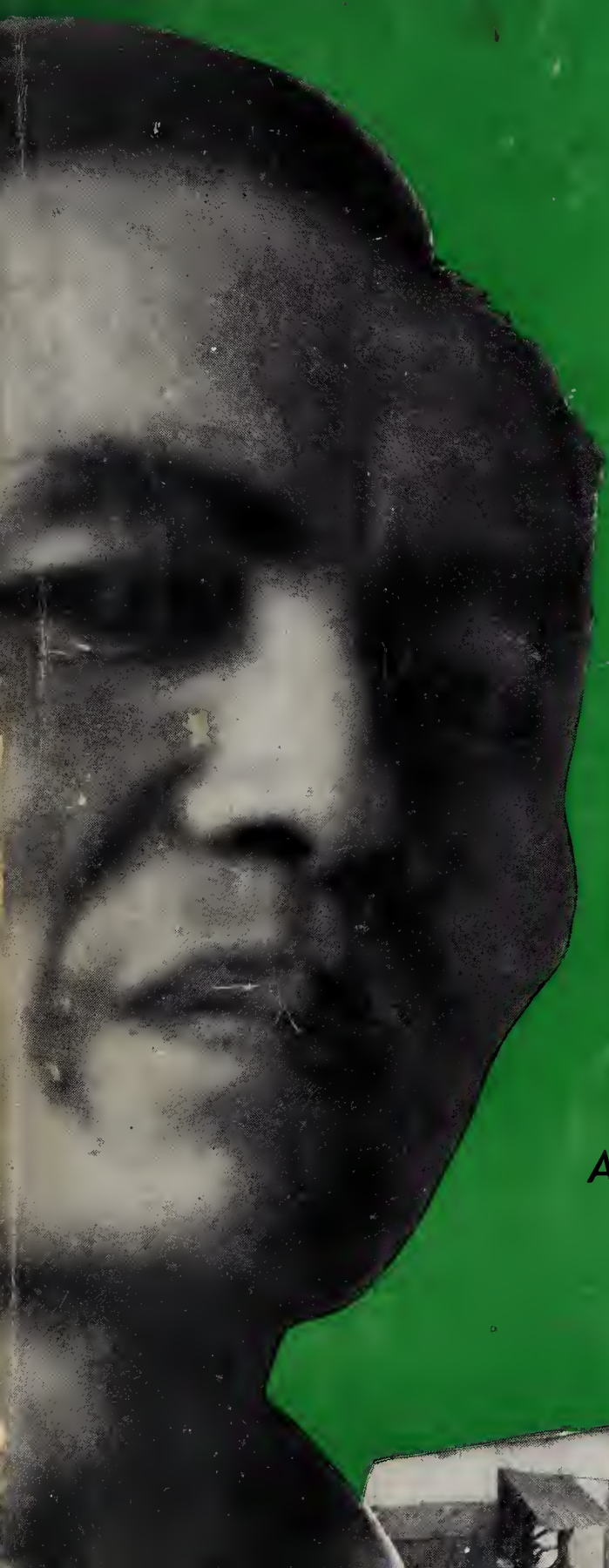

LUIS TARUC

born of the people

An Autobiography

BORN OF THE PEOPLE

by Luis Taruc

With a Foreword by Paul Robeson

INTERNATIONAL PUBLISHERS, NEW YORK

To the Common Tao
Who Will Come Into His Own

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Foreword

When I was in Hawaii a few years ago it was my privilege to sing for and with the sugar and pineapple workers, to clasp their hands in firm friendship, to share for a short time their way of life. Truly, here was unity, amazingly broad—Hawaiians, Japanese-Americans, Portugese, black and white workers from the United States, Chinese and Chinese-Americans, and many workers from the Philippines.

Not long before a noted singer from the Philippines had visited Hawaii, to appear in the usual concert series sponsored by the "Big Five" Companies. I had come as the guest of the unions. We had long discussions with my brothers and sisters from the Philippines about artists and others serving the people in their struggles toward a better life.

They talked of their land, of the Hukbalahap, of the fight to survive against Japanese fascism, and later against the vicious forces of American imperialism and against their own collaborators like Manuel Roxas and Elpidio Quirino.

My mind often went back to 1898, the year of my birth, the same year that President McKinley felt the divine call to export "freedom and liberty" to the people of the Philippines. The real story of that time has been recorded, one of the most shameful periods of United States history, comparable to the British in India and South Africa, the Belgians in the Congo, or for that matter, the United States in almost any section of Latin America, beginning with Mexico and Panama.

Then the talk would break off and feasting and singing would begin. They would tell me in song and story of the beautiful land set in the Eastern Sea, of the lovely mountains, of the warm, simple people, and of their hopes, longings, and firm resolve to

work out and control their own destinies. Before leaving the island I was proud to be able in one concert to sing a few of their beautiful songs for them.

So with great anticipation I began to read the story of Luis Taruc, the great leader of the Hukbalahap, and of the Philippine people. For truly, as Taruc says, this is the saga of the people, for *from* them is he sprung and *to* them is he so closely bound.

Often we talk of the struggles of colonial peoples, of the early struggles here in the days of our nation's birth. We are daily in touch with the sufferings and strivings of 15 million Negro Americans for nationhood in the South and full freedom in all the land. We follow the surging forward of the emergent African nations, all over that vast continent.

What part does this great land of ours play in those world changes? We see the administration at their deadly work in Korea. We hear talk of "no imperialist ambitions," but we see the close ties with the remnants of Japanese and West-German fascism. We watch with dread the policies of a General MacArthur and a John Foster Dulles coming into ascendancy. We know that we must widen and deepen the struggle for peace, that we must fight for these United States to help civilization forward, not to attempt to check its march and even threaten to destroy it.

We ask ourselves: What can we do, what methods can we employ, what role can culture play? Can we really build a strong united front? How can we best defend our leaders? How do we stimulate the activity of the masses? In short, how can we head off a threatening but as yet unrealized domestic fascism?

And, amid all the political realities, what of the human beings involved? For we fight with and for people. How is such courage possible, such unswerving, deep belief, such devotion and sacrifice as are needed today? We live it too, through brave working class leaders in the United States—Eugene Dennis, Ben Davis, Steve Nelson, Claudia Jones, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, Henry Winston—through courageous workers and intellectuals.

Here in Taruc's searching and moving story, the whole struggle is laid bare—the terrible suffering and oppression, the slow

torturous seeking for the "basic reasons" and for the "right methods of action," the tremendous wisdom and perseverance in carrying through, the endless courage, understanding, determination of the people, of all sections of the people, for national liberation and dignity.

For in the end, says Taruc, the answer is the people, in them lies the eternal wisdom. They are like the sea, seemingly calm at times on the surface, but raging beneath. They may seem to be patient and slow to move, but once they understand, no forces can hold them back until final victory.

No one reading this book can doubt the ultimate victory of these brave, warm-hearted, joyful, sensitive people of the Philippines. They'll make it, as have tens of millions in the Soviet Union, China, and the People's Democracies, and the other millions of the earth will follow them. For freedom is a precious thing, and the inalienable birthright of all who travel this earth. And in the end every people will claim its rightful heritage.

One often speaks of the emergence of a "new kind of human being."

In this magnificent and moving autobiography we see Luis Taruc grow with the people, reach into the most basic roots of the people, embrace and become a part of a whole people moving swiftly and unbendingly toward full national liberation. In the process, Taruc and many, many others become new kinds of human beings, harbingers of the future.

This is an intensely moving story, full of the warmth, courage, and love which is Taruc.

Here certainly is proof that the richest humanist tradition is inherited and will be continuously enriched by the working class, acting in closest bonds with the peasantry and honest vanguard intelligentsia—intellectuals who know that they must "serve the people, not enemies of the people."

How necessary that we learn the simple yet profound lessons of united action, based upon the deepest respect for the people's wisdom, understanding, and creative capacity.

Here is a rich experience in life itself, of practice and theory, theory and practice.

Know, Taruc, that like your American friend there are other

brave Americans who understand, there is the other America. And to "Bio," to G.Y., to the memory of Eva Cura Taruc, to you, Taruc, and to all of your beloved comrades, we of the other America make this solemn vow. The fight will go on. The fight will still go on until we win freedom, friendship among peoples, the co-existence of many ways of life, the right to live full and many-sided human lives in dignity and lasting peace.

PAUL ROBESON

BORN OF THE PEOPLE

I. THE SOCIAL CANCER

1. The Barrio

The facts of a man's life are the dry husk enclosing the fruit. It is a fact that I am the son of peasants, and that I was born on June 21, 1913, in the barrio of Santa Monica, in the town of San Luis, in the province of Pampanga. Santa Monica is across the river from the town proper, the slow, coiling Pampanga River lying between. The river is like a carabao—big and lazy, but quick to anger.

Perhaps the biggest fact in my life was the landlord. When I was still crawling in the dust of the barrio street, I remember the landlords coming into the barrio, shouting *"Hoy, Puñeta!"** and making the peasants run to carry out their demands. Our people would have to catch the fattest hen, get milk and eggs, and bring the biggest fish to the landlard. If they delayed, or perhaps did not do things to the landlord's liking, they were fined, or given extra work. In an extreme case they might be evicted. And where would they go for justice? The landlord owned the barrio. He was the justice, too.

Every year, after harvest, I watched from the dark corner of our nipa hut the frustration and despair of my parents, sadly

*Roughly, "Hey, you so-and-so."—*Ed.*

facing each other across a rough *dulang*, counting corn grains of palay (unhusked rice). The grains of corn represented their debt to the landlord, one grain (ten cavanes of palay) for every peso they borrowed during planting season. They produced 200 cavanes of palay yearly. Every peso they borrowed was paid back with one cavan of palay, and ten cavanes were paid back for every five cavanes of palay they had borrowed. Five to seven cavanes of palay were paid for each cavan of polished rice (*bigas*) the landlord advanced for us to keep alive. The debts grew from year to year, and the corn grains were never absent from the lives of my parents.

The land was too poor in San Luis. My grandparents had owned land, but they had parceled some of it out to relatives and friends, and had lost the rest to the landgrabbers, the adjacent landlords. Now we were among the poorest in San Luis. Finally, my parents, Nicanor and Ruperta Mangalus Taruc, moved across the swamp to Batasan barrio, in San Miguel, Bulacan. There I had to learn another tongue, Tagalog. Pampango, Tagalog, Spanish, English. The languages might differ, but the life was the same. The landlords were everywhere.

By the time I was six years old I had begun to resent the landlords, who made us, children of peasants, go to their houses and clean the floors and chop their wood and be their servants. When I saw them coming I ran to hide in the bamboos. I no longer wished to be their janitor.

Others felt the resentment as well. The feeling was dormant, but when the unions came, the peasants joined them as one man.

I worshipped my father. He was so soft-spoken, so humble and kind. He exceeded others in the produce of his share of land. My mother was much younger than my father. She was rebellious and quick to anger. My mother had been desired by a barrio lieutenant, a man who owned a large house and had *carretelas*, but she loved and married my father, whose largest possession was his goodness. The barrio lieutenant resented my father. He brought about an incident that gave me my first hot flash of the meaning of injustice.

The barrio lieutenant was a harsh man, the trusted and ap-

pointed aide of the landlords. Many were bitter from his treatment and hated him. One day one of his *carretela* horses was hacked to death near my father's cornfield. Investigators traced the blood trail from the horses across my father's share of land. The barrio lieutenant sued my father.

My father's only defense was his goodness. He spoke brokenly to his accuser, with tears in his eyes: "I would never think of harming anyone, or anything. Even when I see thieves in my cornfields, I approach slowly, calling out to frighten them away, so I would not catch them, and have them know the shame of it."

The barrio lieutenant was relentless. He pursued the case. What was my father's word to that of a landlord's official? It would have cost him his year's crop. I saw my gentle father standing there humbled and shamed. There were hot needles in my flesh.

My father's *compadre,* a brave man, stepped forward and confessed that it was he who had killed the horse. He confronted the barrio lieutenant and told him bluntly: "Any man or any animal that destroys my crops, my bolo will not spare him." My father was relieved of the blame, but the heat of it stayed in me. I saw that you need more than a good heart, that you need a good head, if you must fight for your rights. I determined to study, to gain knowledge, to know how to fight if I had to. I was very young and I saw social evils vaguely, through the personal eyes of my family and what happened to them. It caused me to strike back as an individual. Later I was to see evil through the eyes of my class.

The peasantry was my class; the landlords were in another. Nothing was to become more obvious, and more real, than that. The *hacenderos* called us "the great unwashed." Who drew that line? Did we? Some say that classes are the brain-children of professional revolutionaries. When I was a boy, barefooted in the dust of the barrio, whose brain-child was I? And in whose mind was the resentment cradled?

The peasants had one thing the landlords did not have. They had numbers.

My father never attended school. He learned to read and

write, painfully, at home. Because of that he insisted his children should go to school, and urged my mother to save every centavo to send us there. While my father was in the fields, my mother, to earn more, carried fish and vegetables to town to sell in the market. My family found it a hardship to pay the annual 30 centavos to the Red Cross, which was an obligation. Nevertheless, they sent me to school, although I never carried a penny in my pocket.

I rose at five, cooked rice, then walked five kilometers to be at school by seven, carrying the rice wrapped in a banana leaf for my lunch. School came easily for me. Eventually I finished the three-year intermediate course in two years, with honors.

To continue school I had to walk to San Miguel *poblacion*. There I could earn the five to ten centavos I needed daily. The train ran through San Miguel, and travelers to and from other provinces went in and out of the station. After school I ran to grab their baggage. I was a baggage-handler, a *cargador*. They would give me five centavos for my trouble, those travelers from far places.

The station fascinated me. If I could ride those trains I might even be able to reach places where there were no poor people, where everyone looked like some of the well-dressed travelers. I quit school to work there all day. I saw trains from other provinces with strange lettering on their sides. It made me curious about other places. I would jump on the train as it left the station, ride for 200 meters, then jump off, but imagine that I kept going on and on. Sometimes I noticed names written in chalk on the sides of the cars. Perhaps they were the names of other *cargadores* like me, sending their names along the tracks like a message. I added my name on the sides of the cars. Now "Luis Taruc" was riding across the country for everyone to see. Once I saw a train come back with my name on it. How far I had been!

My father quickly found out that I had quit school. At once he called me home. Why had I done such a thing after all the sacrifices that had been made for me? He punished me by giving me the heaviest farm work I could endure. I was sent to the fields to cut rice by hand. I bent over in the hot sun,

swinging a bolo. My hands were cut and bleeding. I was made to feel what it meant to be an ignorant peasant. I was glad to go back to school.

I was becoming more aware each year of the great gulf between my dreams and my life. In Bulacan there were mountains. On week-ends I climbed them, able to gaze far out over the lovely plain, blurred a bit by the sun-haze. I thought: "There is a thorn in the midst of all this beauty: The exploitation of peasants."

When I had completed the seventh grade in elementary school I told my father that I did not have the temperament for a peasant, that I hated masters, and that I wanted to continue school. My father was very pleased. He thought through learning I could escape the toil he had known, and I believed him.

I did not know that I would have to work so hard to get an education in the years ahead that the ultimate disappointments would drive me back unerringly to the peasantry I had tried to leave.

2. Town and School

When I started at the provincial high school in Tarlac, where I had gone to obtain the aid of my brother, I was 15 years old, thin of body, and very serious. I did not like to talk nonsense, like other youngsters, and preferred the conversation of old women. As for my wealth, I could count it in determination, but in nothing else. My brother promised to pay my tuition the first year.

My brother's tender regard for my welfare outstripped conventionalities. The owner of the boarding house at Tarlac, where my brother took me, told him it would cost ten pesos for me to stay there. My brother waved his hand nonchalantly and said he would take care of it at the end of the month. I regarded

him incredulously; I knew he did not have, and would not have, ten pesos. I determined that I would make the people in the boarding house love me so much that the ten pesos would not matter. I worked in that house, carried wood, washed dishes, cooked (I had learned how to cook from my mother and my aunts in the barrio, during fiesta time), washed my own clothes, bathed the children of the house. When my brother finally came to the house and said he could not pay, the owner said: "Why, we should pay Luis!"

On week-ends I walked to my brother's house in Hacienda Luisita, seven and one-half kilometers away, and did housework for him there. During my first year in high school I learned how to be a houseboy. That was called higher education.

My brother had been a draftsman and had become aware of the fact that his hands were more dextrous at another trade, so he was now a tailor on the Luisita hacienda, one of the biggest in Tarlac. There I saw more injustice. The laborers on the hacienda were treated like work animals. They had been recruited from the Ilocos provinces by labor contractors, who promised to pay them Pl. 20, but when they reached the hacienda they were given 30 to 40 centavos. Everywhere I went were the landlords and their domineering ways. I never had theories to guide me in my antipathy toward the oppressing class, but I had my own eyes.

I could not stay in the boarding house without paying. I had to find work. My brother-in-law also had a tailor shop, in town. I worked there, doing all the duties, washing clothes, cleaning the house, slaving literally like a carabao. The tailor shop was under a photo studio. I also helped its owner, always the houseboy. Once I hid in the bamboos to escape such work, now it was my livelihood.

That year, in Tarlac, I met the girl who became the greatest love in my life. For me, even love was a conflict of classes. Through sweat-filled eyes from the back door of the photo shop I saw the high clean windows of a hotel. A pretty girl leaned out, looking down at me. She in the tower, I in the cellar. She smiled, the princess to a slave.

The family I worked for in the photo shop came to be my

friends. They would invite me for ice cream on Sundays. The pretty girl in the hotel was their friend. In their home I met her, Ena Cura.

We became sweethearts, without ever speaking of it, in a way of understanding that needs no words. I did not want to speak of love to her because she was the daughter of one of the richest families in Tarlac. Not the wealth of peasant exploitation, but business wealth; her father owned a large bazaar. She expressed her feelings by sending me gifts: cookies and candies, books, newspapers, handkerchiefs, gifts that only made me feel my poverty more deeply. Perhaps because she seemed so far removed I came to think of love not from the physical standpoint, but only as a great spiritual blessing. To be loved by others, the knowing and the feeling of it, is the greatest gift of all.

Out of my sensitivity, at the end of the first year, I wrote her a letter. I told her to forget me, that I was going back to the farm.

I did not go back to the farm. I stayed in Tarlac, working at any job I could find to get money for the second year's tuition. I went back to my old job as *cargador*. It was hard work, and I earned just enough to live. When I took the exams for the second year's entrance, and passed them, I had not eaten, and I had only three centavos in my pocket. After the exams I went out and bought ice water, put some sugar in it, drank it, and ate two bananas. I became very sick, and fainted. Someone took me to the hospital. While I lay there, weak and listless, a package came. It contained oranges and much food, and a letter, saying "I love you." She had found me out.

She introduced me to her family as a "friend." At the bazaar I was a regular visitor. Her family became very fond of me and liked to have me come there because I always tried to be helpful, carrying baskets for her mother and assisting in the store. However, when they discovered a hint of closer relationship between Ena and me, they hated me. I could no longer see her, only write to her. The bitterness returned.

When I started school again, the second year, I had to borrow eight pesos for a down payment on my tuition. I lived with my

brother, walking the seven and one-half kilometers to school each day. It took me two hours. Finally I applied for a job as a conductor on the transportation vehicles running into Tarlac. I accepted the job without pay, so I could ride to school.

The workers on the plantation were paid miserably and treated with abuse. They formed an association to alleviate their conditions. I was glad to help them draft their petition of grievances and to picket during their strike. It was my first try at labor activity.

The conductors on the transportation line were my good friends. A wealthy and jealous rival suitor of Ena once hired gangsters to intimidate me. The conductors came to my rescue in a bunch, caused a brawl in the street, and beat up the gang. I was never bothered after that.

Finally, in my third year, my brother moved seven kilometers further from Tarlac, a distance I could not walk. I did not know what to do. That summer I went to the home of my aunts in San Luis, back to Pampanga. I worked there, hard, for my tuition. My aunts had a peculiar sense of ethics; they were willing to spend 300 pesos on a single fiesta, but to give me ten pesos for school was another matter. Money must be earned. Why not work in the fields, or in a factory? It was the ethics of the system. I worked in the fields.

For my fourth year of high school I went back to San Fernando, the provincial capital of Pampanga. There I worked again as a houseboy for my board, washing clothes at a public faucet, going to market, getting firewood. When my fellow students saw me and shouted at me, I shouted back at them about Chief Justice Marshall doing his own marketing, with basket over his arm. Such little episodes we learned in school, poultices to take the sting out of reality.

Why was I studying? For what was I sacrificing? Partly, it was that blind belief in learning upon which my father had placed such reliance. However, besides being a vague struggle to escape my own inheritance, it was the reflection of a condition that exists among Filipinos, in which attainment becomes a fetish. We have been for so long under the heels of the snobbish Spaniard and American, who look down on us from what they

believe to be their lofty standards, that our own stifled aspirations have been forced to seek any outlet whatever. It did not matter that our knowledge, once acquired, would be wasted in a cramped, inhibited, unproductive society. The degree was the thing, the honor was the goal; it lifted a man above the sweaty mass.

And yet, that was not my purpose. From the beginning I wanted to be a doctor. In the barrios the people died without medicine, died slowly, and with agony. The herb doctor and the witch doctor were the rule, muttering incantations over tuberculosis and beri-beri. Chiefly I was interested in child care, to save the young. There were many things to be enjoyed in life. Even while working hard in the fields I would look up and see the way a line of trees lifted at the horizon and I would think that life was good. At its most miserable there was still much in it that was enjoyable. If a child died the people bowed and said: "It is the will of God," as they had been taught. It was not my will to accept it that way.

Then, afterwards, I thought of studying law. I would be a lawyer for the people, not one who prosecuted them in the courts and used even the laws which sounded good to the advantage of the landlord and the capitalist. I would defend the people honestly.

During election time I listened to the campaigners. Every year it was the same. "The people this, the people that." After the elections, the word "people" was stricken from the vocabularies of the winners, who sat in their polished chairs and collected both graft and salary, equally, with both hands, from the people.

The men I admired were all simple men who had a feeling for the people. Lincoln, the simplest of them, Washington for his honesty, Jefferson with the language of freedom, the militancy of Bonifacio, Rizal and his steadfastness. I was impressed by Christ, by Joan of Arc, and Rizal because they went to their deaths for what they believed, and their beliefs were common and of the people, such as Gray's "Elegy" and Markham's "Man With A Hoe." When we studied history I was thrilled by that great oration of Marat during the French Revolution: "What

is the Third Estate? Everything! What does it want to be? Something! What has it always been? Nothing!"

I had begun to arrive, in a small way, at a philosophy, "If you do something, finish it. If you do something, do it with all your heart. If you do something that will benefit many people, though it threatens your happiness, sacrifice your happiness for your noble purpose."

I was studying to escape the narrow confines of my class, but my efforts only led me to the conviction that my class was all-important, and that I was secondary to it.

3. City and Barrio Again

When I graduated from high school, nothing, anywhere, was favorable. It was 1932, a year of crisis. Why there should be a crisis no one knew, but it was a fact, nevertheless. In Manila there were strikes and hunger marches.

As I wondered, slowly becoming apprehensive, a letter came from Ena. We had corresponded all during my school years, but I had tried to discourage her affection, half smothering my own. We came from different worlds. Then with greatly misplaced magnanimity, I had sent my old schoolbooks to her sisters, and this gesture of the son of poverty to the children of wealth caused her family to resent me more than ever.

Ena's letter tore at my heart. Sympathize with my feelings for you or kill me with your indifference, she wrote. It broke my pride. I sent her my diploma, and a pledge of my love. Soon after that, her father sent for me for an interview. I knew what to expect. He would do everything possible to discourage me.

I trembled with nervousness over our meeting. Before going to see him I visited my brother, who tried to give me courage to face the music. I had no good clothes. My brother loaned me his. They were much too big. I had to use a pin to hold up the pants.

I stood before her house, my mouth dry, and looked for her at the windows. I walked up the steps, counting each one slowly; there were seventeen. Within, I had to go through the old Spanish custom of invitation and greeting being repeated three times before acknowledgment. When younger I had been scolded for not observing such elementary courtesy. It seemed that hours passed. The father pretended not to know me.

"Father," I said. "I am Luis. You know me."

"Ah, yes. Luis."

Silence. I fidgeted. Finally he got around to it. After all, he had invited me.

"If I were not her father, I would tell you: she is not worth your pains. You have a good future. There are many pretty girls, my son. You should have no difficulty in finding another . . . after your studies.

"As for poverty, do not mention it. It is nothing. I was poor at the beginning myself. . . .

"You are young; you have so much to accomplish. It is not well to have distractions. When you have the distraction of a young lady you cannot concentrate."

He arrayed his arguments, like a general manoeuvering what he thought was an invincible army.

"I beg you, father," I said, when I had the chance, and when I could find a gap in his lines, "to every rule there is an exception. I am the exception. In school my grades were poor until I met Ena. After I knew her, they improved. Look, I have my report cards." I brought them out.

"Skip that, skip that," he said hurriedly, reaching around for one of his regiments to throw into the breach. He found one. "You are intelligent. You can find many girls who are prettier."

"Beauty of soul is more than beauty of flesh," I told him, from the depths of my sincerity. That got him, I could see, so I followed up the attack. "If she rejects me," I promised solemnly, "I will cooperate with you. But if she does not, I will stand by her."

He looked down at me then, grimly, and brought up his heavy artillery.

"Ena has had everything all her life. There are many others

who offer her everything, who can give her every comfort she needs. Can you give them to her?"

"In your place," I said, swallowing, "I would demand more. No, I cannot give them now, nor does the future offer them. But I will study further, and I will come back, either with a degree, or with a worthy job."

He deliberated on that, like a general negotiating a surrender and trying to maintain his dignity, and then agreed. I knew that he considered it a doubtful promise, but I felt that in the interview I had been victorious. I, an 18-year-old upstart, arguing with an old man and besting him. If it had not been for the testing of my poverty, I would never have been able to face him. I left the house, walking slowly back down the seventeen steps. When I looked up I saw her at the window, waving.

I left at once for Manila and applied for entrance to the National University. I began the study of law. The will-o'-the-wisp of education, which would solve everything, still floated before me.

The old problem still remained, how to pay for knowledge. The more intelligent one wished to become, the higher the rates were. I had one pair of shoes when I went to Manila. They were intended for school, but I wore them out looking for a job, so I could live as well as pay tuition. The crisis lay upon the city like a blight.

Then I discovered a relative who was acquainted with Ventura, the Secretary of the Interior. Hope! To Ventura I went with a letter. He received me cordially, this great man, the living symbol of the government itself. I sat looking at him with awe as he dictated a recommendation for me, Luis, the obscure son of a poor peasant. I walked out of his office, thinking: "This will make me a chief clerk, at the very least."

I took the letter of recommendation, carrying it like a precious document, to the manager of the Metropolitan Water District. Another fine office. That great man read it. "Ah, yes. From Ventura." Another letter. Great wheels were revolving for me. This time it was to an engineer. He read it and scribbled me a note. I took it to a foreman. The foreman said nothing: he pointed. I went to a toolkeeper. The toolkeeper gave me a

shovel. All the machinery of government had turned, and I was a ditch digger.

I hefted the shovel. "This is too heavy," I said loudly. I was indignant.

"Shhh, not so loud," said the toolkeeper, who was a Pampangueño, too, looking toward the foreman.

"I cannot work hard. I am a student," I said, louder still.

"Don't shout," he pleaded.

"I will become a Socialist," I shouted.

"Please, don't say that," begged the toolkeeper. "You don't have to work. All you have to do is to give the appearance of working."

"What!" I said. "Do you want me to cheat?"

He shrugged. "Doesn't everybody in the government cheat?"

I decided to work hard, for myself, for my own self-esteem, if not for the government or for others. For six months I worked in the wet ditches, building drains to keep flood from the city. At night I went to school. Constantly in the water, my leg developed paralysis. I went to a doctor. He told me that I had come just in time, and that I could no longer go back in the ditches if I wanted to continue walking. At least, I thought, I proved that I can work hard, that I am a man.

Back I went to Ventura. "I have shown my honesty and thankfulness for your recommendation," I told him, "but it is ruining me." The great man pondered. He dictated once more. Back I went to the manager of the Metropolitan Water District, then to the timekeeper, then to the foreman. Now I was a toolkeeper. At that job I worked for one year. It paid more. It enabled me to bring to Manila my brother, who had been starving in Tarlac, and to pay the rent for his tailor shop in the city.

In the middle of my second year at the university a change occurred in the government. Out went Ventura, out of his fine office, and another great man came in. Out went the manager, the timekeeper, the foreman. Out went all the workers. Everything changed with the government. I lost my job. I had to leave the university.

Now it was not just a matter of earning my tuition. It was a matter of living. The crisis had reached its worst depth. There

was not a chance that I would ever be able to finish school. All that I had looked forward to dissolved in a salty brine of bitterness. Ena, a degree, a worthy job. In my brother's tailor shop I learned how to sew. I became a tailor, although at first it was like stitching the shroud of my hopes.

In Manila there was misery. Soon I decided to return to the provinces, to the town where my parents lived, to open my own tailor shop. I went back to the barrio in San Miguel, Bulacan, where I had lived as a boy.

The same barrio lieutenant who had humiliated my father was still there. He had a lovely daughter. Feliciana Bernabe was beautiful. She had many courters, and I joined them. I had stopped even writing to Ena. It hurt me to think of her, and of her father, and of the impregnable fortress of their wealth. Instead, I courted the daughter of the barrio lieutenant and married her within a week.

4. Awakening

A tide was beginning to roll across Central Luzon. In Manila the tobacco workers were on strike for over a month. The peasants in the provinces were also becoming militant. The tide lapped at the door of my tailor shop and awoke me. I witnessed a strike in Pampanga in which two strikers were shot to death by the constabulary. Afterwards, in the enormous burial procession for their dead comrades, the peasants carried red flags.

The waters ran deep in Central Luzon. The problems were ages old. The people were land hungry. The land was there, but it did not belong to them. Sometime in the past there had been land for everybody. Now it was in the hands of a few. The few were fabulously rich; the many were incredibly poor.

It had been that way under the Spanish regime for centuries. When the Americans came they made boasts about having brought democracy to the Philippines, but the feudal agrarian system was preserved intact.

On the haciendas there were laborers who were paid less than ten centavos a day. Thousands more earned less than twice that much. From ten thousand miles away the Spreckles sugar interests* in California reached into the sugar centrals of Pampanga and took their fortune from the sweat of Filipino labor.

Although I had always been aware of exploitation and, in a vague way, of class relationships, my reaction had been an individual one, of me, alone, striking back to overcome inequalities. The rich I considered parasites, living off the toil of the people, but my solutions were romantic. I had read Robin Hood, for instance, and I dreamed of becoming an outlaw, to rob the rich and give to the poor.

In a misty way I thought of change, or something that would affect my father and all the peasants, as well as myself, but what that change should be was unknown. Occasionally, in the barrios, I heard men speaking, men who called themselves Socialists, and who called for a change. They claimed that the workers and peasants could do it, could replace our whole society with a new one.

I had questions to ask such speakers. While I was in my second year of high school, in Tarlac, I had seen a brutal incident on the Hacienda Luisita. The Ilocano laborers who had been brought there under false pretenses by the management were complaining of their conditions. A Spanish overseer kicked and publicly whipped one of the protesters. The man jumped up with his bolo and chopped the Spaniard to pieces. I was revolted. I pitied the laborer, but I thought: Is this what will happen in the future? Do we have to kill the masters? Is this necessary? I kept asking the Socialists that question.

At that time the Communist Party of the Philippines was being suppressed, its leaders were in prison or living in exile in remote places. Others, suspected of being Communists, were hunted as if they were bandits. The people hid them. In South-

* In addition to extensive sugar holdings, the Spreckles family of San Francisco together with the Alfred Ehrman interests also had large investments in the Dollar Line and in large commercial companies engaged in trade with the Philippines.—*Ed.*

ern Luzon, Asedillo with twelve men and a single shotgun kept 300 Philippine Constabulary at bay for over a year. Living in that fashion in Central Luzon was Lope de la Rosa. Often he came to my tailor shop in the barrio to have his ragged clothes repaired. As I sewed, we argued.

He told me that the workers and peasants would be the makers of the new society. "When you get the power," I asked, "how will you achieve the new society?" I thought that his objectives sounded good, but the man and his companions astounded me. They talked about building a new society, but they were mostly semi-literate men who could hardly read. They had one copy of Marx's *Capital* but none of them could read it, so they had buried it.

Despite my questions, I was becoming deeply interested. When a man is attracted to an idea, a philosophy, he should probe it, hunting out the soft spots and weaknesses first; if it is strong enough, it will stand up under pressure. In any movement there should never be blind followers, only those who completely understand. My questions were not those of a cynic, or of a skeptic, but of an earnest seeker of answers. I wanted to be sure. The philosophy of which these men spoke, and for which they risked their lives, was attractive to me because it took me out of the narrow prison of myself and made me see Luis Taruc in relation to the people and the world around him.

"If you can convince me," I told de la Rosa, "I will go all the way, and I will replace you if you die or are killed."

Speaking to de la Rosa was just the stimulation I needed to prod me out of the nest of frustration into which I had burrowed. I had a small son, Romeo; I loved him and my wife, but her family was mercenary and had made my home life unhappy. Now, however, I was becoming more alert than ever before. It seemed as if some pieces had been missing in the past, and now were falling into place, to enable me to see the full pattern of life around me.

In 1938 de la Rosa was caught and immediately thrown into prison. Sympathetic demonstrations blossomed everywhere for him, among both peasants and workers. There were parades. Red flags flew again.

I attended parades. At demonstrations I got up and spoke to the people. I felt entirely inadequate as a speaker, but I felt intensely the necessity of defending a man whose only crime had been to work for the welfare of the laboring masses. That, after all, was my desire, too. My only fault had been in not knowing how to go about it.

When I got up to speak, to my surprise I was preaching socialism. I used the word without even fully knowing what it meant, except that I felt hazily that it meant a new society in which misery and exploitation would be done away with. I had not read Marx, or anything about Marxism, so I used quotations from the Bible to defend my arguments. Strip from the ideas and preachings of Christ the cloak of mysticism placed over them by the church, and you really have many of the ideas of socialism.

"We cannot sit back and wait for God to feed the mouths of our hungry children," I said. "We must realize that God is within ourselves, and that when we act to provide for our own welfare and to stop injustice we are doing the work of God."

Socialism at that time, however, continued to remain a vague word to me. In 1934 the Sakdalistas* were very active, with their own subtle brand of change. Peasants, looking for a way out, flocked to the Sakdal banner, just as they had joined the Tangulan† and any other movement promising change. I attended the meetings of the Sakdal and read their literature, too. By 1935, however, their Japanese propaganda was very open.

"Independence," they were saying, "will appear magically like the burst of a sunrise."

"What's this?" I thought. "Magic? Nothing will ever be done by magic. This is deception."

* The Sakdal Party was formed in 1933 by Benigno R. Ramos, a labor racketeer who promised arms and aid from Japan if the peasants would rise in rebellion. After the rising of 1935, Ramos fled to Japan, from where he carried on Pan-Asiatic propaganda, coming out openly as an agent of Japan. During the war, he returned to the Philippines with the Japanese army. The Sakdals changed their name to Ganap, and became the core of the Makapili, the Japanese-sponsored terrorist organization.—*Ed.*

† An insurrectionary group, arousing the peasants to arms in 1931, and also promising military aid from Japan.—*Ed.*

I heard the word "imperialism." It was new to me. To indicate how naïve I was at the time, I looked in the dictionary for its meaning. It was like looking in a church for the devil.

On July 11, 1936, I marched in a hunger parade to Malacañan, the presidential palace, in Manila. President Quezon met our delegation and spoke to the assembled demonstrators. We stood outside Malacañan in the rain. He repeated the timeless words which have been spoken perpetually by capitalist statesmen to the oppressed masses who come to them for redress. Be patient. Conduct yourselves like peaceful citizens. We are doing our best. Put your trust in the leaders of your nation. We are men, not gods. My face must have registered my disappointment. Perhaps I even muttered a few words of disgust.

"What's the matter? Don't you like the speech?" said a friendly voice beside me. I turned. An American was standing there.

"No," I said angrily. "He is turning away hungry men with words. He is stuffing our bellies with phrases."

He looked at me. I don't know what he saw in the thin, hungry-looking young Filipino, whose clothes were threadbare and who shivered in the cold raw weather.

"I'd like to talk to you," he said. "Let's find a place to sit down, out of the rain."

He wanted to take me to a first class restaurant, but I refused. I would go only to a tiny *panciteria* where I could pay for what I ate with a few centavos.

"I admire your pride," he said, "but not your appetite."

That was how I met an American who believed in socialism. I had never really spoken to Americans before, although they were everywhere in our country. As a matter of fact, they had paid the Spaniards, and now they owned us. They kept an army in our country to prove it. This man, however, was not that kind of an American. He was the kind of an American I had admired in Lincoln and in Jefferson. He loved, had faith in, and founded all his beliefs on, the people.

He was not like the preachers of socialism I had met. He understood it thoroughly, had read the books that explained it, and could teach it himself. We sat in the *panciteria,* we walked for hours through the streets of Manila. I took him home to my

brother's tailor shop and there, too, until late into the night, we talked, talked, talked. I met him again and again. He took me to see the Charlie Chaplin picture "Modern Times" and explained to me how it portrayed the evils of capitalism. He gave me books to read.

Socialism? It was historically inevitable. Capitalism had outlived its usefulness, just as feudalism had done before it. History always moved forward, it never stood still or went backward, in spite of how desperately a ruling class tried to maintain the status quo. Socialism took care of the many, capitalism bore fruits only for the few.

Violence? Violence was a weapon of the ruling class, upon which they always fell back in order to maintain themselves. The army, the police, the hired thug, were all tools of the ruling class. If the masses did not submit, they were beaten into submission. If the masses ever used violence it was to defend themselves. No strike, no demonstration, no revolution even, ever saw violence unless first used by the tools of the rulers. And when the workers fought, they fought for freedom, not to enslave. The man with the bolo at Hacienda Luisita? He was an anarchist. Anarchy was not the way out. The masses in movement needed discipline and guidance. The socialist movement was disciplined, and had the guidance of an organized leadership of selfless men who were inspired by ambition for the many and not by ambition for themselves.

When my American friend explained imperialism it was not with the dead and meaningless words of the dictionary. Step by step he explained how the power of American money dominated every aspect of the lives of Filipinos. He pointed out how it controlled the government, how it prevented the growth of our own industries and our development as an industrial nation, how it obtained super-profits by keeping our wages low and our workers and peasants impoverished. He told me that the only time Filipinos would know true independence would be when the power of American imperialism was broken and driven from our shores.

He denounced the imperialists of his own country, but he spoke with great pride of his own people, his own working

class. He pointed out that the history of the American labor movement was marked by bloodier pages than those of any other large nation. "A combination of my people and yours will end the rule of imperialism," he told me. In every country the conflicts were the same, the class struggle existed. In the United States the "landlords" were the big bankers and financiers and, in the larger sense, those same men were our landlords, too. The only difference, really, between our toilers and the American workers was that we had two sets of landlords, while they had only one.

He was not a utopian; he believed that neither socialism nor independence would come by magic. It had to be accomplished through the experiences and the struggles of the people. There was no short-cut, no substitute.

"Free-lance for a while," he told me. "Acquaint yourself with the problems of the people and of the people's movement." I did so. I went to scores of meetings, walked on the picket lines of strikes, read leaflets and pamphlets, looked everywhere for indications of the class struggle. They were not hard to find.

Finally, he suggested that I go to San Pablo, Laguna, where there were factories, to get a job, and to try organizing workers into a union. I was to take a practical course in the education of a worker.

The crisis still sat like a grey skeleton on the country. In San Pablo there were no jobs to be found. Instead of returning to Manila at once, I roamed the hills of Laguna. On their slopes, in the wind, I read the books my friend had given me. I looked down at the immense symmetry of coconut trees, thousands in a plantation. Here coconuts were rotting in heaps, while the people in Central Luzon had none and were hungry. The capitalists would rather let them rot than give them to the people. I looked down at Lake Sampaloc, and at the riches of my country. It was beautiful, but it was not ours. Everything was in the hands of foreigners.

My mind was now made up, and I was determined. I would devote my life to the cause of my class, even though it might be a life of hard sacrifices. In the barrio I told my wife of my decision. "At least our child will know and will enjoy the new society," I said to her.

As soon as possible I went to San Fernando, to see Pedro Abad Santos, the leader of the socialist movement in Pampanga. I was about to enter my second university, the school of struggle.

5. The Class Struggle

Pedro Abad Santos was an exception who devoted his life to the proving, and then to the resisting, of a rule. He came from a family of landowners, one of the most influential in the province of Pampanga. At first, as a lawyer and as an Assemblyman, he represented their interests, and the interests of his class. That was expected of him. That was the rule. He turned against it.

He noticed the work of his fellow lawyers in Pampanga, Pablo Angeles David and the Baluyots. Every time they brought a peasant's case to court, the case was sabotaged and the peasant lost. He came to believe that the peasant must seek his justice in another way. In 1933 he formed the Socialist Party. Overnight he changed the face of Pampanga.

The Socialist Party of Pedro Abad Santos had no connection with, nor resemblance to, the Socialist Parties of other countries. When the old man was reaching his conclusions about injustice he bought a bunch of Marxist books and read them, agreed with them about the class struggle and the need for socialism, and so named his party. Essentially, however, he knew people better than he knew economics, so there was more psychology than theory in his approach to the movement. He had an immense bag of tricks, filled out by his experience as a lawyer, which he used to prod the peasants into action on the one hand and to provoke the landlords into exposing themselves on the other.

The peasants needed to be militant. He knew that, and tried to bring it forth. If a peasant came to him complaining about a landlord and asking what to do, he told him: "Go out and kill your landlord, *then* come to me and I'll defend you." After the

peasant had departed he would explain: "If I told him to be patient, he would be discouraged and give up. If I told him I would take care of his problem, he would leave it to me and go home, and never lift a finger to help himself. When I tell him to kill his landlord, I know he won't do it, but it will make him brave, it will make him lose his fear of the landlord, and give him self-confidence."

The old hopeless method of peasants with a grievance going one by one to a court and being defeated each time by a legal machine, operating in the interests of the ruling class, was now completely changed. Now in Pampanga there was a union, AMT—*Aguman ding Maldang Talapagobra*, the League of Poor Laborers—which met the landlords head-on with strikes and mass demonstrations, and there was a political party, the Socialist Party, which represented the many instead of the few. The single peasant humbly seeking justice was now the mass demanding justice.

Abad Santos was a tiny, frail old man, who looked as if he could be carried away under one arm by a sturdy peasant. He had intestinal trouble and existed chiefly on a light diet of rice and *paksiw*. Sitting in his chair, in his bare office in San Fernando, the fragile old man seemed to be getting his sustenance from the vitality of the movement he had fanned to life.

He was old, and traces of the old days clung to him. The people called him Don Perico, and he liked it. He had the hangover of little autocratic habits which sometimes conflicted with the socialist principles he had put in motion. He would sign statements without consulting with the rest of the leading body, or reach decisions by himself instead of collectively with others. But that sprang from a poor understanding of organization; it was not the real essence of Don Perico. He put the weapon of Marxism in the hands of the people, and its use was up to them. He gathered around him young peasants in whom he saw the signs of leadership, and trained them in the use of it.

I became "one of the young men around Abad Santos."

When I stepped into the little office in San Fernando I hardly saw the slight figure in the chair, the tangled wiry hair, or the tuft of white beard. I saw the eyes. They were shining black,

with very white eyeballs. Standing before them I felt as if I were under a microscope.

"I am Luis Taruc, a young peasant, who became a student," I told him. "I have heard your leaders speak in my barrio, but I did not understand and I was full of questions. Now I understand. I want to organize. Will you accept me as an apprentice?"

The eyes looked me over and penetrated me.

"I am glad you are interested," said Don Perico. "You are welcome here. But I warn you, this is not a joke or a play. It is serious."

"I am not joking," I answered. "I want to offer your movement my life, not my leisure."

There were others in the room, peasants with seamed faces. One of them said: "Who is this student? He cannot be one of us. He looks soft."

"But he looks sincere," said Abad Santos, and his eyes accepted me.

I was sent to find and report to Lino Dizon, one of the organization's leaders and an outstanding Pampanga poet. With him I met Estanislao Villanueva and Pablo David. Pablo David, the national treasurer, was also a tailor, and I came to stay with him in San Fernando.

The enthusiasm I had had before I went to San Fernando doubled under the influence of the Socialist leaders. I wanted to prove to them my determination, but at the same time I was sharply aware of my shortcomings. In my first experience in speaking for the movement I stammered, in my own Pampanga dialect I stammered. I was not speaking for myself now; I was speaking for a cause. I went to Dizon and told him that I preferred to start at the bottom, and learn.

A group existed that gave skits in San Fernando to dramatize the program of the movement. I joined it and worked as a curtain raiser. Soon I was made an actor. I played the part of the joker, the clown. In that way, with people laughing at me, I gained confidence in myself before crowds. During public meetings I asked to be made the toastmaster so I could conquer my stage fright. I became a fluent speaker.

In a very short time I became well-known to the inner circle of the Socialist Party. When Marcos Manalang, the national secretary, became sick, I was appointed temporarily to take his place. Perhaps my quick appointment to such an important position seems surprising, and it astonished me, but there were reasons for it. The Socialist Party and its mass organization, the AMT, at that time were functioning almost without organization. Everything was done haphazardly and without plan. Meetings were held without an agenda. A constitution did not even exist. I had a small sense at least of organization, and that impressed Don Perico. I suggested to him that a constitution be written. His eyes regarded me thoughtfully.

"All right," he said. "You write it."

I wrote a constitution, searching the books of Don Perico for models. Some parts of it I took from Mexican and Spanish works. The preamble stated that we stood for independence, democracy and the unity of all workers. With it I listed our minimum demands. When I took it to Abad Santos he looked it over, his eyes made more piercing by glasses.

"Now what are we going to do with it?" he asked.

"Let us call a conference and adopt it," I said.

"Oh, yes," he said. "Go ahead. You take care of the details."

That was how Pedro Abad Santos developed his young men.

I organized the entire conference. It adopted the constitution and the program. At that conference I was elected general secretary of the Socialist Party.

"This job has the most responsibility!" I exclaimed. "Why did you elect me? Do you call this starting at the bottom?"

However, inspired by the confidence placed in me, I began at once to participate in a plan of organization drawn up by the conference. The 24-man executive committee launched an organizational drive that would cover all Pampanga. We established "Socialist competition" among the barrios for the obtaining of membership in the AMT. Funds were raised for leaders to travel about the province on organization tours, and we divided the province among us. As my responsibility I drew northern Pampanga. Despite the position to which I had been elected, I was now merely beginning my apprenticeship.

I would start from San Fernando early Monday morning and return the following Sunday morning, spending the week in the barrios. Sometimes I could organize a whole barrio in a single day and night.

I was very green. My success, I suspect, was due more to the readiness of the peasants to join our organization than to my persuasive powers. At first, as a matter of fact, I made many mistakes. I committed errors of leftism. Entering a barrio out of the blue, a complete stranger, I would launch immediately into an attack on capitalism in general, on the system itself. Half the time the peasants would not know what I was talking about, and, if they listened, it would be more out of politeness than interest.

Sitting on a *pilapil* on the edge of a barrio one day, watching a peasant stroking his cock's feathers and aware of the people moving about in the barrio and in the fields, I was wondering what I was doing that was wrong, and I thought about the meaning of a people's organization. It must be of the people, close to them, and must deal with their problems in their terms. It must be something which they can grasp and feel with as much intimacy as the handle of a plow, it must learn from the people as well as teach them. It must always move abreast of them, never dragging behind or rushing ahead, and it should give the people confidence, strength, unity and faith in their ultimate victory. I thought of the political parties of the landlords and the capitalists, coming to the people once every two years at election time, then going back to their halls and their government chambers and running things to suit their own wishes and their own narrow, selfish interests. I got up and walked over to the man with the cock and opened a discussion on the merits of roosters. I learned that the man was deep in debt and used the rooster's winnings to pay out the interest. What kind of debts? That night I spoke on landlord usury.

After that, when I entered a barrio, I first sounded out the people about their problems and grievances, and then spoke to them in their own terms. Instead of carrying out a frontal assault on the ramparts of capital, I attacked a case of usury here, an eviction there, the low crop rate elsewhere. These were things

which our organization could fight, and around which the people could win small, but enormously encouraging, victories.

I had to prove to the people that our organization and its leaders were of them and close to them. I sat down with them in their homes, shared their simple food, helped with the household chores. I walked in the mud with them, helped them catch fish, crabs and shell fish, worked with them in the fields.

It was not hard for me, nor was it new to me. I was merely rejoining my own people. In their turn, the people would go out of their way to feed and to accommodate the AMT leaders.

Within three months I had organized my whole area.

Throughout 1936 and 1937 the AMT grew and became a part of the people. We had many weaknesses. Our organization was loose and slow. Our leadership did not always function as a unit. We made blunders and mistakes that the labor movement in other countries would have considered infantile; we learned as we went along. Not enough attention was paid to mass education, which made the organization top-heavy; if all the leaders had been arrested or killed, the movement would have withered and died. We did not understand yet that the people needed to be developed so that new leaders would spring up at once to replace those who had fallen.

But, if its leaders were untrained and sometimes fell into error, the AMT's members were developing in the appropriate way—in the arena of struggle. As my American friend had said, there were no short-cuts. The years 1936 and 1937 were marked by an ever-increasing number of strikes, and a strike is the classroom of the workers.

There were two types of strikes among the peasants. If conditions were intolerable, the peasants would present a petition to the landlords. We demanded a 50-50 sharing of the crop. At that time the shares favored the landlord 70-30. We demanded an end to usury. At that time if a tenant borrowed one cavan of rice, he had to pay back three or even five. We called for an end to serfdom under which the peasant's wife had to go each week to the landlord's house to clean it, and the peasant had to bring one cartload of wood each week to the landlord.

If the landlord rejected the petition, it was followed by a strike. A red flag on a stick was set up in the corner of a field on strike. We used the carabao horn, the sound of which carried a far distance, to summon workers from the fields. Picket lines were set up in the fields to stop the scabs hired by the landlords. The landlords called on the Philippine Constabulary (PC) for aid. They came with clubs and often beat the strikers. Sometimes they shot the unarmed peasants. We tried to propagandize both the scabs and the PC. The landlords had a weakness: they had to hire from the people to fight the people. Sometimes we could turn their weakness against them, by winning over their tools.

The other type of strike was defensive. The landlords and the capitalists had been used to dealing with phony labor unions, which they subsidized themselves, and whose leadership danced to their tune. Now they were confronted with an organization which sprang from the people, and they tried to break it. When the landlords heard of their tenants joining the AMT, they tried intimidation, threatening to evict them. Some tenants bowed to such pressure, losing sight of their rights in anxiety to provide for their families. Others who were more militant refused to be evicted and called for help from the AMT. Then a strike of all the landlord's tenants would protest the eviction. The landlords called the PC to carry out the eviction, or used their own private armies, such as the Special Police of the Baluyots, one of the biggest landowning families and an old political power in the province. When we had to, we fought the Special Police and the PC.

Gradually the people saw the need for unity. In the barrios they began to boycott peasants who refused to join the AMT. The non-members were isolated, not spoken to, nor were they helped when they had a house to build, or when they had a burial. This treatment improved the warm, close-knit community of barrio life. They were taught the necessity for class solidarity.

The union entered the lives of the people. Union club houses were built. A cultural group presented entertainment. The peasants were deeply interested in dramatic presentations. They organized their own dramatic group. When a Manila dramatic

group came to Central Luzon they presented the play "Waiting For Lefty" by the American, Clifford Odets. It was a play about striking taxi-cab drivers; when the phony leaders talked of selling out the strike the peasants were so incensed that they swarmed upon the stage after the actors and were only restrained with difficulty. Serenaders on All Saints Eve sang songs of the class struggle along with sentimental ballads. Women's auxiliaries made the barrio wives and daughters militant, and the women often joined their husbands in struggle. Sometimes, when workers were arrested, their wives followed them into prison, shouting: "If my husband is arrested, arrest me, too!"

The landlords retaliated with increasingly harsh methods. A big strike occurred in the fish pond district of Masantol. Landlords eagerly grasping for more land were closing the river, shutting off the water for their private fish ponds. They planted mangroves along the river. The silt built up the land and shut off the flow of water. The workers cut the trees to open the river. When the landlords brought in the PC, a tenant strike spread across the whole district. The PC shot and killed three strikers. The tension was very high.

The leaders of the strike were Zacharias Viray and Halves and Mamabat, of the AMT. Zacharias Viray was a man of great honor and principle. He believed that workers, above all, should be incorruptible. He concentrated his efforts to influence the overseers on plantations, to prevent the use of what he called "the tools of the oppressor within the ranks of the oppressed." He had a saying: "To die on Monday and to die on Wednesday is the same. It is just as well to die on Monday as long as you remain loyal to your principles."

During the Masantol strike Viray was called into the town to confer with the chief of police. In the municipal building he was shot and murdered by paid agents of the landlords. After he was dead a gun was placed in his hand, for a frame-up; he was then accused of attacking the police. The people were not deceived.

Zacharias Viray died on Monday.

At the end of 1937 a memorable strike occurred in the Arayat stone quarry. The laborers were receiving an average of only

80 centavos a day for hard and dangerous work. There was no regular daily wage; the workers were paid by the square meter of stone that they crushed by hand. No compensation was given for frequent injuries. It was a government enterprise. We were faced with the problem of how to conduct a strike against the government.

Arayat was in my district, so I led the strike in the name of the AMT. When our demands for higher wages were rejected, the strike began with a sit-down in the quarry. We took our cue from the great CIO sit-down strikes in the United States. Everyone came to work, but they all sat down on the stones and conversed. There were 500 strikers. The picks and hammers lay on the ground, untouched. In the middle of the morning the local police arrived in response to a call from the management, accompanied by the ever-present storm-trooper Special Police of Baluyot, which were always used against the peasants and workers. They ordered us back to work. We ignored them. The overseers tried to haul a load of crushed stone out of the quarry on the train. I lay down on the tracks with 200 strikers. The train halted.

Next a force of 18 constabulary came. They ordered us off government property. We did not budge. Some of the PC climbed on the train and threatened to run the locomotive over us. Still we did not move. The train started. I saw the locomotive bearing down upon us. Perhaps they would run over us, but we were determined to hold fast. The locomotive stopped one meter from the first man. When I glanced around I saw that only fifty men were left with me on the tracks, but it was enough to win our point. Then the constabulary threatened to arrest strikers. Some of the men reached for their tools and announced their intention to resist. I ran to a telephone and called Abad Santos in San Fernando for his advice.

I waited anxiously on the phone while Abad Santos deliberated. The tension in the quarry was increasing. I knew that the old man's canny brain was cooking up a tactic. "Try a new tactic," he said. "Let everyone be arrested."

I spread the word among the strikers. "The government wants to arrest us; we must crowd the prison with our numbers." They

were anxious to try anything. When the PC started to single out men to arrest, they all folded their arms and said: "All right, but you must arrest us all." The trucks and the train became loaded with arrested strikers, but many more still remained. They demanded to be arrested. "If there is no room for us to ride, we will walk to jail," they said.

The strikers were taken to the municipal building in Arayat. Those who could not ride marched in a body into the town. Along the road people came running to find out what was happening. "We are all arrested," shouted the workers. "We are all going to jail!" The people followed. When we arrived at the municipal building over a thousand people had gathered. "Why are you here?" shouted the PC officer. "We are in the strike, too!" they answered.

At noon we demanded to be fed. The police and the municipal authorities, who were totally unprepared for this development, were driven to distraction. They started writing down the names of the arrested strikers. After they had listed 163 they announced that no more would be fed. "That's all we can arrest," they said. "We have no more paper." All the strikers clamored to remain. "Arrest us," they said, "or we will parade in a peaceful revolution." "All right, all right, don't push," said the authorities hastily. There were so many to be imprisoned that Arayat Institute, the high school building, had to be used as an open jail.

I remembered the words of Abad Santos: "What the rich want is good for the rich, what the poor want is good for the poor, what the rich want the poor to do is no good for the poor. The poor must respond with unity. The poor must learn to make what they want come true. Every strike must be a school, even if it is lost." We made the strike into a school.

In the "jail" we organized programs, with improvised skits and songs. We had speeches. From the windows we urged the people to join us. The people did. Girls brought baskets of food to us, and bands came to play. We danced in the "jail." We turned the municipality into a fiesta.

To obtain greater publicity for our grievances we demanded that we be shifted to San Fernando and imprisoned there. The

Arayat authorities were only too glad to get rid of us. The journey to San Fernando was organized in advance by the AMT. We went there in 50 *caretellas* spaced fifty meters apart, a two kilometer parade. Each *caretella* had a placard about the strike and urged the people to support us. Each *caretella* had a chorus. We sang revolutionary songs all the way. At each crossroads we banded together to sing. In advance 2,000 leaflets had been scattered along the route, to tell of our coming. People were waiting for us in every town. They cheered us and gave us things to eat. Our trip was one long demonstration.

In the beginning our bail was very high. It totaled 180,000 pesos. We preferred to remain in jail. The landlords were very angry at our publicity, and ordered the bail reduced to get us out. Still we stayed. We wanted to test the legal processes of the government.

The San Fernando jail was very badly run. The food was rotten, the worst to be obtained in the market. We had rotten fish and rice, moldy *tuyo*. We had no blankets and no pillows. The cells were very crowded.

We decided that a demonstration was necessary to obtain better conditions. I told the warden he had to have my help and cooperation or else the men would get out of control and break the doors. The warden was upset and allowed me freedom to go from cell to cell. In each cell a representative was chosen. We decided to combine force and pity. Half the men would pretend sickness, the other half anger. In each cell men were told to cough, and some to stay in bed, groaning. "If the doctor insists, a bottle of cough syrup will not hurt you," I told them. The rest of the men were to shout, bang on the doors and make as much noise as possible.

