

# THE TINGGIANS OF ABRA AND CELLOPHIL A SITUATION REPORT

Richard Dorral\*

FOR VJP

We the people of Be-ew are poor. All we have now are the mountains, trees, rivers and especially our freedom. All these the CRC is threatening to take away from us.

Demetrio Lubigis, Elder from Tubo

## THE TINGGIANS: A PROBLEM OF NUMBERS

The Tinggians of Abra are a distinctive national cultural community with their own dialects, cultural traditions and political systems based on communal decision-making led by village elders and an intricate system of peace pacts governing intertribal relations. They are closely related to the other cultural communities indigenous to the Cordilleras of Northern Luzon. They live in largely self-sufficient, valley-bottom villages, and their economy is based primarily on irrigated wet-rice cultivation, some kaingin-making, hunting, river fishing, livestock rearing, and handicrafts.

### *Faulty Census Figures*

The most recent national population census (1975) records 38,348 Tinggians (recorded in the census as "mother tongues"), but a closer examination of census data reveals disturbing inconsistencies. For example, in the 1960 census the Tinggians comprised only 21.8 percent of the province's population (the rest being mostly Ilokanos) whereas in 1975 their proportion was 26.09 percent which was slightly lower compared with the 1970 figure of 27.87 percent.

Research conducted by a resident anthropologist in Abra has more realistically estimated the 1975 Tinggian population at 54,254 (36.9%). The official census data is in error by as much as 41.48 percent. Tinggians now form the majority ethnic group in 16 of Abra's 27 municipalities (see Appendix 1) and Tinggian municipalities (defined as those having at least 66.7 percent Tinggian population) comprise 79.11 percent of Abra while Ilokanos occupy 14.4 percent.

### *PD 410: The Tinggians Are Excluded*

Presidential Decree No. 410 issued on March 11, 1974 declared ancestral lands owned and cultivated by the nation's cultural minorities as alienable and disposable. The Tinggians of Abra were not mentioned in the

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\*Ph.D. Candidate, University of Minnesota.

decree confirming their long held fears that there is a deliberate attempt to make it appear that Abra is an Ilokano province. They petitioned the President for inclusion but their letters have remained unanswered.

## CELLOPHIL RESOURCES CORPORATION: THE HERDIS APPROACH TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF "GOD-FORSAKEN" PLACES

We went into pioneering industries because we wanted to do our share in the economic development of the country. It is an admitted fact that the President and myself are very close friends, and this personal relationship has made us aware of our responsibility in helping government speed up the industrialization and development of the economy in God-forsaken places. (Business Day, January 20, 1978)

Herminio T. Disini, Chairman of Herdis Management and Investment Company

### *Herdis: Herminio T. Disini*

Herminio T. Disini, 43, who hails from Narvacan, Ilocos Sur, founded Herdis, Inc., a management-consulting firm, in 1969. In 1970, the firm set up its first business venture, the Philippine Tobacco Filters Corporation, with a bank loan of ₱20,000. Today Herdis comprises over 30 companies and subsidiaries which are involved in a wider range of activities. By 1976, *Business Day* (January 17, 1978) reported that the Herdis Group ranked 51 in sales among the nation's top 1000 corporations, and its total consolidated assets totalled ₱1,042 billion ranking it 15. Disini has always resolutely denied that his Group's success may in anyway be attributed to his golfing relationship with the President, or to his wife's being the first cousin of the First Lady and a physician of the First Family.

### *Cellophil Appears in Abra*

In the months immediately following the declaration of martial law on September 22, 1972, jeeps marked "Cellophil" and "Herdis" accompanied by elements of the Malacañang Guard conducted extensive surveys in Abra's upland areas. On May 4, 1973 Cellophil Resources Corporation (CRC) was incorporated and on October 15, 1973 the Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources awarded to it Timber and Pulpwood License Agreement (TPLA) No. 261 covering 99,565 hectares of largely Benguet pine forests in Abra and Kalinga-Apayao (see Appendix 2). The TPLA apparently ignored an existing forestry regulation that prior to the granting of any license the private rights (ancestral lands) of cultural minorities within the concession must be identified and excluded from the concession (*Forestry Administrative Order No. 11 (Rev.)*, 1970).

There is evidence that CRC surveyors entering the concession with their already agreed upon maps were surprised to find so many people living in the concession (at least 8,000).

On January 11, 1974 a CRC sister company called Cellulose Processing Corporation was incorporated and on March 11 of that year it was granted 99,230 hectares of land adjacent to CRC's concession in Abra, Kalinga-Apayao, Mountain Province, Ilocos Norte and Ilocos Sur. Company officials admit that this is a "dummy" company established to get around the constitutional limitation of 100,000 hectares per private logging company. CRC has thus effective jurisdiction over 198,975 hectares of which 47 percent lie in Abra, 36 percent in Kalinga-Apayao and 10 percent in Mountain Province (see Appendix 2).

