, the release of all political prisoners and the return of parliamentary democracy. Police dispersed the rally with clubs and tear gas.

The unrest spilled out into the countryside. Protesters smashed through police barricades, tore up railway tracks, set fire to government offices, banks and a railroad station, broke into a jail and liberated more than 100 prisoners. The army responded with more tear gas, dusk-to-dawn curfew and a roundup of dissidents, several of whom were sentenced to public flogging. Within a week it was back to normal, as things went in Pakistan: the dictator again in firm control, and the opposition—Filipinos have since become all too familiar with the same lamentable script—still divided, still casting about for a strong and charismatic leader capable of uniting its quarreling factions and winning over Zia should there be a presidential election.

Meanwhile, to the west beyond Pakistan, wars old and new exacted their fearsome toll. In Afghanistan guerrillas wiped out another Soviet truck convoy, dissident-held villages were strafed and bombed. After more than 100,000 deaths, the Iranians and Iraqis continued pounding away at each other in huge grinding battles on their common border. Lebanon, long fragmented and bleeding, faced the prospect of renewed fighting between government-backed Christian militiamen and Islamic Druse forces in Beirut and in the southern part of the country, where Israeli occupation troops were set to pull out at month's end. And in Africa the civil war in Chad threatened to erupt into a wider conflict as neighboring Libya sent in its jets to bomb government outposts, France responded to its former colony's call for help by airlifting a thousand paratroopers into the battle zone and the US ordered a flotilla led by the nuclear carrier *Eisenhower* to stand by off the Libyan coast—a show of force to impress the belligerent Muammar Kadaffi.

The US Navy was likewise on station elsewhere, and even more massively, with carrier task forces maneuvering off the Atlantic and Pacific coasts of tiny, embattled Nicaragua. The Pentagon had dispatched the warships to dramatize Ronald Reagan's message to the US Congress: that the Sandinista government posed a grave threat to the security of non-communist Central America and short of sending in the Marines the *contra* guerrillas struggling to topple it should get more American aid. The Democratic majority in the House of Representatives—the very same chamber that would be deeply concerned about events soon to take place in the Philippines—disagreed with the White House and voted to cut off aid to the *contras*.

In terms of a head count, though, the month's main event in Washington was the march of 300,000 people to commemorate the start of Martin Luther King's civil rights crusade 20 years ago. In the sweltering August heat they converged on the Mall before the Lincoln Memorial, listened to impassioned speeches, sang, prayed and cheered the great black leader's vision of freedom and equality—a dream that changed America and gave it one more martyr, for King was to die by assassination in 1967, the victim, as John F. Kennedy had been, of a sniper's bullet.

To the north, three states and a day's drive from the US capital, in more temperate Boston, Benigno Aquino Jr., having resolved as early as June to go back to Manila, had packed his bags and said his goodbyes. On August 12, despite warnings of an assassination plot and the pleas of kin and friends, he boarded an afternoon plane at Logan Airport bound for Los Angeles, on the first leg of his return trip to the Philippines.

August 1983 in Manila had begun with a buzz of rumors. Through the better part of the month, at the bar of the National Press Club, in Taboy's Cinco Litros in Ermita, in coffeeshops and hotel lobbies, the talk of the know-it-alls revolved around two dissimilar but now seemingly indivisible subjects: the state of one man's kidneys and the chances of another man's homecoming. On the face of it, the most ingenious rumor-monger would have been hard put to come up with more improbable twin topics, though in truth the two famous politicians in question had been linked inextricably in the public mind since their combative debates in the late 1960s. Now Ninoy's vital plans, as one NPC wit put it, depended on President Marcos' vital organs.

The President was undergoing dialysis, it was said. He had had a kidney transplant, with Bongbong as donor, it was said. He had collapsed, he was in a coma, he had been flown to a hospital in the US, and so on... The rumor mills started chugging faster when Malacañang turned away callers or scrapped scheduled audiences. The President, the First Lady told mediamen, was suffering from nothing more serious than an allergy caused by defective airconditioning. A Palace assistant next announced that the Chief Executive, undaunted by nasty rumor or annoying allergy, had merely gone into seclusion, to finish writing a book and start work on another.

On August 13, Marcos reappeared on TV, looking wan and shaky but still his old alert self for all that, addressing a meeting of AFP top brass, posing with boxer Rolando Navarrete, who had just knocked out an Australian challenger. "All I wanted to do," said the President with a smile and a twinkle, "was to finish writing some books and I started hearing strange stories." The "strange stories" must have included that one about Ninoy Aquino deciding to come home for one last chat with him, about

restoring democracy and saving the nation, before he lapsed into a coma marking the end of the Marcos period.

In any event, Marcos that August, whether ailing or not, was decidedly far from idle. He met with US Congressman Stephen Solarz, the not too sympathetic chairman of the US House subcommittee on Asian-Pacific affairs, on the status of the $900 million "rental" package for the use of Clark and Subic. He sat down with his Cabinet to review government reorganization measures and development projects. High on his agenda were matters that concerned Church and State. The Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines had prepared a pastoral letter to be read in all churches decrying the Presidential Commitment Order (PCO) as "immoral." Two days before the statement was to be read, he announced the abolition of the PCO and the bishops, thrown off balance by the nimble one-upmanship, withdrew their message.

The churchmen and the rest of the nation were soon to learn that Marcos had at the same time issued another edict, the Preventive Detention Action (PDA). The new punitive decree, opposition leaders insisted, served the same purpose as the PCO, which was to authorize the detention, even without arrest warrants if such "may prejudice peace and order," of anyone who "has committed or is about to commit insurrection, rebellion, subversion or conspiracy." That the PDA called only for a year rather than an indefinite term of detention and allowed a detainee to appeal through a review committee failed to calm the fears of pro-opposition critics and human rights advocates. At the very least the PDA, stressed former justice Cecilia Muñoz Palma, was "incompatible with the rule of law."

Then on August 17, like the preliminary shock of a vast disaster about to strike the nation, an Intensity 7 earthquake ripped through Ilocos Norte. The 20-second tremblor, the worst natural calamity ever to hit the Marcos' home province, killed 60 people, injured over 200, crumpled or cracked scores of buildings, residences, roads and bridges. After Laoag City, where more than 100 persons were trapped in a collapsed building, Sarrat suffered the heaviest damage, with the casualty list reading like a quick tour of New Society landmarks: the Marcos Museum, the People's Center, the home of General Fabian Ver and the Church of Santa Monica, the festive scene of the Araneta-Marcos wedding in June.

That weekend Governor Ferdinand Marcos Jr. went about directing relief operations in Laoag and seven other stricken towns. Marcos Sr., who had been expected to make a dramatic personal appearance to console his people in Ilocandia, stayed put in Malacañang—"to coordinate the mobilization of equipment and resources from the capital," according to a Palace press release.

Reassurances seemed to be the order of the day. Prime Minister Cesar Virata told an audience of businessmen increasingly anxious about government takeovers and foreclosures of private firms not to worry: the state was merely being helpful, going only into ventures which the private sector was unable or unwilling to undertake. Central Bank Governor Juan Laya reported to Marcos that although the $562 million balance of payments deficit was "disappointing," the "economic adjustment program" was under way, the "momentum for recovery" had "deepened," recovery was at hand, etc. In the light of the "emerging global recovery," the President issued new guidelines to boost exports, prawns in particular, which he said could earn $1 billion for the nation in the next few years. Metro Manila Vice-Governor Ismael Mathay informed the citizens of the City of Man that P2 billion would be appropriated for their "basic needs," including, presumably, garbage collection and flood control, in the coming fiscal year. And General Ver announced that "complete" security measures would be provided former Senator Benigno Aquino Jr. if he should arrive on August 21, in view of persistent reports of assassination plots.

It was precisely these dastardly reports, the Chief of Staff added, that had prompted the authorities to ask Aquino to postpone his coming back, as any "untoward incident at the airport" would no doubt be blamed on the government.

August 21 dawned over Manila through a warm overcast, the ragged fringe of the southwest monsoon that had brought afternoon rains in the last three days. A low pressure area, TV weatherman Amado Pineda had said, had been sighted off Eastern Luzon but was not expected to develop into a typhoon. True enough, the skies by midmorning had started to clear, except for scattered nimbus clouds sailing eastward, now and then shrouding the sun.

"Maligayang Pagbabalik, Ninoy Aquino" proclaimed a placard over the gate adorned with yellow ribbons, in front of the Aquino house on Times Street, in Quezon City. More such placards and ribbons were to be seen on the approaches to the MIA where, toward 10 o'clock, the vanguard of the 20,000 banner-waving welcomers began filling the drive leading up to the arrival area, gathered around a brass band playing "Tie a Yellow Ribbon on an Old Oak Tree."

Beyond the stir and growing jubilation at the airport, it seemed like any other hot, bright, humid, church-crowded Sunday in August. It was the 21st Sunday too of the liturgical year, and the Gospel from Luke spoke of "wicked men" and "weeping and gnashing of teeth," of times to come when "those now first will be the last." Rain puddles from yesterday's rain dried up in the steamy heat on Taft and Buendia. A towering blonde in walking shorts strolled on the seawall behind the Quirino Grandstand, trailed by a pack of teenaged vendors. Somewhere, most probably in San Juan or Mandaluyong, holders of Sweepstakes ticket 445458, the winner of the day's P620,000 first prize, went about their usual business, still unaware of their stupendous good fortune. In Baesa, Quezon City, slum dwellers argued with security guards to let them cart away pieces of wood and roofing from the remains of a cosmetics factory razed by fire the night before. Billed as a "heart-breaking movie," *Saan Darating ang Umaga?*, starring Nestor de Villa and Nida Blanca and introducing weepy Jay Pee de Guzman, was into its second week breaking hearts and choking throats in more than a dozen theaters in Metro Manila. More cheerful fare was *Summer Holiday* showing in even more moviehouses, with Snooky, Maricel Soriano, Albert and William Martinez and other brightfaced, outdoorsy youngsters at their fun and games, in that August of '83.

Bearing down from the north, high above the cloud cover that hung over Batanes and Northern Luzon, China Airlines Flight 811 flew on in the August sun, among its passengers Ninoy Aquino and a company of journalists. The plane had taken off at 10:30 in the morning from Taipei, Ninoy's last stopover on a circuitous journey that had taken him to Tokyo, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur and then Hong Kong, and was due to arrive at 1 p.m. *Time's* Sandra Burton had resumed the conversation she began with Ninoy in Taipei and now asked him, as he reclined looking relaxed in seat 14E in the economy section, what he planned to do if he were arrested upon arrival.

He would write President Marcos from jail, said Ninoy. "Sometimes he would call me presumptuous, but he would acknowledge the letter. One day when I talked to him... he said, 'In a way I envy you. You have earned your presence in history. I am still fighting for mine... You can pick up your book and talk to Plato one minute and to Toynbee the next, while I have to talk to all these jokers...'

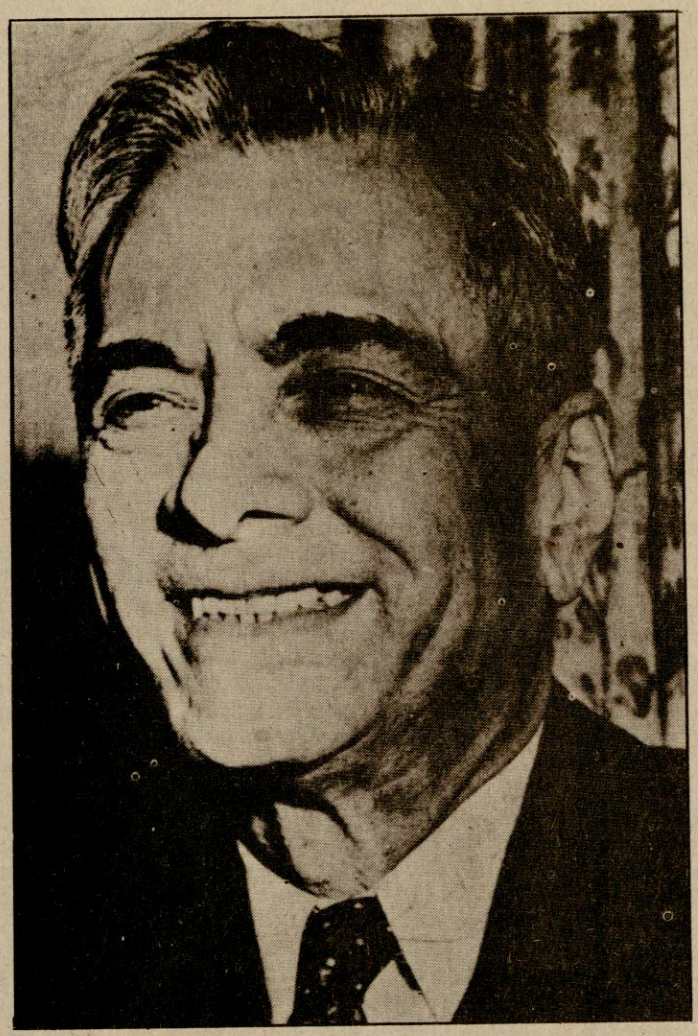
"He wanted me to give my word that I was throwing in the towel," Ninoy went on. "Finally he said, 'The law will take its course, suit yourself,' and he gave me the death sentence. I always felt that he might not like me, but that I was a sparring partner for him and he would be lonely without me."

Between Boston and Taipei, Ninoy Aquino had had the same candid, generous sessions with other journalists. To Teodoro Benigno of the Agence France Presse two weeks earlier, he had said: "In 1983, the country is at a crossroads. If we do not reach an understanding with President Marcos, I agree with the Reds: five years down the road, *gulo na 'yan*... And I will never forgive myself, you know, if I have to live with the knowledge that I could have done something but did not do anything. If I fail, *okay lang*. At least, I can face God and say: I have tried everything I could... Well, I

Turn to page 43

LIFE WITH DON MANUEL

Nonong Quezon remembers Dad, the illustrious President of the Commonwealth who would give his name to a dynamic, fast-growing city.



By QUIJANO DE MANILA

Don Manuel had three daughters before he finally got a son. Baby and Nini were followed by a third girl who died in infancy. She was to have been the goddaughter of the first Mrs. MacArthur, Louise Cromwell, and it was this lady, whom the Quezon children called Auntie Louise, who placed the shroud on the child. The death of their baby daughter so grieved Quezon and Doña Aurora they had that part of their house where the child died demolished.

Joy followed sorrow two or three years later when Mrs. Quezon gave birth again, this time to a boy.

Some time before her confinement, Quezon took her driving one afternoon. They drove out to the old road to Marikina. He had, he said, a surprise for her. This was in 1926, and there was, of course, no Quezon City yet. All that region was still lonely pasture land and wilderness. At a point before the road dipped toward the Marikina Valley, Quezon had the car stopped. He and Doña Aurora got off. He told her they were going for a walk.

They trudged up a rocky, weedy incline. Suddenly they were on the edge of a cliff. Below them lay the Marikina Valley, a spread of green. In the distance, like ramparts, stood the mountains of Antipolo. And farther beyond, a coronet of cloud ever circling its summit, rose Mount Banahaw, the chief landmark of the Quezon's native province of Tayabas.

As Doña Aurora gasped with delight, Quezon told her that this was the surprise. He had bought this cliff for her; it was his present to her.

The place was known as the Barranca and must have looked even more desolate in those days, but Quezon knew what his wife liked. She had never really become a city woman and was happiest when in the country. (Later, after her daughter Baby had turned 18, Doña Aurora would delegate as much as possible her tasks as Malacañang hostess to Baby, and devote her time to looking after the Quezon hacienda in Arayat.) Besides, Quezon may have been aware that, from the Barranca, one can see,

This article, originally titled "Nonong Quezon's Life with Father," is reprinted from *Nora Aunor & Other Profiles* (National Book Store, 1977).

not only Tayabas, but the break of dawn: he was giving his wife a place associated with her name.

Along this property Quezon bought for his wife now runs Aurora Boulevard; and on the cliff itself lives their son Nonong, whose imminent birth had occasioned the present.

Nonong was born at the Philippine General Hospital; when Don Manuel learned that he had at last got a son, he told his wife: "Aurora, now we have an insurrecto!"

Then he went off to celebrate, and the story is that he drank and drank all night, turned up at his office the next morning cold sober. His ability to hold his liquor is part of his legend. He liked drinking but not drunks, and was impatient with people who could not, like him, emerge from a night of carousing with a clear head.

As his child Nonong grew older it was noted that he would be the dark one in the family. Baby and Nini had inherited their father's very Spanish coloring: a light complexion tinged with pink, deepening into nose on the cheeks. Quezon never lost that vivid coloring; even when wasted by disease, he did not turn pallid or yellowish; and what Nonong Quezon remembers of his dying father is that startling bloom of health in the face of a man who was mortally ill, bedridden, enclosed in a sickroom, no contact with fresh air or sunshine to explain those roses on his cheeks.

Quezon was conscious that, except for his height, he did not look Filipino, and he was delighted when he saw that his child Nonong was a moreno.

He said to Doña Aurora: "Hija, it's good the boy is dark; if he should enter politics, nobody will call him a Kastila."

Despite the difference in coloring, however, Quezon and his son looked very much alike. When people commented on the resemblance, Baby would jest to tease her little brother, "Yes, he is the carbon copy of Papa."

The Quezons then lived on Roberts Street in Pasay. Dewey Boulevard had still to be built, and the sea came up to the Quezons' back yard. It was a two-story house of good hardwood, with a U-shaped driveway in front, a strip of lawn behind, where towered two pines. This was the first home Quezon owned, if one excepts the nipa hut in Baler where he was born. During the first years of his marriage, he rented a house in the Manila district of Sta. Ana, in Lamayan. Around 1920, he bought the Roberts Street house and in it was born his second daughter, Nini. There the Quezons lived until they moved to Malacañang. The house was renovated several times, was destroyed during the war. Its ruins still stand, high walls still enclosing the now-silent space of ground where, during the most turbulent years of his public career, Quezon secured for his family a very quiet and private life.

This was in the days before the belief became current that, when a man enters politics, not only he but also his family and his house become public property. Politicians' houses nowadays are like marketplaces, with crowds streaming in and out all day long even when it's not an election year. But Quezon was the old-fashioned kind of politician who believed that the public had the right to scrutinize his public actuations, and perhaps, even pry into his personal habits, but had absolutely no right to invade the home life of his family. And the people of that time respected the right to privacy of a politician's family; the public pursuit of Quezon stopped at his front gate. Nonong Quezon can remember no daily mobs turning his home into a public plaza. Occasionally, very occasionally, there were parties for politicians; tables were set out in the garden; and a lot of people arrived. But Nonong says he went on playing in the back yard undisturbed by the crowd. One or two visitors might approach and say a word to him; there was no rush of news photographers to get pictures of the Senate president's son at play.

His earliest impression of his father was of someone perpetually going out and coming back: a very busy man. There was also an impression of elegance, of beautiful clothes; a further puzzled awareness that Dad was not always as strong as he looked. The young Nonong had seen his father being borne upstairs in a chair; and there was one time when he had clambered over Dad's legs, wanting to be hoisted up, and was admonished that Dad was not feeling well.

But when Dad was feeling well he was willing to horse around with Nonong: roll on the floor with him, carry him piggy-back. Dad had a favorite threat: *"Susuntukin kita sa punong tainga* (I'll box you on the tips of your ears)." And sometimes he playfully carried out the threat, pushing his hand against one's ear, then chucking one of the chin.

Nonong had a vague idea that Dad was an important man.

"What's your salary?" he asked Dad once.

"One peso," replied Dad, with a grave smile.

Nonong also had a vague idea that he was expected to be a politico when he grew up, being the son of such a great politico.

"What would you like me to be when I grow up?" he asked Dad.

"Whatever you like, hijo," said Dad, chucking the boy on the chin.

Sometimes Dad took him along to where he worked, the big house where the politicos did whatever it was they did. Returning home from one such trip, Nonong, in the front seat beside the driver, heard Dad, in the back seat with another politico, talking incessantly about the camara, the camara, the camara.

What's that camera they're talking about, wondered Nonong, not knowing that Dad and his friend were talking, not about the box with which you took pictures, but about the Lower House of that big building where the politicos worked.

That particular memory stuck in Nonong's mind because, later, having got tired of talking about the camara, Dad asked the driver to let Nonong hold the wheel. Dad knew Nonong was fascinated with cars and liked to pretend he was driving one.

Another early memory with a car in it is of a trip to the provinces along very dusty roads. Dad didn't want the children to breathe the dust; so he said he was going to teach them a song about the nose. The lyrics were simple, just a repetition of the word *"Ilong, ilong, ilong!"* But as you chanted the word you had to hold your nose tight between your fingers. Whenever Dad saw a particularly dusty stretch of road in the offing he would start the children singing *"Ilong, ilong, ilong,"* their noses pinched between their fingers. And he sang along with them, holding his very patrician nose between his fingers too.

Of his first trip to the United States, when he was about four, Nonong remembers only that it was the time he and his sisters had their tonsils out, one after the other: "I remember being taken to the hospital by Dad, then Baby being wheeled out, then myself being led in." Dad, says Nonong, was a great "friolero," very sensitive to the cold—which may explain why Nonong has no memories of his father showing him the sights of Washington, since Don Manuel, whose Spanish heritage did not include imperviousness to wintry winds, could not have relished exposing himself to the chilly weather of the American capital.

That particular trip to the United States, in 1930, was an important chapter in Quezon's life. He had been a "fallen-away" Catholic since the Revolution and had joined the Masons. During that 1930 voyage to the US, right on the international date line, and on the eve of his 52nd birthday, Don Manuel returned to the Church. He had, says Nonong, long fallen away from Masonry too, but he made a formal retraction, to Archbishop Michael O'Doherty, a co-passenger on the ship during that August voyage to America.

Quezon's retraction (it's in Spanish and in his own hand) reads in part:

"It has been twenty-five years more or less since I left the communion of the Catholic Church, to which I belong by virtue of baptism, like my parents before me. This separation of mine from the relig-



Nonong Quezon (foreground) and family: "Dusty" memories

ion which guided my boyhood, adolescence and the first years of my mature life was due not only to the fact that I had lost my faith but I had joined Masonry...

"During those twenty-five years, I did not embrace any other religion.

"I have to confess with shame that, in the course of such a long period of time, I forgot, in fact, my God and may even have ceased to believe in him.

"The day came when I felt a complete desolation in spite of the material goods I enjoyed, and I found that the cause was my want of faith in supernatural life, my lack of religion...

"Thus mentally disposed, I asked some ministers of the Catholic Church to aid me in winning anew the faith I professed in baptism, and those ministers responded to the call. I wish to be a Catholic once more, to live and die in the Faith..."

When Quezon returned from America, word of his conversion had spread but was widely doubted until Don Manuel was seen publicly attending mass. Nonong says that his father's conversion was an intellectual one and that he remained devout all the rest of his life, with a special devotion to Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception and to St. Therese of the Child Jesus. An image of the Purisima that had been in the Quezon family for generations was kept by Don Manuel even during his non-Catholic years, enshrined in his bedroom.

Nonong remembers one twilight when he and his sisters were playing under the watchful eye of a maiden aunt who had nursed them since babyhood. Don Manuel happened to be in the same room, going through some papers. From some nearby parish belfry came the sound of the Angelus bell. Nonong and his sisters went on playing. Don Manuel had looked up from his papers; he said to the maiden aunt: "Mameng, don't you teach this children to pray the Angelus?"