The demonstration began. The racket was tremendous. The judge and the court upstairs were unable to work. The warden came rushing. "What is wrong? What is wrong?" he cried. "I cannot control them any longer," I said. "They have given me demands. Come with me and I'll show you." The warden was afraid to enter the compound. The men were shouting for food. Some were groaning loudly and coughing. Others were shouting: "There's an epidemic inside!" When they saw the

warden they doubled their noise. "Why are they doing this?" said the warden, leaping out of sight. "Speak to them and ask them," I urged. "Oh, no, you tell me," he said. "Some are sick and some are headstrong," I told him. "They want to send their own delegation out to market, to buy food and cook it themselves, to get their own firewood and split it. You just give them the money. They also want blankets and mats and pillows." The warden promised he would take care of everything, and left, mopping his face with a big handkerchief. The men became quiet. The day passed. Nothing arrived.

The next day we began our demonstration all over again. A doctor came to investigate. "There is dysentery here, there is cholera, there is epidemic!" shouted the men, groaning on the floor. They began to yell about profiteers in the jail and about rice sharks in the market. "Unless we have food and mats we will break the jail," they threatened.

The doctor hastened to see the warden. That night mats, pillows, plates, spoons, everything arrived. The next day we had good food. Pigs' feet and tails. *Sinigang na baboy* and *bangos.* Milk in the coffee. Bread. In addition the people began to bring us food. Eggs. Chickens. We had a picnic in jail.

I ordered chalk from friends. Each day we went outside for air. "Now we'll have a class," I said. "Do you want me to teach you some history? About the French Revolution and the Bastille? About Lincoln and Bonifacio? About Marx and Lenin?" "Yes, yes, teach us!" said the men. I used the wall of the jail for a blackboard. We held classes every day. I lectured on democracy, on the traditions of the working class, on labor and capital, explaining in their own terms. I lectured in a loud voice so I could be heard through the windows of the courtroom. The judge was very angry.

We had dramatized the strike. All over Pampanga people knew about it, and about how we had turned the tables on the government. The strikers themselves had been schooled in unity and discipline, and were proud of their conduct. Finally, Don Perico decided that our action had achieved its purpose, and bailed us out.

The case of the strike dragged in the courts for more than a

year. When the trial was held at last in 1939, I was imprisoned for two weeks. Don Perico said: "We may have lost legally, but we have won socially and politically."

From 1937 to 1941 I was imprisoned four times for leading strikes in Pampanga. When I was young I thought that to be imprisoned was the ultimate shame. Now I learned that there were all kinds of prisons, and many reasons for being placed there, some noble. The inmate of a fascist concentration camp is a freer soul than he who sells his soul and goes free.

The years preceding the outbreak of the war were hectic. We entrenched our organization in the barrios, in the sugar centrals, in transportation, on the railroad, wherever there were workers. We did it through mass action and through legal court tests.

Unlike other labor movements at that time in the Philippines, we knitted together both peasants and factory workers in the same organization. In Arayat, again, in February 1938, there was a dramatic example of peasant-worker unity during a strike in the town's sugar central. The strike was led by Casto Alejandrino, the son of a middle-class landowning family in Arayat, who had come into the Socialist movement through the forceful appeal of its program.

The laborers in the central had set a strike date. The PC came and deployed in the compound. There was a tense moment as the great wheel of the central slowed and stopped, and the noise died to silence. The workers came out on strike, and the PC closed in on them. Then the sound of carabao horns could be heard from all directions and columns of peasants came out of the fields from all points of the compass, converging on the central. There were over 2,000 peasants and strikers. The PC were frightened and shrank into a corner of the compound. For two days there were demonstrations in the town. We held programs with music and dancing. Always we tried to turn our strikes into public manifestations as an expression of unity. After two days the strikers were victorious. It was the peasant support that had achieved it.

A unified peasant movement had spread further across Central Luzon by 1938, when a cordinating committee was set up between the AMT and the KPMP—*Kapisanang Pambansa ng Mag-*

bubukid sa Pilipinas, the National Peasants Union—from Nueva Ecija. The KPMP had an even longer existence than the AMT, its leaders were more experienced, and its organization extended down into the Southern Luzon provinces. I began a long and fruitful association with its leaders, Mateo del Castillo and Juan Feleo.

On November 7, 1938, this unity was made even more solid by the merger* of the Socialist Party and the Communist Party of the Philippines, of which del Castillo and Feleo were leading members.

In the AMT alone we had approximately 70,000 members. It is true that our organization was very loose. People would simply announce themselves as AMT members, or as Socialists, without oath or obligation, but their sympathies were completely with us.

During 1938 I began to be pictured in the Manila press under captions reading "Fire Over Pampanga" and "Flame Over Central Luzon." This journalistic arson was the press' way of recognizing that the labor movement was growing stronger. In San Fernando I was twice made chairman of the town fiesta. While public officials on the same platform with me pulled frantically

* The merger was ratified by a national convention at the Central Opera House in Manila, November 7, 1938, the first public Communist gathering allowed by the authorities since the mass arrests of labor and peasant leaders in 1933. Crisanto Evangelista, the founder and leader of the Communist Party, was named chairman, and Pedro Abad Santos, founder of the Socialist Party, became vice chairman of the Communist Party of the Philippines (Merger of the Communist and Socialist Parties), the full name of the merged party. The immediate program adopted at the convention stressed Japanese aggression as the main threat to Philippine independence, called for a popular national front against fascism at home and abroad, and offered to cooperate with all patriotic forces in defense of national security, peace, and democracy. It urged a united front of all labor and peasant organizations on this program, and demanded government action against the Falangist and Japanese fifth columns, which later were the core of the Japanese puppet government. The organizational merger of the two parties was to be undertaken gradually. In Pampanga province, the center of Socialist strength among the peasants, the old party designation was retained in the local elections of 1940, when mayors were elected on the Socialist ticket in a number of leading towns.—*Ed.*

at my coat-tails, I made speeches over the radio denouncing fascists and reactionary landlords.

While I was in prison for my participation in a strike in 1938 I received a letter. It was from Ena, the first time I had heard from her in many years. "I know you are the same Luis," she wrote. "I am the same Ena. I do not write to you to ask you to come back to me, although I will love you always. If you give any value to my devotion, heed me when I say: go back to your family, tend to your wife and child, and give up the dangerous work you are doing. I believe you are doing this for surcease of an unhappy life. Turn to your loved ones for happines and find it there."

I was very much upset by her letter, both for the devotion which it plainly spoke to me, and because it made me realize the extent to which my wife, because of me, was sacrificing for the work I did. For my family I could only provide a few pesos from union work and from the sewing I did on the side. Sometimes, too, long intervals occurred when I did not see them.

I wrote to my wife, enclosing the letter from Ena, asking her what she thought of it, and if she wished to share the burden in our common cause. She answered, sympathizing with me and with the cause. I felt humble in the devotion of two such unselfish women.

In December 1938, my wife died. She had contracted a goiter after the birth of our son, Romeo, and it had taken first her strength and then her life. During that same month I had been chosen to represent the Socialist Party at a convention of the *Federacion Obrera de Filipinas* (Labor Federation of the Philippines) in the Visayas. I went, and took my grief with me. It stretched out behind the ship in the quivering wake, which lay on the sea like a streak of tears.

Before leaving for the Visayas I had received a tender letter of condolence from Ena. I had answered her, telling her that I was leaving the Philippines. Again, it was my way of avoiding her. However, when I returned I found a letter from her waiting for me. She reminded me that I had attempted that trick before, in Tarlac. Her letter told of her persistent love.

Not long after that I was returning from Manila on the train,

from a labor conference in the city. I looked up from my seat by the door and saw her standing in the doorway of the next car. It was so long since I had seen her. On June 4, 1939, I married Ena Cura.

6. The Enemy from Outside

The tide that reached Pampanga was now sweeping the whole world. It was the anti-fascist spirit of the people. Filipino peasants and workers, as well as the industrial workers of other nations, were awake to the menace of fascism. From our fields we had watched the Spanish people in their heroic single-handed struggle to the death against Hitler, Mussolini and Franco, and the unquenchable struggle of the Chinese people against the Japanese aggressors.

The fascist movements of both Europe and Asia spread their infection to the Philippines. Andres Soriano, the monopolist who changed citizenships as freely as changing his shirt whenever it benefited his industrial empire, was the leader of the Falangist group in our country. He tried to exploit the former ties of our people with Spain to gain support for the bloody regime of Franco. For his efforts he was awarded the Naval Order of the Garter by the fascist dictator. When Filipino workers denounced Falangist activities they were called subversives. Even more active was the group led by Benigno Ramos, the advance guard of Japanese fascism. It was fanatically ultra-nationalist, led by a demagogue.

When the Japanese launched their big war in 1941 it was called a "surprise" attack, although their intentions had been boastfully announced ten years in advance. It was a "surprise" attack although countless authoritative voices in all countries had been raised in warning from the time of the grabbing of Manchuria in 1932. In 1940 Antonio Bautista, chairman of the Committee for Democracy and Collective Security, had been arrested for

urging a boycott of Japanese goods. President Quezon had ordered the arrest and prosecution of Bautista. There were mass protests against Quezon's order. In Nueva Ecija the peasants shouted at Quezon when he visited the province.

We knew what fascism was. It was the open use of violence and terror by the most reactionary section of the capitalists, to maintain their rule. When an aroused people's movement became too strong, they threw aside their pretenses of courts of justice, their make-believe of democratic elections in which people vote for candidates chosen by the rulers, their farce of freedom of speech and assembly in which defenders of the people are arrested and silenced, and resorted finally to the undisguised rule of their police, their constabulary and their special agents, outlawing and suppressing the people's organizations, jailing and murdering their leaders. Under fascism there was no check to profits, no unions, no right to strike for a living wage. Fascism guaranteed super-profits to the capitalists, at the expense of the people. And fascism made war, because that was the most profitable of all.

Fascism had been nurtured in the world by capitalists of all countries, who hoped that its ability to make war would be turned to the destruction of socialism in the Soviet Union. The capitalists felt a closer kinship to fascism, the iron rule of the few, than they did to socialism, the rule of the many. In the Philippines there were many men in public life who had such views. When the time came they chose their paths unerringly.

Labor struggles in Central Luzon had abated somewhat by 1941, although strikes continued to occur in the sugar centrals, among the tenants, and in the Pambusco (Pampanga Bus Co.). Many demands had been won by the peasants. In 1940 eight Socialist mayors had been elected in Pampanga (in Angeles, San Fernando, Arayat, Mabalacat, San Simon, Floridablanca, Candaba, and Mexico). In addition there were Socialist or Communist mayors and councilors in Tarlac, Concepcion, La Paz, and Victoria, in Tarlac province; in Cabiao, Nueva Ecija; and in Guagua, Pampanga, where a provincial board member was also elected.

Our victory had deeper roots than the success of our movement in fighting for better wages and living conditions for the workers. The Nacionalista Party that had dominated Philippine politics for thirty years was tied completely to American imperialism. It was the party of the compradores as well as the party of the landlords, the political tool with which another nation ruled our people. The people were as tired of lip-service to independence as they were of exploitation. They voted Socialist in 1940 in Pampanga.

The Socialist mayors put a stop to the unjust lending practices of the landlords. In retaliation the landlords stopped loans entirely. A successful petition, backed by powerful mass support, was presented to President Quezon for the establishment by the government of a Farmers' Finance Agency. It operated for almost a year, giving loans at two per cent interest, based on the harvest. Reforms under capitalism, however, are as insecure as its economy. The FFA was finally sabotaged and destroyed by reactionaries. But, for a period at least, the people had tasted victory.

The menace of invasion, however, caused much tension in the towns and barrios of Central Luzon. It was not relieved by the reactionaries and landlords, who took the opportunity to accuse the AMT, the Socialists, and the Communists of being a 5th column. Nacionalistas circulated false propaganda that our movement was connected with the Sakdals. AMT leaders in Pampanga were picked up by the American army intelligence and taken to Fort Stotsenburg for investigation as 5th columnists. In November I spoke at a rally against fascism in Manila, in Plaza Moriones. During the meeting a bomb was thrown by gangsters hired by Baluyot* and by Figueras of the Department of Labor. Instead of preparations to resist fascism, the most anti-fascist sections of the people were singled out for attack and provocation.

We answered the attacks of the reactionaries with an editorial in our newspaper, *AMT*, of which I was the political director at the time. The gist of it was this: We must prepare for the

* Pre-war governor of Pampanga.—*Ed.*

struggle to come. We must weigh the possibilities of an invasion in the light of what has already taken place in Europe. The situation may well develop as it did in France, with the same sort of groups selling out the nation. Labor and the socialist movement are the foremost anti-fascists. They must be prepared to resist in spite of sabotage by the fascist elements.

In October 1941, in an informal discussion in the AMT office, we speculated on the possibilities of guerrilla war in the event of invasion. We based our conclusions on what had happened in Spain and in China. At the end of October we sent a circular to all branches of our membership, suggesting the formation of a military type of organization. Our advice was that branches should divide into squads of twelve each, with a sergeant and a commander. The preparation of communications and of a food supply was suggested, as well as an attempt to acquire some arms. There was no clear-cut policy on this matter, so the circular was never really followed up, although it did serve to alert our membership.

On Monday, December 8, I was sitting in the beauty parlor, which my wife was then operating in San Fernando, when the news came of the Japanese attack. The day's quiet was shattered by turmoil. It was also the shattering of an era. The new era that began was not quiet, it was chaotic, but in it were the elements of a great and calming arrival: the coming of the people into their own.

The labor movement in Manila and Central Luzon immediately offered its complete services in defense of the nation. Labor battalions were organized to cooperate with the American and Philippine armies. Casto Alejandrino, the Socialist mayor of Arayat, contacted by the U.S. engineers, promised 5,000 workers in twenty-four hours. The entire number was organized in less than that time. They helped to construct defenses and camouflaged positions from Concepcion to Candaba.

The Japanese invasion, however, inspired the reactionaries to even more vicious attacks on the labor movement. The PC twice raided the office of the Socialist headquarters in San Fernando, the second time bent on murdering Pedro Abad Santos and his assistants. For an excuse they accused us of being pro-Russian

(although the Soviet Union was now an ally of the United States) and pro-Japanese. All the "evidence" they could find were some anti-Japanese leaflets, which was more than could be said for the offices of the PC. In San Luis, which I visited during a rapid tour of the province to rally our membership to every effort to defeat the enemy, the mayor of the town advised me to leave the Philippines or be arrested as a traitor. I was astonished. That was the type of atmosphere in which the real 5th column, the Japanese hirelings and the traitorous compradores, were able to a great extent to paralyze the country's defense.

In sharp contrast was the special meeting of the leadership of the Communist Party of the Philippines, which was immediately held in Manila, from December 7 to 10. A pledge of all-out support to the anti-fascist struggle was drawn up. It was embodied in a 12-point memorandum, which was presented to President Quezon and to the American High Commissioner, Francis B. Sayre. The memorandum was signed jointly by Crisanto Evangelista and Pedro Abad Santos, chairman and vice-chairman, respectively, of the Communist Party, to which the Socialists had affiliated in 1938. The memorandum was published in the newspapers.

The twelve points were as follows:

1. National unity for an Anti-Japanese United Front.
2. All people and all strata of the population must organize, secretly if necessary, to assist the Philippine and American governments to resist Japan.
3. All able-bodied citizens must contribute all their effort to the prosecution of the war, to volunteer as regular fighters if necessary.
4. All patriotic rich elements must contribute their wealth, all intellectuals contribute their knowledge to the common cause of national defense.
5. All questionable elements will commit acts of treason at the expense of their lives.
6. All patriotic Filipinos and anti-fascist organizations, especially the AMT, KPMP, labor unions, Socialists and Communists are urged to organize squads of irregular volunteers to begin training for guerrilla warfare, while waiting for definite instructions on how and when to begin fighting.
7. All resistance groups must know ways and means of establishing and conducting free governments, especially in liberated and semi-liberated areas.

8. All resistance groups, especially those organized by the people's organizations must learn how to commandeer goods by confiscating enemy property to be used by the resistance movement, as part of guerrilla warfare.

9. People must be armed in order to be effective in fighting in the enemy's rear.

10. Organizations of the people must be formed in well-knit underground movements.

11. The Communist Party pledges loyalty to the cause of democracy and emphatically denounces fascism and militarism.

12. The Communist Party pledges loyalty to the governments of the Philippines and of the United States.

In response to attacks made by red-baiters, the press also quoted Agapito del Rosario, a well-known Communist leader, as saying that "long after a successful invasion by the Japanese and long after reactionary Filipino leaders had stabbed the United States in the back, the members of the labor movement would go on fighting loyally on the side of the United States in the common struggle." It was to be a prophetic statement.

A note brought to me in Pampanga by a courier called me to the city on December 23 to become acquainted with the decisions of our leadership, which was then meeting constantly to work out plans for a people's resistance. I hitch-hiked to Manila on army trucks.

Our armies already were beginning the retreat into Bataan and the roads were choked with traffic. The highways were under bombardment from the air, and the obvious confusion of the army made me acutely aware of the hopelessness of their military situation. The civilian population, in its turn, was evacuating in thick streams into the provinces.

In Manila I met Abad Santos, who informed me in detail about the points of the memorandum and about the decisions to organize a resistance movement. I was instructed to bring the decisions back to the membership in Central Luzon. Soon afterwards, Don Perico was pointed out by Filipino spies. He fell into the hands of the Japanese in January.

Abad Santos had written a letter to General MacArthur requesting him to supply arms to the people for guerrilla warfare. Before the war there had been much talk about the formation of a citizens' army, but it never materialized; the thought of

the people with guns did not rest well with the well-fed in the country. MacArthur, in the capacity of military adviser to the Commonwealth, evidently had had the same reaction. At any rate, the people never got guns. To Abad Santos' letter MacArthur sent a favorable reply, but not a single weapon was ever provided to us by the American command. Later, MacArthur's guerrilla representative, Thorpe, denied that the General had sent such a message. It was not the last time that a MacArthur communication was to have its official life shortened.

The Fil-American army shriveled away into Bataan. We knew they were doomed. With them went the last shreds of the constituted authority of both the American and Filipino governments. There was no official call upon the people to resist. MacArthur said "I shall return," and advised even his own men who were left behind to "wait." Manila was declared an "Open City," a sadly hollow echo of the inch-by-inch defense of Stalingrad, Warsaw, and other brave cities of the world. President Quezon and his cabinet went into exile, and left an official vacuum behind. Into it moved the traitors and the collaborators. Into their hands, and the rapacious hands of the Japanese, fell the fruits of surrender.

But the destiny of the nation fell into the hands of the people.

II. HUKBALAHAP

7. The Birth of Resistance

The people are like a sea. Beneath their surface run great tides. It is easy to be mistaken about the people, because the currents that move in them are not always visible. Then one day a tyrant awakes upon his island of rule and finds that the dikes of privilege have been destroyed, and that the tidal wave is sweeping over him.

The most significant fact about the Filipino people is the strong tide of revolution that runs through our history. It has broken above the surface in over 200 recorded uprisings and revolts against tyranny. Sometimes they were against a foreign oppressor, sometimes against tyrants of our own. The masses of our people have never been submissive. The revolutionary spirit is our proudest heritage.

It follows that most of our national heroes have been revolutionists. Sometimes attempts are made to rob our heroes of their revolutionary significance. It was no mistake that under American rule Rizal the writer and Rizal the scientist were exaggerated to conceal Rizal the revolutionist, and Rizal himself, who eventually compromised, was used to obscure the memory and the militancy

of Bonifacio, who organized and led the revolt against Spain.

But nothing can hold back the tide that moves in the sea.

At the beginning of 1942 the tides were running very strongly. All that was required was an understanding of their potentialities, and of how to harness them for the most good. It was this understanding that we sought to apply in Central Luzon, against the latest of the tyrants, the Japanese fascists.

The resistance movement that sprang up in Central Luzon was unique among all the groups that fought back, in one way or another, against the Japanese. The decisive element of difference lay in the strong peasant unions and organizations of the people that existed there before the war. It gave the movement a mass base, and made the armed forces indistinguishable from the people, a feeling shared both by the people and by the fighters. Under such conditions, wherever it existed, the resistance was magnificent.

Many other groups, however, especially those led by the American army representatives of MacArthur, foraged off the people, paid their way with paper money and with promises of back-pay, and discouraged organization of the people. They existed largely in regions where no mass base of previous organization had made itself felt, and for precisely that reason they played, in the main, a passive role. In many cases the people came to resent the armed bands which lived off them and did little fighting. Everywhere the people were ready to organize and ready to revolt, but the opportunity was not given to them as it was in Central Luzon; the revolutionary tide was held in check by men who neither understood nor appreciated the strength and resourcefulness of the people. If a real people's struggle had developed everywhere in the Philippines, our country would have been spared the bitter postwar years.

We started with nothing. We did not even have a plan. The people reacted spontaneously in many places. In the wake of battle and of the collapse of authority there were bandits and robbers who molested the people in the barrios. The people formed their own *Bantay Nayon* (home guard) for protection. These guard units were able to catch and kill bandits. In most cases the bandits were discovered to be Ganaps, mercenary

SCALE: 25 miles = 1 inch

CENTRAL LUZON

tools, and other spies and sympathizers with the enemy. This early experience made the people more ready for organized resistance.

Before we had an opportunity to organize the resistance in Central Luzon, there were instances of extreme leftist actions by the people. For years their enemy had been the big landowners and capitalists. Now suddenly these people were defeated in a war and on the run, it seemed. It looked like a time to strike. When a group of men under Bernardo Poblete of the AMT raided Masantol, Pampanga, late in February, and killed Jose Tapia, of the Pampanga Sugar Development Company, they were acting in a confused fashion without yet being aware of the bigger enemy, the Japanese. The Masantol raid was denounced by us. It made us see clearly the need for a sharply defined program of struggle.

War imposed the necessity of discipline upon the people. Peacetime has its disciplines, too, but they are leisurely and may be unenforced; in wartime leisure and laxity are dangerous, and a breach of discipline is measured in lives. This is even more true in a people's movement. None of us were soldiers, and we were in no way military. Our methods were adopted as we went along; we learned from the people's experience, and applied what we learned. The discipline we developed was a people's discipline. The people accepted it not because they were ordered to do so, as in an army, but because they understood it and its necessity, just as they understood the need for supporting a strike.

Costly mistakes were made before we learned. Even the Communist Party, which with its 12-point program had been the only political group to call for resistance, made a mistake in considering the city of Manila safe as an underground base. On January 24, 1942, a meeting of the executive committee was raided by the Kempetai, the Japanese military police, and most of the leading members of the Party fell into the hands of the enemy, among them Crisanto Evangelista, Pedro Abad Santos, and Agapito del Rosario.

Crisanto Evangelista, founder of the Communist Party, was murdered soon after in the fascist torture chambers in Fort

Santiago, Manila. He had devoted his life to the movement and he died for it, unshaken.

Agapito del Rosario lived until April, subjected to constant interrogation. Brought to the Manila Hotel for questioning, he could see from the window the statue of Rizal on the Luneta.* He made his decision then. He pretended that he wished to urinate. When the guards brought him into the hall, he broke from them and jumped to the pavement from the fourth story window. The fall failed to kill him. Later, in the hospital, Abad Santos had an opportunity to speak to him.

"I could not help myself," he said from his pillow. "I hate them so completely that I would rather take my own life than be touched by the dirty hands of the fascists."

Del Rosario was taken from his hospital bed and shot.

In the face of men who do not yield, the actions of men who bend seem unforgivable, or, at the least, hard to understand. History has obscured the motivations of Pedro Abad Santos. He was an old man; imprisonment disrupted his stringent diet; he was ill. He did not become a pawn of the enemy, nor did he collaborate; he tried to outwit the Japanese. In my opinion the old man was trying to deal with the Japanese as he had dealt with landlords in the courts, trying to best them in a game of wits. It was not the way. I feel, too, that he was thinking of a trick somewhat similar to that of Sukarno in Indonesia: when the Japanese were gone, the Indonesians faced the Dutch with an army.

I feel that he was also thinking that there was still a way to save his comrades in prison.

A leaflet appeared, signed with the name of Don Perico, urging the people to surrender. It was not of his doing. It was a forgery, like many other statements issued by the Japanese during the occupation, trying to trick guerrillas into giving up. The old man was ill, watched by the enemy, cut off from contact with us, unable to defend himself.

Released from prison in 1943, Abad Santos, enfeebled, went back to Pampanga. He died there at the end of 1944. We were in touch with him then. In his last words he urged the younger

* The public park in Manila, along the bay.—*Ed.*

elements to come forward into leadership of the movement. He requested that he be buried among his comrades, because he wanted to be close to the people in death as he had been in life.

In Central Luzon we were not letting a crop grow under our feet. We were planting the first tender seedlings of struggle among the people. The Japanese patrols were everywhere, centered in the towns and fanning out through the barrios. Their spies, who were numerous, were pointing out the union leaders to the enemy. The Japanese knew that our provinces were the center of the organized labor and peasant movements, and they were anxious to bring them under control. As soon as they arrived in the Philippines they announced that their first enemies were the Socialists and Communists. It was one of the slogans they used to influence our class enemies to collaborate with them.

At the beginning of February 1942, we held our first Struggle Conference in the barrio of Bawit, Cabiao, Nueva Ecija. Even while we deliberated on our policies the people around the Candaba swamps, Mt. Arayat, and the *gubat* of the Chico River (vortex of Pampanga, Tarlac, and Nueva Ecija provinces), were setting the pace with the formation of armed groups. At the Bawit conference were Mateo del Castillo, Juan Feleo, Casto Alejandrino, Fernancio Sampang, Jose de Leon, Eusebio Aquino, Mariano Franco, Lino Dizon and myself, all from the peasant movement. In addition, there were several representatives from the city.

We debated our central problem: whether to form a loose United Front movement or to set up a people's republic with an underground government. The establishment of a republic seemed logical; the government had fled the country and the old Nacionalistas had become the puppet mayors everywhere. On January 24 the Executive Commission had been organized by the Japanese, and that too was composed of Nacionalistas. There was no patriotic authority in the islands. A republic, as some of us saw it, would not only mean keeping freedom alive in loyal hearts, but it would also mean striking out for independence. Ours was not a fight for America, except in the sense that we were allies, but a fight for Filipinos. I saw our resistance

movement as being revolutionary, from which we would emerge free men in every sense of the word.

Our eventual decision, in which we all finally concurred, was to follow united front tactics. In this way, we could draw into the struggle wider sections of the nation, among them those elements who would wish to fight the enemy but who might be antagonized by a people's republic. These elements were the moderate landlords and the middle class groups in the towns and cities. Our united front, however, had this character: it was to be led by the workers and peasants.

In the interests of the broadest kind of unity we adopted the slogan: "Anti-Japanese Above All." That meant exactly what it said. We would forego an independent struggle for separate working class demands. To show our good faith we dissolved the AMT and KPMP, the peasant organizations. All Anti-Japanese Our Friends, All Pro-Japanese Our Enemies—that was our policy; For A Free And Democratic Philippines.

Having clarified our over-all political policy, we next laid the basis for the organizationl forms of carrying it out. We conceived of a three-sided struggle: military, political and economic. We needed an armed force to harass the enemy actively. For this purpose a military committee was projected. Our political purpose was to discredit the puppet regime and to destroy its influence, while at the same time building the concept of a functioning democracy. For this we projected the idea of free people's councils in every community. Our economic objectives were to thwart in every way possible the enemy's attempt to loot the country, while at the same time developing the economic means of providing for the welfare of the people. None of these things was full-blown to begin with. We had to learn how to shape them, with varying success, as we went along. But now, at least, we knew where we were going.

Following our meeting, we sent out a call for a general conference to take place during the final week of March. All organized guerrillas were to attend.

We wanted to fight, but the question of how to go about it was at first obscure. The Chinese guerrilla movement, we knew, had been enormously successful, but in China the country was

better adapted to guerrilla warfare. China had vast distances to hide an army and to provide space for maneuvering. There, large scale fighting could be undertaken, towns and whole regions liberated; in our case we had a tiny area, easily reached by overwhelming Japanese reinforcements. In China there was an established base, from which guerrilla forces radiated; we did not even have a base. It was obvious that our tactics would have to be different.

From the moment of the invasion we had been looking around for possible bases. We had picked Mount Arayat, Candaba swamp, the Sierra Madres and the Zambales mountains. Arayat and Candaba could easily be surrounded, and that seemed to minimize their value. The mountains, on the other hand, were remote from the people. We seemed to be neutralized from the beginning.

Among the people there was an instant desire for resistance. They had undertaken to arm themselves from the first. Anything resembling a weapon was treasured by them. The first arms were pitifully inadequate: bird guns, Cavite pistols that had to be calculated to get the bullet in line with the bore and that often exploded before all shots were fired, 12-gauge shotguns in pistol form that had to be held with both hands. Bamboo spears and even bows and arrows were assembled. Spears against tanks!

The only persons who had guns were the landlords. Delegations of people marched to the landlords' houses and demanded their weapons for use against the enemy. If the landlords refused, a display of "force" was made outside their windows: a number of people would march past with bamboo poles polished to look like rifles and would aim them threateningly at the house. This usually produced results.

Our Socialist mayors used their office to requisition the arms of stragglers from Bataan, who soon began to trickle back from the front. In return, the soldiers were given receipts signed in the name of the elected government officials. They were offered a choice of surrendering their arms, or of joining the guerrillas and using them themselves.

Throughout January and February the slow collection of arms

went on. This was our arsenal at the end of February, and its collectors:

Casto Alejandrino, Arayat mayor: 18 rifles, 8 other arms;
Felipa Culala, woman peasant leader: 3 rifles, 4 shotguns, other small arms;
Bernardo Poblete, peasant leader: 11 rifles, 3 shotguns;
Eusebio Aquino, labor and peasant leader: 7 rifles, 6 shotguns, 14 revolvers and pistols;
Fernancio Sampang, Mexico mayor: 4 rifles, 4 shotguns;
Pacifico Briones, Mariano Franco, and Tranquilino Flores: 16 rifles and some pistols;
Lope de la Rosa, peasant leader: 11 rifles and some small arms;
Jose de Leon and Patricio del Rosario: 12 rifles and some other arms.

Casto Alejandrino had used his office as mayor for another purpose. Before the arrival of the enemy in Central Luzon he had opened the NARIC* bodega in Arayat and had distributed 11,000 cavanes of palay to the people. "The government no longer exists," he said. "I owe my responsibility to the people." When the Japanese arrived they were enraged and Alejandrino became very much wanted.

We had a few arms, and volunteers were coming forward everywhere, but we were an army without tactics or experience. We had a book, Edgar Snow's *Red Star Over China,* which described the operation of the Chinese guerrillas. We read that and pondered on how to apply it here. We also had a translated book on guerrilla tactics by Chu Teh; that, too, would have to be adapted to our conditions.

It was a woman who helped pave the way for us—Felipa Culala, a former KPMP organizer from Candaba. She organized the first guerrilla detachment, from the barrio of Mandili, arming it with weapons obtained from the landlords. Lope de la Rosa, the old labor and peasant leader assisted her. Felipa Culala, who was known as Dayang-Dayang, was a huge woman, very masculine in appearance, with a rough, commanding personality. Most men were afraid of her. She feared nothing.

Dayang-Dayang had enlisted about 35 men. Perhaps ten had

* The government-owned National Rice and Corn Corporation.—*Ed.*

arms, the rest were sent out to collect their own. The detachment was gathering palay for their food supply when they were surprised by the Special Police of the puppet mayor of Candaba, William Arroyo. Eight of the budding guerrillas were seized and thrown into the town jail, in the municipal building.

The brother of one of the officers in the detachment was among those imprisoned. His father demanded that he go to the rescue. Dayang-Dayang opposed the idea at first, but finally led an assault on the jail. On March 8 the guerrillas entered the town, captured the municipal building, released the prisoners, and retreated to Mandili. It was the first offensive action by the people.

The little detachment, however, had no illusions about its small victory. The Japanese were sending regular patrols to the barrios. Suspected persons who were caught were tortured and shot. The Japanese always came on schedule. They were due in Mandili on March 13. The detachment decided to fight.

Mandili lies close to the swamp. Ditches crisscross the locality. In March they are dry and empty of water. Some 130 men led by Dayang-Dayang's unit lay in the ditches in a skirmish line in the form of a triangle. The Japanese patrol came in force, accompanied by a large body of puppet police, to punish the barrio. They marched into the triangle. When they approached the apex, the ambush flamed all around them. It was a perfect surprise. Thirty to forty Japanese were killed, along with 68 puppet police. The enemy retreated in disorder to the barrio church. The guerrillas prepared to assault the church.

Then occurred an incident that revealed our rawness. The Japanese raised a white flag high above the church. The guerrillas thought it was a flag of truce for lunch time. They called off their attack and withdrew for the noonday meal. The Japanese, however, summoned reinforcements, which arrived in large numbers. Our people were unwilling to use up all their ammunition, so they retreated. They had captured 38 assorted firearms. They suffered no casualties.

The enemy was furious at his losses. Patrols combed the surrounding barrios, but the guerrillas found it easy to avoid them. People were seized, some tortured and killed in reprisal,

but they gave the enemy no information. On the contrary, the news of the fight sent a thrill of pride throughout Central Luzon.

The battle of Mandili proved that we could meet and defeat the enemy. We could not do so on his terms, but with ambushes and with hit and run tactics we could be a serious threat to his rear. The operations of the detachment from Mandili, and of others that soon grew up in a similar fashion, proved also that we could live in the lowlands and that the people would support us. For us, that was the most important lesson of all, and every decision we had reached at our conference was now to be hinged entirely on the people and the people's support. Without the support of the people, who give it life, a guerrilla movement cannot exist.

8. The Hukbalahap

On March 29, 1942, in a clearing in the great forest that joins the corners of Pampanga, Tarlac and Nueva Ecija, the Hukbalahap was born. The setting and the ceremony were both simple. A table, brought from a barrio, stood in the clearing. Before it were our armed forces, sitting crosslegged on the ground. Those with arms sat in front, their weapons across their knees.

One by one the detachments had arrived. From Candaba, Dayang-Dayang brought 100 men. They were still excited over their victory at Mandili. They had even marched by daylight. From San Luis and Minalin, Pampanga, came Banal (Bernardo Poblete) with 20 to 40 men. From San Miguel, Bulacan, came Lope de la Rosa. From Magalang, Eusebio Aquino brought 30 to 40 more. Briones and Capuli (Mariano Franco) came with 50 men from Cabiao, in Nueva Ecija. Everyone was excited. The story of the Mandili victory was told a hundred times by the men from Candaba. It aroused the imagination of the others; they were eager to get a crack at the enemy.

Then, too, the bearing of arms was thrilling. The only guns many of these people had seen before had been in the hands of

the PC's who threatened our picket lines. Now, standing in an armed group, running their hands down rifle barrels, they felt more powerful than any picket line.

We slaughtered carabaos in the forest and held a week-long conference. It was the hot season, but under the trees it was cool. We threshed out our program and our guiding principles. We wanted our purposes and our beliefs to be as firm as our bullets. By the 29th we were ready for our inauguration.

We had held many discussions about a name for our movement. At first I was in favor of Philippine Army of Liberation. However, the name we finally adopted, *Hukbo ng Bayan Laban sa Hapon* (The People's Anti-Japanese Army), best fitted our key slogans. It proved to be a name with mass appeal. Now the simple abbreviation "Huk" will live in Philippine history. On that first day in the forest the men shouted, "Long live the Hukbalahap!" It sounded strange.

There were many enthusiastic speeches. The main theme of our lectures was: overcome defeatism. The annihilation of the Fil-American army, then in progress on Bataan, had unavoidably spread demoralization among large sections of the people. We had to uproot it, to replace it with a perspective of struggle. We had to convince the people that their destiny was in their own hands, and that they could mold it by their own acts.

Down with the Japs! shouted the soldiers, sitting under the trees. Long life to the Hukbalahap! Drive out the Japanese bandits! Death to the puppets and collaborators!

At the end of the speechmaking, we elected a Military Committee. The choice belonged entirely to the soldiers. Certain qualifications were necessary: popularity with people, an acquaintance with the people and the region, ability to organize, good physical condition and morale. Graduates of the Philippine Military Academy would not have fitted those demands. Graduates of the school of the working class did.

Those elected to the Military Committee were Casto Alejandrino, Felipa Culala (Dayang-Dayang), Bernardo Poblete (Banal) and myself. Later by this group, I was chosen chairman of the Military Committee, with Casto Alejandrino as second in command. Changes and additions were made in the committee's

membership from time to time during the war. In May, Mateo del Castillo became our political advisor.

There were unanimous proposals to launch, at once, an intensive organizational campaign. Our aims were almost entirely military then, and we conceived of our strength in terms of the number of armed men we could get into the field. At the close of the meeting we dispersed at once, taking no chances of a surprise encirclement by the enemy.

One of the proposals made at our inaugural conference was to draw up a document to be known as "The Fundamental Spirit of the Hukbalahap." It was ready later in the year, a set of guiding principles which established the character of a revolutionary army, and which emphasized the differences between a people's army and the ordinary hired army of the ruling classes. Together with another document, "The Iron Discipline," which elaborated the duties and privileges of the individual soldier, the "Fundamental Spirit" was the backbone of the Huk structure.

The Huk was organized on the basis of squadrons, composed of approximately 100 men each. The squadron was subdivided into platoons and squads. On the ascending scale, two squadrons made a battalion and two battalions a regiment. In that respect we paralleled fairly closely the ordinary army. The similarity, however, ended there.

The squadron officers were: Commander, Vice-Commander, Political Instructor, Supply Officer, and Intelligence Officer. The differences between these officers and the officers in an ordinary army are stated in the opening section of the "Fundamental Spirit":

> The People's Anti-Japanese Army should have as its fundamental spirit equality between the officers and the soldiers, friendship and unity. Why should there be equality between the officers and soldiers? Because a revolutionary army is organized by revolutionists. As their political position is the same, the officers and soldiers should not be classified as high or low, rich or poor. They join the army not to earn salary, not to obtain positions, but to fight for national emancipation and social freedom. Only by actually practicing equality between the officers and soldiers can the whole army be united and carry on the fight with determination to the end.
>
> Why should there be friendship and unity? People with the same political will are called comrades. Comrades should be friendly to one

another. Friendship brings about precious mutual help. Unity is strength. The stronger the unity, the greater will the strength be. War is a comparison of strengths. In order to defeat the enemy we must be stronger than the enemy. In order to become strong we must unite. In order to have unity we must have a common political aim under which we can be united. Therefore, our officers and soldiers should be friendly to one another, and they will be united into one body. In so doing they will become an iron-like fighting force.

The "Fundamental Spirit" stressed over and over again the necessity for comradeship. In the Huk there was no gulf between the separate members because we had nothing corresponding to "brass" and "lower rank."

The members of the troop are all revolutionary comrades. . . . No one is allowed to say humiliating words to another, no one looks down on another, no one is coerced by another. . . . Anyone may express his opinion freely in a meeting. When there is a dispute the right opinion will be that of the majority, and will be passed and supported .. . . Everyone shares the same fortune and endures the same hardship. The leaders must set an example for the soldiers to follow. . . . Insults, coercion or deception are forbidden. . . . The officers should love and respect their subordinates. They should attend to the soldiers before themselves. They should exchange their experiences. They should criticize their mistakes. . . . The officers and the soldiers are all alike. Neither officers nor soldiers can have any individual privileges.

Another, and equally important section of the "Fundamental Spirit" dealt with the relations between our army and the people. The rules we outlined are inconceivable in an ordinary army, in which the order "Off Limits" exemplifies the barrier between the two. We stated:

A revolutionary army should not only love and protect the people, but it should also represent the people. It should regard the fortunes of the people as its own. . . . It should struggle for the benefit of the people. It should regard the people's benefit as its own benefit in all things it does. It should help the people wherever it goes. In so doing it can have the faith and support of the people, can always receive their help, and through it can overcome the enemy.

These were not merely meaningless phrases. We concretized them in a mandatory set of rules:

Clean the houses provided by the people. . . . Speak in a friendly tone. . . . Buy and sell things fairly. . . . Return the things we borrow. . . . Pay for the things we destroy. . . . Do not do, and even refuse to do, things which may harm the people. . . .

All actions that may encroach upon or harm the people are forbidden. Any offender of this rule will be severely punished.

Forcing the people to work for the army is forbidden. Coercion, beating or insulting the people are forbidden. Rape and robbery are forbidden. These are not the actions of a revolutionary army. They are criminal acts. They are absolutely forbidden in our army.

Help the people in plowing, transplanting, harvesting or in cutting wood whenever it does not hinder the actions of the army.

Help the people organize, and support the organizations of the people.

Finally, in all our relations with the people, when entering or leaving a place, when working with them or associating with them, we urged our soldiers to propagandize for the common cause. The Political Instructor organized and led study meetings in every squadron, and the soldiers in turn brought our message of unity and struggle into every barrio.

We called for a hard struggle to the end, pointing out that a revolutionary army must necessarily endure hardships and weariness:

A revolutionary army struggles for the realization of a political aim. For example, the fight against Japan aims to defeat the Japanese and achieve national emancipation. This struggle will not stop until its aim is realized. Only by struggling and fighting to the end can the objective be reached. Even if there is only one man left the struggle must still be carried on. To sign any agreement with the enemy without victory means that we have lost faith in the revolution, and humble ourselves before the enemy. To capitulate is treachery and is a shameful crime.

The individual soldier was exhorted to exercise a self-imposed iron discipline. We said:

An ordinary army often uses certain forms and threats of punishment to maintain its discipline. Compulsory force is used to make everyone follow the rules. If the compulsory source is weak, then the discipline of the army is poor. This is because those who have to follow the rules do not follow them willingly and voluntarily, but are forced to do so. Therefore the soldiers will often pretend to keep the rules when the officers are around, but when the officers are away they forget all about discipline. Such dis-

cipline cannot become strong and also cannot be maintained very long. We, however, can keep an iron discipline, but it is done through the self-consciousness in discipline of every member.

As an aid to self-discipline we listed the "eight requests" of the revolutionary soldier:

1. Act with caution. 2. Act with rapidity. 3. Protect the weapons. 4. Take care of property. 5. Be on time. 6. Be tidy and neat. 7. Be clean and sanitary. 8. Be respectful.

We absolutely forbade torture, beating or scolding of soldiers. Instead, we introduced the system of making a soldier understand his duties and objectives, a collective system based on meetings and inner army organizations, giving the prerequisite leadership by example. And always we emphasized the need for drawing our strength and our determination from the masses of the people.

The "Fundamental Spirit" served as both the Articles of War and as the Constitution of the Hukbalahap. Its revolutionary concepts of an intertwined democratic army and the people was the structure upon which we built our resistance movement, a structure which the people accepted and were willing to support, long after the Japanese were replaced by other enemies of the Filipino.

9. Early American Contacts

At our inaugural conference we had decided to immediately get in touch with responsible elements of the Fil-American armies, if possible establishing direct contact with MacArthur. Our united front perspective visualized a unified struggle by all the anti-Japanese forces. Casto Alejandrino and Fernancio Sampang, mayors respectively of Arayat and Mexico in Pampanga, and Benedicto Sayco, a peasant leader, were previously sent to Bataan bearing the letter of The National Anti-Japanese United Front to MacArthur. They were unable to meet MacArthur,

but they did see Major Thorpe at Pinatubo. Prior to the outbreak of war, he had been in charge of the investigation of AMT members at Fort Stotsenburg, as suspected "subversive elements."

Thorpe, who had been placed in charge of American guerrilla activities, had come to see the potentialities of a people's resistance. He offered to commission Alejandrino and Sampang, but they refused because they represented a movement that took its authority from the people. Thorpe then gave them each a letter which, in the eyes of the American command, recognized them as guerrilla leaders and authorized them to collect American arms from stragglers. Thorpe furthermore promised to give arms to our Military Committee whenever he obtained them.

Following our March conference a report on our activities and organization was sent to Thorpe, who had set up headquarters in Zambales. He was very enthusiastic and promptly answered with an encouraging letter. He emphasized his intentions by sending three American officers to confer with us and to work out coordinating action. Anderson, Barker and Pettit stayed with us during the months of June and July. Together we drafted an agreement. Lates, Spies, another American, came to join the other three, but left soon for Tayabas.

Barker, a West Point graduate, in particular attempted to dominate our group, trying to fit us into a pattern of complete subordination to American command. We told them that we would follow them militarily, but that we must be free to have our own political program which had as its objective democracy and independence. We told them we would not put Filipino patriotism on sale for back-pay promises. Eventually, due to the broader approach of Anderson, we resolved our differences.

The agreement provided for a joint headquarters between Thorpe's group, the Luzon Guerrilla Forces, and the Hukbalahap. Rules and regulations would be handed down from headquarters, and obeyed, but each Huk unit was free to organize militarily as it wished. There would be no attempt by either group to attract the members of the other. In exchange for arms promised by the American officers, the Huk agreed, along with the people's organizations, to supply both forces with food.

In political matters and in all forms of public relations the Huk was free to conduct itself as it wished on the basis of loyalty to the Constitution and to the allied cause.

The agreement was never put into effect. Barker returned to Thorpe's base. Toward the end of the year they came back to us with a tragic tale. A traitor in Thorpe's command had led the Japanese to the major's hideout; Thorpe had been captured by the enemy and later executed. We felt the loss of Thorpe very deeply. He was that rare type of American officer who was not entirely blinded by the glitter of his brass. If he lived he might have been a deterrent to the reactionary policies that developed later in the guerrilla forces under American influence. Merrill, his successor in the Luzon Guerrilla Forces, displayed an objective approach during conferences we held with him, but the cooperative and understanding spirit of Thorpe was never again duplicated in Central Luzon.

We gave Anderson and Pettit guides and they went south, where Anderson built his own unit. Anderson, in Southern Luzon, tried to put into practice, with our people there, the policies of Thorpe. Spies, unfortunately, was captured and killed by Ganaps* in San Ildefonso, Bulacan. Barker suffered a similar fate later in the Manila area.

The handicaps and weaknesses of Americans who worked in the guerrilla movement were apparent to us during the stay of these men with our forces. Their white complexion easily attracted attention and made them noticeable wherever they were, restricting their movements. I took them to my own barrio and fed them. They complained constantly of the severe diet which we all had to endure, and demanded for themselves more food, sugar, milk, and chickens. They just could not conceive of themselves as on a par with the people and felt that they deserved special privileges, an attitude which violated our "Fundamental Spirit." They were also inclined to become panic-stricken by the shooting which went on all around us from Japanese raids. Our soldiers, who minimized danger, were greatly amused

* The name adopted by the Sakdals under the Japanese occupation. See footnote on p. 29.—*Ed.*

one time when Anderson ran off wildly through a cornfield when he sighted a Japanese patrol crossing a river in the distance.

Other Americans were with us from time to time, men who were more adaptable. One was an enlisted man named Jesse. He gave drilling and military training in some of our squadrons. He also fought with one of our units, and was killed in an encounter.

The experience with Thorpe was hopeful but it ended fruitlessly. As far as the supply of arms was concerned, with the surrender of Bataan and Corregidor we were thrown completely on our own resources. We raised the slogan "Arm Ourselves With The Weapons of the Enemy!" and proceeded to put it into effect.

10. Attack

The growth of the Huk from the beginning was spontaneous. Towns, even barrios, produced whole squadrons overnight which announced themselves ready for combat. On May 14 our Military Committee held its first meeting in the barrio of Kandating, Arayat. There we worked out a program of intensive organization, arms collection, and of attacks on the enemy.

A traveling headquarters, knitted to the other organizations by a courier system, was established. We devised a schedule of one-week organizing trips which were divided between Casto Alejandrino and myself. He traveled a circular route through the barrios surrounding Mount Arayat, while mine was a wider circle encompassing Pampanga, Nueva Ecija, Bulacan, and Tarlac.

Movement was still relatively free. The Japanese had not yet pulled their nets tight. I had the same feeling I had known on my regular AMT inspection trips before the war. At least once a week I managed to return "home" to my wife. For quite a while

in this period I lived with other members of the Military Committee on a house boat which shifted about on the waterways at the foot of Mount Arayat. My wife who would have been the envy of any army's commissary, always managed to have something special ready for me: chicken *adobo* one week, *paksiw* another, or even a favorite of mine, caramel candies.

By September our original five squadrons had grown to 35 in number. Invariably, squadrons were formed from designated areas, so they could feel freer and so the people in their own localities would have more confidence in the armed forces.

Our tactics were still in an adolescent stage. For one thing, as soon as our men got arms we allowed them to use them. From May to September we staged many attacks on towns in Pampanga and Nueva Ecija, choosing those which were garrisoned by the puppet constabulary. Such attacks had a two-fold purpose. The people were infuriated by the PC's, who were doing the bidding of the enemy and were perpetrating many abuses on the barrio people. Hated as strikebreakers before the war, they were hated now as puppets. In Cabiao, especially, the abuses were severe, and they were aggravated by the fact that the puppet mayor, Jose Garcia, was a renegade Socialist who had sold out to the enemy. Twice in April we made unsuccessful attacks on Cabiao to eliminate him, because he was pointing out union leaders and members to the enemy. His good fortune, however, did not survive the war. By attacking the puppets we hoped to arouse the people against them, to show them that the enemy could be dealt with, and also to discourage members of the constabulary to the point of becoming passive. Our second major intention was to get arms, which, we discovered, were easier to wrest from puppets than from the highly trained Japanese.

Arms were also taken from bandit groups which sprang up in the wake of the Fil-American defeat, and their depredations were quelled.

In Nueva Ejica, where Jose de Leon was the military commander, three squadrons had been quickly formed. Their first encounter in May was an ambuscade near Talavera, where many arms were secured. The three squadrons based themselves in

the mountains near Laur and proceeded to make it a tight base. By the end of August the Japanese were stung into conducting a large raid into the Cabalugen mountains near Laur. In the fighting nearly 100 Japanese and their auxiliary Ganaps were killed, while the Huk, skillfully utilizing the familiar terrain, lost only two men.

In lower Nueva Ecija, under Capuli and Briones, our men were very aggressive. In September they entered the municipality of San Antonio and raised Filipino and American flags. When the enraged Japanese came there was an open fight in the swamps surrounding the town. Again the Huk utilized its knowledge of the terrain and in this encounter did not lose a man, while the enemy casualties were again near the 100 mark.

By the end of 1942 the Huk squadrons in Nueva Ecija counted 250 soldiers, all armed.

In Pampanga squadrons were organizing so fast that each had to be subdivided, some into as many as four. Poblete (Banal) in particular multiplied his forces rapidly in southern Pampanga. In the Lubao-Floridablanca region, Abelardo Dabu recruited swiftly. Aquino's squadron repeatedly ambushed the roads between Magalang, Angeles, Concepcion and La Paz. Another squadron ambushed the Angeles-San Fernando road.

Best vantage points for ambushes were the roads with embankments or those bordered by tall grass. Here our men could lie hidden until the Japanese trucks were abreast. Japanese movements were usually according to schedule, so our men merely apprised themselves of the schedule and lay in wait, knowing what to expect. When the enemy became wiser and used larger units, a small group of our men would decoy them into another ambush where a large body of the Huk would be hidden.

Among the squadrons formed at this time was Squadron 48, which was inaugurated in the month of May. This was the Chinese squadron which came to be known as the Wa Chi (Chinese Guerrillas in the Philippines). It was composed chiefly of trade unionists from the Chinese community in Manila, with teachers, clerks, and newspapermen among them. Some had fought with the Chinese guerrillas against the Japanese in the

Canton region of China. Their squadron designation, 48, was derived from the Eighth Route and the New Fourth Armies, which then were the biggest thorn in the sides of the Japanese.

Because of the experience of its members and their enormous zeal, Squadron 48 became a model organization for the rest of the Huk, although the Chinese maintained their own entity and were financially supported largely by their own masses in the city. At various times the squadron was split into detachments and assigned to other squadrons to inspire and train them. The Chinese were exemplary in their discipline, following closely a prescribed daily schedule, and were very daring. Individual soldiers would don the uniforms of dead Japanese and enter the towns, posing as Japanese soldiers. In this way they were able to capture many spies and puppets under the very noses of the enemy garrisons, and also to acquire arms. In encounters the Chinese did not hesitate to engage the Japanese in hand-to-hand fighting.

The presence of Squadron 48 among the peasants shattered an old and disreputable custom, that of treating Chinese people insultingly, and in general using them as the scapegoat in the blind reaction of Filipinos to evils that lie much deeper in our society. The members of Squadron 48 became much beloved by the people of Central Luzon, who often went out of their way to give them special consideration in billeting, feeding, and assistance.

The first assignment of Squadron 48 was to clean out the bandit gangs that infested the mountains around Floridablanca. They did a thorough job. The criminal types were liquidated, but some had chosen a life of outlawry in the past out of despair arising from the injustices they had suffered. These men were lectured about the Huk and joined us, becoming excellent anti-fascist fighters.

It was in May, too, that we began to exploit our richest source of arms and ammunition during the war. This was in Bataan, where the Fil-American army, during their retreat, defense and surrender, had left the region literally saturated with discarded and stored weapons. In some places the people had gathered them by the armful.

On foot, traveling the rugged mountain trails, groups of Huks, including 52 Wa Chi soldiers, made the first trip to Bataan, roving as far as Mariveles. Sometimes we bought arms from the people who had picked them up, sometimes we traded for them; as a last resort we commandeered them. We were building an army, to fight, and for that reason we justified our priority to weapons.

The first expedition to Bataan returned by September, laden down with arms and ammunition. They bristled with guns, strapped on, hung and suspended from them. They even brought back machine-guns. After that, whenever we had a need for arms, we sent groups to scour Bataan. In this way we obtained up to 2,000 arms by the end of 1942.

Our activities had hardly begun when we suffered a major casualty. Lino Dizon, one of our dearest comrades from the AMT, was captured and killed by the Japanese in May.

A powerful orator and one of the greatest of Pampango poets, Lino Dizon only reached the third grade in school. He was a people's poet. As with Gorky, his was the University of Life. He was the author of a Passion play called "The Passion of the Workers." The barrio people were so fond of it that they preferred it to the regular Passion play, or when the regular Passion was held, Dizon's "The Passion of the Workers" was given along with it. This Passion play is still presented in the Pampanga barrios.

Our first big lesson, hammered home to us by the harshness of experience, came in September 1942. Up to that time our plans and operations had been sloppy. We harassed the enemy haphazardly, and with little consideration for the consequences. In our bases, sometimes close to the barrios, we constructed permanent barracks, and congregated in large numbers, both before and after an attack. The use of mobility as a weapon was not yet fully understood. In addition, although we had taken certain steps to eliminate spies and traitors, we had not perfected an intelligence network. As a result, many spies were able to report our concentrations and movements to the Japanese. The blow fell on September 6, when the first big raid of the enemy took place in the Mount Arayat region.

The Japanese preceded their attack with mortar fire and the use of .75 mm field artillery. It came as a surprise and many of our soldiers were considerably shaken. The enemy had surrounded the mountain and the swamp. On the rivers and in the swamp they used rubber boats which they pumped up; they moved speedily. The Japanese soldiers were very brave, standing up in boats and hardly glancing about them, so that we could not help but admire their courage. They came so fast that we were unable to form ambushes. The enemy also climbed the mountain and came down upon our camp sites from the rear.

Fortunately, at this time the Japanese had not yet embarked on a policy of ruthlessness toward the people, or even toward guerrillas. Raping of women had occurred, but widespread molestation of the people was practiced more by the Filipino traitors than by the Japanese soldiers. Sometimes, when a Huk was caught, the Japanese praised him, calling him *Tomadachi* (comrade), and tried to win him over. Their September raid was more a demonstration of force to intimidate us than an all-out offensive. They did not enter all the barrios and hold them; therefore our squadrons were able to slip through the loose cordon. It was only on the slopes of Mount Arayat that serious fighting occurred. By the second day our men had slipped away down the mountain and were hidden safely in the barrios.

Our response to the September raid was two-fold, military and political. In the military sense, we revealed a leftist naïveté, which amounted to an underestimation of the enemy's strength and an exaggeration of our own. This took the form of an immediate counter-attack by our forces on the enemy, and on an even broader scale than during the previous period. No sooner had the enemy withdrawn from his mopping-up operations than we re-grouped and retaliated.

From September 15th to December our squadrons carried out many ambushes against small Japanese truck columns, and also raided puppet forces in the towns. In Pampanga, the municipal building of San Luis was attacked on November 22; we took the puppet mayor and seven puppet police, along with arms and supplies. Two days later the puppet mayor and the police force

of San Simon surrendered and joined the Huk, taking their arms with them.

In an ambush between San Luis and San Simon our soldiers killed Captain Tanaka, chief of staff of the Japanese forces in Central Luzon, along with another enemy officer.

No mercy was shown to spies, who had exposed so many of our people to the enemy. Thirteen of them, Ganaps, were seized in Santo Tomas, Zaragosa, and were killed. Spies were also liquidated in other barrios.

In Pampanga the Huk entered the towns of Arayat, Candaba, San Luis, and Apalit and held them for several days, lecturing the people on the principles of the United Front and on the need for resistance. In Nueva Ecija assaults were made on enemy barracks.

Such a display of offensive strength was inspirational to the people, and restored their morale after the enemy raids. But in general, at the time, it was poor tactics. We failed to lend proper emphasis to the fact that the enemy was many times stronger than we were, and that our methods would only bring down upon us the full weight of his arms, at a time when we had neither the resiliency of well-organized mass support nor the reserve of assistance from the outside. For every ounce of perfection we eventually reached, we had to pay a pound of bitterness.