On May 2, 1974 CRC signed in Switzerland a contract with a consortium of European banks and financiers who agreed to finance up to 80 percent of the project's ₱1,357 billion cost. The Development Bank of the Philippines guaranteed these foreign loans.

#### *Cellophil's First Acquisitions in Abra*

CRC's first operational plan envisaged using roads to transport logs to its proposed mill site. So in 1975 it acquired some 55 hectares of agricultural land in Mudiit, Dolores along the Abra-Kalinga highway. The way CRC acquired this land caused considerable resentment. When farmers declined to sell their land, CRC fenced off its lots, effectively surrounding these "uncooperative" farmers and eventually forcing them to sell out. Soon, however, CRC realized that the extremely rugged terrain of its concession and the scarcity of roads in the province would make road transportation of logs uneconomical and impractical. It therefore shifted attention to river transportation. This required a new site of around 60 hectares and CRC turned its attention to the Tinggian lowland barrio of Gaddani, Tayum near which all of Abra's main rivers converge (see Appendix 2). This was an ideal mill site. The process of acquisition was marred by charges of malversation of compensation funds, bulldozers piling up earth around unsold lots thereby cutting off water supply, and a threat to get a Presidential Decree confiscating the land.

At the same time, a 66,000-metric ton long fiber kraft pulp mill which CRC describes as "one of the most modern and sophisticated. . . in the world" was nearing completion at the Gaddani site. Foreign contractors involved in its construction include the French firm Spie Batignolles, Summa Kumagai and Atlantic Gulf and Pacific Co. The CRC project will generate employment for 3,000 persons, provide for the entire deficit needs of the country, and export surplus product, most probably to Japan.

#### *Tree Plantations*

CRC's production costs at the mill for wood cut in its concessions will be high because of the transportation problem. In the meantime, the Bureau

of Forest Development (BFD) obtained World Bank funding for a 33,000 hectare pine tree plantation in the foothill zone of Abra immediately to the east of CRC's Gaddani mill site (see Appendix 2). Production costs are estimated to be one third that of CRC's concession. As early as 1975 CRC had plans to develop a 50,000-hectare pine plantation in this same general area but CRC officials now claim they have dropped these plans, preferring instead to let the BFD shoulder the development costs. The CRC will process the log output.

Around 5,000 persons, mainly Tinggians, live in the BFD project area and operational plans call for the removal of some and the planting over of their pasture lands. With the BFD coordinating its own planting programs with CRC, fears of displacement have also emerged in the Tinggian uplands.

### *A Self-Image: The Cellophil "Mission" in Abra*

The first streaks of industrialization and urbanization are dawning over the province of Abra. In a geographic area where a poor farmer has to wrestle with the harsh elements, coax the soil into fertility and implore Providence for a season of grace, a new promise appears.

In the erstwhile rural town of Tayum, people suddenly found themselves in the middle of a maelstrom of individual activity. In the barrio of Gaddani particularly, carabaos that once tramped through rice fields with the languorous rhythm developed by the ages of rustic existence gave way to tractors and dozers levelling the land, trucks transporting personnel and materials.

The *Rangtay* (October 1977), CRC's official company Newsletter

The "new promise" which has appeared in Abra and which promises "a season of grace" to the Abranians in general and the mountain Tinggians in particular, is Cellophil Resources Corporation. Its philosophy of development emphasizes technology, gigantism and integration into an ever-widening and complex national and international politico-economic system. The company apparently care little for the constitutional provision that "The State shall guarantee and promote the autonomy of . . . the barrio, to ensure their fullest development as self-reliant communities" (1973 *Philippine Constitution*, Article II, Sec. 10). "Progress" has finally reached the Tinggian uplands, and CRC is its vanguard showing the way to the 21st Century.

### *Cellophil is "Divested" from Herdis*

On January 16, 1978 President Marcos issued Letter of Instruction No. 638 ordering the divestment from Herdis of three companies, one of which was CRC. This was done because Herminio Disini was being accused in the foreign press of having used his friendship with the President for business gains. "Divestment" meant the compulsory transfer or sale of title of stocks to the government, including those personally held by Disini. It was announced

that CRC and another Herdis company Philippine Cellophane Filter Inc. (which will use CRC's output) would be taken over by a regional cooperative to be formed by Regions I and II together with the National Investment and Development Corporation (now known as the National Development Corporation) a subsidiary of the Philippine National Bank, as the mother organization.

In January 17 CRC's President Altura wired CRC in Abra saying:

Rest assured that all plans are to be executed full speed as previously conceived. Present management and personnel status will continue.

