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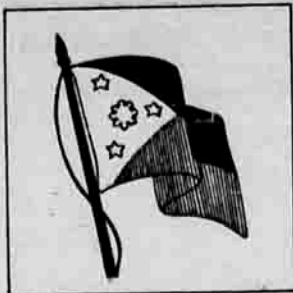


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We Forum

*To seek
and live
the truth
and share
a vision*

VOL. 13

NO. 5

(WEDNESDAY EDITION)

MAY 10-11, 1989

P 2 only

IN METRO MANILA

3,000 FLOATING COFFINS ^{Page 3}



*15,000 Negros evacuees
crowd cockpits, schools,
churches as military
offensive intensifies*

PAGE 12



Economic recovery:
'Mayayaman lang
ang nakikinabang' PAGE 6

Are Supreme Court
justices above, or
exempt, from the law?
Editorial --- Page 7



*Why Gretchen Barretto
is fuming mad at her
film director*

PAGE 14



Taking a respite after a hard day's push, this man finds a space for his pushcart under the shade of a tree just outside the post office building in Liwasang Bonifacio, puts up his tired limbs and dozes off to dreamland. It's a sunny Sunday afternoon. (Roly Embile)

De Villa vows immediate release of Paombong findings

CHIEF of Staff Gen. Renato de Villa yesterday vowed the military will immediately release the results of the investigation on the killing of nine people in Paombong Bulacan last April 28.

The investigation, jointly conducted by military authorities and a Congress committee, was supposed to begin with a physical examination of the 26 members of the Philippine Marines. But PC Crime Laboratory officials said the men are not physically fit for the test "as they have had not enough sleep and have skipped meals."

The April 28 incident was first reported as an encounter between government forces and the New People's Army, and that the casualties were NPA members. Relatives of the victims, however, came out to deny that their kins were rebels.

A fact finding mission team, composed of human rights advocates and a contingent of the Association of Major Religious Superiors



GEN. DE VILLA

in the Philippines (AMRSP), after an inspection of the area and discussions with the fisherfolk there established that the death was a result of a "probable massacre and not encounter." The report was corroborated by testimonies of people living in the area.

The Marines, meanwhile, stood pat on their story that they were provoked by

gunshots allegedly from NPA hiding in the houses in the area.

Marines chief Brig. Gen. Rodolfo Biazon recently threatened to resign if it will be proven that his men committed human rights abuses. He also ordered the men involved in the killing be recalled from the field and grounded at Fort Bonifacio.

THE \$400 million in Economic Support Fund (ESF) due from the United States for 1988 up to 1990 should be channeled to education and not to military assistance, Sen. Joseph Estrada said yesterday.

The use of any portion of the ESF for military activities, particularly in counter-insurgency operations, will only further escalate the war between the communist-led New People's Army and the Armed Forces of the Philippines, Estrada added.

As its name suggests, the ESF was originally intended for economic and social development of the areas around the US military bases. Therefore, Estrada said, in no way must any part of the Fund be used to import military equipment from the US.

The Senator stressed that

the use of ESF for education would help the State fulfill its constitutional mandate to give the high-

A high-ranking executive of a realty firm is urging the government to plan and coordinate the expansion activities of public utilities as well as its infrastructure projects to dovetail with housing development.

Razul Z. Requito, president of REBAP Corp. (REBAPCOR), said it is imperative for the government to coordinate the expansion programs of Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System, Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., Manila Electric Co., Light Rail Transit, Metro Manila Transit Corp. and the public works projects of the Department of Public Works and Highways to accelerate development of

TWO well-known lawmakers — one from the Senate and the other from the House — were on government television over the weekend announcing a new — but personal — stand on Marcos' return.

Senator Neptali Gonzales — an anti-Marcos — said that since the Aquino administration would not let the former dictator return, all suits — criminal or civil — against him should be dropped or withdrawn by the government.

Rep. Rodrigo Gutang (LDP, Cotabato) had a clearer stance: Marcos should be allowed to return.

Gutang, a former military top brass, said he believed the military and the police could take care of any perceived trouble the followers of Marcos would create if he was allowed to come home.

In addition, according to Gutang, Filipino tradition dictates that a dying man should be allowed to return home to his own country and that a son should not be barred from attending the funeral of his mother. Dona Josefa E. Marcos has not been buried since her death a year ago.



EX-PRES. MARCOS

"It has been three years since he has left the country," Gutang said, "and a year since his mother had died, and I believe the military and the police are now ready to contain any trouble his return could create."

Marcos, at the height of the civilian-backed military mutiny of 1986, was flown to Hawaii by a Clark Air Base helicopter. He has asked to be returned to the Philippines since then but President Aquino was persistent on her stand that he should not be allowed to come home in the interest of the nation.

Gonzales maintained that President Aquino had the



SEN. GONZALES



REP. GUTANG

prerogative to determine if the ban on Marcos was to the interest of the nation, but stressed that while the ban is in force, all suits against the former dictator should be withdrawn, to be refiled only if and when he is allowed to come home and face the charges against him.

Gonzales and Gutang were last week's guests of the Headline program of the state-owned People's Television Four, along with former Marcos running mate Senator Arturo Tolentino and Marcos Lawyer Rafael Recto.

Gonzales made known his stand on Marcos after Recto complained that Marcos had been declared in default by the Sandiganbayan for failing to respond to summonses issued by the court in connection with the numerous civil suits filed against him by the Presidential Commission on Good Government.

Recto said he could not reconcile the verdict with the PCGG stand against Marcos' return.

Recto, nonetheless, said he and his group could bring back Marcos in 24 hours should the administration finally allow his return. Then, he said, let Marcos be his own lawyer and allow him to face his detractors. (ANF)

Rechannel ESF to education

est priority to education. Considering the current unrest over an impending increase in tuition fees, gov-

ernment needs to put in more resources into education, Estrada added. (Dulce Dialogo)

Lack of coordination in housing hit

housing projects.

A coordinated effort by the government is necessary to enable the private sector to increase its active participation in the national shelter program, he explained.

Requito, who is also the chairman of the Chamber of Real Estate Builders Associations (CREBA), said the uncoordinated activities of public utilities and DPWH have invariably resulted in a deplorable situation where completed housing units could not be delivered to homeowners because of lack of electricity, water, or worse, service roads leading to the housing project because of poor planning.

The REBAPCOR head said if there is coordination,

public utilities and DPWH could plan out their expansion programs to jibe with housing development.

He cited the cases of the provinces of Cavite and Laguna which are now experiencing a housing boom but which are afflicted with the lack of inexpensive public transportation.

Since a housing boom has been apparent in Cavite and Laguna for the last three years, Requito said the government could have extended the railway system or increased public transportation to alleviate the plight of the residents, most of whom commute daily to their places of work in Metro Manila.

3,000 floating coffins

The sinking shipping industry

By MAX NOBLE

VERY FILIPINO, and very ludicrous, is this trait of taking preventive measures only after the tragedy sought to be prevented has struck, and then backsliding to the same old insouciance once the wake is over.

Thus, after the worst maritime disaster in history occurred two years ago, the Philippine government went through all the motions of averting its recurrence, only to forget all about it until another interisland vessel sank about a year later.

The first disaster was, of course, the collision of M/V *Dona Paz* (owned by Sulpicio Lines) and M/T *Vector* at Tablas Strait off Oriental Mindoro on December 20, 1987 at about 10:30 p.m., while the second involved only one vessel, M/V *Dona Marilyn* (also owned by Sulpicio), which foundered off Masbate in October 1988. Between 3,500 and 4,000

(the exact figure may even be more) died in the first, breaking the 1,500 casualty record of the "unsinkable" *Titanic*; and 500, in the second.

The collision, said President Aquino in a prepared statement, was "a national tragedy of harrowing proportions" made more painful by the fact that it happened just four days be-

fore Christmas.

In characteristic fashion, she ordered "a thorough, unsparing and full-scale" investigation, strict sanctions against all parties at fault, and a more stringent enforcement of all safety-at-sea regulations. With almost unerring prescience, she warned that "this nightmare is bound to repeat itself, as our sad experience attests, unless once and for all we take determined action to prevent its recurrence."

By "sad experience" the President was surely referring to the fact that, for years on end previous to *Dona Paz*, countless interisland vessels had sunk, drowning in the process thousands of passengers. In



Passengers crowd North Harbor for a dangerous trip back home.

fact, *Dona Paz* simply followed two other maritime "accidents" (in quotation because a misnomer, really) that year (1987): the first on January 27, killing 86 people; the second on July 12, drowning about 21.

The *Dona Paz-Vector* nightmare indeed recurred not only in *Marilyn* but also in other subsequent "accidents", although the casualties in the latter were fewer.

Though many or few, the lives — as well as the properties — lost in these maritime tragedies are irreplaceable. Those lives are mostly "society's dregs" as *We Forum* editorialized (April 21-23). Yet, like the rich (who fly between islands in their private planes), and like you and me, they were precious, God-given lives which could have been harnessed for good:

And they were Filipino lives.

Just like President Aquino's, Senate President Salonga's, Speaker Mitra's, and Chief Justice Fernan's. And yes, even like Rey Reyes, transport secretary.

DIFFERENT STORY

If it were any of the first four officials of the government or, for that matter, any of the top dogs hereabouts, it would have been a different story since *Dona Paz*.

Immediately after this disaster occurred, Malacanang conducted its own investigation, the Senate had its own and so had the Lower House, and the owners of the vessels involved also made their own probes — and what have come out of all these are mere proposals. And blame. But no action — decisive action.

The latest of the proposals came from the Presidential Task Force on Inter-Island Shipping, which said really nothing new in its recent report to the President. The Task Force (one of the thousands the government creates each year) told the President things which she is supposed to have known already, like:

* The poor safety record of our domestic ships is due to lack of competent crew, and inadequate and antiquated equipment.

* Interisland vessels are not seaworthy by international standards, and many of them are so aged they might as well have formed part of Magellan's fleet against Lapu-Lapu (the hero, not the fish).

While many other factors contribute to the sorry state of our domestic shipping industry, the foregoing two are indeed the worst.

In this regard, the case of *Dona Paz* is very enlightening.

Senate Hearings

In the joint hearings of the Senate committees on Accountability of Public Officers and Investigations (better known as Blue Ribbon) and Social Justice, Welfare and Development, the following facts surfaced:

* *Dona Paz* was originally a 2,215-ton Japanese luxury liner with a safe service ability of up to nine years. It had a maximum 900-passenger capacity.

* In or about its tenth year, the liner, which was already junk in Japanese eyes, was bought by a Filipino outfit, which converted it into a cargo-passenger ship for 1,500 people (or 600 more than its original capacity) and rechristened it.

* The December 20, 1987 "accident" was the vessel's second. Its first happened way back when it still sported its original Filipino name. Probably to erase the memory of the first "accident", the vessel was renamed anew, this time, *Dona Paz*.

* At the time of its collision with *Vector*, a 630-ton tanker loaded with 8,000 barrels of oil products, *Dona Paz* was already an aging hulk (about 28 years old) overloaded with 1,586 manifested passengers and 2,390 unmanifested ones, plus 58 crew mem-

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Luck plays a role for these disembarking sea travellers.

bers, or a total of 4,034, according to preliminary estimates made by the *ad hoc* "Inter-Agency Task Force on the M/V Dona Paz and M/T Vector Collision" headed by then Acting Deputy Executive Secretary, now Civil Service Commissioner, Samilo N. Barlongay.

* The crew of both vessels were, in all probability, not doing their jobs immediately before the collision occurred. Otherwise, both or either of them could have prevented it. (Unconfirmed reports said some of them had been drinking that fateful night.)

* The educational credentials of the crew members (including how they had hurdled the board exams), their training, their experience — in short, their competence — were questionable.

The Senate inquiry lasted for months. Many witnesses testified — among them were the officers of the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), the Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA), and the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC).

The Industry

More than 3,000 vessels of all shapes and sizes comprise the domestic inter-island fleet. The local shipping industry has a total investment of P3 billion; annually pays some P100 million to the government in form of taxes, licenses and fees; and employs about 50,000 people scattered in 588 ports (84 national, 218 municipal, and 286 private).

Transporting no less than 36 million tons of cargo and 16 million passengers each year (1986 figures), domestic shipping is the most important — and economical — means of transportation between islands of the 7,100-island Philippine archipelago.

According to the Presidential Task Force on Interisland Shipping, there is no evidence supporting the claim of certain quarters that the domestic shipping industry lacks vessels. Problem is, as the Senate found out, these vessels are approaching total obsolescence. As of 1986, 20 percent of the domestic vessels in the cargo-liner category were already more than 30 years old — that is,

nine years over and above the established 21-year life-span of commercial ships. In the passenger-liner category, the average age of vessels three years ago was already 30. "Very old ships" was how the National Transportation Planning Project (NTPP) and the National Economic & Development Authority (NEDA) described the vessels.

A time of reckoning

In their investigation report, the Senate Blue-Ribbon and Social Justice committees described the local shipping industry as "moribund" and the *Dona Paz* disaster, "a time of reckoning" for the government.