Slowly and simultaneously, however, we were learning the right tactics and how to apply them. From the time we realized that we could live and function on the plain, among the people, we had oriented ourselves in that direction. A General Memorandum had been drafted in July and August, based on our experiences, our errors and our achievements. What the people liked about us, and what they did not like, was carefully compiled and examined for correct approaches. We decided on the basis of the people's opinion the things that we should avoid in the future.

Following the September raid we also examined the problem of discipline, as it affected our planning, movements, secrecy, and morale. A disciplinary program was worked out. By this time, too, our "Fundamental Spirit" had been discussed in the army, and put into effect.

Our continual expansion, and the coming into being of new squadrons, soon made our original set-up unwieldy. By November, the Military Committee, which had functioned well as an organizing body, found that it was difficult to supervise the numerous and scattered squadrons. Therefore, as part of our general program of tightening our organizational forms and methods, we divided Central Luzon into five Military Districts. The districts were determined by geography, by the size of our forces, and by the livelihood and general life of the people in the given areas. They were: the First Military District, comprising Southern Pampanga and its swamp and fish pond regions, under Banal; the Second Military District, embracing Baliwag, Apalit, San Ildefonso, San Simon, San Luis, Candaba, Santa Ana, and part of Arayat, under Dayang-Dayang; the Third Military District, roughly covering the area north of Arayat mountain, under Aquino; the Fourth Military District, including all of Nueva Ecija, at first under Capuli and Briones and then under Jose "Dimasalang" de Leon; and the Fifth Military District, containing West Pampanga from Mexico through Bacolor to Lubao and Floridablanca, under Abelardo Dabu, the pre-war president of the Pasudeco Workers' Union. Over all, in place of the outgrown Military Committee, we established the GHQ Hukbalahap. We were now an army.

In December 1942, however, we began to reap the harvest of our past rashness and inexperience. The enemy, it seemed, had been learning lessons of his own. He had plans for Central Luzon, viewing our provinces not only as a rice bowl but as a source of cloth for his army. Sugar plantations were under conversion for the planting of cotton. The importance the Japanese attached to the elimination of the Huk became apparent in the scale of their new operations, which were launched on December 5th.

The fight that resulted from the initial phase of the enemy's offensive became a classic in Huk history. It occurred in the fish pond district of Masantol and Minalin. There, in the First Military District, Banal had built an organization of great strength. The Huk had made considerable progress in organizing the people as a whole, and some barrio councils had been

created. Although the Japanese had been informed of our activity through spies, they had an exaggerated opinion of our armed forces, which they thought numbered up to 5,000. Actually there were less than 700 men under Banal at that time. Against them the Japanese used three to four thousand soldiers.

Our own intelligence units had not been idle. We were aware of the Japanese concentrations that had surrounded the area, and we were apprised of the focal point of attack. It was surrounded by water, and the only possible approach was by boat. The ideal ambush conditions were quickly grasped by Banal, who moved his men one kilometer from the spotted area, in the path of the enemy approach, and placed machine-guns at all key river points.

The Japanese attack began in mid-morning with an air-raid by 22 planes from Clark Field and Manila. In 7-plane formations they bombed and strafed all houses in the area. The houses, however, were vacant, the people having been previously evacuated. Then, at 10:00 o'clock, the Japanese advanced. They came in motorboat launches, from the rivers and from the bay. They were packed in the boats. They were perfect targets for our machine-guns.

In that fight only one Huk was wounded, in the arm. The Japanese, however, had between six and eight hundred casualties. The rivers ran literally red with blood that soaked the soil of the banks. The waters were still filled with floating bodies three days later. The people did not eat fish from those rivers for over a year.

Banal's squadrons retreated between Masantol and Minalin, with the Japanese in pursuit. They were overtaken and surrounded at Macabebe, where another battle occurred on December 7th. This time our men were low on ammunition and were hemmed in at an unfavorable position for our type of fighting. As a result we lost 18 men killed and over 30 wounded, although we were able to account for another 200 Japanese casualties. In the succeeding dispersal that took place, by which our soldiers infiltrated the enemy lines, some of the Huks became demoralized and ran, throwing their arms into the river. It was

the only time this occurred during the war, and we put it to good use as a disciplinary object lesson.

The Masantol battle, in spite of its finale and the attendant circumstances, was a tremendous victory. It spread the fame of the Huk far beyond our area of operations.

The fiasco in the fish ponds, however, marked only the beginning of the enemy's December general mop-up. The enemy continued without let-up from Candaba swamp to Tarlac, through Concepcion, to Arayat, Cabiao and into Nueva Ecija. We split into groups of five to ten, and eluded the cordons. It was more difficult this time, because the Japanese hit all the barrios, and occupied them throughout the raid. They did not, however, enter the big forest, where we had a considerable concentration.

The force under Aquino had to switch to the mountains of Zambales, where they engaged for nearly two months in constant running skirmishes, finally splitting into small groups and going back down to the plain. To divert and spread out the enemy forces, Dimasalang's men launched attacks and ambushes across eastern Nueva Ecija. In two encounters near Zaragosa, from December 15 to 23, nearly 150 Japanese were killed. In the entire month of December our Nueva Ecija organization was able to inflict up to 500 casualties on the enemy and his puppets, the attacks continuing even after the mop-up offensive had swung to the Nueva Ecija mountains.

After the December offensive the Japanese became much more thorough in their methods of control. Patrols now went out nearly every day and the barrios were regularly visited. Consequently, we were forced to adopt an even more mobile existence.

11. People Produce Leaders

One of the things I had learned, long before the war, was that the ruling elements fear not only the strength of the people in their numbers, but the capacity of the people to produce their own strong individual leaders. In their crudest methods of suppression the masters will murder the leader of a strike or of a movement; in their more subtle forms of assassination they invariably accuse people's leaders of "fanaticism," "subversive activities," or of being clever rogues. Always the people are characterized as sheep being misled by unscrupulous demagogues. Never are the people honored for the sons they have sired.

One of the many boastful arguments of the ruling class is: "Who can ever take our places?" While they say it they have one foot on the necks of the people and the other foot in the grave, because they realize that once a people's movement is set in motion, leaders spring from its ranks like the flowers that burst from the earth. Let the people once feel that their destiny is their own, and the lowest, humblest masses will yield forth the necessary engineers and architects of their future.

The Hukbalahap was a movement of that kind.

As vice-commander of the Hukbalahap, Casto Alejandrino came into leadership in the people's struggle. He had been one of the most beloved of town mayors in Pampanga.

It is not possible for me to speak impersonally of Casto Alejandrino, with whom I have intimately shared so much of a difficult existence. He has been my comrade and my *compadre,* advisor and critic, sharer of songs, jokes, sufferings and the high experience of fighting for a common goal for the benefit of mankind.

At the beginning of the war, because he looked somewhat like a Chinese, I gave him his underground nickname, "Guan Yek,"

which was soon abbreviated to the more intimate "G. Y."

I first met G. Y. during the organizing struggles of the AMT, the peasant union of Pampanga. Even before he joined us, he had participated in the labor movement, having been spokesman and picket leader during the Pambusco Workers' Union strike in 1938. Later in that year he led the big strike at the Arayat sugar central, victoriously. Unlike the rest of us at that time, he grew independently of the influence of Abad Santos, preferring to feel his own way toward his convictions. Being neither a worker nor a peasant, but coming from a family of landowners, he came to the working class by way of studying Socialist theory and by his sensitivity to the injustices he observed.

Elected mayor of Arayat on the Socialist ticket in 1940, G. Y. effectively dramatized the victory of the people. He attracted national attention when he took his oath of office with the clenched fist. It delighted the people who had come to witness the inauguration. They demanded that the other elected officers do the same. Even the vice-mayor, who was of the opposition, was forced to do so. As mayor, G. Y. brought a new type of administration to Arayat. From the very beginning he did not hesitate to challenge the most established groups. The Quezon hacienda lay in the Arayat municipality. When Mrs. Quezon came there to dedicate the new Quezon Memorial Hospital for charity, G. Y. spoke at the inaugural. He pointed out that while the idea of charity was not a bad one, it existed only because of an avaricious system that caused the evils charity was supposed to, but could not mend. Although he enraged Mrs. Quezon, she later came to admire his courage, and befriended him.

His program in Arayat was based on protection of the rights of the poor. He insisted that the rights of the poor had supremacy over the rights of the rich, and that when property conflicted with human rights, human right must prevail. When the proprietors tried to sabotage his program by not paying taxes, G. Y. announced that he would collect the harvest in lieu of taxes. The proprietors backed down. The people were enthusiastic.

At the outbreak of the war, G. Y. opened the government warehouse and distributed 11,000 cavanes of palay to the

people. He came to our first conference with more weapons than any other group leader, and in addition had requisitioned over 50,000 rounds of .30 cal. ammunition from a U.S. supply depot left behind by the retreating Americans in barrio San Antonio, Arayat. When the Philippine government fled, he told the people that new forms of governing must be adopted.

Typical of G. Y. is his way of probing for the motivations behind an act or a position. "I have heard your good reason," he says, "now what is your real reason?" The "good reason and the real reason" became the measuring rod for the criticism and the self-criticism which we developed in the Huk.

Vicente Lava was another who left his stamp deep on the Hukbalahap. He too was not a peasant, working with crude tools in the mud of rice paddies, but a scientist, whose tools were the sensitive devices of laboratories and the complicated formulae of advanced minds.

In our society, the scientist and the intellectual are always placed on a pedestal, above the masses. They are supposed to breathe a rarefied air, or live in an ivory tower; no one is supposed to understand what they are doing or thinking; they are assumed to be removed from the common herd.

Vicente Lava did not belong to an intellectual aristocracy. He belonged to the people.

He came from the town of Bulacan, in Bulacan province, where he was born in the barrio of Tibig in 1894. His father was an independent thinker, a progressive among the reactionaries in the Nacionalista Party; when the people urged him to run for mayor he ran in opposition to the rich faction, and won. Vicente's uncle, Esteban, was a revolutionary fighter with del Pilar at the age of 17; the Spaniards cornered him in the Bulacan church and killed him. Vicente heard the story many times from his father. He also heard his father's repeated admonition: "Be first in all things intellectual."

To be an exceptional intellectual, one must be an exceptional student. Vicente was both. From the barrio school in Tibig, he moved to the Academy in Manila, then to the University of the Philippines. When he left UP, in 1916, he had mapped out his future; he would be a scientist, a chemist.

It is a long road from a barrio school to the laboratory of a scientist. Vicente followed its windings to the United States, to the University of California and to Columbia University in New York City. There he married an American girl, Ruth Propper. When he came back to the Philippines, his mind was fixed upon his life work.

He had a great dream of industrializing the Philippines. He envisioned it in terms of utilizing our own resources in new ways. As an industrial chemist, he saw wonderful possibilities in such things as the ordinary coconut. In 1925 he began research on a simple process of extracting oil and other fuels from the coconut. He devoted all his genius to it. Between experiments he returned to the states, studying at Oberlin College and at New York University. In all his life he never halted his studies.

In 1936 the answer came to the problem of coconut fuel. He patented the Lava Process and established a factory for its application at Calumpang and at San Pablo, Laguna. The process of extracting fuel led him enthusiastically on to new processes for the coconut: milk with the same nutritive value as cow's milk, flour, condensed milk. In the meantime he experimented on new uses for sugar, for tobacco, and for other native products.

Vicente Lava acquired world renown. He was honored with membership in the American Chemical Society, the American Men of Science, the New York Academy of Arts and Sciences, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the National Research Council of the Philippines, and a dozen other honorary societies.

Vicente, however, did not keep himself in an ivory tower. When he felt the walls of one closing around him, he demolished them. His eyes were not closed to the other factors of his environment. He saw, for one thing, that his dream of an industrialized Philippines was impossible as long as imperialism dominated our country. He noticed, too, that fascism in the world was destroying independent scientific thinking. He came to a decision that broadened his dream.

"At first," he said, "I thought that if a man excelled in his field that was enough of a contribution; he could then just be content to join a civic organization. But the pressure of inter-

national events, and the operation of harmful social forces in my own country taught me differently; they taught me that man's social problems must be solved before any headway can be made in scientific problems. Around me, wherever I looked, there was a tremendous wastage of human lives and human energies. In pure science, one can afford to make mistakes, but in the social sciences, where human lives are at stake, fundamental errors must not be permitted." His scientific approach led him to the ranks of the progressive movement in the Philippines.

One of his first steps was to organize the League for the Defense of Democracy. He was one of the first to raise his voice in warning against the threat of Japanese aggression. When, a few months before the war, emissaries of the Japanese government approached him and offered to buy the Lava Process, for a sum of one million pesos, he refused even to consider it. He wanted his work to be used for the benefit of the Filipino people.

Through his activities in the people's movements before the war he became deeply interested in the agrarian problem and in the peasant movement. All his scientific work had been designed to bring greater abundance into the life of the common *tao;* now he clasped the hand of the *tao*, to work together with him to remove the barriers to an abundant life.

Before the war began, Vicente shared our opinion that a guerrilla army and a mass people's resistance would be necessary if the Philippines were invaded. When the war finally came, he knew well where such a movement would be likely to grow. In the city the Japanese were looking for him, to obtain his process formula. He went directly to Central Luzon and aided us in hammering out the design of the Hukbalahap. His advice and his counsel were so valuable that he became widely known as the advisor of the Huk.

He lived in the barrios where our organization was strong. The people knew him as "V. Y.," his underground name: "V" for "Victor" or victory, and "Y" for "Yantok," the flexible but unbreakable tree which has its roots deep in the earth. The barrio people knew intuitively that he must be an important man, and they would bring him extra portions of eggs and milk. They would come into his house to watch him have discussions with

us, observing his bright sharp eyes and the quick nodding motions of his eager head. When the hardships of the forests and swamps finally wasted his body, they took care of him with all the solicitude of a close family. They felt that he was part of them.

It delighted Vicente during the war to see native industries develop due to the lack of imported goods: edible coconut oil, alkali for soap making, sugar alcohol, flour substitutes from rice, corn, cassava and sweet potato, an increased use of rattan, buri and other forest plants for making furniture, bags, etc., native drugs and medicines. He would point to them with pride.

Vicente Lava was the symbol of the new society, in which the manual worker and the brain worker join together for the common cause of mankind.

Mateo del Castillo, who occupied the important post of political director on the Military Committee, was a striking example of devotion to the working-class movement. He had not started life as a peasant, either, but as the son of a middle-class landowner in Batangas. His father was Spanish, and he had received the severe Spanish education. His father had been sent out from Spain during the period of the Filipino revolts and was justice of the peace in Tanauan, Batangas, when Mateo was born, in the year of revolution, 1896. His father, however, was a liberal landowner who was amenable to reforms of the Spanish feudal system.

Del Castillo remained a part of his father's background for thirty years before he transferred his roots to other soil. When his children became old enough he wanted them to attend the city schools. He sold his lands in Batangas and moved to Manila, where he bought and operated a *carinderia.* Upstairs he had rooms rented. A Protestant preacher lived in one of them, a man who was a good friend of a leader of the KPMP.

How does a man grow into his convictions? Del Castillo had been a landowner, knowing peasants only as tenants. Now he was a restaurant-owner, a business man, with a comfortable income, a family, a satisfied existence. Yet he became deeply interested in the lot and in the struggles of the peasants. The *carinderia* became a meeting place for the KPMP leadership.

Among those who came there was Crisanto Evangelista, who awoke in del Castillo the same intense admiration and love that made the Communist leader one of the most beloved of Filipinos. Del Castillo threw himself so actively into the discussions of the peasant movement that he was made treasurer of the KPMP.

From that time everything that del Castillo owned belonged also to the movement. Anyone in the movement could come and eat free in the *carinderia.* Whatever income he had was given to the organization. Eventually he had to sell his business to pay for the debts that came from its neglect. His family, although in a desperate economic plight, was unanimous in its support of him and his activities.

When del Castillo became immersed in peasant organization he joined the golden company which has made our history so rich: those who go to prison for the people. Time after time he was arrested, and jailed, always for the convenient crime of "sedition." In Cabanatuan (Nueva Ecija), in Manila, in San Miguel (Bulacan), the constabulary came to take him.

When I came to know Mateo del Castillo I found him to be a kind, gentle comrade, who conducted his own life in a severely simple fashion. He was very disciplined; he had adjusted himself to meet the worst of hardships with complete equanimity. If there was nothing to eat but a handful of poor rice, he would eat it with the same appreciation with which he enjoyed a sumptuous meal. He had absolutely no regard for his own personal welfare.

When the Japanese invaders came, del Castillo had an obvious place to go, among the peasants whose fortunes he had made his own.

Del Castillo's assistant in the political department, a man who became political director of the Huk in 1944, and later, in 1945, its chief-of-staff, was Mariano Balgos. There was a deep significance in the team-work of the two men. Del Castillo had become a peasant leader; Balgos was from the industrial trade union movement of Manila. Together they were a symbol of the most important unity that Filipinos can achieve: the unity of peasant and worker.

Mariano Balgos is a son of the working class. His father, too, was a worker, and also a revolutionist. During the revolution of 1896, he was a sergeant in the Katipunan,* under Ricarte, using the pseudonym "Alon." He was an active supporter of Bonifacio against Aguinaldo. After the conquest of the Philippines by the American imperialists, the elder Balgos became a Ricartista in the Veterans of the Revolution, one of those who refused to pledge loyalty to the American government in the Philippines. Mariano grew up in the home atmosphere of sensitivity to nationalism and to the ills of the downtrodden.

Balgos went as far as the seventh grade in a Sampaloc school and then graduated into the stricter classrooms of struggling for a living. In 1915, at the age of 17, he got his first job, as a printer for the *Manila Daily Bulletin*. The labor movement was in its infancy then; Balgos grew up with it. In 1917 he became a member of the *Union Impresores de Pilipinas* (Printers Union of the Philippines), which six years before had been the first industrial union to be organized in our country. Its president and founder was Crisanto Evangelista. In his local branch, Balgos became secretary at once.

It is impossible to think of the printers' union, one of the proudest and most militant of our trade unions, without considering the role of Balgos. He became its national secretary in 1924, a position which he held until the outbreak of the war; after the war he became its national president, taking the place of the martyred Crisanto Evangelista. To the printers he is so beloved that they have rushed to his defense many a time for his activities outside the union.

An expert typesetter and compositor, he worked at his trade for 14 years, until 1931, when he became a full-time labor organizer. He was always sensitive about discrimination, and would quit one printshop to work in another rather than submit to it.

He had many activities. To Balgos there are many sides,

* The Katipunan, Association of Sons of the People, organized by Andreas Bonifacio, led the struggle for freedom from Spain and later from the United States.—*Ed.*

which have merged to make him one of the most rounded of Filipino labor leaders. From 1917-1924 he was secretary of *Panitik at Diwa,* a Tagalog literary organization; he was fond of writing stories and poems in Tagalog and was popular as a declaimer and crowner of beauty queens in fiestas. From 1924-1930 he was secretary of *Kapatirang* Mabini (Mabini Brotherhood), a nationalistic civic organization. In 1927 he was an orator for *Anak ng Bayan* (Sons of the People), another nationalist group. The Ricartista father lived on in the son. From 1924-1928 he was secretary of a local chapel of the strongly nationalist Philippine Independent Church, and from 1926-1928 he was a minister of *Iglesia Rizalina,* a Protestant sect with a nationalistic trend. While a minister, Balgos was appalled at the discrimination practiced toward Filipino ministers.

When, on August 26, 1927, Evangelista organized the KAP—*Katipunan ng mga Anak Pawis* (League of the Sons of Labor)—Balgos became the secretary of the new labor organization. The KAP injected the spirit of struggle into the Philippine labor movement. The authorities responded with repressions. Together with others, Balgos was arrested a number of times for labor activity. In 1933 the repressions were intensified. Already, because of his KAP activities, Balgos had been thrown out of his job at the government Bureau of Printing. It was the time of the economic crisis and the workers were restless and ready for action. The authorities sought to crush the unions by illegalizing labor activities. The KAP held a convention that year during which imperialism and its reactionary Filipino tools were denounced. The police invaded the Retono Building in Manila, where the convention was held, and staged mass arrests. Of the delegates, 214 were accused of sedition. Twenty-seven, among them Balgos, were sentenced to imprisonment and to long terms of exile in the provinces.

On his return to Manila in October 1937, he resumed organizing for the KAP. Balgos was a candidate in 1940, for Manila councilor on the Frente Popular* ticket, and in 1941 he ran for the Senate.

* An electoral bloc of Communists and other democratic elements.—*Ed.*

At the beginning of the war, Balgos left Manila and went to Tanay in eastern Rizal province. Mountains, suitable for a guerrilla base, existed near the town. With a group of other Manila people, among them I. P. Caballero, the writer, he organized an armed unit, based in the mountains, and a united front committee in the town. But no one was very familiar with techniques, and there was much carelessness about secrecy. Information leaked to the enemy, and the organization was smashed. Balgos found his way to Central Luzon and joined us in the Huk.

We welcomed Balgos, a man with soft speech and immense dignity, but with such a firm determination for the workers' cause that it earned him the name of *Bakal* (iron). Through him, we knew, the workers of Manila stood at our side.

In charge of our united front and mass organizational work was Juan Feleo, the pre-war leader of the peasant unions in Nueva Ecija. In that province the peasants worshipped him because he had devoted himself so completely to their cause that his life was one long calendar of privation and suffering.

Feleo was born in the Nueva Ecija town of Santa Rosa, on the 1st of May, 1896. International Labor Day was an appropriate day for Feleo to be born. He had a middle-class origin, but his family had mortgaged their lands and had become poor. His father had been a revolutionist against Spain. He was proud of it. In school, in the class skits, he always wanted to play the role of Rizal; it was a way of emulating his father's hero.

Feleo became a teacher, earning only 18 pesos a month but satisfied because he worked without a *capatas* to drive him. He taught for five years in Santa Rosa. People came to know him as a person to whom they could bring their problems. At first he mediated lovers' quarrels, family arguments, or the disputes of neighbors. Then peasants began to come to him, bringing complaints about agrarian problems. When he defended the cases of peasants before their landlords the reports appeared in the newspapers. It attracted the attention of the peasant leaders who convinced him that he should not only advise but should organize the peasants.

The peasants of Santa Rosa were easily organized, having

respected Feleo's leadership long before. Although his family included eleven children, he plunged into the peasant movement, sacrificing his means of livlihood. He soon came to know Crisanto Evangelista, Mateo del Castillo, Antonio de Ora and other labor and peasant leaders. Their association was a powerful incentive to the building of a stronger peasant movement.

Feleo played a dominant role in the growth of the KPMP. He was a powerful speaker who could stir a crowd to great militancy with his expression of their feelings. A man who can do this is often called an "agitator" who "creates" discontent. That is false. Such a man is followed because he gives voice to the inarticulate masses; he is the true spokesman of the people; he has merely put into words their desires and demands.

The increased militancy of the KPMP in 1930 resulted in brutal repression by the landlords. They tried to behead the movement by striking at its leaders. While speaking at a mass rally in San Leonardo, Nueva Ecija, Feleo was arrested for "sedition." That was the first of his experiences with landlord jails. In the same year he addressed a memorial meeting on the death of Antonio de Ora, in Santa Rosa, and was again arrested for "sedition."

In San Antonio he led a demonstration of 10,000 peasants against the persecutions that were going on. They marched in the streets of the town. A large detachment of constabulary halted them. The lieutenant drew a line in the dust of the street. "Step across that line and it will be your doom!" he shouted. The women were the first to cross the line. The PC fired tear gas into the crowd. Arrests followed, many of them women. Feleo was again jailed. For twelve days he was forced to sleep on the cement floor of the unequipped jail. His wife had to sell their pig to get him bailed out.

In a San Miguel-Candaba demonstration the people clamored for him to speak. Although he knew the constabulary was waiting to arrest him if he did speak, he climbed to the platform and denounced the government of landlords and capitalists that was responsible for the people's misery. He was seized and immediately imprisoned. The people went with him and filled the municipal building; they brought him food at all hours of the day and

would not leave him. The authorities transferred him to Malolos. The chief of the Bulacan constabulary came to see him. "Mr. Feleo," he said. "You have a wife and many children. You must pity them. If you wish them to be better off, you can name your price, as long as you stop being a leader." "If you ask me that, it is because you do not understand the vast aims of our movement," answered Feleo. "If you ask me to name my price all the money in the Philippines will not be enough, because when I demand money it will be for all the peasants in the Philippines." He remained in prison until the people bailed him out.

The landlords, however, were determined to shut him away from the peasant movement. On Christmas Eve, 1931, the PC took him from his home and jailed him once more on the old "sedition" charge. This time they kept him eight months. His children would visit him in shifts; one son came one day and stayed on with his father. The peasants came so often and in such large groups that the authorities moved him to another jail.

Released on bail for two months, Feleo appealed his case to the American courts. It was rejected. He went back to prison with a sentence of seven and a half years. His wife sold fish in the market and the small children had to work in order to provide for themselves. When, after six years, Quezon offered him a parole, he refused. "I want no conditional freedom," he said. Friends in the peasant movement, however, prevailed upon him to accept because his services would be more valuable to the organization outside than inside a prison. It was 1937 when free air once more entered his lungs.

Feleo was instrumental in forcing Quezon to enact the Tenancy Law, Act Number 4054, which put on paper at least the right of a peasant to a fair share of the crop he grew and to fair treatment. When Quezon created the National Commission of Peasants in 1939, Feleo became its Executive Secretary. At the outbreak of the war he went underground with the Huks. There was no interference with his life work of mass organization: he simply continued it under other circumstances.

The Lava family has been extremely generous in the contribution of its sons to the people's movements in the Philippines. In

addition to the wisdom of Vicente we gained the humane skill of his brother, Jesus.

Jesse Lava was typical of the new, young progressive intellectual who came into being in the years before the war. I. P. Caballero was another. They were young men who had rejected the shallow ivory towers in which many intellectuals shut themselves. Jesse, I. P., and others found their way to the side of the workers and peasants.

Jesse studied medicine at the University of the Philippines, obtaining his degree in 1938. His desire to be a doctor was prompted by his intense desire to erase tuberculosis from the lives of Filipinos: two brothers and a sister had died of it. School had its distractions, but when he left the university and took up practice at the Mercy Hospital in Manila, he began to study medicine as a scientist. He was fascinated by the possibility of using medicine truly as a weapon for the advancement of mankind, and not just as a means of making money in a profession. He observed the extreme poverty of many of his patients, who could not afford payment of the smallest fees and suffered as a result. Tuberculosis itself is chiefly a disease of poverty. He thought: How can medicine progress under such conditions? He read the works of the American, Dr. Henry Sigerist, and was influenced by his ideas on socialized medicine.

When one feels strongly the problems of the people, one is drawn to the organizations that fight for the people. Jesse recognized such organizations in the Friends of China and the groups supporting the Loyalists in Spain. He joined them. He also joined the League for the Defense of Democracy, in which many other intellectuals were arrayed against fascism. In 1941 he became one of six vice-chairmen of the Philippine Youth Congress. I met him that year in Manila, when I attended a Youth Congress meeting as a delegate of the Peasant Youth League of the Philippines. Later he came to Pampanga, where he demonstrated youth solidarity with the peasants on the picket lines. During the Japanese boycott movement he passed out leaflets and defied arrest.

When the war came he remained in the city at first, doing Red Cross work. At the same time, he was active in the Free Philip-

pines resistance movement, using the Mercy Hospital as a contact place. When the Free Philippines printed its underground newspaper he transported bundles to Central Luzon, traveling simultaneously as a volunteer doctor to alleviate the dysentery and typhoid epidemics that, in some places, were killing 20 to 30 people each day. In October, his family home in Bulacan was raided by the Japanese (who even used a cannon in the raid). Jesse went underground with the Huk. We benefited tremendously from his medical advice to our fledgling first aiders. In addition, by the end of 1942, he did contact work in the towns, dangerous work that involved approaching uncertain elements and attempting to enlist their support.

The oldest of our active field commanders was Eusebio Aquino, from the town of Magalang. The erect ramrod-like old man was in his mid-fifties when he came to our first conference to report the collection of firearms from the landlords. The quiet, soft-spoken old blacksmith was one of the most beloved of the AMT leaders before the war. He really did not know how old he was. When he was a small boy he would ask his grandmother, but she would reply, "Oh, you were born during the time of such-and-such a Spanish governor." Consequently Bio, who had no way of calculating his years, considers himself ageless and as belonging by the side of younger men.

Old Bio has always been a great questioner. He was a schoolboy when the Americans snatched independence from the Filipinos who had fought the Spaniards for it. His father was revolutionary General Mianong Aquino. When the police rounded up the small boys to attend the new American schools, Bio ran to hide in the tall grass. So great was the resentment toward the Americans that the people questioned even their schools.

"How do you know?" "Can you prove it?" That was his approach to any question. It was a scientific attitude that was accentuated by the crafts which he learned, becoming first a carpenter and then, in 1919, a blacksmith. He had to rely on the precision of his own imagination to make his blacksmith tools, but he was able to turn out workmanship that the townspeople considered better than European-made. "If you do a

thing, do it with art," was his advice later to young Huks.

His demand for answers and for proof sharpened his observations of events in the town and barrios. He noticed that when two rich candidates ran in an election they were divided and fought each other, but that when a poor man was a candidate the rich forgot their differences and united against him. He noticed a rich man from Malabon who came to visit a rich Pampangueño; they were not related but they called each other *primo* or cousin, and met affectionately. They are cousins of the pocketbook, thought Bio. When he sat by the window thereafter in his house and a poor man passed by, he leaned from the window and called him cousin.

Because he liked people he circulated among everybody, rich and poor alike. When customers came to his blacksmith shop he gave them his practical philosophy along with his workmanship. He knew the leaders of the early Tangulan, and of the early KPMP. Both groups treated him like a member. The rich accepted him, too. He took his time about deciding where he belonged.

In 1924 there was a rice crisis. The bodegas in the town were full of rice, but the peasants were hungry. They came occasionally to town to ask help, and sought Bio's advice. He regarded them thoughtfully and said: "Why do you come in two's and three's? Why not come in hundreds?"

The peasants not only came in hundreds, but they came bearing sacks. The landlords were frightened and hurriedly armed special police with shotguns. Bio, drifting from one group to the other, shook his head. "When people are hungry you do not feed them guns, you give them food." The landlords, who knew the peasants respected Bio, sent him to confer with the people. The peasants, however, looked to him as a leader and asked again for advice. Bio told them to wait for his signal, and then to start marching on the municipal building. He returned to the landlords and told them the peasants were uncontrollable and that the only answer was to subscribe rice for the hungry masses. When the landlords balked Bio gave his signal. The peasants converged on the *municipio*. The landlords consented.

The *municipio* was soon overflowing with rice. "This rice cannot be eaten now; you must feed them; they are hungry," urged Bio. The landlords, ringed with gaunt peasants, were convinced, and ordered tables spread with food in the marketplace. Bio marched the peasants to the tables. They were awed by the sight and ate timidly. "Eat, eat more," urged Bio. When they had finished a peasant whispered to Bio, "What about the remnants?" "Put the remnants in your sacks," said Bio. They cleaned every crumb off the tables.

In the *municipio* the peasants filed past with their sacks, for their share. They were very honest and answered accurately the number in their families. Bio thought: All their lives they have been cheated, yet they know only honesty. He was helping in the distribution. When a peasant said he had two children, Bio would butt in to say, "What! What's the matter with you? You know you have six children!" Or, to a man who claimed to be single, "What! Are you keeping your marriage a secret? And yesterday I saw you getting married? And what about the brothers and sister who live with you?" He filled their sacks.

There is an amusing story of how Bio became a Socialist. When the Socialist movement began in Pampanga in 1932 the people turned to it spontaneously in many barrios. It was a restless period. Peasants, in desperation, resorted to carrying off rice from the mills. A friend of Bio's, who had been losing rice, came to him and asked him to go to the barrio to pacify the people. Bio went and spoke to the people, urging them to get what they wanted by unity and not by anarchy.

The mayor heard a distorted version of Bio's visit, to the effect that he had been preaching socialism and had even aided the people in carrying off the rice. The mayor became excited and accused Bio on the street of being a Socialist. Bio, who knew the mayor was a puppet of a big landlord, shrugged and said, "You call me a Socialist? Well, what of it? What's so bad about that?" The mayor immediately rushed off to the barrios to denounce Bio as a Socialist agitator who must not be listened to.

When Bio heard of it he went to the barrios to correct the impression. To his surprise, the peasants flocked around him and

said, "You do not have to agitate. We are Socialist already. Come, organize us." Bio was flustered. He sympathized with the people, but he was not yet prepared to be a Socialist. To gain time to think it over he promised to return in two weeks and organize them. When the time came he was still undecided and concluded that he would conveniently forget about his appointment. The people were not to be denied. They came to get him.

In the barrio there was a big feast. Guiltily Bio ate. Then everybody adjourned to the chapel, which had been arranged for the big initiation meeting. Bio, casting around for a way out and not wanting to antagonize the people, decided that he would pretend that he was inspector for Abad Santos. He told the people that Abad Santos urged caution in a matter like this, that they shouldn't rush into a movement without making sure of what they were doing. He was thinking of the false leaders whom he had seen before. He told the people that it was not yet time for them to be initiated, and that they should only sign a roster. He promised to return in two weeks for further instruction.

Again undecided, he conveniently forgot. The people became impatient. A truckload of them rode to San Fernando and protested to Abad Santos. Don Perico listened carefully, and told them that Bio was right, that they should first make sure. He did not tell them that Bio was not his representative, but he pulled aside one peasant whom he knew and asked, "Who is this Aquino?" When he heard how Bio had been unofficially representing the peasants, he appointed Bio an organizer, without ever having seen him.

Bio, who found himself a Socialist no matter which way he turned, was relieved to have his mind made up for him, and plunged at once into real organization. Only after two months, when he had enrolled a large membership, did he finally go to meet Abad Santos.

In the pre-war years Bio was a member of the central committee of the AMT. Both there and later in the Huk he was a man who functioned unostentatiously as a leader. He detests public speaking and prefers to spread his ideas and the ideas of

the movement by conversation. He does not like the fruit of an idea to be hidden in the bushes of oratory. "Get to the point," he will urge. When Bio came into the Huk he assumed the nickname *Panday Pira,* the Blacksmith Bard, after a well-known Pampanga poet. Instead of forging horseshoes and hoes, he now placed the Japanese between the hammer and anvil of his squadrons.

From the KPMP in Nueva Ecija came another of the outstanding personalities of the Huk. He was Jose de Leon, a peasant leader among the tenants who had fought particularly brutal exploitation on the large estates of Nueva Ecija. He became a student of Feleo in the movement.

Jose de Leon is better known under the name "Dimasalang," a contraction of the phrase meaning "cannot be touched." Like Alejandrino, he is from a small landowning family. He was born in 1908, and had a high school education. His grandfather had been a revolutionary leader in the province, and Jose grew up with an intense feeling about the achievement of Filipino independence. It was the stand on independence taken by the Peasant Brotherhood, a Bulacan organization which flourished around 1921, that first attracted him to the peasant movement. At that time proprietors were driving peasants out of the fields if they refused to vote as they were told. The Peasant Brotherhood fought evictions and defended democratic rights. The fact that independence was among their demands made a deep impression on the young de Leon.

High school graduation came in 1928, on the brink of the great economic crisis. Its effect moved de Leon closer to the organized people's movements. First he sympathized with the Democrata opposition* until its bankruptcy became apparent. Then, in 1931, he joined the KPMP, as a local organizer in the barrios of his home town of Aliaga.

At the outbreak of the war de Leon was arrested by the panicky Commonwealth Government, accused as a "subversive character." He was imprisoned for two weeks, although he had

* A group splitting from the Nacionalista Party, in opposition to the leadership of Manuel Quezon.—*Ed.*

immediately issued a statement to KPMP members, calling upon them for an all-out resistance to the Japanese invader. When the government saw the ill-logic of its position he was released. He undertook at once to organize the rudiments of a people's army in Nueva Ecija, based on the KPMP members. In February he became chairman of the military committee in Nueva Ecija.

In the squadrons of Dabu was a young 22-year-old youth who believed that action was more valuable than words. His name was Silvestre Liwang. He came from the town of Lubao. in Southern Pampanga, the son of a poor peasant. Throughout his early youth he worked in the fields, with his father. Father and son both joined the AMT, the youngster in 1936, when he was only seventeen. He helped organize the barrios of Lubao.

After the death of his father in 1938, he went to Manila to find work that would give him more of an income than tenant farming. He got a job as a mechanic in the National Development Company. In the city he came in contact with the trade union movement. He joined the lumber workers' union.

When chaos disrupted the life of the city in December 1941, he returned to the province. In Lubao there were armed detachments forming as early as January 1942, led by AMT leaders. He joined one, as a sergeant. Eventually the Japanese learned of the Huk detachment, through spies, and sent a mop-up force. The squadron ambushed them and killed 17 Japanese and PC's. Liwang's coolheadedness in the encounter boosted him to the rank of squadron commander. By the end of 1942 he was second in command under Dabu.

He took the name of Linda Bie, a combination of Spanish and Pampango, meaning "Beautiful Life."

Linda represented a significant element in the resistance movement. He was a peasant who had worked and had been trained in industry. He brought to the struggle a mechanic's appraisal, an industrial worker's feeling for unity and organization. When I heard Linda speak of his exploits, in those rare moments when he could be gotten to talk about himself, I noticed his use of the phrase: "Then I made a plan." It was the approach of a well-organized mind. In the peasant movement we often spoke of our "carabao efficiency" and we welcomed the disciplined

characteristics of the worker in industry. In an important sense, Linda was one of the forerunners of that merger of peasants and workers that will bring about the victory of the common Filipino.

One of the proudest features of the Hukbalahap was the role played in its ranks by women. In no other wartime guerrilla organization was this true, except in minor capacities. As a matter of fact, in most units of the USAFFE (U.S. Army Forces of the Far East), women usually played the role of the "guerrilla wife," chosen by officers for temporary convenience. There were cases of USAFFE guerrilla leaders who had as many as one hundred "wives" during the occupation. The only other tasks of the women in such organizations were menial, nursing, cooking, or chopping wood.

In the Hukbalahap we had leading military commanders who were women, as well as innumerable mass organizers. A woman, Dayang-Dayang, led the first organized encounter against the Japanese, in Mandili.

Remedios Gomez, who adopted the name "Liwayway," was the daughter of the pre-war vice-mayor of the town of Mexico, who was also a provincial organizer of the AMT. As a family breadwinner she ran a modiste shop and contracted for embroideries. She was interested in the so-called feminine pursuits, dancing, pretty clothes, perfumes, but she was also the chairman of the Youth League in her barrio of Anau. She was pretty, soft-spoken and delicate in her mannerisms.

For five months after the invasion Liwayway continued to maintain her modiste shop. Then occurred an event that completely transformed her life. Her father was betrayed and killed by puppets in Mexico. Shortly after that both Liwayway and her brother joined the Huk. Her first act was to organize a platoon of soldiers from her barrio.

Unlike Dayang-Dayang, who was so masculine that she sometimes inspired fear in her soldiers, Liwayway preserved her feminine charms under the most difficult of circumstances. Before an encounter she would comb her hair, apply lipstick, manicure and polish her nails. "Why shouldn't I?" she said. "One of the things I am fighting for is the right to be myself." She carried

perfumes and offered them to comrades who, in all their dirt and sweat, would gravely decline.

The character of Liwayway, however, belied her mannerisms. She was not flighty and superficial. Our movement consumed all her energies and dominated her thoughts and speech. She did not talk of dresses, dancing or perfumes; she talked of the work to be done, of our organizational tasks, of the obstacles to be overcome. I have sat beside her when she was prostrate with malaria, the tears unashamedly on my cheeks, and listened to her in her delirium speak of nothing but the welfare of other comrades and of the problems of the resistance.

Before the end of 1942 Liwayway was a squadron commander, carrying out daring ambushes of enemy troops.

Another vigorous woman leader developed in this early period was a former KPMP organizer from the swampy riverside region of Pampanga near Apalit. She took the name *Guerrero* (Warrior), and it was a fitting one. She was a big-bodied woman with a man's strength, fond of wearing a man's clothes. She became adept at handling an automatic rifle, and would command on the firing line. She was one of the organizers of Apalit Squadron 104, which became one of our best. Guerrero was also a good speaker and an effective rallier of the people's support.

The year 1942 was rich for us in new comrades who developed as military leaders and as mass organizers. In Bulacan a poor peasant from the barrio of Bankal built the squadron that became the nucleus for the Huk growth in that province. He was Fred Laan, a short, pink-cheeked, quiet comrade, who started his career in the Huk as a squadron organizer. In Squadron 6, in Pampanga, were the two Lising brothers, from Mexico, Pampanga, who were brilliant and daring. Another Squadron 6 man was Catapatan, later to become a leading commander. One of the Bataan veterans who came to us was Paul Aquino, son of old Bio; he became an important addition to our Tarlac forces.

Among the many proteges of Banal was the son of Zacharias Viray, the pre-war martyr in Masantol. Like his father, this brave 16-year-old boy, Pelagio Viray, gave his life for the people.

There were many others. But I must stop. It is difficult for

me to select names at random from among the hundreds of people who became, overnight, brilliant soldiers and underground fighters. Each is deserving of a volume as his monument. They came to us in scores. The people gave freely of their sons and daughters.

12. Self-Evaluation

My life and actions as Commander-in-Chief of the Hukbalahap were becoming more and more unified with the lives of those whom I represented. Whatever attention I may have received from my fellow-countrymen was due solely to my identification with the Hukbalahap and with other people's movements.

When I came into the Socialist movement in 1936 I had many ideals about what the people were and what they should be. I would approach them and say: "Organize and unite!" and when they did not do so immediately I would think "What's the matter with them anyway?" Slowly, however, the people ceased to be a word, an idea, a mass; they became faces that I knew, hands that I felt as I grasped, voices that I recognized, individual gestures and mannerisms. I discovered their humanity. Also, I began to see our movement in terms, not of ideals, but of hard work by people who sacrificed. If the people came to accept me it was not because of bombastic speeches or the expounding of high sounding theories, but because I became one of them, a brother.

The war left no room for mistakes. I had weaknesses; I was criticized for them and urged to correct them, for my weaknesses were the enemy's strength. I was soft-hearted, for instance. When I was a boy I would cry over the death of a chicken. Now I was in the position of ordering the death of certain spies, traitors, enemies of the people. I, personally, never took the life of a single human being, but I have signed the death

warrants of many as Commander-in-Chief of the Hukbalahap. I acted as the representative of the people's will. In every case mine was the responsibility, and I accepted it.

My training under Abad Santos had produced an erratic tendency which my comrades in the Huk persistently criticized. Don Perico's office had no system, and all of us who worked with him were free to follow our own methods and our own ideas. Unity suffered and individualistic traits appeared. I still had them at the beginning of the war; I would take steps and give directions without consulting other members of the leading bodies. In the sessions which we held for self- and group-criticism, I was given some hard knocks by my comrades, until I took steps to correct myself. In our organization, where unity and democracy were essential, individualism could easily degenerate into anarchy.

Our decisions were collective and, once arrived at, fell under my supervision. We did not have a "headquarters" complex. We were all field commanders. To implement policies we would each take a Military District and tour it, Alejandrino to Pampanga, del Castillo to Nueva Ecija, myself to Bulacan. In addition there were inspection tours of the squadrons. Our headquarters, in the first place, was not permanently located; we constantly shifted from one barrio to another, or to the forest or to the swamp. It was simple: our office was not much more than a typewriter and a roof. Until the late phases of the war we led a highly mobile existence. That was a big factor in our successful existence on the plain.

A guerrilla leads a perpetual life of hazard. In that respect I was no different from the rest. I had narrow escapes and hairline experiences. Like the rest, I often ran, climbed, crawled or squirmed my way to safety. It is not my intention, however, to underscore my experiences during the war. A history of the Huk alone would be my biography, and if any of my comrades read these pages, I know that they also would say: "Look, there is my biography, too."

Despite the privations of our life, there was much that made us happy. The life of the peasants even in the best of peacetime conditions is a miserable one. Now, however, our difficulties were

lightened by our way of life. We governed ourselves with our own set of principles which gave us a new sensation of freedom, democracy, and comradeship. It was possible for an ordinary Huk soldier to live in the rain, in the mud, in a rough lean-to, to go hungry, and to be sick, and still to feel excited, because his destiny was his own. Our squadrons were happy; they sang, joked, played games; they went into encounters singing.

My own sense of happiness had many sources. My wife was with me throughout the war; coming back to her each time after trips in the field was not unlike returning to San Fernando before the war after visiting the barrios to organize. It sprang, too, from the wonderful movement we were creating, and the transformation that was taking place among the people. I was 29 years old when I came into leadership of the Hukbalahap. I was young enough to be boyishly excited by our tasks. I rushed about with such energy that comrades, who were dubbing each other with nicknames to facilitate underground work, called me first "Lu-Lu" (the racing one), then "Alipato" (the spark that spreads a fire). When I was on the march, climbing our mountains, I would run up slopes and leap from rock to tree to rock again, feeling the same release of energy that I used to feel as a boy in Bulacan, when I climbed the mountains during holidays.

Freedom is never so exuberant as when it is hard pressed.

Next to my wife, my greatest personal happiness during this period came from the presence in our organization of my younger brother, Peregrino. I had always regarded Reg as the most promising one in our family. When I had to leave school myself I insisted to Reg that under no circumstances should he abandon his studies. He remained in school, studying to be a teacher. After his graduation in 1936 he became a vocational training instructor in Laguna High School, teaching there for five years, until the outbreak of the war.

Reg is five years younger than I. I remember him sitting at our feet when we used to argue heatedly about socialism in my brother Meliton's tailor shop in Manila, his mouth open in amazement at the way we juggled such peculiar phrases. He

assured me that some day he would take part in the movement with me. He was not impetuous; he approached the movement intellectually, deepening his convictions first. While teaching in Laguna he joined the League for the Defense of Democracy.

At the outbreak of the war Reg, as a teacher, automatically became a reserve officer. He was sent to Dau, in Pampanga, at the time when the first steps were being taken by us to organize the Huk. When all the Fil-American forces were ordered to retreat to Bataan, Reg came to us, to do his fighting in what he thought was the most effective way. When I saw him I embraced him fervently. We were together at last in the great common struggle.

The most significant emotion of my life has been the joy of comradeship, and the Hukbalahap was an army of comrades. It is an emotion that springs from an essential love of one's fellow men, a love for people that transcends family and all those intimately treasured in the heart. It is a supreme happiness to live, work and struggle with people who share one's beliefs. All of us, in peacetime, had lived in our own homes, with our own families, knowing comradeship chiefly during organizational work. Now we were all one family, living together, going hungry together, sharing common hardships equally. Our common home was usually a tiny, unobtrusive shelter which was so crowded that we slept in layers. We ate from the same pot, off the same banana leaf. Our lives were communal.

Neither at our headquarters, with a squadron, nor in a barrio could we act in the prescribed bourgeois fashion as leaders. I considered it sacrilegious for me to be considered in any way but as a comrade and as a man not only by our soldiers but by the masses as a whole. It was more important, I felt, that our "Fundamental Spirit" be followed to the letter by the leaders than by our comrades in general.

It was, and still is, a joy to me to mend the torn clothes of my comrades; reduce me to my economic essentials and I am a tailor. My greatest delight, however, is in cooking, or in baking a cake for a comrade's birthday. To be a commander of the kitchen can often be as exalting as to be a commander of an army.

Fundamentally, I have always considered that if I can make others happy then my function as a human being has been fulfilled. I believe in reaching out to people, in going out of my ways to please, to aid, or to soothe. I have often been criticized by other leading comrades because I have devoted so much time and attention to the welfare and comfort of others that I have neglected my own personal development. "You should read," they would tell me. "You should study." They were correct, and I followed their criticism, knowing that a people's movement demands leadership armed with the most advanced knowledge, with the theories of struggle, with history, economics, and political science. Nevertheless, it would be incongruous for me, or for anyone in our movement, to adopt a political philosophy based on the brotherhood of man, and not to practice it in our own lives.

13. Counter-Attack

We began the year 1943 with an excess of confidence. The December Japanese raid had been severe, but when it passed we remained, and in the same old places. It made us feel that the enemy was incapable of crushing us, or even of crippling us badly. Such an attitude led us into a gross underestimation of the enemy's strength. We repeated the same audacious tactic that we had stressed following the September raid: intensive military activity, with many raids and ambushes. This in spite of the fact that the enemy had increased their patrols until they were almost a daily occurrence.

A large raiding patrol of three hundred Japanese entered the barrio of Gandue, Mexico, on January 9, and were engaged in a big battle by our squadrons, which managed to kill 83 of the enemy. Another battle at Bitukang Manuk, Macabebe, was notable for the heroic conduct of Mameng, the daughter of Banal, who fought the enemy face to face with a .38 pistol,

killing several enemy soldiers before she died in action.

On January 22 we caught an enemy patrol of over 100 men while it was crossing the river in the vicinity of Cantunga, near Arayat. Their presence in that spot, which was in the forest proper, indicated that they were becoming more aggressive. Wa Chi Squadron 48 ambushed them. The enemy was allowed to cross the river and to climb the bank. Then, their retreat cut off, they were attacked. The Chinese were very daring; they attacked with bayonets and fought the Japanese hand-to-hand. During the fight they were reinforced by another squadron. Thirty Japanese were killed before they could get back across the river.

Early in February our forces made an assault on Arayat *poblacion*. It was the day of the inauguration of the puppet mayor, and a puppet demonstration had been scheduled. The raid was carried out under the command of G. Y. He took 200 men with him, stationed most of them around the outskirts of the town, which he entered with only a small group. G.Y., the rightful mayor, was paying an unofficial call on his spurious successor.

The intention was to disrupt the puppet demonstration, an act which in itself, was of excellent propaganda value to the people. In addition, we were after the arms of the puppet policemen. The police and their arms were in the municipal building, which was in plain view of the proceedings. A Japanese garrison was only a stone's throw away. Nevertheless the whole police force was held up and disarmed in the *municipio*. The celebration itself was smashed when the raiding party opened fire on the puppet mayor. This brought into action the Japanese garrison, which up to then was unaware of what was taking place, and our people had a narrow escape. G. Y., who had his pockets loaded with eggs given to him by friends in the town, had to roll over and over in a hasty plunge to get out of line of the enemy fire, with disastrous results. "If it had gotten any hotter," he said, "I would have been an omelet."

In February, too, a big fight occurred in the barrio of San Julian, Cabiao, also in the vicinity of the big forest. This time there were over 200 Japanese involved, and four of our squadrons

engaged the enemy. We were forced to retreat into Nueva Ecija, but there, too, the enemy patrols were everywhere. The squadrons retreated back into the forest.

Encouraged by our accomplishments, we had begun to project plans for expansion beyond our Central Luzon provinces. But our plans were due for a rude interruption. In March 1943, we were taught our biggest lesson of the war.

In our overconfidence, most of us were lulled into a false sense of security. Our people became careless about secrecy, without which any underground movement is doomed to failure. They exposed themselves carelessly in towns, where enemy spies were alert. Our own intelligence networks were not woven tightly enough, and our united front program in the barrios often went no further than the blueprint stage. Although we had initiated a rounded program, our leadership itself was at fault for not carrying out a thoroughgoing check-up and for not emphasizing our weaknesses. Those who pointed to the danger signs were often disregarded.

The greatest mistake was our concentration in the big forest of Cabiao. The forest, besides being a good hideout, had a sentimental attachment for us because the Huk had been born under its trees. A large number of our leading comrades lived there, along with at least ten squadrons. We had a hospital there, and schools. In addition, hundreds of civilians had made their homes with us. Nearly all the people of Cabiao, for instance, where the puppet government was very brutal, had moved into the forest during 1942. Houses were everywhere, and the soldiers had permanent barracks. Because most of the forest is under water during the rainy season, many houses were built in the trees.

The probing of enemy patrols around the rim of the forest in January and February should have warned us of their impending operation. We failed to take heed. When the blow fell on March 5, we were completely surprised.

When we became fully aware of what was happening, the forest was entirely surrounded. Japanese units were stationed in every barrio. Over 5,000 Japanese soldiers, plus an equal number of puppet constabulary and police, converged on the region in

five columns. One penetrated the forest at once, two others guarded the river crossings, another patrolled the highways, while the fifth was strung in a wider circle beyond the main highway. We were cordoned.

I was not in the forest at the time. I was in the swamp. That, too, was surrounded by an enemy force, but the main attack was centered on the forest.

The early morning attack was preceded by heavy bombing from ten planes. They dropped bombs through the forest but especially in the tall *talahib* around the forest edges, setting it on fire.

We had no time to prepare defenses, nor would it have been wise to risk a pitched battle. We simply dispersed, the squadrons splitting into small groups, others attempting to get out singly or in couples. V. Y. went out the dangerous way, over the river. Others who tried it were caught. Many preferred to remain in the forest and hide. There was no food and no water, and after several days of great privation many had to come out, falling into the hands of the enemy. The Japanese maintained their cordon for 10 days, each day sending over a column to comb the forest. Each day too, four or five planes came over and bombed.

There was no fighting, and we had no losses due to fighting. Large numbers of our people were captured, however, among them some of our very best organizers, of whom a heartbreaking number were tortured and killed.

Two squadrons, the Wa Chi and Squadron 66, re-assembled at once behind the enemy cordon and carried out diversionary attacks to enable other comrades to get away. They assaulted Japanese units in Mexico and Magalang, with some effect, but the enemy's reserves were moved into those localities and the forest raids went on. In Nueva Ecija the squadrons of Dimasalang conducted very effective diversionary work.

In the forest the octopus gave its last squeeze and withdrew on the 15th. On the 18th several Huk leaders were already back in the forest to discuss the catastrophe. Fourteen squadrons had been scattered. Many leading people had been killed and some were captive. Over a wide area the people in the barrios were demoralized.

Among those captured were several of our leading friends from Manila: Jesus Lava, Vitaliano Manansala, Jerry Lacuesta, and some university professors. They were made to work for the enemy in the forest, carrying heavy equipment through the tangled underbrush. If they stumbled or tried to rest they were beaten with heavy sticks. There was no water for them to drink except from the river, which was full of dead animals and men. Later, when they were forced to march to town, Jesse developed acute dysentery. The Japanese were afraid to touch him after that, for fear of contracting it themselves, and it undoubtedly saved his life. In the town of Cabiao they were flung on their faces into the dung-covered street, where the people could see them.

It was in Cabiao that Vitaliano Manansala died. Vital was a progressive young lawyer who had defended laborers in Manila before the war. He despised the Japanese fascists and had jumped at the opportunity of serving in the underground movement against them. He could not stand the idea of being captured, and perhaps unable to continue the struggle. On the way to Cabiao he tried to escape.

He was caught at once. In the streets of Cabiao he was beaten with a shovel by the Japanese. With it they broke his legs and arms, and smashed his face. As they beat him he made a speech, denouncing the Japanese barbarians. They could not shut him up. In his loud ringing voice he shouted out his hatred for fascism, calling on the people to resist and drive out the invader. The Japanese hung him head down from a tree. "This is what we do to Huks," they said. He shouted back at them: "Yes! I am a Huk, and this is how Huks live and fight!" He was dashed headlong on rocks below until he was dead. With his last breath he called upon the assembled people never to stop fighting until the fascists had been driven from the Philippines.

Some of the prisoners had only one fear, that of being forced to talk, to betray their comrades. One of our organizers, Eddie, hung upside down from a tree, dashed his head against the tree-trunk until he lost consciousness so that torture would not loosen his tongue. He lived. Others were made more determined by the heroism of Vital.

Jesse Lava followed a different tactic from the recklessness of Vital. He kept quiet, with caution learned from the underground. In Cabiao he had two narrow escapes, once when a Ganap who had known him at the University kept insisting to the Japanese guards that "this man is one of the masterminds of the guerrillas," and again when a civilian whom he had contacted during his united front work pointed him out to the puppet police. On both occasions the Japanese were negligent and ignored the accusations. Jesse was taken to Bongabon concentration camp, where he wisely accepted the "rejuvenation course" for guerrillas.

At Bongabon the prisoners were given indoctrination lectures by leading puppets, who spoke with great conviction of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. Prisoners were not treated badly; the Japanese were making an effort to win over their opposition. Jesse saw a way out in pretending to accept their "course." He even taught a Japanese how to play the piano, and was rewarded with freedom in the town, where he was able to contact friends and get good food. In addition, he pretended to strain his leg, and wrapped it in huge bandages which kept him out of work in the camp. On July 23 the enemy was satisfied with his indoctrination and he was released. He went back to Manila, resuming his medical practice at the Mercy Hospital. There, following the practice of the underground, his friends cut him off from all contact for several months, until it was certain that he was not under surveillance. By November, he was once again organizing united front underground units.

Rita, a young girl secretary attached to our GHQ, had a unique experience when she was captured by the enemy. It indicated the resourcefulness of our people. She was a girl who had run away from home in Manila to join the Huk. When the bombing of the forest occurred she tried to escape in the company of a comrade named Nobli. They had immediately run straight into the hands of the Japanese.

Nobli at once made a desperate attempt to get away, but he was shot and killed. Rita, taken to the Arayat garrison for questioning, assumed an air of bewildered grief, claiming that she was the newly married bride of Nobli and that they were

innocent civilians merely on their way to meet her new husband's parents, to get their blessings. The enemy was inclined to be skeptical and kept her imprisoned, although they did not harm her. Through our intelligence we learned of the story she had told. Our comrades went to Nobli's parents and told them that their daughter-in-law was being held. All unknowing, the parents went to Arayat and put on a touching scene urging the release of their "daughter." Rita was let go. Rather than disillusion our comrade's parents, they were allowed to go on believing that Rita was really their daughter. She was something tangible to go with their memory of Nobli.