Herdis offered to help the new owners develop the necessary expertise during a transition period. However, it is quite apparent that Herdis has been contracted to run the company. The change of ownership has not brought any changes in the company's management and operational philosophy: Abra remains a "God-forsaken" place which needs the "civilising" influence of modern industry.

The divestment order did not mention CPC, CRC's dummy sister company whose status of ownership therefore remains unclear.

#### THE INITIAL TINGGIAN RESPONSES TO THE CELLOPHENOMENON: TO SEPTEMBER 1978

CRC's first forays into the Tinggian uplands were light and confined mainly to preliminary surveys and sample cuts. Consequently, because so little was known about the company at the time, the Tinggian response was slow in developing.

One reason for CRC's reluctance to enter in force was the presence in the area ever since the declaration of martial law of a small band of persons belonging to the Maoist New People's Army (NPA) who were engaged in mainly propaganda work in the municipalities of Tineg, Lacub and Malibcong. It was only in August 1976 that Police Constabulary (PC) commando teams successfully battled them killing five and capturing four thus wiping them out. With its safety now assured CRC began river studies in Tineg in late 1976.

#### *The First Cellophil-Tinggian Dialogues*

CRC planned its first dialogues with the Tinggians only in December 1976, a full three years *after* its TPLA was awarded, and then only in response to the negative reactions its workers were receiving from the Tinggians. When the Tinggians threatened not to come to the first seminar scheduled in a CRC camp site the company decided it would be wise if it went to the barrios instead.

In February 1977 two three-day seminars were held in Tineg in the north and Tubo in the south which were attended by top CRC officials (including President Altura) and some foreign consultants. They discussed Tinggian requests for minor boundary adjustments (CRC: "these boundaries are of no real importance"), grazing lands, kaingin-making, watershed protection, communal forests, employment, and the possibility of a written agreement between CRC and the Tinggians (CRC: "the best we can do is to keep a record of these proceedings"). CRC's usual reply to the people's queries was that they were safeguarded by the company's TPLA, but since the Tinggians were never given a copy of this they could not check the company's claims. In Tubo, CRC made it quite clear that it had not come to make any deals, or get any agreements, but rather merely to inform the people of the company's programs.

### *Tinggian Opposition Consolidates*

On March 4, 1977 barangay residents of Tubo met in Tiempo to deliberate over the CRC supplied Minutes of their February meeting. They issued Resolution No. 6-A which said in part that:

in the long run we will not only lose our rights over the land and privileges on its resources but also our freedom and security will also be lost because of our close relationship with other municipalities and provinces by having a peace pact which our forefathers have been sacrificing destroyed due to the misunderstanding between these parties brought in by the company.

They then resolved to

stick to our stand or to carry with us the principles of our ancestors not to permit the operation of any company within our area and never to accept any condition offered.

The fear that CRC operations would disrupt the Tubo peace pact relationships and the fear of subsequent cultural disruption leading to disintegration was thus as important, if not more so, as their fears of environmental damage. CRC in its subsequent dealings with the Tinggians has never really understood this deeply-rooted desire among the Tinggians that the peace pact territory must be defended because if it is breached so too will culture and the people with it. For CRC, Tinggian "culture" is music and dances. CRS has instead insisted on focusing its attention on the Tinggian technical and legal fears and has ignored the more culturally based ones. This early disregard for the sanctity of the Tinggian peace pact system culminated towards the end of 1978 and in the early months of 1979 in the direct assault on the institution.

### *The Tinggians Seek Support*

Abra is a missionary province and the Tinggians are relatively recent converts to Christianity. Not unexpectedly, it was to the Church that the Tinggians first turned to for assistance with their problems caused by CRC. Church-based organizations were approached to help in petitioning Herdis to stop CRC's operations in Abra. Individual members of the clergy were also contacted and their intercession was requested.

Attempts were made to neutralize this church-based support by some parties who insinuated that those priests who had involved themselves in the controversy were "subversives" and "anti-government". This attack on the integrity of the Catholic clergy in Abra was finally discussed at a Provincial Church Military Liaison Committee (CMLC) meeting held in Bengued on May 11, 1977. Abra PC Commander Colonel Constancio Lasaten admitted that "opposition to Cellophil is not against the Government of the Philippines and hence is not subversive," and the meeting decided to take steps to restore the good name of the affected clergy and to try and stop these insinuations from being spread around the province.

At about this time the first comprehensive and documented survey of the situation in Abra viz CRC was issued. It stated that contrary to CRC's public promises, some grazing lands had been declared off-limits to animals, some pastures surveyed for possible conversion into tree nurseries, and some people had been prohibited from cutting trees for lumber and firewood and from even collecting rattan. Furthermore, CRC's mountain employment turned out to be seasonal and contractual. The mood of the Tinggians was summarized thus:

In exchange for this rotten kind of employment, we shall be giving up an economy based on agricultural production, river-brook water supply, forest products and pasturelands. As added interest, we gain floods, landslides, pollution and drought.