"The bureaucracy," said the committees, "had little to offer except knee-jerk reactions and confusion" because there was no "properly organized government office responsible for the shipping industry," as there is still none today.

The disorganized state of the industry was admitted by NTC Commissioner Jose Alcuaz who said that the 1981 memorandum of



Safety means walking down the gangplank at one's destination.

agreement between NTC and the PCG regarding supervision, control and monitoring of communications

equipment of interisland ships never worked out and instead disrupted, among other things, established

procedures. Apparently, *Dona Paz* failed to send SOS signals (because it had no radio facilities?); and even if it did, the PCG might not have been able to monitor and receive the distress signals (also because it had no radio equipment?).

The NTC-PCG confusion was even worsened by Malacanang in 1987 when it issued Executive Order (EO) 125 in January and EO 125-A in April transferring certain functions of the PCG to MARINA, such as the enforcement of water-transportation laws.

The two EOs, said MARINA Administrator Philip Tuazon in his testimony, were never implemented because it was simply impossible for his agency to do so, not having the required budget and personnel.

"The two orders," the Senate report concluded, were "a classic example of bureaucratic 'muddling through' (which) opened convenient 'escape hatches' for both MARINA and the PCG during the *Dona Paz* inquiries."

It was indeed, as Blue-Ribbon Chairman Teofisto Guingona Jr. said, "an inter-agency football" with the heads of the NTC, MARINA and the PCG blaming one another but their respective agencies. Like Pilate, each washed his hands of any responsibility for *Dona Paz*.

Ditto for the bosses of other agencies having to do with the shipping industry: the Philippine Ports Authority (PPA), the Bureau of Customs, the Bureau of Coast and Geodetic Survey, the Bureau of Quarantine, the Bureau of Plant Industry, the Bureau of Animal Industry, the Bureau of Forest Development (now called by another name), the Bureau of Standards, the Bureau of Ports, the PC Anti-Carnapping Unit, the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC), and the Department of Labor & Employment (DOLE).

Notice that there are far too many agencies concerned with domestic shipping, and this precisely is one of the problems of the

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Domestic sea travel is an ordeal

By HERBERT L. VEGO

IF YOU intend to take an overnight boat trip from the province to Manila, or vice versa, expect a test on physical endurance. If not, imagine yourself taking the voyage just the same.

Your ordeal starts at the port of origin. Due to the heavy volume of summer passengers, you inch your way to the ship, hoping that the guy by your side is not a pickpocket.

Now you're on board, but it seems there's not much breathing space. When the night falls, there's not enough space to walk around, since even the ship's foyer and the aisles have "grown" extra bunks for excess passengers.

Hungry? Go to the dining room. Sorry, but meals no longer come free with your ticket — even if you are a first class passenger. You either eat at your own *baon* or pay for your dinner, or — if you have no more money to spare — sleep on an empty stomach.

Sleeping, too, could be a fight against the elements. Economy-class passengers are no longer provided with pillows, bedsheets and blankets; first-class ones have pillows and bed sheets, but no blankets. Anyway, you can still be thankful the summer nights are not so chilly.

More or less 24 hours later — assuming you have taken the Iloilo-to-Manila route — you hurry up to the gangplank as the ship anchors. You have arrived at Pier 2 of the Manila north harbor, all right, but who are those strangers offering to take you to your destination? Take a pick: a taxi, a passenger jeepney or a *colorum* car from among the hundreds of vehicles parked on a supposedly no-parking area. Whatever is your choice, haggle for the right price because you are certainly being asked to pay more than the tariff.

From one port to another, you are supposed to be protected by the Philip-

pine Ports Authority (PPA), the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) and the Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA).

Based on a World Bank (WB) report, however, the domestic shipping industry is controlled by a "cartel" which primarily protects the interest of five big companies. The "big 5" exercises near-monopoly at certain ports. Red tape discourages smaller companies from mounting a competition. Hence, the lack of incentive to provide better service.

The WB report also confirms that domestic shipping lines "modernize" by buying used (for 10 years, more or less) vessels from Japan, allegedly because buying brand-new ones costs much more than they can afford.

Commenting on this report, the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) has deplored the emaciation of the local ship-building industry. While local ship-

yards in Batangas and in Cebu have the facilities to build 3,000-ton ships, local shipowners seem unaware of it. Need we wonder why the Philippine Shipbuilders and Repairers Association has asked DTI Secretary Jose Concepcion, Jr. to allow Soviet ships to drop by for repair?

Although thousands of lives have been lost in sea accidents involving domestic vessels, "professionalism in the local maritime industry hardly exists." Thus said an operations manager of an overseas shipping company.

Capt. Oscar S. Bayombong recently told *Asian News & Features* that domestic shipping inefficiency is caused by lack of capable personnel and lack of navigational equipment.

"Local shipping lines," Bayombong said, "pay the ship captain an average of P8,000 a month. Since overseas vessels pay thrice as much, it's not surprising why most skippers go over-

seas at first opportunity.

"The ones who remain don't give a damn whether there are look-outs on duty. We know of officers who openly socialize with young lady passengers on board.

"Some ships don't have functional radars. Their radio equipment are obsolete. Their navigational lights are weak.

"Most of our light-houses, probably 80 percent, are unlighted.

"Our ports do not have separation zones through which incoming and outgoing vessels could sail without risk of collision."

Worst of all, Bayombong added, international rules for preventing collision at sea are flagrantly violated, such as this one concerning head-on situation: *When two power-driven vessels are meeting on reciprocal courses, each shall alter her course to starboard (the right side) so that each shall pass on the port side of the other.* (ANF)

Slum colony in the making

BY LIZA ANN BOQUIREN



Behind polluting factories is the scavengers' domain where every scrap counts a lot.
(Roly Embile)

ANOTHER Makati is in the making.

Pasig, a municipality of 30 barrios surrounded by Quezon City on the north, Mandaluyong on the south, San Juan on the west and Marikina, Tagig and Pateros in the east, is the site of a construction boom which has made it the prime business and residential area in Metro Manila.

In the area bounded by EDSA, San Miguel and Meralco avenues, SM Shoemart and Robinson's have intensified their retail store battle with the ongoing construction of the SM Megamall and The Galleria. Between the two giants is the soon-to-be-finished imposing headquarters of the Asian Development Bank. Nearby, along Meralco avenue, is the Alexandra condominium complex where unfinished units are priced at P4.5 million each.

Surrounding this area are older subdivisions such as Valle Verde where lots sell for P7,000 per square meter.

Farther into Pasig are

factories, a motel row and smaller business establishments such as restaurants and photography stores.

Hidden behind these business establishments and lower-middle class subdivisions, usually with one-storey houses cramped inside small, fenced lots is barrio Pinagbuhatan.

Hidden eyesore

Within this barrio, at the end of a cemented road is Pasig's answer to the other side of Makati where the construction of "skyscrapers" is also ongoing.

Pinagbuhatan, as the government lot is called, is home to some 500 families. Previously a dumpsite for Pasay City, Quezon City and Makati, it is now exclusively for the leavings of Pasig's construction boom and isolated economic affluence.

The dirt road leading to the area was donated by Sen. Joseph Estrada. It is flanked by the Republic

Glass Co. factory and horse stables and by grassy vacant lots.

Fifty meters from the RGC, the color of the vacant lots begin to change from green to white and blue, the colors of paper and plastic.

The subdivision houses are replaced by one-room shanties made of pieced-together materials such as wood and steel and roofs with tires to hold them down. Gone are the subdivisions' water tanks and in their place, either deep wells or MWSS water rationed and sold for P2.50 per plastic container.

As one approaches the center of the area, the air becomes heavy with the smell of burnt plastic and spoiled food. The wind blows and smoke, from several mountains of garbage envelopes the dirt road. The foul smell intensifies and the air becomes hotter, and drier.

At the foot of these mountains of garbage are men, women and children dressed in rags with multi-colored stockinged feet

shod in old rubber boots. With a steel-tipped, wooden implement in hand, they sort through the garbage looking for milk cans, cartons, cooking oil containers and other recyclable materials which are grouped together and sold to the dumpsite's self-proclaimed queen -- Tasing.

The "skyscrapers" are not as tall as they used to be but people still manage to earn enough for the day, P10 at least.

As the smoke clears, more houses come into view. Some are at the foot of the mountains of garbage while most line the dirt road.

In one house, an enterprising housewife charges 50 centavos per program watched on the area's only TV set which she got on loan. Another resident has reportedly purchased a TV set and may soon give the housewife competition.

Sari-sari stores sell warm softdrinks and halo-halo served in perpetually unwashed-looking coffee jars. Mothers gather to converse in these stores while the menfolk play on a recycled pool table.

Mass produced

Children outnumber adults and fill the dirt road like flies covering a laundry line in front of one house. Most, some barely 10, carry either a newborn or a younger sibling on the hips. Some go to school. On weekends, several attend informal classes held in the health center while others play with batteries which during the rainy season are replaced with big, live worms.

According to Mrs. Josie Quizon, a social worker who runs one subdivision's learning center where Pinagbuhatan preschoolers can study for free, children in the area are "mass produced".

Since in the area, children are considered gifts from God, Mrs. Supan, 32, a mother of 11 including a four-month-old, said she would accept two more children if God willed it.

Mrs. Supan, dark-skinned with prominent cheekbones, married at the age of 16. Her husband, a factory worker in Batangas, became jobless so the family moved, first to Mrs. Supan's godmother, then to Pinagbuhatan. Since she has

nowhere else to go, she has no intention of leaving the area unless forcibly evacuated.

Her husband and children work at the dumpsite. However, her eldest son was taken as a scholar by a group of nuns. Mrs. Supan allowed her son to go because she wants a better life for him. However, Mrs. Supan hesitated when the nuns wanted to take her second eldest son. When asked why, she smiled, revealing spaces where side teeth used to be and reasoned that she would have no one left to take care of the kids.

The average family in Pinagbuhatan has about five kids. But Gemma, 11, and Mary Jane, 8, both third graders, are the eldest of two-children families. They wear slippers unlike most of the kids from whom "bubog na ang umiwas".

Gemma is bony with long legs, fair, clear skin and smiling eyes. Mary Jane has the face of a much older person on a shorter, darker-skinned body. Mary Jane wants to be a teacher because she thinks the job is very easy while Gemma

(Next page, please)

Economic recovery: 'Mayayaman lang ang nakikinabang'

THE Government's "medium-term plan," an economic program which promises to alleviate poverty, generate employment, and promote equity and social justice has helped improve the country's economic state, especially during 1988.

Or has it?

Statistics released by the National Statistical and Coordination Board showed that the economy grew by 6.7 percent in 1988 compared to 1987's 5.9 percent. This means that a substantial increase occurred in both the industry and services sectors with a growth rate of 8.86 percent and 6.54 percent, respectively.

Moreover, the trade liberalization policy which allows cheaper foreign goods into the country, tremendously increased imports by 35.94 percent.

Despite all these statistical data, does this improvement affect the lives of the 70 percent of Filipinos who have fallen below the poverty line?

We Forum went to the streets and asked a few of these common Filipinos how their lives have changed since the implementation of this program.

No effect

Watch-your-car boy Jonathan Aguas, 20, of UP Village, Quezon City, says his life was not affected at all by the program. "Kung sa pagtulong, siguro 'yung paghinto ng paghuhuli sa mga watch-your-car boys dito sa parkingan. Kaya, nakakakita ako ng P40-50 isang araw." Jonathan also says that if ever the government is helping the poor through this medium-term plan, it would only be a

minority. "Ang mayayaman lang naman ang nakikinabang," he says matter-of-factly.

A security guard shares the same sentiment. Arsenia Sustituido of Krus na Ligas, Quezon City, says that there wasn't any drastic change in her life. "Kung minsan nga, hindi namin natatang-gap ang, sahod namin. Nade-delay pa paminsan-minsan," she said. "Siguro may nagagawa din ang gobyerno. Balita ko nagbibigay sila ng pagkain sa Mindanao. Sa Mindanao 'yon. Dito naman, hindi ako apektado, eh."

The National Economic Development Authority, in assessing the government's plan, admitted that it prioritized debt service over economic recovery, not much different from Marcos' policies. Both are export-oriented, foreign-investment dependent, foreign-debt dependent, anti-labor and anti-people.

Cecille Arriola, a UP student from Paranaque, shares the same observation. "Sabi ng gobyerno maka-kaahon tayo sa paghihirap sa tulong ng programang ito. Parepareho naman ang economic strategies nila, eh. Di kung naghihirap tayo dati, paano masasabi na aahon tayo ngayon?"

"Sa palagay ko, ang mayayaman, lalong yumayaman. Lalo na siguro yung mga opisyal dahil ang daming balita tungkol sa pangungurakot. Tapos, ang mahihirap naman, lalong naghihirap." This opinion is shared by Euphemio Santos, a barber from Malabon, who says that the standard of living is harder now than during Marcos' time. "Ang talagang umaapekto sa amin ngayon ay ang presyo ng



CHAVEZ



SUSTITUIDO

(Story, photos and interviews by Sheila Elbinias, J. Antonio Santiago and Rachel Tatoy.)