Although I managed to slip out of the Candaba swamp, my brother Reg had an ordeal there. He was teaching in a mass school when the bombings came, and the class discovered the swamp to be entirely surrounded. The students, 15 of them, split into three groups and tried to get out. Reg's group of five found Japanese soldiers wading in the swamp whichever way they turned. For five days they wandered back and forth in the swamp to evade patrols, only guided in their movements by the peak of Mount Arayat. They had two guns between them.

On the third day without food, two of the students tried to enter a barrio to obtain something to eat. They were shot at by Japanese. Two others who tried to enter another barrio, were also fired upon, and one was killed. On the fourth foodless day the *cogon* was burned around them. When a suffocating student rose to breathe he was shot by the Japanese from foxholes dug around the patch of *cogon*. Three were left, with one pistol. On the fifth foodless day, they lay in the *cogon* under the blazing sun, unable to move for fear of being detected. When night came they decided they had to get out. The moon was now becoming full. Soon there would be no darkness to hide their movements. They got out by way of the river. Too weak to swim, they had to float on pieces of bamboo. Finally, in the Mexico barrios, they found people's organizations, which took them in and cared for them.

One of our leading Chinese friends, afraid to speak for fear that his speech would reveal his origin, clasped a rosary constantly and continuously mumbled unintelligible prayers over

it until the Japanese were sick of listening to him and let him go. Invariably an expression of defiance to the captors meant torture or death. We had to learn to be clever to deceive the enemy.

The March 5 disaster had taken a heavy toll and had spread much demoralization in its wake. However, it was not a fatal nor even a seriously crippling blow. It simply taught us that we could not be careless and that we must be less confident and more shrewd in our appraisal of the situation. We saw now the need for decentralization of our command, and established a new system of Regional Commands, each self-sufficient in itself, with an over-all, extremely mobile GHQ.

The big raid produced differing reactions among our leadership, and among the rank and file. Some of us were for continuing an intense struggle, but adopting different forms to fit our circumstances. Another group favored the adoption of what came to be called the "Retreat for Defense" policy. This, in essence, was nothing more than the awaitist policy which we had been condemning all along, dressed up in different clothing. It called for "lie-low" tactics, for splitting our army into small groups of four to five each, and for restricting instead of expanding our range of operations.

We condemned "Retreat for Defense" as the reverse extreme of our erroneous recklessness in 1942. We pointed out that we had outside allies who could be counted upon to grow progressively stronger, that every moment we rested gave the enemy an hour more to consolidate himself, and that the very concept of guerrilla warfare was offensive in nature. Furthermore, the tides among the people had a revolutionary flow, and not to expand our activities meant a stifling of the people's mood.

Up to now we had concentrated chiefly on the military phase of resistance. The Japanese retaliations, using as they did an overwhelming force, drove home very plainly the necessity for a many-sided struggle. And the people were more than ready to participate.

14. Mass Base: The BUDC

An account merely of our armed struggle against the Japanese would be only one-half the story of the Hukbalahap. The main center of the people's resistance movement came to be in the barrios, among the civilian masses.

The Japanese, too, were well aware of the value of organizing the people, for their own ends. Their control system and the intelligence service of the Neighborhood Associations was one method. The Kalibapi, the government party, was another. Although neither of these organizations penetrated very deeply among the people, enlisting for the most part the rabid pro-Japanese, the collaborators and the puppets, they did, unless combated, stifle the will of the people to resist. In addition, the Japanese utilized their tools in the Ganap leadership to launch that toy army, the Makapili, the Patriotic League of Filipinos. An even more spurious attempt was their "Bamboo Army." Both of these were launched with a fanfare as "people's armies," obvious attempts to win the people from their mass support of the Huk.

At the top of this infamous pyramid was first the Executive Commission and then the crowning indignity of the full-fledged puppet government. No de-facto government existed on Philippine soil. In its absence, we created one, putting the government into the hands of the people. We did this through the medium of the BUDC, the Barrio United Defense Corps.

The first BUDC's came into being in the swamp and fish pond towns along the Pampanga River, barrios in which the AMT and the KPMP had had solid organizations before the war. They arose as early as the middle of 1942, but the original efforts were not very thorough, all our emphasis at that time being on recruiting and supplying our squadrons.

It was not until 1943, after the lessons of March, that we undertook to set up BUDC's in earnest. Then we made them so much a part of the people that, although smashed repeatedly in some places by the enemy, they sprang up again full blown over night.

The BUDC, or, as it was called often, the STB (*Sandatahang Tanod ng Bayan*, the people's home defense guard) was one phase of our united front activity. Although, as its name implies, it had its military aspects, being coordinated closely with our army and having its own armed guards, the BUDC, in a deeper sense, brought a hitherto unknown phenomenon into the barrios: democratic government. After centuries of *caciquism** the people were given the opportunity to rule themselves.

A BUDC council, in a large barrio, had up to twelve members; smaller barrios had as few as five members. The size of the governing body was determined by both the size of the barrio and by its importance in our area of operations. The members included a chairman, a vice-chairman, a secretary-treasurer, and directors of recruiting, intelligence, transportation, communications, education, sanitation, agriculture, and a chief of police. Sometimes two or three of these positions were held by a single council member.

All offices in the barrio were elective. The secret ballot was extended to all residents of 18 years and over, providing they had no record of pro-Japanese activity. Disfranchisement was the penalty for acts committed against the people.

The BUDC's were created only in those areas under our influence, which became, in actuality, guerrilla areas, protected and defended by our squadrons. Elsewhere, we utilized relief associations, anti-robbery associations, all of which were really underground councils. Often we infiltrated and took over the organizations of the enemy in order to render them useless.

In those regions where the pre-war peasant unions had been strong and had accustomed the people to organization and struggle, we had almost complete mass support from the beginning. However, when our squadrons entered new territory we

* Local government by appointed authority, established during the Spanish regime.—*Ed.*

ran into new problems. In approaching a strange barrio we first sent in contact men who sized up the people to find out whether they were pro- or anti-Japanese, if puppets and spies were present, and what kind of people the leaders of the barrio were. If the barrio was anti-Japanese, the squadron entered, called a meeting of the leading individuals, and explained the Huk and its program. This was also done with the people as a whole. Invariably such barrios were easily organized.

A different type of problem confronted us when we encountered a barrio in which puppets and spies were present or where there was pro-Japanese feeling; or when we were very mobile and had to enter a barrio where conditions were unknown. Here, too, we sent in contact men who obtained full information on who the puppets and spies were, where they lived, and about their movement. Then we surrounded the barrios with a heavy guard, permitting no one to leave and making those who entered stay. Our next step was to arrest all puppets and spies and to place them before a public meeting in the church or in the school. The people were told that we had come to arrest traitors. Our charges against those arrested were made on the basis of the information we had gathered, and then the people were asked if the charges were correct, and if they had anything further to add. If the people refuted the charges, the prisoners were released. If the charges were affirmed, we next found out if the persons in question had acted under force by the enemy or willingly. Those who were avowedly traitors were punished, killed if the people thought it appropriate. Those who acted under duress were lectured on the principles of the resistance movement, and urged to remain in their positions and use them as a disguise for anti-Japanese work.

When the barrio had been thoroughly propagandized the squadron left, but after a time returned to check up. If, in the intervening time, the persons in question had aided the enemy, they were again arrested and taken with the squadron for two or three months, during which time they were lectured constantly. If they changed, they were sent back to the barrio to do anti-Japanese work. Seeing such people return gave the barrio people additional confidence in Huk discipline and demolished

the enemy propaganda that whoever was captured by the Huk was killed. The barrio, in the meantime, was organized along united front lines.

This direct military approach to the barrios, however, was not the normal case. Most of the groundwork and building was done by trained mass organizers.

Before we could organize we needed organizers, just as before we could fight we needed weapons. Both militarily and politically we armed ourselves. Starting with a handful of union organizers, and of professional men who had been close to popular movements, we created our own schools to teach the technique of organization. These Mass Schools, as we called them, were held throughout the war and turned out hundreds of mass workers. They were schooled in the methods of underground work, in the ways of bringing about unity between all kinds of organizations and guerrilla groups, in the principles of democracy and of our traditions of struggle for national liberation," and in how to penetrate and combat the Neighborhood Associations, the PC and the Ganaps. These were the people who went into the field singly and in twos and threes and laid the basis for our expansion. Many lost their lives in lonely deaths, but live in mass remembrance.

It was never a problem to find students for our Mass Schools. Individuals from strange barrios often came to us, seeking out the Huk, anxious to learn how to build resistance in their localities. Eventually we had to limit students by a quota system, each Regional Command sending a specified group each "semester." These Mass Schools also trained barrio council members.

Once fully organized under the BUDC, a barrio was a liberated island in the ocean of invaders and traitors. Within it, once spies and betrayers had been liquidated, there was absolute unity and cooperation with our armed forces, and the people practiced self-rule, hidden from the eyes of the enemy. In accordance with the demands of a people's war, the BUDC's had three main channels of activity: the most important, aid to the military struggle; second, the development of an economic program that would both supply the army and keep food products from the enemy; and third, the putting forward of new

political perspectives for the people that would be a factor in a democratic Philippines at the end of the war.

Ordinarily our squadrons had their own bivouacs, camps, and barracks, both to avoid drawing suspicion to a barrio and not to be a burden on the barrio people. However, when we did stop in a barrio the BUDC assigned our soldiers to houses. While the exhausted soldier rested he would probably be entertained with songs by the family of his host, or would have his muddy, sweaty clothes washed while he slept. Before leaving, however, Huk visitors, in accordance with the "Fundamental Spirit," always cleaned the homes of their hosts, and did the household chores.

Through the BUDC we were able to build mass reserves for the Huk. For every Huk soldier in the field there were two others in reserve in the barrios, where they engaged in production work or in civilian pursuits that otherwise aided the overall struggle. The BUDC director of recruiting saw to it that our reserves were drilled and schooled in tactics. Usually the man on active duty was periodically relieved in the field by one of his reserves; the soldier rested "on furlough" while the reserve became a seasoned guerrilla. In this way we were able to build an army that was very much like an iceberg in appearance, two-thirds of it being beneath the sea.

The Huk itself took particular care to avoid having encounters with the enemy in a barrio proper, or even quite close to it. This was to prevent the Japanese from taking punitive action against our masses whom they would suspect of aiding the Huk. When the vicinity of a barrio was used for an ambush, the BUDC chairman was usually contacted and the approval of the people's council obtained. Even when hard-pressed we would ask the barrio inhabitants if they objected to our use of the barrio for defense.

The BUDC's, of course, were repeatedly the object of intensive enemy brutalities. The barrio people were tortured and beaten often to make them reveal the council members. The chairman, once discovered, was killed by the enemy.

The barrio director of intelligence was an integral part of the liaison of the people with the army. Our information system, of

course, included practically every man, woman and child in the barrio. Everything that happened was reported to the director of intelligence, who in turn transmitted it to our regular army agents. In the beginning, the zeal of the people to pass on everything that occurred produced some amazing reports. We were given the position of every carabao in the fields, the number of chickens and pigs in the vicinity, and an account of all births, deaths, marriages, and family quarrels, as well as the details of enemy movements. The barrio intelligence was as its best, however, in the observation and investigation of strangers; it was our most effective way of combating spies and enemy agents. By the end of 1943 it was almost impossible for spies to penetrate our guerrilla regions.

In the river and swamp regions the director of transportation had charge of all the *bancas,* which could be commandeered when needed. Elsewhere transportation was in the form of carabaos, carts, horses or *caretellas.* At a moment's notice these would be at the disposal of the army.

Between all barrios existed a network of communications, the operation of which was in the hands of the BUDC. The English word "connection" became part of the Central Luzon dialects due to the operation of our communication system; no one could be transmitted from one barrio to another without his "connection". I recall an instance when Sampang neglected to bring along his connection while passing from one barrio to another in his own municipality of Mexico, where he had been the pre-war mayor. The BUDC's refused to transmit him. "Look, you know me; I'm Dante," pleaded Sampang. "Comrade, I'm sorry," said the director of communication, who had probably seen Sampang any number of times, "but you have no connection. How do we know? Maybe you have become a spy." Poor Sampang argued himself hoarse, to no avail. He had to wait until he had been thoroughly investigated.

The communication system was very intricate and differed in various regions. Couriers were of two types, the direct and the relay. Important messages were always sent the swiftest way, by direct courier, who always traveled a definite mapped-out route; the relay system was often circuitous. The enemy,

with his radio and telephone, could not keep pace with either our couriers or our other methods of communication. These functioned as in a regular signal corps, and were ordinarily carried out by the barrio police. Flashes of light or a light by an open window at night, flags, banners, or clothes hung on a line in the daytime were some of our visual signals, combinations of them translated by code. To a limited extent, we also used sounds, the cutting of bamboo with a bolo, for instance, with the number of strokes sending a message.

In the fairly short period of the occupation a good beginning was made in many barrios toward broadening barrio life. A director of education, wherever possible, set up schools where children were taught instead of sending them to the Japanese-supervised schools in the *poblacion*. Our difficulty was the shortage of teachers. Perhaps of more importance was an attempt to carry on adult education, which was usually undertaken by the youth leagues in the organized areas. Public assemblies where lectures were given by our mass organizers was a much more frequent form of education.

Our few teachers painstakingly made their own textbooks with a toy rubber stamp and ink pad. In these, the traditional Pepe and Pilar were transformed into young Huks fighting for their country. The Reader had little stories about their adventures and their methods of combating the Japanese and puppets. They were even carefully illustrated in pencil and crayon. They read: "This is Pepe. He is a Huk. He is fighting for our freedom," and so on.

The director of health and sanitation advocated such things as the construction of the sunken toilet, the habits of cleanliness and neatness in the appearance of the barrio. When it is in their own hands the people become very conscious of their welfare.

The director of economy and agriculture was a key man. It was his job to organize the economic life of the barrio so that it would yield the most to the people and the least to the enemy. The whole problem of production was most carefully supervised. The free land was tilled by the community as a whole, and the profits went into the barrio treasury. Cooperative movements

were launched, especially in the watermelon fields and in the fisheries. From the beginning, the economic struggle to keep the crops from the enemy was one of the major contributions of the Hukbalahap during the war.

The most significant of all the innovations made by the BUDC, however, was in the administration of justice. All cases, whether criminal or civil, were settled in the barrio, by the council. For the first time in their history, a system of jury duty and public trial was instituted among the barrio people, all of whom had the obligation of serving on the jury and, if charged with guilt, the right to choose their own defense. The party found guilty was subjected to a process of improvement instead of punishment.

I remember one case of a poor peasant whose only carabao was destroyed by an influential member of the barrio. The poor peasant was afraid to do anything, but finally he went to the BUDC. His case was taken up in a public trial, and it was decided in favor of the peasant. The influential man had to pay for the damages and, in addition, he was sent out with the squadrons for a time, where he was lectured daily on the meaning of democracy and unity in the community.

Perhaps the most outstanding of the decisions of the BUDC courts related to the disposal of inherited property. The division, in the first place, was made on the basis of the size of the various inheriting families, the largest receiving the largest plot. This was only modified in case one of the inheritors was fairly wealthy; in that case the poorest man got the largest share, while the richest got the smallest. (Ordinarily in Philippine practice the oldest is the inheritor of the larger share.)

Cases of treachery, involving informers, spies or traitors, were referred to the Military Committee, or GHQ. This was done deliberately to absolve the barrio people of later being held responsible for executions carried out in the interest of national liberation.

One function that was actually pressed on the BUDC by the people was the matter of performing marriages. People had such hatred of the puppet regime that they did not want the sacred act of marriage solemnized by its representatives, nor

did they want to contribute to it by paying for a license. Priests who collaborated with the enemy were held in low repute, although there were many priests who performed marriages free of charge. (A priest who was a cousin of mine was killed by the enemy for aiding the Huk.) Many people, however, came to the BUDC, and to Huk leaders, to be married. They were not refused. Their marriages, actually, were expressions of patriotic feeling. In our ceremonies we tried to bring forth the idea that the family must be a bulwark of democracy, and that the devotion of the couple to each other must be matched by the devotion of the couple to their fellow men.

The fullest effectiveness of the BUDC was displayed in the economic battle to keep food from the enemy. From the beginning it was obvious that the Japanese placed great value on the Central Luzon crops. One of their first moves was to seize the 1941 harvest from the bodegas, and their Rice Growers Association was launched with great fanfare in 1942. From the latter part of 1942 until the end of the war we resisted their schemes of looting the fields. We called it the Harvest Struggle.

The Harvest Struggle was carried out by the BUDC in cooperation with the army. We raised the slogans: "No Rice For the Enemy!" and "Keep the Food of the People!" As soon as the harvest season drew near we circulated the following memorandum throughout Central Luzon:

1. All ripe palay must be harvested and threshed immediately after ripening. It must not be stored in places near towns or near roads which can be reached by the enemy.

2. Make every attempt to destroy, smash or burn the Japanese threshing machines. Give notice to all anti-Japanese proprietors owning threshing machines not to allow the enemy to use them.

3. Destroy or burn bridges, destroy trucks of the enemy. Cut his communication lines. Ask help of the nearest squadron if you cannot do it alone.

4. Establish a regular guard system around barrios day and night. Enforce rigid discipline. No sleeping at or leaving of post. Violation of discipline punished.

5. All strangers, whether peddlers or purchasers, beggars or threshers, must be investigated well. If necessary ask help from the nearest squadron.

6. Devise ways and means of hiding palay. Use dispersal.

7. Every inhabitant of a barrio must have his own arm, whether axe, bolo, spear, or bow and arrow.

8. Create sabotage groups to steal contents of bodegas if food falls into hands of enemy. If it cannot be recovered, burn the bodegas.

The barrio people and the army were skillfully coordinated when palay was fully ripe. Our squadrons would attack the enemy in places where harvesting was not taking place, and while the enemy troops were thus diverted the ripe fields were harvested. Often, to aid in swiftly stripping a field, our squadrons became harvesting teams. To make diversion easier, the threshing was done in a province by sections and in specific time periods. Rice stacks, after threshing, were rebundled and left standing in the fields to deceive the enemy. Anti-Japanese proprietors would go to the Japanese feigning anger and report that their rice had been stolen.

The whole barrio rallied to hide the produce. It was placed in drums and buried in the ground. It was poured into the hollow bamboo poles of houses. It was distributed among the rafters of homes. It was stored in our own concealed bodegas in the forests and swamps. Only the personal needs of families were displayed.

When the old pre-war NARIC was exposed for what it was, an agency to transfer rice to the enemy, the Japanese tried to counteract the Harvest Struggle with a new organization, the BIBA,* which was nothing more than another rice-collecting agency to deprive the people of their harvest. Under the supervision of Manuel Roxas, it employed the PC to take rice by force from the people. Anyone caught violating the strict regulations of the BIBA was given ten years in prison and a P10,000 fine. At the same time the Japanese created a "Japanese Military Store" which pretended to have nothing to do with BIBA, but the two were virtually synonymous. When, in the latter part of the war, BIBA also became ineffective, the Japanese resorted to their own army, which killed the peasants and seized all the rice it could find.

* *Bigasan ng Bayan,* Tagolog equivalent of National Rice and Corn Corporation (NARIC).—*Ed.*

The Harvest Struggle extended beyond the reaping and hiding of palay, of corn and of other vegetables. That was merely the first phase of our economic fight. Once harvested, the rice had to be kept from passing into the hands of the enemy through black marketeers. To smash such profiteering at the people's expense and to wipe out the black market as a traitorous act of aiding the enemy, we established a system of licensing and patrol, which checked on the movement of all rice in the Central Luzon region. We allowed no rice to go out except for the personal use of families elsewhere, or when it was taken by Roxas' BIBA at the point of guns. All rice agents engaged in the sale of rice had to carry our license. Anyone detected and caught in black market activities was investigated and turned over to barrio justice. The upper-class proprietors resisted such a policy, feeling that it interfered with their normal business, but they agreed to it finally because it was a blanket policy that had no exception.

Our united front policy operated in the economic as well as in the political field. Peasant-landlord coordinating committees ironed out differences over the harvest. The harvests of collaborators and puppets were simply confiscated, but the harvest of the anti-Japanese proprietors was dealt with on the basis of equality in the struggle. Under our rice control agency such landlords were given a share of the harvest commensurate with the size of the family, the financial condition, and, quite often, an extra amount for business purposes.

Through our rice control agency we were effective, to a certain extent, in keeping down prices. A cavan of rice was eight pesos in Central Luzon during most of the occupation, and even during the extreme inflation, when the price of a cavan soared to P50,000 Japanese money, we kept it down to 15 pesos for many peasants. Eventually, when inflation began to set in, we successfully advocated a system of barter, rejecting entirely the use of Japanese money. The people were urged to trade among themselves, between barrios, and to refrain from bringing food to the town markets. Cooperatives organized by the BUDC functioned as bartering channels. Those who attempted to engage in buy-and-sell were tried by the barrio courts and educated; for per-

sistent violations they were disfranchised. Simultaneously with our barter program people demanded from the puppet government an increase in rations and a decrease in town prices.

The Harvest Struggle kept serious hunger out of Central Luzon and was a major factor in preventing the complete plundering of our country by the enemy.

The BUDC was not perfect. Sometimes the members of the council did not function, and very often the programs that were drawn up were utopian, but for thousands of people in Central Luzon it was their first real taste of democratic rule. In any time of oppression, when the people are forced to resort to their own devices, experimentation will run side by side with practical necessity, to find the right and best way of doing things. From the experiences and the pioneering of the BUDC it was only a short step to the establishment of local people's governments, which we began to build in the last stage of the war. The people's horizons had been immeasurably expanded.

15. The People's Army

However broad it became and however far it advanced, the core of the people's resistance was the people's army. That is why we paid such scrupulous attention to "The Iron Discipline" and to "The Fundamental Spirit," stressing continually that our greatest weapon, that which made us superior to the enemy, was the weapon of the mind. We knew for what we were fighting.

We recognized war as an extension of politics by other means. Fascist politics had brought about this war, and it was seeking to achieve political objectives by military means. What we needed, therefore, was not only an army that could shoot, but an army that understood what fascism was, what its political alternatives were, and how to achieve them.

Within the army we initiated two regular features, the study meeting and the production meeting. The study meeting consisted of lectures and discussions on fascism, on democratic government, on the meaning of democracy, on the history of the peasant movement, on Philippine history. Sometimes we issued mimeographed study outlines, which were passed from hand to hand until the ink wore off. The production meeting consisted of analyses and criticisms of the activity of the squadron, and of its members. After every encounter there was a production meeting, and also after every visit to a barrio. While the men were in barracks they discussed the discipline, the character and the conduct of the squadron and of each other. We encouraged self-criticism as the broadest path to improvement.

In addition to our Mass Schools we operated Military Schools, which were designed for squadron commanders, vice-commanders and promising soldiers. There, besides guerrilla tactics (which we adapted from a book by Chu Teh), we taught "The Iron Discipline" and "The Fundamental Spirit". Part of the course, too, was political.

Within the squadrons a continual struggle went on to eradicate the traces of feudal mentality in the Huk soldier. The idea of comradeship instead of obedience, the cacique way, took months to eradicate from a new recruit. All the little mean and vicious traits so highly prized in a capitalist society, opportunism, self-aggrandizement, personal glorification, we fought against and tried to purge from our ranks. We tried to produce highly conscious, highly disciplined, highly moral soldiers. To illustrate one aspect of our success, throughout the war only one charge of rape was pressed against a Huk soldier. Although the man had not been able to achieve his intent, the barrio people insisted that he be punished. He was shot.

A revolutionary struggle, in which the people are molding new forms and new concepts of behavior, is the greatest of testing grounds for the individual. An act of treachery, of cowardice, or of oppression can undermine the people's faith in the movement.

The case of Dayang-Dayang is a good example of how the

Huk dealt with those whose actions tended to destroy the faith of the people in the Huk, and, inevitably, in the anti-fascist struggle.

Felipa Culala was a former KPMP member from Candaba. Before the war she had led anti-strikebreaker squads, a type of work for which she was well-fitted, because she was a big woman of masculine appearance. When she became a guerrilla she took the name of Dayang-Dayang, after a Moro princess who came from a long line of fighters. She was 31 when the war started.

At the beginning, Dayang-Dayang had been a very promising leader. She had helped show us the way toward basing ourselves on the plain, among the barrios, and she had led the first major Huk encounter, in Mandili. She was made a member of the original Military Committee. From the beginning, however, she had also displayed a certain amount of contempt for our principles and for our conduct of the struggle. She would wave a copy of the "Fundamental Spirit" in the air and say: "Can a piece of paper like this stop bullets?" She was anarchistic by nature, and disliked taking orders from the Military Committee. On the other hand, she encouraged both her soldiers and the people to call her "Generala" and built a little bureaucracy in the squadrons under her command. She appointed her brothers as commanders.

During 1942 Dayang-Dayang did good work in recruiting and in stimulating the fighting spirit of the people. Soon, however, reports began to drift into GHQ concerning her. On one occasion she was quoted as saying: "Those who don't get rich in this war have liquid brains." Another report complained of her desire to be treated like a queen in the barrios, calling for pigs and chickens to be killed and cooked upon her arrival. Again, the barrio people were angered when her squadrons passed carelessly through a field, destroying the palay. By the latter part of 1943 a stream of complaints was arriving, protesting the theft of food, fish nets, carabaos, and even money and jewelry. Finally, we sent a circular around her region through our investigators, collecting concrete evidence and the testimony of witnesses. The reports were completely verified.

When our evidence was complete Squadron 55 was assigned to her case. She was located, with some of her soldiers, in a barrio, which was surrounded by Squadron 55. Dayang-Dayang and her men were then disarmed and arrested. She submitted peacefully and was also very composed at her trial, during which she calmly confessed to her crimes. She also admitted that she had been in connivance with some deserters from the Huk and had helped them plan for the killing of myself and other members of the GHQ, with the depraved intention of utilizing the Huk for their own purposes. One of her brothers denounced her and contributed to the testimony against her. Another brother was also found guilty and shared her penalty: death by a firing squad for acts seriously detrimental to the interests of the people.

Dayang-Dayang was an opportunist and a "leftist". She wanted to use our national liberation struggle as a stepping stone to power for herself. Although she was anti-Japanese and fought them, she viewed the people as only servants of the "Generala."

In the broad movement which we tried to create, attempting to involve the whole people, it was inevitable that some unstable and unsound elements should enter. In the first flush of general enthusiasm they did not reveal themselves, but as the hard task of molding a disciplined and responsible army became more urgent, the bad separated itself from the good.

In contrast to the handful of defective elements, of which we had purged ourselves by the latter part of 1943, was the ordinary Huk soldier. Invariably he was a peasant, with the gnarled fingers of the plowman and with the hard-soled feet of the walker on *pilapils*. He breathed in the democracy of our army life like the fresh air of freedom. In our ranks the submissive peasant became the conscious man.

These were the men who persisted, who grew with our struggle, and who grew closer to the whole people because of it. The renegades and the betrayers have already been lost in the dust of history.

Always we paid greater attention to the political than to the military character of our army. In their first encounters, our peasants with guns used to close their eyes and shoot, firing

somewhere into the air. How could we train them? We had only meager ammunition, and our men with actual military experience, who could be used as instructors in arms and drill, were extremely few.

The way we developed accuracy in shooting, technique in attack, and spirit in combat was through socialist competition. We promoted friendly rivalry between squadrons. The prize at stake was service to the country, and the political instructors in the squadrons lectured the soldiers on what was expected of them. The exploits of the various squadrons were popularized among the people, until each squadron had its own identity for the people, although known only by a number. The squadrons vied for popularity.

Eventually the Hukbalahap developed a kind of folklore based on the exploits of individuals or squadrons. One commander of Caballero Squadron in Nueva Ecija became a living legend because he was believed to have a charmed life. While standing on a small hill directing a fight with upraised pistol, a shell exploded under him, blowing him end over end in the air. He came down on his feet, still holding the pistol aloft and with a command still issuing from his mouth. He was called "the man who could not be killed." A machine-gunner in Bulacan was another fabulous individual. He was reputed to be able to play the tunes of popular songs on his machine-gun during a battle. Such Huk legends have become a living part of the folklore of Central Luzon.

An advanced step in the political education of the army, and of the people as well, was taken in January 1943. In Nueva Ecija, Juan Feleo, casting about for a method to present the significant events of Philippine history to the people, conceived the idea of a cultural group to present pageants. He called it the Nueva Ecija Cultural and Dramatic Association, the NECDA. It consisted of a group of singers, actors, performers and reciters, who traveled from barrio to barrio with the army and presented programs dramatizing the need for struggle.

Within a few months, after carefully noting the great success of the NECDA we adopted it for the entire Huk, as an essential wing of the army. We changed its name to the Cultural and

Information Department, the CID, and drew into it some professional artists, singers, and directors. Among the latter was at least one pre-war movie script writer for Tagalog films. The vast majority of the talent for the CID, however, came from the barrios, from the common people themselves.

Our barrios have always been culturally starved. Illiteracy prevents masses of the people from reading books, and poverty keeps them from buying such luxuries anyway. Forms of entertainment, such as movies, are mostly out of reach in the towns. Radios are so rare that they are an oddity. Except for their own makeshift amusements, the only time the barrio people know entertainment is during the fiesta.

The CID, like the BUDC, was extremely popular among the people. Although we frankly designed it as propaganda, our CID units were welcomed effusively in the barrios, and the people would stay up all night to attend the performances.

Before visiting a barrio the CID unit first studied the situation in advance, obtaining all possible information about the attitude of the people, their sympathies, their problems or their faults. The program was then adapted to fit the barrio circumstances. If it was a question of democratization, the performance would be ringingly inspirational; if the barrio had inner conflicts, the program would include propaganda about unity and cooperation; if the people were advanced but were lazy about coming to meetings or doing resistance work, we would criticize them sharply by means of pointed songs and jokes. We found that the CID, in addition, was the best form of introducing the Huk into new territories.

The CID's methods of performing were, of course, very simple. Usually they were given in barrio schools or in big houses; on special occasions a stage was built in the open. A blanket was used for a curtain; often they used nothing more than a hand, raised and lowered, to indicate a curtain. A change of scenery was managed by the narrator, who simply described the scene. Sometimes they had costumes, sometimes not. We never had difficulty in providing the units with Japanese uniforms, to portray the enemy. The only makeup ever used was carbon, obtained from charcoal.

The first full-length performance was a play *Malayang Pilipinas* (Happy Philippines), which lasted 40 minutes. A story of three brothers, one a soldier from Bataan, one a PC, and the third a peasant who had become a Huk, it stressed the United Front. The play showed the peasant influencing his brothers to join him in the struggle against the common enemy. It propagandized unity and struggle, as opposed to awaitism and collaboration.

The CID had many other plays. Some of them were: "Mother Philippines," "Commander Sundang," "Harvest Struggle," "You've Got the Blood of a Hero," "Comrades," "Before We Die of Hunger," and "Where is Justice?" On some occasions the units gave extemporaneous plays, when a problem arose that had to be solved at once. Special performances were designed for May 1, for March 29 (Hukbalahap Day), and for November 30 (National Heroes Day).

Short, lively propaganda skits were interspersed in the program, giving people ideas on how to combat the enemy. One of the most popular was entitled, "Ambush the Jap Inside Your Home." It taught the civilians how to capture an enemy without the use of arms. On the day after this skit was presented in a barrio of San Antonio, Nueva Ecija, an old man captured a Japanese soldier in his home.

Barrio performances fulfilled only half of the CID schedules. They were also the most important morale factor in the army itself. Traveling always with the squadrons, they performed for the soldiers on the march, in bivouac, and before and after encounters. Even during the actual fighting, singers from the CID joined the men on the firing line and inspired them with revolutionary songs. In the hospitals the girl members of the units tenderly cared for the wounded men during their visits, and sang for them. They shaved the soldiers, washed their clothes and gathered fuel and water.

It was through the CID that the Hukbalahap was provided with most of its songs. We were a singing army. We took Filipino tunes, or American, or even Japanese, and fitted our own words to them. We had our "Hukbalahap Song," which became very widely known. It was adapted from the "Collectivista March"

which had been written as a dedication to President M. Quezon.

We had songs for the march, for the Harvest Struggle, for encounters, and also for such things as birthday events and holidays. They were all songs of struggle.

Our songs are known by heart throughout Central Luzon. They have become a part of the people's music.

The people would even sing them in the presence of the Japanese, very few of whom understood a word of Tagalog. I have heard often of the Japanese soldiers standing and watching the people working in a field and singing a Huk song. "What song is that?" they would say in English. "Oh, that is a romantic song," the people would reply. "Sing it again, sing it again," the Japanese would urge, and the people would sing the Huk song enthusiastically into the faces of the enemy.

The eyes and ears of our underground army was the Department of Intelligence, working directly under GHQ. The DI had a multifold task. The gathering of military information about the enemy was only part of it. Its agents also obtained full details on puppets and collaborators, and on pro-Japanese and anti-guerrilla elements. They investigated reports from the barrios concerning complaints or protests by the people against Huk squadrons or individuals. In addition, DI agents were often given the assignments to carry out counter-terror against the enemy.

The DI, of course, coordinated with its own operations the BUDC intelligence network, which utilized old women vendors in the town markets, young boys tending carabaos in the fields, and small merchants traveling between towns. Wherever he turned, the enemy was surrounded by our spies. Known to us, too, was every traitorous act, every puppet crime, every betrayal through collaboration. We examined the military information and through it we planned our movements and our attacks. We sifted the evidence of Filipino treachery and, using it, we weighed our decisions concerning collaborators.

The men who supervised our DI were men of great courage and resourcefulness. They did not sit in an office examining clues or leads through a microscope or in a test-tube; they were field operators who lived in the shadow of danger constantly.

Our DI commander was Tomas Calma, the son of a poor family

in San Luis, Pampanga, who before the war had worked as an auto mechanic in Manila. He joined the Philippine army at the opening of hostilities, and became a sergeant during the Bataan fighting. After the defeat of the Fil-American army he slipped through the enemy lines and found his way to us. He took the underground name of "Sol."

Sol was a crack shot, a sharpshooter with a pistol. He could shoot the coconuts out of trees by severing their stems with a bullet. Such accuracy came in handy during many DI assignments. He would never sit or seek cover during a battle, although he was often criticized during production meetings for his recklessness. At one time a bullet passed through his hat. Sol merely shrugged and said: "H'm, they almost had me that time," and continued to stand.

Sergio Cayanan, who used the name "Elen," was DI Political Supervisor in the GHQ. Elen was a former fisherman and worker in the watermelon fields along the Pampanga River. He was captured and tortured by the Japanese but on his release he returned again to the risky DI operations.

Another equally outstanding DI leader, who began as a section leader and became deputy commander in the last year of the war, was Roman Maliwat, son of a middle class family in Santa Ana. He became known under the name of "Luna." A member of the first class in the Philippine Army aeronautical school, he had three years of flying, from 1938 to 1941. Having finished third in a competitive test conducted for candidates to be sent to Randolph Field for advanced training, he was screened out at the last moment when the army discovered his interest in progressive youth groups. He was shifted, instead, to the infantry, where he served as a second lieutenant. During the Bataan fighting, Luna won the Silver Star at Moron where he commanded one of two suicide squads that defended a river crossing. He was also wounded in the hand by a Japanese sword during a hand to hand fight at Pozorrubio.

Caught in the surrender, he returned to his Santa Ana barrio soon after his release in June 1942. He joined the Huk, and in December of that year he was recruited into DI work. Luna was one of the most daring of our operators, carrying out his

assignments under the very noses of the enemy. He was barely 21 when he came into the Huk.

We were at war, and we acted in a military fashion. The enemy, however, did not treat guerrillas as prisoners of war. Guerrillas were tortured and murdered, and so were people caught supporting us. Filipino puppets and collaborators not only joined the enemy in hunting us down, but themselves participated and even surpassed the Japanese in torturing and murdering. There was only one way to counteract such acts of treachery and terrorism, and that was to strike terror into the hearts of the enemy, too. The DI was one of the instruments we used.

There are some people who shrink at the very idea of using such methods. They believe, idealistically, that the side of justice and right should only be upheld by "legal" means, through the principles of "fair play." They believe that "evil" should be counteracted with "good," although they can define both terms only in abstractions. They can countenance constabularymen who club and shoot strikers, but when a striker beats up a scab they are horrified by the "infringement of human rights." There is a point where legality becomes ludicrous, and where "turn the other cheek" means to have your head knocked off. Rather than have liberty in our country destroyed, we would destroy the destroyers.

It was through our DI that we implemented our policy toward traitors and collaborators. These we considered to be divided roughly into three categories: (1) the out-and-out collaborators, (2) those who were coerced into working for the enemy, and (3) those who served under the enemy but who used their positions to aid the Huk. No one was ever condemned, or cleared, without first receiving a thorough investigation by the DI.

The voluntary and confirmed collaborators we ranked beside the Japanese as the main enemy. There were many of these in Central Luzon, serving in the municipal governments, in the PC, or as buy-and-sell profiteers. Their base, to a great extent, was the feudal landlord class, which eventually subsidized pseudo-guerrillas whose main job was to fight the Huk. The big puppets played safe, staying in Manila, away from the guerrilla

regions, but the small puppets were everywhere. When the extent of their activity had been ascertained, we sent them a warning, to desist or to answer to the people's justice. We sent them second, and third warnings. If they were ignored, these people were blacklisted, and often our DI agents were authorized to liquidate them, or to arrest them and bring them before our military tribunal.

Such arrests and sentencings have been called kidnapings and murders by collaborators who later went free, accusations they never made against puppets who condoned the mass arrests and murder of thousands in Central Luzon. Who should answer for the 2,007 skulls of people that were found buried in the backyard of Dorong Tola in San Fernando?

To those who claimed coercion as an excuse we also sent warnings and made our appeals. There were ways to resist. If one could not use a gun, one could sabotage, one could give aid to those who did fight; one could at least be passive, and not an active collaborator.

The DI had the authority to carry out arrests, but their freedom of action was limited by strict regulations. It was strictly forbidden to arrest anyone merely on suspicion or because of vague reports. It was strictly forbidden, under pain of punishment, to kill a prisoner without the knowledge of the squadron staff and without the approval of the staff of the regional command and, of course, without first conducting a rigidly thorough investigation. The exception to this rule were those notorious spies and blacklisted traitors who had long been exposed as enemies of the people, and were widely known by sight.

It is true that errors were made and that innocent people died. Invariably such tragic mistakes were the result of unauthorized action by squadrons operating far from our GHQ. Sometimes, too, they were hasty acts of revenge by soldiers whose families had been murdered or who had themselves suffered at the hands of traitors. Over such tragedies we were immeasurably grieved. Ours was a large movement, involving masses of people at a time when tempers were inflamed by brutal acts; it was unavoidable that a few unfortunate incidents should occur. Whenever they did, however, those responsible were courtmartialed

and punished for committing acts against the interests of the people.

As much as possible we tried to narrow down the responsibility for carrying out acts of liquidation. The ordinary soldiers were forbidden to take such responsibility into their own hands. For planned operations against a specific puppet or traitor we used a special squad which acted only under an authority signed by me.

The squad also had another duty: to carry out the confiscation of collaborator property. We believed that traitors should be disfranchised and their property confiscated for the people as a whole. Sometimes we raided the homes of collaborators, like that of the German Nazi, Hallman, in Calumpit, taking everything we could use. (In Hallman's case we even took his piano, installing it in an organized barrio, where the people could never have enough music.) Sometimes we confiscated the contents of municipal buildings, particularly for paper, ink and stencils, which we used for issuing leaflets, newspapers and for our schools. Our leaflets and newspapers, therefore, had the habit of appearing on the backs of birth registrations, civil service applications, and old municipal correspondence. No looting, which was under penalty of death, was ever indulged in by our soldiers. Everything confiscated, down to the last scrap of paper, was immediately listed and turned over to our provision division, which was operated on a quartermaster basis, with requisitions for anything to be withdrawn.

Our provision problem in general was handled through our united front and mass organizational set-up. This included a Finance Department, which drew up a budget, and contribution teams which did contact work in the towns. Our budget for 1942 was P1,600,000, of which we raised about half. In succeeding years we fulfilled budgets up to P2,000,000. Cash contributions were used to purchase medicines, clothes for our soldiers, cigarettes, and propaganda materials. The proceeds came in the form of donations by sympathetic proprietors, by mass organizations in the barrios, and also from the profits of community crop production and from cooperatives. Deep-rooted civic spirit was the guiding factor for voluntary contributions, which

automatically was based on everybody's initiative to give in proportion to his income.

Food, ordinarily, was obtained from the barrios by quotas, which were adopted voluntarily by the barrio people through their BUDC or other mass organizational arrangements. Nothing was to be taken without the consent of the people; violations of this rule were considered punishable as acts against the people. Soldiers were prohibited from asking individually for food; collections were made only in an organized way.

To obtain supplies directly from the enemy, we had squadrons specially designated as Struggle Forces. Our Struggle Forces waylaid Japanese trucks, singly or in convoys, and took everything they carried. We got many arms in this fashion. Materials captured were often distributed among the needy people in the barrios, especially to those families which had lost members while fighting against the enemy.

The most dramatic and profitable Struggle Force action occurred at the end of 1943, when a Japanese freight train was ambushed between Bamban and Capas. The enemy guards and soldiers on the train were killed and the contents of two cars were confiscated. There was so much captured material that hundreds of barrio people were unable to carry it all away. Large numbers of Japanese cigarettes were taken; they led to a disaster for some barrio people who neglected to be cautious. The Japanese were enraged and combed the barrios for evidence. If they found Japanese cigarette butts anywhere they killed people and burned homes.

The most difficult to obtain and the most needed of all supplies were medicines. Sickness was our worst enemy and accounted for many times the casualties inflicted by the Japanese and puppets. It was the one problem which we were never quite able to overcome. Malaria was the worst cause of death. Our squadrons were often forced to live in the swamps, which were thickly infested by malarial mosquitos. At one time, in Nueva Ecija, there were 200 deaths in the army due to a malaria epidemic. Dysentery and stomach ulcers, from inadequate food, were other serious afflictions.

Among the first contacts we made in the towns were the drug-

gists and the doctors, who supplied us as well as they could from their own meagre stocks. At the beginning we had six doctors with us who taught medical techniques and established a First Aid Corps. They wrote simple books on first aid which were widely copied and distributed among the squadrons. We wanted to obtain a physician for every squadron, but we were not successful. Often we had "quick doctors" who were able to create medicines from the bark of trees and from plants.

Under the supervision of our doctors a Medical Corps was established. First-aiders were its main personnel, usually young girls. The men first-aiders operated *banca* ambulances and carried stretchers made like hammocks. Because of the great prevalence of sickness and the number of wounded we had to organize hospitals. Wherever possible a hospital zone was set up, embracing a number of barrios. There, in practically every house sometimes, the Huk soldiers were cared for, one to a house. We also maintained hospitals in the mountains and in the forest.

Among the points discussed at our first conference in 1942 was a plan for issuing a newspaper. We realized that the enemy would try to keep the people submerged beneath the cesspool of poisoned propaganda, and we wanted to raise their hopes with the truth.

As it happened, we broadened our plans and issued two newspapers, one designed for general mass appeal, to be circulated through the united front departments, and the other aimed specifically at the army and its soldiers. The first to appear, in August 1942, was the united front paper, which we called *Katubusan ng Bayan* (*National Redemption*). The army paper, called *Hukbalahap,* started appearing three months later, in November. Both contained agitational editorials, local news of our own encounters and activities, and international news from all the fighting fronts which we received by radio from San Francisco and New Delhi.

Both newspapers were issued weekly, ordinarily (depending on our supply of paper and on our mobility) in quantities of 3,000 to 5,000. They were circulated through the squadrons and barrios and received the attention always accorded the under-

ground press of the people, passing from hand to hand until they were worn out. In a little corner box in each issue we appealed for contributions of ink, paper and stencils; our appeals were perpetually urgent.

The newspapers were turned out on a mimeograph which was located in a remote hut in the mountains. Our editors varied—peasant organizers who had worked on the old AMT paper, trade unionists from Manila, university professors who were among the many intellectuals who stayed with us; once the "KB" editor was a beautiful girl from the city. Occasionally we used cartoons, lampooning the Japanese, the puppets or the awaitists. We asked for contributions from our readers; they sent us anti-Japanese jokes, poems, little essays on what their barrios were doing to beat the enemy, playlets and skits, letters of appreciation and suggestion. Occasionally, on Hukbalahap Day or on other days of national significance, a special issue in color was put out. The editors would spend hours painstakingly coloring the cartoons and the page borders, using a box of children's water color paints.

We had other propaganda devices. Once a month, and on every calendar date of importance, we issued leaflets, calling upon the people to resist and explaining how. Special leaflets went to the PC, urging them to turn their guns upon the enemy instead of upon the people, reminding them that the day of retribution would come and that the people would judge them by their acts. To the puppet officials we mailed letters and leaflets containing our warnings. In the middle of the night our people would slip into the towns and tack our leaflets up in the plaza, or else chalk our slogans on walls and on poles. When the puppet government issued circulars and posted them in the towns, our people entered at night, tore them down and put Huk leaflets in their place.

Of all our propagandists, however, the simple, ordinary Huk soldier, in the way he conducted himself, and in the way he spoke to the people, was the best we had. In the ultimate sense, our propaganda could only be as strong as the faith of the people who spoke it, and its effect could only be as great as the justice of its aims.

16. Growth and Development

On March 18, 1943, three days after the Japanese cordons withdrew from their big raid on Cabiao forest, a group of our leading comrades were back in the forest, discussing reorganization. It was particularly noticeable that those who had had the least contact with the mass movements of the people were the ones who advocated a lie-low and retreat policy. Those of us who had been active in the peasant organizations opposed a splitting up of the squadrons and a lessening of pressure on the enemy. We were convinced that we simply needed more efficient methods of organization. We started at once to overcome the demoralization that had taken place in some parts of the army. Within three months we were back to normal strength, and by the end of the year we had increased to 150 per cent of our strength before the March raid.

The remainder of 1943 was, in the main, a period of intensive mass organizational work. We built BUDC's, and widened the range of our united front contacts. We worked on undermining the puppets and collaborators and on destroying their influence among some sections of the people. The PC became a target for our propaganda. To a certain extent our efforts were rewarded. Few PC's took their guns and joined us in the field, but numbers of them became neutral. Through our contact men, and others who purposely infiltrated into the PC ranks, we managed to arrange some sham battles, in which the PC "surrendered" and gave their arms to us. However, these were isolated instances and the PC, as a whole, continued to be an enemy of the people.

In 1943 the Japanese occupation began to bleed the Filipino people noticeably. The enemy policy of robbing us of our rice to feed his army, of stealing our sugar to make alcohol for

his dwindling fuel supplies, of robbing us of our clothing materials to clothe his people at home, had drained away our economy until the bare bottom of want had begun to show.

As the plight of the people began to worsen, and discontent spread, the "comradeship" approach of the Japanese toward the peasant guerrillas, many of whom had been given only a friendly lecture when caught at first, changed to ruthlessness. Raids on the barrios were characterized now by brutality and wholesale looting.

While the nation suffered, the cynical treachery of the collaborators became more pronounced than ever. Signed statements by puppet officialdom urging guerrillas to lay down their arms became as abundant as Mickey Mouse money. Then, on October 14, 1943, the Japanese displayed their most glamorous exhibit: the puppet independence and the full-fledged puppet government of Jose P. Laurel. One of the first acts of the latest puppet show, which had been preceded by such performances as that of Henry Pu-Yi in Manchuria and Wang Ching-Wei in China, was an "amnesty" offer to all guerrillas.

Our answer was a manifesto which cried: "Drive out the Japanese bandits and smash the traitorous puppet government! Long live Philippine national freedom and emancipation!"

We had learned our lesson concerning concentration. After the March raid we devised a system of regional commands, each of which was given its autonomy to a large degree, and all of which functioned under a reconstituted mobile GHQ. The regional commands actually amounted to expanded military districts, and each was given a general perspective of expansion beyond its territory. Banal started his expansion in July and pushed west, east and south, into Bataan and Bulacan, organizing as he went along. By November he was consolidated enough in his new areas to begin ambushes and to risk battles with the enemy.

Aquino's squadrons split immediately after March, almost half staying on the plain, while the rest went up into the mountains to locate bases from which to push into the northern part of the province of Tarlac and eventually into Pangasinan.

Bio's forces operated in the feudal domain of arch-collabora-

tor Benigno Aquino, who raged against the "bandit" guerrillas from the safety of Manila. ("No relation," old Bio would say tersely, ejecting a large violent stream of *buyo* juice.) The Kalibapi chief sent his father, old Mianong Aquino, who had been a general in the Katipunan, to contact Bio in the mountains and ask him to surrender. "How can you expect to hold out?" said the old man. "How many arms and men did you have in the Katipunan?" retorted Bio. The old general reflected. "One platoon," he answered. Bio drew himself up and said: "I have 300 men and I have automatic rifles." The old general considered a moment. "In that case, don't surrender," he said, and went slowly back down the mountain. Those were the same mountains from which he had fought the Spaniards in 1896.

Dimasalang aggressively pushed out the borders of his command, penetrating also into Tarlac. Nueva Ecija became so active a field of operations that it was divided into an "eastern front" and a "western front."

Although the latter half of 1943 was chiefly devoted to rooting ourselves deeper among the people and to the strengthening of our squadrons, we did not cease harassing the enemy. Recklessness, however, was curbed; we stopped assaulting towns and we spread our ambushes over wider areas, so that the enemy could not effectively zone us or our mass bases. We did not avoid fights and were often forced into pitched battles; when that happened our troops gave a good account of themselves.

We learned that the best way to keep morale at a high level was to develop the offensive frame of mind in our soldiers. Thus, although we spaced attacks, we did it according to monthly plans of action. Each month a squadron was to carry out three ambushes, raids or acts of sabotage. In this way the attack psychology routed tendencies toward demoralization. To overcome any "retreat for defense" attitudes we initiated the following slogans in the squadrons: "Fight against cowardice!" "Stand firmly at your post!" "Have proletarian courage!" "Grow strong through struggle!" and "There is no victory without a fight!"

It was in the course of carrying out a routine ambush that one of our squadrons became engaged in a memorable battle in

Pampanga, in the month of May. It was Squadron 66, a subdivision of the now venerable Squadron 6; it was commanded by one of the Lising brothers, Fidel, with a political director named Abad. The squadron had less than 100 men.

On the morning of May 13 squadron intelligence brought in a report of a Japanese detachment entering the barrio of Malialo, Bacolor. The squadron took up an ambush position on the enemy route back to its garrison. The Japanese detachment was wiped out in a brief action. The Huks retired to the barrio to eat before returning to their base. As they prepared to leave a second enemy detachment appeared. There was no time to prepare a favorable ambush and the encounter was a long drawn out affair, with the enemy suffering severely and forced to retreat. During the night Lising led his tired men toward their base in the wide tracts of sugar cane, but enemy patrols were now combing the region and they had to move cautiously. At dawn they were overtaken by a large and mixed body of Japanese and PC's. Squadron 66, in a disadvantageous position, retreated to secure ground in the barrio of Concepcion. The enemy, believing the Huks to be demoralized, became over-confident and rushed headlong to the attack. They were annihilated crossing an open field.

For two days and two nights Squadron 66 continued its fighting retreat. Finally, exhausted and hungry, near Saguin they were hemmed in by another large detachment of the enemy. They had been eating only the meager rations they had brought with them from their base. They were sleepless. Only a determined effort at a breakthrough would enable them to escape this latest threat, but they were too weak to make an advance. Commander Lising resorted to a trick. A white flag of surrender was raised. The enemy, sure of victory, marched to take them prisoner. At close range our fighters opened fire and literally covered the ground with enemy dead. On the verge of complete exhaustion, the squadron was then able to retreat to its base in the Zambales mountains.

In that running fight it was estimated that the enemy, both Japanese and PC, sustained nearly 500 casualties. The Japanese themselves admitted 300. Our loss was fourteen dead, but they

were multiplied in our minds, because among them were both Lising and Abad.

While the other regions were more or less quietly pushing expansion work and intensifying organization, Dimasalang in Nueva Ecija pursued more aggressive tactics, engaging the enemy wherever he exposed himself. His squadrons rested in the Laur mountains until the Japanese block raids of March and April had subsided. Dim was very skillful in planning and carrying out attacks and schedules of ambuscades. He enthused his comrades so much that they often exceeded their plans. Squadron 7 had the habit of carrying out three ambushes every time it was assigned to do one. It was the first squadron to renew its activity, catching an enemy patrol unawares near the Laur mountain barrio of Saban in June. In subsequent battles Dim's men were able to capture their first trench mortar and a number of automatic rifles.

In August, Squadron 101, under Commander Alipugpog, ambushed and seized a train between Papaya and Santa Rosa. One of the Japanese guards was killed and five others wounded. The cargo, composed of food and clothing, was confiscated, the barrio people assisting. The squadron obtained large amounts of canned coffee and sugar, which were delicacies then. Civilian passengers on the train were not molested, but were given a short lecture on the Huk. Part of the captured cargo was given to needy people in the barrios, many of whom were using rags and old sacks for clothing even then.

A convocation of several squadrons for political lectures in San Felipe, a barrio of Rizal town, took place in mid-September. Unknown to us, the place was fifth-columnized by the enemy. The barrio people gave our squadrons permission to form a firing line through the center of the barrio. The enemy advanced to within 50 meters before the squadrons opened fire. The encounter lasted the whole day. It developed into a large scale raid by the enemy, who used cannon. The civilians helped the Huks on the firing line and then they all retreated with our soldiers to the mountains. As a result many of the houses were burned by the Japanese when they entered the barrio after our retreat.

The division of Nueva Ecija into "eastern front" and "western

front" occurred in October, to facilitate expansion plans, and a number of successful ambushes were carried out. Our Nueva Ecija squadrons permitted a lull in encounters in December. It was the beginning of the Harvest Struggle and all efforts went into the saving of the rice crop.

The lull in the north, however, was compensated by an outburst of activity in an entirely new sector, in Bulacan, dissuading the enemy from concentrating in any one area. Banal's expansion southwards had begun to bear fruit by November. Bulacan's Fred Laan had by now 3 fully organized and equipped squadrons. In November, bulwarked by established mass bases, they began a series of sustained ambushes and encounters. Battles took place in Obando, Guiguinto, and Meycauayan. In the same month a train was derailed between Santa Isabel and Guiguinto. Enemy troops were in the vicinity, so our squadrons were unable to get the supplies; the train was burned.

The Harvest Struggle launched at the end of 1943 was wider in scope and more successful than in the preceding year. We were able, due to our intensive mass organizational activities since March, to mobilize large sections of the best rice-producing regions. In Manila, enraged at this disruption of their economic scheme, the Japanese-controlled newspapers and their puppet voices shouted imprecations against "bandits" in Central Luzon. We listened to their ravings from our bases and promised them all a bullet-ridden New Year.

17. Huk and Anti-Huk

Late in 1942, in the northern part of Nueva Ecija, one of Dimasalang's squadrons had a very significant encounter. It was ambushed, ineffectively, by an unknown group of men, Filipinos. At first the Huks thought the ambushers were Ganaps, of whom there were many in that province. The Huk squadron

withdrew, fanned out, encircled and captured its attackers. They were not Ganaps; they were a USAFFE guerrilla force under the leadership of an American officer named Mackenzie, who in turn was under the command of the American Major Lapham. The Huk squadron, in line with our united front policy of attempting to bring about the unification of all anti-Japanese forces, gave Mackenzie and his men a severe lecture on the proper conduct of guerrilla warfare against the Japanese, and then let them go. Mackenzie had listened sullenly to peasants telling him how to fight, and had left in a furious and bitter mood. Our men hoped that their lecture had been effective. (Mackenzie, who had been wounded, was treated in the Huk camp.)

When our expansion into northern Nueva Ecija began during 1943 we ran into difficulties. We discovered that the people had heard of us, but in a distorted fashion. They called us bandits and sometimes refused to accept us into their barrios. Investigation proved that the region had been penetrated by USAFFE elements under the command of Mackenzie, who were spreading viciously false rumors about the Hukbalahap and urging the people to deal with us as bandits. Dimasalang immediately made efforts to contact the USAFFE forces, in order to straighten out differences and to bring about joint operation in the province.

The need for an understanding became imperative following an encounter that took place in Marugol in January 1944. A Huk squadron engaged a force of the PC, which was suddenly reinforced during the fight by a group of USAFFE troops! The Huks managed to drive away both groups (capturing 12 arms, including an automatic rifle) but the cooperation between puppet troops and a supposedly anti-Japanese guerrilla unit was cause for concern. This was an entirely new situation which bore within it seeds of a major threat to the people's movement. Dim immediately sent out contact men to get in touch with the USAFFE to arrange for a conference. Contacts were made and the arrangements were set. Dim, convoyed by Squadrons 8, 9, and part of 33, started out for the rendezvous.

While enroute to the conference, Dim and his forces were sud-

denly surrounded by a large body of PC's in the barrio of Estrella, of Rizal town, Nueva Ecija. The circumstances were suspicious enough to convince us that the enemy had been informed of our movements and destination. The squadrons were caught in a bad position in the barrio and had a narrow escape. Eleven Huks were killed and seven more seriously wounded; in addition some weapons were lost. The planned conference never took place.

Coincident with these encounters, the DI brought in reports of large numbers of PC and Japanese troops in the town garrisons throughout the province. Also, there were undeniable indications that USAFFE leaders had been having conferences with the PC. In anticipation of large scale enemy raids, Dim relayed a message to GHQ for reinforcements in Neuva Ecija. Three hundred reinforcements were sent.