The document, compiled in Abra, charged that CRC had violated the Tinggian basic conception of property (communal ownership) and warned that attempts were being made to manipulate the peace pacts so as to sow discord and division among the people which would only facilitate CRC's entry. Finally, it pointed out that CRC's presence had encouraged the establishment of beer gardens, saloons, gambling dens and a few notorious "red houses" located in Mudiit. The document mentioned that the Tinggians of Danac, Boliney had retaliated by refusing entry to CRC personnel, and pasturelands in Daguoman that CRC planned to convert into nurseries had been razed by fire.

CRC, in the meanwhile reported that between January and April 1977 (Abra's dry season) there were some 217 fires in its concession which had destroyed 4668 hectares of forest. Comparable figures for the previous year

were only 68 and 344 respectively. It may be reasonably inferred that the fourfold increase in the number of fires cannot be attributed solely to natural causes.

*A Twin Strategy to Deal with the Tinggians: Olive Branch and Stick*

When it was realized that the Tinggians were not about to be easily persuaded to accept CRC, a two-pronged strategy to deal with their opposition was put into effect.

On CRC's part, the company established in May 1977 a Community Relations Office (CRO) in Abra to plan company-sponsored programs for the community, and to promote harmonious relationships with government, civic organizations, the Church and the people by conducting "wholesome dialogues" with them. The CRO quickly established a company newsletter in June 1977 (which is still Abra's only regularly published source of news), and in September it launched a bi-weekly radio program over the church-ran station DZPA (the province's only radio station). By October 1977 CRC was claiming that it had become "a catalyst for a provincial cultural renaissance" (Rangtay, October 1977). Singing contests, essay writing competitions and even a Tinggian Cultural Troupe were established by the CRO.

While CRC's Tabili was conducting his "wholesome dialogues", another and far more disturbing prong of the twin strategy began revealing itself. Mayor Manuel Bersalona of Tineg was purged and a certain Captain Alfredo Cuyupan, who is not even a Tinggian let alone a Tineg resident, was appointed in his place. He immediately set out to break the Tineg Tinggian resistance to CRC. It is interesting to note that the Palsugan and Anayan areas of Tineg were chosen much earlier as CRC's first areas of field operations. Eyewitnesses report that Cuyupan imposed on Tineg his own version of Martial Law. He banned community meetings and instead supervised a series of seminars to "correctly orient" the people. Further, he required the residents to work gratis on government projects such as barangay roads and bridges, even during harvest time, because he said that this was all part of the government's plan to make Tineg a "model municipality". Opposition to CRC was decreed "anti-government" and "subversive".

Captain Cuyupan was quite successful in dissipating public displays of opposition to CRC, but covert opposition smoldered, and ever since CRC has been plagued by fires in this municipality.

Provincial PC Commander Colonel Lasaten then began accompanying CRC to its dialogues with the people. He acted as "moderator" and frequently stressed the many advantages CRC would bring to Abra. CRC admits that its Fire Protection Incentive Plan (FPIP) came from an idea suggested by Lasaten (Rangtay, November-December 1977), and it was Lasaten himself who briefed the people of Lacub on the FPIP and got their "enthusiastic support" (Rangtay, November-December 1977).



On June 17, 1977 the first Tri-Sectoral Meeting on CRC was held between government/military officials, church leaders and CRC representatives. Significantly, the Tinggians were conspicuously absent, no invitation having been sent them. The meeting agreed that all parties should in their various actions consider the culture of the upland Tinggians and CRC assured the gathering that it would respect Tinggian rights over their pasture lands and communal forests and that government regulations regarding operating in headwaters and watersheds will be strictly adhered to (*Rangtay*, July 1977).

On September 27, 1977 Abra Governor Garino Balbin was replaced by Arturo Barbero who became the youngest governor in the Philippines. It is not clear whether Governor Barbero owes his appointment by President Marcos to the fact that his father was Undersecretary of Defense (now Deputy Minister of Defense for Civilian Relations) Carmelo Z. Barbero. Within days of his appointment the new governor was quoted as saying that "I would like my administration to be in very close liaison with CRC" (*Rangtay*, September 1977).

In October 1977 CRC unveiled its Forest Protection Incentive Plan to fight the "alarming" incidence of fires. The plan gave each participating community typically guarding 5000 hectares a P200 per month bonus if it would agree to fight all forest fires, apprehend and investigate all forest violators, arsonists, timber smugglers and illegal kaingineros. A closer examination of the plan reveals that this "humane and imaginative" plan will reduce CRC's fire protection costs from P3.79 per hectare per year if minimum BFD requirements were implemented to P2.93, excluding the considerable fire-fighting costs.