CONCEPCION



SANTOS

bilihin. Eh sa tingin ko mas mahirap ang ekonomya ngayon dahil gutom naman ang nangyayari."

Pro-rich, anti-poor

Although the economic plan's intention is to generate recovery and rapid growth, it is not meant to redistribute the country's resources. Rather, it is to help the poor a little but not to disturb the rich.

Moises Chavez, a hotdog vendor from San Mateo,

Rizal, states his views this way. "Mayroon silang (the government) nagagawang tulong doon sa mayroon. Sa wala, wala. Katulad ng presyo ng bilihin. Paano ito bababa kung tumataas ang presyo ng gasolina? Mahirap na nga kami, lalo pa kaming maghihirap kapag tumaas na naman ang presyo," he says. Chavez, who earns P70 a day and supports a wife and five children, says he barely meets the needs of his

family. "Kung naapektuhan ang buhay ko? Hindi. Pareho lang," he says.

Lourdes Concepcion, a saleslady from Pasig echoes a familiar complaint. "Kung may mahihirap na nakikinabang sa programa ng gobyerno, ako hindi. Wala namang dumarating na biyaya sa buhay ko ngayon, eh. Kailan pa kaya?"

These are but a few of the "common" Filipinos who should benefit from the medium-term plan of

the Aquino government. Since this six-year blueprint aims to alleviate poverty, generate employment, promote equity and social justice, it doesn't seem to achieve these objectives. How can this program, which aims for economic recovery, help the poverty-stricken Filipinos when it has a trickle-down policy that doesn't exist?

At the rate this economic plan is going, it doesn't give the poor much to hope for.

Slum

(From page 5)

wants to be a dentist so she can help people. When kidded that she might have heard that line on TV, she giggled shyly.

Both girls talked animatedly into the tape recorder but became wary when too many pictures were being taken. Mary Jane politely asked if they would be made to take off their clothes and if the pictures would be taken to the "white men."

Sexual exploitation

The two girls brought this reporter and company to Igay, 8, who was born and raised within the smoky mountains of trash. Igay's unwed mother left her in the area as a condition for her freedom. According to Mrs.

Quizon, young females are "much preferred" by gun-carrying men who patrol the area for garbage queen Tasing.

Igay is very dark-skinned with an unbelievably wide-eyed look and broom bristle-like, corn-colored hair. She is perhaps one of the most immune to the smoke and the stench which, even after a bath and a change of clothes for a "pictorial," clings to her like a second skin.

Igay is friendly but has a habit (perhaps acquired from Tasing's guards) of touching female behinds. She is often met with hostility by some older people and detached cordiality by the children. She responds either with growl-like sounds or shy smiles.

Igay, Gemma and Mary Jane are nearing an age

when they have to be relocated, "dahil gagapangin sila," says Mrs. Quizon. Some young girls are able to find employment as househelp. Others enter into early marriages. The unfortunate ones cannot complain.

Late in the afternoon, garbage trucks arrive. Igay runs off to stand behind a truck so she can sort through the trash as it showers her.

Gemma and Mary Jane, who are not garbage pickers, request to be taken to Cubao Nene, the eldest of five kids, shyly hands over an unevenly cut piece of paper.

Shortly after the garbage trucks finish dumping their contents, the smoke begins to thicken, making inhaling painful. But the people who live here don't cover their

noses so we resist from reaching inside our bags for hankies and instead walk away as fast as we can. Gemma, Mary Jane and two other kids run along with us. "Balik kayo, ha," they call out.

On the way home, the plush subdivisions and the Meralco building come into view, deceptively giving Pasig the image of a booming municipality. Despite the smog from the jeepneys and cars, the air smells better. We cannot smell ourselves but other people can.

We unfold Nene's letter. Her handwriting is a bit crooked and her message, in block letters, occupies three lines of the intermediate pad, "Maraming Salaman(sic)".

Would she have said the same had she realized the decent life denied her?

Are Their Honors above, or exempt from, the law?

SEN. Rene A. V. Saguisag has criticized the highly sensitive Supreme Court for its resolution dated May 2, 1989 setting guidelines every Filipino has to follow before he may be given a copy of a justice's or judge's statement of assets, liabilities, net worth, and financial and business interests. Mr. Saguisag, couldn't be more right.

Why, indeed, should there be guidelines other than those provided for in the law, that is, RA 6713 otherwise known as the Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees? Precisely, said the Senator, the law requires all government employees to disclose their respective wealth. And the law, we hasten to add, states that the public has the right to know the worth of every public officer.

Moreover, RA 6713 neither specifies nor distinguishes who among Filipinos may obtain subject statement, except to say that it is "unlawful for any person to obtain or use any statement filed under this Act for: (a) any purpose contrary to morals or public policy; or (b) any commercial purpose other than by news and communications media for dissemination to the general public" (Sec. 8, par. D).

It's certainly impossible for Their Honors to know whether or not the purpose for which a particular statement is obtained militates against morals and public policy, or is purely commercial, before a probative or overt act has been done. Only a fool will tell Their Honors beforehand that he's going to use the statement for an illegal, immoral or commercial purpose.

Under the Constitution, public officers and employees are at all times accountable to the people (Sec. 1, Art. XI). To this end, the Charter requires all of them to submit their respective sworn declarations of assets, liabilities and net worth. Sec. 17 of Art. XI mandates that such declarations "be disclosed to the public in the manner provided by law".

By issuing guidelines other than those RA 6713 embodies, the Supreme Court, we believe, has indulged in what is called judicial legislation.

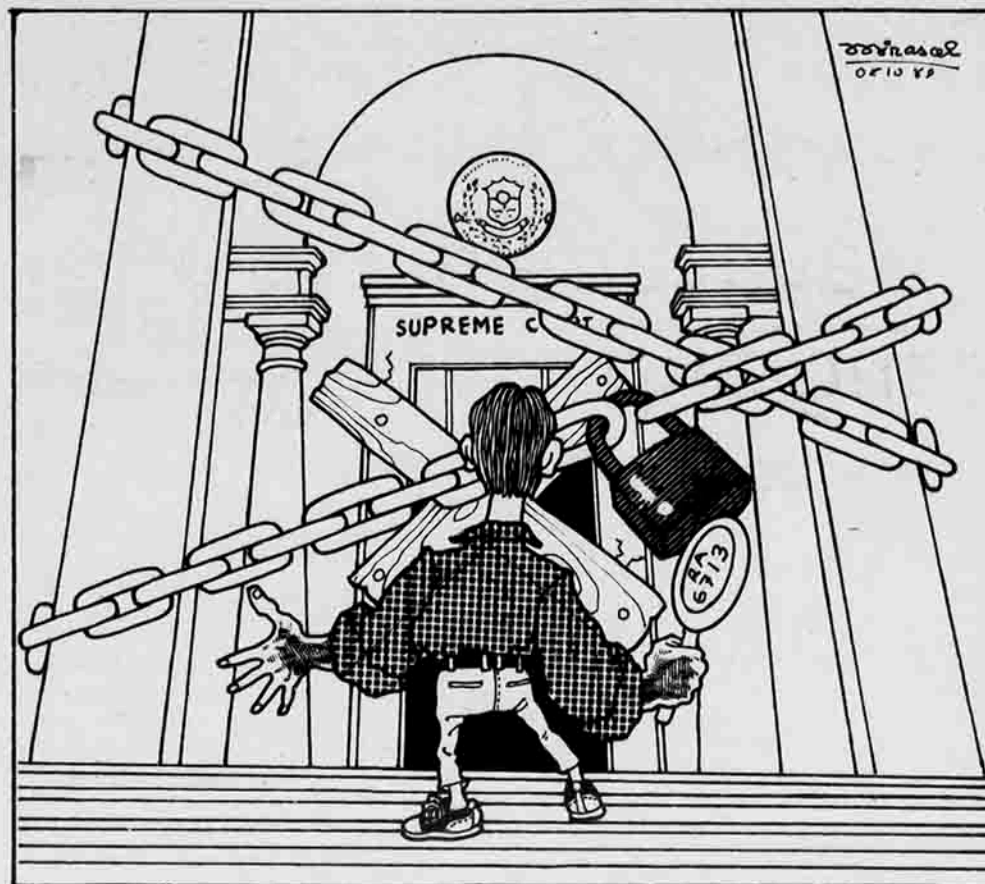
There ought to be, said the Court, "a legitimate reason for the request" but it didn't define *legitimate reason*. It was in consideration of "circumstances which may endanger, diminish or destroy their independence and objectivity in the performance of their judicial functions or expose them to revenge for adverse decisions, kidnapping, extortion, blackmail, or other untoward consequences" that the Court issued the guidelines in question.

In brief, it's *fear* that something wrong may happen to Their Honors which prompted the Supreme Court to do what it did. Which raises the question: Why should they fear anyone or anything if Their Honors have nothing to hide? "There's nothing to fear," goes the famous dictum, "but fear itself."

The Bench, we like to believe, is peopled by honorable men who are above board and beyond reproach, and have balls. Real balls to enable them to face the "untoward consequences" the Supreme Court is afraid of. (Imagine a Bench made up of cowards and reproachable men!) To merit the measures the Tribunal has adopted, the danger, we submit, must be clear and present, not just speculative or imaginary. As it is, the Tribunal's resolution virtually makes Their Honors above, if not exempt from, the law they are supposed to uphold impartially for all, themselves included.

And if the Supreme Court can do it, what's to stop the Executive and the Legislative from doing likewise? They, too, can invoke the same reason as the Court's.

Transparency, anyone?



Saguisag reacts

SEN. Rene A. V. Saguisag, who was one of our lawyers in the celebrated subversion case filed by the Marcos military in 1982, has strongly reacted to a column of Prof. Salvador Roxas-Gonzalez (also, one of those whom Rene defended in the same case) in connection with the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant.

I am yielding this space to the good senator, after which I will make my own comment at the end of his piece:

"My good friend, Dr. Salvador Roxas Gonzalez, has started a series on the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant. The first installment should give you pause. (May 3-4, 1989)

"1. The current head of the Presidential Committee (not a Commission) on the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant is Sec. Sedfrey Ordonez. I head the Senate Ad Hoc Committee on the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant.

"As Joey Lina became a Senator only in 1987, he could not have invited Dr. Gonzalez to appear before him in the Senate in 1986. On Aug. 19, 1987, the Senate Committee on Science and Technology, then headed by Sen. Raul Manglapus, did convene a meeting which I attended with Dr. Gonzalez as guest. I did apologize for his *sentimiento* about our 1986 meeting. (I did not know he

PUBLISHER'S NOTES



by JOSE G. BURGOS, JR.

could bear a grudge that, and now, this long. He resented my supposedly preferring to talk with a pretty girl instead of him. My advice is he should go and find his own girl. Seriously, I had to rush to another meeting. In any case, I hope my wife does not get to know of this.)

"2. Not long after that Aug. 19, 1987 meeting came the Aug. 28, 1987 putsch. For some months we were unstable. By the time we normalized Sec. Ordonez had taken over. It is only he who can now clear access to the voluminous sensitive documents.

"3. Without seeing any of these documents, or maybe even the court records in New Jersey, on our suit (including the damning affidavits), Dr. Gonzalez now echoes Westinghouse's line. This is sad. I can arrange to have him gain access to the evidence, if he so wishes, and then probably he can continue to write on the plant after he gets to know what he is talking about.

"4. He discredits the Puno Commission, the Batasan hearings, and the series (Page 13, please)

We Forum

MEMBER



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OUR DAYS



by F. T. OCAMPO

Unsavors analyses

THE 22nd annual meeting of the Asian Development Bank in Beijing last week expectedly focused some of its more unsavory analyses on the Philippines. The ADB president granted an 8.8 percent economic growth rate for Asia's developing nations in 1988, but at the same time called attention to a half billion poor people in the region. It would be safe to assume that about one-tenth of that figure would be found in this country where 95 percent of the 50 million population are poor. Outside of a handful of legitimate businessmen, only the thieves who are called congressmen in this country ever get rich.

In a special publication read during the meet, it was noted that "the Philippines still remains the slowest-growing and most heavily debt-burdened country in Asia. Over one-third of its population still depends for its livelihood on coconut, maids are still its second or third largest foreign exchange earners, a diehard rebel army still has more than 24,000 recruits in the bush, all sorts of human rights abuses are still an everyday event, and even after Marcos has gone, corruption remains the national sport."

But what should damn this government before the people is the lady President's single-minded insistence to pay the foreign debt which reportedly "impressed" the more than 2,000 bankers and finance experts who attended the meet, held for the first time in China. According to the paper, the foreign banks which lent more than half of the \$28 billion debt "did not expect the government of President Aquino to continue paying the country's external obligations based on previously agreed amortization schedule." To the pleasant surprise and eternal delight of the foreign bankers, who "feared that she would use her new mandate and reserve of international support to scale down the debt service or even repudiate the Philippines' commercial debt entirely," Mrs. Aquino had persisted in religiously paying the yearly amortization amounting to about a fourth of the gross national income. If a good part of the money was stolen by Ferdinand Marcos and his cohorts, it did not figure in her decision, for the cogency of the argument for a selective debt repudiation. In her simple mind, Mrs. Aquino will not waver on a debt though millions of Filipinos grovel and die in penury. Her intransigence on the debt issue is reminiscent of the famous Charge of the Light Brigade.