Dim thereupon took the offensive. With the full weight of his command he attacked a concentration of PC's in barrio Bibiclat, Aliaga, in the latter part of February. In that fight 70 PC's were killed and the rest fled, while the Huks acquired large supplies of arms and ammunition. Dim then retreated to the vicinity of Talavera. There, in the barrio of Kuldit, the Hukbalahap experienced something which it had hoped never to see: they were assaulted by a combined group of PC's and USAFFE. During the battle an American officer directed the USAFFE troops from a distance; he did not go near the firing line and could not be accurately identified. The fight lasted from one to four o'clock in the afternoon; 70 PC's and USAFFE were killed and our losses were three. We were unable to get arms because of the sudden arrival of Japanese reinforcements for the enemy! In the face of a combined army of Japanese, PC and USAFFE, our forces retreated.

That encounter stripped bare an ugly cancer that had begun to grow in the anti-Japanese struggle, the cancer of partisan politics.

A general offensive by the enemy seemed to be impending, so Dim gathered his command and retreated to the mountains near Papaya. The enemy followed and at the end of March attacked the Huks in their bivouac near Sumandig, Papaya.

There were close to 1,000 Japanese and PC's in the attacking force. Our squadrons were in a good defensive position on the ridge of a mountain, and they made the most of it. Ninety or more Japanese and PC's were killed in an all-day fight, while our losses were less than one-tenth of that. The enemy, however, was in overwhelming strength and was prepared to continue the offensive. Using discretion as the better part of guerrilla valor, Dim retreated south. His Pampanga reinforcements went back to join the expansion in Bulacan and he rested his squadrons.

The serious developments in Nueva Ecija regarding the attitude of certain elements of the USAFFE were indicative of a trend. In our original discussions with Thorpe in 1942, we had sought in every way to bring about unity of action on the basis of "Everything for the Anti-Japanese Struggle." In the beginning the possibilities seemed good. We were promised arms in return for our mobilization of mass support. Always, however, the American officers showed a violent dislike for our political program.

After the death of Thorpe, the one man who had shown a willingness to take a conciliatory position, our relations with USAFFE groups became sporadic. Occasionally when our squadrons retreated temporarily to the Zambales mountains they met USAFFE groups which consented to vague conferences that never bore fruit. Late in 1943 Linda had worked with a USAFFE unit to capture some puppet police in Dinalupihan, but it was only an isolated operation. At the beginning of 1943 our contact men in Manila had arranged, through Father Hurley of Ateneo,* a conference with USAFFE elements in Central Luzon. The USAFFE itself had selected the site and guarded it. The conference was attended by Banal. It was raided by the enemy due to a gross lack of intelligence work by the USAFFE, and every one except Banal and his aide were captured and liquidated. The contact was never renewed. In 1943, too, my brother Reg and old Bio contacted Captain Bruce of the USFIP (U.S. Forces in the Philippines) who promised help for the recognition

*The Jesuit middle school in Manila.—*Ed.*

of the Huk; that, too, never went beyond the stage of a promise.

Throughout 1942 the groups which called themselves USAFFE followed what amounted to a lie-low policy. This, it must be noted, was not a Filipino attitude. In the Hukbalahap, where we gave complete freedom to the spirit of resistance, Filipinos eagerly took the offensive against the enemy. USAFFE policy had an American origin. It was embodied in the order that came from MacArthur himself in November 1942, in which he directed USAFFE members to "organize against time until my representative appears." In it he said absolutely nothing about waging active war against the enemy. A MacArthur representative, Colonel Jesus Villamor, the heroic airman, was sent back to the Philippines at the beginning of 1943 as head of the Allied Intelligence Bureau and as a coordinator of guerrilla activity. He acted under the supervision of General Courtney Whitney of MacArthur's staff. General Whitney, before the war, was a business man in Manila, a man whose interests were far from those of the patriotic Filipino. This is what Colonel Villamor said in the report of his activities:

"In some cases General Whitney's policy appeared to play off one guerrilla leader against another. Whitney was also interested in protecting American property even though it was of value to Japs.

"For instance, the Japs were operating the Insular Lumber Company on Negros Island. This is the biggest lumber mill in the Philippines and was indispensable to the Japs. Guerrillas got in touch with the Filipino engineers employed by the company and had them sabotage the vital machinery.

"However, when I reported this back to General Whitney, I got instructions from him that there must be 'no further sabotage of private property without the express order of this headquarters.' "

Our whole attitude toward collaborators and toward the building of a new life for the peasantry was "dangerous" in the eyes of a man like General Whitney, and the fact that we refused to have our movement corrupted by such a policy made us "bandits."

We had nothing against Filipinos who were recruited into the

USAFFE units. In fact, in our newspapers, we popularized their acts against the enemy whenever they occurred, and urged enthusiastically the spread of all forms of resistance. The USAFFE soldiers, however, followed a policy laid down by American officers who had a narrow brass hat perspective that was founded on regarding the Philippines as a colony, and the Filipinos as inferior. There were exceptions, but they merely served to make the rule stand out more boldly. Books were written after the war by Americans who hid out in the mountains; practically all of them portray Filipino guerrillas who were with them as "faithful" people who took care of them hand and foot. Faithful to what? American domination? The Hukbalahap was faithful too, to the people.

Throughout the war we protected and hid an American Bataan refugee, a Lieutenant Gardiner. He resented the way the Huk was organized, particularly the precepts of the "Fundamental Spirit." "Don't call me 'comrade,'" he would shout. During the liberation, after we had delivered him to safety, Lieutenant Gardiner was one of those whose testimony, calling us "bandits," led to the persecution of Huks.

One of the worst of the American elements was Roy C. Tuggle, who had been a stockbroker in Manila before the war. Tuggle, who was associated with the USFIP in Northern Luzon, demanded absolute control over the Huk as a basis for coordinated action, threatening that if we did not submit he would consider us bandits to be hunted down like common criminals. We broke off discussions. Others in the USFIP were more inclined to discuss, and carry out, cooperation on a friendlier basis. Alejo Santos, commanding the Bulacan Military Area, was of this type, although many of the men under him were viciously anti-Huk.

One of our earliest experiencecs with USAFFE men was late in 1942, after the disruption of Thorpe's command. Edwin Ramsey, a Thorpe officer, came to Pampanga and formed a group in Floridablanca. He demanded food and contributions from the people, and those offering the most were given the rank of officers, the highest contributors getting the highest ranks. Everywhere he went, too, he asked for girls. He made absolutely

no attempt to organize the people for a struggle of any kind. Among those he contacted was a weak AMT man named Bundalian, whom he made an officer. When the Huk squadron in the area, under Catapatan, heard complaints from the barrio people about compulsory contributions, they captured both Ramsey and Bundalian and lectured them for several days on the "Fundamental Spirit" and on how the war should be fought. Ramsey was very smooth, professing interest in what our comrades said. They were both released. Later, Bundalian's own outfit rebelled against him when he committed rape and robbery in a barrio; they killed Bundalian and joined the Huk under Dabu. Ramsey left Pampanga and went south into Bulacan.

"USAFFE" was a name that had meaning and prestige to many people; it symbolized heroism on Bataan and held the promise of returning allies who would help us gain our freedom. Freedom, however, is not handed to the people; it is fought for, bitterly. We disagreed with USAFFE officers who went about with blank forms which they signed, promising back-pay from 1942 to all who put themselves on their rosters. Even in 1944, just prior to the American landings, they were promising back-pay all the way back to 1942. Such an approach submerged the true patriotism of the Filipino, which is one of the glories of our history as a people.

The name "USAFFE," however, soon came to be used very loosely. Every undisciplined collection of armed men took to calling themselves "USAFFE", as well as many outright bandit elements. They lived off the people by raiding barrios and terrorizing them. We called such group "tulisaffe*," a term which became very popular among the people and which they used for any group, regardless of origin, which demanded and took from them without their consent. Our BUDC guards often had to fight off tulisaffe raiders, and when we entered new regions we often found that we had to break down a conception in the minds of the people that "guerrilla" and "bandit" were synonymous.

* Contraction of *tulisan,* meaning bandit, and USAFFE.—*Ed.*

There were many guerrilla organizations in the Philippines that were sincere, that believed in fighting, and that fought. Some were led by Americans, more often they had Filipino leadership. They were in Luzon, in the Visayas, and Mindanao. The Hukbalahap, however, was the only one that organized the people as well as an armed force. After the war I met many guerrilla leaders who said: "If I had only known about Huk methods at the time, how much more effective I might have been."

By the beginning of 1944 several converging factors had crystallized. For one thing, the Hukbalahap had become a strong menace not only to the Japanese army, but also to the pro-imperialist feudal landlords whose entire harvest we confiscated wherever possible, and whose tenants we were organizing into a powerful democratic force. The big landlord collaborators used Japanese troops and armed hirelings to harvest for them. Sometimes their harvesters were surrounded in the fields with tanks, to defend them against our squadrons. The Japanese constantly agitated such people to subsidize their own war against the Huk. In 1944 the landlords began to do so.

Secondly, Japanese losses in the Pacific and the threat of the advancing allies forced them to drain their occupied areas of security troops. These troops had to be replaced or else the enemy rear would collapse. The Japanese, however, had a solution, and that was to pit Filipino against Filipino. The PC, more than ever, were used as puppet anti-guerrilla troops.

There was a third factor. MacArthur and the American command (including Whitney and Andres Soriano), watching from Australia and New Guinea and receiving reports of the Allied Intelligence Bureau, were obviously alarmed at the growth of the Huk and at the manner in which we organized the people. Earlier in the occupation, representatives of the American army in the Philippines like Villamor, were withdrawn and their reports buried when they advocated guerrilla unity or alliances with the Huk. As a result, no over-all guerrilla command was ever set up and many lives were needlessly lost. Now, with the Huk expanding into territories where the USAFFE had played an awaitist game for two years, MacArthur's headquarters called

upon the USAFFE to fight; not, however, to fight the enemy, but to fight the Hukbalahap.

That was why, in 1944, the Huk found itself engaged in encounters with the Japanese army and the PC on one hand, and "guerrillas" either directed by Americans or subsidized by the feudal landlords on the other. In Pampanga the tool of the landlords was Jose Lingad, who, however, was unable to raise any opposition to us and who hid out during most of the war. In Nueva Ecija, the Mackenzie group formed an alliance with the renegades Briones and Fajardo. Erickson, another American officer, had relations with Benigno Aquino and the puppets. Ramsey was tied up with Sotero Baluyot and other buy-and-sell profiteeers who became rich on the occupation.

To both the American imperialists and the feudal landlords the Huk and the people's movement it had set in motion were a threat to the status quo, and had to be liquidated. The United anti-Japanese struggle for which we had such high hopes at the beginning of our resistance was now being shattered by the same enemies of Philippine democracy that had existed before the war.

We met this tendency by intensifying our appeals for a united struggle to drive out the Japanese and to smash the puppet government. We issued the following statement in leaflet form and scattered it everywhere in the regions where we had encounters:

Build a National People's Army of Liberation!

We call on all patriots to unite! There is no more fitting honor that we can give to our national heroes than coordination and unity of all anti-Japanese forces, whether they be USAFFE soldiers or patriotic civilian anti-fascist revolutionaries. Our independence is a certainty. This is now the greatest test of our worth as a people: To stand on our own feet, to uphold the national interest over and above our personal interests. Let the memories of our beloved martyrs, Lapu-Lapu, Bonifacio, and our gallant Bataan boys serve to brush aside petty jealousies, disputes and factional quarrels and differences.

In honor of our national heroes, guerrillas everywhere unite!

GHQ HUKBALAHAP

At the same time we issued a call to the PC:

Philippine Constabularymen, Hearken!

Unite with all Anti-Japanese Armed forces!

Turn Your Bayonets Against Our Common Enemy!

Countrymen in the Philippine Constabulary:

Japanese domination has brought to the Philippines nothing but poverty, starvation and slavery. More so are the miserable conditions and hardships of the masses aggravated by the aid rendered by your military institutions to the Japanese in consolidating their forces here.

It must be duly noted that the war situation in Europe points more and more to the rapid disintegration of Germany, Japan's ally. The victorious onslaughts hurled by the terrific forces of the Soviets and Anglo-Americans on the fascist bandits and the rapid rise of patriotic people's movements in the different occupied countries all contribute to the coming final annihilation of Hitlerism. The heroic overthrow of the Vichy puppet government of Petain and Laval in France by the united people and their army should be a lesson to those who work for the interest of the enemy and the puppets lest they suffer a fate similar to that of the traitors in France.

Countrymen in the Philippine Constabulary: Now is your last chance to change your minds and take the only correct stand—that of fighting on the side of your countrymen. Every step you take towards inflicting harm on anti-Japanese elements only serves to intensify the wrath of the people against you. Someday if you do not change your course, the hatred and fury of the people will punish you. There is no doubt now that the fall of the Japanese is certain and inevitable. Those who choose to help them will inevitably be crushed with them. There is only one alternative left for you: to leave the enemy camp or to be destroyed with them!

All PC's unite and cooperate with all anti-Japanese forces! Turn your guns against our common enemy! Drive the Japanese pirates out of the Philippines! Let us strive for our national freedom!

GHQ HUKBALAHAP

We called for unity, but we took a principled position and condemned every act that injured unity. The scab who insists on breaking through a picket line and refuses to be won over must be prevented from endangering the welfare of his fellow workers. We were willing to cooperate, but when we were attacked we fought back.

We knew that if people understood the struggle they would

fight the enemy wholeheartedly. Therefore, when other Filipino guerrillas ambushed us at the instigation of unreliable leaders, attacked us or committed acts that angered the people, we captured them and disarmed them, gave them lectures on the need for a determined anti-Japanese, anti-puppet struggle based on unity, and let them go again, with their arms. Many times those same arms were used again to kill our people. Nevertheless, we continued the practice until the end of the war. Sometimes it bore fruit. We had several squadron commanders who had been anti-Huk at the beginning, even some who had been pro-Japanese, but who had been convinced by our methods of struggle and by our goal.

As we saw it, unity was not only a military necessity. When the Japanese had been driven out and the puppets smashed, a democratic government must take their place. We did not want our liberated nation to be torn internally by partisan struggles from which the old masters would emerge astride us once again.

We attempted to further such a policy in Nueva Ecija, where the disrupters were many. Dimasalang sent out contact men to effect a united front with Briones and Fajardo, who had deserted the Huks to become bandits. In the conferences the two consented to fight the common enemy. The "United Front" lasted only a few days. Reports started to arrive from every direction that Briones and Fajardo were torturing and murdering our mass organizers in the barrios. At such treachery, our patience became exhausted. We drew up plans for a concerted anti-Japanese, anti-puppet, anti-bandit campaign.

To combat the activities of Briones, Fajardo, Abad and other renegade elements whose main activity was the killing of Huks, we formed special "anti-tulisaffe" regiments under the command of Catapatan. We disliked diverting squadrons from the central task of fighting the Japanese, but this was imperative to safeguard the anti-Japanese forces. From our DI reports we were able to piece together other unpleasant information: Fajardo was connected closely with Mackenzie, and Briones had a network of relations with Mackenzie, Tuggle, Ramsey and Lingad. They all had close relations with the PC's and, worst of all, they

had an understanding with the Japanese that they would not be molested as long as they fought the Huk. Under this arrangement the Japanese, the American imperialists and the feudal landlords were well satisfied.

All the USAFFE elements were well-armed, equipped with the latest American automatic weapons. We had been unable to obtain them. Bandits had them in abundance.

In April, our intelligence reported the movement of a large body of men under Briones toward Pampanga. They were looting and abusing the people in the barrios as they passed. Investigation revealed they were en route to Bataan in the hope of securing more arms. As they were crossing the Pampanga River in the vicinity of Mapalad, Arayat, our squadrons ambushed them. We killed 90 and wounded many more. We had no alternative.

Rebel bandit groups made repeated raids into Huk territory during the year. The biggest occurred in November, when 400 men under Fajardo came down from Nueva Ecija with the avowed intention of contacting all USAFFE and tulisaffe groups for joint anti-Huk action. There was no doubt in our minds that the move was inspired by the feudal landlords and had the blessings of the Japanese. In connection with this raid, a piece of treachery revealed that Fajardo was not moving in the dark; the vice-commander of one of our squadrons betrayed 18 men in his hands and disclosed himself as a Fajardo agent. Our men, incensed by the betrayal, chased Fajardo south across Pampanga, and after inflicting many losses upon him, the enemy band was dispersed into the hills of Floridablanca. Along the whole path of his raid, Fajardo looted the barrios and killed barrio people suspected as Huk mass organizers. Fifteen of our organizers were slaughtered by his men.

Sporadic anti-Huk activity by elements calling themselves "guerrillas" erupted into large scale encounters at the end of the year in Nueva Ecija, just prior to the American landings. In one battle, the Wa Chi suffered a loss of 25 men, its worst disaster during the whole war.

At this renewal of anti-Huk activity, Dimasalang assembled the special regiment designed to cope with tulisaffes. First, however,

he made another effort to bring about unity against the real enemy. He managed to arrange a conference on December 15, near Talavera in eastern Nueva Ecija, with the USAFFE elements under Captains Cruz and Ponce. An agreement to halt hostilities between Filipinos was discussed and seemed to meet with approval. On the following day, the Huk squadrons that had attended the conference were attacked while resting in barrio Marcom, Talavera, by the same body of USAFFE's! Our forces retreated across a brook and waited; this was our terrain. When the USAFFE's pursued, they were caught in a trap with their backs to the brook. Forty were killed and 50 captured. The prisoners were lectured for three days and then released. Dim immediately made another attempt to confer with USAFFE leaders. He was determined to exhaust every possibility of halting fratricidal strife.

Just before Christmas, Dim was successful in arranging another conference which took place in the Cabanatuan barrio of Talubtub. It lasted until December 30. Here a complete agreement was drawn up for joint action against the Japanese. It included a pledge to respect each other's organization because we were both fighting for the same cause. No one in either organization was to arrest the members of the other. The USAFFE made a promise to furnish the Huk with arms, ammunition, medicine, and clothing. Dim had high hopes for this agreement.

On the following day, December 31, our squadrons sent notification to the USAFFE that they were preparing to leave the site. They had to pass through the USAFFE lines. USAFFE guards halted the advance troops. When the Huks notified the guards of their intentions, the guards opened fire. Our men retreated and reported the incident. That night our squadrons completely encircled the USAFFE camp and sent emissaries to ask for clarification of the shooting. Once again the USAFFE men fired upon the Huk soldiers. A fight began that lasted the whole night and into the following day. The USAFFE men soon began to raise white handkerchiefs in surrender. Many of them were shot by their own officers. Nevertheless, over 100 surrendered, with arms; 60 had been killed.

The fight was still in progress when a large force of Japanese arrived on the scene. They had been sent for by a landlord in Platero, a supporter of the USAFFE. The enemy came with tanks and artillery. The Huks were forced to abandon their prisoners and retreat, having lost 18 men.

A few days later the Americans landed in Lingayen and all our attention was turned against the Japanese. The issue between USAFFE and Huk was left pending.

In the early months of 1944, our expansion forces, moving south through Bulacan to effect a junction with our southern Luzon squadrons, reached Polo, Obando and Novaliches. The barrio people had many grievances to relate. The guerrillas, they said, were ambushing their *bancas* and stealing from the barrios to obtain produce to sell in Manila for large profits. They asked us to help them. Our DI men investigated and discovered that the Ramsey force was responsible. Fred Laan and Villa planned and executed a raid on the GHQ of the Ramsey group. In addition to rosters and application blanks that promised back-pay from 1942, they found a long record of loot taken from the people and sold in Manila at a great profit. Included were papers indicating that Sotero Baluyot held the rank of major in the unit and was carrying out buy-and-sell with the Japanese, maintaining an office in Manila for that purpose. A captured Lieutenant Colonel and two Majors were pointed out by the barrio people as those guilty of perpetrating the ambushes. They were liquidated. The enlisted men we disarmed, lectured, and sent home.

Throughout Bulacan, as the barrios became organized under us and more people rallied to our support, the USAFFE spread insidious propaganda that the Huk would be anti-American when our allies arrived. Such propaganda was not accidental. In Bulacan, as elsewhere in Central Luzon, the worst clashes developed with those forces inspired and subsidized by the big landlords.

The blood spilled in these encounters, in our estimation was one of the greatest tragedies of the war. We had no quarrel with the common ordinary USAFFE soldiers, most of whom had been persuaded to join an armed group for patriotic reasons and

had been inflamed against us by irresponsible leaders who acted out of ulterior motives. "Indoctrinate, Not Liquidate," was the policy that expressed itself in the capture, lecture and release of many who fought us. Our GHQ received many complaints from our DI and from our squadrons, urging that we abandon such a lenient policy toward elements that used the guns we returned to them to ambush us a second time. Nevertheless we persisted; a gun spoke of death; our greatest weapon, the weapon of the mind, spoke of life, and we felt that it was more important to convince people of the strength that lay in our principles than of the strength that lay in our arms.

Our persistent desire to grasp willingly every hand extended for unity brought about one of our worst experiences with the tulisaffe in the month of September. An escaped American soldier named Johnson who was living in the vicinity of Lubao contacted Banal and asked a conference, claiming that he had some men with him. Trusting him as an American and an ally, a detachment of 18 Huks under Jose Mabini and Felix Manabat went to meet him at an appointed spot, near Gumi. Mabini was at that time the political director for West Pampanga, and Manabat held a similar position under Aquino in Tarlac. They had organized the Bataan region. They were two of our best men.

The American met them with a band of armed men. Immediately after they arrived, Johnson disappeared. Our people were suddenly surrounded, disarmed, and tied. The armed men were a part of the outfit of Briones. Mabini, Manabat, and the others were first tortured in a barrio schoolhouse and then bayonetted and beheaded in the barrio of Manga. Only one escaped, badly wounded. The same tulisaffe group murdered 60 civilians in the Macabebe, Minalin, Masantol region for aiding the Huks.

This incident, news of which we spread in our army as a lesson in carelessness, caused us to intensify our campaign against traitors and bandit elements. We knew that the days of the Japanese were numbered and that the Americans were coming. We felt, too, that during the period of liberation turmoil was likely and unscrupulous elements would seek to seize control. The tulisaffe

groups were perfect tools to be used by such groups. To our way of thinking, the interests of the people must be preserved at all costs.

This was a people's war against fascism and we were determined that it should be a people's victory.

18. Southern Front

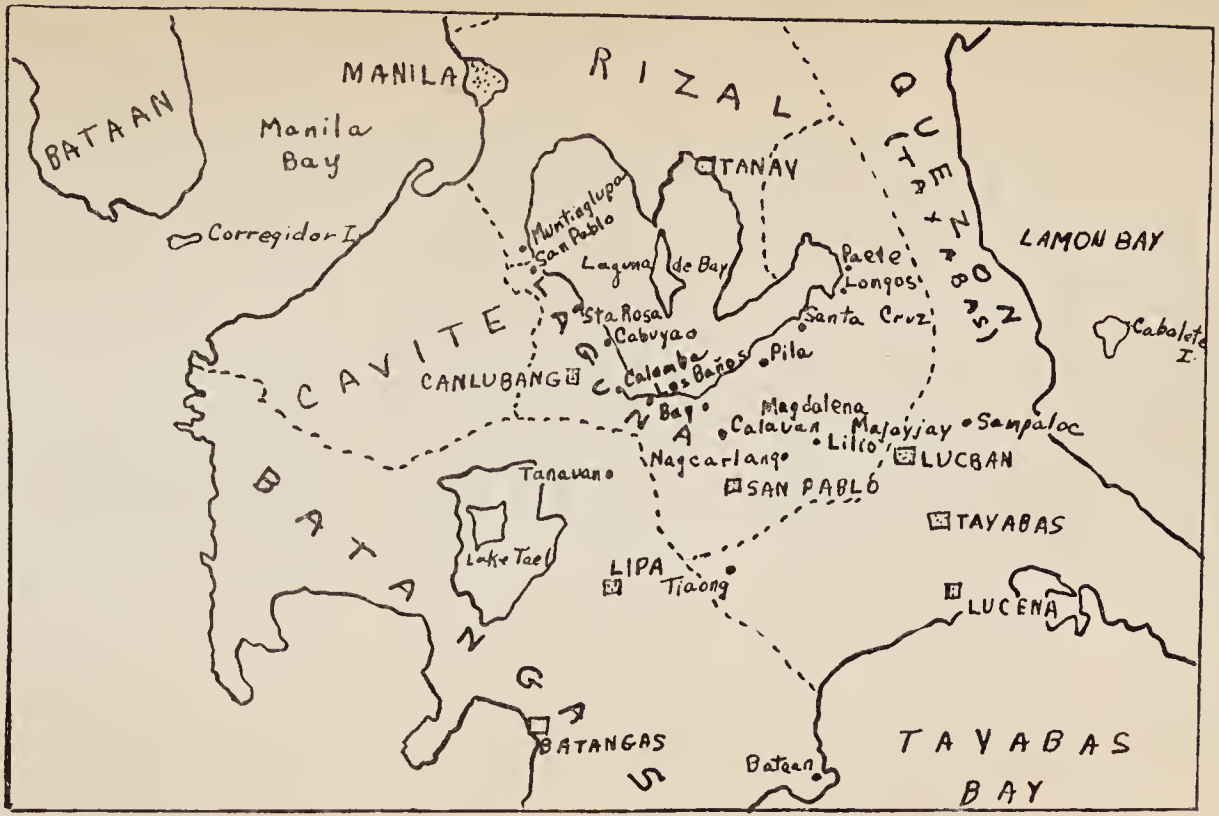
The Hukbalahap of Central Luzon was a guerrilla army of the plains. It grew up like the seedlings in the rice fields, hiding in a region as flat as the palm of the hand but one which we knew as well as the palms of our own. In Southern Luzon, however, there were other problems. There the Hukbalahap was a guerrilla army of the mountains.

Other men, Filipinos, had used the mountains of Southern Luzon to fight oppression. During the Spanish regime the *pulahanes** had fled to them; Rizal's *filibusterismos* lived there. In 1934-35 Teodor Asedillo, the militant schoolteacher and one-time chief of police of San Antonio, Longos, Laguna, wanted for his participation in the Manila general strike, had carried on his tiny rebillion among their peaks, resisting 300 PC's with 12 men and a shotgun.

There were haciendas in the South, too, along with the land hunger of the Filipino peasant. It is not rice country, but coconut and timber country. On the coconut plantations foreigners dictated how much copra should be produced; beyond the quota lay unemployment. Unemployment was always a big problem in Southern Luzon. In 1935, when the Sakdals rose, there were uprisings in Santa Rosa, Cabuyao, Los Baños, and Nagcarlang.

The peasant unions were there, too. The KPMP had much strength in the barrios; in the towns of San Pablo and Canlu-

* Peasant rebels who sought refuge in the mountains.—*Ed.*



SCALE: 21 miles = 1 inch

SOUTHERN LUZON

bang there were trade unions. However, it was not like Central Luzon, where the struggle has always been clear and sharp between tenant and landlord; in Southern Luzon the struggle was more diversified, irregular like the mountains. The unions were not as strong, but neither was reaction so brutally entrenched.

One thing, however, was the same: when the invader came, the people fought him. The flame of nationalism remained liveliest in Southern Luzon, especially in Laguna, the birth place of Rizal, in Batangas, the birth place of Mabini and Malvar, and in Tayabas, the birthplace of Apolinario de la Cruz.

The principal organizer of the Hukbalahap in Southern Luzon was a peasant, Pedro Villegas, who used the name "Hassim" during the occupation. Villegas was born May 1, 1907, in the barrio of San Antonio, Longos, Laguna. His father was a farm laborer.

When Villegas finished the seventh grade in school, he ran away from home, to Calamba, to work on the sugar estate. Soon he went to Manila to work there. When he was 17, the horizon of Manila Bay drew him further. He stowed away on a Dollar Line ship, bound for the United States. The first day out he was discovered and then dropped off into a Shanghai jail. The horizons had closed in. The authorities sent him back to the Philippines, where in 1924 he was recruited into the Philippine Scouts.

In the barracks the young Villegas discovered that most of his comrades were peasants, like himself, who had been driven to join the army to escape misery. During off-duty hours he had become acquainted with workers in Manila, members of the KAP. They gave him leaflets explaining their strikes and their struggles. Villegas began to see another world, but it had to be built, not chased after like a will-o-the-wisp. When he left the army in 1930 he had a new horizon.

The first step he took was to join the KAP. He returned to San Antonio as organizer in the home barrio which he had left long before, back among the people of his father. During the general strike that gripped Manila following the tobacco workers' strike of 1934, Villegas acted as a member of the workers' and

peasants' committee that aided the strikers. As a result of his strike activity he was arrested, charged with "sedition," and sent to jail for seven years. In Bilibid prison, Manila, cut off from the sky and sea and mountain slope, Villegas kept alive the horizon of struggle. He helped other jailed workers to organize against the miserable prison conditions, and as a result Villegas was thrown into solitary confinement for three weeks; in the solitary cell he was hung from the wall by the arms.

Pedro Villegas came out of the dark enclosure of Bilibid on November 31, 1941, one week before the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Villegas had returned to Laguna, to San Antonio, where he contacted the peasant leaders he had known before. He joined immediately in the organization of an armed force, based in the Sierra Madres, to resist the Japanese.

It took almost a year to organize sufficient armed forces in Laguna and Tayabas to fight the enemy effectively. The armed groups began in San Antonio, Longos. At first, until April, there were only 8 men with arms. By September, the details of the Central Luzon Huk organization had arrived and had been studied. Squads were then radiated in all directions to form what they called Vanguard of the Barrios. This was comparable to our BUDC, a system of barrio councils. In November, in San Antonio, an open Bonifacio Day rally was held, attended by thousands of people. Military activity at this time was restricted to acts of sabotage.

The first encounter in the South occurred on February 12, 1943, a planned ambush. The Japanese were scheduled to come to San Antonio to collect taxes. They were ambushed on the winding road up from Longos. The enemy had brought along municipal police, marching them in front and behind. The Huks opened fire from the bushes and killed four Japanese. The municipal police who had been contacted before the ambush, fled and left the Japanese to face the fire. Afterward, the police all joined the Huk. Ambushes and raids soon became a regular activity. The Japanese lost many trucks on the narrow winding roads in the mountains.

Due to our activity, all the towns around Laguna de Bay became unhealthy for spies and puppets. Small groups of Huks

kept slipping into the towns and liquidating traitorous elements. Hassim himself was a daring participant in such raids.

The outburst of Huk activity was answered promptly by the Japanese, who were just completing their big raid in Central Luzon. Evidently determined to crush our guerrilla movement in the South before it spread further, they launched a large scale offensive that lasted from June through August. The raids began with an air assault on the San Antonio area. Six planes bombed the vicinity of the barrio, dropping 70 bombs in all. The Huks collected the shrapnel for souvenirs.

So far the Hukbalahap in the South acted independently of our army in Central Luzon. Early in 1943 we tried to send two squadrons South, but they were unable to penetrate Bulacan without great difficulty, so they returned. Following the Japanese March raid, the Chinese Wa Chi, finding it hard to move in the raided barrios, agreed to go South, and left early in May.

To the Chinese the journey became known as "The Long March." It took 36 days. They traveled the entire route through the Sierra Madre mountains, avoiding inhabited places to prevent attracting attention, meeting no one along the way. They brought no food with them and had to rely on whatever they could find on the wild slopes. They were always hungry, and became half-starved. Previously they had had four months of incessant movement to escape the Japanese. Now they could not afford to stop for rest. At night they slept anywhere, in the forest, under rocks, in the open fields. It was the rainy season and they found no shelter. Sometimes it took them two days to climb a single mountain. Most of them became sick, three died of privation. Once they passed through a forest filled with large leeches. They had to run for two hours to get out, the leeches swarming on them from the vines and trees. Finally, when they passed close to Ipo Dam, they carried out a desperate plan to get supplies. Disguised as Japanese soldiers, they entered Ipo Dam, killed the Japanese guards, and had their first real meal in weeks.

In June they arrived in Paete and Longos.

In the South, the Chinese served as instructors and as model units, helping organize four new Huk squadrons. They put into

practice the policy of military and mass schools followed in Central Luzon.

Equally important was their role as mediators in the united front program. In the South there were many guerrilla groups in addition to the Huk. The Huk there, as a matter of fact, was not then the largest and most important group, as it was in Central Luzon. Marking, in Rizal, had the largest armed force. Scattered elsewhere through Laguna, Batangas, Tayabas and Rizal, were President Quezon's Own Guerrillas (PQOG), the Red Lions, the Fil-American, the Hunter's ROTC, the Blue Eagles, Anderson's and a number of small USAFFE units. Our squadrons sought an alliance with them for united action against the enemy.

The experience of the squadrons in the South proved the correctness of our united front policy. They were able to form alliances with every group with which they came in contact. As a result, bitter feuding was less than in Central Luzon. Incidents did occur; the guerrillas who took what they wanted from the people antagonized the masses, who often asked the Huk for protection. Small clashes over these policies took place between the Marking, PQOG, and ROTC outfits.

Marking and the ROTC also wanted to establish territories for each unit, a sort of guerrilla "off limits" scheme, but Villegas insisted that "the whole Philippines is the territory of guerrillas," and that each unit should be free to organize where it wished. Rivalry existed between the groups. At one time both Marking and the ROTC asked aid from the Huk to crush the other. The Chinese mediated that clash and brought about harmony. The Huk was also an influence against the awaitist policy. ROTC leaders argued that guerrillas should leave an area when the enemy raided. The Huk, however, set the example by playing hide-and-seek in the barrios. Under our influence, too, an aggressive anti-puppet, anti-spy program was carried out.

In April 1944, American officers from a USAFFE unit near Tiaong contacted the Huk. The daughter of an American had been captured by a notorious puppet leader in Tiaong, Juanito Umali. (Juanito was the brother of Vicente Umali, a leader of the PQOG and the editor of the underground newspaper,

Liberator). The Huk agreed to help. They released the girl and captured Umali, who was brought outside for trial. He was found guilty of treason and of brutality against the people, and was executed. His trial aroused considerable attention and encouraged anti-puppet acts by other groups.

The comparative success of the united front in the South, while we in Central Luzon had difficulties, can be easily explained. In Central Luzon a combination of feudal landlords and imperialist-minded American army officers stood in the way of unity. The landlords were looking ahead, and they knew that a mass movement such as ours was more than a wartime phenomenon and therefore had to be crushed. The American brass hats were inspired by MacArthur's headquarters to conduct themselves as imperialists should, and that meant to decry, to play down, or even to crush any national liberation movement originating in the people. MacArthur had the reputation in the States of using the army to shoot down veterans of World War I who marched on Washington demanding a bonus.

In the South that combination did not operate to the same extent, and besides the Huk there did not reach the size and scope that it did in Central Luzon. Otherwise, the story there might have been different.

Of all the units the Huk worked with in the South, the best relations were established with Anderson and the ROTC. Anderson was the outstanding exception among the American officers, a man who really made an attempt to understand the Filipino under the stress of war and fascist occupation. When Villegas first met him in May 1943, Anderson claimed that he had exclusive authority from MacArthur's headquarters to organize guerrillas, and that the Huk should come under his command. However, when Villegas explained the nature of the Huk, Anderson agreed that relations should be friendly and not subservient. The Huk supplied regular intelligence reports to MacArthur through Anderson, who had submarine connections.

A significant mix-up occurred not long after the meeting with Anderson. A Huk squad dispatched to the Pacific coast for patrol work spotted a motor boat approaching shore one night. They saw the boat land and the crew begin unloading it. The

squad crept up and captured them. None of the Huks spoke English, which was the only language spoken by their captives. It was a motor boat from an American submarine, carrying arms to Anderson. The Huks confiscated the arms and let the crew go. Then they took the arms into the hills, traded some of them for their old guns, and buried the rest. A communication was dispatched to Villegas about the incident. He promptly wrote a note to Anderson, apologizing, and had the arms dug up, replaced and sent to Anderson who was very much impressed. Later he gave the Huks arms, ammunition, and medicine.

The fruit of such relations came later, during the liberation period, yielding cooperation and harmony with the U.S. army instead of the persecution and bitterness that we experienced in Central Luzon.

19. Manila Front

A guerrilla army, essentially, is an army of the forest, the mountains, and the swamps. An active army cannot be quartered underground in a city very easily, to carry on warfare in the back streets or to stage ambushes in the plazas. A city is too confined, a Neighborhood Association can work too well, and a block raid is hard to dodge. In a barrio all neighbors are intimately known; in a city strangers can parade past your house all day long, and any one of them can be a spy. The Huk had no squadrons in Manila.

An underground, however, did exist in the city. The Allied Intelligence Bureau, for one thing, had its spies everywhere. A Chinese Anti-Traitor, Anti-Puppet League had liquidation teams which executed many collaborators and spies in the crowded city streets. And there were several passive groups which bided their time until the Americans arrived in the suburbs.

The most admirable unit, which we were proud to call an ally, was the little group known as the Free Philippines. It was independent, adhering to no faction, but it acted as the unifier, the coordinator, and the go-between for all guerrilla groups with which it had contact. The Huk was one of them. As in all Central Luzon towns, we maintained our contact men in Manila, too. We got in touch with the Free Philippines.

The Free Philippines probably never numbered more than 100 members at peak strength. It was composed chiefly of professional people and intellectuals, most of whom were very well known in public life. Its original organizing group was composed of members of the pre-war Civil Liberties Union.

The guiding spirits of the Free Philippines at the beginning were Antonio Bautista and Liling Roces. Bautista, as chairman of the Committee for Democracy and Collective Security in 1940, had been arrested by Quezon for advocating a boycott of Japanese goods. Liling Roces, a small, slight, daring man, came from a rich family, some branches of which collaborated, and Liling indignantly refused to acknowledge any connection with the family.

The Free Philippines group was organized on January 18, 1942. Its first step was the issuing of a newspaper, *Free Philippines,* which appeared shortly after the setting up of the puppet Executive Commission under Jorge Vargas on January 24. Its editorial, written by Roces, carried a fierce attack on the Executive Commission, branding it as a "Judas." The *Free Philippines* became a famous underground newspaper. It was printed on a mimeograph machine stolen from an office of the Insular Life Building. People were killed for possession of the paper after it became well-known; they made the mistake sometimes of copying it on their own typewriters in their own offices. The paper was passed from hand to hand, but its contents also went from mouth to mouth. The second editorial was read over the "Voice of Freedom" broadcast from Bataan.

The members of the group had to learn by experience the technique of an underground. They had to learn discretion, caution, secrecy and diplomacy. They had to live two lives, one submerged, one on the surface. And they had to learn how

to face death and torture. The group was organized in small cells, with only a single connecting link. There were no traitors in the Free Philippines.

As a clearing house for guerrilla contacts the Free Philippines did its most valuable work. It was in touch by courier with the resistance movements from Central Luzon to the Visayas. The Peralta group on Negros and the Fertig group on Mindanao both requested intelligence work from the Free Philippines. Sketches of Clark Field, Nicholas Field and Manila installations were sent to MacArthur.

In all their intimate relations with the Allied Intelligence Bureau and with the guerrilla organizations, none of the Free Philippines members ever heard the slightest verification of the later claim that Manuel Roxas had a connection with the resistance movement.*

The Free Philippines also collected money to be turned over to the various guerrilla organizations. It was distributed impartially to those who had the greatest need. We received such contributions. We were most grateful, however, for the efforts made by the Free Philippines to bring together conflicting groups. Many of our conferences with the USAFFE were arranged through the Free Philippines. They met Ramsey, for instance, in December 1943 in Calle Espana, and urged him to cooperate in Central Luzon. The smooth-talking Ramsey agreed, but his cooperation never occurred. The report of General Willoughby, made in October 1944, indicated that Ramsey's main assignment from MacArthur was to fight the Huk.

In the middle of 1944 we asked the Free Philippines for their assistance in sending representatives to the Visayas and to MacArthur himself, in order to promote national unity among Philippine guerrillas. The contact was made for us in the Visayas, and in August two of our representatives went to Negros, where they met Alfredo Montelibano, who headed the resistance there. A conference was held on the question of a unified guerrilla

* After reoccupying the Philippines, General Douglas MacArthur rehabilitated Roxas and backed him for the presidency in 1946. Roxas then claimed that while serving in the Japanese puppet government he gave secret aid to the guerrillas.—*Ed.*

command and on the possibilities of setting up a people's democratic government to offset the puppet administration. Although Montelibano expressed interest in the matter, it never went beyond the discussion stage.

The envoy to MacArthur was to be relayed through Anderson in Tayabas. Chosen as representative was Jesus Lava who, after a period of caution following his incarceration at Bongabon, had resumed united front work in Manila. He had worked undetected until April 1944, and then had to go underground again when a courier posing as a patient was trailed to his office at Mercy Hospital. The contact was made; Anderson was known to be favorable to the idea. Jesse was scheduled to leave by submarine from the Tayabas coast. However, Anderson's contact man in Tayabas, an anti-Huk element, deliberately withheld the final messages of arrangement, and the submarine left without Jesse. Instead, Jesse was captured by the USAFFE and threatened with death; it was only the pro-Huk sympathy of the people in the area that saved him.

The members of the Free Philippines lived constantly on the borderline of detection by the enemy. Liling Roces was investigated seven times prior to 1944. Antonio Bautista was taken in August 1943, and released in October after getting the water cure twice without effect. Neither of them ceased activity at any time. Finally the Japanese put a master spy, Paco de los Reyes, on their trail. Reyes was slow and painstaking, but he got clinching evidence. When he submitted his report in January 1944, it was complete.

On February 26, 1944, Bautista and J. B. L. Reyes were picked up. Liling Roces was seized on March 3. They were all taken to Fort Santiago. J. B. L. was the only one of the three leaders who came out alive, as the result of pressure from influential relatives, but torture left him incapacitated until the end of the war. Not a single member of the Free Philippines was arrested as a result of the torture of its leaders. With the death of Roces, Judge Jesus Barrera became the chairman.

The members of the Free Philippines had one thing in common with the Huk. They were patriots who devoted themselves unselfishly to the liberation of the country. They scorned the

idea of back-pay or rewards for their voluntary services. They were the only guerrilla organization that did not submit a roster for back-pay when the war ended, much to the astonishment of the American army, which had been the chief factor in promoting the idea that patriotism had a peso value.

The Free Philippines, we thought, had an even more important feature. It represented a group of intellectuals and professional people, of very high integrity, middle class people, who were willing to unify with peasants and workers in the interest of freedom and justice, who were willing to ignore partisan interests to promote the general welfare of the nation. For the members of the Free Philippines, and for all representatives of their kind who take their positions on the side of the people, the common *tao* will always have the greatest respect and admiration.

Another middle class organization that advocated a united front existed in Manila, the League of National Liberation, which was organized in April 1942. The fact that it had a political program distinguished it from most of the other underground forces in the Philippines. It, too, called for a struggle against the puppets and collaborators as well as against the Japanese, and urged a more democratic Philippines to emerge from the war. The Huk maintained liaison relations with the LNL, which also collected contributions and funneled them out of the city to the various guerrillas operating in the provinces.

Lawyers and small businessmen formed the membership of the LNL, which reached an active strength of 300. It had its own newspaper, *United Front*, which came out once a week, carrying international as well as guerrilla news and editorializing against the enemy.

The following poem appeared in a cultural supplement of the *United Front*:

RECKONING

Do you, reclined in shiny cars,
Prisoner, not see the bars
Behind which you have been secured
By the invader, who has lured
You on by flattery, decoration,

Banquets, feasts, felicitations,
Junkets, offices and missions,
Inspection trips and expeditions,
To hogtie you, and thus with ease
To bring the country to its knees?
The poison is so well injected
That you cannot become infected
By your brothers' agony.
The method of the enemy
Achieved its aim, for you are blind
To the misery of your kind
Who are digging in the gutter
For food, while you are eating butter,
And since your table boasts of ham
For famine you should give a damn.
The human misery on the street,
The tattered loins, the festering feet,
The pleading hands, the wistful look,
The neck beneath the pushcart yoke,
The children stunted by disease
Do not faze you; the Japanese
Are feasting at your house tonight
And you must see the food is right,
The fish piquant, the saki cold,
The capon brown, the sherry old,
The lechon crisp, the lampis hot,
The suki-yaki in the pot,
The biscuits light, the butter yellow,
The coffee rich, the cigars mellow;
Furthermore the conversation
Requires thought; the Nippon nation
Is known to be not very subtle
And you must show in the rebuttal
That you are a man of breeding
When it comes to chatting, feeding
And yet, perhaps you're not so brainless
And see the day when you'll be chainless,
When your prison walls will crumble

And you'll hear a distant rumble
Approaching, swelling to a roar
And spot the noose. "Oh, what's that for?"
"Step lively, traitor, don't be stupid.
This is a necklace for a puppet."

The LNL specialized in rendering Neighborhood Associations useless. If a guard in a neighborhood took his job very seriously and actually patrolled the streets, he was warned; if the warning did not take, more drastic steps were taken. In addition, many LNL members themselves became NA guards, thus nullifying it completely in some sections of the city.

Toward the end of the occupation, when starvation was making the people of Manila desperate, the League of National Liberation propagandized rice-grabbing by the people, from the trucks and bodegas of the enemy. Many Japanese trucks were waylaid in the streets by small boys and women, who climbed upon them and fought the guards, while others threw the rice to waiting comrades.

A large LNL armed force was created shortly before the liberation of Manila. It functioned in the southern part of the city and was able to save many sections from complete destruction by the Japanese. LNL members also served as guides for the American army, pointing out machine gun nests and booby traps. In the few days of action during the Manila fighting, ten per cent of the LNL group was killed fighting with the U.S. troops.

Recognition was never extended to the League of National Liberation, as a guerrilla unit. They dared to mingle a political program with their military objectives.

The Huk maintained only a liaison unit in the city. It carried on propaganda and maintained contact with other groups. The underground newspaper *Patnubay* (*Guide*) was issued by us. It carried predominantly the reports of all our military activity against the enemy in Central Luzon. We hoped in this way to convey to other guerrilla groups the possibility and the necessity of fighting the Japanese instead of playing a relatively awaitist game.

In the latter part of the occupation, *Patnubay* called for the formation of Hunger Brigades in the city, to carry out raids on bodegas and trucks of the enemy. "Get your food back from the enemy!" read the editorials. "Bring knives, scissors, iron bars —break down the enemy bodegas! Hold up the Japanese trucks! Struggle for rice and freedom!"

We wanted Manila to have its counterpart of our Central Luzon Harvest Struggle.

20. The All-Out Offensive

Vicente Lava once said that a people's movement is like a chemical process. It is created in a qualitative change after a quantity of oppressive events have brought it into being. Once it has been created the people's lives are not the same anymore; they do not look backward to what has been, but look forward to what will be.

So it is, too, with the struggles undertaken by a people's movement. They have a small beginning. A committee yesterday is a full-fledged BUDC today. It moves steadily from one stage to the next stage, from a lower plane to a higher plane.

Throughout the first months of 1944 a qualitative change could be sensed in our struggle. Everywhere now the allies were attacking the fascist armies and driving them backward. In the Pacific, the Americans were winning back islands steadily, converging on the Philippines. The year 1944 was developing into a year of offensive, and we, too, had to orient ourselves increasingly toward an offensive policy.

Everywhere we went the people had rallied behind our anti-Japanese slogans. They had contributed freely to the building of our squadrons, and had organized themselves under our leadership in the barrios. They had resisted not only the Japanese but also the puppet government. As the time for offensive

drew closer, however, the struggle to sabotage and disrupt the puppet servants of the fascists had to reach a higher stage. What was to replace the fascists and the puppets when they had been driven out? The old Commonwealth government? With most of its leaders, it had been the machinery of collaboration with the Japanese. Besides, how had the people prospered under the Commonwealth government anyway? Our BUDC was more democratic than the Commonwealth local government; the people would not want to go backward from that. What was needed now was a direct struggle to replace the puppet, to preserve what we had gained, and to bring about in the postwar Philippines the forms that would guarantee a more democratic way of life to all Filipinos. That meant a qualitative change.

In September we held a special struggle conference to determine the steps to be taken. Among other things, we assessed our strength. At this time we had an effective armed strength of approximately 10,000 men, with plans going forward for the creation of many new squadrons. In reserve, assigned to production work in the barrios, we had 10,000 more men who had received a degree of military training. If need be, we felt that we could summon into the field, in addition to those already on active duty, an army of 30,000 fighters. For support and sympathy we relied on a mass base of no less than 500,000 people, many of whom lived in organized barrios.

We assessed the attitudes of the people, not only of those whom we had organized but of the people in general. Of their overwhelming anti-Japanese sentiment there was not a doubt. More important, a mass disillusionment had set in as far as the puppet government was concerned. The masses of the people were suffering greatly due to the looting of the nation by the enemy, and it was the puppet government that supervised the looting. Discontent was rife everywhere. Anti-puppet jokes were very popular. We noticed that the example of our anti-puppet program was taking effect beyond the regions under our influence.

Nevertheless, the influence of the puppet government was still great. It was the strongest prop of the Japanese in our country. As a result of our history under the heel of foreign-

ers, when the Japanese used anti-imperialist slogans against the Americans, they had their effect.

To destroy the shreds of faith in the puppets we launched the slogan, "Smash the Puppet Fascist Regime!"

To realize the next stage in the people's struggle for national liberation and democratic freedom we raised the slogan, "Establish a Democratic Government of All the Anti-Japanese People!"

Our objective in setting up a people's democratic government was not designed to contradict the government-in-exile in Washington. We looked upon Quezon, Osmeña and their cabinet as our government. However, we did want the various resistance forces, the true representatives of the Filipino people in the islands, to be recognized as such, and to be incorporated in the government when the time came. Our objective was to create local people's governments everywhere, and to urge people elsewhere to create them, so that they could immediately function when liberation did occur, and before if possible.

We believed, for one thing, that the war and the enemy occupation had created special problems which the government-in-exile was too remote from the people to grasp. One of these was the question of dealing with the traitors and collaborators. The people lived under the rule of such elements, they knew who they were and what they had done. All types had to be judged; the pro-Japanese leaders, the pro-fascist capitalists and proprietors, the small puppets (on town level), the puppets who played both sides, the puppets who were forced to serve, the spies, the big buy-and-sell profiteers, and the small buy-and-sell operators.

We believed, too, that the democratic processes which we had set in motion during the war would not be preserved unless the framework for preserving them existed. We looked upon the defeat of fascism in the war as the victory of the people over the worst and most barbarous form of reaction the modern world had seen, and we expected the common *tao* to get something out of it. We expected him to be better off than when he started. We expected that our fight for national liberation against the Japanese would give us the right to complete independence from *all* foreigners. We expected the peasant to get

more from the land he worked, the land itself if possible; we expected the worker to get higher wages, and the standard of living to rise; we expected a free nation, industrializing itself, using its own wealth, and working out its own destiny. We expected all of these things because the evil we fought against was an outgrowth of the same evil that had always oppressed and exploited our people.

The BUDC thus became the framework for local governments, a step far beyond the system of barrio lieutenants. Town as well as provincial governments were also planned. That was as far as our working program went, although we did conceive of a people's national government. If guerrilla unity had been an accomplished fact throughout the islands we would have seriously considered proposing a provisional national government to function until the arrival and re-establishment of the exiled regime and to be incorporated with it. As it was, however, we actively advocated only local government.

We immediately spread wide the slogans, "Drive Out the Puppet Traitors With the Fascist Invaders!" and "Establish People's Local Governments Everywhere!" The first barrio council to transform itself into a local government, at the beginning of November, was the barrio of San Juan in San Luis, Pampanga.

Shortly after our September conference, American airplanes raided Manila and we knew that the war in the Philippines was reaching the critical stage. We geared ourselves to put into action as rapidly as possible the decisions of our conference.

Besides the achievement of barrio and municipal governments, our agenda of action included the liquidation or nullification of puppets, the expansion of liberated territory, and aggressive offensive military action against the enemy. Our patient organization during 1943 and 1944 would now be counted upon to cripple the enemy.

Our vigorous liquidation of the worst puppet elements was typified in our raid on Cabiao. The mayor of Cabiao, Jose Garcia, had long been our target; he made the Cabiao barrios the scene of some of the worst terror in Central Luzon, outdoing the Japanese. In December 1943, Dading, the son of Mateo del

Castillo, was caught in a Japanese raid in a Cabiao barrio. He talked his way out of Japanese hands, but the puppet police seized him. Dading was tied to a tree and tortured; hot irons were thrust into his armpits and genitals; his torn, dead body was flung into the river. He was only one of scores who met the same fate.

On the afternoon of August 30, our forces entered Cabiao, seized Garcia, Ambo (the most vicious of the puppet police), seven of his henchmen, and four spies. The prisoners were taken to the barrios where they had committed their worst crimes, investigated and tried. All were executed.

Ambo was turned over to the people for punishment, upon their demand. He was placed in a house and the people with grievances paraded through it. There were many, because we had publicized the trial. All those who had suffered at his hands, or whose relatives had been victims, meted out their justice. One would approach him and say: "You are the one who slapped me in the town," and then would slap Ambo as hard as he could. A woman would say: "You tortured my son with burning matches," and she would thrust a burning stick into his body. When the people had finished, Ambo was dead, like his host of victims.

Our anti-puppet campaign, however, was many-sided. In addition to our military and propaganda work we attempted, with considerable success, to divide the puppet camp from within. With the allies coming closer, many collaborators were getting ready to change sides. We hastened the process by warning them of the consequences of the people's wrath. An example of our attempts in this direction was the relationship we forced on our old foe, Pablo Angeles David.

David was serving under the Japanese as Judge of the Court of First Instance in San Fernando. In October we kidnapped him and took him to the barrios for a trial. An old friend and ally of ours—pre-war chairman of the provincial committee of the Popular Front and wartime key-man in united front contacts—Edilberto Joven, son-in-law to a niece of David, vouchsafed for him. We decided to release David in due respect to Joven. (In April 1946 David had Joven murdered by his hired thugs.) In

exchange for his life we demanded that he use his influence to organize anti-Japanese factions among the functioning puppet officials in the Pampanga municipalities and in Tarlac, and to quash indictments against the people in the courts. Pablo Angeles, having an exaggerated opinion of the importance of his existence, agreed, and became rather diligent in carrying out such work. He even went to the extent of pretending to embrace the program of the Huk, and would address us in his communications as "comrades." Reading them was one of the transient pleasures of the times.

Expansion, one of the key tasks set by our conference, was pushed toward the end of the year, but when the American invasion seemed imminent we abandoned such projects in order to throw our full strength into attacks on the enemy. One of our regional commands, extending itself down through Bulacan to form a junction with our Southern Luzon forces, reached as far as Novaliches, Rizal. An expeditionary force to Pangasinan was sent up through Tarlac and was on the border of the two provinces when the Lingayen landing occurred. Dimasalang's forces were vigorously pushing outward in three directions, north, east, and west.

Despite the hampering of our activities by treacherous attacks upon us by tulisaffe elements, we carried out assaults on the enemy throughout the year. The September resolutions, therefore, as far as our military work was concerned, amounted to an intensification of a policy already in operation. The Japanese had begun to regroup their forces in preparation for the expected American invasion. They withdrew many of their garrisons into the main towns and left the brunt of the anti-guerrilla fighting to the PC and to the bandit groups.

In Bulacan our squadrons had been very aggressive since February. Early in the month the commands of Fred Laan and Villa had assaulted with success the town of Paombong, and in the middle of the year, Hagonoy was also attacked and held for four days. In the same period, one squadron of 76 men fought an epic 6-day battle from Hagonoy to the sea, dispersing each night to infiltrate and escape, regrouping by day to engage the enemy. In June an ambush near Guiguinto precipitated a run-

ning fight that extended through Plaridel and up to the Bulacan-Pampanga border. Two Huk battalions totaling 600 men eventually became engaged with nearly 2,000 Japanese and PC's. Over 90 puppets died during the fight. Ambushing was also intensified along the railroads, highways and waterways after our September conference.

The fight in western Pampanga in 1944 had been carried to the enemy by means of competition between the squadrons, which rivaled each other in ambushing and in quality of the work done. An over-indulgence in the competitive spirit, however, caused us to suffer a serious loss in the month of June. Dabu, one of the best and most beloved of our commanders, and many of his men lost their lives when, with excessive bravery and reckless courage, they gave pitched battle to a large enemy force instead of withdrawing.

In southern Pampanga, where the PC's were very active, on October 5, they were given a crippling blow in an encounter in the Masantol-Macabebe region. In all, 113 arms were taken by our men. Incidentally, the PC's arms were much inferior to those used by the Japanese, who evidently did not believe it was a reliable risk to put good weapons in the hands of Filipinos.

Throughout the year in Nueva Ecija, Dimasalang's squadrons were hard pressed by the Japanese-PC-USAFFE correlation, with the PC's bearing the brunt of the attacks in accordance with the Japanese policy of conserving manpower and letting others do the fighting for them. The PC was very aggressive and forced our squadrons into a highly mobile existence.

September witnessed two encounters of note with the Japanese. On the 20th a mingled group of Japanese and puppets were ambushed in barrio Bical-Bical, Rizal town. A Japanese captain and 24 puppet police were killed. (The squadron captured a bicycle.) On the 30th a large Japanese patrol was caught by Squadron 4 in the act of crossing the river near barrio Platero, Cabanatuan, and 15 were killed. Five squadrons executed a brilliant raid on Rizal town on October 3. They liquidated the puppet mayor and captured all the supplies in the municipal building and in the bodegas. By now the crisis in the country

had become very acute and the people were starving and in rags. Our squadrons therefore distributed rice to the people of Rizal.

The invasion of Leyte by the American army on October 20 struck the first gong of doom for the Japanese in the Philippines. We were jubilant. We issued special editions of the *Hukbalahap* and the *Katubusan ng Bayan* to celebrate the occasion. They contained editorials announcing that victory was approaching, that the days of the enemy were numbered, and once more calling upon all guerrillas, regardless of affiliation, to join together in the final effort to throw off the shackles of the barbarous Japanese-puppet regime.