Nonong was sent to study at La Salle. (Escorting him to school during his first years there was a detective named Alejo Santos; yes, he is the present defense secretary.) Don Manuel had gone to Letran and many people wondered why he didn't send his son to his old school. Don Manuel explained that the Dominicans at Letran were so fond of him they would surely have spoiled his son.

Nonong says his father often called up Letran to ask what the Fathers were having for lunch. If the answer was "cocido," Don Manuel would say: "Then wait for me. I'm going right over to eat your cocido!"

Cocido Español, says Nonong, was his father's favorite dish. Don Manuel also liked sinigang and inihaw na isda; and when the fare was native he loved eating with his fingers. Being a Tayabeño, he had a taste for deer meat, dried and fried, and eaten with champorrado. He wanted his hot chocolate in the Spanish style: thick enough to cut. But he had been Americanized enough to be a morning-coffee addict, and a percolator graced the Quezons' breakfast table long before coffee became fashionable among the local gentry.

Quezon would start guzzling coffee as soon as he woke up—which was usually at around five dawn—and he didn't like to guzzle his coffee alone. His usual coffee companion was Don Tomas Morato, a close friend since boyhood, and for years Don Tomas rose before five in the morning to go to Malacañang and have coffee with the Presidente.

One morning there was a typhoon and it looked as if Don Tomas wouldn't show up. Quezon called him up to say that the coffee was waiting.

"But, Manolo, there's a big storm!"

"You, a sailor and the son of a ship captain, afraid of a storm?"

Don Tomas abandoned his warm bed with a sigh, put on some clothes and braved hurricane and flood to have a cup of coffee at five in the morning with el señor presidente.

Don Tomas Morato, a naturalized Spaniard, was the first mayor of Quezon City and also one of the first Filipinos to take possession of Malacañang. He, Don Manuel and Nonong were the first to sleep in the Palace after Frank Murphy, the last of the American governors-general, moved out, and Quezon, as President of the Commonwealth, moved in. (Considering the Spanish blood of both Morato and Don Manuel, they may also be said to have been *retaking* possession of that old palace of the viceroys.)

Of the elections in which his father won the right to occupy Malacañang, Nonong remembers only the night he was allowed to stay up and await the election returns with the family. Soon after, he was made to understand that the family would be leaving the Roberts Street house. He didn't want to leave his old home but at the same time thrilled with a sense of adventure at the thought of moving to another, unknown house.

On inauguration day, November 15, 1936, Nonong accompanied his family to the Legislative Building and saw his father sworn in as president. Nonong, then only about ten years old, was wearing the uniform of an aide-de-camp: white with gold braid.

That night—or, possibly, the following night—he and his father and Morato drove to the Palace to take possession of it. Mrs. Quezon had still not finished packing and remained at the Roberts Street house with the girls. Nonong remembers driving to the front gate of Malacañang and seeing an American soldier at a table near the driveway. The American opened the gates and the three Filipinos entered. They ascended the main stairway and were shown to the private quarters of the Palace.

Nonong and his father shared a room that night; Morato took another. The three roughed it in bachelor style for several days until Mrs. Quezon and the girls arrived. Having been in on some very big events in our history, Nonong Quezon agrees it's rather sad he didn't keep a diary—"but, then, if I did keep a diary I wouldn't have written about those big events but about things like: Today, I played tirador with so-and-so."



Douglas MacArthur conferring with Quezon: Morning-coffee addict

The Palace, says Nonong, made no great difference in his and his sisters' lives: their existence remained sheltered; they didn't see their father any oftener or less than at Roberts. School report cards still had to pass his inspection; there were still lectures if one was caught being naughty. Neither Quezon nor his wife believed in using the rod on their children and Nonong remembers only one of them ever being spanked: Baby, for her headstrong temper, and Doña Aurora, who administered the punishment, quickly realized it was no way to discipline the spirited girl.

Nonong was now big enough to feel the influence of his father's glamour and to want to be like him: a good talker, a good dresser, and so forth—the so forth including such things as Dad's finesse as a dancer. Though Dad was a small man he felt no shyness about dancing with women bigger than he—American women, for instance—and because he didn't feel ridiculous he didn't look it. That was one of the many things he could carry off because he had natural dignity and self-assurance.

But there were times, recalls an amused Nonong, when even Dad's savoir-faire on the dance floor failed him.

Once, at a ball in Washington, he approached a Filipino lady for a dance. She told him she didn't know how, but Don Manuel felt sure that anything with a skirt on could be danced with, if the man was a masterly enough leader. The lady was persuaded to accompany him to the dance floor. Then followed some agonizing moments during which they lumbered about, stepping on each other's feet, bumping against each other's legs, while spectators averted their eyes in horror. Finally Don Manuel cried out: "Basta señora—you are like a log, you do not know how to dance!" "But señor presidente," protested the poor lady, "that is what I have been telling you!"

At another ball, this time in the provinces, the señor presidente again had the misfortune of asking to dance with him a lady who did not have to be coaxed, though she, too, it turned out, was another "log" on the dance floor. The orchestra, knowing that when Don Manuel started dancing he didn't like to stop, played tune after tune without a pause. Round and round stumbled Quezon and his persistent partner. Finally the suffering spectators saw a sweating Don Manuel desperately signaling the orchestra to stop, for God's sake, stop!

Dancing was Don Manuel's true hobby, his favorite pastime, and he could pass without effort from the passions of the conference room to the light-heartedness of the ballroom. His years in Malacañang were the gayest in the history of the Palace.

He had no time for sports, but loved horseback riding. He had no time for reading either, but was fascinated by the biographies of great leaders. He could play the piano a little and wanted all his children to learn to play it well. But, after politics, his great talent was for dancing; he had mastered the rhumba just before the war broke out—and the dearest memory of Commonwealth days is of Don Manuel, urbane and handsome and elegant, dancing all through those years when it was almost more important for a politico to know how to tango than how to get votes.

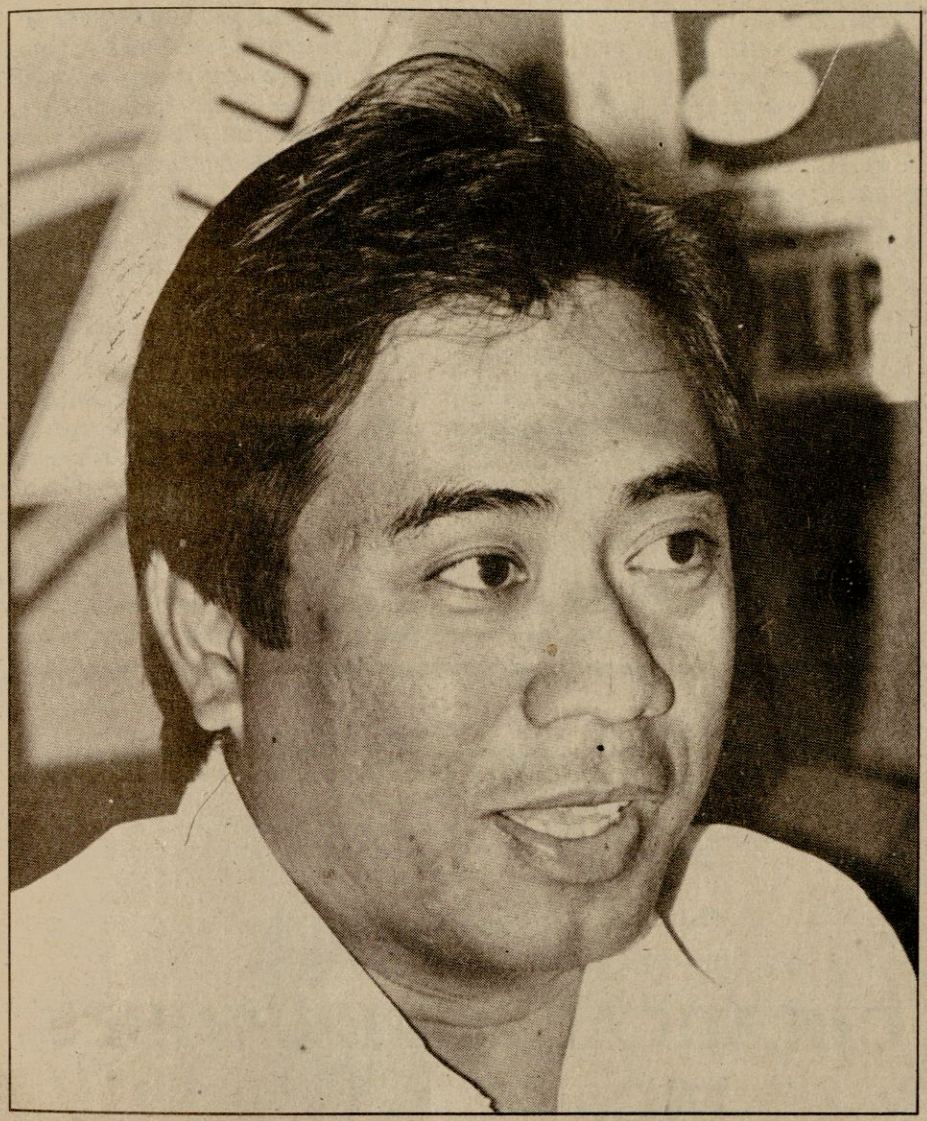
The day the Pacific War broke out, Don Manuel was in Baguio with Baby. Doña Aurora was in Arayat with Nonong and Jovita Fuentes, the opera star. Nonong saw the Japs bombing nearby Fort Stotsenberg (it's now Clark Field). That night, his father arrived in Arayat to pick them up. They sped to Manila, but not to stay in Malacañang. During the first weeks of the war, the Quezons were at their Marikina estate, the Barranca, where a spacious air-raid shelter had been built.

On Christmas Eve, they returned to Malacañang—for the last time. They went

Turn to page 47

INTERVIEW

JUN SIMON
SHELTERING THE HOMELESS



"Before the end of the year, makakatapos kami ng 5,000 bahay. By next year, ang construction rate ay magiging 1,200 units a month. Mga 14,000 o 15,000 units ang matatapos next year. By 1992, we hope to provide housing for close to 40,000 people. We're on our way. We're on target."

Housing is a perennial problem in Quezon City and the other cities in Metro Manila. Every year, urban poor communities grow in size and number all over the metropolis, giving rise to social unrest and other problems related to peace and order.

Mayor Brigido "Jun" Simon thinks the problem can be licked with the cooperation of government, the private sector and the urban communities themselves. He has embarked on an ambitious plan to ease this problem in Quezon City, rallying the support of businessmen and community organizers in a pioneering effort to provide low-cost housing for the city's poor and underprivileged.

A journey of a thousand miles, it is said, begins with the first step; and for Quezon City's housing program the first step was Manresa.

Manresa is urban-poor territory, a 26,200-square-meter piece of prime land situated in Quezon City's Masambong district. Because fire had razed 80 percent of the shanties in Manresa in December of 1986, the place was chosen as the first of the city government's 66 Areas for Priority Development (APD).

Simon launched the Manresa Urban Development Program with the signing of a memorandum of agreement for a P20-million commitment line to be provided by the National Home Mortgage Finance Corporation (NHMFC). The memorandum of agreement was signed with the National Housing Authority, the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council, the Presidential Commission on the Urban Poor and other government institutions.

The aims of the Manresa project were to "upgrade the living condition of the inhabitants, develop the area into a sanitary and livable community and provide homes at nominal cost to homeless and underprivileged residents of Quezon City," according to civil engineer Noli R. Rivera, who was appointed project officer.

With the launching of Quezon City's first housing project came the baptism of fire.

The city's Urban Poor Affairs Office (UPAO), based on a pre-EDSA census-survey, had determined that target beneficiaries would be 549 squatter families occupying 320 shanties. The number included both shanty owners and renters, according to Rivera. By the time Phase I was to be implemented, however, the number of shanties had increased, swollen by what the weekly Quezon City Hall Gazette *described as "gatecrashers" and "professional squatters."*

As the Gazette *tells it, the initial stage of the project required the resi-*

dents' voluntary dismantling of their shanties and their temporary relocation to a nearby basketball court: "Initially, the demolition came out fine and [was] implemented peacefully but 'imported' goons hired by a professional squatter who formerly owned a lot and house at Dagat-Dagatan started trouble by throwing stones, pillboxes, and darts [at] the demolition crew, who were left with no alternative but to protect their lives from the unexpected onslaught."

At the height of the melee, a police lieutenant, a member of the demolition crew, was reportedly kidnapped by the squatters and had to be rescued by his comrades in an "all-out assault." Rivera's car, a Volkswagen Beetle, was set on fire. One person died and several others were wounded on both sides. City Hall found itself accused of human rights violations, but the Gazette *says a Senate committee which conducted a thorough investigation of the Manresa incident subsequently cleared Quezon City executives and "finally saw the actual humanistic side of City Hall."*

On August 19, Manresa's ordeal was expected to have the beginning of a happy ending. Some 400 housing units—solid structures of hollow blocks and cement, comprising three out of four phases of the project—were scheduled to be turned over by Mayor Jun Simon to bonafide residents of Manresa. Project officer Rivera says the units are being offered at very low monthly amortization. For one-story units, payment is P515 a month; for two-story units, P420 a month. No equity or down payment is required, and each unit is payable within 25 years at 6 percent interest per annum.

"Inch by inch," according to the Quezon City Hall Gazette, *"Quezon City is being transformed into a virtual 'squatters' paradise' as urban migration escalates to a level that leaves the present administration not much choice but to come up with a stricter control over squatters' proliferation." The Manresa project is part of the effort to provide "a more responsive land management program for housing resident squatter families and ... alternative sites where livelihood opportunities can best be given."*

It may take years for all of Jun Simon's plans to bear fruit. But the mayor is willing to wait. "I'm very optimistic," says the former anti-Marcos activist who won the mayoralty in 1988.

In an exclusive interview with MIDWEEK *writer B.I. Pimentel a few days before the turnover of housing units at Manresa, Jun Simon outlined his other housing plans for the people of Quezon City, expertly citing figures and referring to maps to explain why he thinks the Quezon City government, under his leadership, is on the right track.*

CONGRATULATIONS TO QC-MANRESA PABAHAY PROGRAM

FROM:

POLYFOAM CHEMICAL ENTERPRISES, INC.

ROBERT CHENG

No. 32 Miller St., San Francisco del Monte
Quezon City, Tel. Nos.: 99-72-00 * 99-47-22

QUEZON CITY ITO, TULONG-TULONG TAYO!!

By B.I. PIMENTEL

Could you give us an overview of the housing situation in Quezon City?

Maraming developers sa Quezon City, pero karamihan mga private developers na ang dinedevelop ay mga mamahaling bahay. Tulad dito sa may Ayala, ang lote ay P4,500 per square meter ng lote na 600 square meters. Kaya kulang-kulang P3 million ang pinakamura nilang lote.

Paano naman ang mga mahihirap? Hindi sila makabili. The national government has allocated funds for low-cost housing defined as house and lots that are P80,000 and below. Ang problema, sa buong Pilipinas, wala namang subdivision na may ganoong kamurang bahay at lupa. Kaya ang mga kapatid nating mahihirap, lingid sa kanilang kaalaman, ay may naka-appropriate na pera para sa kanila, pero



Hizzones with urban poor: Baptism of fire

CONGRATULATIONS TO QC-MANRESA PABAHAY PROGRAM

FROM:

Shangri-La

RAMON A. SYHUNLIONG
President & General Manager

No. 4 Times St., West Triangle
Quezon City, Tel. Nos. 98-38-86 * 96-52-98

QUEZON CITY ITO, TULONG-TULONG TAYO!!

hindi nila makuha. Kasi hindi nila ito puwedeng i-withdraw as cash. You have to withdraw it as house and lot at P80,000.

Kaya ito ang inaasikaso namin. Nagsimula kami sa government-owned with government contractors. *'Tapos ngayon kinukumbinse namin ang mga private contractors. Ipinapakita namin sa kanila na mayroon ding kita sa low-cost housing. Kasi nga masyadong maliit ang kita sa low-cost housing.

How have they responded to your proposals?

Nagsimula na kami sa Manresa. Mga 550 units ang itatayo doon. 'Tapos sinisimulan na ang Bahay Toro sa Quezon City hospital site. This is a cross-subsidy scheme na more than 1,000 for squatters at 500 for Quezon City employees and another 1,000 plus units for open market. The open market houses are supposed to subsidize the cost of the land of the low-cost houses. Mga 2,000 units ang itatayo dito. itatayo dito.

Mayroon din kami sa Fairview para sa low income at middle income families. Instead of renting an apartment for P2,000 a month we are now opening house and lots that are apartment-type row houses at P1,891 a month for 25 years. Hindi tataas ang hulog mo dahil iyo na ang unit.

May itinatayo kaming subdivision sa Fairview para sa mga middle class. Kung ang income mo ay P6,000 and above, eligible ka sa isang unit.

Sa Escopa, na isang sakit ng ulo for the past 20 years, may ginagawa din kami. Ito ang lupa sa gitna ng dalawang Katipunan Avenue. Kung titingnan mo ang Katipunan Avenue, sa Blue Ridge natatapos bago magpatuloy sa may Ateneo. Sa gitna kasi may squatter area na tinatawag na Escopa. Ang mga squatter doon ay magkakaroon na ng lote at bahay sa tagiliran at P80,000. May amortization na P515.00 a month over 25 years, six percent interest, at no downpayment. Ang magiging beneficiary dito ay mga 600 pamilya.

Dito naman sa may Bagbag, sa may bandang Novaliches ay mayroon kaming eksperimento kasama ang isang private corporation, ang Rubberworld. We hope to provide housing for Rubberworld employees using the capital infusion of the company itself. Magbibigay sila ng mga six or ten million pesos to buy the land, and for the needs of the construction of the houses. Inaasahan naming ma-reimburse ang perang ipinasok ng Rubberworld. Ibig sabihin magkakaroon ng bahay at lupa ang mga empleyado na halos wala naman silang gagastusin. If we are successful in this we hope to have a housing boom in Novaliches being spearheaded by factory owners in the area. Four hundred na ang factory owners na na-organize namin. Naghahanap lang ng halimbawa ang

CONGRATULATIONS TO QC-MANRESA PABAHAY PROGRAM

FROM: QC-MURP PHASE IV
CONTRACTORS:

1. Construction Ventures, Co., Inc.
   No. 738 Boni Avenue, Mandaluyong, M.M.
   Tel. No. 741-4750 * 79-33-29
2. Structures Contractors, Inc.
   Rm. M-07, Mezzanine Flr., Caly Bldg., Aurora Blvd., Cor. F. Castillo St., Q.C.
   Tel. No. 921-3487
3. Spectra Construction
   No. 175-C R. Pascual St., San Juan, M.M.
   Tel. No. 70-06-71 loc 342
4. R.S. Gatbonton Construction
   No. 32 Carnation St., St.Dominic No. 5, T. Sora, Q.C.
   Tel. No. 96-82-84
5. United Power Construction Development
   No. 1335 Narra St., Tondo, M.M.
   Tel. No. 712-4473 * 60-84-34
6. B.C. Cuerpo Construction
   No. 75 Venice St., Galleria Townhouse, 14th St., New Manila, Q.C.
   Tel. No. 78-98-82

QUEZON CITY ITO, TULONG-TULONG TAYO!!!

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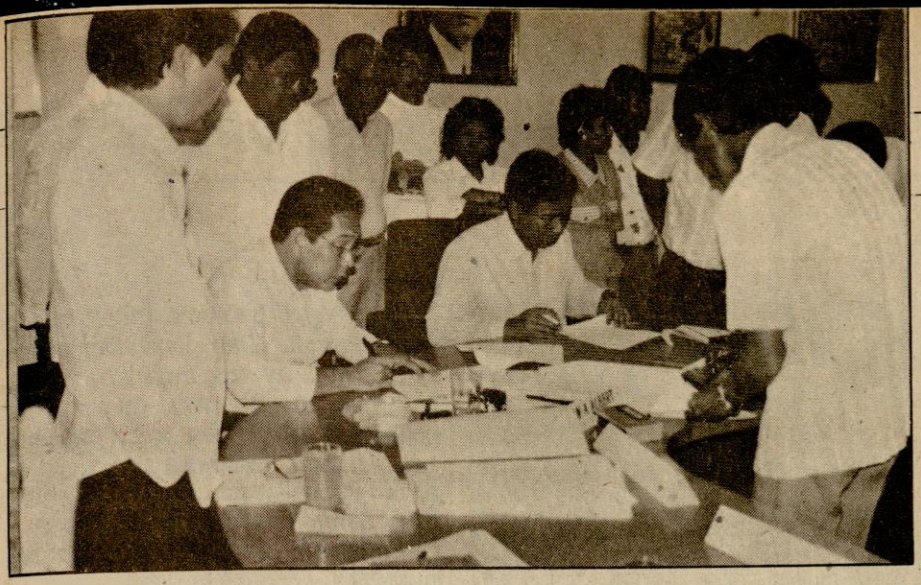
CONGRATULATIONS TO QC-MANRESA PABAHAY PROGRAM

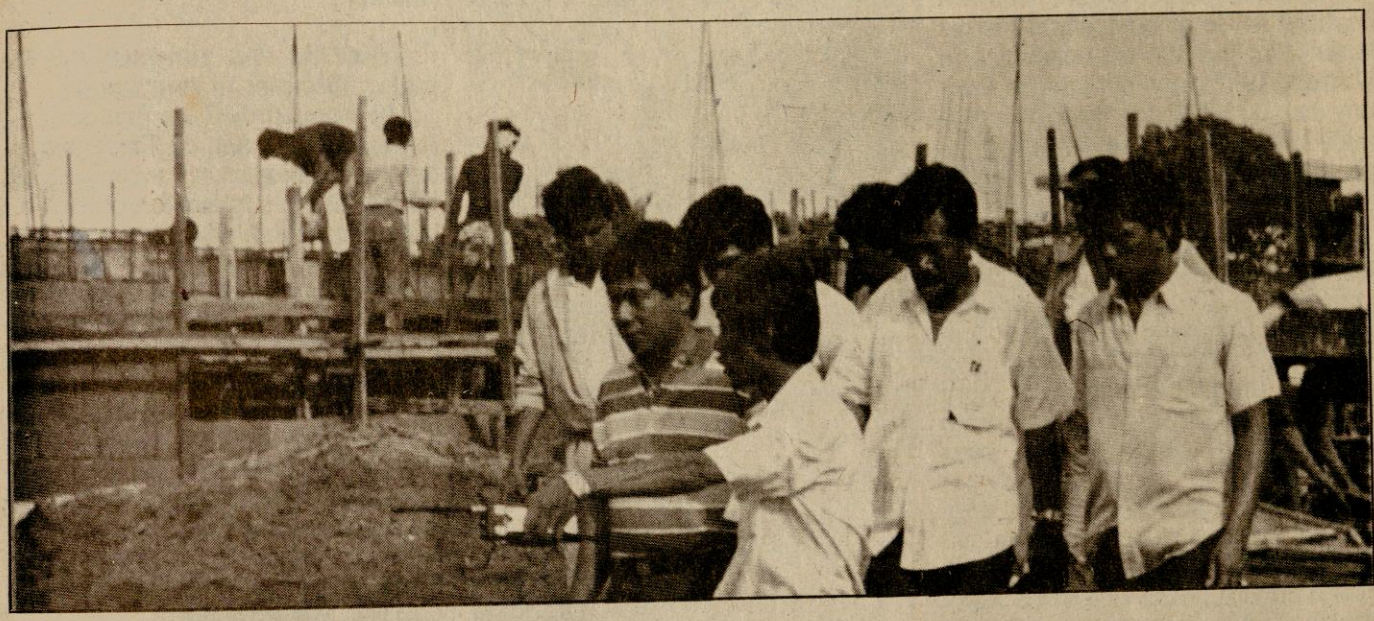
FROM: QC-MURP PHASE II
CONTRACTORS:

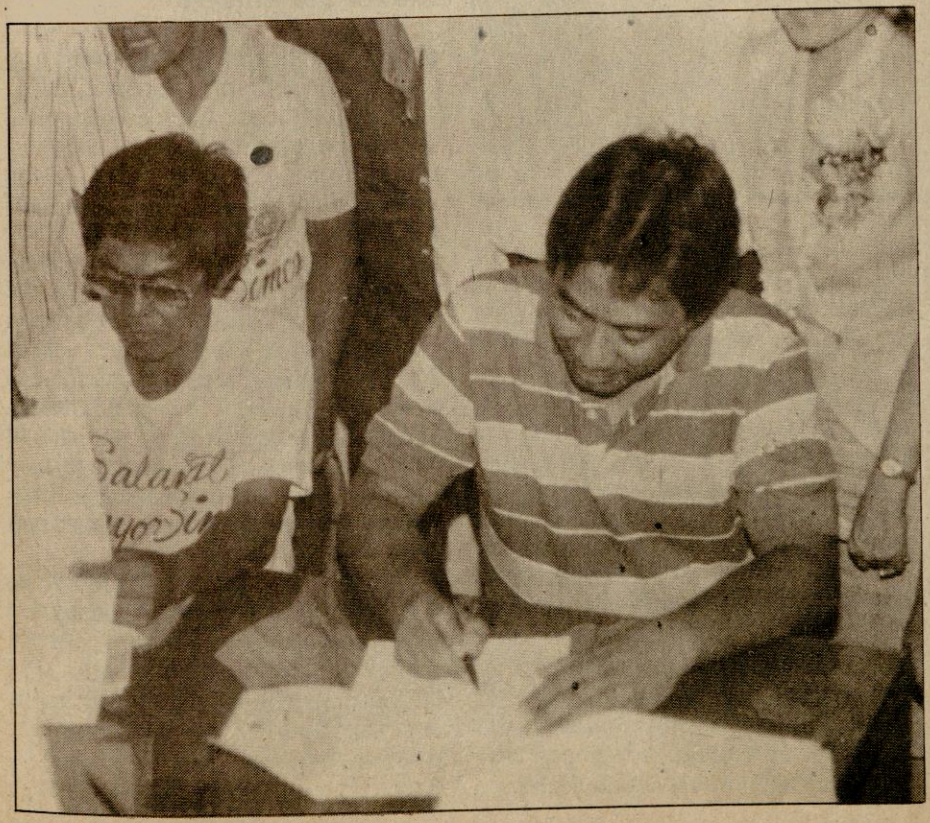
1. Maple Construction Co., Inc.
   Suite 406-409, R&G Tirol Bldg., EDSA Cor. Scout Albano, Diliman, Q.C.
   Tel. No. 922-3276
2. C.M. Eusebio Construction
   126-15th Avenue, Cubao, Q.C.
   Tel. No. 721-0561 * 79-49-14 * 70-90-52
3. M.C. Evangelista, Jr. Construction
   No. 15 de Ocampo St., DBP Village, Las Piñas, Metro Manila
   Tel. No. 58-71-27
4. Core Block Engineering
   No. 3 McArthur Highway, Lucap Dist., Dagupan City, Pangasinan,
   Tel. No. 97-84-90
5. Titan Construction Corporation
   No. 2814 Unit L, Violeta Court, F.B. Harrison Pasay City
   Tel. No. 831-1517-20
6. Terraces Construction
   No. 008 Valdez St., Concepcion, Tarlac
   Tel. No. 95-22-56

QUEZON CITY ITO, TULONG-TULONG TAYO!!!



Simon signing memorandum of agreement with NHMFC (left); at construction site with project offices Rivera (below); signing contract with representative of Manresa beneficiares(bottom).





mga iyan. Kaya kung magtatagumpay ang sa Rubberworld, magtutuloy-tuloy na iyan.

There have been a lot of reports about unrest in urban poor communities in Quezon City. What can you comment about these reports?

Iyong mga nababalitaan nating mga demolisyon bahagi ng policy natin na i-maintain ang bilang ng squatter families sa Quezon City. Seventy-nine thousand families ito noong 1986. Ngayon 120,000. Over the past three years, they increased by 40,000. May usapan at dikreto na walang tayuan, walang gibaan.

Kaninong dikreto ito?

Ng national government. Pumayag dito ang mga squatter. Pero ang nangyayari may tayuan pa rin. Kaya ang ginigiba lang iyong mga bagong dating.

Saan ho ba ang mga areas na nagkaroon ng problema?

Halos sa lahat nagsisingitan. Para ipakita naman na hindi kami nanghuhula, may mga aerial photos kami ng mga lugar. Kinuha ito noong 1986, tapos noong 1989. May record din kami ng mga families doon.

May dalawang klase ng containment ng squatter families. Iyong physical containment, o demolition, is only our secondary mode of containment. The first mode of containment is the census like the one we conducted in 1986 and 1987. Ang ibig sabihin, kahit may bahay ang isang pamilya, pero hindi sila nakasama sa census, hindi sila kasama sa programa ng city government.

We are trying to do our best to solve the problem. But the national and local governments cannot do it alone. We have to involve the private sector.

Given the trend that there is an increasing number of squatters in the city, how will this affect your plans?

Squatting is a problem of poverty. Sa level ng city government we can only do so much. We are going on a joint venture with Governor Obet Pagdanganan of Bulacan to put up a commuter trail from the Quezon City Circle all the way to San Jose del Monte, Bulacan. Doon sa San Jose del Monte may sequestered property ang mga Araneta, around 2,000 hectares. Balak naming i-develop ito para puwede naming sabihin sa mga pumupunta sa Maynila na mas magandang pumunta muna sila sa San Jose del Monte.

Para hindi na namin brasuhin ang squatter na lumipat doon, magtatayo na kami ng industriya doon. We are coming up with industrial estates. The first industrial estate is a joint venture between the municipality of Montalban and the Quezon City government, and the private sector. We have to initially come up with an 80-hectare industrial estate. *'Tapos later a 200-hectare at isang 500-hectare industrial estates. Pag nagawa na ito kailangan nang gumawa ng provision for low-income housing. Dahil kasunod ng trabaho ang mga squatter, ang mga mahihirap na factory workers.



May dine-develop kaming ganito sa Payatas. Recently, the Quezon City government was appointed the lead agency in the development of the Payatas estate, which is 4,000 hectares, 1,500 sa Quezon City, at 2,500 sa Montalban. The estate is one and one-third of the city of Manila, which is just about 3,000 meters. Ngayon ayaw naman naming gumawa ng mga turo-turo plano, so we have hired the services of Planning Resources Operation Services. Sila ang magsasabi kung saan dadaan ang mga kalsada, kung saan ilalagay ang shopping center, kung saan ilalabas ang ospital, at iba pa. Hindi magiging sabog ang approach. Magkakaroon ng total plan.

This is going to be a unique relocation attempt. Dati kasi ang unang nirerelocate ay ang mga tao, *'tapos ang pabrika. Ngayon mauuna ang pabrika, *'tapos ang mga tao. Ang gusto namin, tulad ng pagtatayo ng aquarium, kailangang mauna ang tubig bago ilagay ang mga isda. So inuuna namin ang livelihood, bago ilipat ang squatter.

What do you consider are the major obstacles to your plans?

We have hurdled the first obstacle. Ito ang Department of Trade and Industry na masyadong maraming burukrasya. We applied for exemptions last November 1988 and we got it June 1989. Of course, we are still very thankful dahil nakuha namin ito. At any rate, marami pa ring mga legal problems. You know, pathfinding ang ginagawa namin, e. Kami mismo kinakabahan sa ginagawa namin. Kasi in the whole history of local governments in the Philippines, this is the first attempt to put up an industrial estate by a local government unit.

Do you get any support from the national government?

Except for the exemption, wala. Bale ang suporta namin nakuha sa pag-organize ng Filipino-Chinese community dito sa Quezon City. Four hundred factory owners sila.

Are you optimistic that your plans will work?

Noong una, noong kami-kami lang, talagang hilo ako. But now that the private sector has come in, I've become very optimistic. We have been able to convince the businessmen that there is profit to be made in low-cost housing. The private sector is also interested in the social approach, but, of course, they are also there to do business. Hindi naman sila pumapasok doon para malugi.

Before the end of the year, makakatapos kami ng 5,000 bahay. By next year, ang construction rate ay magiging 1,200 units a month. Mga 14,000 o 15,000 units ang matatapos next year. By 1992, we hope to provide housing for close to 40,000 people. We're on our way. We're on target. M



VANTAGE POINT Luis V. Teodoro

Outhouse logic

Our favorite, stranger-than-fiction government character, Censors Board—sorry, Movie and Television *Review and Classification Board*—Chair Manuel Morato, is in the middle of another controversy, and this time we're not referring to his refusal to allow the showing of movies he hasn't seen.

Herr Morato recently denied one of MTRCB's own members, Carmen Aquino-Sarmiento (apparently no relation to Mrs. Aquino), access to MTRCB subcommittee review reports and decisions on films as well as TV programs the Board had reviewed from October 1988 to January 1989. Mrs. Sarmiento needed the documents for a study she was doing at the University of the Philippines, but that apparently meant *zilch* to Morato, who promptly classified the documents Sarmiento wanted as "national security documents" that not just anyone, not even members of MTRCB, and certainly not the rest of the Filipino people, can get hold of.

And through what convoluted labyrinths of reasoning—through what dark spheres of unreason—did Morato have to travel to justify his classification of film reviews and decisions on such things as the classification of films and TV shows as national security documents?

Through the same medieval passages, it turns out, which the Marcos government once travelled when it justified everything, including the suppression of a strike in a soy sauce factory, in the name of national security. With the difference, however, that Morato's reasoning, if it can be called that, should win this year's *Kalabasa* (Pumpkin) Award for exceptional gall.

Follow this if you can:

1. MTRCB members are all presidential appointees.

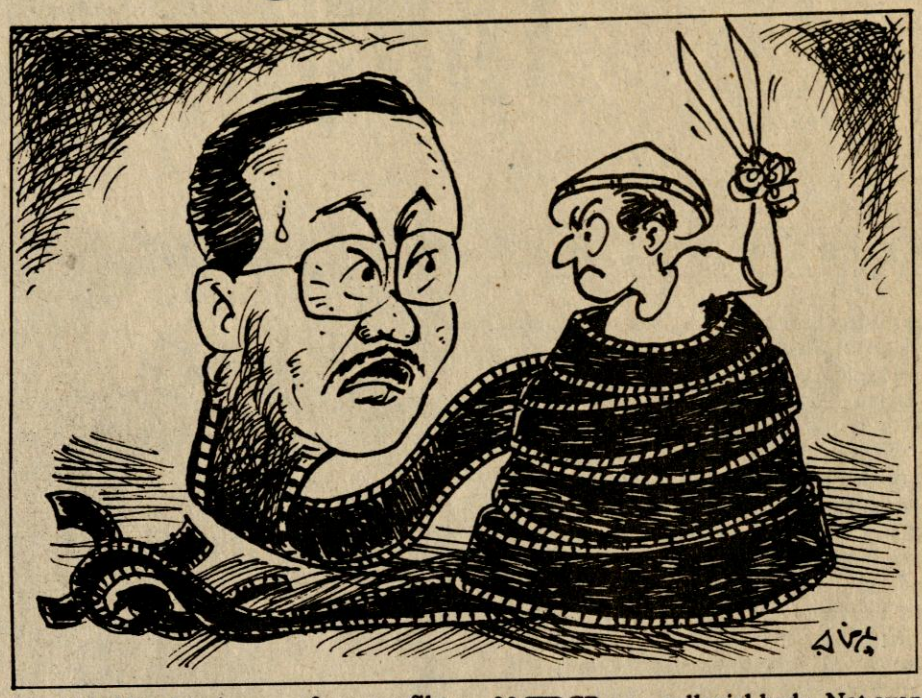
2. Any criticism of what MTRCB is doing or has done will reflect on the President.

3. Such criticism could destabilize the government.

4. Ergo, the bases for any criticism that could destabilize the government are national security documents, and therefore cannot be made public.

Mrs. Sarmiento is naturally questioning this argument, and in fact has asked Malacañang to define the powers of Morato, since Morato also claims that he has the authority to overrule the decisions of MTRCB subcommittees.

It is Morato's belief that he can stop the showing of any film, for example, simply by withholding his signature from any film permit, even if its showing has been approved by the appropriate subcommittee. In Morato's typical outhouse prose, any permit without his signature can be thrown away "like toilet paper."



Quite aside from the obvious implication of both arguments, which is that whoever sits as head of MTRCB can withhold what should be public documents from the public, *and* overrule the entire MTRCB membership—there is also the further implication that one man and one man alone can determine *who* can see what films and TV programs as well as *what* films and TV programs they can see—which is in fact already the case in this, Aquino's democratic paradise.

Morato's resorting to the "national security argument" in fact suggests that he doesn't want the subcommittee reviews made public because he probably overruled some if not most of them, which is itself suggested by his insistence that he has the power to do so. Morato has always claimed the law—in this instance, Marcos Presidential Decree 1986 which created the MTRCB—as the basis for his official actions as Chair of MTRCB, among those actions being his banning of films like *The Last Temptation of Christ* on the basis of news reports and his "Christian" impulses.

PD 1986, however, authorizes the MTRCB chair only to implement the decisions of MTRCB subcommittees as well as of MTRCB as a collegial body. Not even Marcos, apparently, wanted to give the MTRCB chair as much power as Morato now claims he has.

We detect here the same process occurring in certain agencies involved directly with the public, such as the police and the military. The latter have been able to enlarge their powers, too often because no limits have been put on them by the supposedly responsible authority (that is, the presidency). Like the police and military, Morato is simply widening his reach and power in the absence of clear restraints, and justifying his *de facto* enthronement as sole arbiter over films and TV shows in the Philippines as the need arises.

There has been a widespread clamor for Morato's relief from precisely those sectors most affected by his ever broadening power—actors and actresses, film producers and directors, scriptwriters and critics—although Mrs. Aquino has chosen to ignore it. She may yet listen to the argument, now being raised by Mrs. Sarmiento, that Morato's arrogation of the power to withhold public documents and to overrule MTRCB subcommittees compromises democratic principles, as indeed it does.

But then again, Mrs. Aquino may not.

This moviegoer and TV watcher, however, is anxiously awaiting the next Walt Disney Productions movie. We want to see just how a Donald Duck cartoon classified "G" relates to Philippine national security. M

BATANG LANSANGAN

Katha ni Cyrus P. Borja

Inilipad na naman ng hangin ang mga paa ni Miguel. Binabagtas niya ang mga nasisilungang bangketa sa Quiapo; papunta na siyang muli sa Avenida. Mag-aalas sais na ng umaga.

Tulad ng kanyang inaasahan, nang magsimula ang rush hour ng mga bandang alas siyete ay nagkabuhol-buhol na ang trapiko sa Avenida. Bagamat may mga lugar ng babaan at sakayan ay kung saan-saan na lang nagbababa at nagsasakay ang karamihan sa mga tsuper. Para sa kanila ay waring napakagaang parusa ang basta lamang matikitan. At kapag hanay-hanay na ang mga sasakyang tinitikitan ay lalo lang nagkakandabuhol ang trapiko.

"Pare, ang hina mo ke sarhento! Gawin mong po-sam, di pa nag-aalmusal 'yan!" isang paslit na naglalako ng sigarilyo ang sumigaw sa tsuper na tinitikitan ni Miguel. Pinamulahan ng mukha si Miguel, at kung hindi lang bata ang nagsalita ay malamang na nasuntok na niya iyon sa mukha.

"Matuto kang gumalang," ang kanya na lamang nasabi nang maliksing nangunyapit ang paslit sa isang dumadaang dyip.

Kinabukasan, habang nagtatrapik si Miguel at kipit ng mga labi ang isang sigarilyong hindi masindihan, patalong bumaba ang pilyong batang naglalako ng sigarilyo mula sa isang dyip na mahinay-hinay ang takbo.

"Gud morning, tsip," ang bati nito, sabay alok ng ningas mula sa lighter na Zippo. "Pis na yo-ta, ha?"

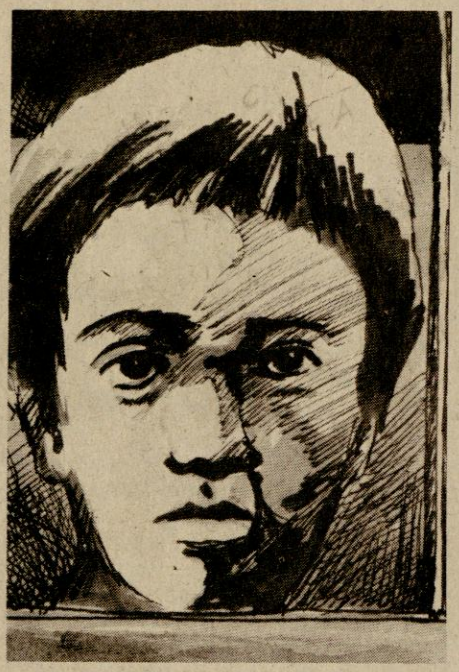
Saglit na natigilan si Miguel ngunit pagkuwa'y tinanggap din ang maliit na suhol ng paslit.

"Ke bata-bata mo pa marunong ka nang manuhol."

"Kelangan 'yon, tsip, para mabuhay," ang pakli ng bata.

Bahagyang namangha si Miguel. Hindi niya akalaing ang mga katagang iyon ay mabibigkas ng isang bata.

"Siya, siya, tabi't baka ka pa masagasaan."



Isang paslit na naglalako ng sigarilyo ang pumasok sa buhay ng pulis trapiko.

"Yes, bos," ang nakangiting sabi nito, sabay sabit sa isang dumadaang dyip.

Isang araw pagkatapos ng kanyang duty, sa utos ng kanyang hepe ay nagtungo si Miguel sa isang kalapit na distrito ng pulis para sa isang pangkalahatang pagpupulong.

"... ang mga insentibong ito ay bilang pagkilala sa mabuting serbisyo ng mga alagad ng batas. Ano-anong insentibo, halimbawa? Wan istep promowsyon sa sinumang makakahuli o kasamang makakahuli sa mga pusakal na kriminal. Wan istep promowsyon din para sa mga pulis na makakahuli o makakaengkuwentro ng mga holdaper, karnaper, at kidnaper. Meron ding mga merit promowsyon o kaukulang pagtaas ng sahod. Halimbawa, kung laging malinis ang hawak na linya ng isang trapik polis, mayroon siyang kaukulang promowsyon..."

Mag-aalas kuwatro na nang matapos ang pagpupulong. Masasayang nagsilabas ang nagpulong na mga pulis sa prisinto, kasama si Miguel na nakatuon ang isip sa pag-uwi. Sa ingay ng mga nagkakatuwaang pag-uusap ng mga kasama sa trabaho ay nangingibabaw ang boses ng isang paslit na pamilyar sa kanyang pandinig.

"Tsip naman... gabi na... palayain mo na kami..."

Binalikan ni Miguel ang dinaanang selda at sinino ang may-ari ng maliit na tinig. Hindi siya nagkamali.

"O, natiklo ka na pala! Ano'ng kosa mo, repa?" ang may panunudyong tanong ni Miguel.

Hindi sumagot ang napahiyang paslit na nagbaba ng tingin. Padabog itong sumalampak sa sahig kasama ng ilan pang mga kabataan na pawang kasing-dungis niya. Ilang saglit na napagtuunan ng pansin ni Miguel ang mga paslit na sama-samang maiilarawan. Buto't balat na pangangatawan, hapis na mga mukha, malalalim na mga mata at nililibag na mga katawan.

Binalingan ni Miguel ang kabong sarap na sarap ang pagkakaupo sa kanyang swivel chair. "Ano'ng kaso no'ng mga bata?"

Sinulyapan ng kabo ang mga bata sa selda. "Bagransi. Nagra-rugby sa kalye."

"Kailan pa?"

Bantulot na sumagot ang kabo. Halatang wala sa mood na makipag-usap. "Kahapon pa. May bata ka ba?"

Ginanyak si Miguel ng pagkakataon. "'Yong kausap ko kanina. Taga-amin 'yon sa looban," ang kanyang pagsisinungaling.

Tumindig ang kabo at binuksan ang selda. Tinawag nito ang paslit. Itinulak nito pabalik sa loob ang mga nagpipilit na makalabas na mga bata at parang kuting na dinaklot sa leeg, palabas sa selda, ang


HOPE
LUXURY
Marlboro
PHILIP MORRIS
Menthol 100's
REPUBLIKA NG
LIMANG
EMILIO AGUINALDO

pakay na paslit. Nagsumamo ang iba pang bata na makalabas rin.

"Mimiya! Mag-'intay kayo!" ang bulyaw nito sa mga bata pagkuwa'y sinenyasan sina Miguel na umalis na.

Dinala ni Miguel ang paslit sa isang mumurahing pansitan. Iniorder niya iyon ng isang platong miki-bihon at jumbo siopao samantalang siya naman ay nag-beer. Sabay na inumpisahang kainin ng paslit ang siopao at pansit.

"'No ba'ng talaga'ng kaso mo?" ang tanong ni Miguel.

"Bigransya lang," ang sagot ng paslit na halos namumuwalan.

"Nag-rugby ka raw?"

Hindi sumagot ang kausap.

"Ang mga magulang mo?"

Umiling lang ang paslit na patuloy sa pagkain. Hinayaan muna ni Miguel na makakain iyon. Samantalang nakakadalawang bote na siya ng beer ay nalilinis naman ang paminggalan ng pansit at siopao. Inulit ni Miguel na magtanong.

"Ang mga magulang mo?"

"'Ala na 'kong magulang. Lola, meron."

"Sa'n kayo umuuwi?"

"'Ala kaming inuuwian."

"Nasa'n ang lola mo?"

"Sa anderpas sa Quiapo."

"Anong ginagawa sa Quiapo?"

"Nagdedelihensiya. Namamalimos."

"Sa'n siya umuuwi?"

"Sa anderpas nga sa Quiapo!" ang nakukulitang sagot ng paslit sa mga ipinagtatatanong ni Miguel.

"Nasa'n ang mga magulang mo?"

"'Tanong mo na lang sa lola ko."

Sa paulit-ulit na pagtatanong-tanong ay naniwala si Miguel na nagsasabi ng katotohanan ang kausap.

"Nasa'n na'ng mga tinda mo?"

"'Ala na. Nadilihensya na no'ng mga parak na buwaya."

"Pa'no ka ngayon?"

"Magdedelihensiya uli."

"Pa'no?"

Hindi umimik ang paslit.

"Magnanakaw ka? Mang-iisnats?"

Hindi pa rin sumagot ang paslit. "Bukas-makalawa, 'kita mo, hindi na sa distrito ang bagsak mo. Do'n na sa munisipyo. Kalabas-labas mo n'yan, batang city jail," ang pananakot ni Miguel.

Hindi pa rin sumagot ang paslit.

"Di ka ba natatakot sa mga pulis?"

Umiling ang paslit.

"Di ka natatakot makalaboso?"

Umiling lang uli ang paslit. "Sanay na 'ko. Pinalalabas rin naman talaga kami. Dinidilihensiyahan lang naman kami... pigtapos pinalalabas rin..."

Si Miguel naman ang hindi nakaimik. "Pa'no ka ngayon?"