From now on it became increasingly difficult to separate CRC from the provincial military command, and the latter emerged as the company's chief ally and working partner. The 'Odd Couple' now looked increasingly like twins in the eyes of the Tinggians.

### *Renewed Opposition and More Dialogues*

On December 14, 1977 the people of Bangilo, Malibcong agreed on a resolution requesting CRC to enter into an agreement with them and made such demands as: communal forests and pasture lands be excluded from the concession; watersheds be respected; CRC use roads rather than the rivers to transport their logs; and finally, that each family be given a percentage of the profits CRC would earn from the logs cut in the area because, as they explained later, "not everybody can work in the company". The resolution also requested that anyone entering their area should "respect the provisions of the peace pact". The resolution reflected deeply-held beliefs in communal ownership and benefit of natural resources and a desire to protect the peace pact system in which was embodied their customary law.

That same day CRC's new administration building in Gaddani was formally blessed by Abra Bishop Odilo Etspueler, and Colonel Lasaten's wife cut the ceremonial ribbon.

"CRC's divestment" from Herdis in January 1978 did not disrupt the company's activities. In January 18 CRC officials met with the people of Bangilo in Gaddani, Tayum with Colonel Lasaten acting as moderator. CRC reiterated its recognition of "the prior rights and legal claims" of people found in the concession, and it promised to train Tinggians for skilled and specialized jobs. But CRC's replies to some conditions were confusing. For example:

- C. CRC should not touch or destroy any land or property of the residents (rice paddies, lands suited for cultivation, plant irrigation, ditches and irrigation rights of way, old kaingins or clearings, animals).
- A. Yes, all alienable and disposable lands, even old clearings which could be tilled later shall not be touched by CRC.

Since only 1.5 percent of the entire concession comprises alienable and disposable lands, CRC's answer did not give much away.

- C. CRC should not touch or cut within the watershed limits.
- A. Yes, we do not cut trees inside the watershed because it means the end of our license if we violate the law.

However, CRC's definition of watershed turned out to be a strip 40 meters either side of a river course. BFD regulations define watershed as "a land drained by a stream. . . .and its tributaries having a common outlet for surface run-off" (PD 705: *Revised Forestry Code*) — meaning the *entire* catchment area of a stream.

CRC ingeniously turned down the Bangilo request that it use roads rather than the rivers on the grounds that road construction will lead "to the destruction of the cultural peace enjoyed by the Tinggians"! CRC did, however, promise to respect traditional pasture rights and practices and pledged to inform the peace pact holders of its presence in the area.

Not suprisingly, the Bangilo delegates remained sceptical because of the evasive nature of some of CRC's replies, and because the critical questions concerning watershed protection and river transportation remained unsettled.

In March 9 CRC met with the Tinggians of Gacab and Duldulao, Malibcong who sought assurance on pasture lands, employment and the protection of their fields.

In April 1978, despite an Election Code ban on partisan politicking by employees of government-owned or controlled corporations acting in their official capacities, CRC officially endorsed the Kilusang Bagong Lipunan (KBL) (*Rangtay*, April 1978). In that same month CRC was instrumental in urging the revival of the Abra Cultural Minorities Association (ACMA) and its subsequent involvement in ACMA was intended to demonstrate its great concern for the Tinggians. Interestingly, an end of the year assessment of ACMA stated that it had remained "distant" from the Tinggians who had not been allowed "to participate in its affairs" (Rogelio F. Balla in *Gansa*, official publication of the Provincial Government of Abra, December 1978).

Sometime between the 15th and 18th of June 1978, CRC undertook a sudden flurry of activity in the municipality of Malibcong. Dialogues were conducted in Mataragan, Bangilo, Gacab, Duldulao, Malibcong barrio and Taripan. A BFD District Forester accompanied the CRC officials. CRC's Pete Tabili denied there was any relationship between the CRC and the BFD and said: "If CRC will touch your watershed its license will be cancelled by the BFD". The forester informed the Tinggians that the BFD had stopped accepting applications for communal forests and that the BFD had even suspended the issuance of permits to cut trees within communal forests. Now the Tinggians became really worried. Tabili complained that CRC was being blamed for the bad actions of earlier companies, and he said Abra ought to feel lucky that it had a big company like CRC operating in it. In Duldulao the people told CRC that they feared CRC's entry especially since they had no lawyer to safeguard their rights. When, in barrio Malibcong, proof was offered that CRC had in 1976 cut logs in an officially designated communal forest, this was quickly explained as merely a "sample" cut for "experimental" purposes. In all areas CRC declined to sign separate agreements with the Tinggians (all data from official transcripts of these meetings kept by CRC).