The Japanese, however, proved to be more aware of the possibilities of a people's offensive than the groups which rejected our appeal. With large scale fighting on Luzon only a matter of time, they knew the danger of a powerful guerrilla army in their rear. The harvest season was also approaching, a critical harvest from the standpoint of the hard-pressed enemy. They wanted the rice and they wanted to smash our Harvest Struggle and our morale. Beginning in November and lasting throughout December, they launched ruthless raids across Central Luzon.

The first violent raid of the Japanese took place on November 22. On the previous day one of our DI agents had killed a Japanese officer in a staff car in San Roque, Bulacan. The next day, at dawn, 500 Japanese, using six tanks, four cannon, and armed with machine guns and automatic rifles, raided the Bulacan-Pampanga border barrios. They fired upon every civilian they encountered, including all women and children. They burned houses and looted all barrios of carabaos, chickens and clothing. In the same week, Japanese planes at midnight bombed other barrios in Pampanga. The enemy also initiated the practice of burning barrios near the scenes of encounters.

During the first week of December the Japanese rice raids began. Enemy garrisons were stationed in all the key barrios of Pampanga, Tarlac, Bulacan, and Nueva Ecija. In some places they ordered the people to do no harvesting themselves, and warned that anyone violating the order would be killed. They did their own threshing, the machines guarded in the fields

by tanks, armored cars, machine guns, and by soldiers with automatic rifles, while the work was done by Ganaps. That was an indication of how effective our previous Harvest Struggles had been. But still we managed to destroy their machines and trucks or flood the fields so they could not pass.

In an editorial in our newspaper we raised the slogan of "No Rice for the Enemy," pointing out that the Japanese had thrown off the disguise of the BIBA and of the Rice Growers' Association, and were now using their own forces to rob the people. We urge all sections of the people to assist in saving the harvest, to decentralize accumulated stock, and to sabotage the enemy threshings. Our suggestion was that these activities be done democratically through organized people's local governments. The Harvest Struggle that year was thus instrumental in causing local governments to come into being.

There were intensive and vicious enemy raids in many barrios, but they failed to accomplish their purpose. Although they took, by force, large amounts of rice in some barrios, we still managed to save most of the harvest where we were established. However, the greatest failure of the enemy was their complete inability to crush the spirit or the activity of the people. In December we raised the slogan "Fight the Enemy Everywhere!" "Fight the Enemy in the Fields, on the Highways, in the Towns!" we cried. The Americans were landing on many islands, jumping closer to Luzon. Their planes were bombing the airfields and strafing the installations in Central Luzon. The national highway was littered with the burning wreckage of Japanese trucks.

News of the Lingayen landing had been received by our radio. An Allied Intelligence Bureau man who had come to Central Luzon earlier to obtain data in advance of the landing, acknowledged the report as true. Promptly we issued orders to recruit reserves. In Pampanga the enemy garrisons were concentrated in and around the key towns along the highways on which the American forces would have to advance.

We ordered the all-out offensive.

This was our time of triumph. The tides were high, and the sea rose around the enemy. We had organized for three years

for victory and now we were about to achieve it. All of us were eager to meet the Americans and to clear the way for them. Although we had good reasons to be suspicious of the motives of their top command toward us, nevertheless we regarded the American soldiers as our allies against fascism, just as they were the allies of the other progressive forces then smashing down the fortress of fascism in Europe. We gave our squadrons the freedom of unlimited operations. Two objectives were paramount in our minds: to break up enemy concentrations and to disrupt his line of retreat; and to liberate all territory and have people's local governments functioning and ready to cooperate with allied authorities. The latter was a point of pride with us, as Filipinos. From Concepcion, Tarlac, to Calumpit, Bulacan, self-governing town and barrio councils were in operation as early as December.

The offensive of Dimasalang in Nueva Ecija literally burned the ground out from beneath the enemy. There were ambushes on many highways. The Huk assaulted Aliaga itself, took the enemy bodegas, and distributed the goods to the people as a liberation gift. They did the same in San Antonio. In southern Pampanga, as well, the squadrons of Linda attacked and captured the landing field and the sugar mill at Carmen. Huk squadrons in Laguna, now in coordination with us in Central Luzon, launched a dramatic series of attacks on towns in December and January, long before the American troops reached that region. They liberated the towns of Majayjay, Nagcarlang, Lilio, Magdalena, Rizal, Pila, Bay, Calauang, San Pablo, and Santa Cruz, establishing people's councils in all towns and barrios. The united front worked very well in the local governments. In December, Jesse Lava was elected provincial governor of Laguna, with Pambuan as vice-governor.

The most severe fight in Laguna occurred during the liberation of Santa Cruz. It was entered by the Huk squadrons in cooperation with the Chinese Wa Chi. A ten-hour battle ensued, from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Over 60 Japanese and 100 Makapilis were killed. Large quantities of supplies were captured.

Unlike the awaitists, we had carried the fight to the enemy from the beginning. Our strength had not been conserved,

it had been accumulated through struggle. Our victory offensive was the culmination of all those struggles. We looked forward with pride to meeting our advancing allies, with the pride of equals. The fruits of our joint victory, we thought, would be sweet.

I remember standing on the slopes of Mount Arayat then. The plain below seemed to be alive with sound. Everywhere there was firing. It was like the singing of an assembled crowd. First a voice begins over there, then a voice takes up the tune over here, then a group of voices in the back, then voices in front. Soon the whole crowd is singing. I stood there on Mount Arayat and listened to the voices of our guns singing freedom.

21. "Liberation"

In a barrio between Mexico and San Fernando, our GHQ sat in January 1945, waiting for the American army to come. The Hukbalahap and the people were the masters of Central Luzon. The enemy was everywhere in flight; Japanese stragglers were being killed in the barrios by women; puppets had been chased from their positions and the people were ruling themselves through their own elected provisional representatives. Victory was within our grasp.

The first contact of our forces with the American army occurred in the town of Tarlac. We had already liberated Tarlac province up to the highways, and on January 20 our squadrons assaulted and captured the provincial capital. A sharp fight took place in the streets, in which 56 of the enemy were killed, while our losses were but two. The Huks hoisted the Philippines and American flags and waited in the town of Tarlac for two days before the American armored spearheads entered. It was a great occasion for the Huks, who received the GI's as our allies.

Concepcion, Victoria, and La Paz in Tarlac, Magalang and

Angeles in Pampanga were all taken by the Huks before the Americans could come within cannon range. We were in possession of San Fernando, the provincial capital, for two days before the 6th Army arrived. The Americans were amazed. Long after we had liberated San Fernando, American planes bombed and strafed the town, thinking the enemy was still there. Our squadrons guided the Americans over mined roads to Bamban and Clark Field; we could have prevented the enemy from fortifying those strong points if we had been better equipped. Near Mabalacat, American forces were ambushed by the enemy. It was our Squadron 45 that saved the situation, receiving a commendation for its work from the American officers.

The other towns of Pampanga had been liberated by us long before the 6th Army even started its advance. From Calumpit to Concepcion to Cabanatuan our local governments were functioning. On January 28, Casto Alejandrino had been elected provisional governor of the province; he hastened back from his command of our advance forces on the outskirts of Manila to assume his duties. In Nueva Ecija, Juan Feleo was elected provisional governor.

Dimasalang's soldiers had contacted the 6th Army in Victoria, Tarlac, on the rim of our "western front" expansion, and had led them into Nueva Ecija. The now famous assault on the concentration camp at Cabanatuan, which released many American prisoners, was a joint operation of Americans and the Huk, the plans having been discussed between U.S. officers and Huks in Pulilio, Cabanatuan. After a hard fight for the town of Cabanatuan, the Japanese retreated from the provincial capital and the Huks entered it. Our squadrons then led the Americans to the assault on Santa Rosa, seven kilometers distant. An American reconnaissance team, rushing to San Miguel, found that the town was already in the hands of the Huk. When the Japanese retreated into the mountains of eastern Nueva Ecija, it was the Huks who went in after them and cleaned them out.

The advance of the American army through Central Luzon in January 1945, was the swiftest advance it made anywhere, during the whole war in the Pacific. Elsewhere on Luzon and on the other Philippine islands, the American advance was an inch-

by-inch struggle, in which their losses were high. The credit due to the Hukbalahap for enabling this military achievement to take place has never been acknowledged, particularly by the American army.

Our squadrons paced the American army all the way to Manila. Huks, following up an American plane and artillery bombardment, captured Calumpit, the gateway to Bulacan. When the Americans asked for coordination in fighting at Meycauayan and Obando, we were able to inform them that Huks were already there.

The capture of Manila is often described as a race between two American units. Obscured entirely is the shock absorber role played by the Bulacan Regiment of the Huks and the squadrons of Regional Command 7. As a matter of fact, if there had been even a small amount of coordination between the Huks and the USAFFE, at least half of the city could have been captured long before the arrival of the Americans, and the massacre of thousands of innocent Filipinos might have been avoided.

Huk squadrons entering Manila established their command post in the building on Lepanto Street which was later occupied by the House of Representatives. That was as close as most of our heroes ever got to representation in the government.

It was in barrio San Jose Matulid, Mexico, Pampanga, that I first saw American soldiers—on January 28. We met them with a large banner inscribed, "Welcome American Soldiers," and signed, "Hukbalahap." The Americans were young, well-fed in appearance, and very self-confident. They had everything we had dreamed of for the past three years: new, modern guns, inexhaustible ammunition, armored vehicles, medicine, clothing, and supplies. In that barrio, as in every barrio of Central Luzon, the people took them into their homes, fed them, treated them as liberators.

I regarded the GI's with mixed feelings. Were these like my American friend whom I had met at the hunger demonstration or were they Americans like Tuggle, Mackenzie and Ramsey? We considered them our friends and allies, but how did they consider us? The USAFFE had spread propaganda that we were anti-American. Were we to be treated now with USAFFE

treachery, or with the dignity and equality deserved by people's representatives who had won their right to respect on a thousand battlefields?

The American spearheads that entered Tarlac included an advance intelligence team under a Lieutenant Littlefield. They contacted Eusebio Aquino, who relayed them on to our GHQ. They were interested chiefly in coordinating operations with us in order to get to Manila. We wanted a real conference. Two of our representatives were sent to Pangasinan to arrange a meeting with responsible people in the 6th Army. The 6th Army would not deal with them, requesting instead to see the leaders of the Huk.

On January 28, in San Fernando, we had proclaimed the provisional government of Pampanga. Our representatives to the 6th Army returned shortly after the ceremony of inauguration had taken place, and on the following morning GY and I went to Tarlac to contact the American authorities. We had one main thought in mind: to ask for arms and equipment to enable us to help drive out the Japanese as quickly as possible.

The authority we met in Tarlac was Captain Fredericks of the Counter-Intelligence Corps. He greeted us with visible reservation, listened to our request for a conference with responsible authorities, and took us out to the Hacienda Luisita where we met another CIC man, a Captain Thorpe. To us it was obvious that we were merely being sounded out and scrutinized. Finally we were taken to Calasiao, in Pangasinan, where we met Colonel White of the 6th Army Intelligence.

Our "conference" with Colonel White and his aides, a Major Labatt and a Major Eaton, confirmed our fears. They gave us a very cool reception. The first thing they said was that they didn't like "civilians with guns." We declared that we were not just civilans with guns, but soldiers of a guerrilla army that had been fighting for three years. Furthermore, we stated our request for more arms to intensify our struggle against the common enemy. The American officers exchanged glances and gave us a half-promise of "maybe." We had been "armed" with such promises for three years. As we were discussing, the report came of the Japanese retreat in the direction of Ipo Dam

and of the advance of the 1st Cavalry to the outskirts of Manila. Abruptly Colonel White said: "Okay, that's all," and waved us out, turning to his reports.

As we came away from Calasiao, I had the same feeling in the pit of my stomach as when eating something sour, thinking it was fresh. Captain Fredericks had made it very apparent that he resented the fact that we did not act subservient to him, and Colonel White had dismissed us coldly as untrustworthy "civilians with guns." All the way back to San Fernando I thought about the years of struggle, the lives spent, the suffering, to obtain and to use those guns against the enemy of the Americans as well as of the Filipinos.

Our disappointment on that occasion, deep as it was, did not prepare us for the horror, the terror, and the persecution that was to follow. We trusted the Americans, although many of their representatives had given us good reason not to. In our united front frame of mind, we thought of them as allies in a war against a fascist enemy. We had not even considered that our allies themselves would turn to using fascist methods.

On February 5, our squadrons in Manila, where the battle was still at its height, were suddenly ordered disarmed by the American army. Astonished, our comrades refused. Instead they packed up and started back to Central Luzon. Just beyond the city our squadrons were halted and disarmed at the point of guns by American MP's under the personal authority of Colonel Eaton, whom I had met and spoken to only a few days before in Calasiao. Two squadrons were disarmed in Obando and another at Meycauayan. Our comrades were stunned. Some of the GI's with whom they had fought side by side into Manila were present and cried when they witnessed what was happening; others gripped our comrades' hands and said it was all a mistake, the arms were sure to be returned in a couple of days. The reason Colonel Eaton gave was that armed civilians would not be tolerated behind the American lines. The USAFFE units behind the American lines were considered not civilians but soldiers attached to the U.S. Army! Our soldiers were not even given truck transportation; they were set afoot and forced to walk back to Central Luzon.

Squadron 77 passed through Malolos. When they reached that town they were suddenly surrounded and seized by the men of Colonel Adonais Carlos Maclang, the tulisaffe, who had ambushed and murdered our men before the Americans arrived. Thrown into jail, our comrades were accused of raiding and looting in Malolos, accused of the very crimes which had been committed by Maclang. This arrest was permitted by the American MP's, under whose noses it took place.

On February 7, with the full knowledge of the American CIC, the men of Maclang dragged the 109 Huks of Squadron 77 into the courtyard, forced them to dig their graves, and there shot and clubbed them all to death. Only 109 appeared on our rosters, but other enthusiastic reserves had joined, unlisted, a week before. All told there were probably 160. I was able to find only 30 alive, who told me the grim story.

The massacre of Squadron 77 I consider to be the greatest tragedy that happened to the Hukbalahap during the entire war. It was one of our best squadrons, containing many of the most promising leaders of the people produced by our struggle against the Japanese. Most of them came from Santa Rita, and from my home town of San Luis; many were Manila students; many were my relatives. Among them was a girl, Isabela Calma, sister of Commander Sol; another was Sol's brother, Florante. They were murdered by the agents of the landlords and of American imperialism.

The anger of the people forced the Americans to place Maclang under arrest. Almost immediately, however, he was set free. Two days after his release, at the behest of the CIC, he was appointed mayor of Malolos.

They are raising monuments now to the dead heroes of Bataan, Filipino and American, and reciting words about the brotherhood sealed in blood on that battlefield. Who is going to commemorate the death of Squadron 77? When the people have come into their own, they will remember their heroes with the true monuments of brotherhood achieved in peace and democracy.

The Malolos massacre was the forerunner of fascist terrorism in Central Luzon.

Simultaneously, Linda Bie, whose squadrons had assisted the Americans in the capture of the Floridablanca airfield, was arrested along with several of his commanders in Guagua. Six squadrons were disarmed and told to go home. An American Major and two Captains, one of them Lindsey of the CIC, used the men of Lingad to carry out the disarming. Linda cried when they demanded that he surrender his pistol after fighting the enemy for three years. He would not surrender it himself; one of his comrades gave it to the Americans, who told them that they were being disarmed because they were enemies of the American and Filipino governments.

"Ask the people. You will not hear that from the people," said Linda.

Linda and Commander Sante, brother of Dabu, were taken to Calasiao at the orders of Colonel Leonard of the CIC. There they were investigated for one week by Lindsey of the CIC. They were told that they were being charged by the USAFFE as anti-government, as guilty of the kidnapping and murder of Filipinos, and as Communists. After a week of questioning and accusations, in which their protests were scorned, they were taken to San Fernando to be lodged in the provincial jail. They arrived late and the American truck drivers told them to sleep in the municipal building. The guard was careless, and in the morning they both escaped. They came to see me. I told them to go home, to Lubao, and to avoid coming in contact with the Americans.

Another situation arose when the Philippine Civil Affairs Unit (PCAU) came in the wake of the American army. Trained in American army schools and reflecting the MacArthur policy of reaction, the PCAU refused to recognize the authority of our provisional governments. The CIC demanded to know who had placed mayors in office. When told that the people had elected them, they ordered the removal of provisional officials. The elected officials in Concepcion, Tarlac, under Mayor Narciso, were the last to be ejected; the people did not recognize the authority of the PCAU. In many cases, the mayors appointed in place of the elected officials were former USAFFE, and many were rabid anti-Huk elements.

In Concepcion, Squadron 45 defied an order by a unit of the CIC to surrender arms. Commander Corpus told his men to keep their arms, and pointed out that the CIC unit did not have a force large enough to disarm them. After analyzing the situation, the CIC unit backed down.

Squadron 50, bringing into Concepcion two Japanese prisoners whom they had captured in the barrios, was surrounded by American MP's and disarmed. Commander Remy was accused of being a collaborator because he had the two Japanese with him! The squadron was imprisoned in Concepcion. In Magalang, Squadron 3 was disarmed and imprisoned.

Huk squadrons were finally given orders to avoid contact with American units. We greeted our allies; they answered with persecution.

The American command had come fully equipped with distorted information furnished them by USAFFE elements that had remained hostile to the Huk throughout the occupation, a hostility compounded by relations with landlords and puppet elements. That, however, did not explain entirely the position of the American command. The attitude of MacArthur during the entire war was to play down and repress popular democratic movements organized to fight the enemy. His awaitist and lie-low orders had enabled the puppet government to exert a wide influence on the Filipino people and had helped the enemy consolidate his occupation, at a time when the people themselves were everywhere ready for mass resistance. As the "liberation" progressed it became increasingly obvious that what MacArthur wanted was a return to the status quo, that he was carrying out a colonial policy of an imperialist group. Osmeña, well-meaning as he was, came back into relationships that were strange to him and tried to conduct himself in the spirit of the status quo, enabling MacArthur to maneuver at will. Even men like Tomas Confesor, who came into office as Secretary of the Interior shouting anti-collaborationist slogans, had little understanding of the issues in Central Luzon, having himself disturbed none of the feudal relationships in his type of guerrilla movement on Panay.

On top of preconceived prejudices, the American army, the

officers in particular, were greeted with open arms by collaborators, landlords and USAFFE alike, who poured out tales of the horrors of the Japanese occupation, and included fantastic accusations of murder, robbery, rape and other crimes against the Hukbalahap, to which was added the charge that we were anti-American and were conspiring to set up a Communist dictatorship in the Philippines. American officers, wined and dined in the wealthy homes of landlords, came to feel much closer to their hosts and their opinions than to the ragged peasants in nipa huts. Every liquidation of a dangerous traitor was distorted into murder; our Harvest Struggle was termed robbery because it kept the profits from the landlords which they might have acquired from selling to the Japanese; our local governments were falsely called Soviets. The campaign of slander had no limit.

Among the most vicious was the lie that we were anti-American, a slander spread by the USAFFE among the people even during the occupation to discredit us. Our entire propaganda during the war, our leaflets, newspapers, and appeals for action, are testimony to the high regard in which we held our American allies against Japanese fascism. Another convincing demonstration is the number of American flyers we rescued and relayed to safety. In all there were thirty, in addition to many other American soldiers who were convoyed to safety through Huk territorry during the occupation, or who were cared for by us.

Of the American flyers shot down during the air raids that began in the latter part of 1944, I remember only a few names: Captain Frank Hogan, Captain Morris Nayland, a Captain Eisenbrenner, Lieutenant Adelard F. Landrey (USNR), Lieutenant Fred A. Lafser (USNR), and Lieutenant David E. Nyman (USNR). Most important was Colonel Gwen G. Atkinson, who was rescued by old Bio. Bio still has the following letter given to him by Colonel Atkinson:

8 January 1945,
Butulan, Magalang,
Pampanga.

To Whom it May Concern:

The bearer of this letter will serve to introduce Eusebio Aquino, affectionately known as the Old Man. Mr. Aquino is Colonel Aquino of

the Hukbalahap Guerrilla Organization. Since being picked up by the guerrillas 3 January 1945, I have been extended every courtesy by him without duress or compensation. Colonel Aquino is to be fully trusted and has full knowledge of all means of aiding Americans to return to their organizations.

(signed) Gwen G. Atkinson
Colonel, Air Corps, U.S.A.

When the persecution of the Huks by the American MP's and CIC became a practice, Colonel Atkinson went all the way to MacArthur to defend us and to urge good treatment. "I don't care even if they are Communists," he said. "I saw how they treated American flyers and I saw how the people followed them." He came back to apologize for a situation that was beyond his means to control. Colonel Atkinson was a true representative of the democratic, fair-minded American. We met many more among the GI's; usually they were enlisted men. Their sympathy emphasized to us that the policies of the MacArthurs and others of their kind did not spring from the hearts of the American people, but from the small minority of imperialists and finance capitalists who exploit the American people as well as the Filipinos.

Today, in Central Luzon, Hukbalahap members still treasure souvenirs given to them by flyers and other GI's as tokens of friendship and brotherhood. They have a meaning distinct from that of other souvenirs: American bullets sent from American guns held by PC's and civilian guards.

In Nueva Ecija, the original unity resulting from the liberation of many towns broke down quickly when the USAFFE began to slander the Huk to the Americans. Three days after the liberation of Cabanatuan, when our forces had moved on to other objectives, USAFFE units entered the town and denounced the Huk as a fifth column. When Dim tried to enter Cabanatuan to discuss the matter with the Americans, Cabanatuan was heavily guarded by USAFFE and he was unable to pass. In other towns the USAFFE entered two weeks after their liberation by the Huk and accused our squadrons of being anti-American and pro-Japanese. In spite of this changed attitude, Dim continued to order the drive against the Japanese in coordination with the

Americans. When our forces came down out of the mountain regions of northeast Nueva Ecija, after clearing them of the enemy, they were disarmed by American MP's in Bayumbong.

When the disarming continued, Dimasalang went to confer with Colonel White, who promised to return the arms; none were given back. In another conference with Colonel Stevenson in Munoz, Dim influenced the return of about 60 weapons by donating a captured Japanese sword and flag to the Americans. That, however, was an isolated incident.

On February 22, the members of the GHQ of the Hukbalahap were suddenly arrested by the American CIC. We were brought to San Fernando for a "conference" at gun point. When the "conference" ended we were thrown into the San Fernando jail. I was particularly impressed by the date on which it happened. It was Washington's birthday.

Throughout Central Luzon the Huk leaders had been placed on the wanted list by the CIC. Planes dropped leaflets in the barrios with names listed. Luna, on March 5, picked one up in a barrio with his name on it, asking him to come for a conference; when he did so, he too was arrested and imprisoned with us. In San Luis they raided the schoolhouse in which our intelligence and communications department was located at the time; our men there were boxed around by the American MP's.

In the "conference" we were interrogated as if we were criminals and lawless elements. Captain Fredericks and a Lt. Pauley conducted the questioning. They had what amounted to dossiers on our pre-war activities and they used these as a basis for establishing their accusations, the exact nature of which was never very clearly defined. We were peasant leaders, therefore we were dangerous Reds, in their eyes. We had organized the people to fight against the enemy, therefore we were plotting an insurrection, in their opinion. They implied that we were subversive because we fought against the puppet government.

"Is this the attitude of the State Department toward the Huks?" asked G. Y. We knew that Roosevelt had taken a firm and positive attitude toward cooperation in the Philippines.

"The army, not the State Department, has the authority in the Philippines," answered the brass hat, Captain Fredericks.

They wanted to know the location of all our commanders. They kept asking questions about how many Communists there were in the Huk, and who they were. It seemed as if they had forgotten the Japanese and considered the Communists their main enemy. They never asked us to name the traitors and collaborators in Central Luzon. They demanded that we give up our arms, and presented us with prepared statements for us to sign, calling upon the Huks to surrender arms. We were promised high rank if we did so. We refused everything with counter-offers to place all our strength and abilities at the disposal of the American army to drive the enemy out of the Philippines.

"We owe all our responsibility to the people, who put their trust in us," I said. "It was the people who took the arms from the enemy, and the people have a right to hold them. You do not take arms from the landlords and from the men of the landlords. Why do you take them from us?"

"You may not accept it," said GY, "but we are patriots. Whatever you demand we will only accept if our country and our people are not affected adversely."

In the San Fernando jail we were held incommunicado, kept in solitary cells. There were no beds; we slept on the cement floor. We could not bathe. Each of us had two tin cans, one to urinate into and one to drink from. We had no eating utensils. Outside there were machine guns mounted around the prison. Luna used a nail to cut a bitter phrase into the wall of his cell: "Democracy in the hands of the U.S. Army."

I was placed in a solitary room. From my window I could see a gallows being erected in the prison yard. I thought, "That is my gallows." On the evening that it was finished I decided that they would be coming for me in the morning. This is the way Rizal felt, I thought, when the daylight shrank away in the cell at that loneliest of all times for men in prison.

In the morning, footsteps tramped down the corridor toward my cell. I set my lips, ready for them. I had a few personal belongings wrapped in a handkerchief to be sent to my wife. I thought about my wife. In a short note on the handkerchief I told her: "I love you. I love our country, our people and our

cause. For all that it is sweet to die. Be strong. Good-bye." The footsteps came to my cell, then passed. I thought of GY and Luna. But, instead, they took a Japanese spy from the cell beside mine, and brought him out to be executed. I sat down and held the handkerchief tightly. In a few days GY was transferred to my cell. I felt then the fullest meaning of having the company of comrades.

For 22 days we sat in an imperialist prison in our own country, which we had fought for three years to free. Outside the "liberation" was in progress. This was the day of victory for which we had struggled. We did not view our imprisonment, however, as a personal indignity; it was an insult to the whole people; it was an imprisonment of all Filipinos.

The people, indeed, were fully aware of it. All over Central Luzon there was a mass demand for our release. A leaflet printed by the Hukbalahap called for the release of the Huk leaders and for the all-out prosecution of the war, as well as for the punishment of the real traitors and collaborators. It concluded with "Long Live our American Allies!" and "Long Live the Osmeña Government!"

Finally, on March 8, the demand for our release culminated in a mass demonstration in San Fernando. From thirty to forty thousand peasants streamed into the town on foot, clogging the highways. Under the shadow of American tanks and machine guns they demanded that their leaders be freed.

On March 15 the American army released us.

Before they let us out, the CIC officers made an attempt to gain our support by asking solicitously how we felt about our treatment.

"Of course we feel resentment," we said, "but our decisions will not be influenced by our feelings. Whatever we decide will be for the benefit of our people, not of our personal selves."

Once more, too, they presented us with the statement to sign for the surrender of arms. It was a matter of peace and order, they said.

"You speak of peace and order," we said, "as if we were indifferent to it, and as if you should determine how it must be, on your terms. But it is we who will be affected by a lack of

peace and order, not you. You will return to your country, but we will have to watch over the interests of our people."

Only GY and myself had been released; the rest of our comrades, Ellen, Luna, and others, were taken to Muntinglupa. We knew that our experiences with the CIC and with the revived forces of reaction in our country were not at an end, in fact were merely beginning. Formerly we had one main task: to contribute everything possible to the utter defeat of the fascist enemy. Now another problem had been forced upon us: to defend ourselves and the people as a whole from persecution by enemies within the ranks of our allies.

We appealed to the people to stand firm and not to be provoked into deviating from our main objective. We urged the people to maintain their dignity, not to beg from the luxuriously equipped Americans even though we suffered from lack of necessities. And we prevailed upon them not to act subservient to the Americans, but as their equals, to put into practice the new life they had glimpsed in the democratic processes we had set in motion during the occupation. We asserted that we deserved our immediate independence as soon as the enemy had been thrown out, that our fight for national liberation had to become a reality now.

In addition to our offers of military aid to end the war, we helped organize labor battalions to aid in the construction of the scores of army installations that had sprung up in Central Luzon. We wanted to help make the Philippines a vast base for launching blows against the remaining enemy positions in the Pacific. Our acts were characterized by nothing but cooperation to achieve the common victory. All of this was done in spite of the official attitude of hostility toward us.

In Southern Luzon, where the united front had operated with greater success and where the landlord elements had not yet developed an anti-Huk complex, our squadrons were attached to the American army and fought side by side with it until the end of the war, having especially good relations with the 11th Airborne Division. They were an important part of the force which liberated the internees from the Los Baños prison camp on March 25. That operation, incidentally, had been originally

Hassim's idea; he was preparing to carry it out when he learned of similar intentions by the Americans, and joined with them. The Americans in the south provided the Huks with arms and equipment, and they were able to do an extremely effective mopping-up of the mountains of Laguna and Tayabas. In Laguna, Jesse Lava functioned as provisional governor until April, and when he left for Manila, the united front deputy governor, Pambuan, took over his duties.

Our Nueva Ecija command, with the aid of Governor Chioco, was able to gain the attachment of a Huk battalion to the 32nd Division of the American army. Three hundred Huks, under Major Jose Taguiam, constituted the battalion, which was known as the "Dimasalang Force." Its job was to patrol the Dingalan Bay area and to prevent the retreat of enemy forces from the south to the north, where Yamashita had elected to make a stand. It achieved for itself the finest record of any guerrilla unit in the entire war. From April to December, the Dimasalang Force killed 700 Japanese and captured 1,000 more, only suffering one casualty itself. That was what the Huk could do against the enemy when given the opportunity. Huk detachments also took part in the very difficult operation of clearing the Villa Verde Trail, winning praise from the Americans with whom they fought.

These were the activities which prompted Brigadier General Decker, chief of staff in General Kreuger's 6th Army, to say that the Huk was "one of the finest fighting units I have ever known."

Our refusal to surrender arms or to permit the liquidation of the people's movement built out of blood and toil during the war was followed by a more intense wave of repression. When officials were appointed in the towns, the members of our local governments were ousted and disregarded, while the appointees were selected from the USAFFE or from among elements who had remained completely passive during the Japanese occupation. Invariably they were hostile toward the Huk. In addition, the American army, under the pretext of maintaining peace and order, stationed detachments of USAFFE men and of the puppet police in the towns where our influence was greatest. The result was a reign of terror.

In Lubao, Linda's home town, the men of Lingad, in conjunction with the American MP's terrorized the barrios in the search for Huk leaders. USAFFE's spread the vicious lie that Linda had killed two Americans during the occupation. Linda's brother was captured and tortured to find Linda's whereabouts; they did not succeed. In Concepcion, Lubao, seven former Huks from Linda's disbanded squadrons were taken to the town garrison, tortured and killed.

Although the Japanese had been driven off the plains long before, Central Luzon now echoed with the indiscriminate gunfire of "liberation." In June, USAFFE units, CIC detachments, and American MP's were further strengthened in the Huk regions by battalions of American tanks and tank destroyer artillery. The rumble of American tanks sounded no different than the rumble of Japanese tanks in our streets. Dodging their new persecutors in the barrios, our comrades looked back upon forest life under the Japanese with nostalgia, because there we had at least been able to practice democracy and to live as free men.

The anti-Huk campaign, founded on lies and treachery, accusing us of sedition, murder and anti-Americanism, resulted in only one major dereliction from our organization. That was the case of Banal. He and his son, Tom, had been arrested in the general round-up of "wanted" Huks in February. He had been held for only one month when he succumbed to the American pressure and promised to surrender his arms and those of his men. He and his son were released. Once out, he negotiated for the surrender of the arms of some of the men in his command. Promised rank and back-pay, they were inducted into the American Army as the Banal Regiment, severing relations with the Huk command.

Banal's motivations, I believe, were not opportunist, nor did opportunism influence many of the men who followed him. They honestly believed that the Americans had come as liberators and emancipators, to establish democracy in the Philippines. They did not understand the role of American imperialism nor even what was happening in Central Luzon.

Banal needed only to look casually at Central Luzon, where democracy had been strangled in the cradle of hope. Our Squad-

rons and our leaders (those not already in prison) were forced into a half-underground existence. Our CID had been forbidden to present its performances. Public meetings were banned.

On April 8, less than three weeks after our release from San Fernando jail, GY and I were arrested for the second time by the American CIC. The arrest took place at a mass meeting held by the Huk in the public square of the town of Arayat, which had elected GY as its mayor in the 1940 elections. The main address of the meeting was by GY, who spoke on "Peace in the Spirit of Teheran." He had written out his speech in English so that if it was suppressed it could be sent to the newspapers. He spoke in English, too; the CIC was present and he wanted them to understand every word.

The speech was based on the Declaration of Teheran, which laid the cornerstone for democratic peace in the postwar world. "It should not be a Russian peace, an American peace, a British peace or a Chinese peace, but a peace for all nations, big and small." He quoted liberally from F. D. Roosevelt, whom we regarded as one of the greatest friends of the Filipino people. He attacked the CIC and the reaction that followed in the wake of the American army, placing the blame on the imperialist-militarist clique that was seeking to turn the war from its real purposes toward the revival of fascism before fascism had yet entered its death throes.

The CIC men sat listening expressionlessly. When GY finished he turned to them and said: "How did you like my speech, Captain Fredericks?" "Not very much," replied Fredericks grimly. After the meeting he arrested both of us, and brought us back to San Fernando—to the provincial jail. After two days we were transferred to Pangasinan.

This time we were taken to Calasiao and placed in a concentration camp for war prisoners. For three weeks we lived in a solitary compound enclosed with barbed wire, called "isolation compound." In the next cells were Japanese and Korean prisoners. Here was true irony, for those who could appreciate it. To whom had gone the victory? Certainly not to that American farm boy walking up and down with a rifle outside the barbed wire. We thought about that as we carried trash to dumps under

the rifles of the victors who had no victory. We worked hard and they fed us bad food. We were given the treatment of the vanquished.

From Calasiao we were taken to Bilibid prison, in Manila. There the conditions were extremely bad. A faucet in the wall was for drinking purposes. The toilet was a bucket brought in and removed. A small opening in the door was used to insert food. Occasionally a guard would throw cigarettes through it, saying: "Here, you monkeys, your smokes." The room was seven by nine meters and there were eleven jammed into it; there was practically no space to lie down. In Bilibid we were imprisoned with leading puppets. Fortunately we were only there for three days.

Our destination was Iwahig Penal Colony on the island of Palawan, far from the masses of Central Luzon.

We were taken by boat to Puerto Princesa. It was a crowded voyage; on board were most of the leading puppets and many of the smaller ones, the Ganaps. We were to be imprisoned together, the crowning irony. Amphibian tanks took us from the port to the prison itself. When the gates closed behind us it was for an indeterminate time. We never knew what was going to be done with us, or for how long our imprisonment would last. We were asked nothing and told nothing. We were only sure that if American imperialism could have its way, it would be permanent.

One thing that encouraged us was the discovery of cracks in the imperialist wall of suppression. They appeared in the form of ordinary GI soldiers who sympathized with us, and who tried to help us when they could. While we were in the San Fernando jail a sergeant had smuggled in a message, stating that he was "a friend from the States" who wanted to discuss "common working class interests." In it we were saluted "comradely." The sergeant, however, was never able to get past the guards. When in Muntinglupa, Dim, Ellen and Luna were invited by a group of friendly GI's to speak about conditions in Central Luzon; they were later discovered and placed in solitary confinement for seven days, on bread and water. At Iwahig we met another friendly American who could not understand why GY and I were

behind bars. He gave us special liberties and, when the officers went to Puerto Princesa, he opened the gates and let us have a brief taste of freedom.

In Central Luzon a number of progressive GI's contacted the Huks in the towns and in the barrios. Some of them were Communists, some were trade unionists, others were simply strong supporters of Roosevelt and his policies. They were outraged at our treatment by MacArthur, and promised to tell the truth about the Philippines when they returned to the States. They brought us medicine, clothing, shoes, food, office supplies, and even guns and ammunition.

Just before we were shipped to Iwahig, we received the news of the death of Roosevelt. It was the bitterest blow that our hopes for a democratic peace had received. I was depressed and very near to tears. We were certain that Roosevelt, proponent of the Four Freedoms, had not sanctioned the MacArthur brand of fascism in the Philippines. Later we could see a reflection of Roosevelt's line of thought in his Secretary of the Interior, Harold Ickes, who denounced the MacArthur policies and called for harsh treatment for collaborators and traitors. By that time, however, reaction was in power in our country.

In Iwahig the shamed and the proud were brothers behind barbed wire. Our pride, and our confidence in the masses who supported us, soared above the mean insanities of that enclosure. We did not scorn our fellow prisoners, however, and although they were the men whom we had fought, we did not remain aloof, nor make an island of our pride. Within the prison we had an election; GY and I were both elected to the board of directors. It was not a gesture of forgiveness nor of alliance, but an expression of the common lot into which we had been thrown. It was the truce of tribulation, each of us knowing the struggles of the past would merge into the struggles of the future.

To help pass the time I also returned to my tailoring; sometimes I sewed the clothing of the men who had been but recently our enemies. In this way, I was able to earn a little money to buy some books and newspapers from outside the prison. GY, who had been a skilled poker player in the years before he joined the movement, played cards with the puppets and

won considerable sums to purchase books and periodicals.

We observed them closely, these men who had served the enemy. Recto, Yulo, General Francisco, de las Alas, Paredes, Alunan, Paez, Lawides, Sebastian, Sabido, Luz, Bocobo, Madrigal, Abello, de la Rama, Moncado. They were all different types, on the surface. Recto was haughty and unapproachable. Yulo and Alunan were more amenable to discuss matters with us, or were better politicians. Sabido and de las Alas expressed their intentions of remaining out of politics in the future. Moncado was in charge of the latrine. "Now I, too, am a Minister," he would say. "The Minister of the Latrine."

It was much better, and easier, to talk to the rank and file Ganaps. Many had been motivated to work with the Japanese out of misdirected nationalism. With these men we held endless discussions and lectures, and were able to win many over to our concepts of the struggle for independence and national liberation. "If we had understood these things before," some said, "we would have been with you." Some also said, "We will be with you the next time."

Prison was not a new experience to me. There is no working class leadership, anywhere, that has not been steeled by the metal of prison bars. It is a part of the education the ruling class gives us. It is designed to break spirits and to decapitate people's movements. However, more often the people, and those who go to prison for the people, are strengthened and made unbreakable. That has happened to our people, who have known the insides of Spanish, Japanese, and American prisons, as well as the dungeons of our own ruling class.

Why were we in prison now? Behind the answer to that question lay the whole meaning of the war we had fought, and of the peace that was to come. Behind it were forces far greater than those which operated between a tenant and his landlord. The forces were world-wide, and they were later to shoot guerrillas in Greek mountains, massacre peasants in Indonesia, Malaya and Indo-Chinese villages, precipitate bloody civil war in China, and everywhere trample upon the hopes of all people for a democratic peace.

We were in prison because of a gigantic imperialist con-

spiracy to strangle the people's movements that had been born in the struggle against fascism. We were in prison because imperialists considered us too "dangerous" to be at large, dangerous not to our own people but to the interests of a handful of monopoly capitalists on the other side of the ocean. The Americans had come back not to liberate us but to reclaim us.

We had been a colonial people, but the Hukbalahap, founded on national liberation, was destroying the colonial mentality. Because we believed in a free Philippines, with its people educated not only in words about democracy but in democratic actions, we were called anti-American. The American officers in the CIC called us subversive. If the American way of life was imperialism, then we meant to be subversive of it.

The way in which the anti-American charge came to be leveled at us had a significance all its own. Throughout the war we had had nothing but praise for the Americans, and had done everything possible to bring about a pro-American feeling instead of one that was pro-Japanese. We had always referred to the Americans as our allies, and had sincerely believed that under the leadership of Roosevelt the American nation would help usher in a new era of world peace and democracy. All our anti-imperialist and anti-fascist slogans had been directed against the Japanese. We had fought against collaborators because they were pro-Japanese. Yet when the Americans came they took the very slogans and propaganda which we had employed against the Japanese and told us they proved that we were anti-American! In other words, they were admitting guilt before it could be charged against them.

In Iwahig, GY and I examined our work and our mistakes over the past three years. One mistake, we felt, had been the failure to emphasize sufficiently our expansion work, which, properly pressed, might have mobilized far wider sections of our people. More important, however, in our estimation, had been our failure to emphasize and to clarify the true meaning of imperialism to the people. We had neglected to point out that imperialism was the same, whether Japanese, American, British or Dutch. In so doing we had narrowed down and weakened the basic issue of World War II, which, in its positive aspect,

was a war for national liberation, a struggle which unharnessed not only the anti-fascist forces but also the anti-imperialist forces.

We had left our people unprepared for what to expect from the return of the Americans. That is why our soldiers, gladly greeting the GI's and fighting beside them, were stunned when the same GI's turned around and disarmed them, arrested them, and permitted them to be massacred. That is why men like Banal gave in to the Americans and abandoned the people's movement; he thought the struggle had ended and that the postwar world of democratic peace and independence had arrived. Most tragic of all were the people who supported our struggle against the Japanese but who welcomed the Americans and the regime which they later dictated. It would take bitter years before they would see the vulture disguised as an eagle. For the benefit of the CIC, which arrested and investigated us: our crime was not that we were anti-imperialist, but that we were not anti-imperialist enough.

Our analysis and our fears had been completely confirmed in April, the same month in which we were imprisoned, with the "rescue" of Manuel Roxas. It became obvious to us immediately that this arch-collaborator, who had called for the surrender of guerrillas, who had signed the puppet declaration of war against the Americans, and who had supervised the BIBA, that plunderer of our harvests, was the chosen "leader" for a new regime, an American imperialist puppet government.

MacArthur and the other American imperialists were not the only group that considered the Hukbalahap dangerous. This opinion was shared by the compradore-feudal landlord group that had always been the backbone of American rule in the Philippines, that had, in the main, automatically switched to the Japanese masters when they arrived, and now were ready to accept American rule once again. Always they followed their narrow class interests, and were ready to sell out people and country for their property and profits. Every colonial country has running dogs and lackeys of imperialism. If we had so many it is because we have been oppressed by foreign powers for so long that the compradores have become well-entrenched. At the

end of the war, however, they were in a weakened and discredited position. The anti-Japanese and anti-collaborator feeling was so high that it threatened to sweep away the whole framework of imperialist control. The threat was felt to be greater because of the existence of the militant and well-organized Hukbalahap. The persecution and attempted suppression of the Huk, therefore, were the results of the joint efforts of the American imperialists and the compradore-feudal landlord group of Filipinos to maintain their rule.

When the Americans came in 1898 they crushed the people's movement that had come into being in the struggle against Spain, and found and installed elements whom they could depend upon to guard their interests against the people. When the Americans came in 1945 they tried to crush another people's movement that had come into being in the struggle against Japan, and they again found and installed elements who could guard their interests against the people. History, we determined, was not going to repeat itself. This time the Filipino people were not going to be crushed; they were going to win.

We studied the collaborators imprisoned with us. The "rescue" and endorsement of Roxas by MacArthur was a signal to them and they were obviously quick to understand. All were confident of their early release from this temporary difficulty and, although some of them, like Sabido and de las Alas, made pledges to retire from public life, we knew that the spots of the leopard were very durable.

Where, in this developing switch of alliances, did Osmeña stand, and a number of leading elements who were with him? Why was Osmeña, who had grown up under the wing of the imperialist eagle, being discarded in favor of Roxas? We studied our answers. Osmeña was old, Roxas was young. Osmeña showed tendencies of going along with the will of the people; Roxas, with the shadow of punishment for collaboration hanging over him, could be depended upon to go all the way with the imperialists. Most important, however, was the tendency for Osmeña to ally himself with a group that we termed the nationalist bourgeoisie, those elements among our capitalists that wanted

independence with the least possible imperialist control, and wanted to profit from an industrialized Philippines. Roxas, on the other hand, would accept puppethood and complete imperialist control. We saw the promotion of Roxas into leadership as the greatest danger to the interests of the Filipino People.

We fretted impatiently in the cells of Iwahig.

Upon our imprisonment, Mariano Balgos had become the acting commander-in-chief of the Hukbalahap. He had offered to the American army a full division of Hukbalahap soldiers to be used in the then-planned invasion of Japan proper. He had urged the induction of Huks into the regular Philippine Army to help complete the liberation of the country as swiftly as possible. Both offers were ignored.

On June 15, Balgos issued a statement entitled "Where We Stand," which placed our program on record. After reviewing the Huk record during the war, in which we had killed more than 25,000 Japanese, spies and traitors (our own losses were less than 3,000, an average of ten casualties to every one of ours), Balgos stated:

There are misconceptions emanating from those same elements who would not only cut the Hukbalahap off from America, but also separate us from the Filipino people. The Huk is not anti-Commonwealth government. We recognize President Osmeña as the legal president of the Commonwealth, and the Commonwealth Constitution as the legal constitution of the Philippines. We are opposed to civil war and shall fight for the orderly democratic progress of the Philippines.

We are not seeking to conscript capital or socialize industry. We join with the Democratic Alliance in a program for the democratic industrialization of our country, so that labor and foreign and Filipino business can utilize, without hindrance or interruption, our great resources for our benefit and that of the United Nations. Within the framework of the Democratic Alliance, business, labor, and the farmers can unite in furthering our prosperity and democracy.

We realize that there are in the Philippines believers in fascism and opponents of independence and industrialization. The U.S. War Department itself issued a memorandum on March 25, 1945, warning the American people and the American army against the dangers of fascism. This memorandum points out that: "There were native fascists in the Philippines" and that "Freedom, like peace and security, cannot be maintained in isolation. It involves being alert and on guard against the infringement

not only of our own freedom but the freedom of every American. . . . The germ of fascism cannot be quarantined in a Munich Brown House or a balcony in Rome. If we want to make certain fascism does not come to America, we must make certain that it does not thrive anywhere in the world."

Here in the Philippines it is up to us to call a spade a spade, and to clean house. Before the war our compradores and big feudal landlords protected Japanese interests and persecuted those who warned the people against Japan. During the Japanese occupation they willingly fed the Japanese, helped them in hunting down guerrillas, and in other ways supported the domination of our country by the enemy. Now, these same fascist elements and their agents are seeking with might and main to secure or control government positions of political, economic and military power to the detriment of the war effort and our country's independence and democratic progress.

To some degree they have succeeded. We call upon President Osmeña and other leaders of our government to remove these enemies of our progress. We urge that those who, in an advisory or supervising capacity, served the Japanese, should not occupy posts of leadership. We make no indiscriminate charges of treason, but we maintain that the war effort and our country will be better served by putting into office those who have an unimpeachable record of loyalty to our Commonwealth and to America.

It was in July that the news came to us of the formation of the Democratic Alliance, a new political party born in the struggle against fascism. The Hukbalahap supported it, as did the Free Philippines, the peasant unions, the Blue Eagles, sections of the USFIP and other active fighters for our freedom. The Democratic Alliance (significantly under the chairmanship of Judge Jesus Barrera) recognized the revolutionary nature of the people's fight against Japanese fascism and called for our independence and for our development as a free nation on the basis of the widest extension of democracy and the greatest attention to the welfare of the common people. The Democratic Alliance came into being because of the fact that the Nacionalista Party had been exposed as the party of treachery and betrayal which had abandoned the people, and the majority of whose leaders had participated in the orgy of plunder of the people during the occupation. We saw in the Democratic Alliance a medium of expression for the masses of people who wanted a better life in the postwar years.

Previously in May, the merger of the pre-war peasant move-

ments took place, and the PKM—*Pambansang Kaisahan ng Magbubukid* (Confederation of Peasants)—came into being under the leadership of Mateo del Castillo and Juan Feleo. That gave us tremendous encouragement. It was a unity cemented in the Hukbalahap, in the struggle against fascism.

In July, too, the most significant sections of the trade union movement reconstituted themselves in the Congress of Labor Organizations, in Manila. Among the founders of the CLO was Mariano Balgos. Many of the other active CLO leaders had fought with the Hukbalahap also, and the new trade union movement in general was crowded with workers who had participated in guerrilla movements.

The pre-war organizations of the people had not only been kept alive; they had burst forth now in even greater number and at a higher stage of advancement. Such was the contribution of the Huk and its allies.

The imperialists and their tools in the Philippines had sought to crush one manifestation of the people's movement, our armed force, but the masses could not be held back; they burst forth at a dozen points to assert themselves. From Iwahig we could feel the way the tide was running, and we knew that the people would set us free. Not for a moment did we lose confidence in the people.

In August we were transferred from Iwahig to Muntinglupa. It was the first big step on the road to our release. In Muntinglupa we met Dim, Ellen, Luna, and other comrades. It was like a reunion.

On September 23, 50,000 workers and peasants marched to Malacañan in an enormous demonstration, demanding our freedom and an end to the persecutions in Central Luzon. Barefooted, the peasants walked in the rain, past rows of MP's who stood with fixed bayonets. The reactionaries could not withstand the growing anger of the people. Two days later, on September 25, GY was released.

On September 30, I, too, walked out of the imperialist prison and took my place in the new struggles for the emancipation and the advancement of the Filipino people.

III. THE STRUGGLE FOR NATIONAL LIBERATION

22. The Enemy Within

The war against Japan was a people's war without a people's victory. A people's war differs from most wars because from it the people as a whole have something to gain. That makes it a just war. The other wars, which are fought against the people's interests or in which the people are used for the gain of a few, are unjust wars. We fought a just war against Japan; we had an unjust peace forced upon us.

The tyranny that attempted to force an unjust peace on the Filipino people at the end of the war against Japan sought to rob the people of their victory. The people did not submit. The struggle did not end with the surrender of the Japanese. The armed struggle merely became for a time an economic and political one.

When I came out of Muntinglupa on September 30, 1945, reaction was already well on its way down the road to power. The entire collaborator group, the wealthiest capitalists and landlords, and the top brass hats of the American army and the American State Department were allied behind Manuel Roxas, who was working frantically to win over a decisive section of the Nacionalista Party. The Osmeña administration, from which we

had hoped so much, was helpless in the face of treachery and opposition from both at home and abroad, and gave way everywhere to reaction and corruption. Nothing could be approved in the Osmeña Congress without the consent of men who had served the Japanese. While the masses of our people suffered and starved in a destroyed country, collaborators voted themselves three years back-pay and some non-collaborators plunged both hands into the profits of black-marketing.

Even more tragic than the drama of betrayal that took place in the Philippine Congress was what was happening behind the scenes to the freedom of the people. Permits were denied to hold meetings in Manila to protest the actions of Congress, and, when they were granted, Colonel Holland, the American MP dictator, surrounded the meetings with bayonets and guns. In the provinces American and Filipino MP's, with tanks and tank destroyers, broke up peaceful meetings, raided homes and intimidated the peasants. Private civilian guard armies of landlords began to rule in towns.

Much publicity was given to a handful of men in Osmeña's Cabinet who had participated in the resistance movement in the Visayas and Mindanao. Among them were Tomas Confesor, Tomas Cabili, and Alfredo Montelibano. Confesor and Cabili especially were outspoken anti-collaborationists. Yet Confesor, as Secretary of the Interior, allowed reactionary elements to come into control in Central Luzon, and under Cabili, as Secretary of National Defense, the Philippine Army became riddled with those who had served the Japanese. The later actions of both these men proved that they were merely holding out for the highest price they could get. The resistance movements they had led, in the first place, were the awaitist type, existing apart from the people and making no attempt to organize them. Montelibano was an even more impatient opportunist. As Secretary of the Interior in Confesor's place he was to launch the "peace and order" terror in Central Luzon.

The manner in which Roxas quickly organized his forces to take power was a spectacle to sicken the stomach of even those who had endured the nauseating rule of the Japanese and collaborators. Could the betrayal have been avoided? Yes, it could

have been, if Osmeña had taken up the challenge and had carried the fight to the people. Instead he allowed the rights and the strength of the people to be curtailed at every turn. In truth, there was little else to be expected from an Osmeña, whose whole background and political life had been built on playing the game of colonial rule, which breeds the compradore and smothers the people.

It was the realization of the bankruptcy of the Nacionalistas that led progressive elements from the guerrilla movements to unite in the Democratic Alliance. Originally it was not a political party; it was an organizing committee around which the people could rally in breaking away from the Nacionalistas. Within it were elements of many political beliefs, differing perhaps in methods and in ultimate objectives, but all agreed that there should be a democratic peace.

The original Democratic Alliance executive committee, with Judge Jesus Barrera as chairman, included Jose Hilario, Rafael Ledesma, Manuel Crudo, Vicente Lava, Jose B. L. Reyes, and Antonio Araneta. Its initial statement of July 15, 1945, stressed the need for a new political party. Its declaration of principles was built around four main points: independence, as promised, for the Philippines; national unity against fascism and punishment for collaborators; the safeguarding and extension of democracy; and clean and honest government, free of corruption. Its program called for a free and independent Philippines that would be democratic and economically self-sufficient. Its emphasis was on the welfare of the common man.

The DA program was not revolutionary. It believed in the ballot and the peaceful petition as the instruments through which the people's will should be expressed and achieved. It did not propose even the mildest socialization or change in the system of society as we know it. The path it proposed would have led no further than the development of a healthy industrialized capitalist country out of the feudal agricultural colonial condition that we had. Nevertheless, it was a tremendous change, which the people wanted.

The Roxas group was also sensitive to the general desire throughout the Philippines for a change. It, too, was aware of

the stigma attached to the very name "Nacionalista." When, in January, the Roxas group split away from the old party to form their own political organization, it adopted the name "Liberal Party" and conducted a campaign during which they promised everything to everybody. Reaction, without a mask, could never have succeeded in the postwar Philippines. Where it did not resort to fraud, it won with sheer demagogy.

The Huk supported the Democratic Alliance with every gram of its energy. Socialist-Communist candidates had swept many towns in 1940 in Central Luzon. In 1946, with Huk support, they could have swept whole provinces. However, as we did during the war, we visualized the fight against reaction as requiring the widest possible united front. With its broader and more far-reaching appeal, the Democratic Alliance was the best channel through which the people could flow away from the parties that were dominated by landlords and compradores.

After the war a new qualitative change had entered the people's struggle. During the war it had been a struggle for national liberation, with the military phase uppermost. Now it had become a struggle for independence and democracy, with the political phase uppermost. During the war, so to speak, our methods had been underground and illegal; now they were open and legal. In the postwar Philippines, however, we had to face one fact: whoever used legal methods to resist the ruthless drive to power by the Roxas faction was operating strictly at a disadvantage.

To recite the facts of Manual Roxas' life is to draw the portrait of a puppet of a man who serves and shields the masters against the masses. As such he was not alone, nor was he even the most outstanding example. History is full of men like Manuel Roxas. The capitalists use them to fill their governments, and call it democracy; the imperialists place them in power in their colonies, and call it independence. They are the apologists, the spokesmen, and the tools.

Before the war Manuel Roxas was one of the lawyers who handled the interests of Andres Soriano, the monopolist and fascist. By marriage he was related to the De Leon interests, big feudal landlords and sugar magnates in Central Luzon. Dur-

ing the Japanese occupation he urged the surrender of guerrillas, he was a member of the Preparatory Commission on Philippine Independence which organized the puppet republic, he was chairman of the BIBA which robbed the people of rice, to feed the enemy, he was Minister-without-Portfolio in the puppet cabinet, he supported the declaration of war against the United States.

Following the war he was whitewashed and protected by MacArthur and U.S. High Commissioner Paul V. McNutt, he was financed by Soriano and the Elizaldes and the feudal landlords, he gave our economy to the American imperialists with the Bell Act and parity, he gave our sovereignty to the American army with the military bases treaty,* he sought to drown the people's movement in blood.

During our sojourn in Muntinglupa, GY and I were contacted by Roxas. His masters had failed to break us by force; he would try other methods. He offered to pay our way out of prison if we would support him. He appealed to our youth, pointing to himself as a young man and to the need for young leaders in our country. He indicated that we could have high positions. He must have been disappointed and perhaps surprised when we refused; he himself had been won by such offers.

Later, after our release, we met him again. We were in Jimmy's restaurant in Manila, as the guest of Edgar Snow. Roxas entered, in the company of others. Out of courtesy I went to his table to pay my respects. He embraced me and once again urged my support, promising all manner of reforms. "I am the most radical in the Philippines, even more than you," he boasted. Sitting at his table was Julius Edelstein, the public relations man of Paul V. McNutt, the chief representative of American big business in the Philippines at that time.

After my release I had returned to San Fernando, the central point of people's organization in Pampanga. There my wife re-

* The U.S.-Philippines "defense" agreement, signed in March 1947, turned over to the United States for 99 years a series of bases in the Philippines, including Fort Stotsenburg for ground forces, the air base at Clark Field, and Leyte Gulf for the navy. For details on the Bell Trade Act see p. 250.—*Ed.*

sumed the operation of her beauty parlor, which had been interrupted so violently in 1941. The war was over, but the Philippines was still like a huge armed camp. The American army, in many places, outnumbered the Filipino civilians. San Fernando was teeming with American vehicles and GI's. They were a constant reminder that the liberation was like a new occupation. The CIC kept us under continual surveillance.

A period of comparative peace set in until the following year. The Hukbalahap disbanded immediately following the end of the war and the soldiers returned to their homes. A Hukbalahap Veterans' League, with GY as its chairman, was formed, in the same fashion as all other guerrilla organizations kept their identity. In many barrios guard units were created out of veterans, for local protection. Landlords were busy recruiting bands of civilian guards and we realized that reaction, far from subsiding, was really gathering itself for large-scale onslaughts on the people. Huk veterans kept their arms. We insisted on it as a right of all citizens.

All guerrilla organizations were submitting their rosters for back-pay. Throughout the war we had fought against the back-pay psychology. The question of back-pay had been left out of Huk life entirely; we had emphasized the political and moral values of patriotism, not its peso value. Now, however, with many Huk families destitute and with a need for funds to build the people's organizations as part of our peaceful legal struggle, we decided to apply for back-pay. I accompanied an investigation team of the American army from barrio to barrio and we compiled a roster of Huk fighters. Some Huks were recognized despite the official anti-Huk attitude of the American army. They were members of units such as the Dimasalang Force and some of the squadrons of Hassim in the South, which had done brilliant work in direct coordination with the American army and whose services were so great that they could not be ignored. In the main, however, recognition was never extended as a policy to the Hukbalahap.