"No one quite expected the relationship to continue as smoothly as it has under the Aquino regime, which has signed two more IMF Letters of Intent," the paper noted. The fact is, the last LOI was

Objection, your honor!

IT has been said that the great bulk of the law on evidence consists of negative rules declaring what is not evidence. There is nothing farther from the truth than this concise statement of what really constitutes the law on evidence.

The exclusionary rules on evidence excite surprise not only among laymen but even among veteran practitioners of law. By their application and operation, facts which logically appear to have a strong probative effect are often rejected, and the question is often raised whether the ends of justice are not thwarted by technical rules in the admission and exclusion of facts offered in evidence.

While reformers both in the bench and in the bar have zealously attacked and have broken down many of the artificial barriers which formerly prevented litigants from bringing the facts on which they rely for the success of their causes to the ear of the judge, it is hardly possible that the courts of civilized countries will ever seek to administer justice without the use of fixed, and to some extent, arbitrary, rules of evidence. And this is probably why Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. could well afford to say that "the life of the law has not been logic; it has been experience."

To a young lawyer appearing before the United States Supreme Court, Holmes once said: "Young man, this is a court of law, not of justice." Which is the same way as saying that Law is not necessarily Justice. What is just may not be legal and what is legal may not be just. A trial is a scientific inquiry into the truth. A trial is just the resolution of a dispute. The outcome of a trial depends entirely on the evidence presented and the evidence excluded. If you are looking for God's honest truth, the last place for you to look for it is in a courtroom, because a trial is often circumscribed by technical rules of evidence which sometimes prevent "the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth", from coming out.

There's an old saying that the duty of an advocate is to persuade. To be persuasive, he must be believable. To be believable, he must be credible. To be credible, he must be factual. But to be factual does not necessarily mean to be truthful. It only means to be able to establish the facts supporting your theory of the case with clear, convincing and competent evidence. Truth and fact are not always compatible. Although Justice Felix Frankfurter would say with tongue-in-cheek that to some

lawyers all facts are created equal, some lawyers are more equal than others.

Just the other day, I came upon a one-liner which says: "Have you ever noticed that whenever a witness on the stand offers to tell the truth, some lawyers stand up to object?"

The trouble with us lawyers sometimes is that when we are in court we do not talk to the layman and let the layman talk to us in terms that he can understand. Why should a party or witness be expected to learn a new language for use in court in order to obviate objections that may be posed by opposing counsel? Why don't we just let him talk as naturally in court as he does out of court or perhaps, even as truthfully?

For example, there's that lawyer's allergy to conclusions. The witness is asked whether something took place and he begins his answer by saying "I think..." or "I believe..." At the wink of an eye, counsel would rise up to object. He cannot say "I believe", that's a conclusion. He cannot say "I think," either, that is an opinion.

One time, a witness who began his answer by saying "I think..." was rudely cut-off in mid-sentence by a brusque lawyer who roared: "Don't think. Just state what you know." To which the witness stammered: "I'm sorry, sir. I cannot talk without thinking. I'm not a lawyer."

Or take the case of those favorite stock phrases that lawyers cannot do without. If you want to know when a witness left the building where the crime was committed, you don't simply say WHEN DID YOU LEAVE THE BUILDING? That might be assuming a fact that is not yet in evidence. You don't say DID YOU LEAVE THE BUILDING? either, because that would be leading. So you eventually come up with this bright one: DID THERE COME A TIME WHEN YOU LEFT THE BUILDING?, which is certainly no longer objectionable but is downright silly, because if he never left the building at any time he would not be in court testifying.

And surely, we can dispense with all that business of striking out answers that are not responsive to the question. For example, the witness is asked: "Did you actually see the accused shoot the deceased?" And the witness begins to answer by saying I WAS TALKING TO THE DECEASED WHEN THE SHOT WAS FIRED. And the battery of defense lawyers jumps as one man to shout

Impatient

Apparently, President Corazon C. Aquino is getting very impatient over the dimming prospects of the Philippine Assistance Program (PAP) which is desperately needed by her administration to keep the Philippine economy alive. Now that the aid package is threatened to be delayed if not totally scrapped by the nega-

rammed into the people's throats against their wish and better judgment. For a government which rode on the crest of people power, Mrs. Aquino seems to have a strange way of repaying the people who supported her. She is practically committing treason upon the people in her sickening attempt to curry favor with the United States for its continued support of her tottering administration.

tive political developments in Japan (over a scandal involving Prime Minister Noboru Takeshita) and by the worsening budgetary problem of the United States, President Aquino is constrained to leave for the US this year to beg for its immediate implementation.

I consider it a sick joke for the President to rely upon the Americans concerning the program when the latter themselves are on the brink of bankruptcy owing more than \$2.5 trillion foreign debt aside from a huge trade deficit. As it now stands, the figure accounts for the biggest debt in the world that a single country incurred. Yet, bigger than the combined foreign debt of the Third World countries.

Since time immemorial, we accepted in our system the shameful habit of running to the

LAW AND
(DIS)ORDER

by ANTONIO P. CORONEL

OBJECTION! MOVE TO STRIKE! ANSWER NOT RESPONSIVE TO THE QUESTION! And the poor witness sits there on the witness stand wondering whether he did something wrong. Maybe he has done something terrible, perhaps even committed a crime, or maybe his fly is open, or something just as humiliating.

But perhaps we lawyers should recognize that we are dealing with non-legal trained witnesses and therefore we cannot insist on a direct responsiveness that to neither the witness nor the cause of justice would serve a useful end.

Then there's the much-abused question of asking a witness whether several years ago, during the preliminary investigation of the case, he was asked a particular question and he gave a particular answer -- as if anybody could remember any question put to him several years ago. Why do we go through all that rigmarole? Why not simply read the transcript into the record?

The point is, should we not take a more relaxed attitude towards the rules of evidence and to certain forms of legalese in court? If only to both help the administration of justice and improve the lawyer's public image, a second look at our antiquated exclusionary rules is very much in order. Perhaps, we can adapt as a basic principle that what shall get into the record as evidence and what shall be excluded, should largely depend upon the discretion of the trial judge, instead of being governed by fixed, technical and arbitrary rules that somehow give lawyers the idea that they have a duty to object even to sensible evidence simply because there is some rule somewhere that says such evidence cannot be admitted. The trial judge should be given more leeway in determining whether it makes sense or not to have the evidence admitted.

As things stand, however, we lawyers must accept the rules of evidence as they are today, if only for reasons of uniformity and orderliness in the administration of justice. We can only decry the fact that there are times when the ends of justice are thwarted by defects in judicial procedure.

PEOPLE'S FORUM



Americans for assistance, not to mention the strings attached to every help extended. It has become a virtue of our government to be always dependent on Uncle Sam. When can we earn the dignity of being a self-reliant country and not being a beggar? Can or can never be?

ARIEL R. ALBIS
2100 Santissima Trinidad St.,
Sampaloc, Manila

Letter from a 'Statehood' advocate

I FIND much hope in the new crop of barangay officials in Zambales. Since the barangay polls last March 28, I have closely monitored the newly elected officials in the 168 barangays in my wife's district and, as a whole I am satisfied with the choices of the people. I have talked with many of these newly elected captains and councilmen and a new crop of barrio leaders are slowly emerging. Many old political pros have been replaced by more energetic and, hopefully more dedicated leaders. There is much to hope for.

As I mentioned in a previous column, I shall share with my readers some interesting letters I have been receiving and here is one from somebody who signed his name as "A Statehood". He writes:

"Sir:

At the outset I want you to know that I sympathize with you. The Supreme Court decision is very harsh and cruel and everybody knows that. They are acting only to vindicate their names at your expense, of course.

There's not much hope for you and your family left here. The only chance you've got is to migrate to another country, preferably America, where there is fairness and justice. With your ability you'll go far in the land of so-called "milk and honey". Stop day-dreaming. You will never regret, I am sure.

If you will look around, the country is in shambles with insurgency as the number one problem and if I may suggest, join and support the Statehood Movement. It is

the only hope we got.
Regards.

Very sincerely,
A STATEHOODER"

I thank you, Mr. Statehooder, for your kind thoughts. But I have absolutely no plans of migrating, much less being for statehood. I don't think the cruel decision of a vengeful Supreme Court is the end of the world for me and my family. You see I have so much stake in this country. As you know I fought very hard for the restoration of our freedoms, long long before EDSA. So while America is, according to many the "land of milk and honey", I will not migrate, much less dream of being an American citizen - which will happen if I agreed to statehood. During the time of the dictatorship, I stayed and risked life and liberty because I did not want to abandon our people. I cannot imagine myself as a steak commando, whose only claim to patriotism was writing letters to American congressmen and senators denouncing Marcos but so scared to return to his country and fight the dictatorship frontally. I fought a dictatorship before; I can fight even a tyrannical Supreme Court now.

Speaking of the Supreme Court, may I reprint the words of wisdom of Chief Justice, Sir Denys Roberts of the Hongkong Supreme Court on what he called the "7 Deadly Sins" of magistrates. According to Sir Denys, these seven deadly sins are: pride, anger, sloth, envy, gluttony, lust and greed. Sir Denys also warned of the

"over mighty" magistrate, the sloven and impunctual magistrate, the magistrate who loses his temper after a long and tiring day. He warned that "only those who are worthy should be entrusted with the duty of deciding upon the liberty and reputation of one's fellowmen".

I wonder if the distinguished justices of our Supreme Court have read Sir Denys. Because if they have, why are they "over mighty" that they have declared themselves as sacrosanct?

By the way, I am wondering why the Catholics have different versions of the music of "Ama Namin"? It is confusing to hear this very important Church music being sung in various versions in many churches in the Philippines. So far I must have heard at least 5 different tunes of the song and I get lost. Sana isang sound na lang, but even in the Cathedral in Iba, Zambales, sometimes we sing the traditional "Ama Namin", sometimes they sing to a different music.

Some prisoners bolted the Malabon jail recently. I knew this was bound to happen because the Malabon jail is always overcrowded and the cells are not strong enough to keep determined escapees. Years back I defended a policeman who, as jail guard, was charged with the escape of a detention prisoner but I was able to prove that there was no negligence on the part of the guard but the culprit was the dilapidated jail. As I said in a previous column, there should be prison reforms, among which should be improvement of

IN MY CORNER...



by RAUL M. GONZALEZ

facilities, better food, more humane treatment by guards and re-inforcement of the iron grills to lessen chances of escapes. Lack of guards and firearms also contribute to many prison escapes. Many of the cases I had investigated as Tanodbayan Prosecutor on "discharge of prisoners" or "infidelity in the custody of prisoners" can be attributed to these factors. In the remote municipalities it is not uncommon to find jails with no handcuffs so when prisoners are taken for court hearings, their hands are only tied with strings. Kung sa bagay kahit dito sa Maynila they just tie prisoners with strings kaya kung minsan mayroon din pumupuga...

Speaking about jails, I talked with a former inmate in Muntinlupa who was paroled in 1983. He is an ex-policeman who did time for a homicide case. He told me that he was witness to many instances when truckloads of canned food arrived in the NBP compound as donations from manufacturers or from some civic groups but none of these canned goods ever get tasted by prisoners. Saan napupunta ang mga de lata? Baka bumalik sa Divisoria? O na debi-debi ng mga matataas doon?

Imelda's love for crookery

ACCORDING to Carmen Navarro-Pedrosa, the Imeldific's unauthorized biographer, at the height of the Madama's power, she wanted to buy a fortune of Marie Antoinette's crockery or gold inlaid porcelain.

Ah, the Madama's love for crookery.

Chit wrote the best-selling book "The Rise and Fall of Imelda Marcos."

Did we hear right that her second book will be entitled "The Rise and Fool of Imelda Marcos?"

During the Marcos dictatorial regime, they changed "for the people and by the people" to "fool the people and buy the people."

Item: "Imelda, failing to acquire Marie Antoinette's crockery, decided to have her own French antique crockery and had her own monogram superimposed on the set."

She failed to get the real crockery, so she resorted to crookery.

Short story: "Will the beautiful and seductive young lady who left her bra and pantie in my car please call and explain to my wife?"

Inscription on a monument in France marking the grave of an army mule: "In memory of Maggie, who in her time kicked two colonels, four majors, 10 captains, 24 lieutenants, 42 sergeants, 432 other ranks and one Mills bomb."

The Mills bomb is not a boon but a bane

to Maggie.

Did you know that a woman never knows what kind of dress she doesn't want until she buys it?

The superstar leads her private life in public.

Today's children: "Tell me Boy, what do you want to be when you grow up?" a reporter asked his small nephew.

"Alive."

The trouble with women is that they have become too much like men. They work, smoke, drink and swear like men. Some even tell dirty stories like men. But of course, they are homos.

My friend doesn't understand that marriage ought to be a partnership.

