

THE PEASANT STRUGGLE FOR POWER IN THE PHILIPPINES: AN OVERVIEW

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INTRODUCTION

March 29, 1981 marks the 12th anniversary of the New People's Army (NPA). It appears as the most dramatic manifestation of the Filipino peasantry's struggle for power, and a logical successor to the previous numerous peasant uprising revolts, rebellions. Together with the Bangsa Moro Army (BMA)**, they represent the continuing struggle of the Filipino peasantry for power.

Since its establishment by the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP-MLMZD) on March 29, 1969 the NPA has been a consistent force for the expression and pursuit of peasant demands.

Available CPP-MLMZD documents clearly indicate the peasant form and content of the struggle for power of the NPA as the military arm of the CPP-MLMZD.

In waging a people's war, the Party relies mainly on the mass support of the peasantry, especially the poor peasants and farm workers. The Party develops the revolutionary forces in the countryside to destroy the pillars of feudalism and the armed counter-revolution there, and to encircle the cities from the revolutionary base areas until the people's democratic forces are ready to seize power from the cities. (Constitution of the CPP-MLMZD).

The main force of the Philippine revolution is the peasantry. It is the largest mass force in a semi-feudal and semi-colonial country. Without its powerful support, the people's democratic revolution can never succeed. Its problem cannot but be the main problem of the people's democratic revolution.

The main armed contingents of the Philippine revolution can be raised only by waging a peasant war. Thus: it is

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**We are not treating here the BMA because of its different tradition which would not be within the context of this paper. For further discussion on this matter, please see Ajas Ahmad, "Class and Colony in Mindanao: Political Economy of the 'National Question' (A Case in the Politics of Genocide)."

inevitable that the vast majority of Red fighters of the NPA can only come from the peasantry.

The people's democratic revolution is essentially a peasant war because its main political force is the peasantry, its main problem is the land problem and its main source of Red fighters is the peasantry. (Amado Guerrero: Philippine Society and Revolution).

The main content of the people's democratic revolution is the fulfillment of the peasants' demand for land and the eradication of the various forms of feudal and semi-feudal exploitation.

It is therefore the prime duty of the people's democratic government to fulfill the aforementioned demand by implementing a comprehensive land reform program whose essential goal is the free distribution of land to the poor peasants and lower-middle peasants and the promotion of productive cooperation among the peasant masses. (Revolutionary Guide for Land Reform).

According to reports, the NPA is now active in 40 provinces. Government and military estimates range the number of NPA regulars from 3,000 to 5,000. According to "Statement on the 11th Anniversary of the New People's Army" dated March 29, 1980 it says:

Our guerilla fronts have a combined population of more than 10 million. We effectively reach more than half of the people here, and they support the revolutionary movement in various ways. The core of this mass base consists of some 40,000 mass activists and some 800,000 active members of the revolutionary mass organization.

Recent newspaper reports show that as far as Isabela, Cagayan, Central Luzon, Bataan, the Southern Tagalog Provinces, the Bicol Region, the Visayan islands, including the Negros provinces, and more recently in Mindanao, in particular the Davao provinces, the NPA has staged mass peasant demonstrations and rallies and have temporarily taken over the town halls and confiscated firearms or engaged the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) in gun battles and encounters.

In areas where they are or have been active, rent reduction and anti-usury campaigns have been initiated benefitting considerably many poor landless peasants. They have also helped in the increase of wages of farm workers.

In areas that have experienced these campaigns, many peasants remember the NPA with nostalgia. They become the positive comparison to the many abusive AFP soldiers when the latter take over control of these areas during military operations.

Why has the NPA attracted so many peasants – not only peasants but also students, intellectuals, professionals, even nuns and priests, who have joined its ranks?

What has occasioned its rapid increase in number and its spread in so many areas? Political analysts say that the NPA has expanded tremendously since the proclamation of Martial Law. It must be noted that the main reason for the imposition of Martial Law was precisely to combat more effectively the NPA. (See Proclamation No. 1081, dated September 21, 1972).