Actually we proved drastically shortsighted in so trustingly submitting a roster of Huk names. Later it was used as a blacklist to persecute and to murder our comrades.

The powerful people's movement that had flowered in the struggle against the Japanese now turned its energies to peacetime organization. San Fernando was the headquarters of the Pampanga PKM, CLO and DA. The PKM alone had seventy thousand members in Pampanga, and thousands of workers had joined the CLO, with Ellen as its provincial president and Linda as vice-president. My brother Reg became the executive secretary of the DA in the province, which had a wide following among the middle class elements.

The upsurge of mass militancy was prevalent everywhere. In the month of February 1946, peasant demonstrations for 60-40 crop sharing and other agrarian reforms took place in Bulacan, Bataan, Nueva Ecija, Pampanga, Tarlac, and Laguna, by tens of thousands in each place. Economic demands were linked with political, as was evident on the placards carried by paraders: "Give Roxas back to the Japs!" "Down with Collaborators, Down with Remnants of Fascism!" "For Complete Independence and Real Democracy!"

The contrast between the prewar and the postwar forms of mass organization was a good indication of how the metal of our movement had been tempered in the heat of war. The haphazard and rather uncoordinated methods of the AMT were replaced by smooth-running committees which had division of labor and which sought to involve their memberships. It was extremely easy to organize among the people, due to the work of the Hukbalahap. When a demonstration became necessary, the barrios could be swiftly circularized and in three days we could have a demonstration of 50,000, in any of the provincial capitals of Nueva Ecija, Pampanga, Tarlac, and Bulacan—and many more in Manila.

The strength of the people's movement in Central Luzon was the biggest stumbling block in the path of the Roxas reaction.

In March 1946, on the ninth day of the month, occurred a greater personal tragedy than the war with all its horrors had brought to me. My wife died.

My marriage to Ena Cura was doubly precious to me because it meant a sacrifice on her part. She defied and left a wealthy family to be with me, realizing the danger and uncertainty of life

with a revolutionary. She went with me into the field during the Japanese occupation. That led to her final sacrifice: she died of septicemia, the result of drinking polluted water over long periods from the swamps and rivers in Huk hideouts.

Her funeral procession in San Fernando was bright with flags and banners of PKM chapters.

In my grief I hunted back over all the years, to touch her in my memory, back to the days when I was a thin eager youth in Tarlac. Somehow it seemed that all my life had been entwined with hers, and that now a part of me was gone forever. It made me feel that the greatest fact of all in any man's life was the fact of death. But I felt that way only momentarily. Around me, in the presence of my comrades, and even surging in the procession of my wife's funeral, was the great life-giving fact of the movement to which I had dedicated myself. Over her coffin, by the sacred memory of thousands of gallant fighters who had died for the cause, I renewed my pledge: "To always give my best and the rest of my life to the movement, to be loyal and brave, simple and honest, selflessly devoted."

The new alignment of forces in the Philippines had taken definite shape by the end of 1945. The imperialist forces had had to move very fast. Under the Tydings-McDuffie Act our country would receive its independence on July 4, 1946. At first the Roxas group, prodded by its imperialist backers, had tried to advance the idea of "re-examination," or postponement of independence; this had always been a favorite idea of High Commissioner McNutt, who was the trouble-shooter selected by American imperialism to keep the Philippines in the vest pocket of Wall Street. The Filipino people, however, wanted nothing but independence, on time. Re-examination was smothered by popular opposition.

In Pampanga the people had a word for the MacArthur-McNutt combination: "mac-mac," meaning, in the dialect, "worthless and nonsense."

Unable to postpone independence, the imperialists set out to do what they considered the next best thing: to make it an independence in name only, with themselves still actually in control. Because no election had been held officially in the Philippines

since 1941, a pre-independence election was set for April 1946. It was in this election that the imperialists and their tools hoped to guarantee a tight grip on the Philippines.

They needed "strong men" who would carry out ruthless policies. Former collaborators, under the shadow of punishment for treason, made the best and the most willing tools. They were allowed by MacArthur and McNutt to seize control of Congress and the army, and to attempt to take over completely the Nacionalista Party. On December 29, Roxas demanded full government and party power from Osmeña, and the withdrawal of Osmeña himself as a candidate in the coming elections. When the President refused, Roxas and his group split away from the Nacionalista Party and formed their own Liberal Party. It held a convention on January 19 and Roxas was nominated, with Elpidio Quirino running for vice-president. Quirino, a semi-collaborator who had been briefly imprisoned during the occupation for engaging in black-market deals that cut into Japanese profits, was used to screen the grosser crimes of his running mates.

Within the Democratic Alliance there was a difference of opinion. Some members wanted to support Osmeña, in a united front effort to defeat Roxas, while others wanted to run a separate third party candidate. The decision was finally made to support Osmeña, on the basis that Roxas was the main enemy and the chosen tool of American imperialism, and that his defeat would give a powerful impetus to the democratic movement. The Roxas line had been made apparent in the newspapers of his millionaire backers. They concentrated on raving that the Hukbalahap was an organization of lawless elements and that the government should conduct an all-out drive to crush it with an iron hand. This was the talk of the feudal landlords and of the big monopolists.

The coalition formed by the Nacionalista Party, the Democratic Alliance, and a number of minor parties, although holding separate conventions, united behind the candidacy of Osmeña and Eulogio Rodriguez later in January. Although we differed from Osmeña and the Nacionalistas on a great many issues and problems, we nevertheless felt that our problems could be solved

equitably in a free and independent country. Under Roxas they would merely be aggravated.

At the Democratic Alliance convention held in San Fernando, Pampanga, I was unanimously chosen as a candidate for Congress from the 2nd District of Pampanga.

From the time the election campaign got under way it became obvious that the Roxas forces were taking no chances on losing. As early as October 1945, the Democratic Alliance had become the target of intimidation and terror in Central Luzon. Pro-Roxas mayors had refused to permit rallies to be held in municipalities, and when meetings did take place they were broken up by American MP's and by civilian guards on the pretext they were a threat to peace and order. The DA was organized in the shadow of imperialist and landlord guns.

Unrest was widespread across Central Luzon at this time. The 60-40 crop sharing program urged by the PKM and agreed upon by Osmeña to supplant the old 50-50 arrangement had been discarded by the administration due to the pressure and the sabotage of the big landlords. The PKM organized protest rallies. They were answered by Montelibano, the new Secretary of the Interior, who announced that he was declaring war on "lawless" elements.

Montelibano's declaration of war, which fitted in perfectly with the strategy of Roxas, was backed up with great strength. In January, control of Central Luzon was transferred from American MP's to the Philippine MP Command, which had a force of over 22,000 men and was still under the direct supervision of the American army. The great majority of the MP's, both officers and enlisted men, had been members of the Philippine Constabulary in the service of the Japanese. The U.S. army gave them a gift of 10,000 sub-machine guns. Also, large civilian guard units, recruited for the most part from anti-Huk wartime guerrilla outfits, were located everywhere in our provinces. Among the elements utilized as civilian guards by the landlords was the religious sect known as the Iglesia ni Cristo. During the Japanese regime, the sign "I am Iglesia" written on a house guaranteed its protection from the enemy touch.

Montelibano's little demonstration of statesmanship was im-

plemented at once in Nueva Ecija, where martial law was declared, although this province was completely peaceful. Curfews, raids, and provocations became the order of the day across the province. Peaceful, unarmed citizens were fired upon for gathering in private houses for celebrations. Many were killed and wounded. Cocky MP's raced about the roads in tanks and armored cars, firing in the air to frighten the people in regions where the PKM was strong.

"The Japanese times are returning," said the people.

At the same time, the 86th Division of the American army, stationed in Central Luzon, was suddenly ordered to reorganize itself along battle lines, to deal with "possible unrest which may grow out of the political crisis in the Philippines." The people, however, found they had an ally in the American soldiers, who called a huge demonstration in Manila, protesting against the intended use of American troops against Filipinos by groups that wanted to keep a stranglehold on our economy, and demanding that American GI's be sent home to the states. It showed that Americans themselves could not swallow the intentions of their imperialist-minded leaders, and they forced the U.S. army to change its mind about using GI's to shoot down Filipino peasants.

Our election campaign emphasized independence and democracy. Wherever I spoke I stressed the fact that our people had fought for national liberation, and for the rights of free men that went with it. Unlike the Osmeña group, which conducted a half-hearted campaign, I centered my attacks on the collaborators, who had sold our country once and were about to sell it again. I denounced the new assaults against the peasants in Central Luzon as the opening guns of an attempt to impose fascism on the Philippines. Wherever I spoke outside of Central Luzon, accompanying the campaign tours of other candidates, the people were deeply interested in the Hukbalahap. They listened with fascination and asked questions that revealed a sympathy with the objectives of the Huk.

During the months of March and April, while on a speaking tour with Mrs. Osmeña, Rodriquez, and other national leaders and candidates of the Coalition, I was amazed by the reception given to me by the workers and peasants of Negros and Panay.

In Balcolod, capital of Occidental Negros, heart of the Philippine sugar industry, where the worst treatment of plantation and mill workers can be found, no less than 50,000 attended our meeting. In Iloilo some 35,000 attended. In Talisay, another mill town, about 30,000; in Pulupandan, both a seaport and a sugar hacienda, some 40,000; and in Cabangkalan, an out-of-the-way barrio, the farm laborers, including old, deformed peasants, came. In all instances I got the same impression: they came to hear and to rally to the call for unity of their brother peasants in Central Luzon, represented by my person. I cannot forget the parting words of one of their spokesmen: "Comrades in Central Luzon, don't fail us. We look upon you for guidance and example. We will act here with you in unison."

I was going to school once again. This time it was the school of politics. In our country it has been a specialized business. People train for it from the time they are young men. In the universities they make their contacts and become skilled in the game of classroom politics. That is what happens in a colonial country, where politics is usually a doorway to quick wealth through graft and corruption, a system fostered by the dominating foreigners because it enables them to buy politicians, and thus to siphon off the political vigor of the nation. The word "politician" was so debased that it meant "cheater" and "demagogue" to the masses.

At times I felt embarrassed and out of place among the professional politicians. There was so much that was insincere in their bombast and in their pretended adherence to promises that were merely an expedient to get them into office. For the sake of the united front the DA had put forward some candidates who later proved to have been purely opportunistic in motive. Dim, for instance, had withdrawn in favor of Jose Cando in Nueva Ecija. Cando later switched to the Liberal Party, into the worst camp of reaction. This also was to be true of many vehement Nacionalistas whom I met during the campaign. It is an uneasy experience, half-shameful, to have principles and to participate in the colonial pattern of Philippine politics. I realized then, more than ever before, the need for a new, people's politics, devoted to the welfare of the common man.

During a tour of the Visayas with the Osmeña party I was criticized by Atang de la Rama and Mrs. Kalaw-Katigbak for being too humble, too modest. They were very well-meaning. They undoubtedly thought that I was very naïve and needed to be educated in the harsh realities of the political scene, where men thrust themselves forward or are trampled down. They spoke to me honestly of the rotten nature of the society of the privileged classes.

In the weeks immediately before the election, the Roxas forces used everything from terror to trickery in Central Luzon. Peaceful meetings were dispersed and fired upon, homes were illegally entered and searched, and countless citizens were unlawfully detained by MP and Special Police forces. The MP's made it openly known that they were for Roxas, and threatened that everyone who voted for Osmeña would be regarded as a Huk and a Communist and would suffer for it. Armored cars rumbled daily in Central Luzon.

We made every effort to guarantee a peaceful election, going out of our way to avoid clashes with the aggressive armed men of the opposition. Later an attempt was made by the Roxas administration to prove that the people's organizations intimidated voters. The only violence that occurred during the campaign, however, was committed by Roxas thugs and by landlord terrorist gangs. On the eve of the election Edilberto Joven, chairman of the Pampanga DA, and his son, a senior medical student at the University of the Philippines, were kidnaped in Bacolor and their bullet-riddled bodies were flung upon their own doorstep, as a warning to DA voters. Delegations demanding an investigation were ignored by the MP command, which covered up for the murderers, hired by Pablo Angeles David, Joven's own uncle-in-law.

On March 22 the civilian guards of Lubao precipitated an encounter in barrio San Miguel with Huk veterans. It was used as an excuse to order the arrest of Linda, who became wanted. Linda, to protect himself, went "outside" and was hidden by the barrio people. Old Bio Aquino also was forced to go into hiding before the election.

Intimidations were intensified especially just prior to election

day. Roxas began to shout hysterically about the "Red menace" and dangers of a "Huk uprising." On election eve he actually went into hiding, claiming that Huks were out to kidnap him! In Pampanga the Liberal Party went to the extent of circulating leaflets in the 2nd District purportedly supporting my candidacy, and calling for the election of a "Roxas-Taruc" ticket!

Roxas was repudiated in Central Luzon, which elected six Democratic Alliance Congressmen and one Nacionalista, and gave Osmeña a majority.

Roxas had won nationally, but was his victory the expression of the people's will? The American writers, Bernard Seeman and Laurence Salisbury, in their book written for the Institute of Pacific Relations, *Cross Currents in the Philippines* (banned by the Roxas administration in 1947), said the following:

> The Roxas victory at the polls, which took place on April 23, 1946, should be judged against the background of these events: the Philippine Army, the government machinery, and the press were almost entirely in the hands of the Roxas group; the powerful landowning, business and financial groups backed Manuel Roxas; the Philippine Army, the Civilian guards, and the USAFFE guerrilla bands undertook a campaign of legal and extra-legal terrorism in order to prevent the strongest anti-Roxas areas from freely casting their ballots; High Commissioner McNutt, General MacArthur, and other American officials and businessmen, while ostensibly keeping "hands off," actually gave Mr. Roxas substantial support by ignoring the collaboration issue; Manuel Roxas capitalized on this support to promise the destitute Filipinos that the United States would give him the rehabilitation aid that President Osmeña had been unable to obtain; by remaining in the Philippines during the occupation, Mr. Roxas was able to take over control of a very substantial portion of the political machinery of the Nacionalista Party.
>
> Finally, the nature of the Philippine elections must be taken into account. Out of an estimated 18,000,000 population, there were some 3,000,000 qualified, registered voters. Of these, only about 2,500,000 voted in the April elections. And, in large Philippine areas, peasants still voted as directed by their *cacique*, landlord, or plantation foreman.*

A little over six months after I was released from the imperialist prisons I was elected to the Congress of the Philippines by the people of Pampanga. For the son of a peasant to become a Congressman is not a small honor in our country.

* I. P. R. Pamphlets No. 23, New York, 1946, p. 50—*Ed.*

23. The Betrayal of the People

The coming to power of the Liberal Party in April 1946 marked the beginning of a new and more difficult phase in the people's struggle for emancipation. Up to that time it was still possible for the people to defend and to extend their rights by normal constitutional processes. A victory for Osmeña might have placed the nation at least on the road to real independence and real democracy. The victory of Roxas doomed the nation to a new puppethood and placed it in the shadow of fascism.

It is impossible to understand the steps taken by the Roxas administration without relating them to the postwar schemes of American imperialism. Having betrayed the Filipino people by robbing them of the fruits of their victory over the Japanese and over their own traitors, U.S. imperialism now set out to consolidate its newly regained position. It wanted to dominate our economy, to keep us as a market for its goods and as an open field for its investments; and it sought the appearance of legality, by having legislation passed in the Liberal Party Congress to accept the Bell Trade Act and its parity provision. It wanted to base armies and navies on our soil, existing outside our sovereignty, to be used as a means of attacking any nation in the Far East that it wished and to protect its Philippine investments, against Filipinos among others. An anti-Soviet madness gripped the American military planners, and they viewed the Philippines as a jumping-off point for an invasion of the Soviet Union.

To carry out these plans, however, one thing had to be done. Opposition to the Liberal Party and to the schemes of American imperialism had to be crushed. In Central Luzon the democratic movement had demonstrated great strength. The PKM and CLO were spreading in all directions. The election of six Democratic

Alliance Congressmen from Pampanga, Nueva Ecija, Tarlac, and Bulacan (which elected Jesse Lava) had prevented Roxas from having a two-thirds majority in the lower house, and gave promise of even greater accomplishments for the democratic movement in future elections. The opposition, therefore, became the immediate target of Roxas.

The first open move by Roxas was the refusal by the Liberal Party to seat the six Democratic Alliance and one Nacionalista Congressmen and three Nacionalista Senators. As an excuse they claimed coercion had been used by us to influnce voters and that the results did not reflect the popular will. In the 2nd District of Pampanga 39,000 people had voted for me, and 1,000 had voted for my opponent, Meliton Soliman. No investigation of the charge or review of the case, as required by Philippine law, was conducted by the Electoral Tribunal before we were denied our seats.

There was, of course, a reason for the haste of Roxas to have the DA Congressmen unseated. Approval of the Bell Trade Act and its parity provision necessitated an amendment of our Constitution, requiring a two-thirds vote of the Philippine Congress. After we had been unseated, the resolution to amend the Constitution was approved by only a one-vote margin in the lower house. In that naked way was the will of the people frustrated.

The organized democratic masses in Central Luzon were called "the peace and order problem." During the election campaign Roxas had announced that if elected he would settle "the peace and order problem" within sixty days. In his first press interview after the election he said that he "would move with finesse" to eliminate "lawless elements." In Central Luzon his words were followed by a wave of terrorism.

In a memorandum submitted by the PKM to Roxas on June 10, less than two months after the election, it was asserted that in the period over 500 peasants and peasant leaders had been killed by the MP's and civilian guards, and that about three times that number had been jailed, tortured, maimed or were missing.

The feudal landlords of Central Luzon regarded the Roxas

victory as the signal to smash the peasant movement. In Pampanga they secured the appointment of Pablo Angeles David as governor. David, still rankling over the time we had captured him as a collaborator during the occupation, stepped up the recruiting of civilian guards, using ex-USAFFE guerrillas for the most part, many of whom willingly lent themselves to the reactionaries as they had done during the war when they fought the Huk.

David also organized his own little fascist outfit, which he called the Republican Social Movement, patterned after the Spanish Falange. It was chiefly concerned with convincing peasants to accept the old 50-50 system of crop sharing. Its symbol was to be "a shield on the face of which stands a cross. The shield stands for resistance to all subversive social and economic principles and elements. . . . The cross stands for the Christian principles of government and social justice." Its declaration of principles said: "We recognize progressive capitalism animated with the sentiments of Social Justice and Christian Charity. . . . We condemn the suicidal class warfare preached by Marxist communism as subversive of national unity and industrial production."

When the brutalities began there occurred a spontaneous reassembling of Huk squadrons. As an organization, the Huk had been disbanded with the ending of the war, and its former members were mostly absorbed by the mass peace-time organizations of the people, such as the PKM. Most Huk veterans had kept their arms, feeling that it was their right, especially since they had wrested their arms from the Japanese enemy. Now, with their lives no longer safe from the attacks of landlord armies and of government troops, they reassembled their wartime squadrons in self-defense and fought back. No Huk command issued such a directive. It was a spontaneous action by the squadrons. In Pampanga and Nueva Ecija some clashes occurred.

At the end of May, in the barrio of Kandating Arayat, the former Huk command gathered to discuss the serious trend of events since the election of Roxas. Even before the inauguration of Roxas, reaction was in the saddle and, as we had predicted,

was taking the offensive. How were we going to defend ourselves, and to resist? In this respect we were faced by the spontaneous reassembling of the Huk squadrons.

We decided that if assaults on the people continued, we would re-assemble squadrons on a purely defensive basis, avoid encounters and fight only when cornered and attacked, or when the people were being persecuted to the point where they would ask protection from the squadrons. To guarantee the carrying out of this policy and to prevent leftism from springing out of desperation, we reconstituted the GHQ of the Hukbalahap.

While the people's organizations took steps to defend themselves against fascist-like repression, they continued to exhaust every means of solving the problem without bloodshed. On June 10, in answer to Roxas' reiterated statement that he intended to settle the "peace and order" question in sixty days, the PKM presented a memorial to the President embodying the program of the peasant movement, a program that might have taken longer than sixty days to work out, but which would have provided a sound solution. Essentially, except for its reference to the maintaining of democracy in the present period, it did not differ radically from the program of the peasant movement for the past twenty-five years, urging agrarian reforms and real independence.

The PKM called for the government purchase of all landed estates and their sale to tenants, for the replacement of tenancy everywhere with lease-holdings, for farmers' loan agencies, for irrigation and mechanization of agriculture, the organization of cooperatives and home industries, the encouragement of native capitalists, the nationalization of public utilities. It demanded real independence, a republican system of government, opposition to the Bell Trade Act, seating of the minority Congressmen, dissolution of civilian guards, full recognition of the right to bear arms, and cessation of hostilities in Central Luzon. It elaborated social, educational, health, and welfare demands.

This was a program of reform, not of revolutionary change. Yet so untenable was the position of the feudal landlords and compradores that with the slightest alteration of the system they had built, they felt that it would crumble beneath their feet. Most

important of all, behind even the tiniest demand in the program they saw the solid organized masses, and the sight made them tremble.

Within our own ranks, in the peasant movement, there were differing estimations of the new Roxas administration. Some believed that it was possible for the people to win concessions from the Roxas government, that the promises of Roxas would at least be made partially good, and that negotiations could be undertaken in good faith with representatives of the government. They were even inclined to favor the partial surrender of arms. Others, including myself, expressed the opinion that the people's organizations could not trust the motivations of the Roxas regime, that the promises of Roxas were merely a screen behind which he would move to crush the democratic movement in blood, and that the people could win nothing without the sharpest vigilance and struggle. The position we eventually took of reforming the squadrons for the people's defense and of meeting the government on every hand on their own terms, was a reconciliation of the two positions.

Upon his election Roxas had appointed an Agrarian Commission to examine the situation, merely a gesture on his part. The commission rendered its report at the end of June. Although going out of its way to attack the peasant movement, it recommended the revision of the Tenancy Act to establish a 70-30 crop-sharing formula. The PKM accepted wholeheartedly the 70-30 arrangement, urging its adoption. It was universally attacked by the landlords.

The mockery of proclaiming Philippine independence was performed in the rain on the Luneta in Manila on July 4, 1946, formally launching the puppetry of Roxas. Reaction now had a free hand. It was the beginning, too, of the infamous sixty days, within which Roxas had pledged to settle the "peace and order" problem with "finesse." Secretary of the Interior Jose Zulueta was entrusted with the "pacification" campaign in Central Luzon.

The months of July and August marked a crucial period for our people. A state of half-truce existed between the government forces and the peasant movement. The truce, as such, was in

effect only at the top level, between the government representatives and the peasant leaders. On the level of the fields there was open conflict. A ten-point agreement had been drawn up to guide negotiations. Despite the fact that the government had refused to seat me, I agreed, at a meeting on June 10 between Roxas and Feleo, Castillo, Judge Barrera, and other PKM and DA leaders, to go into the field in Central Luzon to contact reassembled Huk squadrons and to discuss the terms of negotiations. Central Luzon, under the "pacification" plan, was divided into four areas: Juan Feleo toured Nueva Ecija, Mateo del Castillo was assigned to Bulacan, Alejandre Simpauce to Tarlac, while I visited the barrios and the Huk bivouacs in Pampanga.

The "pacification" campaign was used by Roxas to condemn the peasant movement on one hand through propaganda, and to attack it on the other with armed force. The reactionary press and government officials raised a hymn of hate against us, while the appointed officials of reaction in Central Luzon sabotaged every effort toward a peaceful settlement.

While negotiations proceeded, the MP Command and the civilian guards intensified their raids, arrests, and shootings. As early as June the DA office in San Fernando had been raided, and all its furniture and equipment smashed. My brother Reg was forced to go into the barrios for safety. During July and August, the "pacification" months, the PKM was compelled to change over from a legal to a semi-underground basis, to avoid the torture and murder of scores of peasant leaders. At this time, in southern Luzon, Pedro Villegas and other Huk and PKM leaders in Laguna and Tayabas, went back into the forest for self-protection, following the murder of several former Huks in Laguna.

Arrested Huks, for lack of a valid reason for prosecution, were charged with murder and kidnapping during the Japanese regime. That was their reward for resisting traitors during the war. The collaborationist landlords were having their revenge. Muntinglupa and the provincial jails were crowded with Huk martyrs.

Central Luzon echoed with gunfire. Wherever the MP's went they fired their guns to intimidate the people. Skirmishes occurred

in Bulacan and Pampanga between the MP's and Huk squadrons in barrios where the maltreatment of the people had become intolerable.

The Roxas government's objective in its negotiations with the people's leaders was to achieve the surrender of arms. Ours was to prove that we were the true champions of peace and to exhaust all peaceful means for its achievement. We recognized that the right of the people to bear arms was the key issue in the situation. Without the means of defending themselves the people would be helpless in the face of armed attack. Roxas issued Republic Act 4 on July 20, calling for the surrender of arms and setting the deadline at August 31. We countered with demands that the government should make the first move by putting into immediate effect real remedies for the problems of the people.

In a memorandum presented by del Castillo and myself to Roxas on August 17 we listed our minimum program for an immediate end to hostilities. They were: (1) the right of every citizen to keep and bear arms to be recognized by the government, with all arms registered; (2) all armed forces, except regular police, to be disbanded; (3) barrio guards to be established by the people themselves pending complete restoration of peace and order; (4) all charges against Huks and other guerrillas for anti-Japanese activity to be dropped; (5) remove anti-peasant officials and appoint officials acceptable to the peasants; (6) seat the DA Congressmen; and (7) guarantee security for peasants from arrest, torture, and imprisonment. The PKM, in addition, urged the strict enforcement of the 60-40 crop-sharing law.

In the propaganda of the reactionaries, these demands involving elementary democratic rights were termed "seditious."

Throughout July and August, I traveled about Central Luzon, talking to the people. I urged that all trouble and provocation should be avoided, that hot tempers should be curbed and that the people should maintain the utmost patience and discipline during the period of negotiations. I explained in detail the promises of the government to enforce the laws and the Constitution and (even though I myself distrusted the motivations of

Roxas) I admonished the people to act on the good faith of the government.

In the barrios the people brought me an endless recital of the brutalities and miseries they had suffered at the hands of MP's, civilian guards, and reactionary officials. Husbands and sons were missing, had vanished without a trace. Tenants had been robbed of their shares of the previous harvest. They showed me the scars and bruises of beatings, ugly marks on their toil-warped bodies. Many people were frankly bewildered and confused, especially those who had voted for the Liberal Party, honestly trusting the promises of Roxas and expecting a change. They were the most tragic of all.

In the bivouacs, in the swamps, forests and mountains, where the reassembled Huk squadrons were staying to avoid encounters, I found the soldiers extremely bitter. Their experience in three years of fighting against the Japanese and puppets had made them militant, and ready to leap to the defense of their families and rights. They told me that they did not feel like always running away, that they were not cowards and that they wanted to fight. On the first few occasions when an encounter had proved unavoidable, the MP's had run away. Above all, they did not want to surrender their arms. I counseled them to fall back upon their iron discipline, and to allow themselves to be drawn into trouble only when it meant actually to save their lives. They discussed it and agreed. To me the most outstanding feature of that whole period was not the encounters that did occur, but the encounters that did not occur due to the admirable restraint of the Huk soldier.

Each time I came back to Pampanga from Manila I felt anew the weight of the tragedy that seemed impending in the lives of these people whom I loved. In the city, where the people had a tendency to feel secure among their buildings, movies, universities, and homes with electric lights, it was possible to feel very distant from the pain and misery in the crude and simple barrios and fields.

Increasingly, too, I felt the weight of responsibility. These peasants, my fellow-peasants, had elected me to Congress. They had faith in me. They expected me to lead them out of their

predicament. What could I say to them? Surrender? Give up your hopes and dreams and let the landlords be your masters? Give up your arms and be shot like dogs? I remembered then the words of La Pasionaria, the great woman leader of the Spanish working class, in rallying the Spanish people to fight the butcher Franco: "It is better to die on your feet than to live on your knees!" When I spoke to the people of Pampanga I did not give them words of surrender or appeasement, I gave them fighting words. I felt that to do otherwise would have been to betray the people's trust.

The ominous atmosphere that hung over Central Luzon produced another effect on me: it made me extremely sensitive to the peaceful beauties in the countryside and in the lives of the people. The contrast between the ugliness of the evil that oppressed them and the loveliness of sun and fields and winding rivers made my heart ache. In the very presence of death, the smell of newly-plowed fields, then in progress, gave me a sensation of life and of things to be born.

One day in August I spent the last absolutely free and peaceful day that I have known to this time. I was in Kandating, an Arayat barrio, with GY. Kandating is on the bank of the Pampanga River. In the near distance rises the green slope of Mount Arayat. It is the largest, the most prosperous barrio of the town. Because it was a center of the resistance, the Japanese had burned part of it. Now its people were the victims of another tyranny.

Romantic GY had arranged a picnic date with two sisters in the barrio. Together we walked down along the river to a place on the bank where we could sit and look out on the wide slow water. I had been traveling and speaking much, without rest. Now the simple, ordinary act of sitting on a river bank with young girls filled me with immense peace. The harmless words we spoke, of pleasantry and nonsense, seemed at the moment more eternal than the debate that was shaking the country.

I felt then that what I really wanted, for myself, was a life as simple as this: to have a small farm and to work its soil, to have a wife and children like these young girls and to watch

them grow up, to be able on holidays to sit like this and relax among the natural beauties of my home.

We walked home slowly, chewing on the sweet cane stalks. The sunset filled the sky with irregular streaks of dark purple, pale green and soft orange. Beside us the legendary Pampanga River, wide and alive, half-dark, mixed the sunset on its surface in long colorful swirls. Mount Arayat was a black silhouette, sharp against the pale parts of the sky. When we approached the barrio we could smell the wood fires burning under the *kalan* and hear the sleepy calls of chickens going to roost in trees.

That night, as I lay with my eyes open for a long time after I went to bed, I pledged to myself that I would never let the monsters of special privilege wantonly stamp upon the hopes and the dreams of Kandating and all its sister barrios in this, our Philippines.

In the middle part of August, Zulueta devised a trap. He proposed that cantonments be set up in each province where, on a set date, Huk squadrons would come *en masse* to present themselves and their arms. To us it was a transparent scheme to get Huks concentrated, easily surrounded, and under the machine guns of government troops. We refused to agree to any plan of arms presentation until Roxas first implemented the promises he had made.

On August 12 I had a meeting, alone, with Roxas. He offered me assurances for my Congressional seat, numerous appointments for "my leaders," and unlimited crooked personal opportunities, if I joined him and took as many leaders of our movement "to his side" as possible. "You are young. You have a very bright future," he said. "Yes, Mr. President," I replied, "but with the toiling masses, until their victory is attained."

On August 17, along with Feleo and del Castillo, I met Roxas in Malacañan to discuss the detailed implementation of our past agreements. We proceeded to Zulueta's home in the afternoon. It was there that we discussed "cantonment." I opposed it, and proposed instead free and voluntary assembly of all Huks and armed PKM's in their respective barrios or places of their own choice, to be inspected and registered by a joint committee, composed of representatives of the Huk and PKM and of the

government. We left Zulueta with no clear understanding except that we (Feleo, del Castillo and I) would bring the "cantonment" idea to the rank and file and report back on August 24 about the response of the men.

Around the middle of August suspicious developments had forewarned us to be on our guard. On the 15th, del Castillo discovered that he was being followed by gunmen during his tour of Bulacan. He refused to continue unless adequate protection was guaranteed. In Calumpit two former Huk commanders were kidnapped and murdered near Bacolor. Along all highways MP's and civilian guards intensified their activity, establishing checkpoints and molesting all travelers.

On August 24, Feleo and I were scheduled to come to Manila to confer with Zulueta. Feleo was in Nueva Ecija, in the company of an MP "pacification" team, in whose hands he had placed himself with complete confidence. I was in San Nicholas, San Simon, preparing to return to see Zulueta when a courier reached me from Manila, with a letter from Luna. It was a warning. A report had been obtained from unimpeachable sources of a meeting called by Zulueta in which he had ordered the liquidation of Feleo, del Castillo and myself.

The date was set and the treachery against me was to take place in one of three places: on the way to Manila, at the Centre Escolar in the city, where I had a speaking engagement, or in the Malate section of Manila on the way to the conference with Zulueta. As I started out I was warned again of unusual activity by civilian guards and MP's along the highway where it was known that I would pass. When I was about to board the *banca* to meet my MP escort waiting on the other bank, I received a report (later confirmed) that the enemy would kidnap me at Calumpit. Immediately my companions and I switched our plans and instead of crossing the river I returned to the swamps. From there I waited for developments and further reports.

Del Castillo received the same warning and also "went outside" in Bulacan. Feleo, however, failed to receive the message of Luna. On the same day, August 24, while in the company of an MP officer and several enlisted men, he was kidnapped in the barrio of Baluarte, Gapan, Nueva Ecija, by a group of armed

men dressed in MP fatigue suits, riding in a command car. From there he was taken to an unknown spot and murdered. His body was never found.

By that act of treachery, the brutal murder of a man beloved of the common people for his selfless devotion to their welfare, the Roxas administration placed itself outside the bounds of civilized government and joined the company of the blood-stained tyrannies of Hitler, Mussolini, Franco, and Hirohito. That it had already murdered hundreds of the best sons of the working class was a grim truth to many, but the brazen double-cross murder of Feleo and the earmarking of del Castillo, myself and many others for the same fate exposed to the nation the naked face of fascism.

Deep in complicity in the assassination, Roxas then used a tactic straight from the handbook of Hitlerism: he sought to place the guilt on the Huks, on Feleo's own comrades. Despite the possibility of identifying the guilty parties, with many witnesses, no effort was made to apprehend the criminals. The government armed forces were too busy carrying out another task, the slaughter of peasants.

The martyrdom of Feleo was the prelude to the launching of a bloodbath in Central Luzon. Already on August 22, MP's in battle-dress began to shell barrios and to conduct wholesale raids on people's organizations. The first barrios to be shelled were in Cabiao. Feleo had gone personally to Cabiao on the 23rd to get the facts and brought back with him the barrio lieutenants of the destroyed barrios. They were murdered with him.

Immediately after I had evaded the enemy trap set for me at Calumpit, I met with the available leaders of the PKM and Huk in Central Luzon. While we were in conference, discussing the signficance of the assassination attempts on the people's leaders, the MP offensive was launched. The gauntlet had been flung down by the imperialist puppets. The people had been given but one choice: to fight or to die.

The conference decided that I should answer the fascist move of Roxas with an open letter that would place the guilt for the nation's tragedy squarely where it belonged for all

the people to see. With my heart filled with emotion over the brutal treachery that was being enacted within hearing distance of where I sat, I wrote the following letter:

In the Field, Central Luzon.
August 29, 1946.

President Manuel Roxas,
Malacañan Palace, Manila.

Dear Mr. President:

The supreme test of your power has come. In your hands rests the destiny of our miserable people and our motherland. Yours is the power now to plunge them into chaos and horrible strife, or pacify them and unite them as brother Filipinos in the spirit of liberty. You, for the rest of your life, will be thinking of what you do *now* . . . and the many generations to come will judge you by this. The choice is yours and history will record the rest.

But even as I write this, your blood-thirsty subordinates are already making an all-out punitive campaign against the peasants. The MP's are shelling barrios and shooting innocent civilians. They are even threatening to use bombs. Suspects they catch (and they just pick up anybody) are subjected to all despicable tortures. Together with the civilian guards, they are virtually in control of all government machinery, conducting a reign of terror worse than the Japs.

The latest report is the kidnapping of Feleo—topping the long list of well-known peasant leaders lost in the same manner, because they clung to the hope that your government would intervene and make democracy survive. Feleo's loss is the most serious sabotage your subordinates have done so far. And, Nazi-like, they clumsily blame it on Feleo's own men. That is a very poor imitation of a Reichstag fire incident, Mr. President. The peasants of Central Luzon love their leaders and the peasants of the Philippines love Feleo. They are expecting you to do the right thing about that.

The peasants of Central Luzon are loyal to our country and to our Constitution. You know that. They are humble, peaceful and law-abiding. They do not entertain even the slightest idea of resisting the duly constituted authorities. And before these self-seeking and vindictive reactionaries came to power through your support, peace and order reigned in Central Luzon. Now under the guise of crushing lawlessness the MP's, civilian guards and some of your provincial and municipal officials have trampled in the dust our Constitution and suppressed every democratic right of the peasants, to crush not lawlessness and banditry, but the vanguard of the patriotic peasant movement, the Hukbalahap veterans and the PKM.

From our three conferences and from your public commitments you gave us sufficient reason to start an earnest campaign of persuading the

peasants to have faith and confidence in you. Our demands were very reasonable. And you approved them:

1. Temporary right of the people to keep their firearms in view of their present insecurity. Registration of those firearms to enable the government and the community concerned to check up and control their proper handling.
2. Stop MP raids. Civilian guards must be controlled. Kempetai treatment of detainees must cease. The constitutional rights of the people must be protected.
3. Removal of Governor David of Pampanga, fascist municipal officials and MP officers like Lieutenant Reyes, Captain Bausen of Mexico, Captain Sandang of Magalang, Captain Escalena of Nueva Ecija, Lieutenant Erginio of Bulacan.
4. Put into effect badly needed social welfare projects and agrarian reforms.

But actually before the people could see the concrete and full realization of our understanding, your reactionary subordinates, blood-thirsty MP officers and mercenary guards, sabotaged our efforts. Lately, if the papers carrying press releases are to be believed, they indicate clearly that you are inclined to throw overboard all pretense, human sympathy and statesmanship. Confused, overwhelmed and finally giving in to enemies of democracy and progress, you are now reportedly determined to use the mailed fist, the imperialist-fascist method instead.

I am giving to the press this letter, my letter to you dated August 17, and the petition we presented to you the last time we met. You asked us to refrain from publishing these. We complied—even after your subordinates flooded the people with the venom of fascist propaganda, lies, calumny, and red-baiting. But now the people must know.

And I respectfully inform you that I believe I will be of more service to our country and to our people and their government if I stay now with the peasants. In spite of every harm and provocation done to them I am still confident I can help guide them in their struggle for democracy. I will do everything in my power so that whatever happens, their loyalty to our country and our Constitution is not lessened. And against all the fascist-imperialist leaders I will help them raise their voices so that the country will properly understand the side of the oppressed.

You have your choice, Mr. President—be a real liberal and a true leader of Filipinos and rest assured of our cooperation. But be an imperialist fascist agent and you will find that there are enough Filipinos who have learned a lot in the last war and who will not give up in peace social gains acquired during that war. Should it unfortunately be your choice to lull our people into vain hopes and blind loyalties by promises and later find that our people are getting impatient, it would be committing a double injustice to resort to the persecution of the most advanced population of

our country as a scapegoat. There is only one key to a lasting peace and that is indivisible peace for everyone. That is, put into effect the basic principles of freedom and democracy rooted in the security and welfare of the masses.

Mr. President, extremists may want you to order the bombing and cannonading of the poor—to kill them by the thousands. They may want hand to dip and feet to wallow in blood to their heartless satisfaction. But they should know that they can never bomb out the people's newfound hopes and convictions—that democracy, freedom and a lasting peace are for all, including the common men who feed the nation when it is starving and fight for it when it is in danger.

My decision to stay with the peasants now is not because I have given up all hopes of a satisfactory solution of the people's present plight, but is due to my desire to save the government from a further embarrassment should I be snatched from the government agency in the same manner that Mr. Feleo was taken from the custody of the MP.

Yours for democracy, freedom and peace for our motherland.

LUIS M. TARUC

Two days later a hysterical reply by Roxas sought to shift the blame to the peasants, branded me a murderer, and officially launched what had already been a fact for ten days: all-out warfare against the peasants.

Under the revived command of the GHQ of the Hukbalahap, the peasants formally assembled and took up arms again to defend their liberties.

24. The Fight for Survival

In all our history as a people there is nothing to equal the campaign of suppression and persecution launched against the peasant movement by Manuel Roxas in August 1946, and later continued by President Elpidio Quirino. The Spanish execution squads, the butcheries carried out by the American army when it crushed the first Philippine Republic, even the terrors of the Japanese, were all exceeded by the orgy of killing, torture, burning,

and looting that was let loose upon Central Luon. It will remain forever an ugly stain upon our nation.

In every town the jails overflowed with arrested peasants. Zoning was carried out in many barrios, and everyone suspected of being an active Huk or PKM was dragged off to the MP prisons, beaten and tortured. In Manila, too, scores of men who had been active guerrillas with us during the war, but who were now pursuing civilian life, were arrested in their homes and in the street, indicating that no one was safe from the surveillance of government agents. Well-known Huks were charged with an astonishing list of crimes, for every act that we had ever committed against the collaborators during the war. Huks who had fought desperately for the defense of their country were railroaded to long terms in prison for "kidnapping," "murder," and "banditry." The traitorous landlords took their revenge.

In the zoned barrios all male inhabitants were rounded up by the MP's and grouped in an open space. Masked informers then went among them, pointing out active comrades to the MP's. In the jails the arrested men were beaten and tortured sadistically, in an effort to make them reveal the whereabouts of Huk leaders or bivouacs. Repeatedly they were given the water-cure, that torture of fiends in which water is poured into a man until his stomach is swollen and the water runs from his nose and ears, and then he is beaten. Bullets were placed between their fingers and they were given electric shocks. Our most active comrades were killed, and then reported "shot while trying to escape."

"Shot while trying to escape"—an epitaph for a Filipino peasant. Shot why trying to escape from feudalism and oppression and hunger. Shot while trying to escape from imperialism and backwardness and misery.

The mailed fist crashed upon Central Luzon. Running fights between our squadrons and the MP's flared up at many points, but the main emphasis of the MP offensive fell upon the civilian population. It was a terror campaign, aimed not merely at annihilating us but at smashing our mass base. MP's and civilian guards swarmed into the barrios. From that moment until today, the life of the barrio people has not been free from fear, death, looting, and persecution.

The armies of Roxas and the landlords were far worse than the armies of the Japanese had been. They were Filipinos like ourselves, for one thing, who knew our language, our customs, our countryside, in a way that the Japanese could not know. Many had received their training from the Japanese; the majority of the MP's, with their officers, at that time came from the ranks of the puppet constabulary, and in the civilian guards were large numbers of USAFFE troops who had fought the Huks even during the occupation. Weak, renegade elements from among our own neighbors, strike-breaking elements, men easily bought by a few pesos and a promise of loot, criminals and thugs, filled the ranks of the civilian guards. The MP recruited, wherever it could, the scum of the Manila streets. The "cream"—the most ruthless and venomous—were organized into a battalion, appropriately called the "Skull Unit." They were sent against the people with the freedom to perpetrate whatever crime they wished.

These measures far exceeded the cordoning and zoning by the Japanese. At a moment's notice barrios were evacuated into the towns, where the people lived huddled in churches, in the overcrowded homes of friends, or in makeshift huts. In the barrios their homes were systematically looted, the pigs, chickens, goats, and carabaos stolen, and the homes finally put to the torch. The smoke of burning barrios dotted the plain of Central Luzon. Women were raped in the barrios, men were shot down in the fields on the mere suspicion of being Huks. MP's, afraid of Huk fighting ability, shelled many barrios before entering them, killing helpless people. Tanks and armored cars ran through cultivated fields, destroying crops. It was total warfare against the people.

In the annals of our history, when its pages are written, let the crucifixion of Central Luzon in these years of the imperialist independence not be forgotten. Remember the barrios, and the ashes of the poor homes of poor people. Remember the dead people, machine-gunned, beaten to death, thrown into the rivers by the hundreds. Remember all the crimes against the people. They will one day be the heritage of our freedom.

Remember the barrios of Candaba: Magumbalay completely

burned and destroyed; Mandili and Vizal, half-burned; Mapaniki, completely burned; Santa Rosario, burned completely; Mandasig and Barranca, three-fourths in ashes; Salapungan, two-thirds of its homes gone; Dulong-Ilog and Paligi, three-fourths burned and destroyed.

Those were the homes of simple people, honest workers in the fields.

Remember San Luis (my town): San Juan, completely destroyed, completely; Pambulog, the most prosperous, completely destroyed with $30,000 worth of fish nets, *bancas,* tools of working people; San Isidro, completely destroyed; 100 houses in San Roque. In San Juan fifteen women were raped; ten were my nieces, each raped by an entire platoon of MP's because they were the nieces of Luis Taruc.

Remember Duyong in San Simon, completely destroyed, 150 houses burned to the ground. Remember a family killed by a mortar shell, a pregnant mother and her small children.

Remember the complete destruction of Consuelo and San Stevan in Masantol, of Sapang-Malalam and Dawe in Macabebe, and the barrios of Minalin, where the rice crop was destroyed and the domestic animals were driven off and slaughtered. Remember the killing of the wives of Huks in Lubao.

Never forget the suffering of Cabiao, where the destruction began and was worst of all, Cabiao, Nueva Ecija, where the people boasted that even the pigs were Huks. Remember there the barrios of Sinipit, completely destroyed; San Julian, completely destroyed; Bagong Sikat, completely; Akle, completely; Dumanas, completely; Santa Ines, completely; Saklang Tagalog, completely; San Vicente, half destroyed. Pala-Pala, and Linao of San Isidro, Nueva Ecija, completely. Kaput and the houses in San Carlos and Caimaligan that were half burned.

Do you think that the people of Cabiao and San Isidro will ever forget, or their children, or the children of their children? And these were but a few in Nueva Ecija.

Let no history fail to recall the barrios of Arayat, where the faith of the people in their own leaders lies deeper than the burned posts of their homes: Kandating, biggest and most prosperous of all, where I thought of the future and where it came

true, completely destroyed; Turu, completely, with 200 houses burned; Balite, completely; Tanag, completely; Banga, half; and Panlinlang, three-fourths destroyed, where fourteen people were shot to death while tied.

Remember the neighbor of Arayat, Magalang, where Balas was emptied and completely destroyed, and Pasico was destroyed and Cabayusarol was destroyed and where only a handful of homes were left in Balitucan. Remember sixteen people ordered to run across a field and machine-gunned from the rear.

And Concepcion. Never forget Concepcion, Tarlac. Never forget these places: Malatumbaga, Anunang, Almendras, Callos, Castillo, Peralta, Kulatingan, Panalicsican, Calamanti, all barrios and all destroyed completely, and the nearly destroyed barrio of Talimundok. Most of all remember the crime of the people who lived there: the desire to live decently, as free men and women.

Keep in your memory the mountain barrios of Bamban and Capas, Sulu, San Pedro, Villa Aglipay and Mamut, all burned.

Put in the pages of history the barrios of Santa Rosario and Gabor, in Aliaga, both completely burned. Put them beside the wiped-out barrios of Rajal in Santa Rosa, and the barrio of Sinigang, where one house was left out of seventy. Remember Sta. Maria, of Quezon town, Nueva Ecija, almost a town in itself, now turned forest after four years.

Remember, too, San Antonio, where 200 houses were burned in Panabingan, and 300 houses were burned in Santa Barbara, and Kinahalaan was destroyed completely. And Hilerang Bahay, in Jaen, where 211 houses were burned, the first in Nueva Ecija, in September, and Panakpahan and Sangalang, destroyed completely.

Remember, for the historical record, the barrios of Cabanatuan, Nueva Ecija; Pulilio, completely destroyed; Talabutab Norte, completely destroyed; Balumbong, completely destroyed. And the complete destruction of Santa Lucia and Manaul in Zaragoza, and Bantay in Licab. And the barrios in Bulacan put to the torch, in the town of Calumpit, Malolos, Poambong, Baliwag, Pulilan, San Miguel, Marilao, Bulacan and Meycauayan, the barrios of organized peasants.

Remember that these were not all, that these were only a few

of the persecuted places in the first year of the mailed fist, and that there were many more, and many were built up from the ashes, and were destroyed again, and that the people suffered, and remained with us.

Remember these places, and the thousands of people who lived in them, poor people, whose poor possessions were wiped from the face of the earth by brutal armies of fascist landlords, encouraged by American imperialism to attempt to shatter a people's cause. Remember well, because the people will never forget, even when this land is theirs.

The masses of the people were at first demoralized, in varying degrees, depending on the depth of their political consciousness. The members of the mass organizations, who had a better understanding of what was happening, were least affected and recovered from the shock of the blow the quickest. The people outside the mass organizations, however, were confused and shaken.

The most important feature of the people's reaction was the fact that, despite the terror, good will toward the Huk was maintained practically everywhere. Their experience with the Huk during the war had convinced them that beyond all doubt our organization was fighting for their interests and was a part of them. Even when they were demoralized and were afraid to participate in activity themselves, they still gave supplies to the Huk when our squadrons visited them. At no time, in spite of the brutal advantage gained by the enemy, were we severed and isolated from the masses.

The demoralization that prevailed among large sections of the people was caused by their natural desire for peace and security after the difficult years of the Japanese occupation. Although they did not trust the demagogy of Roxas, many of them wanted to believe it. Many were even willing to accept the peace of slaves, just as long as it was peace. It was the path of least resistance, whereas the path of the Huks was the path of long and bitter struggle. The test of the revolutionary spirit, of an individual as well as of a group, is the willingness and readiness to endure severe hardships over an indefinite period to achieve a goal. In 1946 only a part of the people of Central Luzon were

willing to take this path. It was the mailed fist policy that convinced the people as a whole to give their complete support to the Huk, and compelled them to acquire the revolutionary spirit.

The murder, torturing, burning, looting, and raping perpetrated by the MP's and the civilian guards wiped out every illusion the people had ever had about Roxas, the Liberal Party, and its program. The people had not expected such terrorism. Demoralization and fear existed for a time, and then it turned to hate, to deep unquenchable hate, for the MP's and for the civilian guards, and, through them, for the men in the government who were responsible for it all. The hatred of the masses for their persecutors is a positive emotion. It counteracts fear and complacency, and makes them ready to act and to support action against the persecutors.

Countless raids and large-scale operations have followed the first all-out attack upon us in August 1946. Almost always they have been accompanied by a certain amount of demoralization among the masses: when beasts, shooting and committing brutalities, descend upon a home it cannot be laughed away. But always, however, the demoralization has been only temporary, The people have acquired reflexes, the reflexes of hate. As soon as we go back to them, after eluding the enemy, they welcome us again with open arms.

During their raids the MP's always arrest "suspects." The suspects are never formally charged. They are merely taken to the garrisons and "questioned." Sometimes the "questioning" lasts for months before the suspect is released. Sometimes the victim never comes home. Relatives go to the garrison or to government officials and inquire anxiously about those who have disappeared. They are told, he was released long ago. But why hasn't he come home? Where did he go? The answer is always a shrug and the reply, I don't know.

What happened to my son? Where is my husband? Where can I find my wife, my father, my brother?

I don't know.

In the new speech of Central Luzon the people refer to a missing member of the family by saying: "He has gone to the

barrio of I Don't Know." It has become such a commonplace that the constabulary and the civilian guards use it as a threat. When a peasant protests or refuses to obey he will be asked: "Do you want to go to the barrio of I Don't Know?"

Beside the burned and bombed-out barrios stands the barrio of I Don't Know. In it lies buried the faith of the people in any government of bullets and terror.

It will never again be easy for reactionaries to fool or to lull into complacency the people of Central Luzon.

From August to November there was no let-up in the terror. As it has been with us so often in the campaigns of repression against the Hukbalahap, or, for that matter, with people's movements everywhere that have had to meet suppression, our main objective during the period was survival. Constant mobility, continual use of the tactics of evasion, hungry days of hiding and sleepless nights of movement were the rule. We knew that all we needed to do was to live through it, and that the people and the conditions that facilitated their organization would be there, waiting.

Although our main intentions were to avoid encounters, to conserve our strength, to conduct ourselves in a purely defensive manner, it was impossible to keep entirely from clashes with the enemy. A number of fights occurred in September around Minalin, Masantol and Lubao. We were not prepared, however, to become involved in warfare at that time. We knew that we were on the verge of a long struggle, just as we had felt in 1942, when the enemy of the people was the Japanese. The present enemy was strong enough to gain an advantage, due to overwhelming military power, but in the type of struggle we envisioned his initial advantage would be off-set by the building up of our mass base and by attrition against him. We felt that our mass base would grow and expand in direct proportion to the force used against the people, as it did.

We also had the problem of food. We needed to organize mass support and to develop our own production schemes. We had to adopt new tactics to contend with the enemy tactic of barrio evacuation. We needed to plan struggle tactics to get arms from the enemy. We had the problem of locating new

bases at a distance from the MP concentration points. We had the problem of training new recruits and new leaders.

We had no time, and it was not right, to make decisive battles yet. We had to reorganize, expand, and organize.

Our potential armed forces were considerable, but we did not assemble them fully. It was a hot, mobile period, no time for assembly and concentration. In addition, as soon as the repressions began, there were numerous volunteers to join the Huk. We accepted only those who were on the wanted lists of the authorities or who were well-known as active Huks in the past. The armed force itself was split into small units to aid mobility and to assist evasion. Those who were not mobilized were assigned to the strengthening of mass organizations (which were now of course all underground), and to supply and production.

The intensive repressions were beneficial in at least one respect: they compelled us to carry out a plan which we had drawn up long before, during the Japanese time, the plan of expansion. It was a fact we had to face that the majority of our soldiers and organizers were reluctant, even in the face of extreme hardship, to leave the vicinity of their homes in Central Luzon. It was a factor that had retarded our development during the war. Now, however, the enemy helped us drive home the necessity to our comrades. Central Luzon was hot, sizzling hot. There remained practically no more organizational work to do there and expansion became more attractive—and an urgent task.

In September, Linda was assigned to expansion work in Bataan and Zambales. He did a very good job. In less than a year he had spread an organization throughout the two provinces, and had organized fourteen towns. In the middle of November we sent Sol with an expeditionary force to the south. He traversed the mountain route, behind Manila, and joined the force of Pedro Villegas, which had reassembled in Laguna and Tayabas (now renamed Quezon), and proceeded to Batangas. That, too, was very successful, to such an extent that we now had what amounted to two fronts. In October and November we also sent vanguards of organizers to Pangasinan, to Nueva Vizcaya,

to Isabela, and to the Visayas. Batangas, Cavite and the Bicol regions were made future objectives. Expansion, particularly in territory that was new to us and did not have a previous history of mass organization, was long, slow work, but we recognized that it was all-important. We could count on powerful assistance from at least one quarter: the government itself, which by its very policies and corruption made people turn to the Huk.

Although we made plans for a long and bitter struggle, we did not discard seeking a settlement with the Roxas administration. We continued to press for a program of agrarian reform and of democracy, which we viewed as the substance of a democratic peace. We understood fully the nature of the Roxas regime, and its puppetry to American imperialism, but we did not make demands that Roxas sever our country's relations with the United States. The full scope of the Roxas treachery had not yet been made clear to the people, although we did propagandize on the menace of imperialist control. We conceived of our fight, actually, as two-sided: with the Hukbalahap defending, maintaining, and expanding the people's organizations on one hand, and on the other the progressive forces in Manila and throughout the country conducting legal, constitutional and parliamentary struggle in elections, in Congress, in public demonstrations and in the courts. Essentially we were still thinking to a great extent along the lines of a parliamentary victory for the people.

The steps taken by the Roxas administration in the latter part of 1946 proved that the mailed fist policy was intended to crush the most effective section of the opposition preliminary to carrying out the dictates of American imperialism.

First of all, Roxas paid his debt to his big landlord backers. On September 30 he proclaimed the 70-30 amendment to the Tenancy Act (Quezon's Commonwealth Act 4054). This had been recommended by Roxas' Agrarian Commission in its report of June 29, 1946, and had been given full support by the PKM. But as promulgated by Roxas, the 70-30 act was a mockery which was utilized by the administration to cloak itself with the appearance of agrarian reform. While Roxas boasted of it publicly as a demonstration of social justice, the big landlords were privately

given assurance that the act would never be enforced, and it was not. In the terror-ridden provinces whoever demanded his rights under the 70-30 act ran the risk of being murdered. In addition, the amendment contained a clause stating that any agreement made outside the provisions of the act was valid and created a situation wherein the act was not applicable. With their civilian guard armies the landlords compelled tenants to sign 50-50 agreements, which left the burden of the crop expenses on the backs of the tenants and deprived them of the act's provisions. We added enforcement of the 70-30 act to our demands for a democratic peace.

The first installment of Roxas' debt to his American imperialist backers was paid off in the form of the Bell Trade Act, which perpetuated a colonial economy for the Filipino people, binding us to the will of the American industrialist and banker. The free trade provision of the Bell Act allowed American goods in any quantity and of any nature to flood our markets while only a few Filipino raw materials under quota could be sent to the United States. The currency provision made the value of our peso depend upon the value of the American dollar, fixing it at a rate of two pesos to one dollar, thus preventing us from adjusting our economy to avoid adverse consequences arising from the fluctuations of the American economy. Most outrageous of all, however, was a demand that we allow American capitalists the right to enter the Philippines without restriction, to participate in any business including public utilities on an equal basis with Filipinos, and to exploit fully our natural resources. This was the infamous parity provision. To force us to accept these provisions, which were more like those demanded of a defeated enemy in a war than of an ally, the United States refused to pay any of the huge war damage their army had caused until we agreed.

The acceptance of parity required an amendment to our Constitution (Article XII on Conservation and Utilization of Natural Resources, and Article XIII, Section 8, on the Capitalization of Corporations). An amendment must be passed by a three-fourths vote of Congress and approved by a majority of the voters. It was to obtain the three-fourths majority that Roxas

had deprived the six DA Congressmen and three Nacionalista Senators of their seats, although it still passed by a single vote in the House of Representatives. If Jesus Lava and I alone had been there, parity would have been defeated. Roxas had thwarted the will of the people in order to sell the nation to foreign interests.