His wife being the boss.

I had an odd experience in a Cubao movie house recently.

I watched a love scene for five minutes before I realized that I was facing in the wrong direction.

We are all actors in real life, because acting is pretending.

And the most difficult part is pretending that we're eating regularly.

History of today's family: Small house, apartment, bigger house, apartment, small

house.

Did you hear that Imeldific wrote a check, and the bank bounced?

You can always tell when a woman commits adultery.

She's married.

In advertising you have to be a diplomat. When you're with a matadero, you talk meat. When you're with a baker, you talk bread.

When you're with both of them, you talk about sandwiches.

Give a woman credit for anything today and she will buy it.

An old maid certainly loves the good old days.

She listed her phone number as IX VIII VIII VII I III.

Two Romans were playing golf. So the caddy shouted: "IV!"

Define a diary. The wit answered: "Panned-up emotions."

Define a racetrack. And the punster answered: "Where the windows clean the people."

Define a scandal. And the intellectual answered: "Something that has to be bad to be good."

PUNNY LINES



by FUNDADOR SORIANO

According to a typist, the miniskirt is a bane. To girl with legs like this () or this ().

Did you know that Lotlot de Leon's showbiz friends gave her a party before she got married?

It's called a pre-natal party.

Never underestimate a woman. Unless you are talking about her age.

His monthly salary runs into three figures - his wife and two daughters.

Boy to girl: "Let's kiss, then you can make up."

Shapely bold star to homo reporter: "His entire family opposed me, but I had Mother Nature on my side."

Rock music - the kind that we keep hoping will turn into a tune.

Attitude of Tita Cory's government towards the USA: "Just leave us a loan."

Gold & Mayor Lacson's dreams-(Part V)

I LOOKED over those maps and drawings but since I am not an engineer, I could hardly understand them. Anyway, since I was not in a hurry for I wanted signs from the Lord as to what I will do, I did not really concentrate on the matter. But I knew that someday soon I must make a decision. The decision must be fair not only to the family of Lacson but most of all to the Filipino people. It was God's grace that these treasurers fell into our soil and since it is the Filipino people's economic salvation, I must continue to depend on the Lord's guidance.

But one day I was told by my maid that then retired CB Governor Licaros called up so I returned the call. He congratulated me for our victory in the Supreme Court re the Meralco case and he said: "Sabihin mo rin kay Mary Concepcion Bautista na congratulations and why don't you come over one of these days?" I replied that when I have time I will make an appointment with his secretary.

When I finally found the time to visit him in his office, we talked about the economy, the poverty around us and the seeming indifference of the technocrats of Marcos. I said, "Alam ninyo, Boss, ibang-iba na po ngayon ang mga tao sa gobierno at para po bang wala nang pag-asa ang mga

mahihirap lalo na rito sa appraisal accounting na inaabusado, kanya ang mga mahihirap lalong naghihirap."

And he said, "Katulad niyang si Laya, akalain mo na tinanggal niya yoong standby credit natin na \$1.5 billion na may support naman iyan ng ating mga ginto. I put that up na parang payong - kung umuulan, mayroon tayong payong kaya kung may mga imposition and IMF at World Bank na hindi palatable, diyan tayo tataakbo for credit sa mga bangko na yan na nandiyan ang ating mga ginto."

So I said, "Bakit Boss, marami po ba tayong mga ginto?"

He opened his drawer and said, "Tingnan mo ito." He gave me the piece of paper and I looked them over and I said, "Marami po pala tayong ginto, bakit tayo utang ng utang?"

He said, "Alam mo, Julie, yoong mga OPEC facilities, mura lamang ang interest noon at mahabang panahon pa ang pagbabayad. At kung atin namang ipagbibile ang ating ginto, argabiado tayo dahil marami ng gobierno ngayon ang nagimprenta ng pera na walang gold support. So why will we sell our gold for paper money? Kung may emergency lang, tama yon."

I remember vividly that before he handed me that piece of paper which con-

tains the data on our gold, he said, "Julie, when I am gone, fight for the Filipinos; we are actually sitting on a mountain of gold; hindi dapat maghirap ang Pilipino; my hands are tied and I am too old to battle the giants." His face looked very sad and he was looking afar. When he handed me the data, he said very emphatically: "These will prove how I have tried to manage well the monetary system of the country despite tremendous pressures. I have fought devaluation because it is the poor man's Waterloo. If I had my way, every Filipino should be able to stand on his own feet."

When I reached home, I prayed very hard and I said, "Salamat po, Jesus, lumiwanag na po ang langit." For that revelation proved beyond doubt that we indeed have plenty of gold. Lacson's legacy to the Filipinos is turning out to be true.

Governor Licaros was some kind of a father to me and later in life, I used to have lunch with his family on Sundays. I have always been awed by his positive thinking, innate goodness and his sense of fairness and justice. Sayang naman yoong mga ginawa niyang kabutihan para sa bayan kung hindi ko sasabihin.

He died on August 1983 nine days after the death of Ninoy. In October 1983,

TEA W/ JULIE



by JULIE AMARGO

there was this IMF report saying that the Central Bank reserve was overstated by \$600 million and Laya then seemed to be laying the blame on his predecessor which was wrong. Governor Licaros told me in one of our conversations, that our gold in the Central Bank is stated at cost, so our international reserve is even understated for by then, the price of gold has gone up.

Since Governor Licaros was no longer around, I had to defend him because the rumors floating around were not true and it was unfair to the memory of a man who has served his country well for more than 50 years.

The Malaya headlined twice the story of the gold in the last week of 1983 December and in the 1st week of January 1984. I sent an open letter to Laya dated January 3, 1984.

Anti-Americanism in 'client states'

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The United States is at present quite alarmed at the wave of anti-Americanism openly felt in otherwise American allies, even client states. It cannot be repeated too often that even as this wave of anti-Americanism is sweeping, for instance, in Western Europe, a counterwave of understanding of the Soviets' desire for internal reforms and world harmony is moving with increasing strength. The Washington Post has spoken for the general American unease regarding this turn of things, remember other epochs during which similar stirrings of hatred for American ways have filled the international atmosphere. After World War II, with American victory and hegemony so patent, and with the United States all too ready to make this supremacy felt everywhere, the

United States was not the best-loved nation in the world. Its senseless intervention in the Vietnam war was another occasion for US unpopularity. Its regular habit of throwing its weight around has irked peoples, and its meddling has made potential enemies of otherwise natural allies. In the Post essay, it was clearly stated that as far as the goal of peace for the world was concerned, the Soviet statements (and their actions) seem more convincing than those of the United States.

Even the keenest and most suspicious of Soviet watchers are getting less and less skeptical of the sincerity of Gorbachev to relax on political structures. The popularity of erstwhile officials like Yeltsin, disapproved by the big chief is often cited as an example. The acceptance of erst-

while dissident Zacharov is also made much of. In the meantime, except almost for Afghanistan, the Soviet Union is respecting the international law of non-intervention in other countries, while even the Salvadoran President-elect recently requested the United States again to leave El Salvador to manage its own affairs (and El Salvador is as faithful a United States ally as one could wish.)

The Post's essay is a reminder that the nervously agitated movement of the United States to plead for peace (media continues its series on War and Peace in This Nuclear Age, books continue to warn on the causes of war, TV shows continue to show friendly pictures of Russia, China, even Cuba) as long as its acts belie the rheto-

WOMAN
SENSE



by PURA SANTILLAN-CASTRENCE

ric, the wave of anti-Americanism will not abate.

There is no reason to blame the United States totally for the still teetering state of peace. One does not erase suspicion, and create instant goodwill with a wand. The general feeling, however, is that the United States is not trying as hard as the other fellow to try the erasing of the suspicion and the creation of the goodwill.

Defenders of injustice

WAS it right for the Spanish conquistadores to "discover" the Philippines and claim it as a string of pearls to be added to the jewelry collection of the Iberian crown? Who gave them that right? The Roman Pontiff who traced the demarcation line to settle proprietary disputes between the royal houses of Castille and Lisbon? Who gave the Pope the right to confer that right to Catholic kings in the pursuit of imperial domain? God? Which God? The God of Love or the God of Greed?

Was it right for the Spanish delegation to cede the Philippines to the US for twenty million dollars without the knowledge and consent of the Filipino people at the Treaty of Paris? When the Filipino patriots have already liberated the whole country from the Spaniards and were

laying siege on Manila and could have overrun it were it not for their desire to spare it from unnecessary destruction? Was it right for the Pope's legate to ratify the Treaty in the name of the Filipino people? The only stipulation being that church lands and properties will not be touched in the transfer of government?

Was it right for the Americans to come in with their Marines and subdue the natives much as their ancestors did with the Indians, in the name of democracy at that? Was it right for the Macabebe scouts, the forerunner of the Philippine Constabulary as agents of American colonization, to betray General Aguinaldo into capture? Was it right for the US government to grant political independence but retain economic control over the country?

Was it right for the US government to

discriminate between American and Filipino soldiers who fought the Japanese during the Second World War? Was it right for the Pentagon to see to it that the Armed Forces of the Philippines will always prove loyal to it rather than to their own country and people? Was it right for the White House to support the 20-year Marcos dictatorship and cooperate if not mastermind the plunder of the country's wealth (for the nation's gold bars have been spirited away from the national treasury at the Central bank and it is widely believed, although only Cesar Virata and Jobo Fernandez are among the few Filipinos who are privy to the truth, are in American hands) and ensure that the couple find secure refuge in flight to Hawaii?

The fundamental injustice is that Spain

BEYOND
HYPOCRISY



by PLACIDO P. DIAZ

acted unbidden as nursemaid and the US as legal guardian of the fledgling Filipino nation, assuring themselves only of the privilege of exploiting their charges, giving to Filipinos the duties and obligations, reserving to themselves the right to profits and benefits. The EDSA miracle was God the Father's gift to His Filipino children: a Sacrament of Confirmation marking their entry into adulthood - their debut into the family of mature and res-

(Page 15, please)

Things that make mothers happy

"MOTHER'S Day", a practice of Western origin, is just a few days away. Actually, in the Philippines, we should be celebrating "Family Week" on the first week of December, the first Monday of which is "Mother's Day." I remember being required (and later, requiring) to pin a pink rose on our chests to honor our parents. But only the schools remember to celebrate the "Family Week."

Of course it is easier to remember "Mother's Day" in May because of the reminders on tv, in newspapers and over the radio. Gift 'ideas' are proposed, special dinners and even "Mother's Day" sale in some department stores provide tempting offers to the family. But all are too commercial and the personal touch is gone.

And naturally, on this day at least, we would like our mothers to know we appreciate them. But do you think an expensive gift would show our mothers how much we love them?

What really make mothers happy? We tried to ask the same question in our graduate class composed of mothers between the ages 24 to 54. And we gathered the following answers.

To a mother, happiness is . . .
 . . . when my children visit me and I can cook their favorite dishes.
 . . . seeing my children help each other.
 . . . staying healthy so I can give my all to my family.
 . . . getting a massage on my head from my 4-year-old son.
 . . . a kiss from my girl when I arrive home from school.
 . . . getting up from bed and finding breakfast ready on the table.
 . . . seeing my children serve and help their father.
 . . . being near when my family needs me.
 . . . hearing my son say I am the best among all the mothers in his school.

. . . giving my children everything that they need.

. . . listening to my children pray for the family.

. . . when I go up the stage to pin a medal on my daughter.

. . . a hot bath waiting for me when I arrive home from work.

. . . when my children become successful in their chosen careers.

. . . coming home to a houseful of newly bathed, sweet smelling children.

. . . when my teenage son tells me "sige na nanay, magpahinga na kayo, ako na lang ang magtatapos ng paglalaba."

. . . when my son stops crying after I kiss his swelling finger.

From the answers given above, one can see that mothers are one of the easiest to please. In the current lingo, 'mababaw ang kaligayahan'.

It doesn't take much to make them happy. Often what they prefer does not

HEART & HEARTH



by EDITA T. BURGOS

involve any cost.

It can be seen that what these mothers value most are the intangibles in life. The selfless mother needs no expensive gift that can be bought from stores. She is happiest when she can give, serve and just be around when needed.

To those who haven't decided what gift to give to their mothers, remember that it is not the amount but the love that goes into the preparation or search for the gift.

Happy inexpensive "Mother's Day" to all!

ECONOTIPS



(Contributed by Lucia Evangelista of Lucena City)

Lanzones peeling can still be useful even after you have eaten the flesh. Sun-dry or simply set aside and allow peelings to dry. When completely dried and brittle put over live charcoal. The resulting smoke drives mosquitoes away.

Let's cook

Paksiw na Malaga

1/2 kilo malaga cleaned of all viscera, blood and gills
 1 cup native vinegar
 1 pc ginger root
 8 whole peppercorns
 4 cloves garlic
 salt to taste
 banana leaf (optional)

Line the bottom of the pan with banana leaf. Lay the fish on the leaf. Add vinegar. Peel and macerate the ginger root and garlic and add to fish. Add the peppercorns and salt. Cover and boil, then lower heat to a minimum. Allow to simmer until the strong odor of the vinegar is gone.