CRC's bland assurances, unclear answers, and the news from the forester that even cutting trees in communal forests had been suspended did little to placate the Tinggians. In June 28 barrio Pakged, Mataragan area, issued a joint resolution requesting that it be excluded from the concession. Similarly, the Tinggians of Gacab, Duldulao and Taripan issued a joint resolution which said that if their watersheds were disturbed the ecosystem would be eventually destroyed and that would render their communities without any source of livelihood. They petitioned the BFD to exclude "our ancestral lands and watershed areas from the Cellophil and Cellulose concession" and urged the BFD to implement all laws and decrees pertaining to ancestral lands.

In July 24 tribal representatives gathered in Bangilo to renew their intertribal vows and discuss such problems as land ownership, communal forests and pastures (*Rangtay*, September 1978). They decided to work towards a Tinggian intertribal peace pact (budong) consultation to be hosted by

Bangilo from September 24 to 25 so that they could discuss and work out a common strategy to deal with the CRC problem.

In August, by way of reacting to the proposed intertribal consultation, CRC announced that it was summoning a "final" meeting at Bangilo in September 17 to settle once and for all the conditions under which the company would start undertaking a tree inventory prior to actual logging operations. Attendance of the mayor and barangay captains was made "compulsory". In September 15 CRC met with Governor Barbero who was assured of CRC's undiminishing concern for the people and its efforts in maintaining ecological balance in the area" (*Rangtay*, September 1978).

The September 17 meeting was called off, and instead CRC accepted an invitation to attend the intertribal consultation.

In September 19 Abra's Catholic Bishop Monsignor Etspueler expressed support for the latest resolution which he described as concrete, valid and constitutional. He announced that he would send a letter of support to the forthcoming Bangilo meeting, and promised that depending on the outcome of the intertribal consultation and the end-of-month Regional CMLC meeting to be held in Bangued, he would consider issuing, if necessary, a pastoral letter on the matter.

#### THE BANGILO INTER-PEACE PACT PARTNERS GATHERING (SEPTEMBER 24-25, 1978)

September 24, 1978 is a historic date in Tinggian history. On this day the first intertribal Tinggian peace pact meeting was called with delegates coming from the municipalities of Malibcong, Tubo, and Bucloc. The main topic of discussion was CRC whose planned entry into the peace pact partners' territories had caused considerable anxiety among the Tinggians of these areas. Colonel Lasaten, a Mr. Cayan representing the BFD, CRC's Pete Tabili and a handful of observers from Manila were also in attendance.

The main problems mentioned included CRC's encroachment on private agricultural lands, communal forests and pasture lands already granted by the government. They complained that the BFD had not taken proper and prompt action on Tinggian requests for land classification and that it had not informed them of the CRC concession prior to the company being granted its license. They demanded that their "cultural heritage of peace, cooperation and unity be preserved" and that rights to communal forests, pasture lands, watersheds and private agricultural lands be protected, and that the rivers not be used to transport logs because of inevitable environmental damage.

CRC's Tabili stated that CRC would go ahead with its operations because it had the license to do so, and that any decision to the contrary could only come from the President himself. Mr. Cayan called the Tinggians "squatters" for not acquiring titles to their private land.

After two days of discussion the delegates formulated a joint resolution which was addressed to CRC and the BFD with copies to, among others, the President of the Philippines, the Governor of Abra, Colonel Lasaten and the World Bank. It demanded that the Tinggians be given their constitutionally guaranteed first priority rights to the lands, waters and natural resources their ancestors have used and defended. Specific watersheds were listed within which CRC was banned from operating, and the rivers, vital as a food and water source, were not to be used to transport logs. Requests for specific communal forests and pasture lands were also made. The Tinggians complained that CRC had not been completely open with them and they insisted that it suspend all operations in their areas until the demands were met and the express permission of the peace pact partners was received. Some 1265 Tinggians eventually signed the resolution.

The main demand of the resolution was that all subsequent negotiations with the Tinggians must be done with duly authorized community representatives: the peace-pact partners and elders who, in keeping with tribal custom, would make decisions in close consultation with the entire community. Specifically rejected was any method of decision-making which would exclude the community as a whole from the process. This culturally based demand was to be one which CRC in the following months would systematically ignore.

#### **REACTIONS TO THE BANGILO GATHERING: SEPTEMBER 1978 TO JANUARY 1979**

##### *The CMLC Meetings*

In September 29 a Region I CMLC meeting was held in the PC camp at Villamor, Bangued to which CRC was invited as guest of honor. Prior to the meeting there was considerable confusion as to whether said meeting would be a "closed" or "open" affair, and it was not until the very last hour that the tribal representatives authorized in Bangilo to present the Tinggian case knew that they could attend. They did, and sat with the general audience. Some quarters have interpreted the confusion which originated from Camp Villamor as an attempt to ensure that the Tinggians would not be carefully prepared to state their case.