Hindi na sumagot pa ang paslit. Nakatuon ang mga mata nito sa pagdaloy ng buhay sa labas ng pansitan. Matamang pinagmasdan siya ni Miguel, tinatantiya nitong mabuti ang pagkatao ng kaharap. Sa wari niya ay mabait naman at mukhang matalino ang paslit, dangan nga lamang at ang marusing nitong anyo ay nagpapamukhang hindi iyon mapagkakatiwalaan. Siya na rin ang sumagot sa katanungang hindi tinugon ng kausap.

"Sumama ka na lang sa 'kin. Bibigyan kita ng puhunan."

Hindi sumagot ang paslit. Kinakamot nito ang paligid ng sugat sa kaliwang kamay.

"O ano, ayaw mo?"

Matipid ang ngiting patuloy na kinakamot ng paslit ang kanyang sugat. Hindi ito makatango o makasagot bagamat gusto dahil sa nahihiya. Naintindihan ni Miguel ang bata.

"Sige, isasama kita sa 'min. Pero magpapakabait ka sa nanay ko!"

Tumango ang paslit. Binayaran ni Miguel ang kanilang kinain. Palabas na sila ng pansitan nang maitanong ni Miguel.

"'No nga palang pangalan mo?"

"Ruben."

"Ruben ho. Pag matanda sa 'yo ang kausap mo, magbibigay-galang ka," ang pangaral ni Miguel. Tumango si Ruben na napapahiyang nakangiti.

"Ruben ano?"

Walang maisagot ang bata.

"Ilang taon ka na ba?"

Wala ring masabi si Ruben. Lalong nakadama ng pagkahabag si Miguel sa paslit na hindi na nga alam ang paroroonan ay hindi pa alam ang pinagmulan.

Hindi tumutol si Aling Menang nang sabihin ni Miguel ang balak na ampunin si Ruben. Palibhasa'y sila lang namang mag-ina ang magkasama sa isang maliit na paupahan sa isang looban.

"Hindi kaya naman hanapin 'yan ng kanyang lola?"

"Hindi raw ho. Matagal na raw siyang palaboy-laboy. K'wento niya sa akin, dati raw ay kasama niya ang kanyang lola sa pamamalimos. Hanggang sa lumaki-laki, nagtinda ng sampagita... 'tapos nagtinda ng sigarilyo, umalis sa kanyang lola, nagsolo."

Kinabukasan ay pinagpala ni Aling Menang ang bata. Bagamat ayaw dahil sa nahihiya ay nagawa rin ng matandang paliguan si Ruben. Sa tantiya ni Aling Menang ay mula diyes hanggang dose anyos na si Ruben, ayon sa pangangatawan nito.

Nagkulay-tsokolate ang ginamit na shampoo sa buhok ni Ruben. Inulit ni Aling Menang na sabunin ang buhok hanggang sa iyo'y bumula nang puting-puti. Kasunod naman ay kinuskos ng matanda ng labakara ang buo at lahat ng singit sa katawan ng bata.

Nang mapaliguan si Ruben at madamitan ng mga pinagliitang damit ni Miguel ay hindi mailarawan ang kasiyahan ni Aling Menang. Sa pakiramdam niya ay isa siyang Diyos na nakatanglaw sa kanyang kinapal. Upang lubos na maayos ay pinagupitan pa ng matanda si Ruben sa may labasan. Ibinili rin niya iyon ng sepilyo sa ngipin. Nakaapat na beses pinagsipilyo ni Aling Menang ang bata na bagamat mangiyak-ngiyak na dahil sa pagdugo ng maruming ngipin at gilagid ay malugod pa ring tumalima.

Isang bagong Ruben ang tumambad kay Miguel nang hapong iyon. Kagaya ng ipinangako ay natutuwang iniabot ni Miguel kay Ruben ang dala-dalang kahong yari pa sa palotsina na siyang paglalagyan ng kanyang sigarilyong ititinda. Makapaglalaman ang kahon ng nasa apatnapung kaha. Meron din iyong sisidlan ng pera na may pintuang hinahawing padulas. Walang kasing lugod ang ngiting bumulas sa mga labi ni Ruben.

Ang pagkalingap ng mag-ina ay sinuklian ni Ruben ng mabuting pakikisama. Tuwing umaga, sa halip na si Miguel ay si Ruben na ang umiigib ng tubig sa kalapit na poso. Kalimitan naman sa hapon, kapag tapos nang maglaba si Aling Menang, ay pumapasada si Ruben sa paglalako ng sigarilyo para makaipon sa binabalak na pag-aaral sa susunod na pasukan. Bagamat tiniyak na ng kanyang Kuya Miguel at Nanay Menang na siya'y makakapag-aral, sinikap pa rin ni Ruben na makapaghanapbuhay upang kahit papaano'y makalabas siya ng bahay.

Minsan ay umuwing mainit ang ulo ni Miguel. Nakasagutan na naman niya si Sergeant Lorenzo sa pagpapabaya nitong sitahin at tikitan ang mga tsuper na hayagang lumalabag sa mga patakarang pantrapiko. Sa wari ni Miguel ay parang sinisino lang ni Sergeant Lorenzo ang mga drayber ngunit ang mga iyon nama'y hindi niya nakikitang naglalagay.

Habang nagpapamasahe kay Ruben ay naikuwento ni Miguel sa ina ang mga pangyayari. Nakisabat ang paslit.

"Mataba ho ba, Kuya, 'yong Sargent Lorenso?"

"Oo."

"Kalbo sa me noo?"

Napatawa si Miguel. "Oo. Ba't mo kilala?"

"Buwaya 'yon, Kuya. 'Yon ang madalas humuli sa 'min ng bigransiya. Anlakas ding komo-tong no'n sa mga tsuper."

"Pa'no mo naman nalaman?"

"Bata no'n si Lari, dati kong kasama."

"E ano ngayon?"

"Si Lari ang tigatinda ng sampagita."

PITIK-BULAG SA MAKINILYANG DUWAG

Ni Nestor Abella de Veyra

Tat-ta-ta-takbo, tat-tat-ta-talon!
Sumalubsob ang tinggang bumaon,
Bumakas sa puso't dumaplis, tumalilis!
Bumigkas ng poot sa punglong matulis!

Titibok-tibok ang naghihimutok
Makinilyang takot sa katok ng antok;
Tuloy gising pang sinundot ng bangungot—
K'wentong sumulpot, mabantot at bansot!

Tat-ta-ta-takbo, tat-ta-ta-talon!
Umipot ng apoy ang tutubing umuugong!
Habulin, hulihin ang hiningang malalim—
Sa hukay—mga bangkay sa iisang libing!

Hahagok-hagok sa haplos at dagok
Ng lagitik ng paltik ng batang namundok:
Bukas babalik ang gunitang nawaglit
Sa tamis ng ngiti ng busog na paslit!

Tat-ta-ta-takbo, tat-ta-ta-talon!
Pinindot ang buton, higanteng kabute'y umusbong!
Bungo, laman, dugo, at ang bughaw na bangaw—
Sabaw na hinigop ang mundong nalusaw!

Sulit ang saglit-pahinga sa pakudlit
Kung bawat tik-ka-tik putok ang bunghalit—
Panay padamdam ang makinilyang bulok,
Patanong ang sagot ng mailap na tuldok

AKO'Y TATAWID

Ni Israel Makaraig

Ako'y tatawid
sa pulang sapot
ng iyong mata.

Huwag kang mabahala.
Kung madulas,
ako'y lalambitin
sa alambre ng iyong
pasensiya.

Huwag na huwag ka lang
sana luluha
pagkat di ako
marunong lumangoy
sa alat ng baha,
at mahapdi humiwa
ang asing di makita.

Ako'y tatawid
sa pulang sapot
ng iyong mata.
Huwag ka sanang kukurap
at matalim ang pilikmata
sa dulo ng talukap.
Ngunit kung ika'y
hapo na't
kailangan nang pumikit,
matututo akong kumapit
sa matatalas na bingit
anuman ang sakit.

Ako'y tatawid
sa pulang sapot
ng iyong mata

At mag-aanyong gagamba
Itititig ang walong mata
sa mga kuliglig ng alaala

Mag-aabang ako
sa kumikitid na sinulid
ng iyo at aking pangamba.

Ako'y tatawid at tatawid
sa pulang sapot
ng iyong mata.

Tumihaya si Miguel mula sa pagkakadapa. Hindi nito lubusang maunawaan ang bata.

"Anong koneksiyon ng sampagita sa tong?"

"Ginito 'yon, Kuya. Si Lari, do'n sa Dibisorya. Bawat dyip, kumukuha sa kanya ng sampagita. *'Sang kuwintas, lima. Kung me sampagita ka, libre sa huli. 'Yong wala, sori."

Napatango lamang si Miguel sa sarili. "Kaya pala... kaya pala..." ang nasabi niya sa sarili. Lihim itong natutuwa at humanga sa bata.

Malalim na ang gabi ay hindi pa rin makatulog si Miguel. Buong-buo na sa kanyang isip ang jigsaw puzzle na matagal na niyang pinag-iisipan.

"...limang piso ang tong mula Divisoria hanggang Cubao... iyon marahil ay sa isang araw... sa isang libong dyip bawat araw, iyon ay limang libong piso bawat araw... sa isang linggo ay trenta'y singko mil... sa isang buwan ay... siyento kuwarenta mil..."

Napabiling si Miguel sa pagkakahiga. Masyadong malaki. Inulit niya ang pagkukuwenta. Pero tama ang kanyang matematika.

"...sa limang daang dyip, maliwanag pa ring sitenta mil bawat buwan ang koleksiyon... Malamang kasama si Lorenzo. Meron kayang humahawak na sindikato? Ma-promote kaya ako kung matimbog ko?"

Sa pagtataka ni Aling Menang, nang sumunod na araw ay buong pagtitiyagang tinuruan ni Miguel na bumasa at sumulat si Ruben. Hindi mapurol ang ulo ng bata. Sa loob ng tatlong linggo ay marunong na itong kumilala ng mga letra. Nakakabasa na rin ang paslit kahit papantig-pantig.

Nang sa wari niya ay handang-handa na si Ruben ay muling isinama ni Miguel ang bata sa kanyang pagpasok isang umaga. Hindi na sila nag-almusal sa bahay kundi sa isang maliit na restoran sa may Avenida. Espesyal ang tapsilog na kanilang inagahan. Inulit ni Miguel ang instruksiyon kay Ruben.

"'Wag kang magpapahalata. Ililista mo lang dito ang pangalan ng kung sino-sinong mga pulis-trapiko na makikita mong naka-duty mula sa Divisoria hanggang Cubao. Gano'n din mula Cubao hanggang Divisoria."

Iniabot ni Miguel ang bolpen kay Ruben at ang binuklat na kaha ng sigarilyo. Inabutan din niya ang bata ng dalawampung piso.

"Kumain ka pag nagutom ka. Mag-ingat ka sa pagsabit-sabit sa mga dyip, ha?"

Napangiti si Miguel nang iabot ni Ruben sa kanya ang listahan kinahapunan. Katulad ng kanyang sapantaha, magkasabwat na mga pulis-trapiko ang bumubuo sa sindikato. Sampung lahat, kasama na si Lorenzo. Tiningnan ni Miguel ang sariling listahan ng mga pulis. Maliban sa dalawang apelyido ay kilala niyang lahat ang iba pang miyembro. Ang lima ay kasalukuyang may nakabimbing kaso dahil pa rin sa pangongolekta ng tong.

Kaagad nagharap ng sumbong si Miguel. Ang sumbong ay iniakyat nang madali sa pinakahepe ng pulis sa Maynila. Kinuha ang testimonya ni Miguel bilang bahagi ng pagsasakdal laban sa mga tiwaling pulis.

Dahil sa nangyari ay tuluyang nasuspindi sina Lorenzo nang magsimula ang imbestigasyon tungkol sa mga akusasyon ni Miguel. Tila alingawngaw na umugong naman sa kanilang distrito ang posibilidad na mabigyan si Miguel ng dalawa hanggang tatlong baytang na promosyon. Kaipala ay iyon naman ang matagal nang hinihintay ng binata. Halos gabi-gabi ay tungkol sa promosyon ang kanyang pinagmumuni-muni.

"Malaki-laki na rin ang two-step kapag naipon... At least, hindi kagaya ngayon na halos kasyang-kasya lang... Sigurado, pagtaas ng ranggo ko, pahahawakin na rin ako ng mga kaso. Sana maging sarhento na kaagad ako... 'tapos tinyente..."

Isang hapong papauwi ay may isang lalaking sumabay sa paglalakad ni Miguel. Malaki-laki iyon kaysa kanya at ang pagkilos ay parang pulis din. Nakasuot iyon ng kinulayang salamin.

"Pare, walang mabuting mangyayari sa pakeke'lam mo. Bawiin mo'ng testimonya mo kina Lorenzo. Kung makikisama ka, kikita ka. Kung hindi, alam mo na..."

Tumigil sa paglalakad si Miguel at hinarap ang kausap. Tumigil din ang lalaki. Saglit silang nagtantiyahan.

"Tinatakot mo ba 'ko?" ang tanong ni Miguel.

Hindi sumagot ang pangahas. Patuloy lang itong nanigarilyo. Nang humakbang palayo si Miguel ay hindi na sumunod pa ang lalaki.

Hapon ng Miyerkules, tatlong linggong mahigit matapos masuspindi sina Lorenzo, nang pumutok ang balitang sigurado na ang tatlong baytang na promosyon ni Miguel. Sa katuwaan ng binata ay halos pigtalin na nito mismo ang mga araw upang dumating na ang araw ng parangal.

Ngunit tatlong gabi bago ang pinakahihintay na sandali, ang ampon niyang si Ruben ay hindi umuwi. Sari-sari ang sapantaha nina Miguel at Aling Menang.

"Baka napabarkada 'uli," ani Aling Menang, na bagamat hindi tunay na anak ang nawawala ay nababalisa rin.

"Hindi naman ho siguro. Pero kung magkagano'n man, mabuti na rin sana, basta't hindi ho nadisgrasya."

Magdamag na naghintay ang mag-ina. Ang isip ni Miguel ay kinakatkat ng tanong na "Bakit ba 'ko nag-aalala ng ganito? Si Ruben naman ay hindi ko talaga kaano-ano." Ngunit sa tanong ng kanyang isip ay iba ang sagot ng damdamin. Buhay na sa kanyang puso ang pag-aalala sa paslit na animo'y kanyang kapatid. "Hindi kaya dinukot nina Lorenzo?" ang umuukilkil sa kanyang sentido. Ano'ng mangyayari kay Ruben? 'Wag na kaya akong tumestigo? Pa'no ang aking promosyon? Kung pagbigyan ko na lang kaya sina Lorenzo?"

Kinabukasan ay nagbakasyon si Miguel sa trabaho. Hinanap niya si Ruben sa bawat distrito. Inabot na siya ng hapon ngunit hindi niya nakita ang paslit ni anino nito. Nagtalo na naman ang kanyang isip at damdamin. "Ba't ko ba pag-aaksayahan ng pagod ang 'sang batang lansangan?" ang sumisiksik sa kanyang isip. Ngunit ang utos ng kanyang damdamin ay "Hanapin mo ang batang iyon. Sa isang banda ay utang mo sa kanya ang iyong promosyon."

Umuwing naguguluhan si Miguel. Wala pa rin sa bahay si Ruben. Ipinaghain siya ng ina ngunit hindi siya nakakain. Hindi rin siya nakatulog. Kinabukasan ay agad siyang nagbihis at naghanda sa pagpasok. Buo na ang kanyang desisyon. Aalamin niya kung bihag nina Lorenzo si Ruben. Kung magkagayon ay iuurong niya ang mga akusasyon.

Malapit nang makalabas si Miguel sa looban nang matanaw niya ang nagmamadaling si Ruben. Napatigil iyon nang siya'y makita.

Gulong-gulo ang buhok at madungis na madungis ang bata. Kapit ng bisig niyon ang palotsinang kahon. Nang makita nitong naniningkit si Miguel ay nagbaba si Ruben ng tingin. Lumapit si Miguel sa natitigilang bata.

"Sa'n ka nanggaling?" Inambaan niya itong sasapukin. Napatawag si Ruben ng "Kuya!" sa pagsusumamo. Hindi itinuloy ni Miguel ang balak gawin. Tahimik na umagos ang luha ni Ruben nang magpaliwanag.

"Nakita ko ho ang Lola sa Santa Mesa. Do'n na siya namamalimos, Kuya. Hinanap daw n'ya ako... do'n n'ya pinatulog ako... Sabi n'ya... samahan ko naman daw s'ya... ang sabi ko... Oho... magpapaalam lang ako..."

Pinahid ni Ruben ang sipon at luha sa manggas ng suot na T-shirt.

Napahinga nang malalim si Miguel. Napatingin sa lupa ngunit sa mahinang boses ay kagyat na nagsalita.

"Halika, puntahan natin ang 'yong lola." M

NOTES

LEGAL LEGERDEMAIN

By JOSE F. LACABA

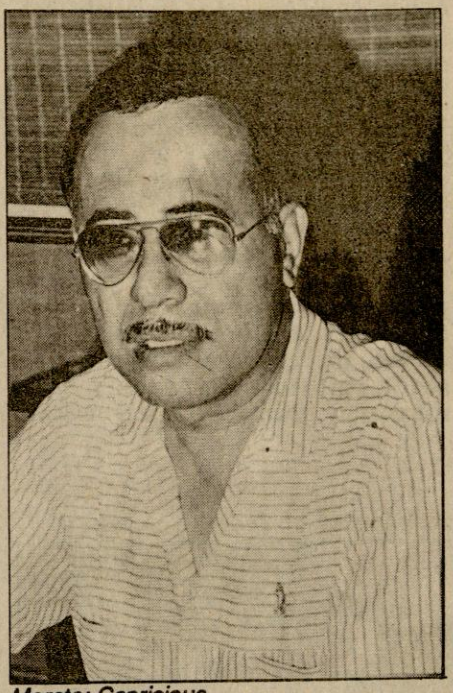
The feats of legal legerdemain of Chairman Manoling Morato of the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board should have qualified him to be the front act for magician David Copperfield. Mr. Copperfield is famous for having made the Statue of Liberty disappear; not to be outdone, Mr. Morato has not only made civil liberties and due process disappear, but has also conjured up nonexistent laws from out of nowhere.

In a letter to the editor (*Philippine Daily Globe*, July 27), Mr. Morato claims that "the provisions of the law mandate me as Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the MTRCB to enforce and implement Art. 201 of the Revised Penal Code of the Philippines—not only the provisions of PD 1986 and its Rules & Regulations."

The provisions of what law?! I have just re-read, for the umpteenth time, the Marcos-era Presidential Decree 1986, which remains in effect in these supposedly more democratic times. Section 5 cites four "functions, powers and duties" of the Board Chairman and Chief Executive Officer. Nowhere does it mention Article 201 of the Revised Penal Code.

It is true that Section 3(i) of PD 1986 gives the Board the power to "cause the prosecution on behalf of the People of the Philippines, of violators of ... other laws pertinent to the movie and television industry." But note that the whole of Section 3 is concerned with the powers and functions of the Board—not of the Chairman! And even the particular power cited in Section 3(i) is simply the power to "cause the prosecution" of violators. If I understand my legalese correctly, this means that the Board should go to court if it feels that Article 201 of the Revised Penal Code has been violated.

Article 201 of the Revised Penal Code imposes "the penalty of prision mayor or a fine ranging from six thousand to twelve thousand pesos, or both such imprisonment and fine," upon (among others) those who



Morato: Capricious

exhibit films deemed obscene or offensive to morals. But the implementation of Article 201 is a function of a court of law—not of Mr. Morato!

Besides, Mr. Morato did not apply the provisions of Article 201 on the film in question. Instead, he unilaterally reversed the decision of an MTRCB review subcommittee and cut up the film that he personally, individually, unilaterally deemed to be pornographic and obscene—in clear violation of the provisions of PD 1986! Section 4 states that the first review of a film submitted for classification is made by a subcommittee of at least three Board members; if "a motion for reconsideration in writing" is made by the producer after this review session, a second review session shall be undertaken by another subcommittee of five, "to be presided over by the Chairman, or the Vice-Chairman, or by a member designated by the Chairman." The law does not empower the chairman to ignore a first subcommittee's recommendation and to overturn its decision, much less to insult, malign and libel a member of his own Board.

Obviously, even the Marcos-era PD 1986 seeks to avoid the kind of one-man rule that Mr. Morato, a petty Marcosian if ever there was one, continues to perpetrate within the MTRCB.

That a repressive Marcosian decree such as PD 1986 has not been repealed by a government that claims to be democratic is bad enough. That a charlatan and a fishmonger such as Mr. Morato is allowed to interpret such a repressive decree in an arbitrary, capricious, whimsical and authoritarian manner is truly frightening. M

Director Lino Brocka: Repressive Marcosian decree



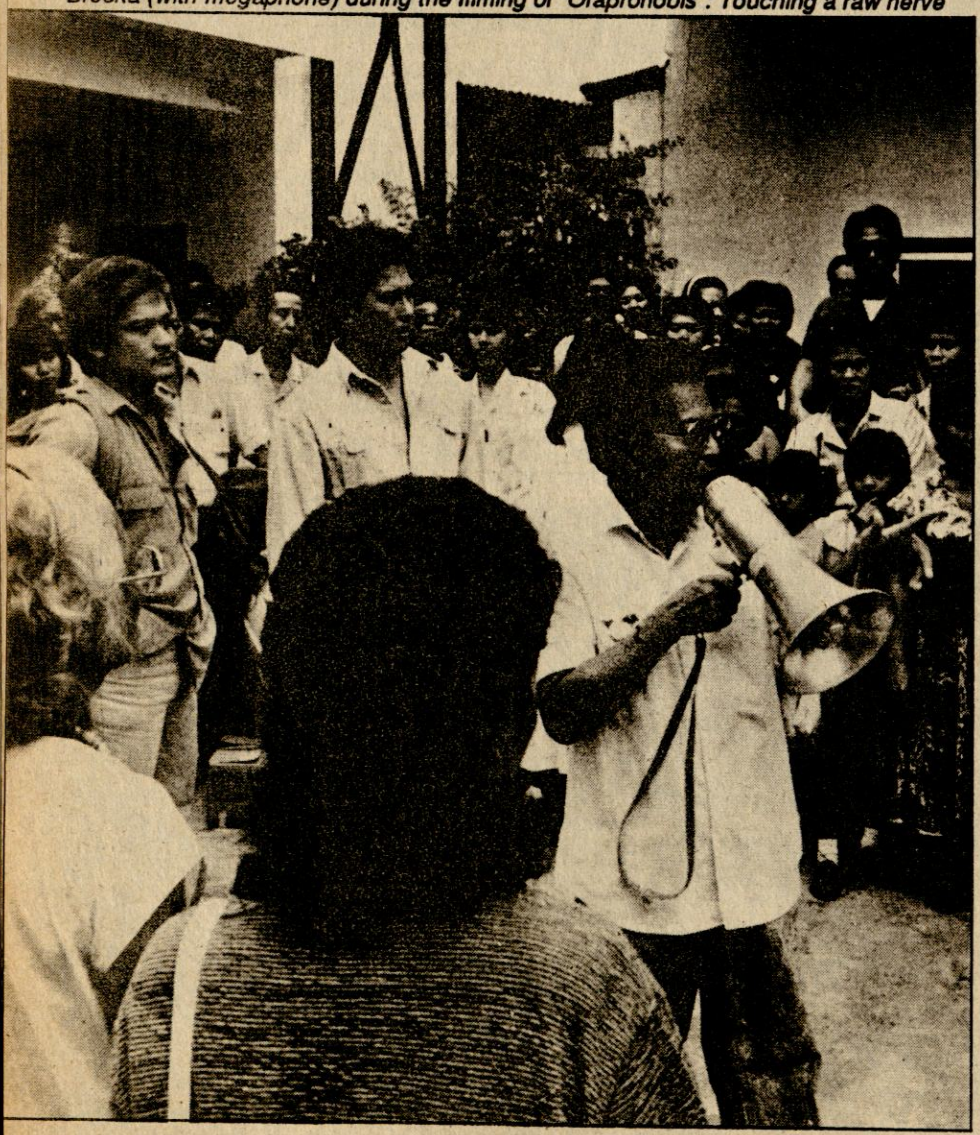
AN ARTIST'S RIGHT TO FAIR VIEWING

By the CONCERNED ARTISTS OF THE PHILIPPINES

Orapronobis (*Les insoumis* in France, *Fight for Us* in the United States) is a new Lino Brocka movie not yet seen in the Philippines but already prejudged in an orchestrated campaign of derogation. The movie's narrative touches on aspects of life in a village under the shadow of President Aquino's total war policy against the communist insurgency. Realities of violence and death occasioned by that policy have been sensational stuff on local print and broadcast media. Brocka's version of those realities on film is now the target of a campaign in media to prejudice Filipino audiences against *Orapronobis*.