Who are the Filipino peasants? What are their demands and aspirations? Why have they been struggling for power? Why do numerous Filipino peasants find the NPA as the most effective expression of their demands and aspirations and struggles against which all peasant groups, organizations, and movements pale in comparison?

Let us go back in time and try to review the numerous attempts of the Filipino Peasantry to struggle for power. Let us examine briefly the actors of these events, the form and content of their struggles. Let us look into the material basis of these struggles. Perhaps they will give us some clues to understand better the current peasant unrest and the agrarian revolution that is brewing in our countryside.

SOCIO-HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Spanish colonial period before the Revolution of 1896 showed two general types of peasant revolts and uprisings.

Those of the first type were described as the "ENCOUNTER" types (1565-1663).

It was during this period that the Filipino peasantry was being confronted by new forms of economic, social and political formations, such as the establishment of the encomiendas and later on the imposition of the tribute and corvee system.

Other determinant factors were the Spanish demand for free labor for the galleon trade, which overshadowed the development, at this period, of the hacienda economy. Because of the shortage of labor – one of the chief characteristics of pre-modern Philippines, the Spanish colonial administration had to exact free labor from the peasantry for its economic, religious and political endeavors. Because of this the peasantry had to be dislocated from its regular agricultural cycle, and new form of controls had to be established against which the peasantry revolted.

It was this disruption rather than the issues on land which occasioned the revolts and rebellions. Covert resistance, for example, was in the form of "Philippinization," or selective borrowing of the preferred Spanish

culture. Overt rejection took the form of retreat to the interiors. Those who retreated were later on called *remontados* or *montestas*, as they called those who inhabit the hinterland of many Rizal towns. Many of our national cultural communities belong to this tradition.

Nativistic revolts such as those of *Tamblot*, *Bankaw*, *Tapar* and *Dagohoy* incorporated a demand to return to the indigenous religion and culture, which was within their control and comprehension. The immediate appeal and success of these revolts reflected the distance from Spanish center of power and hence the weakness of Spanish influence.

Revolts against the new intervention in the life of the peasantry were: the *Pampanga Revolt* of 1584 against forced labor in the *Ilocos* mines, the *Sumuroy* rebellion in *Samar* (1649) against forced labor in the *Cavite* shipyards, the 1661 *Pangasinan* and *Ilocos* revolts against taxes and forced labor, and the revolts again in *Pangasinan*, but this time spreading to the *Cagayan Valley* in 1717 to 1719, and in *Pangasinan* once more in 1762-1764.

It was only toward the second half of the 18th century that the revolts and uprisings took a more distinctly agrarian character. The Land issue became a major grievance, identifying a marked departure from the first phase. The rise of the value of land as a commercial commodity was reflected in the expansion of the friar estates. In *Cavite* alone, a total of 48,243 hectares of the best agricultural lands was appropriated from the peasantry. Land usurpation became the order of the day. The Filipino peasant was dispossessed of his land rights in several devious ways, besides outright and violent landgrabbing methods. Many subsistent peasants found themselves either dispossessed of their lands or were subjected to land rent. Feudal exploitation under share tenancy within the haciendas were exemplified by peasant demands for the lowering of land rents, protests against usury and false measurements of shares during harvests.

The entry of the Chinese mestizos into the agricultural sphere as landowners brought increasing monetization in the agrarian economy and through their aggressive commercial practices captured whatever limited surplus existed, allowing them to become landowners especially via *de pacto de retroventa*. Beginning in the 18th century and toward the 19th century, there was an increasing concentration of land in the hands of the mestizos creating new friction between them and the indigenous population. In many cases they were already the *inquilinos* or direct lessors of the friar estates, while the Filipino peasants were the actual cultivators. This created further social stratification in what was already a destabilized traditional peasant society.