Cellophil was the main topic of discussion. A special fact-finding committee established earlier reported that the people of the Mountain Province had expressed "total opposition to Cellophil operations in Sagada, Besao, Bontoc and Saganga" and that their main grievance was that they had not been consulted *before* the granting of the concession. Three petitions from the Mountain Province were tabled demanding the total exclusion of CRC from their areas and the cancellation of the company's license. The Sagada petition charged that CRC had entered "deceitfully"; that it violated PD 410 by including in its concession ancestral lands; and that "we are caught be-

tween the economic motives of the CRC vis-a-vis the general welfare of the people". Further, sympathy with the struggle of their Tinggian tribal neighbors against CRC was expressed.

In response to the Mountain Province petitions, CRC's Altura issued a "Certification" assuring that CRC had no intention of operating in watersheds involved in the Chico Dam Project. Noteworthy is CRC's apparent greater concern for the success of the multi-billion peso dam project compared with the demands made by the simple folk that domestic and agriculture water be preserved. Since Chico Dam No. 1 has been apparently discontinued and therefore its watersheds need no longer be preserved for the dam project, it is no wonder that *The Northern Churchman* (December 15, 1978) reported that CRC's "Certification" had been described by the Igorots as "evasive" and that they are "more worried than before".

CRC then made an hour long presentation on its various activities. Only upon the insistence of the Church representatives was one Tinggian elder allowed to speak for all of five minutes. He demanded that CRC enter into direct consultation with the Tinggian elders. He was given a polite reception.

A week later in October 7 a Provincial CMLC meeting was held in Bangued at which the clergy complained at the manifestly unfair treatment meted the Tinggian representatives in September 29 and they demanded that an apology be sent to the Tinggians. The issue was brought up at the next Regional CMLC meeting held in Lingayen, Pangasinan. Military representatives took vigorous exception to the allegation of unfair treatment and insisted that the Tinggians were granted "ample time" to air their side. Writing later, CRC's *Rangtay* (October 1978) ingeniously reasoned that

If it appeared that CRC representatives were given more chances to talk during the Abra CMLC meeting, it was because the committee wanted to have a sound basis in assessing the complaints of the people.

The *Rangtay* did not explain just how such an assessment could be made if the people's complaints were not properly aired in the first place.

Colonel Lasaten reported to the Lingayen meeting that he had found that there were only a "few personalities who form the pocket resistance and are making agitation against Cellophil". CRC's Pete Tabili spoke of "vested groups" who agitated to "waste time".

CRC has been invited to periodically brief the CMLC meetings. It is significant, however, that no Tinggian representative has been invited to these meetings since that first occasion in September.

#### *Cellophil-Military Dialogues with the Tinggians*

In October 16 the Tinggians of Malibcong issued a resolution reiterating their strong support for the Bangilo resolution. They demanded that

CRC's Fire Protection Incentive Plan be dispensed with and existing barrio ordinances against burning and illegal cutting of trees be enforced. They feared that acceptance of CRC's FPIP scheme was being interpreted by CRC as proof of acceptance of the company's other activities. Many barrios that had been first attracted by the ₱200 monthly allowance now began having second thoughts.

By way of a reaction, in October 17 CRC officials and Colonel Lasaten met hastily summoned Malibcong local government leaders (mayor and barangay captains) "to delineate proper lines of authority in the wake of numerous complaints from CRC field personnel about unauthorized persons hindering them from pursuing their all-important legitimate activities". CRC branded the Bangilo gathering as "self-serving groups without legal identity" and it refused to recognize such groups. It put on record its intention to just deal with "duly constituted authorities", meaning the local government officials headed by the mayor, Mr. Solomon Dayag, whom it recognized as "spokesman and leader". CRC said that it would tolerate no work stoppages and that starting November 1, 1978 it would resume its activities in Malibcong at "full speed".

The next day CRC's Tabili and Colonel Lasaten helicoptered aboard a CRC craft to Tiempo, Tubo to attend a community meeting there. Tabili promised priority of employment and offered scholarships. Elders who spoke emphasized that CRC's entry would destroy "many of the beautiful values of the people". Colonel Lasaten then expounded at length. He said that if CRC committed anomalies he would solve them. He accused some churchmen, whom he alleged were involved in the controversy, of being "snakes" and he warned the Tinggians not to listen to them or to "outsiders" and "foreigners".

Tabili and Lasaten departed after declining an invitation for lunch. The Tubo Tinggians then met and decided to send a letter to neighboring communities in Abra, Mountain Province and Kalinga with whom they held peace pacts suggesting a general meeting to discuss the best way to deal with CRC.