In depicting the plight of victims of government-sponsored vigilantes, Brocka's *Orapronobis* has obviously touched a raw nerve in the Aquino administration. The charge against Brocka is that he has washed dirty Philippine linen abroad, and has thus created a bad image for the country, thereby adversely affecting Filipinos living, or earning a living, in Western countries. The Concerned Artists of the Philippines would like to note that the "dirty linen" in question is not entirely unknown in the West, where Amnesty International and other neutral organizations have on several occasions criticized the human rights record of the Aquino government.

Brocka (with megaphone) during the filming of "Orapronobis": Touching a raw nerve



What seems to be on trial here is not whether it is right or wrong to expose despicable conditions obtaining in one's native country before an international audience. After all, not too long ago, militants of the anti-Marcos opposition abroad—including Ninoy Aquino, Raul Manglapus and Heherson Alvarez—washed the country's dirty linen all over the US and Europe, exposing repression and corruption in the Philippines under Marcos. What is on trial, it seems to us, is the right of artists to depict in their chosen medium a perspective on contemporary society, regardless of whether or not such a perspective conforms to the version sacred to those who are in power.

The Concerned Artists of the Philippines, even in the face of harassment and imprisonment, has always stood for the right of free expression. The Constitution framed after the EDSA revolt guarantees that right: "No law shall be passed abridging the freedom of speech, of expression, or of the press." The Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaimed by the United Nations upholds that right: "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers."

Among those now defaming a movie they have not seen are men and women who at one time shared the CAP position on freedom of expression as a basic human right. What has happened to make fellow marchers for freedom assume the stance of "people-powered" censors? Why have they conveniently forgotten that the present dispensation, now so touchy about criticism, once prided itself in having opened democratic space for dissenting elements?

The Concerned Artists of the Philippines fears that the country has come under a new type of intellectual repression masquerading as concern for the Filipino people's international "face." We call on all Filipino artists, whatever their political persuasion, to insist on fair viewing for Brocka's film. Such fair viewing ought to be seen, not as a concession from a tolerant regime, but as a right that any artist can claim. M

IMAGINARY RABBITS

By JOSE F. LACABA

In his reply to film critic Nestor Torre (Letters to the Editor, *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, August 6, 1989), Mr. Manoling Morato, chief censor, indefatigable letter writer, and master illusionist, once again demonstrates his amazing powers of prestidigitation, pulling out imaginary rabbits from nonexistent hats and drawing on his inexhaustible supply of non sequiturs, ad hominem arguments and squid tactics.

Mr. Morato says: "...our Filipino compatriots in France and many other places in the world saw it [*Orapronobis*, a.k.a. *Les insoumis*, a.k.a. *Fight for Us*] in a different light...." Since the film has so far been shown only in France, I wonder how our Filipino compatriots in "many other places in the world" managed to see it.

Mr. Morato asks who paid for Nestor's and my trip to Moscow. Answer: the Moscow Film Festival and the Cultural Center of the Philippines, as part of a cultural exchange program between the Philippines and the USSR. I was sent there because the festival was supposed to show *Bayan Ko: Kapit sa Patalim*, a 1984 film for which I wrote the script; also directed by Lino Brocka, produced by Tony Gonzalez (who would serve in the Aquino cabinet for a time), and applauded by Mrs. Aquino when she saw it in a private screening (this was before she became President), *Bayan Ko* was also jumped on by the Marcos censors for reasons that can only be described as picayune. (Due to some technical hitches and miscommunications, *Bayan Ko* was not included in the Moscow festival program; did Mr. Morato mayhap block its showing in the interest of reconciliation or because it did not obtain an export permit?) As for *Orapronobis*, finding it in Moscow was a case of serendipity. It was not in the filmfest proper but in the separate film market, where Pathe International was selling it along with Meryl Streep's *A Cry in the Dark* and Chuck Norris' *Delta Force II*. The Pathe booth had an English-subtitled video copy of *Fight for Us* available for showing to prospective buyers and interested viewers.

Mr. Morato speaks of "slush money" and "paid propaganda," going so far as to allege that "all those who wrote [sic] and defended" *The Last Temptation of Christ* were "funded and paid" by the production company. I suppose that when you are so used to buying favors with paella and payola, you find it difficult to believe that not everybody in Philippine (not to mention international) media is on the take.

But all of the above are diversionary tactics. Mr. Morato's main point, previously raised in slightly different form by columnists and letter-to-the-editor writers, is that cannibalistic Filipino vigilantes do not exist in reality. Mr. Morato tries to accomplish this disappearing trick by insinuating that my script of *Orapronobis* was based on a book about a Latino cult in Texas, where—Mr. Morato informs us—35 bodies of cult victims were found "in early June this year."

I hate to admit it, but the fact of the matter is that I was not aware of the book and the incident Mr. Morato mentioned until he mentioned them; and since my TV set is not equipped with a FEN antenna I have never once seen a Geraldo Rivera show. For Mr. Morato's information, I wrote the first version of the storyline (at that time entitled *Tadtad*) in September of last year, and I completed the second draft of the screenplay in January of this year; the finished film was shown at the Cannes filmfest on May 22 and opened in eight Paris theaters on May 24—all this, long before the discovery of 35 bodies in Texas in early June this year.

There was no need to look to Latino cults for story ideas when our own Philippine cults provided a wealth of material. The fictional vigilante group in the film, named Orapronobis (one word), is a composite portrait modeled on native fanatic cults, chiefly the Ilaga, the Tadtad, and the Rock Christ. The background material for the story itself is based on reports culled from Philippine newspapers and magazines; moviegoers, when and if they are allowed to see the film, will recognize echoes of the Father Tullio Favali incident, the grenade throwing in Bishop Fortich's official residence, the ambushing of Bernabe Buscayno and Dr. Nemesio Prudente, and most of all the case of the Leyte refugees. Additional background information was supplied by various publications of the Task Force Detainees of the Philippines, the Ramsey Clark US-Philippine Fact-Finding Mission report on Philippine vigilantism and US involvement (1987), the Senate Committee on Justice and Human Rights report on vigilante groups (1988), and Amnesty International's *Philippines: Unlawful Killings by Military and Paramilitary Forces* (1988).

Two magazine articles proved especially helpful: Candy Quimpo's "The Vigilantes" (*Asia Magazine*, August 7, 1988) and film director Mike de Leon's interview with Father Peter Geremia, "The Favali File" (NATIONAL MIDWEEK, January 28, 1987). Allow me to quote from the De Leon interview; Father Geremia is talking about a Cotabato-based group of Ilaga-turned-CHDF led by Norberto Manero Jr. alias Kumander Bucay:

"...a pregnant young Muslim woman who had been a high school student was taken and tied up, and her belly was opened up and the baby used for anting-anting by Kumander Bucay and his companions.... The whole group of CHDF were fed human flesh. They cooked Muslims. They roasted them slowly, still alive, then took the skin, like lechon. And this was done not only once, but repeatedly.... Some said that they would vomit. They were being given sometimes the internal organs, sometimes the whole body."

I grant that the gory incidents described above—real events more stomach-turning than anything we show on film—happened during the Marcos era. Post-Marcos fact-finding reports are replete with accounts of beheadings, dismemberment and disembowelment perpetrated by fanatic cults, but no specific case of ritual cannibalism has so far been reported under the present dispensation, or at any rate none has come to my attention. But the point of the film (which, incidentally, is not a documentary but a work of fiction and drama) is that incidents similar to those described by Father Geremia could very well happen again, because the paramilitary groups and fanatic cults that committed such atrocities in the past are still very much around. Now they are called vigilantes; now they are recycled as Alsa Masa and Nakasaka and CAFGU; now they are even endorsed by President Aquino and Cardinal Sin.

A telemovie like *The Day After* posits that Hiroshima can happen in America; it is at the same time a warning against future Hiroshimas, and an expression of hope that there will be no more Hiroshimas. *Orapronobis* likewise presents a worst-case scenario of what might be, based on what has been; the warning is that government endorsement of vigilante groups is leading toward a repetition of their worst excesses, the hope is that such a policy is not irreversible.

It is the duty of a good son—to paraphrase G.K. Chesterton on the necessity of dissent in a nation's life—to warn his mother away from a cliff before she falls over it. Those who seek to stifle voices of criticism and protest may not realize it, but what they are doing is tantamount to removing the warning signs from the edge of the abyss. M

Writing, teaching, and the teaching of writing (and a bit of reading, too)

By FRANCISCO ARCELLANA

Speech delivered during the 78th commencement exercises of the University of the Philippines in Diliman last April 2.

Writing, teaching and the teaching of writing and maybe reading too are activities formed and informed by the mind in varying degrees of intensity from very near mindlessness through helplessly distracted thought to almost total concentration. If it is true that we are what we think, that we become what our thoughts are, then these functions of the mind indeed direct and help shape our lives.

I'm certain that the age after which your mind is empowered to direct your lives has come and gone. Is your mind then lurching and is it lurching forward? Lurching is not exactly a comfortable feeling and although forward is not backward, there's no way of knowing if it is going up or down, ascending or descending. You are, as it were, on the threshold of the real world, the reality which we are told has alternatives. Has your mind begun to direct your life? Commencements are rites of passage to personhood, of coming-of-age rituals.

There's a theory that a fellow turns to writing because of a speech impediment if not an outright block. What about the jolly good talkative fellow who loves to talk? He probably loves to hear the sound of his own voice, talking.

But the fellow who is not just turned on by writing, who is, as a matter of fact, committed to the silence and solitude so essential to the wrestle with words that would correspond to the tireless activity of that "eyeless, granular organ called the tongue," the compulsive writer whose only mode of being is this drive to write—what about him!

In the beginning was the bard, the tribal poet, the teller of tales, the grand rememberer who chanted and declaimed, sang and recited, but whose praise and prayer remains: "Welcome, O Life! I go to encounter for the millionth time the reality of experience and to forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race."

The most familiar formulation is Flaubert's: *An author in his book must be like God in the universe, present everywhere and visible nowhere* who is also a bayadere in the ivory tower or an English poet in his attic, to which Joyce was added, *within or behind or beyond or above his handiwork, invisible, refined out of existence, indifferent, paring his fingernails.*

The least familiar and most recent is Milan Kundera's: *The novel's essence is complexity. Every novel says to the reader: "Things are not as simple as you think!" All I think I know is that the novel cannot live in peace with the spirit of our times; if it is to carry on uncovering the undiscovered, to continue "progressing" as novel, it can only do so against the "progress" of the world.*

Which world is this? The submerged world, the world of the submerged population. This is why Flaubert's godlike bayadere and Joyce's dandy must come down. Pull down that vanity. The godlike bayadere and that dandy must come to his senses.

Item: he can't be his own audience. Item: whatever he is doing, it can't be done in empty space. Item: you can't produce something out of nothing and Nature hates nothing more than emptiness, a vacuum, a void.

He must come down from his attic, the ivory tower, out into the streets; he must man the barricades, run to the hills, go underground!

He must be. where the action is—with the people, the submerged population of the world.

Immersion in the language, although essential to the writer is not nearly as necessary as immersion in the people. He must immerse himself in the submerged population of the world. The need for contact, the need to connect, the yearning to be one with the people is as vital as the need to lose oneself in the language.

For after all, life is the language in which it is lived.

I have never really thought of writing in terms of books but only in terms of stories, single and separate, *the story*, as it were, in short stories and novels, fiction, long or short.

I have always moved from story to story as if stories were peaks or precipices the way Paul Valery used to move from poem to poem.

Of course, prior to all this, is the fact that the gift of writing springs from a natural but more than usual verbal sense, a way with words, a verve and flair for language.

Actually writing, for the most part, is a function of the habit of notation: thought seeking language, matter seeking form, story material seeking how best to tell itself. Writing is really a matter of having something to work on—you have to have something to pencil (blue or red), to blot, to add to and to annotate and there's nothing like the habit of notation to provide the material for *that*. The habit of notation makes it possible for the story to assume its shape under your hand.

After the habit of notation comes the habit of perfection which means, *not* that the work should be flawless but that the language be one of fidelity to the fact, to the occasion of the writing itself in the first place, originally, previous and prior to anything else which it is not, faithful to the image of truth that the work yearns to be.

But best of all is the habit of being—that one has achieved reality, one no longer seems, one is, one will always be, being there, grossly or finely, present to the flogging and the flogging, the bloody horse there undead, being there yourself, no matter what, no matter where, yourself, unabashed, unashamed, yourself silent and alone, confronting, finally, face to face, the Other, not the Enemy but the Friend, Father, Brother.

You always know when the story is done, unlike the novel which can only be given up, abandoned as reported. The story, like the poem, is a closed system: when the circle is closed, the story is ended.

Now I realize that I have always felt about writing in a very special and rather grandly ambitious way. I have always thought



Arcellana: Writing as the habit of being

about stories—never about storytellers. I have always felt that I would write only those stories that I alone can write that nobody else can. A poor thing but my own, I always say. These are the stories that I have to write because nobody else will write them. Sometimes I say I'll write stories which nobody else will like. If I don't write these stories, nobody else will; if I don't write these stories, they'll remain unwritten. Curiously enough, there are more and more stories waiting to be written, rather than less and less. It's for this reason, I think, that I find the writing of stories so exciting. I'm most happy when I'm writing them. This is true even if nobody believes it.

For the mind is its own place—there is a place in it for even the mind-boggling, the mind-blowing, the mind-stopping. Whatever it is, there is a word for it and a word order. Language can grasp it, articulate it, formulate it. Nothing is so kinetic that it can't be fixed, static. Whatever it is, it can be transfigured and transfixed.

After having been diverted to teaching, always I sought authority for it. It's been a good life, I always say, but that is not what figures with me. I have sought authority to teach and have not found it and that must be the reason why I have always declared that teaching is an expense of the spirit. It must also be the reason for what I haven't always said—which is that it has also been a waste of shame.

As it is in the song, something happens in a classroom, that doesn't happen anywhere else, that hasn't happened before, that will not happen again. A moment of superior clarity, great illumination: it's like faces opening, scales falling from eyes, ears getting unstopped and, as they say, things are never going to be the same again.

But what is previous to all this in the matter of teaching is the certainty that the only way to learn a thing is not by doing it (as it has been widely touted) but, for the purposes of teaching, by teaching. Learning, pure, selfless, disinterested learning, learning for its own sweet sake is also its own reward, the guerdon that is gained. What I'm saying is that it is not Authority after all that one needs to teach but heart and humility and willingness to learn.

In classes, workshops, centers and conferences where writing is purportedly taught, the first observation that's offered is: writing can't be taught, it can only be learned. Which is of course a copout and a bit of a bore. Which is really not saying anything. It is like saying: the highest cannot be spoken but it can be acted.

I used to say all the time that all you can talk about when you talk about writing is the craft, that you have no right to talk about the subject matter. The subject matter is the writer's and you're not supposed to tamper with that. Fairly all the time I said that, until fairly recently, when I read letters of Flannery O'Connor where she tells of sending all her stories to Caroline Gordon to read and Caroline Gordon sending them back to her with voluminous notes on the story matter. No amount of cunning will help you explore your material if you don't know the first thing about it in the first place. True, craft plus courage equals are; but only the deepest possible knowledge of your subject will make the shaping of your story possible.

Of reading, I'm tempted to say as I once did, what the son and brother and friend of the gentleman caller in that magnificent play called *The Glass Menagerie* said of movies: *I have to stop watching movies. I must start moving.*

Of the reading of books, as in the writing of them, there is no end. You must read with freedom just as you must live in freedom. It is the only way to live—with freedom. It is the only way life is possible. You read books to be able to read life. You read a poem to be able to read the wind. What do you read to reap the whirlwind?

Let me read you something. It's a little story. It's a very small story that its author, Carolyn Forche, tries to make even smaller. Although Carolyn Forche calls it a story, I think it is really a poem. It is a poem because it says something true and real and clear about the imagination which after all is the subject of poetry. Carolyn Forche is not just a versifier or a rhymer. She's a real poet. She can't help writing poems any more than I can help being, inhaling and exhaling, inhaling and exhaling.

May I read it then? A class poem for the graduates of UP *'89. I had a lesson once that I want to share. In El Salvador, I was working as a woman named Louise of Amnesty International and I was very concerned about political prisoners and their whereabouts. I didn't know that at that time most of the people who had disappeared were already dead, but finally friends and mentors told me that this was the case. However, if there was something that I would like to do about people who were in prison, there was something that they would offer me to do. They wanted me to go inside a prison and they wanted me to spend half an hour inside the prison. And they told me there was something inside that they wanted me to see, and they thought maybe my friends in Amnesty International would be interested in it. And they said, "You can't take any paper or camera or anything, you have to memorize." Then they said to me, "We give eighty percent chance that everything will be O.K." And I thought eighty percent! And they said, "Oh yes, that's very good odds. We think that every thing will be fine." But I was thinking, of course, about the other twenty (percent). So I said finally—because I had an agreement with my friends that I would do what they wanted me to do and learn what they wanted me to learn, and if I came to something that I didn't want to do or felt tired or felt bored, I would just go home—I

decided to go into the prison rather than go home.

And in the prison there were men being kept in small wooden boxes. I was able to see this by the man who was taking me around when I was first going in—I should describe just a little bit to you. It was a four-sided structure with an open courtyard, and when I was brought into the prison, a prisoner brought me an Orange Crush and handed it to me so that—I didn't know why, and I protested a little bit, but he said, "No, you're going to need this." So I walked in with my little Orange Crush and I had a sweater over my arm, because it had been chilly but now it was hot, and when they opened the doors, I nearly fell over from the stench of shit and piss and vomit. And there were maybe four hundred men in there, and I had been told that some were criminal prisoners and others were not, but they were all there. And the men walked me around, and the guards had their G-3s, standing around, that's an automatic weapon. The guards were about 17, 18, 19 years old and they were very interested in me at first, and then sort of lost interest and got interested in a little game of dice.

And when that happened, my friend said to me, "You see that dark open doorway in there? I want you to go through that doorway, that's what you want to see, that's what we brought you in here for." And he said, "Try to see what's in there, but only stay one minute, no more. Don't stay longer. Count." And then he said, "When you come out, if they see you come out, make a face like an absent-minded North American lady," and he made an absent-minded North American lady face for me, so I would know what it looked like. And he said, "Just—you don't know where you were going, you got lost, you didn't see anything." So I said, O.K., and I went inside, and inside there were six wooden boxes, three across and three stacked on top of them. They were about one meter by one meter by one meter, and they had openings the size of a book that were covered with many layers of chicken-wire mesh, and they were padlocked. And I thought it would be impossible, when the boxes started to move, for someone to be other than completely crouched inside. And I counted them, and I made a mental map—this is everything automatic, I was supposed to do this. I was supposed to walk out and take the map and send it to Amnesty and the International Commission of Jurists in Geneva. So I did it.

Maybe I have them now, I don't know, I had them earlier today, but I got hives while I was doing it. And I counted, and I walked out, and I made my face blank, and I was a little panicky, and he told me to tie my sweater around my neck to cover these up, and he said, "That's called *el oscuro*, the 'darkness solitary.' Sometimes men are kept in there one year and can't move when they come out, because of the atrophy in their muscles." And so the rest of it is kind of blank for me.

I know I was in there about ten more minutes. I know I went out and talked friendly with the soldiers. I know I got in the cab of the truck. I know I was driven away, then all of a sudden I really became sick and vomited all over the inside of the truck and started to cry hysterically. And the man who was with me, who was my friend, a Salvadoran who had led me through many things, stopped the truck and yanked on the emergency brake, and he said—I thought he was going to pat me on the shoulder and say, "Oh, poor North American Lady, we will take you now to the hotel for a drink or a nice meal, and you can go to bed, and we are very sorry that you feel so bad." That's what I expected, really, that's what I expected. And instead he folded his arms, and he got a very stern look on his face and he said, "O.K., you go ahead," and he said, "You pay attention to what you're feeling right now." And I thought he was hard, you know. And he said, "Because this is what the oppression feels like. And if you can imagine this now and hold it in your imagination and keep it, then you're going to understand what these people who live in shit shacks and have no place to shit in the morning feel like every day, and that's the condition of depression and anxiety and fear and revulsion out of which they have to form some sort of sense of communion with each other."

"I have always felt that I would write only those stories that I alone can write. A poor thing but my own. These are the stories that I have to write because nobody else will write them....Curiously enough, there are more and more stories waiting to be written, rather than less and less."

So he said, "Pay attention because this is important. This is the most important thing you're going to learn here." And I was pissed off at first, really angry. And then a light went on in my head, and I realized that he was trying to teach me something, how to—and this is a hard thing for us to learn, I think (by "us," I mean our nationality here in this country)—how to get inside another human who isn't one of us. And that's what the imagination is for.

This little small story of Carolyn Forche that I call a poem wasn't even written, not to say composed. It was spoken, like the words of Archbishop Romero at the foot of the altar where he was killed before he was killed—*"Brothers, we are the same people. Each one of you is us. Stop the killing, brothers, each one of you is us or each one of us is you"*—our class poem spoken by Carolyn Forche at a symposium on the writer and the world.

You can't take any paper or camera or anything. You have to memorize, said Carolyn Forche's Salvadoran friends. You must remember, you must be the bard again, the great memorizer, the grand rememberer. Against the so-called "progress" of the modern world, the word processor, the computer, the memory store, artificial intelligence avail us nothing. This must be what Kundera meant: (the novel) to continue "progressing" as novel, it can only do so against the progress of the world.

A fellow, I'm told, speaks out of the top of his mind if he's tapping his mind at all. The writer, speaking, said Oliver Wendell Holmes, is a literary strumpet who, like a whore, must unpack himself with words. Writers shouldn't be seen, only read.

They should be heard too, I think. If it is worth writing, it is worth shouting from the rooftops.