It was also during this period that Philippine agriculture was

integrated into the global capitalist system. From a basically subsistent agriculture the transition to a distinctly feudal mode of agricultural production which was partially export-oriented but for the most part for domestic consumption, introduced Philippine agriculture in the world market. Already sugar and tobacco although produced under feudal rather than capitalist arrangement were exported under a Spanish policy of monopolies. This fostered more intensive development of agriculture in response to its link with the capitalist economy.

The Manila-India trade brought about by British capitalism finally culminated in the British occupation of Manila in 1760 – another factor which facilitated the linkage to the global market system of Philippine agriculture.

Thus crop production increased because of the impetus of a commercialized agriculture accompanied by a rapid population growth, which led to high land rents and increasing indebtedness of the share tenants.

Another feature which added to the disruption of traditional peasant economy was the civil incorporation of estates. The civil incorporation of the Calamba estate into a British Company led to the eviction of tenants.

The support of social bandits, and the practice of many peasants in petty thievery, pilferage of crops and other forms of banditry, became a ready response to their increasing exploitation.

These instabilities resulted in different forms of peasant struggle e.g. reformism – an attempt to restore the status quo of dependent relations with landlords against the impersonal and in-cash kind of relations.

Notable during the agrarian revolts was the revolt of 1745 which raised the land issue against the friar haciendas and which mobilized the peasants of Cavite, Bulacan, Laguna, Batangas, and Rizal. The Guardia de Honor of Pangasinan, Tarlac, Nueva Ecija, Ilocos (1886-1900) although dominantly millenarian contained agrarian issues and an incipient class consciousness in their anti-*ilustrado* demands. The Basi Revolt in Ilocos (1807) also directed its fury against the *principalia*, composed of those who became the main agents of the colonial rulers and who already incorporated into themselves the class status of the ruling powers.

While the class contradictions between the peasants and the colonial rulers and their local representatives, the *principalia* were apparent, especially in the land issues, there was also the beginnings of unity between the peasantry and the *principalia* in their common struggle against the Spanish colonialists. The Diego/Gabriela Silang Revolt of Ilocos (1762-63), for example, was *principalia*-led, and was directed against Spanish abuses.

This unity provided the Revolution of 1896 its nationalist

(anti-colonial) and democratic (anti-feudal) content.

The eight provinces where the Revolution of 1896 started were the areas where Spanish exploitative impact was most intense in terms of appropriation of the peasantry's limited "surplus." The agrarian conditions were oppressive, and the ilustrado class was capable and willing to lead the peasantry.

It was not anymore a mere peasant revolt; it was a revolution. It did not merely demand land rights within the context of a peasant economy, it demanded independence, the establishment of a new social order.

At its height, according to one source, 400,000 peasant revolutionaries participated. They comprised the main force of the Revolution of 1896. The peasants did not identify the inquilinos nor the local landlords as their class enemies, but as their patrons. They relegated to some future date their immediate agrarian demands for the sake of national liberation against colonial rule. The revolutionary army provided them with the discipline and organization which led to Spanish defeat, only to be coopted by the new US imperialist power in connivance with the vacillating and indecisive ilustrado class.

Although the peasant army was disbanded, the first two decades of American rule were confronted by several peasant revolts and uprisings which continued the demands of the Revolution of 1896, but due to the changing social conditions, assumed different forms.

The Bagong Katipunan (1901-1904) in Bulacan and Rizal continued the anti-colonial battlecry and continued to resist American rule. Sakay's Republic (1902-1906) in Bulacan, Rizal, Cavite, Laguna and Batangas was another manifestation. So were the Pulajanes of Samar, Leyte, Cebu and Bohol; the Colorums of Surigao and Agusan; the Babaylanos of Negros and Panay, which assumed nativistic forms in their anti-colonial, anti-principalia struggles.