The people had one more chance to defeat parity—in the national plebiscite that had been scheduled for March 11, 1947. For that, too, Roxas had prepared. Terror ruled in the provinces with Huk influence, where parity was most likely to be defeated; the most outspoken voices against it were smothered. In addition, the voting machinery was in the hands of an administration that used fraud at every opportunity to cheat the popular will. The March 11 vote was a foregone conclusion. The record said the people voted for parity.

Three days later, on March 14, Roxas paid off the second monstrous installment of his debt to his American imperialist backers. He signed on that date the military bases agreement, which gave the American army, navy and air force the right to maintain bases throughout our country for a period of 99 years. Under the mutual assistance pact signed by Roxas on the same day, the American army was given permission to interfere in any situation involving "national security."

With the Bell Act and the military agreements, Roxas signed away our future and our sovereignty. He was given an American Military Advisory Group to train his armed forces, to train them for war against the peasants, and he was backed up with the promise of greater aid if the people's movement got too strong for him.

As a result of these acts of Roxas, it became necessary to extend our struggle to include not only agrarian reform and the establishment of democracy, but also, freedom from imperialist domination.

By November the terror had died down a bit. We had played hide-and-seek with the enemy until they had exhausted themselves somewhat and had used up their immediate supplies of ammunition. On our part, we had decided upon an intensified widespread offensive-defensive form of struggle, confined to small

hit-and-run ambushes. These steps were taken in order to maintain the morale of our own soldiers as well as to raise the morale of the masses.

These tactics were also devised to undermine the morale of the enemy troops. In our type of guerrilla warfare we were really the masters of the tactical situation. We had long ago perfected the technique of the ambush and of the surprise raid, against the Japanese. Now, as it had been then, the ratio of our losses to those of the enemy was one to ten, or less. Under such circumstances the most highly trained soldiers become demoralized. There were other factors, also, to hasten the demoralization of the constabularlyman. He was paid a very low wage. He was fed miserably, a condition that promoted the looting of food from barrios. (The MP's themselves opposed evacuations because they prevented them from foraging from the barrio people). He was treated brutally by his officers. We began to appeal to the constabularyman, urging him not to fight against his brothers, against his own people, but to fight instead against those who oppressed him too. After many months our orientation had effect. MP companies had to be shifted continually because of "battle fatigue." In encounters MP's frequently broke and ran. On raids many would fire in the air long before reaching their destination, to warn us of their approach, and they would secretly drop ammunition for us to pick up after they left.

To handle the more insidious enemies of the people, the spies, the agents, and the informers who betrayed our comrades into death and torture at the hands of the MP's, we undertook the organization of our own People's Security Police. This PSP organization, which played the same role as the wartime DI, was directed by Luna (now known by the name of James).

We had emerged from the first assault by the enemy without serious effects upon us, but we had no illusions about the future. We knew that we had not yet borne the full brunt of the government's military strength. Weapons used by the American army during the war and available now to Roxas had not yet been used against us, and MP tactics were still crude and not streamlined to meet our kind of warfare. The question of survival we recognized as still a primary consideration.

Nevertheless, it was obvious by the end of 1946 that the Roxas mailed fist policy was already a complete failure. Government information bureaus, in an attempt to conceal this, flooded the press with reports that its police forces had crushed the Huk (which it maligned as "bandits"). Huk leaders died a dozen times in the headlines. Roxas, in his address to Congress in January 1947, flatly announced that "the Huk question" was ended and that he had settled the "peace and order" problem. (He had said that he would do it in sixty days: those sixty days were to multiply until eternity for Roxas.)

The time was ripe for a move to counteract the pompous propaganda of the administration and to let the people know the truth, that we were still alive, intact and growing stronger. On February 2 we contacted a representative of the Associated Press, James Halsema, who was guided to Central Luzon for an interview with me.

There was an amusing incident connected with Halsema's trip. At the time of his visit we had re-established our network of organization so thoroughly despite raids that it was possible for me to meet him in the very first barrio where he made contact with our forces. In fact, I was there when he arrived. However, he was informed by our people that he would have to undertake an all night march in order to reach the rendezvous where I was waiting. This was not malice on our part. It was a vital part of our tested policy for military security, and we wanted to acquaint him with the type of life our squadrons were experiencing—it would make his report more authentic. All night long, therefore, a squadron marched him across rice fields, river beds, and hills. We were in single file. I was in the line of march, three or four soldiers behind Halsema throughout the march. The soldiers were very amused and in high spirits; it was difficult to make them act like a guerrilla squadron avoiding the enemy by stealth. Just before we reached our destination, I slipped away and took a short-cut. I was waiting for Halsema when he arrived. He never knew of our night's sport with him but I am sure he would forgive it. There was not much in our lives that could be amusing.

The interview appeared in the Manila press on February 7,

1947, thoroughly demolishing all Roxas' claims of success. It also made it clear that the issue was not banditry, but was economic, social and political. The reaction to the interview made it apparent that the population in general sympathized with our cause.

Five terms were listed by us as the minimum for a democratic peace. They were:

1. Immediate enforcement of the Bill of Rights, especially the right to assemble, freedom from arbitrary arrest, ending of cruel and unjust punishment, trial by unprejudiced judges.
2. Dismissal of all charges against Huks, MP's and civilian guards alike growing out of events of the previous five months.
3. Replacement of fascist-minded officials in municipal and provincial governments and military commands in provinces affected by agrarian unrest.
4. Restoration of all Democratic Alliance Congressmen to their seats.
5. The implementation of Roxas' own land reform program, beginning with a fool-proof crop distribution law and leading towards eventual abolition of tenancy.

To express our determination not to yield unless this program was realized we raised the slogan, "A Democratic Peace or Martyrdom!"

This interview re-awakened a tremendous interest among the Filipino people in the "peace and order" problem. The administration was widely condemned for its policy. The reaction of the Roxas administration to this dramatic proof of the existence and activity of the Hukbalahap was not long in developing. The MP Command was given the order to carry out a big, widely publicized campaign that by its very size and noise would counteract the effect of our activity, a campaign that would wipe us out—in the headlines. The result was Operation Arayat.

March 29 was Hukbalahap Day, the fifth anniversary of the founding of our people's army. We had planned a celebration to take place on the slopes of Mount Arayat, which overlooked Cabiao forest, the scene of our inauguration. Scattered about the mountain, on the east, west and north sides, were approximately two squadrons of soldiers, about 200 men, most of them sick and recuperating, practically none prepared for com-

bat. There were also a number of "civilians" working in *kaingins,* part of our production force.

The enemy plan was thorough. For weeks, in advance of military operations, they sent large numbers of agents to infiltrate everywhere, in the towns, barrios, into the underground mass organizations. Civilian guards and MP's started fraternizing with the masses and even with some of our soldiers. Their object was to lull us into a false sense of security and then to catch us off guard. Finally they launched a huge, sweeping, three-pronged military offensive in the middle of March, coming down through Tarlac and Nueva Ecija, across Bulacan into Pampanga, up along the Candaba swamp from Calumpit, and through Lubao to Angeles from Bataan. The prongs converged on Mount Arayat. In these operations many of our cadres were killed due to relaxed vigilance, particularly mass organizers.

On March 25 our intelligence units reported the culminating developments of the enemy plan. Truckloads of MP's were being brought into the surrounding towns. From where I stood on the Magalang side of the mountain, I could see the MP's raiding the barrio of Balete and building tents below me. There was the sound of shooting at many points down on the plain. At that time I was touring the mountain, checking up on our hospital sites. We held a consultation. It was thought that this was one of the localized two-day raids that were then a common occurrence.

On the 26th I was at James' office on the Magalang side. MP's had climbed to no more than 200 meters below us. We did not move during the entire day, waiting for them to go down again, since such excursions on their part were not infrequent. We sat in our tiny huts, packed and ready to move quickly, if necessary. Reports arrived from other parts of the mountain. The enemy had surrounded the mountain completely, with units stationed at every two or three kilometers around it. Heavy 105 artillery had been hauled into the rice fields, and converged on the mountain from several points. Thousands of MP's were involved, and they were under the personal direction of General Mariano Castaneda, at that time head of the MP Command.

The bombardment began on the morning of the 27th. The

mountain was shelled from all sides. When the shells burst they shook the ground beneath our feet. At intervals the shelling ceased and then we could hear the MP's shooting and shouting around the base of the mountain. There was shooting everywhere. The infantry advanced after the artillery barrage. We retreated higher, up the slope. At elevation 3,000 feet we had a brief conference: GY, old Bio, his son Paul, and myself. The mountain was reverberating and trembling around us. It exceeded anything that the Japanese had launched against us. We tried to estimate the enemy plans. This was the second day of the raid. We decided that if it lasted into the third day we would stick it out on the mountain, because we did not believe the enemy would prolong it beyond that. It proved to be a near-fatal decision.

That night the mountain was alive with tracer bullets and explosions, a wild and savage display. We slept on the ground, near the peak. The MP's were firing completely at random. They climbed the mountain very slowly, shelling everything in advance before they moved. They were very nervous and shot wildly to reassure themselves. About fifteen MP's and civilian guards were killed in this way, by their own men.

We were without food or water. Our last meal, two spoonfuls of porridge each, was eaten on the morning of the 27th. On the 28th, with the intense attack continuing, we gave orders for everyone on the mountain to go down and get out, and to organize diversionary attacks in the lowlands.

James, on the east side with Liwayway, the well-known woman commander, had encountered the first and most intense firing on the 26th and had organized penetration at once, having sized up the situation as precarious. Liwayway was sick, at times delirious. James carried her down the mountain, choosing the most precipitous slopes, which would be least guarded. James contacted the squadrons and ambushed a large MP unit, killing and wounding nearly 40. Once down, they managed easily to reach the swamps.

I was with GY and Paul. When we decided to go out, on the 28th, we first climbed to the summit, to get a clear view. The firing was worst on the east and west sides. We selected the

most difficult route to go down, figuring out where the enemy would least expect us. We traveled chiefly at night, guided by a compass. During the day we lay in the tall grass, under the sun. The MP's were burning the *cogon*. Sometimes smoke choked us and seared our throats. Some of our boys were beating their breasts and ready to shout to bring the enemy, anything to get rid of the thirst. We had no water at all on the 28th and 29th.

The MP's contributed plenty of fireworks for the Huk anniversary.

To the men who were desperate and almost ready to surrender I spoke passionately, myself burning with thirst and heat. I exhorted them to remember our principles. I promised them all the cold drinks they wanted and a big meal in the barrios if they would stick it out.

On the night of the 29th we got out, passing through barrio Banga, crawling between houses where the MP's lay sleeping. Beyond it we found a watermelon patch, our first food in four days. Swimming between passing MP patrols, we crossed the Pampanga River, reaching the barrio of Kandating on the morning of the 30th. There we were safe.

Our losses during the famous Operation Arayat were claimed by the MP Command to be over 900. Actually we lost four soldiers: one sick squadron commander, killed by mortar shrapnel; one machine-gunner who delayed the enemy while his comrades escaped; and two privates who were caught in ambush. Two civilians working in the *kaingin* were captured, tortured, and killed. Later we found the remains of two of our civilian organizers on the mountain trails, beheaded. Among the civilians "captured" on the mountain was a new-born baby.

The MP's on the other hand, lost approximately 70 men killed and wounded. Their expenditure of ammunition was enormous. They withdrew with their nets empty on April 4. On April 8 our people were already back on the mountain. The civilians were pleased to find their new *kaingins* burned off for them, so they began at once planting their mountain corn and rice.

Operation Arayat was a colossal failure for the Roxas administration. It accomplished nothing. As a matter of fact, it resulted

in a heightening of our prestige. During the bombardment of the mountain the people everywhere below were praying and weeping, thinking that we had been trapped and would be killed. Afterwards, when they saw us again, they said: "Ah, see! The MP's cannot catch them!" Far from being demoralized, the people's faith became stronger, they believed more than ever in the inability of the administration to crush the Huk. The failure of Operation Arayat was never forgotten by them. They came to think of every huge military campaign against us as just another Operation Arayat. It was synonymous with defeat for the government.

We could expect a long period of struggle filled with situations worse than Operation Arayat, but we faced the future with confidence. The morale of the people was back to normal. It might be temporarily weakened again, but it would always come back to normal, always come back to strong support for the Huk. We looked forward with confidence, too, because we knew that we could endure the worst the enemy could give us, and come through. We knew that it was possible to survive.

25. U. S. Imperialism

In April 1948, Manuel Roxas died unexpectedly, symbolically in the arms of his masters, while visiting the U.S. army air base at Clark Field, Pampanga. His usefulness to the American imperialists had been declining fast; his policies were discredited, and the masses were becoming restless under his administration. Significantly, many people believed that he was poisoned by his masters. A month previously, driven to desperation, he had outlawed the Huk and PKM, placing a huge sum on the heads of the peasant leaders. Upon the masses this move had no effect whatsoever. His faithful adherence to American imperialist interests and the excessive corruption in his government had exposed him to the people.

The man who stepped into his place, his Vice-President, Elpidio Quirino, began at once to adopt different tactics toward the Huk. He let it be known privately that he was ready to negotiate terms acceptable to us. In our analysis of Quirino we saw him first as a leader of the Liberal Party, the chosen party of the American imperialists, who could be expected to carry on the relations established by Roxas, and we saw him secondly as a politician anxious to build enough following, by hook or by crook, to fulfill his ambition of being elected President in 1949. Under the Roxas administration he had been pushed into the background by the Liberal Party chieftains led by Jose Avelino, and his ambitions had suffered. We did not expect to win a democratic peace from Quirino, but we concluded that we could at least establish a wider acceptance of the legitimacy of our cause, and prove the sincerity of our demands. We accepted the Quirino overtures, and the negotiations commenced.

It became obvious at once that Quirino's intention was to dupe us into surrender of our arms and thus place us at his mercy. Our arms were at all times the key question. They were the means by which we had twice defended the cause of the people, and had kept alive. Without them we were helpless before fascist terror.

To trick us into giving them up, Quirino promised everything. He agreed to our demand that we keep our firearms. He publicly promised land reforms and democracy, and he privately agreed to work toward the abrogation of the Bell Trade Act, military bases, and in general to fight against American imperialism. Judge Antonio Quirino, the President's brother and emissary with full powers, was a smooth bargainer who agreed with us on all points that we advanced.

We went along with him as far as we dared, waiting for evidence that he would keep his promises. To prove our good faith, I relinquished the field, under a truce, and came to Manila on June 29, 1948 (my birthday), to confer directly with Quirino. I was overwhelmed by the enthusiasm and the sympathy with which the people greeted me. All the attempts of Roxas to brand us as bandits had failed. My reception was the best proof of that.

To enter the city after two years of underground struggle in

the forests and mountains was a strange, throat-catching sensation. The contrast between the relative security of a city-dweller's existence and that of the hounded peasant was sharp and painful. My mind was constantly on my hungry and sick comrades in the field, who were so anxiously awaiting the outcome of the venture. Many had warned me against trusting unduly those whom I had come to see.

While the negotiations were proceeding, I was granted my right to sit in Congress. Almost everyone in Congress vied to pose in pictures with me, claiming that they, too, were "Huks at heart." Government spokesmen loudly asserted that the Huks had surrendered. On the floor of Congress I denounced the attempt of the government to distort the negotiations, pointing out that I was in Congress by the will of the people and not by the will of the administration. In my maiden speech I said bluntly that I was grateful to no one but the people for that honor, and pledged to continue to fight for their cause. I pointed an accusing finger at those who had betrayed the national honor in the previous two years.

We made two serious mistakes in our negotiations with Quirino. We allowed ourselves to be put in the position of accepting an amnesty proclamation from him without challenging its implication that we were the guilty party. Secondly, we kept too much in the background the basic consideration of struggle against American imperialism.

Fortunately, I was able to expound on these issues in huge rallies we held in Batangas, Quezon, Laguna, Baliwag and Cabanatuan—to the bitter discomfort of Quirino.

Peace depended entirely upon Quirino's implementation of his promises, which failed to develop. During the period of truce the PC's and civilian guards continued to raid and to terrorize, and ambushed our soldiers on several occasions. Huks and PKM's who dared to register under the amnesty proclamation were told directly by civilian guards and by PC's: "Now we know who you are. We will take care of you later." Quirino finally got around to announcing his "agrarian reforms," which turned out to be a charity offering that he called "social amelioration." It involved an appropriated sum of four million pesos, enough to

give a few cans of milk and some old clothes to landless peasants.

Eagerly the administration put forward its much-publicized plans for the registration and surrender of our firearms. The promises of Quirino grew emptier as the days passed, and the ominous outlines of a double-cross took shape. On August 14, a day before the deadline, I went to see President Quirino to give him my final appraisal of the situation, and to remind him of our agreements, both written and verbal. My visit failed.

The same day I gave to the press my first statement accusing Quirino of bad faith and treachery. That same evening our intelligence unearthed a scheme to kidnap me. My brother-in-law was mauled by thugs gunning for me. The ghost of Feleo hovered over the fruitless negotiations. I left the city and went back to the field early the next dawn. The following day the PC's, and civilian guards made simultaneous raids throughout Central Luzon.

On August 29 a mass rally for a democratic peace took place in the city of Manila. I had been scheduled to speak. Instead I sent the following letter:

To the Filipino People,
Through the Chairman,
Committee on Democratic Peace Rally.

Compatriots:

I deeply regret that I cannot come to address you personlly on this most significant occasion, significant because it is the first gathering of all elements of the population who, regardless of their political and religious affiliations, sincerely want to achieve democratic peace.

I cannot come, not because of reasons of personal security. Despite the preparations (which had come to my knowledge) of our enemies to have me disposed of, as Juan Feleo and Manuel Joven havc been disposed of before, we can devise ways and means to thwart their evil designs. I choose not to come in order that I may protest, and break the silence over what is happening in Central and Southern Luzon, which up to now is not yet adequately presented by the press to the public.

Even as I am dictating this hurried message of peace, guns are barking and men, women, and children are running for their lives in fear of PC and civilian guard terrorism and atrocities. Even as President Quirino was expressing optimism for the maintenance of peace, General Castaneda ordered the launching of a swift and all-out offensive against us. Already the PC have bombarded Mount Arayat, PC troops in large numbers go to

peaceful barrios on the pretext of searching for arms, but rob the barrio folks of their cash, food, livestock, clothes, and in some cases of their jewelry, whether arms are found or not. They have arrested and killed Huks and PKM's without benefit of the courts. Innocent civilians are herded and massacred on the mere suspicion of giving sustenance to the Huks. Masico has been re-enacted in Floridablanca, Arayat, Lubao, and other places of Central Luzon. Nine Huk officers were arrested in Tanay, Rizal, on the first hour of the 16th of this month. Nothing has been heard from them since. Fascist terror and sadism once more have been unleashed on the hundreds of thousands of peasants of Central and Southern Luzon. Now, as in the past, these peasants look up to us for guidance and protection.

Why have the peace efforts failed? Do we, the peasants, want to be shot at, bombarded and killed instead of leading peaceful and decent lives? Are we any different from you who earnestly desire peace? No! The peace efforts have failed, not because of us, but because President Quirino and his administration have failed to live up to their commitments. They have failed to abide by the conditions necessary for democratic peace. President Quirino has failed to define his stand on the Wallace plank* advocating the abrogation of the Bell Trade Act and the removal of U.S. troops and bases from foreign soil. He has decided to continue trade with Japan as imposed by SCAP [Supreme Commander Allied Powers], despite the overwhelming opposition of the great majority of the people. He has dilly-dallied in going after the top administration officials who are publicly known to be enmeshed in graft and corruption. The fact that these same officials enjoy strong imperialist support and patronage demonstrates clearly his refusal to break with imperialism and to make our country really free. Failing to achieve the conditions necessary for democratic peace, the administration has chosen to becloud the issues and to place the burden of imperialist exploitation on the shoulders of the peasants.

The administration has allowed to remain uncorrected newspaper reports that the Huks and PKM's have not shown any attempt to prove their sincerity in keeping with their part of the agreement. We made him understand that we are going to hold onto our arms, because even then we expressed to his emissary our misgivings as to his ability to resist imperialist pressures. I made a commitment to register our arms in recognition of the authority of the government, but made it very clear that such registration can only be fulfilled as the administration implements its promised social and agrarian reforms necessary to win back the lost confidence of the peasantry. President Quirino has agreed to break up the big landed estates for distribution to the landless peasants, but he has merely set up a relief and charity agency under the glorified name of a

* This plank was contained in the platform of the Progressive Party during the elections of 1948, when Henry Wallace was its presidential candidate.—*Ed.*

"Social Amelioration Committee." The President has proclaimed amnesty for Huks and PKM's, but he has failed to release more than 600 Huks and PKM's who are prisoners. And yet, despite all this, President Quirino and his local officials would now hurry us in registering our arms. It is obvious that what they want is not peace, but our arms.

Before I close, I wish to confess that I have been painfully disillusioned with the way President Quirino and his administration have implemented our agreement. In my profound conviction that the masses want and need peace, I was carried away by the promises and commitments of the President's emissary. Now we know better. I shall continue to lead the peasants in their struggle for agrarian reforms and national emancipation. I shall, within my power, continue to preserve the peace, despite the impasse in the negotiations, but will never submit to any peace imposed by imperialist-feudal guns and bayonets.

1. There can be no democratic peace as long as we are under imperialist domination!
2. Only the close working unity of the workers and peasants can finally guarantee the achievement of democratic peace!
3. Legal, constitutional, parliamentary methods of struggle alone cannot achieve democratic peace!

(Signed) Luis M. Taruc

Amnesty was over.

The terror immediately launched by Quirino exceeded by far the worst of the Roxas brutalities. Murder, torture, raping, looting and wholesale evacuations ensued across Central and Southern Luzon. The bulk of the victims at the beginning were those who had trustingly registered under the amnesty proclamation of Quirino. The hopes of the people for peace, raised during the negotiations, were smashed again.

The most important conclusion forced upon us by our experiences was that we could no longer hope to achieve a democratic peace through normal, legal, constitutional processes alone as long as we were under imperialist-feudal rule. We had been driven gradually toward this conclusion by an accumulation of events: the unseating of the Democratic Alliance Congressmen in 1946; the rigged parity plebiscite of 1947; the senatorial, provincial, and municipal elections of 1947, in which tremendous frauds were perpetrated to keep the Liberal Party in power; and now the fraudulent amnesty of Quirino in 1948. All of this was compounded by the incredible graft and corruption of

Liberal Party rule, which mercilessly and without check robbed the public treasury.

In consequence of this assessment of our situation, we decided henceforth to place our main emphasis on the necessity for an armed struggle to overthrow the corrupt puppet regime of the American imperialists and to liberate our country entirely from the grasp of imperialist elements. We concluded that it had become impossible to accomplish democracy and agrarian reform, much less industrialization and prosperity for the Philippines, unless an armed struggle for national liberation brought a people's government into power.

This conclusion was strongly criticized by the majority of the Democratic Alliance leadership, which rejected the concept of armed struggle and placed its reliance on parliamentary processes. This was confusion on the part of the key DA leaders. Conciously or unconciously they were developing an attitude that had been adopted by Nehru in India and by Sukarno and Hatta in Indonesia, which made of them tools used skillfully by the imperialists to maintain their position against the rising tide of people's movements throughout Asia. Nehru and Sukarno had betrayed the national liberation movements in their countries. Were there Filipinos who would unwittingly follow in their tragic path?

The exposure and decay of the Liberal Party that occurred during the administration of Quirino gave the Nacionalista Party an opportunity to capture power in the presidential elections of 1949. Despite the nationalist pretensions of many elements in this party, we knew that the transference of power would bring no basic change in the imperialist relations of our country with the United States. Although there were sincere individuals among the Nacionalistas, the basic orientation of the party as a whole was to make a bid for and to secure the support of the American imperialists now enjoyed by the Liberal Party. It could only do so by playing the role of a bulwark against the people's movement. We could conceive of reforms, in a small way, advanced by a victorious Nacionalista Party, but they would be essentially reforms devised to block the people's march to complete freedom, not to assist it. The leadership of that party

feared the people, and that very fear would drive it completely into the arms of the imperialists.

There was no other way. The people's movement could take only a direction independent of the established political parties.

The most significant feature of the orientation we had reached was the recognition of the need for struggle against American imperialism. This had been the logical result of our program and our demands for agrarian reform and democracy. Although we had previously understood the need for such an extension of the struggle, it had been necessary for the masses as a whole to accept its importance. The Bell Trade Act and the military bases agreement provided the foundation for such a mass understanding. American disinterest in the industrialization of the Philippines while rebuilding Japan, United States support of other colonial powers which sought to stem the rising liberation movements, and the American attempts to bring about a new war against the Soviet Union, laid bare the nature of the imperialist enemy.

We found that once the people understood the character of imperialist control over our country, they were ready to fight it. Quick to resist any form of open oppression, they required a longer time to accumulate wrath against the subtler forms of control utilized by the American imperialists. The British and the Dutch have been openly the masters; the Americans have been more clever.

How, then, does American imperialism affect our people?

For over half a century the Philippines has become largely the private landed estate of a handful of big businessmen who live ten thousand miles away in the United States. They acquired possession by taking us away from a previous owner, Spain, as the spoils of war in 1898, and they made sure of their possession by using the iron fist in 1899 to crush with blood our revolutionary movement for real independence. Since then, posing as our friends and benefactors, they have robbed and plundered our wealth, and they held back the achievement of our democracy and freedom. When they pretended to give us independence, in 1946, it was only as a smokescreen to hide an even greater domination.

The American imperialists used many excuses to justify their

taking of the Philippines. President McKinley said that he had been advised to do so by God. Some said that it was the duty of the United States to civilize the Filipino. Others said that it was their duty to teach us how to govern ourselves. None mentioned publicly that they could make huge profits in our country.

To guarantee those profits, American imperialism has kept us a backward, colonial people, with the majority living in the misery of poverty and ignorance. It has prevented our growth as an independent nation, forcing us to act according to its own wishes, both in our internal and in our external affairs. It has stood in the path of our free economic development, compelling us to endure the narrow, outworn system of feudalism and keeping us from using our own means and our own energies to advance the welfare of the people.

It has boasted that it "educated the Filipinos," but today nearly fifty per cent of our people are still illiterate and a large proportion of the rest can barely read or write. It has said that it raised our standard of living to the highest in the Orient, yet today tens of thousands of Filipinos die each year of tuberculosis and beri-beri, the diseases of poverty. It has claimed that it trained us in the ways of democratic government, but today the most corrupt regime in our history, with American approval, massacres the people and conducts itself like the worst emperors of pagan Rome.

It has allowed all of these things to exist because ignorance, poverty and corruption are weapons used by imperialism to maintain its rule.

I was educated in schools established as part of the colonial rule of American imperialism. I learned there many of the ideals of democracy, and I took them seriously. I worshipped Washington, Jefferson, and Lincoln as much as our own national heroes. I believe in them more deeply today, because my experiences at the hands of Americans have taught me their value more than any classroom could teach me. When I was told that America was the land of opportunity I used to envy Americans because there was so little opportunity in my own country. I did not know then that it was American rule which limited my opportunities.

The Philippines is a backward agricultural country, and has been for centuries. There was a general impression, fostered by both Spaniards and Americans, that Filipinos were incapable of achieving anything better, at least not until they were taught to do so over a long, long period of time. In the meantime, the Americans would protect us and guide us along the right path. I believed that. I even believed that America was noble because it was doing so much for us.

What they neglected to teach us, and what we had to find out for ourselves, bitterly, was that American imperialism had deliberately perpetuated the backward, feudal agrarian system which had been used by Spain. The American rulers had not broken up the big landed estates because they wanted us to remain an agricultural country, and the feudal tenant system was the best way to maintain the status quo, since it kept the largest mass of the people impoverished and disciplined and easy to control.

The American imperialists did not want our country to become industrialized because they wanted our people to buy only the products made in American factories. Our country was to be a market for their goods. It was also supposed to remain a source of raw materials needed by the American factories: unrefined sugar, copra, abaca, metallic ore, lumber, tobacco. Under our backward system of economy such raw materials could be obtained cheaply because our workers were paid very low wages. The raw materials were converted into finished products by the American factories and then sold back to us, by American import companies. All the Filipino ever received from this process, which involved the exploitation of the resources of his country, were very low wages.

The Filipino moves about in an American-made world. The clothes he wears, the cigarettes he smokes, the canned food he eats, the music he hears, the news of the world he reads (and the books and the magazines) are all American, although his own country has the ability to produce all these. He eats pineapple canned in California, but he grows it in the Philippines. His country grows millions of coconuts, but he has to buy toilet soap made in New Jersey out of coconut oil. He buys sugar

refined in American mills, but grown on his own island of Negros; if he wants to buy Filipino-made sugar he must be content with *muscovado* or *panotsa*. He rides on American-made busses or an American-made train. On the radio, made in New York (if he is one of the very few who have a radio) he listens to recorded American programs. American movies dominate his theaters. His schools use American textbooks that explain science, economics, history, and politics from an American standpoint. The value of his peso depends entirely on the value of the American dollar. The very home he lives in (if he lives in the city) is virtually American-made: the corrugated iron roof, the nails in the walls, the electric light bulbs, the electric wiring and switches, the kitchen utensils, the plates and spoons, his toothbrush, the bed clothes, the ring with which he weds his wife. And finally, of American make, are the guns, the tanks, the planes, the artillery, the vehicles, and even the uniforms of the troops that have been used to shoot down the Filipino people who would like to see a Filipino-made future for their children.

Some small American industries have been established in the Philippines: cosmetics, soft drinks, electric fixtures. They are subsidiaries of large corporations in the United States which have set up Philippine branches because they can hire cheaper labor and thus sell their products for a greater profit. The American worker who does the same work is paid a wage three times as great.

There is another reason why the imperialists do not want to industrialize the Philippines. They would create an industrial working class that would undoubtedly organize and form powerful unions to fight for higher wages and living standards, as the large industrial trade unions do in the imperialist countries. The imperialists are afraid of creating a large, militant industrial working class; it would threaten their super-profits and eventually their control.

Before the war, when I worked as a laborer for the Metropolitan Water District in Manila, I received a wage of one peso, seventy centavos per day. I was told by the good American friend I met in those days, that an American laborer received more for a single hour's work. Yet we were told that Filipinos

were being taught the American way of life. As I came to realize, all the ideals of American democracy preached to us were so much dust thrown in our eyes to conceal the colonial inequalities we experienced. The only phase of the American way of life that had been put into operation was exploitation, which, for us, was much worse than the exploitation of the American worker.

The clever American imperialist! He came into our country with his talk about democraey and about the superiority of the American way of life, painting a picture in colors about his big cities and his luxuries and his opportunities, dazzling the humble Filipino who lived on rice and fish, telling him that he too could be fortunate if he would just trust in the American way. He would pat Juan de la Cruz on the back and say: "You should feel proud. You are the only Christian nation in the Orient. Look at all the sugar and copra you produce and all the gold you dig and all the abaca you grow. One of these days, too, you'll be independent and then you too can be like your Uncle Sam."

The Filipino peasant, who slept on the floor and whose chair was an empty box, plastered the walls of his nipa hut with American magazine illustrations of mansions in the country and hotels and advertisements of luxurious beds and furniture. In the city the laborer who lived in a *barong-barong* that became flooded when it rained, went to the American movies and saw the well-dressed glamorous characters moving around in the handsome drawing-rooms and the modern kitchens that had refrigerators and washing machines and electric toasters.

How long did the purveyor of this kind of civilization think that he could convince the Filipino that poverty was cnnobling in a Christian and that subservience was admirable in one whose skin was brown?

After the war the imperialist said: "Here is your independence. You see? Just as we promised." The Filipino could look around and see the American army, stronger than ever, still on his soil, and see the Bell Trade Act operating so that he still produced nothing but sugar, and copra, and abaca, and metallic ores. He could still cut pictures out of the magazines and still go to the movies. The worker was now paid three pesos instead of a peso-

and-a-half, but now he paid one peso and thirty centavos for a *ganta* of rise instead of the pre-war 25 centavos.

The Americans soon realized they could not rule forever with an iron hand; it was too expensive. They solved their problem by getting Filipinos to rule for them. A group of Filipinos stood ready and willing to play such a role, the landlord-*ilustrado* class, the landed gentry. A large number of this group had not even joined the struggle against Spain. Their own fortunes were derived from the exploitation of the masses and they were content to have a strong external power upon which to rely, to help them maintain their exploiter's position. They were afraid the revolution would go too far and would get rid of them as well as of the Spaniards. The Americans were stronger than the Spaniards; they were even more reliable. The American Civil Government, operating through the Philippine Commission, at first based itself upon this class of Filipinos. They formed the first political party in the Philippines, the Partido Federalista. It existed during the period when no Filipino political party advocating independence was allowed to exist.

American rule brought into prominence a new economic group, the compradores, the middle-men through whom raw materials left our country and finished products entered. The compradores had been a weak group under Spain but they grew and flourished under the United States, particularly after the passage in 1909 of the Payne-Aldrich Act,* establishing free trade as a basis for imperialist relations. Owing their fortunes to the operations of imperialism, they became the right-hand men of foreign rule.

The whole process of "training to govern," about which American imperialism has boasted so much in the Philippines, has been built around the training of these groups to govern in the interests of American imperialism. One reason for perpetuating the feudal system of landowning that had functioned under the

* Under this tariff act, unlimited quantities of U.S. goods were permitted into the Philippines duty-free, but the amount of Philippine sugar, the chief export, which might be imported into the United States free of duty was limited to 300,000 tons per annum.—*Ed.*

Spanish regime was to keep the big landlords in power because they were an integral part of the new American pattern of rule.

In the old Spanish universities, as well as in the new University of the Philippines and in the other higher schools of learning established by the Americans, the theory of the "intellectual aristocracy" was driven home to the students. The school system grew less and less adequate the closer down it got to the masses until, in the barrios, it was mere perfunctory instruction. The gap between the educated and the uneducated or poorly educated was a sharply accentuated class difference. In addition, American textbooks were moved from the United States into Philippine schools without a line of revision, regardless of how great a difference existed between the two countries. The sociology of the American big city and of the American rural community was clamped grotesquely upon the mind of the Filipino student, to whom the cacique and the governor-general were the symbols of authority.

At all times the superiority of the American methods, the American customs, the American traditions were stressed. English and American literature crowded aside the growth of a native Filipino literature, which was referred to self-consciously if it was ever mentioned at all. Anything "American-made" took precedence at once over anything "Filipino-made." "I am ashamed before you," said the Filipino to the American, apologizing for his "unworthiness." Always the American, from billionaire to beachcomber, must be greeted with the deferential "Sir." The colonial mentality grew unchecked and was subtly encouraged by the imperialist rulers who called their colonial government in the Philippines an "experiment in democracy."

Out of this careful groundwork grew the structure of American rule, which created and established in power the compradores, those who had grown fat on the free-trade-agricultural economy of imperialism. The Nacionalista Party of Quezon and Osmeña, which began as a party calling for immediate, absolute and complete independence in 1907, was soon taken over by the compradores until at last it was fully under the firm thumb of the Governor-General and the economic powers that stood behind him. It could be pointed out that the Nacionalista Party

called for independence, but anyone in Philippine political life who did not call for independence was sure to be discredited in the eyes of the people, and the imperialists were much too careful to let that happen.

In the restricted economic life of the Philippines the government service and a political career assumed a special attraction. Government employees were most easily imbued with "loyalty" for the existing regime, and whoever would "go into politics" was inevitably one whose "allegiance" was definitely established. The Philippine political structure was so deeply permeated with the compradore spirit that when the Japanese came, most of the politicians had no difficulty in adjusting themselves to the new rulers.

Politics is a special sort of occupation under imperialism. It is made attractive by the opportunities for politicians to enrich themselves through corruption. After the war, when American imperialism needed ruthless and unscrupulous men to carry out its policies in the face of a strong people's movement, this corruption was magnified a hundred times. It went so deep that it is impossible to uproot until the whole of imperialist control is uprooted. Japanese collaborators, anxious to get back into the good graces of American imperialism, jumped at the bribes dangled in the form of surplus army equipment and war damage payments. Once they had sold themselves thoroughly, imperialism then had a weapon to hold over them to enforce even greater acts of puppetry. This phenomenon was not new, nor was it a product of the break-down of morals during a war. It was the culmination of the type of political rule that was fostered from the beginning by American imperialism in the Philippines. The compradore politicians, owing their existence and their position to the operation of imperialism, put their class and profit interests above everything, including the welfare of their own country and its people.

Some day our history, retold from the people's standpoint, will reveal, with unadorned truth, the real role of our national leaders in the imperialist scheme of things. How will Manuel Quezon, the leader of the compradore Nacionalista Party during his lifetime, stand forth in the pitiless light of that history?

He is famed for his "Social Justice" and for his statement: "I prefer a government run like hell by Filipinos to a government run like heaven by Americans." But when, and in what way, except in words, did Manuel Quezon ever lift his hand to strike away the chains that bind the Filipino masses to the ancient forms of exploitation and to imperialist domination?

Or Sergio Osmeña? Or Manuel Roxas? Or Jose Yulo? Or Elpidio Quirino? Or Claro M. Recto? Or Carlos P. Romulo? When did their actions ever spring from true concern for the interests of the people, these corporation lawyers and public apologists for the imperialist way?

In the common Filipino, however, the revolutionary spirit had never died; it persisted in him, despite all the efforts of American imperialism, for the simple reason that his lot had not been changed.

For a long time the revolutionary spirit was stifled for lack of effective leadership. The imperialists were even successful in distorting the revolutionary tradition, by glorifying Rizal as the national hero and submerging the role of Bonifacio in the revolution against Spain. Jose Rizal, the middle-class intellectual, had recoiled from the idea of mass struggle and had opposed it. Andres Bonifacio, the worker, had faith in the masses, had believed intensely in mass struggle and had organized it. After the treacherous death of Bonifacio at the hands of the Aguinaldo clique, the revolution had passed into the hands of wavering middle-class elements, and they led it into confusion and capitulation. Many of these elements subsequently upheld the idealisms and the frustrations of Rizal, pushing into the background the accomplishments of the militant Bonifacio. Rizal was an important figure in the development of the national liberation movement, in the advancement of our culture, and in the upholding of our national honor. But he was hardly the symbol for the next and higher stage of the national liberation movement.

Lacking proper leadership, the revolutionary spirit that revived later was led into error in sporadic, ill-organized uprisings by the downtrodden peasants, and was subverted by opportunistic or irrational nationalist movements. The Ricartistas misunderstood imperialism and turned their eyes to the false hope of

Japan. The Tangulan rose tragically at Tayug, and died there. The Sakdals died vainly and illogically in Cabuyao.

In another way had the imperialists crippled the national liberation movement. When trade unions first formed, calling for independence, they were outlawed by the Americans. The trade union movement had a militant beginning under the leadership of Isabelo de los Reyes, Sr., who was one of the few Filipino leaders who understood imperialism and fought against it, and who has been consequently buried in our history.

The corruption of imperialism seeped even into the labor and peasant movement which eventually arose. Labor racketeers lived like parasites on the workers whom they pretended to organize, and in the name of the workers' cause, "labor organizations" were used as pawns in the machines of corrupt politicians. But always there was a firm core of incorruptible labor and peasant leaders, outstanding among them Crisanto Evangelista, who founded the Communist Party of the Philippines in 1930. The labor movement, and the national liberation movement in general, now began to fight more insistently against reformism and opportunism, and also to revive the militant traditions of Bonifacio and the early Katipunan.

During the second world war, in the guerrilla struggles against Japan, in which the people gained the experience of self-organization and saw the road to freedom, the great national liberation movements rose to new heights. In other colonies, where the exploitation was more direct and open, the anti-Japanese guerrilla movements turned into national liberation movements at once, as soon as the imperialists returned to claim their "property." In the Philippines the reaction was slower. The smokescreen of American promises of independence hung in the air. A large group of puppets, who had been corrupted all the more under the Japanese regime, were ready and willing to be used. A large proportion of the masses, due to the clever propaganda and tactics of imperialism in the past, still had faith in American promises. Only a minority saw through the performance of the "independence ceremony" that occurred on July 4, 1946, to the maneuverings behind the scenes.

What happened in 1945 was almost a duplication of what had

happened in 1898. The American army, on both occasions, landed to find a revolutionary movement fighting against the common enemy. On both occasions they took steps to crush it, and on both occasions they found allies in the exploiting classes of Filipinos. In 1945, however, there was a difference: the revolutionary movement was not led by vacillating elements who would sell it out; it was led by the working class leadership of Communists.

Within three years after the end of the war, the operation of American imperialism had resulted in converting the Hukbalahap guerrilla struggle into a national liberation movement.

At the beginning of our struggle in Central Luzon many observers referred to it as a movement for agrarian reform, just as they had referred in similar terms to the revolutionary movement of the Chinese people. They pointed out that centuries of feudal relations had brought our movement into being. What they said was correct, but they did not carry their observations far enough. They failed to see that our struggle, as well as that of the Chinese people, took place within the setting of imperialist relations. Our feudal agrarian economy was one of the mainstays of imperialist control in our country, and any movement to change it was inevitably bound to conflict with imperialist interests that were determined to perpetuate the age-old system. Our movement, therefore, could not be merely a movement for agrarian reform; it had to develop into a struggle against imperialism.

We realized this from the beginning. Our immediate demands for agrarian reform and democracy were always linked up with condemnation of American imperialism. In the latter part of 1945 and in early 1946 we sought to achieve our demands by defeating the imperialists and their allies through legal, parliamentary methods. The mass movement set in motion by the war won an election victory in Central Luzon. The imperialists and their allies promptly took the path of all imperialisms: afraid of the people, they set out to crush the mass movement.

The sentiment for change was not limited to Central and Southern Luzon, where the Hukbalahap was strong. The postwar period witnessed the spread of mass discontent throughout

the Philippines. In part, this was due to the enormous graft and corruption, and to the wholesale election frauds by the puppet administrations of Roxas and Quirino. It was also due to the deterioration of our economy and of the living standards of the people arising from the operation of the Bell Trade Act; industrialization and prosperity were promised, but mass unemployment resulted. In addition, the people were inspired by the national liberation movements in neighboring countries.

We pointed out that the armed conflict in Central Luzon and elsewhere in the Philippines was created in the first place by the imperialist-puppet regime and that it could never be settled until the regime of the imperialists and their puppets was brought to an end.

We pointed out that graft and corruption were an essential part of the imperialist system of rule and that they could never be eliminated until the rule of the imperialists and their corrupt puppets was eliminated.

We pointed out that industrialization and prosperity could never be achieved until the imperialist system, which forced us to be a colonial, agrarian people, was removed from our midst.

We also pointed out that our national experience for fifty years, and particularly that of the Hukbalahap for the past three years, had proved that legal, constitutional, parliamentary methods alone could not achieve democracy, peace or freedom, but that it was necessary for the Filipino people to adopt the armed struggle to end finally and irrevocably the rule of imperialism and puppetry.

Our revolution of 1896 had been an unfinished revolution, interrupted in its course by the tyranny of American imperialism and by the betrayal of Filipino moneyed, propertied elements. For fifty years that interruption had persisted, and now the struggle was being renewed. Our national liberation movement of today is a continuation of the freedom revolution which had been crushed at the turn of the century. There is a central difference, however: moneyed and propertied elements today are not in the decisive leadership of the movement; the leadership is composed of working class elements. We have invited and urged the participation of all anti-imperialist groups to fight side

by side with us and to share in the victory of a free Philippines, but we know that only the working class can carry the struggle to complete victory.

The Hukbalahap, the people's army, had thus become the rallying center of all Filipinos in the struggle for national liberation.

26. Epilogue and Prologue

The final pages of this book are being written in a very small nipa hut, somewhere on the slope of a mountain above the central plain of the island of Luzon. It is a temporary shelter, newly built, and it may have to be abandoned quickly, perhaps today, perhaps this afternoon. Perhaps even as I sit here writing, an alarm will come. The enemy is not far away.

There is no furniture in the hut. I balance my notebook on my knee. The roof is so low that I must bend my head where I sit. Bits of sun come through the branches overhead and through the nipa roof and fall on this page. It is very quiet in the forest. Down the slope, below the hut, I can hear the water on the rocks in the little stream from which we drink. The tuko calls from the tall trees in the sun. Crickets are chirping incessantly, and frogs sing, deep-voiced. These are the sounds of peace.

They are deceptive. At any time may come the sound of guns.

This hut is big enough to hold five sleeping men, lying close. Its sides are open, so we can roll out fast, if need be. It sits under dense trees, to escape aerial observation. Washed clothes drying in the sun are pulled from sight when a plane is heard. Cooking, when there is something to cook, is done in the early morning and after dark, so the smoke of the fire will not be seen. To the enemy, from above and below, there must be only the trees. The mountain is a friendly mother sheltering us.

Under other trees, ten meters away but barely seen, are other huts. In them are sleeping a squadron of the Hukbalahap soldiers. They are without uniforms, ragged and barefooted. They do not look like an army, but they are one.

This is the mobile headquarters of the people's army of liberation.

In this tiny, barren, simple place I sit completing a book about my life at a time when at any moment the armed hirelings of tyranny may burst in upon me and end it brutally with their guns. In the midst of death I write about life. That is significant because it is not my own life with which I am primarily concerned, but the life of the movement to which I belong and of the people's cause which it serves. In this place death is not the important event, but the birth that our struggle is bringing about.

My comrades urged me to write this book. "Write about yourself," they said. "To the people you symbolize the movement." Looking back through these pages I find that there is less of me here than there is of the movement itself. And that is as it should be. The people's movement is made up of many, many lives, and all the struggles of which I have spoken are but a part of the life of our people as a whole. In a most important respect this book is not an autobiography; it is a chapter in the biography of the Filipino people.

This mere act of sitting on the rough floor of a hut in the forest is not an isolated incident today. It is being duplicated by the armed men of liberation movements in Indo-China, in Indonesia, in Malaya, in Burma, and wherever the masses of Asia are stirring themselves. The facts and the men are everywhere, and towering over them all is the enormous fact of the Chinese people, who have emerged from their mountains, and from their huts in the forests, into the towns and the cities, into their own.

On the corner poles of this hut hang all my possessions: a light, packed knapsack, and a carbine. Both are the unintentional gifts of American imperialism. None among us has more. Something else, however, is ours: the love and comradeship of each other and of thousands more like us in a thousand huts

across our country, and of the masses of people to whom we are the hope of the future. That is more than enough to keep alive a man's body and his spirit—indefinitely if necessary.

With us, too, is the unquenchable memory of all those who have fallen in the present struggle, and who did not survive to see the final triumph, but whose victory it shall be, neverthless:

Vicente Lava, who disregarded the chemistry of his own body until he exhausted his strength making the movement strong.

Juan Feleo, treacherously assassinated while seeking to prevent the slaughter of which he became the first victim.

Manuel Joven, kidnapped and murdered by the agents of Roxas for unifying the struggle of the city workers with that of the peasants.

Fernancio Sampang, who died in the forest for lack of medical attention and whose very grave was hunted down and desecrated by the enemy.

Roman Maliwat, who was known to the people as Luna, then James, the courageous chief of our intelligence, who died by the guns of the enemy as an aftermath of the Quirino amnesty.

All of the hundreds of peasants, soldiers, and civilians, who have died in the fields and barrios. None will be forgotten; all will be remembered, all honored.

Our friends in Manila refer to us as being "outside." That is incorrect terminology. For seven of the past eight years I have lived as I am living now, in the forests, in the swamps, wanted and hunted (with a price of 100,000 pesos on my head today, dead or alive), but never have I felt truly "outside." Rather, we are on the inside, close to the heart of the people. We are on the inside of the struggle. Whoever joins in the struggle today, whoever joins the people's movement, has an inside place in the most decisive events of our time. That is a proud and enviable role.

We do not live normally, of course. The life of a guerrilla has many strange features. The soldiers in the nearby huts, for instance, are sleeping in the daytime—they do so because at night is the time they move. They are more content with a moonless night than with the mid-day sun, for then they are unseen.

The plain below changes hands at night: in the daytime it is an oppressed area, ruled by MP's and civilian guards, but when night falls it becomes a liberated region, where the people receive our soldiers with open arms.

Soon, when the sun of our victory comes, the day, too, will be ours.

It is also strange that a guerrilla is happiest when it rains, for then the countryside is deep with mud, then he is safest. The tanks and the armored cars and the PC boots stick in the mud and are useless, and the Huk can move freely, even during the day. "Huk weather," we say when the rain pours down, and we plan our movements.

We plan, too, for the day when rain to us will mean time for planting and for good crops.

By shifting my head just a bit I can see, through the trees, a large section of Central Luzon. The plain is streaked with sun and with cloud shadows and I can see the barrios faintly in their clumps of trees, squeezed tightly on all sides by the rice fields. Each of those barrios I know, and there are many; I have been in them, and I know their people. I can chart the path of my life, from barrio to barrio, as a fortune-teller might read the lines on the palm of my hand.

During the period of "amnesty" in 1948 I made the announcement to the press that I was a Communist. The workers and the peasants accepted the fact, but certain individuals expressed astonishment and consternation. They shouted that a foreign ideology had seized control of the peasant movement, and that I was carrying out the dictates of the Communists in the Soviet Union. If I had them here with me now I could show them the exact place where I learned to accept the logic and truth and the need of the Communist Party of the Philippines.

I could show them the exact places where I worked in the fields, the places where the constabulary shot down striking peasants, and the locations of the largest landed estates. I could point out a barrio and tell them how its people live, the possessions they have, the extent of their education, and how much of a chance they have to be happy. I could indicate the barrios where landlords ejected tenants before, and where the PC's

shoot them now. I could show them Clark Field, where the American army owns a whole corner of Pampanga for 99 years. I would prove that any ideology that would better the lives of the people is foreign to those who rule and exploit the people.

There are Communists everywhere because there is exploitation everywhere, except where the people led by the Communists have ended it. The tenant-farmer of Central Luzon is the same as the tenant-farmer of Indo-China, or of India, or of the state of Mississippi, the same as the peasant of old tzarist Russia, or of old China. All have been exploited in the same way. It is not surprising, then, that they should all arrive at the same answer for ending their exploitation. The millionaire imperialist of Wall Street is the twin brother of a Chiang Kai-shek or of an Andres Soriano or of a millionaire plantation owner in Malaya. They all act together and have the same beliefs. By the same token, the people of all countries are the same, and the Communists they produce are alike. I am not a Communist because of what happened in Russia; I am a Communist because of what has happened and still is happening in the Philippines.

The peasants in the barrios below me are Filipinos, but they are brothers in toil to the Chinese peasant and to the American factory worker. No struggle by any of us is isolated. The freedom of the Filipino people from the American imperialists will be a blow for the emancipation of the American workers, just as the victory of the Chinese people over their imperialists and feudal rulers was a triumph for the Filipino peasants, and a warning to their oppressors.

Here in this small hut on the side of a mountain, looking out upon the soil that bred me, upon the land of the people of whom I was born, I complete this book, which is more their record than mine. The struggle of which I have written, and to which I have tried to contribute, is still not completed, but it will be, and the people will triumph.

How many men in our history have lived as I do now, in hidden places, fighting for liberty from our forests and mountains? Diego Silang, Juan de la Cruz Palaris, Apolinario de la Cruz, Francisco Maniago, del Pilar and Malvar—our history rings with the names of those who fought for a free Philippines, un-

trammeled by tyranny. Their unfinished struggles will be completed in ours.

The sun is going down. The squadron awakes. I must go. In the barrios the people are waiting for us.

It is necessary now to get on with the work that needs to be done.

June, 1949

GLOSSARY

adobo: cooked, seasoned, and preserved meat.
banca: canoe-type boat, carved out of a tree trunk.
bangos: milk fish, bred in the peasants' ponds.
Bantay Nayon: village home guard.
barong-barong: a make-shift hut, built from odds and ends.
barrio: village or hamlet, subdivision of a town, the boundaries of which usually extend over a considerable area, including arable land. In a complete place name, the barrio is given first, followed by the town and the province, thus: Botosan (barrio), San Miguel (town), Bulacan (province).
bigas: husked or polished (refined) rice.
bodega: warehouse.
bolo: a native sword-like knife, used as a working tool or weapon.
buyo: beetle-nut.
capatas: foreman or boss.
carabao: water buffalo, used as a work animal.
cargador: baggage-handler.
carinderia: small restaurant or coffee-pot.
carretela: horse-drawn carriage.
cavan: a measure of rice, roughly 100 pounds.
centavo: a coin, equal to one-half cent U.S.
cogon: high grass, used for thatched roofs.
compadre: relationship between a father and a godfather; they are *compadre* to each other. Feminine is *comadre.*
compradore: the middle-man between the imperialist country and the native market, selling raw materials and buying finished products; politically, puppet or agent of imperialism.
corn grain: a measure of rice, equal to 10 cavanes of palay.
dulang: a low table, around which the diner squats on the floor to take his meals.
ganta: a measure of rice, 2.2 pounds.
gubat: forest.
hacendero: plantation master or big landowner.
kaingins: hilly land, grubbed and cleared of trees and undergrowth for cultivation.
kalan: cooking stove.
Kalibapi: the party of the Japanese puppet government.
Kempetai: Japanese military police.

Makapili: Patriotic League of Filipinos, the Japanese puppet army.
municipio: municipal building or city hall.
muscovado: brown sugar, in crude unrefined form.
paksiw: a native dish of fish or meat (in some places vegetables), steeped in vinegar.
palay: unhusked or unrefined rice.
Pampangueño: native of the province of Pampanga.
panciteria: a restaurant serving Chinese-type food.
panotsa: brown sugar in hard cakes, used as a native desert.
peso: the monetary unit, equal to 50 cents U.S.
pilapil: a dike or levee, usually in rice fields.
poblacion: the town paper, as distinguished from the barrios.
sinigang na baboy: native dish of boiled pork and vegetables.
talahib: a coarse, tufted high grass, growing in open land, especially along the banks of rivers.
tao: peasant.
tuyo: salted dry fish, the peasant's daily fare.

ABBREVIATIONS

AMT: League of Poor Laborers (Pampanga).
BIBA: Rice-collecting agency of the puppet government.
BUDC: Barrio United Defense Corps.
CID: Cultural and Information Department of the Huk.
CLO: Congress of Labor Organizations.
DA: Democratic Alliance.
DI: Department of Intelligence of the Huk.
KAP: League of the Sons of Labor.
KPMP: National Peasants Union of the Philippines.
HUKBALAHAP (HUK): People's Anti-Japanese Army.
LNL: League of National Liberation.
NARIC: National Rice and Corn Corporation.
PC: Philippine Constabulary.
PKM: Confederation of Peasants.
PQOG: President Quezon's Own Guerrillas.
PSP: People's Security Police.
USAFFE: U.S. Army Forces of the Far East.
USFIP: U.S. Forces in the Philippines.
WA CHI: Chinese Guerrillas in the Philippines.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Aquinaldo, General Emilio (1870-); after the murder of Bonifacio, head of the armed forces in the war of independence against Spain, and then against the United States. He compromised the independence struggle, and after his capture by U.S. forces in 1901, he took the oath of allegiance to the United States and retired from public life.

Bonifacio, Andreas (1863-97), the popular organizer and leader of the revolution against Spain. He founded the Katipunan, League of the Sons of the People, which opened the armed struggle in 1896 and became the driving force of the revolution. Fearful of the peasant forces gathered around the Katipunan banner, the Aquinaldo clique had Bonifacio assassinated.

de la Cruz, Apolinario, Filipino patriot; denied a priesthood in the Catholic Church, he organized a Filipino church among the Tagalogs and in 1840-41 led the first serious revolt on the issue of religious freedom. His defeat and execution by the Spaniards was followed by a mutiny among the native troops, which was cruelly suppressed.

Lapu-Lapu, first Filipino chieftain to resist European invasion; killed Magellan.

Mabini, Apolinario (d. 1903), the "Sublime Paralytic," one of the close co-workers of Rizal, and an outstanding leader of the revolution against Spain. Refusing to cooperate with the American occupation authority, he was exiled to Guam in 1900.

Malvar, General Miguel, commander of the Filipino independence forces, after the capture of Aguinaldo; among the last generals to hold out against the United States.

Maniago, Francisco, leader of revolt against the Spaniards in Pampanga in 1660, directed against requisitioning of rice and of lumber to build galleons.

Palaris, Juan df la Cruz, leader of a revolt in 1762-64, which drove the Spaniards and friars out of the towns in Pangasinan.

DEL PILAR, GREGORIO, the young general who stopped the Spaniards at Tilad Pass, during the revolution of 1896.

DEL PILAR, MARCELO, Rizal's colleague, a prolific writer and propagandist of the revolution against Spain.

DE LOS REYES, SR., ISABELO, a leader of the independence movement, and a founder of the nationalist Filipino Independence Church, in opposition to the Catholic hierarchy; founded the first labor unions in the Philippines.

RICARTE, GENERAL ARTEMIO, "The Viper," who refused to take the oath of allegiance to the United States, and lived in self-exile in Japan. During the Japanese occupation he returned to support the puppet government.

RIZAL, DR. JOSE (1861-96), great Filipino patriot and martyr; son of tenants on estates owned by the Church, he was educated in Catholic universities in Manila, and after study in Europe became an optical surgeon of note. In Europe, he joined with exiled Filipinos to denounce the tyranny of Spanish rule. His novels on the evils of the friar tenant system, such as *Noli Me Tangere* (published in the United States as *The Social Cancer*), had a profound influence on the independence movement. In 1892, he returned to his native land to form the *Liga Filipina* to petition for reforms. Forced to leave again, he was lured back to the Islands on promises by the Spaniards that he would be unmolested, but he was immediately arrested, and after a farcical trial was executed by a firing squad. His martyrdom touched off the revolt against Spain.

SILANG, DIEGO, a favorite Filipino hero of song and folklore. After the British captured Manila in 1762, he organized an army and native government, spreading the revolution against both the British and Spaniards from the Ilocano provinces to Pangasinan and Cagayan.

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