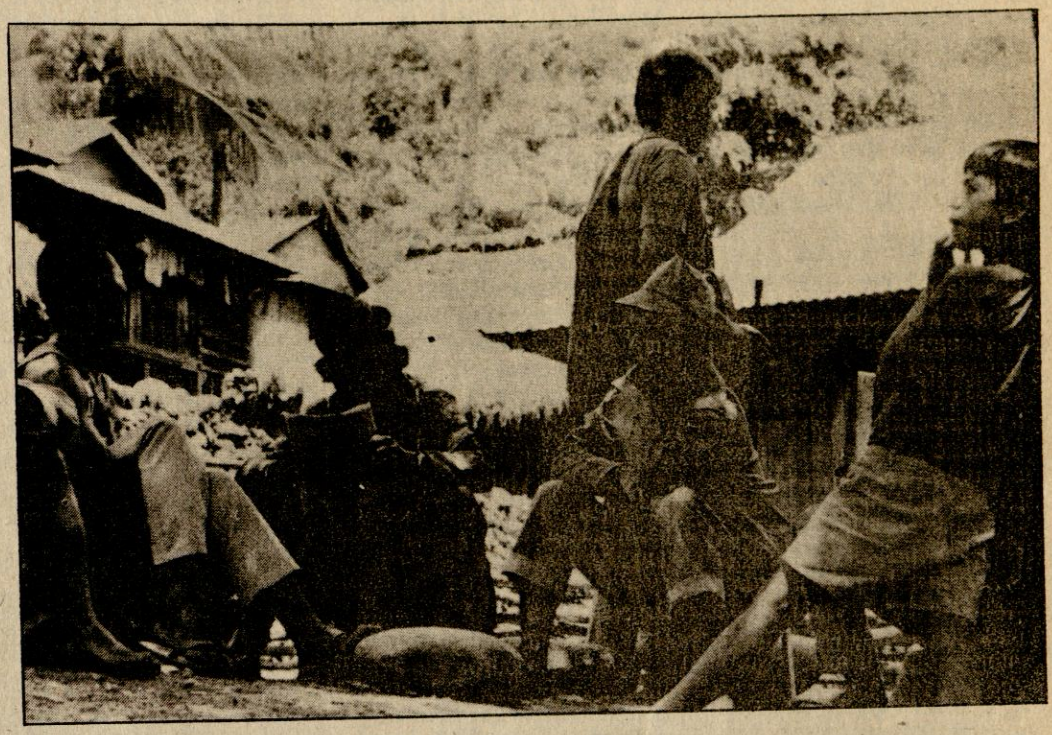
Just as I'm shouting now.

Writing has been described as being either noisy or quiet. Speaking is just noise, big noise.

Standing here, speaking before you now, in a role partaking of the bard, the tribal poet, the teller of tales, speaking, even shouting. What am I producing? Noise, sheer but unsimple unmitigated noise. What is the noise saying? It is saying, Here I am. I have a great need to make contact, Contact. I'm reaching out to you. Only connect: there, in the hollow of the hand of the Saviour is my salvation.

Thank you, good evening, God bless us all. M

To NDF: On the Sagada appeal



Signatories from the 19 barangays of Sagada, Mountain Province have elevated their appeal for an NPA pull-out from their community to the NDF national leadership.

This was compelled by the rejection of the appeal by the regional Cordillera People's Democratic Front Provisional Council and Chadli Molintas NPA Command and by NPA-initiated battles and NPA operations in the municipality since then.

The appeal assumes greater significance in the light of the pull-out of the 50th Infantry Battalion and 1st Army Special Forces Company—a gain that the people want consolidated, not undermined, in their efforts to totally demilitarize Sagada. A corollary pull-out of NPA units would prevent the further drawing back of AFP presence to the municipality.

The Coalition for Peace supports Sagada's urgent appeal to the NDF.

Their letter speaks of the tension between the AFP and NPA as "almost at the brink of war." An "army of the people" such as the NPA calls itself must defer to their right to exercise self-reliance in determining, for example, that their community is to be a Demilitarized Zone. The NPA must help protect the democratic processes at work in Sagada by taking all necessary actions to decrease the level of actual and potential armed conflict which disrupts these processes. As a first step, we join our voices with Sagada's calling on the NDF to effect the NPA troop pull-out from Sagada.

In the longer term, Sagada's efforts to build a Demilitarized Zone are planting seeds of a just and lasting peace in the Cordilleras. Other communities in the region are building up their capabilities to break free of the vise of war and underdevelopment, with an eye observing the reactions of the NDF to the interventions of an awakened and mobilized community.

We challenge the NDF to be true to revolutionary spirit and practice. We challenge them to respect the Sagada people as they wage their campaign for life, as they struggle to become a people as sturdy as the rice terraces, in a new truly revolutionary way.

Coalition for Peace: Teresita Quintos Deles, Main Convenor; Gaston Ortigas, Convenor; Risa N. Hontiveros, Secretary-General; Karen Tañada, Convenor; Edmundo Garcia, Convenor; Randolf David, Convenor

SAD CONSEQUENCE

Digos—a place where, praying inside a Church, members of the Itoman tribe, mostly women and children were admittedly gunned down by the insurgents. The result of the NDF's investigation of the incident, its findings and verdict on the matter is therefore much awaited. Certainly the NPA's action in Digos detracts from the claim that it is the army of the people—protector of the poor and the oppressed. A serious and thoroughgoing examination of how and why this reprehensible tragedy occurred is definitely in order.

It must also be noted, however, that Digos is but a sad consequence of the Aquino government's favorable policy towards the formation of paramilitary units where vigilante groups have sought and found shelter. Thus, in this matter, the government must also share part of the responsibility. In encouraging their formation and providing them with arms, an already volatile situation has been made even more explosive. It is but one more example of how palliatives are used to remedy a very critical situation. Unfortunately, it is the non-combatants who suffer most.

It is hoped that the government will heed the call of various groups to undertake, therefore, a comprehensive reexamination of the government's present policies with regard to the arming of civilians and vigilante groups. This course of action can only lead to more violent encounters that cannot but adversely affect the civilian population. Leave the fighting to those who have been trained for it—the soldiers.

Manifestoes, statements and similar pronouncements from movements, parties, organizations and other groups, legal or otherwise, as well as individual spokespersons, are welcome in this new regular department.

Submissions should be typed, double-spaced. Even if they are not, they may be accommodated if space and priorities permit. They will be published unedited, but may be abridged if longer than two double-spaced pages.

Materials for this space should be addressed to: THE DEMOCRATIC SPACE EDITOR, NATIONAL MIDWEEK MAGAZINE, 43 ROCES AVENUE, 1103 QUEZON CITY, METRO MANILA.

Both the government and the NDF should likewise heed the call of the UCCP, the NCCP and leaders of the organization of major Catholic congregations in the country to return to the negotiating table where it is fervently hoped the actual root causes of why our nation is in the state it is in would be addressed.

Renato Constantino Jr.

NO-NUKES BILL

I would like to know whatever happened to the "no-nukes" proposal of Congresswoman Anna Dominique Coseteng which was filed in the House of Congress sometime in 1987.

This is also to remind the chairman of the House committee on national defense—that to delay the passage of this no-nukes bill is dangerous to the safety of the Filipino people in case of any nuclear accident coming from the US military facilities.

The time has come for all members of the House of Representatives to act immediately on this important bill for the sake of our country's safety and survival.

Rony Dadivas
CCJP-Capiz
Hughes St.
Roxas City, Capiz

TRIBUTE

During the abduction of the Redemptorist human rightist, Rev. Fr. Rudy Romano in Cebu City in July 11, 1985, there was one dedicated lawyer who took on his case: Atty. Al Surigao Jr. or Lolong to close friends, relatives and family. The job brought with it a bombing incident in his office of the Protestant Lawyers League in Cebu City, which did not stop him in pursuing the case, until his assassination in June 24, 1988.

A year after, the members of the Protestant Lawyers League, Free Legal Assistance Group, Task Force Detainees and KAPATID sponsored a fitting remembrance for Atty. Al Surigao during a symposium and ecumenical service taking on the appropriate theme of: Human Rights Essence of Life. In this celebration, the invited guest speaker Atty. Emil Capulong shared for the need "to be vigilant," as according to a "study in the US conducted in 61 countries on human rights violations, last year, the Philippines is the number one, taking over the 'credit' from Colombia. And just as a proof to this, for the first 18 months alone, 7 lawyers have been killed."

The killings have, in a way affected the membership of human rights lawyers "from an original number of 23 to 5," according to Atty. Vic Balbuena. The only major factor that made a difference is that these 5 lawyers were really committed lawyers for human rights, that were potentially not merely affidavit-lawyers. Human rights lawyers that would want to take on the example of Atty. Al Surigao.

The ceremony of June 24, interspersed with solemnity and songs, provided insights into the life of a human rights lawyer who died in front of his daughter at 7:30 in the evening. It was one ceremony that shed light into the life of Atty. Al Surigao, even as he fell from a vigilante's bullet, while he was feeding his pigs in his backyard. Rev. Fr. Ramon Fruto CSsR, remembered Al Surigao as "a person who lived his Christian vocation as a professional whose life was more eloquent than any of his words spoken; who genuinely loved the poor and the oppressed." In the words of Judge Meinrado Paredes, "Al was not an ordinary human rights lawyer, for he did not simply issue affidavits, but nilubog gyud sa masa as he shared will and woe of the masses by joining fact finding missions in Balamban-Asturias, in Leyte; and who remembered that as a reviewer, he had to sell his pair of trousers to have transport allowance, while his mother baked and sold puto in Leyte."

Clearly, Judge Paredes maintained that Al Surigao's message is: "Be a part of the people, immerse with the people and understand their problems." These really transcend the ordinary works of the lawyer, and remembering Atty. Al Surigao last June 24, is remembering the dead human rights lawyers like him; and perhaps, challenging more lawyers to opt for human rights as a Christian vocation.

Maria Lourdes Alorro
Banaag Center
for the Popularization
of Visayan People's Culture

JUSTICE FOR CHRISTIAN ACTIVIST

It has been two months now since a member of the Student Christian Movement (SCM)—West Negros College (WNC) chapter was brutally-murdered. It has been two months now and the perpetrators of this heinous crime has yet to face the fullest extent of the law.

Rodolfo Vista was a first year Political Science student and an SCM organizer in Bacolod City. Dolfo, while working with the church-based Monsignor Aglipay Don Belong Labor Center (MADBLAC), was arrested twice but was later on released. He resigned from MADBLAC to resume his studies at WNC and eventually joined the SCM chapter in this school.

Two months ago, Dolfo visited friends and relatives during fiesta celebrations in Sitio Cabug, Barrio Sum-ag in Bacolod City. Trying to look for his friends, Dolfo roamed around the dance site at around 7:00 PM of May 5, 1989. A few hours earlier on that day, 15 CAFGU's of the Barangay Feliza detachment headed by Armyman "Alyas Rambo," were seen in the said place. Upon seeing Dolfo, Rambo aimed his M-16 armalite and pulled the trigger hitting Dolfo thrice at the back of the abdomen. Witnesses rushed the victim to a hospital but he was dead on arrival.

We're very much aware that prior to Dolfo's brutal slaying, a pattern of persecution was being done against the clergy, church workers, and struggling Christians. This pattern of persecution have claimed the lives of Fr. Malalay and Pinoy Rivera, Rev. Roillo, Rev. Gran and her husband, Luvino.

We student Christians would never be cowed by these series of heinous crimes, a part of the US-designed Low Intensity Conflict (LIC) bloodbath policy of the counter-insurgency program of the Cory Aquino government. We student Christians would never be deceived by a president whose only knowledge was to pray and by a cardinal who talks like a traditional politician. Both distort the true essence of Christian faith of helping the poor and freeing them from oppression and exploitation. Acts that are contrasting to the building of a just and humane Philippine society.

Student Christian
Movement of the
Philippines (SCMP)
NCCP Ecumenical Center
879 EDSA, Quezon City

REGRETS

The National Democratic Front and the General Command of the New People's Army deeply regret the unfortunate killing of noncombatants, mostly women and children, in Digos, Davao del Sur, last June 25, and sincerely condole with the families of the victims.

A thorough and speedy investigation is now being undertaken jointly by the NDF, the GC-NPA and the Mindanao Commission of the Communist Party of the Philippines. We shall make public the result of the investigation as soon as it is submitted by the team.

We assure the Filipino people, and the United Church of Christ in the Philippines and the National Council of Churches of the Philippines in particular, that we will apply the appropriate punishment and disciplinary action to everyone responsible for the un-

necessary killings and for any violation of our revolutionary discipline and rules in the conduct of the war.

The Digos incident was an unintended, and deplorable turn in the intensifying armed conflict between the revolutionary forces of the people and the armed foroes of the US-Aquino regime. On the part of the NDF and the NPA, we will do our utmost to avoid its repetition, given the limits imposed by the harsh conditions of the war and the increasingly dirty means used by the state armed forces.

We take this incident very seriously as it could impede our earnest drive to insure that all the armed units of the NPA adhere to the humanitarian laws of war, especially in the context of Protocol II of the Geneva Conventions that guarantee protection of civilians and noncombatants. This, of course, in addition to requiring the strictest compliance with the NPA's rules and points of discipline, especially in relating with the masses.

National Democratic Front
General Command
New People's Army

WANTON AND CRUDE

The wanton crude and haphazard exhumation of the military on the alleged mass graves in Southern Tagalog is putting our country into worldwide criticisms and shame.

The use of shovels and worse payloaders in the retrieval of the skeletal remains is an unpardonable sin in the field of archaeology and exhumation procedures. Such kind of undertaking is the work of our uneducated, untrained and propaganda-hungry men. In this kind of work many of the evidences are destroyed, You may identify the person but it will be very hard or impossible to determine the cause and manner of death.

I appreciate the courage of the Department of Anthropology of U.P. Diliman and other non-governmental organizations, particularly the Medical Action Group in their call to put all these activities in the proper way and to stop all these exhumations, unless an independent credible and properly trained group is formed to do the exhumation, analysis and identification in a scientific method based on international standards.

I call on the Commission On Human Rights, Department of Justice, the Congress and the President to order the military to stop all their exhumations and let the proper body perform the work. Then we can give the victims proper and quality justice where we can have credible evidence to use against the perpetrators.

A Concerned Citizen

TRUTH ABOUT LFS

I would like to address this letter to some right-winged groups regarding their allegations that the League of Filipino Students (LFS) is a "communist front" being "manipulated" by members of the New People's Army (NPA) and the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP).

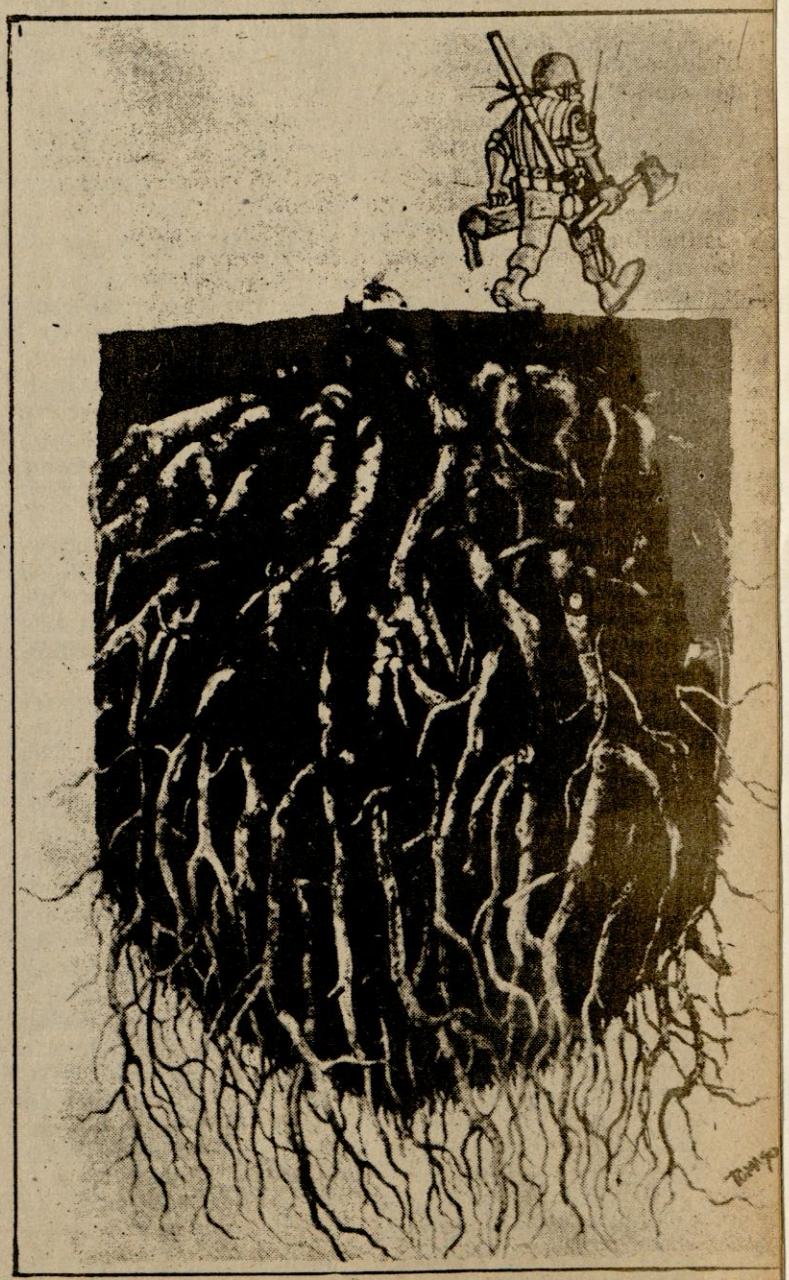
The "Alyansa ng Mag-aaral Laban sa Pagtaas ng Tuition Fee" created the foundation of the league at the height of the national campaign against unjust tuition fee increases during the mid-70s. Thus, on September 11, 1977 the National League of Filipino Students (NLFS) was established with members from different student councils in various colleges and universities. The National Alliance for Democracy (NAD) alleged that the league was "organized by the Kabataang Makabayan (KM) under the political front of the CPP/NPA."

In 1981, the league became a mass organization and was granted defacto recognition as a legitimate representative of the Philippine student body, after it led more than 500,000 students in series of nationally-coordinated protests.

The LFS is a national democratic, mass activist organization and commits itself to the struggle for a free, nationalist, scientific and mass-oriented educational system. Also, the league has three strategic objectives such as: 1) Defense, preservation and advancement of the democratic gains of the overall people's movement. 2) Assertion of the Filipino people's sovereign will or collective democratic right to self-rule, free from all forms of foreign interventionism and 3) Emancipation of the Filipino peasantry from land bondage and the realization of a genuine agrarian reform program.

The LFS being a legal and legitimate mass organization enjoys the support of many students and have some 25,000 members organized in 245 chapters nationwide, and some 120 Filipino students in 9 colleges and universities in California, Illinois and New York at the start of SY 1987-1988 alone.

The NAD further alleged that the LFS always link its political and other sectoral issues to imperialism, bureaucrat-capitalism and feudalism



(which is associated for being a national democrat) and does not lambast communism as the so-called "ill of the society." On the league's part, communism is not the issue since the root cause of insurgency is poverty that consequently resulted from the massive plundering of our nation's wealth, natural resources and raw materials perpetuated by US imperialism through multi-national corporations and transnational corporations.

Myke A. Sotero
LFS
National Information Desk
National Office
Quezon City

CUTTING LEGAL CORNERS

I could not help being disturbed by the case of the UP *Philippine Collegian* employee, Donato Continente, who is accused of being an accomplice in the assassination of JUSMAG officer Rowe.

Was there a warrant for his arrest? Did the arresting officers identify themselves properly? Why was his arrest denied by said agency upon inquiries of Continente's coworkers?

It seems several days lapsed before the PC-CIS finally acknowledged that they had the hapless fellow in their custody. By this time, they had extracted a "confession" about Continente's alleged participation in the Rowe killing.

Considering the 3 days that he was held incommunicado, officially denied access to a lawyer of his choosing, it does not take much imagination to guess how this confession was finally extracted.

Continente's case would probably not even merit newspaper space were it not for the fact that this is no ordinary political crime but one which involves a high-ranking American military officer.

I'm no lawyer but I always thought that there were pretty good reasons why a citizen's rights against arbitrary arrest and against self-incrimination have always been upheld in a democratic and just society. Are we now being asked to set these rights aside in the name of efficiency in police work? Doesn't it matter that this suspect may be innocent?

Worse, labelling him a communist hitman practically makes anyone who raises a question about his arrest a communist coddler!

K a n y a - k a n y a n g konsyensya na lang but I wager the Human Rights Commissioner would not touch Continente's case with a ten-foot pole.

Ma. Elena Ang
College of Arts and Sciences
UP Diliman

SYMBOLIC ATTACK

Red paint spattered on the walls of local government edifices expresses the utter contempt of the revolutionary movement for such state institutions which have become instruments in perpetrating an oppressive system, surpassing that of the Marcos dictatorship.

The NDF deems it necessary to inform and educate the citizenry of Davao City the meaning and purpose of such an act, before the media makes wrong conclusions.

Eight government agencies were made targets of our symbolic attack, namely: The City Hall, The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB), National Telecommunication Commission (NTC), Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council (NUDCC), Presidential Commission on Urban Poor (PCUP), The Philippine Information Service (PIA), Presidential Commission on Human Rights (PCHR), including the United States Information Service (USIS).

DOLE is supposed to protect the rights of the workers but it has not functioned in the interest of the working class. In its dealing with employer-employee relationships it shows its bias for the management. LTFRB have taken advantage of small time public utility operators, making money out of franchise grants, while NTC has been responsible for coercive pressure and restrictive measures on media. It is responsible for censor and obstruction of all communications of the revolutionary movement. The US-Aquino Regime created the PCUP as its response to the poor. However, this is an adhoc solution targetting a long-neglected problem. This agency is supposed to be a protector of the poor, but what has it done for the poor? Does it have viable concrete program? At present, this agency has not addressed the legitimate demands of the majority instead it has caused more demolitions and worsen the problems of the urban poor. Through its programs, it gives false hopes to the people.

The reality is, it is created to ensure the smooth implementation of the IMF-WB dictated projects through the RCDP and BPZ. It is sad to think, that the supposed to be protectors of the people are even the ones pushing them towards more destruction.

PIA as a mouthpiece of the government gives false hope to the people and ultimately neutralize their feeling of discontent. It only caters to the government's needs for image building through publicity, while it disregards the real issues at hand in order to project an impressive public image for the regime. Being created for such a purpose, it is definitely anti-people and is therefore counter-revolutionary.

Commission on Human Rights' existence symbolizes the regime's bogus concern for the respect of Human Rights. Sometime after the Edsa Uprising, it has successfully deceived the people into believing that its creation is an assurance that this regime values human rights more than anything else.

The government's declaration of a total war against the people, negates the credibility of this agency. The regime's go-signal or a heightened counter-insurgency campaign has stripped this agency of its main function. For how could it effectively go about with its responsibilities when the gross violators of Human Rights themselves also receive the orders from the same master?

The City Hall belongs to the citizens, not the Mayor or any Official. It also stands as a symbol of state authority which has fast become either coopted by the Armed Forces of the Philippines or simply cowed by fascist might. The City though admittedly still open to people of all walks of life may have just become a place where the powerful politicians and wealthy business personalities exercise great influence on decision making.

The City Council has shown its lack of commitment in tackling the real issues of the City which involves the welfare of its citizens. Attributed with questionable actuations and involved with shady deals, this government body has lost its significance and credibility among the populace.

The local government which is proving to be anti-people and pro-fascist deserve to be dismantled and divested of its power. It has no moral ascendancy to remain in authority.

The symbolic attack serves as a warning to all enemy forces, directly or indirectly involved in diverting and obstructing the revolutionary struggle of the masses that any act of betrayal of the peoples' trust will not be tolerated.

Down with the US-Aquino regime!