This period also witnessed the establishment of peasant organizations (without arms), such as the *Kusug Sang Imol Mainawaon* of Negros Occidental (1923) which brought together peasants in mutual aid cooperation as well as in common demands for higher wages.

The *Kapisanan Makabola Makarinag* of Nueva Ecija (1928) advocated a secret people's army to lead successful local uprisings which would provoke mass actions leading to wholesale property redistribution.

The Philippine National Association of Tayug, Pangasinan (1928) advocated armed uprising, spontaneous revolution and an anti-ilustrado, anti-military (constabulary) position.

The millenarian *Intrencherado* (Iloilo, 1927) was anti-elite and anti-alien merchant.

As we can see, the first two decades of American rule did not result in any new changes of peasant oppression. For this reason, the response of the peasantry continued to be the same, this time, however, with more sophistication learned from their participation in the Revolutionary Army of 1896.

Land concentration and accumulation continued unabated with the sham American land reform, purportedly to buy out the Friar Estates and redistribute these to the peasants. The Friars Land Act did not give land ownership to the peasants but to the inquilinos and to the newly-established American corporations as well as to certain key persons in the American colonial government.

Examples of large estates were: Hacienda Lian – 7,799.8 hectares, Buenavista Estate (Bulacan) – 27,407.2 hectares, San Pedro Tunasan (Laguna), 2,286.7 hectares, Dinalupihan Estate (Bataan) – 4,125 hectares.

The land concentration further increased the rate of share tenancy relationship. The land policies of the Americans assured the continuation of feudal arrangements and the growth of a Filipino elite landlord class now gradually being Americanized through a system of colonial education.

The entrenchment of capitalist relation was further strengthened with a vigorous development of export crops production which was institutionalized by a free trade policy.

The homesteading program of the government which opened the Mindanao Moro homeland to Filipino settlers created its own problems. (See Aijas Ahmad, *Ibid*).

The successful October Revolution in Russia (1917) had its impact also on the Philippine socio-political situation.

The Communist Party of the Philippines was founded by Evangelista in 1930. However, even before this, the emergence of peasant unions, associations with a distinct class orientation, were already proliferating.

In 1917 the *Unyon ng Magsasaka* (Bulacan) raised the issues of tenancy and usury; in 1919 the *Anak-Pawis* in Pampanga, the *Union de Aparceros de Filipinas* in Bulacan, the *Kusog Sang Imol Mainawaon* in Negros Occidental; in 1922 was the first tenants' Congress of the *Katipunan ng mga Manggagawa at Magsasaka sa Pilipinas (KMMP)*. In 1928 it changed its name to *Katipunan Pambansa ng mga Magbubukid sa Pilipinas (KPMP)* under the leadership of Manahan and Feleo.

Together with the Socialist Party (1929) and the *Aguman Din Maldong Talapogobra* (AMT-1930), the KPMP and the CPP merged in 1938 to present a united front against colonialism and landlordism.

Meantime, Tugunan (Manila-Bulacan-Tayabas-Laguna-Pampanga-Nueva Ecija-Cavite) led by an ex-newspaperman, a former member of the CPP,

mobilized 97,000 members, both peasant and workers along revolutionary social and economic objectives.

The *Katipunan ng Anak-Pawis* of Laguna-Tayabas led by Teodoro Asedillo, a former CPP member who was forced to flee to the countryside as a result of his participation in a workers' strike, and Nicolas Encallado came under strong CPP influence.

Robin Hood-type outlaw band of peasants like the Lope de la Rosa Band of Bulacan-Nueva Ecija slipped in and out of the already growing numbers of peasant organizations in the area.

Side by side with the nativistic movements like the Jesus-Maria-Jose (Soldiers of Christ) and the Colosa-led Tayug uprising of 1931 were the politically inclined Sakdalistas (1935) who participated in the elections of 1934 and raised three main issues: against colonial education, US economic control, and military bases. They promised the peasant followers the confiscation of large landholdings to be redistributed to the landless. In the 1935 plebiscite they campaigned for electoral boycott in accordance with their demand for absolute independence. Forced by repression, they responded through an armed uprising which spread out to many provinces, only to be violently quelled.