Children

*When the voices of children are heard on the green
 And laughing is heard on the hill
 My heart is at rest within my breast
 And everything else is still.*

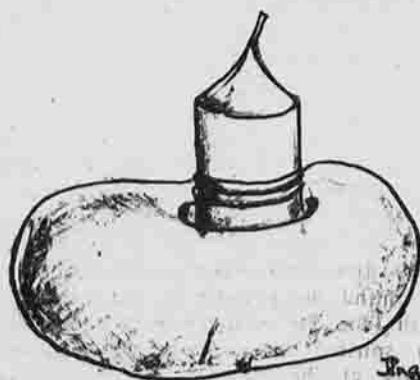
William Blake

The more people have studied different methods of bringing up children the more they have come to the conclusion that what good mothers and fathers instinctively feel like doing for their babies is the best after all.

Benjamin Spock

Crafts

Candle holder



An unusually shaped pebble or stone may be used as a candle holder. Just apply varnish to preserve the color and your candle holder is ready. For more attractive results, use a candle that matches the color of the pebble.

Bathing baby

BABY'S bath time can either be fun or an ordeal. This depends on how organized you are. For suggestions on how to make baby's bath an enjoyable experience for both mother and child, read on.

o Be sure that all the supplies, 'tools' are within reach. Arrange them in the order at which they will be used. You would need soap, warm water, a soft hand towel, two large towels, powder, clean diaper and clean clothing.

• For newly-born babies just give a sponge bath using a soft wash cloth. Older babies may be given a tub bath.

• For tub bath, line the tub with a towel to prevent baby from slipping.

• Wash and rinse the baby in this order:

face, hair and scalp, using a wash cloth as you cradle the baby in your arms.

• Wash chest, arms and stomach, soap then rinse with clear water.

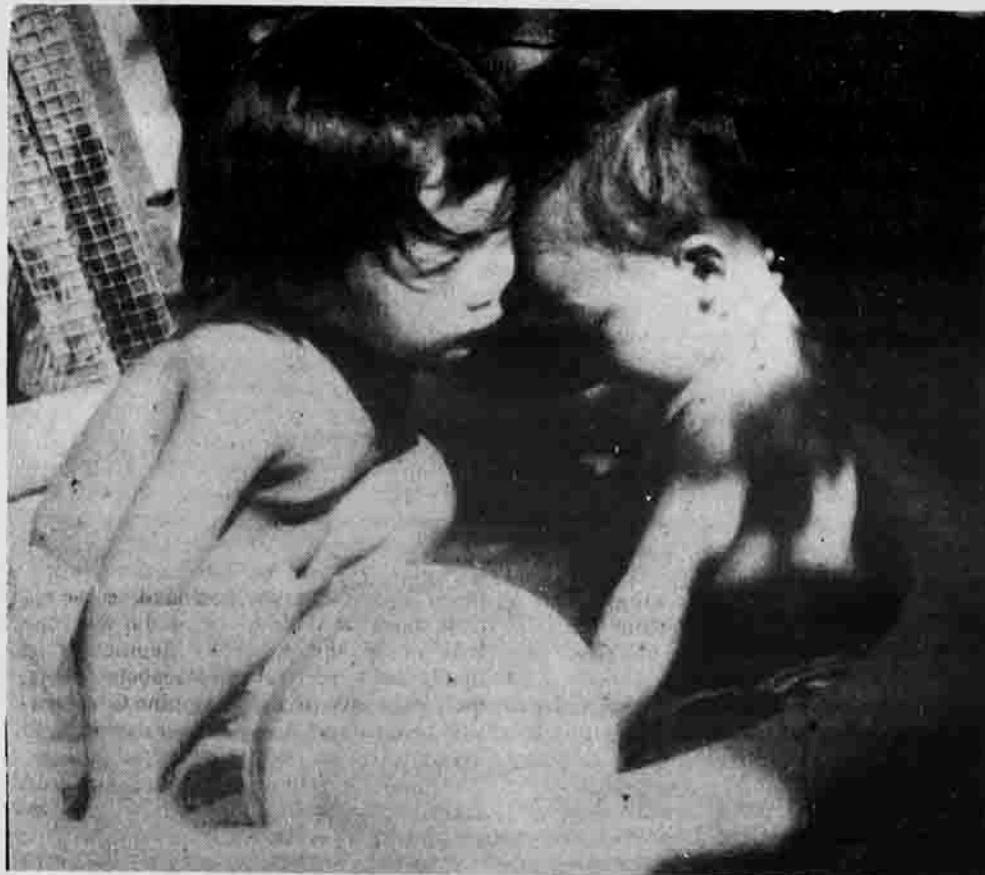
• Wash back and bottom while turning the baby over on one side. With one hand supporting the head, use the other hand to hold baby under the armpit.

• Turning the baby back on his back, wash legs, feet and toes.

• With the baby cradled in your arm, rinse all folds and creases.

• Dry by patting with a large towel. Wrap baby in a soft towel. Move the baby to a safe place where he can be dressed and diapered.

• Dress the baby gently, and slowly.





Negros folk

A FULL SCALE military offensive designed to strike at the heart of the communist rebel stronghold in Negros Occidental has triggered the evacuation of at least 15,000 hinterland residents trying to avoid the crossfire.

The exodus of mostly farming families began shortly after the military started dropping bombs on suspected rebel lairs deep in the jungles, camps that are often too deep and hazardous for soldiers to penetrate as they are protected by layers of land mines,

traps and sniper fire.

The offensive — from cannons, helicopter gunships and tora-tora and jet fighter planes — was launched by the Negros Island Command, after New People's Army guerrillas attacked and destroyed a detachment of the 7th Infantry Battalion in Canningay Village, Candoni town on April 18.

A few days after the March 29 celebration of the NPA anniversary, pictures appeared in local papers showing a large group of rebels displaying captured heavy weapons, including mortars and machineguns.

Two weeks later, about 100 NPA guerrillas suddenly attacked the company-size Canningay Village camp of the army, which guards the approach to the mountain town of Candoni.

The rebels captured only few weapons and ammunition, having unwittingly blown up the armory of the army camp.

Official military reports said six soldiers and a civilian, were killed. Rebel sources said four soldiers were captured but they were released after treatment by an NPA medical unit.

A four-year-old child, Mary Grace Shahana Maquiling, daughter of a soldier and his wife who were both killed during the fighting, is still in the hands

of the NPA after recuperating from superficial wounds and after having been rescued from a burning bunker.

Several days after the NPA attack, the Negros Island Command, in a command conference chaired by Brig. Gen. Raymundo Jarque, decided to launch an offensive.

Mobilized were the 7th IB already based in Southern Negros, one company each from battalions based in Central Negros among which are the 6th IB, 11th IB and the 61st IB and various units from other areas in the province.

These were supported by Field Artillery Unit which began bombarding suspected rebel lairs April 21, helicopter gunships consisting of Sikorsky and Tora-Tora planes.

The offensive started with incursions of soldiers into nine villages, mostly hilly and considered strategic. From here they conducted patrols and operations against the NPAs, once strafings from helicopter gunships and bombings from cannons stopped. The nine villages they are holding are Bulog, Cambugi-ot, Bawog, Taya-o, Tomina, La-a, Layugan, Haba and Banga.

Rebel sources, however, said the soldiers have not yet ventured into the mountains beyond Banga Village



Agenda for the year 2000

By E. P. PATANNE

FOR a glimpse of the 21st century the Solidaridad Publishing House of F. Sionil Jose in February 1987 held a conference among the country's leading thinkers to periscope the year 2000.

What the participants in this conference made out of the year 2000 is contained in a book, *A Filipino Agenda for the 21st Century*. The conference papers cover a wide-ranging view of the near future. Additional insights into what tomorrow holds can also be savored in *Futuristics*, journal of the Philippine Futuristics Society.

Delving into the

unknown is a ceremonial exercise with ancient beginnings here and elsewhere, from the Delphic oracles to the babaylan divinations on a pig's liver. From auguries to fortune-cookies, the reading of what lies beyond human knowledge has graduated into the modern scenario-making, the political and economic risk analyses.

What can be divined may not all be pleasant. The development engineer Eligio J. Tavanlar Sr. puts at the top of the agenda for the year 2000, the following concerns: containment of our population, search and development of new or

unused natural resources, reversal of the degradation of our environment, and structured national program focused on the poor and youth in our population.

Tavanlar says that with the population growing at 2.4% every year, we shall have 70 million by the turn of the century. He strongly suggests a zero population growth. He calls for the planned expansion of our natural productive resources so that "one hectare produces more and more until the optimum is attained, and using resources now unused through the application of sciences and technology." He also

urged "farming the seas." He has a dire forecast on the environment by the year 2037 unless its degradation is stopped. To deal with the problem of the poor and the young in our population who are unemployed, he has proposed the formation of a Filipino Peace Corps. "The most urgent need of our poor is food," says Tavanlar.

The food situation as forecast by the Department of Agriculture: by the year 2000 the Philippines will be producing between 150 and 200 cavans of paddy or unmilled rice per hectare, with an annual production of between 285

and 360 million cavans. Another projection by the NEDA, given a population of 84 million, would create a demand for rice of 8.17 million metric tons. When we were self-sufficient in rice in 1983-84, our production was 67.7 million tons. And we had a population of 52 million.

A 1984 study by the Development Academy of the Philippines projected demand for white corn in the year 2000 at 2.47 million tons; for sugar 5.25 million tons and for vegetables 3.25 million tons. Self-sufficiency in beef from 1984 levels was projected to take 15 years, but by

the year 2000 the nation may be 80% self-sufficient in milk and dairy products. The Philippines is already self-sufficient in poultry and eggs and nearly self-sufficient in pork. By the end of the century, we may be exporting these products.

Self-sufficiency in fish is not expected to be reached by the year 2000, but a flourishing processing and canning industry for the export market is just around the corner. By 2000 the major source of fish supply will be aquaculture.

On resources projection: Domestic use of wood shall have exceeded the projected

flee combat zones

Text by: Lar Trinidad
Photos by: Ariel Garcia

when narrow footpaths make entry to the suspected rebel area very difficult. One sometimes has to traverse a 'log' turned into a bridge or else fall into a deep ravine.

Narrow mountain trails affording passage for only one individual have become death traps for troops who wish to cross over into the rebel areas.

In 1985, army troopers under then Col. George Antonio Moleta, suffered 40 casualties when they tried to force their way through to the rebels' base area. Most of the military's casualties came from snipers' fire, ambushes and land mines. After a few days the soldiers were forced to go back where they came from.

The Southern Negros offensive now appears to be a long-term one, though. Col. Tranzane Palermo of the army's 7th IB said a permanent detachment will be set up in Banga village. The evacuees he said will only be allowed to return once construction of the detachment is finished.

Southern Negros, specifically the "CHICKS" area, is conceded to be the rebels' stronghold. "CHICKS"

stands for the towns of Candoni, Hinobaan, Ilog, Cauayan, Kabankalan and Sipalay.

Hardworking subsistence farmers, the evacuees tilled small plots of land, raising livestock to augment their livelihood, before the battles began.

Concerned over the plight of the evacuees, government and non-government organizations have tried to muster their re-

sources in order to be able to provide medical services, foodstuffs and other aid to the evacuees. The outbreak of diseases has compounded the problem.

This was confirmed by Josefina Labatorio of the Department of Social Welfare and Development and the Negros Relief and Rehabilitation (NRRC) which visited the areas where the evacuations were taking place. (COBRA-ANS)

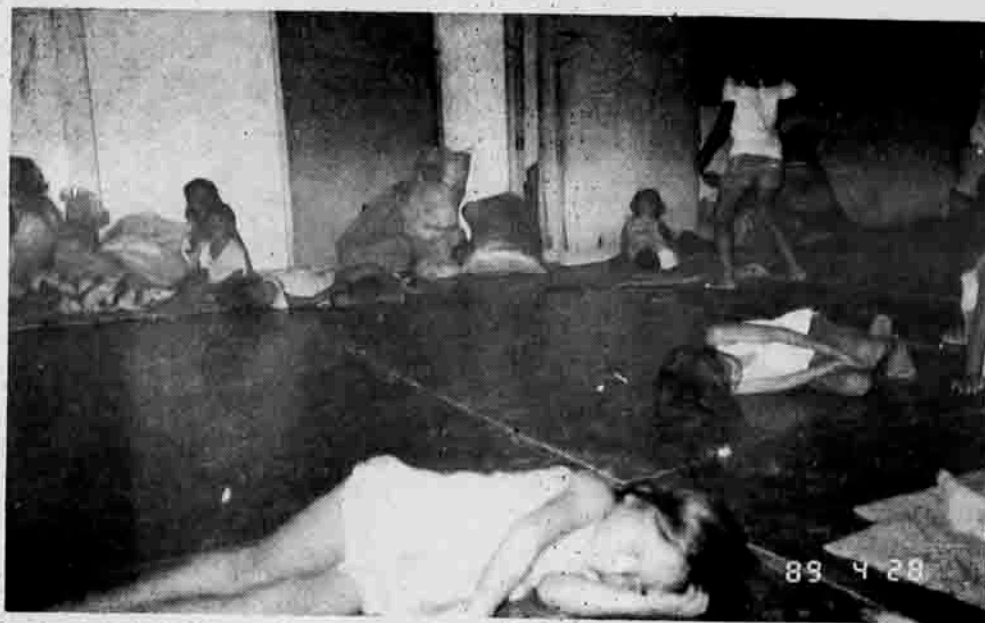
THE people photographed here are some of the more than 15,000 evacuees, mostly children, in the three towns of Sipalay, Candoni, and Cauayan in Negros. They were uprooted from their homes and herded here on the orders of Brig. Gen.