Prepare for the establishment of a national democratic coalition government!

Onward with the revolutionary struggle until total victory!

Ariel Badiang
National Democratic Front
Davao City

CPP purge

The military claimed that secret underground documents recovered from the raid on the hide-out of captured National Democratic Front leader Satur Ocampo revealed that the Communist Party of the Philippines is now undergoing a bitter internal struggle. Nine top rebels, the military said, were sacked for their participation in a bloody purge which has also led to dissent and infighting within the underground movement. Among those who were reportedly punished were Satur Ocampo, his wife Carolina Malay and Jose Luneta, whom the military said replaced Rafael Baylosis as CPP secretary-general.

The Ocampo papers, the military said, also described the bloody purge as "madness" which threatens to split the CPP and the entire underground revolutionary organization.

The military also admitted having deployed "deep penetration agents" in the CPP, including the central committee of the underground organization. Alleged former CPP chairman Benito Tiamzon and his wife and Central Committee member Wilma Austria, the military claimed, were being held prisoners by military agents in the party organization. The CPP, in a press statement, denied the report.

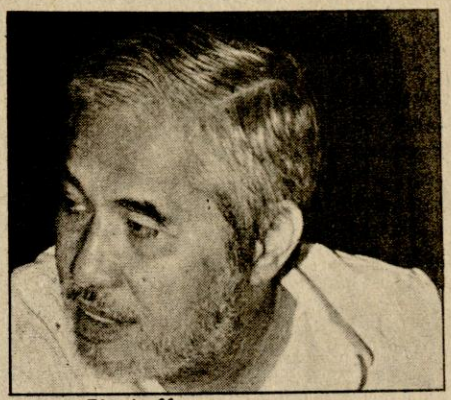
MAYOR AMBUSHED

Unidentified men ambushed and killed the mayor of a town in Quirino province. Mayor Romulo Liclican of Diffun, Quirino, was shot dead by gunmen along the Maharlika Highway at Barangay Malapad, Cordon, Isabela. Liclican was hit in the head and body. The mayor's driver-bodyguard was hit in the shoulder but survived the attack.

NPA ATTACKS

Around 200 heavily-armed NPA guerrillas raided the town hall of Lorente, Eastern Samar and killed a municipal employee. According to reports reaching the office of PC-INP chief Maj. Gen. Ramon Montaño, the rebels arrived in two groups, attacked the town hall and conducted a house-to-house search for firearms in the houses of policemen. The rebels ran off with several high-powered firearms and hand-held radios toward Barangay Antipolo aboard a commandeered vehicle owned by the Alamag Mining Corporation.

Meanwhile, in Negros Oriental, constabulary soldiers foiled an NPA attempt to kidnap a Chinese millionaire.



Mitra: Final offer

SARAH OVER DYAN

Sarah Castillejo outplayed elder sister Dyan to bag the Lagerlite national championship at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center. It was Sarah's second women's title in a row. Sarah needed an hour and thirty minutes to beat Dyan and pocket the P20,000 first prize.

Sarah will be playing for the national team in the upcoming 15th Southeast Asian Games to be held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The other team members are Jennifer Saret, Dorothy Jane Suarez and Nina Castillejo. Dyan Castillejo was also appointed coach of the team.

In the international tennis scene, topseed Steffi Graf of West Germany beat Zina Garrison to bag the $40,000 prize money in the San Diego Classic tennis tournament in San Diego, California.

SALARY BILL

Congress ratified a new bill increasing the minimum salary of government workers to P2,000 a month and P3,102 for public school teachers.

"This is the best and final offer," said House Speaker Ramon Mitra of the bill which President Aquino was expected to sign immediately and which was unanimously voted upon by both chambers of the legislature. But state workers plan to hold more marches to dramatize their rejection of the measure.

The bill's approval came after weeks of protest actions by government workers and school teachers who were pressing for minimum salaries of P2,500 and P4,500 respectively.

A teacher and a government employee died in the protests for higher wages. Teresa Almazan, a teacher at the Don Mariano Marcos High School and Adriano Nuquia, a maintenance mechanic of the Metro Manila Transit Corporation, both succumbed to pneumonia after attending several rallies.

Budget Secretary Guillermo Carague had earlier said that the government can only afford a minimum pay of P1,700 for state workers and P2,954 for teachers.

Senate President Jovito Salonga said, however, that domestic borrowings could be increased in order to grant the pay hikes.

CORY'S US TRIP NIXED

President Aquino wants to visit the United States again this November. Nine senators, however, have urged her to cancel the trip saying she might misrepresent the views of Congress on the future of the US military bases in the country.

The senators who voiced their objections to the trip were Aquilino Pimentel, Wigberto Tañada, Leticia Shahani, Vicente Paterno, Orlando Mercado, Juan Ponce Enrile, Teofisto Guingona, Joseph Estrada and Sotero Laurel.

Shahani said that the trip was unnecessary if the chief executive's purpose was to secure more loans. But if President Aquino wanted to take up major bilateral issues like the future of the US military facilities, Shahani said she ought to consult with Congress first.

Enrile said the trip would be a "waste of time and of people's money."

Senator Tañada added that the president could be "easily pressured into committing something inimical to our vital national security."

President Aquino will reportedly visit Canada first before proceeding to the US.

MINDANAO AUTONOMY ACT HIT

Seven Muslim groups have asked the Supreme Court to declare as unconstitutional the Organic Act for Muslim Mindanao and to stop the Comelec from calling a plebiscite on it on November 19.

In a press conference the organizations said the government should heed the statement of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC). The OIC said signing the law is tantamount to declaring war because the Organic Act does not concur with the 1976 Tripoli Agreement.

President Aquino however justified the act saying it was enacted in accordance with the provisions of the 1987 Constitution. M

Leveriza and its nuns

By ALICIA LOURDES M. DE GUZMAN
Population Media Service



Soap factory in Leveriza: Dramatic changes

Early one morning," Sister Christine Tan relates, "they came to fetch me because a man had died in his sleep. He was a poor man who lived alone in a tiny shack with no light or water and only the dirt for a floor. When I got there, I saw that there were deep wounds on his face and various parts of his body were stuffed with cotton. Several fingers were missing. So I asked the neighbors how this happened, if he had indeed died of *bangungot*. I was told that rats had gotten to the dead person before I did.

"That to me was more shocking than if I had been told that the man had been shot. That's still a pretty common occurrence around here despite the progress that we have made. We who are made in God's own image certainly deserve to live better."

Sister Christine adds that "it is not unusual for a child to wake up with half of his cheek gone—bitten off by a rat. Almost every day, a child falls into the *estero* that they are using as a toilet. They are fished out, but they get dysentery from the dirty water that they swallow. I really do not think that this is what God meant when He said 'Go forth and multiply.' I believe God meant us to enjoy life in its fullness."

Sister Christine sums up the essence of her work in one word: survival. "By survival, I mean that each person can live as a human being with clean air, water, food, land, housing, education, medical attention, recreation, music. Not like this."

"This" is Leveriza, an urban poor community that straddles Manila and Pasay. From Quirino Avenue to the back of the Rizal Memorial Coliseum along Vito Cruz, just outside the walls of the elite educational enclave of the De La Salle University (whose well-off students use the community's alleys as a parking lot), hundreds of shanties house thousands of people.

Among other things, Leveriza and similar localities are a symptom of the population problem and its attendant factors, like large families and migration. There are narrow streets, stinking alleys, open sewers and rats bigger than house cats.

Sister Christine and the other nuns of the Religious of the Good Shepherd (RGS) have been living in Leveriza for about 10 years now, helping the residents organize to realize basic needs that many of us take for granted: "Like running water... We had to get an audience with President Aquino herself before we could get running water."

They spare no effort in trying to find jobs and upgrade the skills of residents. Most of all, the sisters try to strengthen the moral fiber of the community through 39 Bible-sharing groups.

Sister Christine commends the women of the community for their efforts to improve their lot: "The women play multiple roles. They are good wives and caring mothers. They earn enough for rice and vegetables. They are responsible for conscienticizing the community and organizing the people for group effort."

In Sister Christine's own words, "Malaki na ang asenso, pero hindi pa sapat." For instance, they have constructed 170 toilets, but that only makes for a ratio of about one toilet for every 271 inhabitants.



Sister Christine: Survival

Ruth Damasco, chairperson of Alay Kapwa Kristiyanong Komunidad and known to everyone as Cleng, related how these dramatic changes took place in the last decade: "Sina Sister Christine ang nagpasimula nito noong 1979. Nineteen eighty-na nang ma-involve ako dito. It started with a few of us. We studied the Bible at tiningnan namin kung ano ang nangyayari dito sa aming paligid. We started thinking of the things that we could do to improve our lot in life."

Sometime ago, the National Housing Authority under its Zone Improvement Program widened roads and undertook reblocking to put some order in the area.

The residents, however, lament the fact that there is still no working drainage and they have not been issued titles to their land parcels, even if some of them have been fully paid for.

Yet, with characteristic optimism, Alay Secretary General Fe Dahan says, "May liwanag nang nakikita. Pinagtutulung-tulungan nam-

ing magkakasama."

Alay activities include assisting families in building their houses, constructing toilets and operating a soap factory. There are basket-weaving and crocheting projects, as well as a feeding center and various forms of educational assistance.

The RGS sisters act as their advisers and open doors for them, although Sister Christine is always the first to say, "Don't make me a heroine."

Cleng cites the time when the price of soap became prohibitive. The residents suggested that they make their own soap, so the sisters helped them send some people from the community to a soap-making seminar. Now, the soap factory is a viable business that benefits the community and sells its products to outsiders as well.

Cleng admits that it has been a long, hard climb to where they are now, but they still have a very long way to go. [M]

Pal a losing business

By JUAN V. SARMIENTO JR.
Philippine News and Features

The state-owned Philippine Airlines (PAL) which reported to President Aquino last week a net income of P302.7 million in fiscal year 1988-1989 ending March 31 actually lost about P200 million during the period.

PAL President Dante Santos, in his report to Aquino last June 16, said 1988-1989 was the second year out of three in which PAL achieved a profit since the present management assumed office in 1986.

PAL posted P318 million in profits in fiscal year 1986-1987 but suffered a P70 million loss in 1987-1988.

Asia's first airline, however, became profitable for 1988-1989 by excluding from its books some P500 million in fuel taxes it pays the national government every year.

If domestic fuel taxes amounting to P1.5 billion PAL has paid since 1986 were counted, as they should be, the airline would be a consistently losing business:

The addition of the taxes to PAL expenses would mean PAL lost P197.3 million in 1988-1989 instead of making a P302.7 million profit as claimed by Santos. The airline lost not only P70 million in 1987-1988, but a whopping P570 million. In 1986-1987, PAL actually lost P182 million rather than earned P318 million.

Santos told President Aquino in his report that PAL's losses every year in its domestic services would be considerable should payments for fuel tax be included in its expenses. PAL's losses in domestic services would amount to P425 million in 1988-1989, P401 million in 1987-1988 and P320 million in 1986-1987.

Santos said that of the P302 million earned last fiscal year, only P24.19 million came from domestic services. Some P270.11 million came from international services. The rest came from non-transport services.

The PAL president said PAL profits from domestic services was only 0.88 percent of net revenues of P2.764 billion. In the preceding fiscal year, profits from local services amounted to P129 million or 5.6 percent of the P2.318 billion in revenues.

PAL claims that profits from its domestic operations dropped because of low fares and the high cost of modernizing the domestic fleet and complying with safety standards. PAL has asked the Office of the President for exemption from the domestic fuel taxes which drain its coffers of P500 million every year.

This huge amount is not reflected in its books, said PAL, because no decision has been made yet on its appeal. The fuel tax has been imposed since November 1985, however.

PAL has appealed against the tax on the ground that its franchise says that it has to pay only the franchise tax or corporate tax, whichever is lower, in lieu of all other taxes, duties, fees and levies.

PAL said President Aquino had commended the airlines' performance last year saying that it would have "a salutary effect on government's efforts to privatize the ownership of the airline."

Aquino should have known that PAL was "profitable" only on paper. But that would not have looked good to businessmen interested in acquiring 20 to 30 percent of outstanding shares in the national flag carrier. The privatization of PAL is supposed to start early next year. [M]

Olongapo innovative college

By ERIC D. TORRES
Philippine News & Features

The boycott fever which has hit schools in Metro Manila and other cities may spare one college in Olongapo City. The college administrators' innovative practice of treating both instructors and students as "co-equals," among others, could earn it that distinction.

Regarding itself as an alternative school, the Virgen de los Remedios College (VRC) was founded by former faculty members of the Columban College in 1986.

Most of the founding teachers, among them current VRC College Dean Prof. Edgar G. Geniza, resigned en masse—some were dismissed—four years ago following their protest over low pay, inhuman working conditions and a demand for the reorientation of teaching.

That collective decision, buoyed by a shared vision of "education for liberation," later gave birth to the college department of VRC.

A friend of Geniza's mother agreed to help finance the opening of the college at VRC, then limited to elementary and high school levels. Now in its fourth year, the college has 800 enrollees.

At VRC, 42-year-old Geniza said, teachers are considered "co-workers" and co-de-

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cision makers in the pursuit of the school's vision rather than as mere employees. Not only academic freedom but also the humane treatment of teachers is thus ensured, Geniza added.

Students, on the other hand, see themselves not as mere recipients of knowledge as the school tries to break away from the traditional "spoon-feeding" type of teaching. Innovative techniques have been adopted to encourage students to develop their potentials and to explore knowledge, Geniza said.

Under this scheme, teachers hold workshops to stimulate ideas among students as well as "exposure-immersion programs" where students not only familiarize themselves with social realities but also become active participants in "social transformation."

Is the school, therefore, encouraging activism among its teachers and students?

"For us," Geniza said, "organizing is an inherent human right." If the teachers and students are organized, they'll become more responsible "and sensitive to the people's situation. They can respond in an organized and effective manner to the concrete needs of the times."

The concept of community involvement as taught in the school has paid off, for example, with the VRC students' engaging in protest actions. At one time, students belonging to the Alyansa ng mga Kabataan para sa Demokrasya (AKDA), joined slum-dwellers in manning barricades to resist a demolition move by the Olongapo city government.

"We treat activism... not as a cancerous cell that needs immediate destruction," Geniza said. "Activism is a healthy sign of human growth because it recognizes the necessity to participate in the common quest for the school's vision."

Academically, however, VRC students are in good standing, and teachers vouch for them.

Out of 800 college students, the school has 52 scholars. If they can manage it, school administrators want to subsidize the expenses of all students.

Aside from its innovative education and the camaraderie between teachers and students, VRC charges relatively low tuition. Tuition fee per unit is P50 (most private schools now charge P80). Furthermore, a VRC instructor (without an MA or PhD) receives P27 minimum per hour—way above the labor standard of P16.

Apart from the usual undergraduate courses, VRC also stresses subjects that develop critical consciousness, like Scientific Sociology and Filipino Philosophy. Unlike other colleges which teach traditional exercises and aerobics, physical education here also offers arnis and karate.

The distinct approach that VRC uses for its college education is a contribution that VRC hopes to share in transforming Olongapo, a city known for its prostitutes and squatters' colonies. Both teachers and students at VRC are also campaigning for the dismantling of the US Subic Naval Base, which they have accused of being the source of "almost all decadence" in the city. M

Paper jewelry

By Exponet News & Features

More and more people in the United States are accepting paper jewelry as a "new" classification in the market. And in New York City, some of the paper jewelry products being sold are handmade in the Philippines, reports *Accent*, an American trade magazine.

An article written by the magazine's associate editor, Michelle D. Sterbakov, noted that Lita Trading of New York mass markets paper jewelry made in the Philippines.

While most paper jewelry designers in the US work at home, a sales representative of Lita Trading was quoted as saying that mass production of these paper jewelry items is possible in the Philippines because it "is not a mechanized country."

The sales representative added: "We still have people doing it by hand. We just have more people doing it."

The report said that paper, as a medium, has several advantages. It is lighter than ceramics or plastic, yet can be made to look like these materials.

"No matter how large a pair of paper earrings is, nobody's ears will 'tear' from the extra weight," quipped Sterbakov, adding that "while it is very light, paper jewelry is surprisingly durable if it is made properly."

Artists and jewelry designers have various ways of transforming paper into fashion jewelry.

Some combine lint with fibers such as cotton and wool, and beat them in a drainless kitchen garbage disposal until they become pulp. The pulp is mixed with water and dyes, and flattened by a hydraulic press. Then, while still damp, the newly made paper is shaped into jewelry designs. M

Monkey business

By ROLANDO G. TALAMPAS
Exponet News & Features

The Philippines exported 83,439 heads of *macaca fascicularis*, otherwise known as the Philippine monkey, from 1981 to 1988.

Priced at $60-90 per head, depending on size and quality, the Philippine monkey is considered ideal for poliomyelitis-testing; it is imported by medical companies and research institutions such as Pfizer, Parke-Davis and Warner-Lambert.

Most monkeys are exported to the US, Japan, France and the United Kingdom.

In 1981-1985, 52,607 heads were exported; 11,267 in 1986; 10,472 in 1987; and 9,093 last year.

Wilbur Dee, Wildlife Division chief of the Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau (PAWB) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), assures that the capture of monkeys in Mindanao, the sole designated hunting ground, is being reduced by 25 percent annually, and full phaseout is slated by 1992. Thus, wildlife activists need not take to the streets yet in protest against the use of monkeys as guinea pigs.

The export of monkeys was pioneered by A.T. Viri, Inc. in the 1950s. Today, among the leading exporters are the Metro Manila-based Siconbrec and Ferlite Scientific Research, Inc. and A.M.O. Farms of Iloilo.

Dr. Victor Atienza of the Quarantine Section of the Regulatory and Control Division, Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI, Department of Agriculture), says that monkey exporters secure the CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wildlife Flora and Fauna) permit from the DENR.

The monkeys are tested for TB, after which a Veterinary Health Certificate is issued by BAI. Visual inspection is also required.

Ferlite president Alex Lina says that monkeys are treated like human beings: "They are fed bananas, corn, pellets, fatteners (mixed feeds) and are given the same medicines humans are administered for common colds and loose bowel movement. We also have to watch out for alupicia or loss of body hair."

Importers keep monkeys in temperature-controlled rooms lest they suffer due to changes in climate and environment.

A six-hectare, 15-building farm is maintained by Ferlite in Calamba, Laguna for breed-

ing monkeys. Lina adds that exportable species of monkeys are of mixed sexes, between two and eight years old, and weigh from below one kilo and above.

It is widely believed that there is a large monkey population in the Philippines, but no definitive census has yet been made. M

BULLETIN BOARD

BRION BOOK

The Office of Research and Publications of the Ateneo de Manila University recently launch *Baka Sakali*, a collection of poems by Rofel G. Brion.

Brion, who is an Assistant Professor at the Ateneo and Director of its Interdisciplinary Studies Program, won the First Prize in the Gawad Galian of the Galian sa Arte at Tula in 1981. In 1984, he won the Third Prize in the Likhaan Awards of the University of the Philippines' Summer Writers' Workshop. He attended the Summer School of the University of London in 1986 on a British Council grant. Last summer, he also flew to Scotland to participate in the International Retreat for Writers.

He graduated with the A.B. in Economics and the M.A. in Literature from the Ateneo, and is currently pursuing his Ph.D. in Filipino at the University of the Philippines.

The booklaunching was held at the new Ateneo Theatre, Rizal Library Annex.

FRANCE AND THE PHILIPPINES

July 28: Launching of *France and the Philippines: From the Beginning to the End of the Spanish Regime* by Denis Nardin, at the National Library Building, T.M. Kalaw Street, Ermita, Manila.

Translated from the French by Maria Theresa J. Cruz, the book narrates the story of relations between the Philippines



and France from the earliest period to the 19th century. Its publication commemorates the ongoing Decade of Filipino Nationalism 1988-1998, and the celebration of the bicentennial of the French Revolution by the French people.

Sponsored by the National Historical Institute with Counsellor Dominique D'Ollone of the French Embassy as guest of honor.

AIRPORT SECURITY

A bilateral agreement between the Canadian Government and the Philippines on airport security was signed recently by Canadian Ambassador Russell Davidson and Acting Foreign Affairs Secretary Jose Ingles.

The agreement provides additional security equipment for the Ninoy Aquino International Airport. This includes X-rays and closed circuit television, metal detectors, patrol vehicles for airside access control and other equipment and materials to enhance identification procedures. Expert technical assistance will be offered in establishing equipment maintenance procedures and providing training courses for local personnel in airport security measures.

The Airport Security Project was conceived by the Canadian International Development Agency in close coordination with the International Civil Aviation Organization and Transport Canada as a response to the rise in terrorist attacks on airports around the world.

Project costs have been estimated at Cdn $1.5 million. The airport security project is part of CIDA's development thrust towards institutional build-up and support as well as human resource development.

THE AUGUST ... *from page 12*

happen to believe that Mr. Marcos is an intelligent man, that he still has his eye on history. That's why he's writing, allegedly writing all of those books... I can best prove to him my sincerity by putting myself completely at his mercy..."

To Cris Abasolo of the *Philippine News*, published in San Francisco, Ninoy said: "Time is running out. I know I have only a two percent chance to succeed in my mission. But for the sake of our country, I will take the gamble. What's one life to give if one can hasten the return of democracy?... *Padre*, so what if I land in jail again? It's time we showed the world not all Filipinos are cowards. As the saying goes, no guts, no glory." To *Newsweek's* Maclean Gander: "I want to go home to be able to talk to Marcos... If we wait too long, I am afraid the nonviolent solution will be bypassed by history... history has passed us by, my generation anyway. We'll have to fade out with Mr. Marcos. We must now build the new leadership."

The China Airlines Boeing 767 landed almost on the dot, at 1:01 p.m. The jetliner, on instructions from the tower, taxied up to Gate 8. A passenger tube was wheeled forward and clamped to an exit door. The door opened, and the boarding team, one from the PC, two from the AVSECOM, entered the plane.

The three soldiers went down the aisle, scanning the seats for Ninoy. They almost walked past the man in white smiling at them, when one of them recognized him. The troopers paused in the aisle—a small, quiet moment, more compressed than the span of one inhaled breath, a pinprick of time poised high and isolated on the brink of the tragedy. After that instant, everything about that day changed, altered in scale and direction, beginning with the pace and atmosphere of it inside the plane. Ninoy, from one of the last photographs taken of him, seemed to know this as, wordlessly, he stood up, the half smile frozen on his face, and was led swiftly out the side door of the tube into the hot glare of sun...

Thus did the epic drama of the last days of that month begin, with a kind of hush, a second's stillness before the voices resumed, the bustle in the aisle, the shoving at the door, *eto na, pusila*, then the shot, the screams, more shots, the blood gushing out on the tarmac and all else that followed, from the stunned cries of the crowd at the airport and through the silent grief of the multitudes on Times Street and along the highway to Tarlac and at Santo Domingo, and on to the massive funeral, the fitful sun, the noon lightning, thunder and rain, and finally the alarms and bonfires in the night of the last day.

Thus did the month of Augustus and assassins, of disasters and storms, become, above all, the month of the martyrdom offering Filipinos of this dispensation and of future regimes and generations a measure by which to judge their own faith, hope, courage and love of country.