Peasant militant action, while limited in its armed action, engaged in strikes, attacking landlords' granaries, demonstrations to seek redress for grievances, arson in cane fields, and legal court cases. Generally non-violent, it pursued moderate objectives. Violence was more local than widespread, reforms and violent protests rather than rebellion or revolution.

The AMT, KPMP, the Socialist Party even fielded candidates in the 1940 elections and won 9 mayorships. The Sakdals, too, participated in the 1933 elections.

While the socio-economic conditions of the peasantry had not improved but rather worsened, the mixture of force and intimidation, the moderate legislation, the increased militarization, and the deceptive Social Justice Program of Quezon, as well as the organization of landlords' associations and private armies like *Cawal Ning Capayapaan* forced the peasantry to wait for the opportune time and the favorable material conditions before rising up again in arms during the Japanese occupation with the establishment of the HUKBALAHAP.

It was during the struggle against the Japanese invaders that the peasants were able to establish control and power once again over their lands. Landlords who collaborated with the Japanese, and who fled to the countryside, were dispossessed of their lands and property. The Huks controlled and liberated many towns and municipalities, especially in Central Luzon and did not need the Americans as their liberators.

Soon the peasantry were to experience a new betrayal from their basically non-peasant leadership, when instead of pursuing their objectives and goals to their ultimate conclusion, the new American-sponsored Philippine Republic trapped them into a parliamentary struggle, only to be repressed violently later on, after they were lulled into unpreparedness (See "Peasant War in the Philippines").

Many things have been written about the demise of the peasant struggle at this period until the early 1950s and the rhetorics are still very much alive. Many of the leading actors are still alive and have expressed their views. Suffice to say that the peasant victories before, during and after the Japanese occupation were phyrnic victories.

US imperialism, in its hegemonic desire to maintain leadership in the capitalist countries, could not allow the victory of the peasants to be sustained. They had to be crushed, and new peasant groups like the Federation of Free Farmers (1953) as well as new labor organizations, had to be sponsored to counteract the so-called communist menace.

The victory of the Communist Party of China and the People's Liberation Army under the leadership of Mao Zedong in 1949 frightened US imperialism. Although the Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas (PKP) continued to maintain the remnants of the HUKBALAHAP, now the Hukbong Magpapalaya ng Bayan (HMB) and started to reorganize the peasants under the Pambansang Kaisahan ng mga Magbubukid (later to be succeeded by the Malayang Samahan ng Magsasaka (Masaka) in the 1960s), its weakened leadership and its gravely battered organizational structures could not anymore provide the class leadership to the peasantry. The peasantry had to wait for another time, another place when the material basis would allow its new rebirth.

Meantime, reformist organizations which did not raise the peasant demands to their global and systematic levels continued to come and go. In the 1960s, eight (8) major peasant organizations formed themselves into the Philippine Council for Agricultural Workers (PCAW-ALU, CIO, FFF, MFL, NUPAAW and PLUM) modeled according to American standard labor unions.

As the oppression of the peasants was heightened by global economic crises, sporadic, spontaneous peasant uprisings, very local in nature occurred. Members of the Lapiang Malaya were massacred. The Monkees and the Beatles fought it out in Central Luzon in an effort to neutralize peasant unrests. In Mindanao, the Ilagas were established as the Muslims established the Mindanao Independence Movement (MIM).

In 1968, the CPP (MLMZD) was reestablished and in 1969 the New People's Army (NPA) was inaugurated.

The late 60s and the early 70s witnessed the growing militancy of the oppressed sectors of Philippine society. Peasants, workers, students, jeepney drivers, urban poor staged mass rallies, demonstrations, protests, pickets, human blockades, etc. The FFF at the height of its activities had over 200,000 members and a mass base of 3 to 4 million, sufficient for it to establish its political party, the *KAMAYAN* Party, and to field candidates in Mindanao, in particular, the Davao Provinces.