Raymundo Jarque, commanding officer of the PA 301st brigade at the height of a military operation against NPA guerillas.

Like all children of war, the children of Negros are growing up in an atmosphere of fear and uncertainty with nowhere

to go.

Where they used to breathe fresh mountain breeze and wallow in childhood bliss communing with nature (yes, even on empty stomachs) they are now traumatized by a war they have yet to understand.



consumption of 16.7 million cubic meters, although by 2000 the Philippines will be experiencing a serious shortage of timber. This shortage is already being felt.

The energy picture up to the year 2000 is going to be touch-and-go as the country moves forward to achieving the 60% threshold of energy self-reliance. The expectation is that before 1992 we shall have brought down the use of imported crude to 40% in total power generation. By 1990 non-conventional energy (bagasse, agriwaste, biogas, producer gas) will reach 20.48% of the total energy mix, conventional energy (oil, coal, hydro and geothermal) taking up 57.76%. Our oil imports average 4.5 million barrels of crude oil monthly. There is promise in the development of geothermal sources to reduce our dependence on imported crude.

Assuming "medium" population growth — from 6.8 million households in 1975 to 16.6 million by the year

2000 — there will be some 73 million Filipinos by the end of the century. GNP is projected to grow either at the postwar historical rate of 6% or at the NEDA perspective plan rate of 8% (target growth).

Income inequality is assumed either to register no change from the 1975 situation or to decline by one-fifth by the end of the 1990s. If the mid-1975 inequalities persist, the number of poor households (61% of total) will grow from 4.2 million to 5.0 million by the year 2000. NEDA forecasts poverty in the rural sector to decline from 64% in 1985 to 47% in 1992; the proportion of families falling below the poverty line will decline from 59% in 1985 to 45% by 1992.

By the year 2000, one half of the Philippine population is projected to be urbanized. Manila with a present population of 13 million and a growth rate of 6% annually will continue to attract rural migrants, beef up a squatter

population now about one-fourth of the total and exacerbate an already serious housing problem.

A wider perspective has been drawn by Sen. Leticia R. Shahani, who sees the year 2000 as the dawn of the Pacific Century. "The momentum of international politics and trade is shifting to our region," Shahani said. "Already the Japanese, the Chinese, our fellow members in ASEAN, the Taiwanese, the Koreans, the Indians, the Soviets and the Americans have indicated to play leading roles in this drama which has already begun to unfold." She forgot to mention the Australians, who have recently moved for the development of an Asia-Pacific community.

There may be a change in political leadership in 1992 — or the country would have more of the same hacienda-style management of government affairs. The idea of federalization may finally sink in to prod Congress to consider its adoption. (AE)

of scientific studies on which I rely — as a lawyer who has been a student of the problem for more than a decade — on our valid safety concerns.

"5. The decision to sue Westinghouse was made at the highest levels. It was not mine alone. Any suit on a plant costing us \$300,000 a day in interest alone is bound to be expensive; not suing to redress an injustice, even more so, in more ways than one.

"6. Dr. Gonzalez should reflect that to put the plant on line could cost \$600-M to \$2-B; that the cost of the decommissioning could be as high as \$3-B; and, that for the nuclear waste disposal problem, the U.S. allocated in 1986 the sum of close to \$1-B for a preliminary study of the site in Nevada. It would take anywhere from three to five years to upgrade the plant under state-of-the-art standards.

"In the *We Forum* case, where he was among the accused, his main worry was to go to the U.S. He was desperate to leave because of a job there. I therefore did not think in 1986 or at any time that he would ask me for a job in a country he decided to leave at the height of our struggle.

If *We Forum* would like to help weaken our chances of recovery, at this crucial phase of our suit against Westinghouse,

Saguisag

(From page 7)

well, we do believe in a free press. Still, it would look odd if Westinghouse would now present Dr. Gonzalez as its witness. We knew that he was good at providing comic relief during some of our rallies. However, our case against Westinghouse is no laughing matter, as you can see in the attached complaint. We can arrange for him to get a copy of it through our Washington, D.C., lawyers, the top American attorneys on nuclear plant litigation, if we can get his address.

"Still and all, I wish him the very best.

Sincerely,

R.A.V. SAGUISAG"

The views of Prof. Gonzalez do not reflect the editorial — and my personal stand — on the controversial issue. We were among the first to vehemently protest this Marcos-Disini monstrosity and we had been very consistent ever since.

*I would like to reassure my good friend, Rene S., that we stand foursquare behind his pursuit against Westinghouse. However, may I remind the senator that in *We Forum* we fully exercise press freedom where our columnists have no fear of any form of censorship.*

Gretchen B. mad at Leroy S.

THE movie world is again snatching another good-looking guy away from his profession. Popular television journalist and newscaster Apa Ongpin has just finished his first movie, Vision Exponent Films' "Kailan Mahuhugasan ang Kasalanan," and from the looks of it, he is now determined to pursue a career in films.

Pursuing a movie career is not actually an instant decision for Apa. During my interview with him, he revealed that his original dream was to be a movie director.

"Nu'ng nasa eskwelahan ako, nag-aaral ako ng film kasi iyon na talaga ang interes ko, not to be an actor but a director. Now, if I get offers to be an actor, I should not say no kasi it's also a way to enter the industry by knowing the people and how the industry works. Interessado talaga akong maging direktor and I would not mind being an actor for a while," he said.

In "Kailan Mahuhugasan ang Kasalanan," Apa says he has just a small role, that of a lawyer.

"Parang pampagulong character ako between Lorna (Tolentino) and Richard (Gomez). Kasi, sa time na nagkakagulo 'yung relationship nila, bigla na lang akong pumasok.

Because of his good looks, Apa has become the favorite of many television news viewers. Many were saying then that he should be in the movies. Some producers were actually interested to get his services but they were afraid ABS-CBN would not permit Apa. So, how did Vision Exponent convince Apa to appear in "Kailan Mahuhugasan ang Kasalanan?"

"I didn't have to be convinced. First of all, it's a production with Lino Brocka. Who is a fool to say no? Secondly, si Mrs. Charo-Santos Concio is the producer so siyempre family natin 'yan sa ABS-CBN. And thirdly Simon Ongpin, he's a



GRETCHEN

relative of mine, was the first one who asked me to appear in the movie and so from the first moment, I said yes na kagad."

It's not all glamour and good times in the movies. Intrigues are unavoidable and nobody's spared from it. Apa is aware of this and he says he is ready for intrigues.

"I have been a victim of intrigues before. Yeah, natatakot ako pero we have to accept the fact that intrigues are very common kahit saan in our society. Kahit journalist ako, mayro'n ding intriga eh.

Movies, ganu'n din 'yon."

His past affair with Carmi Martin will surely be a favorite subject of so many gossip hunters who will interview Apa. As a gentleman, Apa prefers not to talk about the relationship anymore. "Carmi and I are still friends and I have no regrets. I feel my relationship with her was a very good time in my life. She's a wonderful woman. Well, iyon lang ang masasabi ko really."

From "Kailan Mahuhugasan ang Kasalanan," Apa's movie career, it seems, is destined to soar to greater heights. Viva has just offered him a role in a Dina Bonnevie movie and Vision Exponent Films is said to be planning to build him up as a dramatic actor. If he becomes busy with his career in the movies, will this mean goodbye to TV journalism for Apa? Let's just wait and see.

Until now, Ruffa Gutierrez has not forgiven Dennis Da Silva. Ruffa showed that behind her sweet image, there is also that katarayan. She is so mad at Dennis for revealing in a magazine interview that he and Ruffa are really on and that they are planning to get married on July 3, that they even had a theme song and that Ruffa would disobey her mother just so she could be with him.

Ruffa branded everything that Dennis said as pure lies. She is so mad that she swears she won't accept any offer pairing her off with him.

"He doesn't respect me. He's so madal-dal. Talo pa niya ang babae. Pwede ba, huwag niya akong isama sa mga ilusyon niya," Ruffa angrily said.

Another actress who was fuming mad about what her director did to her was Gretchen Barretto.

FIZZ BIZZ



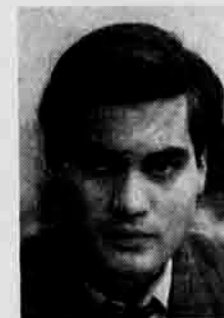
by LHAR SANTIAGO

It all happened on the set of her latest movie with Seiko which is being megged by Leroy Salvador. Gretchen was wearing a two-piece bikini which the scene required. She was so surprised when somebody suddenly cut the upper part of the bikini and her breasts showed. When she confronted the one responsible for what happened, the person said it was ordered by their director. Leroy reportedly said that the scene calls for it.

Gretchen could not do anything but cry. "Huwag naman ninyo akong ganu'nin. Hindi ako bold star," she said in a very angry voice.

Leroy reportedly added that he has also done that to Lorna Tolentino and Dina Bonnevie and it was just OK with them.

"Sila, may mga asawa't anak na sila. Eh ako, dalaga ako. What will the people say?" Gretchen said in between sobs before she walked out of the set.



APA



DENNIS

A victory for OPM artists

THE Organisasyon ng Pilipinong Mang-aawit (OPM) signed with the Commission on Immigration and Deportation a memorandum of agreement that would

require foreign artists to apply for a special working permit 60 days before staging their act here.

The agreement also stipulates the

payment of equity amounting to P2,500 per person per show but not exceeding P10,000.

This "pretty bold step," as OPM President Jim Paredes calls it, is, of course a major victory in the local artists' struggle to better their chances against foreign artists.

"Unfair naman na kapag Filipino talent ang magpeperform abroad, we pay the equity and foreigners can just perform here and get away with it," Paredes said.

The money to be garnered in the equity will be part of a bigger fund that would be allocated to help local artists. The OPM is preparing benefit programs such as hospitalization and other basic services.

"We want to make the singing profession more stable," Jim said.

There's a hitch to the whole grand design, however. The agreement is just an agreement and there's no law to back it up. It means promoters and producers are not legally liable if they fail, or opt not, to comply.

OPM remains optimistic despite that. Jim claimed producers and promoters have given them word they would support the campaign.

"Maski naman sa ibang bansa, equity first evolved as a practice before it was

SENSORS



by JOEL SARACHO

enacted into law," Jim says.

Skeptics could only keep their fingers crossed.

The agreement also dispels rumors that the OPM is against foreign artists.

"We respect talents, but we want fair treatment. Local artists can stand a good chance before foreign talents given the chance," Paredes declares.

And he knows from where he speaks. APO, of which Jim is the third member after all, has made its mark in various concert venues abroad. And that includes the Carnegie Hall.

While we're at it, can the OPM also do something about the music(?) they play on moviehouses during intermission? We have won half the battle to play original Filipino music on radio every 15 or so minutes. Maybe, it's about time that moviehouses play OPM, too, instead of those top 40s that's everywhere anyway.



APO HIKING

The sinking

(From page 4)

industry.

Problems

As noted by the Presidential Task Force on Inter-Island Shipping, there is really a lack of competent seamen, first of all. Most of the "accidents" involving domestic liners, the Senate discovered, were due to miscalculations, absence of foresight and gross negligence — in short, the incompetence — of the crew concerned, from the skipper down to the mates. And most of our seamen are incompetent because they have had no proper instruction and training in schools.

Local maritime schools, the Senate committees found out, "are mostly diploma mills and are turning out half-baked graduates, many of whom buy their way through the licensing board... Of 52 nautical training institutions, 95 percent were estimated (sic) by the MARINA Administrator to be diploma mills."

This is one for Ripley. And if despite these diploma mills, the Philippines continues to be the world's largest supplier of seamen to foreign shipping firms, it is because "foreigners prefer our seamen more for their ability to speak the English language and their acceptance of cheap wages rather than the quality of their education."

The seamen's incompetence is aggravated by the fact that, as also already noted, domestic ships' equipment (especially communications facilities) is not only lacking but in most instances antiquated. Obviously the laws requiring passenger vessels to be equipped with navigation radio, charts, compasses, radars and/or sonars have

never been religiously observed. Conducting an ocular inspection of three operating interisland ships last year, the Senate committee found that all of them had no functioning fathometer and no compass deviation table, and were using very old nautical charts, among other deficiencies. (Incidentally, two of the three vessels are also owned by Sulpicio Lines — a fact which raises the question, Why is it allowed to continue operating?)

Considering the foregoing deficiencies, together with the near obsolescence of many vessels, is it any wonder why more than 500 Filipinos die each year in "floating coffins."