That was the way it was that August, from vague, confusing rumor to blood-splattered reality, the flag-draped casket on the flatbed truck and the mourners with their fists raised in the darkening air, in the longest, largest, most awesome demonstration for one man and his cause that the nation had ever seen and is not likely to see again. M



Something happened on my way to and from a talk show

Going to a talk show can be a no-no kind of trap. It can be a fun trap too, only nobody might be laughing. It all started when Julie Yap-Daza asked Edu Manzano and Maricel Soriano to guest on her TV show and I was asked to join the party as one of the panelists. From the onset I said that the subject was already passé. Edu and Maricel are married, for heaven's sake, and I said, who cares about any old married couple? Give me Zsa Zsa and Dolphy any time. But it seemed Edu and spouse wanted to clarify things some people had written about them and so on with the show.

The subject was a drag, in more ways than one. Who cares about the debts of Maricel's mother anyway, and who paid what? But Edu brought out some checks to prove that they hadn't bounced, as alleged in some writeup. The checks were dumped on the table in front of us and we saw some unfamiliar names and with figures like P65,000 and P80,000, etc.

The traffic director was arranging the checks in front of us but Julie waved her away saying, "Huwag na *'yan," and she took the checks away. I was busy talking with Manoling Morato and since we were seated in front of Julie we couldn't really see the monitor so we were not paying attention to the tapes being shown, about some old people yakking on the Maricel-Edu issue. We only saw the checks again and the name of Ricky Lo on one of them after the show when the floor director was giving the batch back to Edu.

It seems that it was the focus on certain checks during the show—the part I missed—that created the hysteria afterwards and all the bad blood that went with it. I was drawn into the controversy on because, some folks said, since friends in media were being hit, why didn't I speak up for them?



Manzano: The sly fox has done it again

Okay. Media was mentioned just twice. At the opening, Edu said that he and Maricel were being written up negatively by some media people. I said that wasn't my perception as my media friends all wished them well.

The second time the subject of the media came up was when Edu said that some people who were supposedly working for him were now hitting him "because they are paid higher by other parties." When the commercial break came I asked him who and he gave a name. Not Ricky, someone else. Then after that back to the family's dirty linen.

Before the show, I urged Maricel not to say anything anymore about her family. She was silent and pensive as I told her that. Later, there was the extra effort to show that she was happy.

But back to the subject at issue—my role in this controversy. Why didn't I say anything in defense of Ricky? Simply because there was never a need to. He was never referred to, never alluded to in any way that I can recall. Even off camera there was no hint that anyone



Julie Yap-Daza: Controversy over checks

was alluding to him.

"But you could have said something about the check. To say that Ricky got it for services rendered," my friend Ben scolded me sweetly on the phone. But the checks were presented just to show that they had not bounced. Not to show who was being paid what. In fact, I didn't see Ricky's name on any check, and I didn't think of that connection at all until Rico J. told me and Nena V. asked me about it.

Ronald Constantino wrote in his column that I said something like, "Oh, no," when I saw the controversial check, which portrayed me as less than honest to say the least. I don't remember saying anything like that and if I did it I am sure it wasn't because of that check.

Perhaps it would be best for all concerned to watch the tape of the show and let us see where I let go of friendship when I should have stood up for it, etc. I assure all and sundry that sort of "evidence" would be nowhere on the tape.

If what Edu and Maricel want is to prolong this seriocomic little tiff for whatever reason, they have succeeded. The overreaction of some women friends in media has guaranteed that. Now everyone is talking about the checks, and those questions and issues about or, rather, against Edu and Maricel have already been forgotten. That sly fox Edu has done it again.

Another sly fox—in Hollywood—once said, "If you are out of the news, deny something. Then get your friends to defend you." Imagine the spectacle of, say, Lolit Solis denying that she was ever the girl friend of John Kennedy. And ever friendly, kind-hearted me jumping about all over the place to defend her. M

EDITORIAL

From page 1

maybe nocturnal forays by satchel-throwing sappers to blow up the Phantoms on the runways, as the Viet Cong often did at Tan Son Nhut and Danang—until the Yanks, tired, demoralized, decimated, cry "Uncle!" and get out for good. But the rebel forces, also from the reports, won't have that capability for some time as the needed artillery has still to be imported.

Finally, there is the Gringo Solution, one might call it—Washington dismantling the bases as a result of Mr. Gorbachev's peace initiatives, developments in weapons technology and, certainly not least, pressure from American taxpayers who all this time have been supporting, among other costly operations, the Fil-Am projects of Mayor Dick Gordon and his kind.

Our history is littered with ironies, and this could well be one of the most incongruous and interesting, on the face of it anyway—the dastardly imperialists giving the anti-bases activists their biggest boost since the rousing rhetoric of Claro M. Recto. That the US, despite the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Pentagon, may soon give up occupancy of Clark, all 45,000 hectares of it, is the burden of a message delivered through Ambassador to Washington Emmanuel Pelaez, who can be trusted to relay faithfully such communications from his American friends. According to Pelaez, they are seriously considering an early pullout from their biggest air force base outside of the continental US—which move Filipinos could welcome for a host of reasons, including the industrial development and agrarian reform potential offered by all that real estate, if Malacañang and Congress can hold sharp operators at bay.

Less than cheering is the rest of the Washington communique, which says the US intends to retain "a naval presence in the Philippines"—which means Subic. Deprived of the power projected by their 13th Air Force now based at Clark, the Americans would have to bolster that "naval presence"—the nuclear-armed carrier groups, cruisers, destroyers and submarines of the 7th Fleet operating out of the Subic-Cubi Point complex. There would be more nukes around a far more strategic Olongapo than Secretary Ramos and General de Villa could manage to count, prompting Soviet missile programmers to assign more megatons to the area, maybe enough to blow off the top of western Luzon into the sea. Meanwhile, pending the arrival of Soviet submarine-launched SS-N-18 missiles, each with a wallop equivalent to seven Hiroshimas, Fr. Shay Cullen and his fellow workers would have to contend with more of the social rot, cultural pestilence and sexually-transmitted abominations spawned by in that liberty town.

Subic, too, must go.

After the National Security Council meeting earlier this month, President Aquino had occasion to deliver one of her slightly irritated, honest, sincere because divinely inspired statements, when pressed by reporters to comment on Singapore's offer to host "some of the US military facilities" in question:

"Whether Singapore or any country would host these facilities for the United States should not really be the prime consideration, but what always should be foremost in whatever decision we will make with regard to the bases is whether the decision will be in the national interest."

A Subic Naval Base rendered more strategically valuable to the US—and consequently, necessarily more nuclear-equipped and capable than it has ever been since the Vietnam War—can never be in the national interest: a proposition President Aquino might remember to include in her luggage when she goes to Washington in November to talk about the bases with George Bush. (GCB)



FOR REAL LULUBELLE LAM

Maricel fights back

The trouble with some writers is that they do not know where to draw the line. They believe that movie stars are "public properties," but they do not seem to understand that these screen idols are humans, too. They may be public figures, but that does not give anyone the right to accuse them of fooling the public just because they choose to keep their affairs private.

Maricel Soriano and Edu Manzano have been the target of many unkind remarks when they did not make their wedding public. Writers, sour-graping because they were not invited to the wedding, had written all sorts of innuendoes about the couple. Usually, Maricel would not let these pass without a squeak, hence the title Taray Queen. But this time she has chosen to remain silent.

"I do not want to drag some people into this mess. Nakakahiya, pamilya ko pa naman," she says. So the write-ups continue unprotested.

We were very shocked to find out that indeed there were tape recorded statements from people whom Maricel trusted. And the statements weren't exactly kind or friendly.

The 103 tapes Edu said he had in his possession is true, and we heard them. We heard how some people, by putting words into Edu and Maricel's mouths, had placed the two in hot waters. We heard how members of Maricel's own family "robbed" her of her possessions. Conversations with the maids have proven so.

We heard where the shabu gossip came from and how



Maricel: "We have no other recourse"

Edu was pushed against the wall regarding the shooting of Maricel's driver, Lakay.

We also heard how Lakay could get firearms in a flash because of his friends in the military, how he promised Maricel's brother, Jung, that he could get 9-mm bullets because they were just scattered around his house. Putting two and two together, we can only conclude that the 9-mm bullet shells Lakay showed on television did not come from Edu Manzano's gun, which is a 45, but from Lakay's own collection of spent shells.

We heard how Maricel's mother had incurred a huge debt from a certain company, how she failed to pay the debt despite repeated demands from the creditor, how she refused to answer phone calls from the creditor, how the company's sales representative begged her to pay her debt so that the company would not file a case against Maricel's mother.

We found out later that, indeed, the company had written to Maricel asking her to pay her mother's debt plus accrued interest or else the company would go to court.

Edu paid the bill.

Many writers do not know the real Maricel and Edu. The public see the two based on what has been written about them. Many negative write-ups have come out accusing Maricel of turning her back on her family. Little do they know that since she was six years old, when she entered show business, Maricel has been her family's sole breadwinner. She has made the life of her mother and her mother's second husband a comfortable one. They have a roof over their heads, their own cars, and enough money to lead a cozy life.

"Sa akin sila nakasandal. Binigay ko na sa kanila ang lahat ng kailangan nila, *'tapos ito lang pala ang mapapala ko. Sila pa ang sisira sa akin," says Maricel. "Ayoko sanang magsalita. Ayaw naming ilabas ang mga tape dahil akala namin titigil rin sila. But they have not stopped issuing statements about me and my husband. We have no other recourse but to fight back."

Maricel and Edu have a file of all the negative write-ups as well as documents and evidences which they can use against their detractors—Maricel's mother and family included.

"Nakiusap ako na tigilan na nila kami. But they haven't stopped," says Maricel. "Kung ayaw nilang tumigil, patitigilin ko sila." M

LIFE WITH DON MANUEL

From page 16

there just to pick up a few things; then they were evacuated by boat to Corregidor. They heard midnight mass within the fort's tunnels, shared the turkey dinner of the mess on Christmas Day.

At midnight of February 19, 1942, they were flown to Australia on a B-17 Flying Fortress. Nonong says he remembers the date because it was his mother's birthday: "And I'll always remember when Bataan fell because that's Nini's birthday." Nonong recalls that his father was very silent while boarding the Flying Fortress for Australia, but the anguish of departure was blunted by the excitement of flying: none of the Quezons, except Doña Aurora, had flown before.

They stayed in Australia until a few days after the fall of Bataan. Then they sailed for the United States on the *President Coolidge*, which had been turned into a troop transport. Nonong says that, on its return trip to Australia, the *Coolidge* ran aground and perished: "So, beware of riding anything we Quezons have ridden on. Something may happen to it. A few years ago, my sister Nini flew up to Baguio. When she got there she dated the pilot for a tennis match for the following day. She waited and waited the next day but the pilot didn't show up. His plane, the plane Nini had taken the day before, had crashed. It was carrying a delegation of Jaycees."

When the Quezons landed in San Francisco, a special train was waiting to take them to Washington. President Roosevelt himself met them at the station in Washington and they stayed a couple of days at the White House. Nonong says he was given the Lincoln bedroom and couldn't sleep: the big room looked so spooky.

He remembers one amusing incident when his father addressed the American congress. They were accompanied by the first Mrs. MacArthur, Louise Cromwell, who was now married to Lionel Atwill the actor. After his speech before the senate, Quezon and his children and their Auntie Louise went to greet Vice-President Henry Wallace at his office. Quezon not knowing that Wallace and Louise knew each other, introduced her to the American vice-president as Mrs. MacArthur. Wallace and Louise merely winked at each other. Afterwards, in the car, the Quezon children exclaimed: "Oh, but you did put your foot in your mouth, Papa! How could you introduce Auntie Louise as Mrs. MacArthur when she is now Mrs. Atwill?"

Said their Auntie Louise: "Oh, I don't care. Wallace didn't care, and I'm sure Douglas wouldn't either. The only people who would care are Lionel and the new Mrs. MacArthur—and they are both too far away!"

Exile for the Quezons meant a hotel suite in Washington, at the Shoreham, where Don Manuel steadily wasted away. Says Nonong: "I think my father died a saint." Whenever he was in pain, Don Manuel would say to his wife: "I am offering my sufferings to Our Lord, for our country." But the famed Quezon temper still exploded at times and then one heard the voice he was forbidden to raise thundering from the sickroom, spilling forth the dreadful Spanish expletives that used to send Malacañang folk scurrying in all directions.

There's a little-known description of the dying Quezon by Carlos Bulosan the writer, himself tuberculous, who visited the sick man in November 1943.

Wrote Bulosan later:

"He wanted so much to say something and he opened his mouth to say it, but his eyebrows came together in gentle pain. After a while he controlled his voice, said a few words, one word every three minutes; but he went on although it was choking him because he had something to say to *me*. Now and then his hand went to his mouth as though he were urging the words to come out, turning to look at me in his wordlessness...

"He asked me how old I was and what was the matter with my health. I told him and he turned away, putting his hand to his face.

"I intimated that the story of his life should be written for the world to see the true picture of the Filipino people around the life of one man. He turned to ask, 'Would you like to do it?"

"I felt that I was incapable of writing the life story of so great a man; so I simply looked dumbly at him for a few minutes. The pain had come back to the President's face and he turned away to let it subside. I knew then I had to go. He gave me his fragile hand.

"'Take good care of yourself,' he said in parting. 'Consult a doctor—a specialist. You are needed in the Philippines.'

"I felt like tearing away my heart and giving it to him."

In the summer of 1944, the Quezons went to Lake Saranac, a vacation resort with a sanatorium for the tuberculous. The doctors there pronounced Don Manuel very much improved.

On the morning of August 1, Nonong Quezon was startled awake by his mother shaking him. "Come, hurry," she said. "Your father is very ill." Nonong flung on a robe and ran to the sickroom. Doctors surrounded the bed; his father lay very still, his eyes open. The sheet that covered him was stained with blood. The Quezon children knelt down in a corner of the room to pray for their father. After a while they saw his eyes close. Their mother beckoned to them: "Come, children. Your father has just died."

They approached the bed one by one. Nonong laid a cheek on his father's brow and lightly chucked him on the chin, the way Dad used to do when Nonong was a child.

That afternoon, Don Manuel Quezon lay before the altar of the hospital chapel, not in a coffin but on a couch, arrayed in formal wear.

Nonong did not attend the funeral in Washington. He stayed with his mother in the hotel suite. Only Baby and Nini followed the coffin to Arlington Cemetery, where it was placed in the mortuary where the remains of distinguished foreigners who have died in the US are kept until they can be returned to be buried in their own countries.

Quezon's coffin was placed alongside the coffin of Ignace Paderewski, the great musician who became president of Poland.

The two men had known each other, had been co-passengers on the *Ile de France* during a trans-Atlantic crossing, when Paderewski was his country's president. The first time the two men appeared together in the ship's dining hall, the orchestra was bidden to play the national anthems of Poland and the Philippines. The orchestra played the Polish anthem: then there was an embarrassed pause; who the heck knew the Philippine anthem? Quezon rose, went to the piano, and tapped out the first notes of the *Marcha Nacional*, the orchestra presently joining in. That was the night Quezon the amateur pianist played for the great Paderewski.

"It's a strange coincidence," says Nonong Quezon, "that they should lie together in death."

Nonong, now 35 but still boyish-looking, lives on his family's old Marikina estate, the Barranca. A mossy wall surrounds the place. From the gate, one wanders in puzzlement across what seems an abandoned villa, returning to wilderness. Among the weeds and trees, one sees ruins—the ruins of a stone house, the ruins of a swimming pool. Then one comes to another fence, another gate. Past the gate is glossier greenery and a modern bungalow perched on the edge of the cliff.

The view from there is spectacular. Just below the cliff are rice terraces, just as picturesque and rather more astonishing than the ones in the North, for who would expect to find rice terraces in the suburbs? The Marikina Valley is a cool green undulation in the daytime, a necklace of lights in the evening, strung between Marikina town and Pasig. Behind the ramparts of Antipolo looms Mount Banahaw, with its eternal coronet of cloud.

Though suburbia has reached the Barranca, it retains its old air of solitude, almost of desolation, being still as mute and wild as on that day in 1926 when Don Manuel showed it to his wife and told her it was hers. M

August 1961



SIYANGA PALA MARRA PL. LANOT

Lumalagapak na P47 milyon

Kung hindi ako nagkakamali, pabor si Ninoy Aquino noon na gawing legal ang Communist Party of the Philippines, o CPP. Alam niya na kapanalig niya ang Kaliwa laban sa dating diktador ng Pilipinas. Alam din niya na tama ang Kaliwa sa paggiit ng land reform para magkaroon ng sariling lupa ang mga magsasaka; na dapat makamit ng mga manggagawa ang kanilang mga karapatan; na pagkain, hindi bala, ang kailangan ng tao.

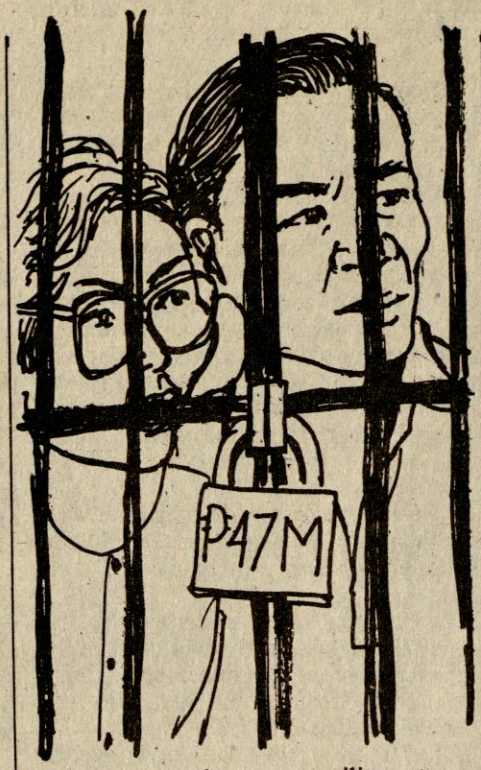
Sapagkat nabilanggo si Ninoy, alam niya ang hirap na dinanas ng mga laban sa kabuktutan ng gobyerno. Dahil naging relihiyoso si Ninoy, naniwala siya na ibayong karahasan lamang ang ibubunga ng karahasan. Naniwala rin kaya si Ninoy na magtatagumpay ang tinatawag na demokrasya kahit malayang makapagpapahayag ng plataporma ang mga Komunista?

Nakinig kaya si Cory Aquino sa yumao niyang asawa? Bakit hilong-talilong ang mga patakaran niyang salu-salungat sa isa't isa? Hindi mahalaga kung taktika lamang o estratehiya ni Ninoy ang kanyang mga pananalita. Mahusay siyang pulitiko, pero mahirap maarok ang utak ng isang martir. Maaaring isa na itong dahilan kung bakit siya pinapatay. Kahit ang imperyalistang Kano ay hindi makasiguro sa kanya.

Noong una, parang nakikinig si Presidente Cory sa mga tsampiyon ng karapatang-tao, sa mga trade union, sa mga kontra sa armas nukleyar, at sa mga anti-base militar ng Estados Unidos. Pagkatapos ay unti-unting nawala ang mga "progresibo" sa kanyang gabinete. Bukod siguro sa isa o dalawa, sino kaya ang hindi darling ng EU?

Totoo kayang mas marami na ang naghahanapbuhay ngayon at mas maraming lugar ang tahimik? Tila madalang o halos wala tayong mabasa sa peryodiko tungkol sa mga positibong hakbang ng pamahalaan. Nababasa lang natin ang kabulastugan sa DAR bago pumasok si Miriam Defensor Santiago, ang kapalpakan ng PCGG, ang patuloy na nakawan sa Customs, ang kawalan ng price control, ang pagsasamantala sa mga Pilipina, ang pagtutugis ng militar at goons sa mga NPA at sa mga pinaghihinalaang Komunista.

Ang kaso, Komunista kuno ang kahit sinong nag-uulat tungkol sa paglabag sa karapatang-tao, ang nagpapahayag ng opinyon laban sa base militar at ng



frustration sa gobyerno, sa militar, at sa simbahang Katoliko. Komunista raw pati ang kumokontra sa paggamit ng armas para sa anumang bagay, ang lumalaban para sa kalayaan, kapayapaan, at pagkakapantay-pantay ng kababaihan at kalalakihan! Saan kaya nag-aral ang mahilig magbintang nang walang ebidensiya o nang hindi alam kung ano ang tunay na kahulugan ng Komunista?

Gawin mang legal o ilegal ang CPP, kung hindi ipatutupad ng gobyerno ang mga programang makakatulong sa mahihirap, hindi mawawala ang mga magtatanggol sa karapatang-tao, Komunista man o hindi. At habang bala lang palagi ang nananakot at nangungusap, walang katuturan ang anumang batas at pare-parehong ilegal ang mga paraang gagamitin ng mga may hawak ng baril.

Pursigido ang Kanan at ang Kaliwa na talunin ang isa't isa. Kahit ang panawagan para sa panibagong negosasyon o pakikipag-usap ng Kaliwa at ng gobyerno ay hindi na halos inaasahan ng tao sa sinsero o taos-puso sa panig ng sinuman.

Sa media, ambush, labanan, patayan ang bumubulagta sa atin tuwing umaga at bago matulog. Parang ipinalalabas na parehong makahayop ang Kaliwa't Kanan, na wala nang inatupag kundi paglagas ng buhay, na tapos na ang mapayapang paraan, na wala nang saysay ang mag-usap, na walang halaga ang opinyon ng mga mamamayan na hindi handa sa giyera.

Sa kasalukuyan importante ang ginagawa ng gobyerno. Nasa kanila ang hukbo, ang pondo na maaaring pakinabangan ng mahihirap, ang mga empleyadong makakatulong sa mamamayan, ang maraming sangay ng pamahalaan na nagkalat mula Aparri hanggang Jolo.

Kulang daw ang mga empleyado dahil kulang ang pera sa kabang-yaman. Mababa ang sahod ng mga titser at gahol sa mga eskuwelahan at kagamitan ng mga estudyante dahil kulang ang pera. Kulang ang ospital, gamot, at kagamitang pampubliko dahil walang pera para matiyak ang kalusugan ng masa. Ilang dekada nang umuutang ang gobyerno, pero talong-talo tayo ng Korea, Japan, Singapore, at Taiwan sa industriyalisasyon at kalusugan at edukasyon. Bakit hindi na lang pabayaran sa mga kurakutero ang utang ng Pilipinas imbes na habang-buhay na ipinapataw ito sa ating mga bilihin at buwis? Patuloy na binubusabos at binabastos ng mga dayuhan, pati ng kapwa Pinoy, ang mga kabarong Pilipina dahil wala raw tayong pera para sa ikabubuti ng buhay nila rito sa bansa.

Pero may pera para sa pag-import ng armas, sa mga bulok na eroplano, sa suweldo ng militar, sa nangungutang na mga negosyante, sa mga junket abroad, atbp. Mamalimos man ang sinumang presidente ng bilyon-bilyong utang kung mas maraming bala ang ipinapamahagi kaysa pagkain, hanapbuhay, at lupa, sira ang papel ng pamahalaan.

At ngayon, may P47 milyon para sa huhuli sa mga lider ng CPP. Ang P47 milyon ay lumalagapak na P47 milyon. Okey pa na magdala ng armas ang ilang opisyal bilang self-defense daw. Hindi ba't nagkalat na ang mga badigard at goon na de-armas? Akala ko ba'y walang pera? Kasama ba ito sa mga kondisyon ng mga imperyalistang nagbibigay ng utang sa pulubing Pilipinas? Okey sana ang utang *kung* makakabili tayo ng sariling mga makinang pang-industriya at *kung* tiyak na walang mga pambigting kondisyon na nakakabit sa pisi ng utang.

Kung gagastusin ang P47 milyon para mabuhay nang marangal ang mahihirap, hindi na kailangan ang premyo-premyo sa sinumang lider ng CPP. M

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