In Bais, Negros Oriental (1971) the struggles of the sugar workers at the different haciendas also culminated in the trap of participating in the November 1971 elections under the banner of the Concerted Action Group – with the false illusions that power does not come from the barrel of a gun, and the deceptive slogan of “ballot offensive-bullet defensive.”

The *MASAKA*, the *KASAKA*, the FFF, FARM, FLRF, HUKVETS, FAITH, AMA continued to pursue reformist lines hoping to influence a basically landlord-controlled and dominated government to accede also to the conservative demands – even when they were generally denied, and stifling the growing anti-feudal, anti-fascist, anti-imperialist fervor of the peasantry.

The nativistic and millenarian types also continue to exist – Lapiang Malaya, the Ibong Adarna, the CRAE and the many other Rizalist cults.

On September 21, 1972 Martial Law was declared and the ranks of the basically peasant-dominated NPA rose with the entry of numerous workers, students and professionals.

While it has suffered setbacks, it has also been able to overcome these and is now the most effective peasant organization in the country.

CONCLUSION

We have seen the Filipino Peasantry in its struggle for power to have undergone a metamorphosis – its actors have developed/changed characteristics, and the form and content of its struggles have manifested themselves differently at different times according to the new material conditions prevailing.

From nativistic forms that wanted a return to the old order of things that are within their comprehension and under their control – whether mystical or real to the millenarian movements – some still exist today – that looks to a “peasant Utopia” that is a free village, untrammelled by tax collectors, labor recruiters, large landowners, officials with “dreams of deliverance, the vision of a *mahdi* who would deliver the world from tyranny” (Eric Wolf: *On Peasant Rebellions*); of a Divine Master who

would lead them to the New Jerusalem in Dinagat Island, Surigao. (PBMA-Philippine Benevolent Missionary Association).

From a localized type of revolt and rebellion, parochial and limited in their demands, the peasantry has gone beyond mere class interests and has advocated structural and radical social transformation.

Even outside CPP and NPA influence, a group of peasant leaders and representatives could issue a Manifesto in 1977 stating,

Our most urgent and most basic problem today is the problem of oppressive structures in the social, economic, political, cultural and even religious fields. A very small but highly privileged minority of Filipino families and some foreign corporations and establishments have concentrated in their hands practically all the wealth and power of our land.

The result has been our mass impoverishment and maldevelopment.

Neo-colonialism, indeed that worldwide structure of the entire economic, social and cultural system, finds us a victim participating as an exploited partner. It is our principal and biggest enemy that keeps us impoverished and our country and our people maldeveloped. It is however not our immediate enemy. Rather, our immediate enemy is semi-feudalism and local capitalism, the twin props of neo-colonialism.

Because of the systematic tentacles of these forces of impoverishing maldevelopment, our people have been polarized into two sharply contrasted dichotomies, namely: we the oppressed and they the oppressors; or, we who are many who want change, and they who are so few who want the obtaining order maintained.

Only nationalism with a realistic nationalist force can effectively counter these vestiges of colonialism. Such a force demands that we the peasantry, the bigger mass of our people, is effectively involved.

As our country is primarily agricultural, we the broad mass of the population are so imbedded in the complex agrarian reality that any genuine people's revolution is imaginable only with us and our reality. Any revolution without our effective and leading participation is elitist. Any change beyond us is nothing but temporary. And justly, we can adequately struggle only when this is waged with and within our reality.

Yet our nationalist force must presuppose a coalesced participation of all the oppressed, each one aiming at the destruction of global imperialism (neo-colonialism as it is manifested within our political reality). But likewise we must recognize that firstly, we have to liberate ourselves from this global oppression as it has transmuted itself into local and immediate bondage.