The other problems of the local shipping industry are:

* **Unbalanced shipping services.** Primarily established for profit, shipping lines concentrate their services on major routes, thereby neglecting the development of areas not along or near said routes.

* **Substandard passenger service.** This refers to overloading during peak seasons like Christmas, lack of toilet facilities, low quality of food served ("almost unfit for human consumption," according to the Senate report), inadequate bedding, lack of emergency gadgets, etc.

* **Inadequate and substandard port facilities.** The Philippines is perhaps the only archipelago with so few piers that in many instances vessels have to wait for high tide to dock and undock. Existing ports, waterways, channels and rivers are not properly maintained, if at all.

* **Profit motive first.** Most local shipowners, it has been found out, are so engrossed with profit they leave much of passenger-safety concerns to the government. Contrary to their claim of a very low return

of investment (ROI), the Conference of International Shipowners Organization (CISO) says its member-firms have generally made good profits.

Gripes

On the other hand, shipping firms complain of the following: high rate of tariff or import duties; inadequate fiscal support from the government; and lack of mapping of sealanes by the government.

Shipowners would want a substantial reduction of the present tariff rates of 10 percent for imported vessels not older than 14 years and 50 percent for older ones, and the compensating tax of 20 percent regardless of the ship's age.

If they will be required to acquire newer vessels, shipowners say the government must grant them loans and/or other financing assistance at reasonable terms, not at the prevailing rates of interest.

And if they have to ply sealanes other than major ones, the government must provide them with updated navigational maps and charts, and it must intensify its mapping work for other, and safer, sealanes.

Recommendations

To the Senate committees, the Barlongay Task Force recommended: (1) strict enforcement of nautical licensing laws, and strict supervision of all marine officers and mates; (2) strict implementation of safety-at-sea rules and regulations by the PCG; (3) increase of marine insurance coverage for each vessel, depending on passenger capacity; (4) the creation of an office charged with sea-disaster operations, and another office tasked solely with the investigation of sea mishaps.

In turn, the Senate committees suggested a covering

Conference of the Philippines; second, the Aquino government. While they are in the saddle, the country will continue to be treated as a mere work-horse for the foreign master, riding an elegant calesa in the fiesta islands atmosphere. But it has always been, and always will be, the Armed Forces or the army, and the police that are employed as tools of the continuing oppression of their own people. The greatest pity is that they think, all of them: bishops, government officials, the military, that they are right when the truth is they are supporters and defenders of injustice.

Onions rot in Ecija

CABANATUAN CITY — Large-scale onion growers and exporters in Nueva Ecija have allowed their undersized onions to rot instead of selling them in the domestic market.

One of the onion growers, Felipe Cruz, a farmer-businessman who owns a 30-hectare farm in San Jose City, some fifty kilometers north of here, said he decided to throw away his undersized onions for "sound and humanitarian reasons".

Cruz said his decision was in response to appeals by small onion growers in the province to leave to them the local market so they could also convert to cash their harvest despite the declining prices of onions. Current price is only P2.00 per kilo compared to P50 or more per kilo a few months ago.

Cruz who is also in the onion export trade and who buys a sizeable portion of

local onion production said he will just concentrate on export. His other friends in the business had similarly heeded the appeal of small onion growers to leave the local market to them.

Onions for export are those with dimensions of not less than four inches in diameter. Those below this prescribed size are good only for the local market.

Nueva Ecija is one of the major producers of onion, but lack of adequate cold storage facilities and other post harvest facilities in the area have subjected the industry to extreme highs and lows, making onion growing a highly risky venture.

Onion growers become instant millionaires during lucky times; at other times they also become instant paupers. — J. N. Fernando

legislation for the following boost.

1. To prevent a repetition of *Dona Paz*-*Vector* collision, require all vessels to install modern communications equipment and require the government to establish safe sealanes, particularly in accident-prone areas.

2. To increase chances of survival in a maritime disaster, require all vessels to install lifeboats, hand flares, parachute signals and other safety devices.

3. To prevent overloading, require shipowners to construct passenger terminals for monitoring of passenger embarkation and disembarkation.

4. To ensure all the foregoing, penalize heavily all violators and, to this end, create a Maritime Safety Commission; and

5. To ensure speedy resolution of maritime cases like those filed by the survivors of the *Dona Paz* victims, design a special court for the purpose.

For its part, the Presidential Task Force on Inter-Island Shipping proposed, among others including those abovementioned, tax exemption for the acquisition of imported vessels and the reduction of common-carriers tax. These tax benefits are clearly intended to encourage local shipowners to buy newer ships to replace their aging vessels. The Task Force also recommended the deregulation of the franchising of passenger ships so as to attract additional shipowners to join the local shipping industry and give it the needed

Devout wish

All these proposals sound good and, if adopted, will surely cure the ills of the shipping industry, if not totally, at least partially. The problem is, they may just remain as proposals on pieces of paper.

It's already 16 months since *Dona Paz* sank, and it seems the question to ask now is not "What has the government done to prevent its recurrence?" but "When is the next *Dona Paz* going to happen?"

Meantime, the millions

of poor Filipinos whose only means of transportation is our interisland "floating coffins", also known as ships, can only devoutly wish to God the Aquino Administration cared more for them. Or is the present dispensation a sinking ship itself?

**Make
We Forum
a habit**

NOTICE OF EXTRA-JUDICIAL SETTLEMENT

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late Timoteo B. Medellin of Quezon City consisting of a lot covered by T.C.T. No. 97510 and a house under Tax Dec. No. New 8132 and Pd-3667; both of Quezon City, Metro Manila, have been extrajudicially settled by his surviving spouse and eight children, entered as Doc. No. 147; Page No. 31; Book I; Series of 1989, executed before Carlito V. Sembrano, Notary Public of Quezon City on April 21, 1989.

WE FORUM
April 26, May 3, 10, 1989

Republic of the Philippines
Pre-Qualification, Bids and Awards Committee
Quezon City, Metro Manila

INVITATION TO BID

Sealed bids on forms furnished by the PBAC for the herein projects will be received at the PBAC Secretariat Urban Poor Affairs Office, Quezon City until 10:00 a.m. on May 18, 1989 and then publicly opened at 2:00 p.m. of the same day:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Quezon City High School | Proposed restoration and imp't of burned Cabaldon type Building |
| 2. Champaca Street | Proposed Improvement |
| 3. Police Detachment | Proposed Completion |
| 4. Loading/Unloading Area | Proposed Construction |
| 5. Doubly Box Culvert (Bgy. Sauyo) | Proposed Construction |

Letter of Intent to Participate for the above mentioned projects to be submitted and the deadline of issuance of bid documents is up to May 12, 1989.

P.D. 1594 and its implementing rules and regulations as amended, shall govern the conduct of the bidding.

The QCPBAC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and/or any part thereof, waive any defects contained therein and accept an offer most advantageous to the City government.

(SGD.) CELSO S. CANONIGO
Chairman

WE FORUM
May 10, 1989

Defenders

(From page 10)

possible, and therefore truly independent and sovereign nations. But the Roman Catholic Church and the Aquino government through the military establishment are working to perpetuate the colonial grip of Spain and Rome on the one hand and of the US on the other hand, holding Filipinos in bondage in their own homeland.

Thus, the defenders of injustice in our country are: first, the Catholic Bishops

9 rebels killed in I. Norte

NINE guerillas of the New People's Army were killed in an encounter the other day in a remote village in Vintar, Ilocos Norte.

Of the nine casualties, only five bodies were taken to the town proper for identification.

Military reports said Scout Rangers patrolling the area ran over a suspected NPA camp shortly before the exchange of gunfire. The encounter started early afternoon and ended late in the evening. No casualty was reported on the government side.

Two other self-confessed guerillas were arrested during the encounter.

Seized in the operations were nine long firearms, rounds of ammunition and subversive documents.

The military said Vintar has become a hotbed of insurgency in the Ilocos province because of its geographic location. Vintar stands near the boundaries of nearby Cordillera region making it accessible to revolutionary organizations of other regions.

Elsewhere, the military also reported 11 other NPAs were killed in various clashes with government troops.

We Forum

NEWSBREAKS

MAY 10-11, 1989

16

Pay hike for top gov't officials to be deferred

SALARY increases for top government officials would have to be deferred as President Aquino yesterday called on her Cabinet and other government executives to

give priority to the salary of rank and file government employees.

Mrs. Aquino said whatever increase that will be mandated shall take effect only after

her term in 1992.

Earlier, Sen. Alberto Romulo and Rep. Salvador Escudero proposed that only rank and file employees up to the level of bureau directors shall

be covered by the salary standardization in the government.

If Congress enacts the proposal, it will take effect in October this year.

2-step salary increase: P30, P20--Senate 3-tiered proposal : P15, P8, P6--House

BOTH chambers of Congress yesterday continued to hold marathon session on the wage hike issue even as provincial governors stepped into the picture saying they should be consulted in the regionalization scheme.

Senate yesterday agreed to push for a two-step salary

adjustment of P30 for workers in the National Capital Region and P20 outside of Metro Manila.

Only Sen. Vicente Paterno voted against the proposal. Paterno voiced the official government position that any arbitrary increase in wages would result in mas-

sive inflation and would harshly affect business.

In the lower chamber, House Speaker Ramon Mitra denied that the House of Representatives has the P20-P13-P8 adjustment for industrial workers, major urban center workers and agricultural workers respectively. Mitra said the House is more likely to adapt the P15-P8-P6 official government offer.

Mitra also said the House's decision will be based on its own investigation and analyses and not on the threat of organized labor.

Earlier, both the militant Kilusang Mayo Uno and the moderate Trade Union Congress of the Philippines warned of a Welgang Bayan in June should Congress fail to grant their demand of P30 across

the board wage hike.

The Speaker also assailed Labor Secretary Franklin Drilon for the department's inaction on minimum wage violators.

MEANWHILE provincial governors opposed the government's move to standardize minimum wages among workers and proposed the adoption of a wage regionalization scheme instead.

According to Gov. Luis Villafuerte, President of the Governors League of the Philippines, the minimum wage increase should vary according to the needs of the different regions.

The governors said not all regions have the same rate of economic development. They insisted that workers in the provinces are mostly farmers and fishermen who do not have regular salaries. The need, they

said, is the creation of jobs and not wage increase.

The standardization proposal, according to the league, will only aggravate the present economic condition. They asserted that the wage increase will force companies and factories to close down and may result to more displacement of workers.

Manila police under fire

Western police district policemen came under fire yesterday from the city council when two aldermen denounced the alleged harassment tactics against legitimate sidewalk vendors by certain groups of lawmen.

Councilors Rogelio de la Paz and Julio Logarta, Jr. assailed the alleged harassment of licensed hawkers by policemen to forced

them allegedly to pay up.

The two aldermen took turns in lambasting the lawmen, particularly those from the city hall detachment for their alleged incessant arrests of legitimate street hawkers licensed by city hall.

De la Paz and Logarta said the "gestapo-like" manner in which the vendors are being harassed has re-

sulted in the deprivation of the vendors to earn their livelihood.

Council president Vice Mayor Danilo B. Lacuna, however, took the cudgels for the policemen saying that the police was only following orders from Mayor Mel Lopez, Jr. to rid the street of obstructions and illegal sidewalk vendors.



ENVIRONMENTAL COURSE FOR MINERS. Lawyer Delfin Gonzales, vice-president of the Chamber of Mines, and Environment and Natural Resources Undersecretary Celso Roque (left to right) lead a training course for miners from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in techniques in stabilizing slopes of open pit mines which are shared by geo-technical experts from the European Economic Community (EEC). Also in photo (from left) are Bureau of Mines Assistant Director Pedro Caleon, and EEC experts Pat Forbes, Andy Houghton, Francis Legge and Bram Breur.



PRES. AQUINO



SEN. ROMULO



GOV. VILLAFUERTE

Osmeña presses PAL's privatization

SENATOR John Osmeña yesterday reiterated his call to privatize the Philippine Airlines and end its monopoly as he accused the airline management of negligence as some 200 passengers were left unattended overnight when an airplane was refused landing in Mactan Airport in Cebu and had to return to Manila Friday evening.

"The passengers had a long wait. But they were not even provided with water. PAL could have given them sandwiches, coffee and milk for the babies,"

the Cebuano lawmaker explained.

In newspaper reports yesterday, a PAL spokesman was quoted to have said that the state-owned airline company should not be held responsible for its being unable to land in Cebu.

The passengers were flown back to Manila and placed an SOS call to Sen. Osmeña's residence at 5 a.m. last Saturday.

Osmeña was told that no one from PAL stayed up with the passengers through the long night. The pas-

sengers were reportedly forced to sit it out at the domestic airport and wait for the first available flight to Cebu at 6 a.m.

"Not only did PAL fail to inform the passengers of how and when they can be flown to Cebu," Osmeña further said, adding that the passengers only realized the next morning that they would not be boarding the first available flight.

"PAL's neglect," Osmeña stressed, "reflects its callous disregard for the comfort of its own passengers." (O.O. Almenario)