Such a coalesced aspiration however must forestall a deceptive unity. The many sectors among the oppressed have each uniquely distinct and at times even contradictory interests. We must identify these distinctions sooner so as to foster convergence for a multiple yet comprehensively objective leadership. We must together build a truly strong united effort but likewise we must eventually account one and all with the blessings of liberation.

Anything less will stir a cycle of vicious violence between the new breed of oppressors against a continuing breed of oppressed masses. Usually the latter are we – the peasantry. The history of our country is replete with this regrettable consequence of a struggle fought but never won together.

The Filipino Peasantry has been always the small agricultural producers with simple farming equipments and with family labor produce mainly for consumption and to fulfill obligations to the holders of political and economic powers.

Included in this general definition are five components, namely:

- a. relationship to land – some form of control. Landlords are not needed to establish the fact of peasantry.
- b. family farm – a combined production-consumption unit; the family being the production-team of the farm.
- c. an occupation that is generally independent of the market economy. Although many of the jobs done by the peasant are also done by other occupational groups, the specificity of the peasant's work lies in its unique combination.
- d. village structure which is characterized with members being born into a single community, undergoing similar life-experiences and necessarily involved in close, personal interaction with a consequent absence of anonymity.
- e. the peasantry is a "pre-industrial social entity."

Peasant action especially in the last few decades can be characterized as an independent class action where the initiative is from them and the corresponding organizational structures are created by them and the leadership is within their ranks; or it can also be a guided political action in which non-peasants, as in the case of the *ilustrados* of the Revolution of 1896, assumes the leadership and the directing influence in order to achieve common aims and goals. "The common element found in all these different types of movements is the existence of a closely-knit group of activists, having its own impetus, specific organizational structure, aims and leadership – a group for which the peasantry is an object of leadership or manipulation." (Shanin: Peasants and Peasant Societies).

It could also be fully spontaneous, amorphous political action in some form, of local riots or passivity.

Finally, guerrilla warfare as the most suitable form for the expression of armed peasant action has been seen and recognized.

Yet the essentially peasant character of guerilla warfare provides not only its strength but also its weaknesses: segmentation, lack of crystallized ideology and aims, lack of stable memberships. These

essential weaknesses may be overcome by the injection of a hard core of professional rebels, making the revolt into guided political action. The professional rebels' nationwide ideological and organizational cohesions, their stability and zeal and their ability to work out a long-term strategy may enable them to unite the peasantry, sometimes transforming its revolt into a successful revolution. (Shanin: op. cit.)

It is in this context that the NPA fits. Having incorporated peasant demands in their Revolutionary Guide for Land Reform, they have further systematized these and incorporated these further into wide-ranging, encompassing objectives and aims that even millenarians may be able to recognize their aspirations.

The NPA's consistency in their agrarian revolution has also contributed to their attraction especially in cases where rent reduction, and even land redistribution are effected immediately.

But even beyond these basically peasant demands, they have raised the levels of class consciousness of the peasantry and provided the opportunities of identifying the problems not only from a merely land or agrarian point of view, but also as structural and systemic problems which can only be resolved in favor of the peasantry through armed struggle.

The many experiences of the peasantry in frustrating parliamentary procedures which only resulted in their further impoverishment and dispossession have taught many of them that the only way is the armed struggle way, that the only way to destroy the oppressive semi-feudal mode of production is the total and radical change of the capitalist system of which they are the primary victims of exploitation, to a more humane and equitable system now represented by a socialist form of economy and government.

While we do not say that the NPA is the panacea to all peasant problems, and while we do not deny the existence of other types of peasant manifestation of their demands and aspirations — we submit that it is only the NPA that has systematically formulated the over all and wide ranging demands of the peasantry and incorporated them into a workable program of action with the direct and immediate participation of the peasants themselves, and have further raised their peasant demands and aspiration into an anti-feudal, democratic, anti-imperialist, nationalist, and anti-bureaucrat-capitalist struggle.