In November CRC held what it describes as "confrontation-dialogues" with the Tinggians of Lacub and Bangilo and the Kalingas of Balbalasang. The reception it received was generally hostile. In Bangilo the people repeated their demand that CRC "should not start unless their demands are satisfactorily met". Tabili offered them vehicles and lodging to follow up their resolutions in Manila. The offer was turned down.

In November 18 Bishop Etspueler wrote a short letter to the Tinggians of Malibcong urging them to seek "cooperation not confrontation" and to work for a peaceful solution to their problem.

Meanwhile in Sal-lapadan the military stepped up its harassment of a Tinggian Catholic missionary priest whom they insinuated was "instigating" the Tinggians to oppose CRC. Local sub-station commanders began insisting

that parish workers get permits to conduct normal community-wide religious services. Similarly, unnamed "outsiders" became the target of nasty remarks made over CRC's radio program. CRC appeared to be trying to build a case whereby these outside individuals and groups were to be blamed for instigating opposition to CRC among the Tinggians.

CRC never did make good its threat to start in November 1 at Malibcong because it was fully aware that the Tinggians there were prepared to forcibly stop its entry.

### *Cellophil and the BFD reply to the Bangilo Resolution*

In October 24 CRC's Pete Tabili, the Community Relations Officer, wrote to the Tinggians of Malibcong, Bucloc and Tubo care of Mayor Dayag of Malibcong giving a detailed reply to the resolution which he claimed "was framed by some people of Malibcong and selected speakers from Buloc and Tubo, Abra". He was thus hinting that the Bangilo meeting was not a representative one. In so doing he betrayed a superficial knowledge of the peace pact system. Representatives are chosen by participating communities and given a mandate to make decisions on their behalf. So, not unexpectedly, "some people" and "selected speakers" attended the Bangilo gathering.

CRC's reply recognized Mayor Dayag as the "duly constituted authority and recognized leader of the Tinggian people in the area" (another cultural misperception) and hoped that Dayag would "explain this reply to the people concerned". The reply denied the charge that CRC had withheld information from them and it proclaimed an "open-door" policy. It said that CRC had as one of its objectives "the preservation of the people's cultural heritage . . . [and] the enhancement of their indigenous culture and traditions".

CRC was apparently amenable to the granting of the requests for communal forests and pasture lands, but turned down the request that it stay out of the watersheds on the grounds that "measures for watershed protection are included in CRC's operation plan". Similarly, it turned down the request that it stay out of the rivers on the grounds that this was "part of the operational design of CRC" and it assured that all "necessary safeguards" would be taken to protect the people's farm, fish traps, irrigation systems, etc. Its repeated explanation why it could not meet the Bangilo demand that it suspend operations till the demands are met was that

undue delay in CRC activities will jeopardize the company's set program of operations and will place the company in an uncompromising situation with its foreign financiers, thereby putting the government in bad light as CRC's principal guarantor.

The strong impression given is that CRC is more concerned with the reaction of its European financiers rather than with that of ordinary Filipino citizens.



The BFD reply was received in November (but the letter was dated October 19) and it asked the Tinggians to "get in touch with the BFD Regional Director at Dagupan City" regarding their requests.

### *The Tinggians Respond to the BFD*

Following a community meeting held in November 19, the people of Bangilo wrote to BFD Dagupan requesting that "high representatives come to our respective areas and enter into a dialogue with us so that in good faith on both sides this problem will be settled with justice and dignity". In November 23 Tinggian representatives went to the BFD station in Bituen, Lagangilang to ask how they should pursue their claims. They were misinformed that only the President of the Philippines can make decisions regarding their demands that CRC stay out of their watersheds.

In Dagupan City in November 27 duly designated Tinggian representatives were informed that a team from the BFD Region I office would visit Abra to look into their demands. In December 2 the Tinggians of Bangilo informed BFD Dagupan in writing that "a lawyer from the Philippines Association For Inter-Cultural Development, Quezon City be with your team in coming here". The Tinggians realized their claims entailed many complex legal issues that only a qualified lawyer could deal with.

In December 7 BFD Dagupan announced that a team would visit Bangued in December 11 to confer with provincial officials and Tinggian representatives before proceeding to the uplands. Despite the very short notice some Tinggian representatives from Malibcong were able to reach Bangued in time only to find out that in December 8 Dagupan cabled BFD Bangued postponing the date for the proposed meeting to December 14. The Tinggians who arrived had a mandate to attend the meeting only if accompanied by a lawyer. Because of prior commitments back home and the impossibility of contacting a lawyer at such short notice, the delegates decided to return home. But before they left they wrote a letter to BFD suggesting that the next time they be given adequate notice (at least two weeks) "so that we may inform our various representatives, and request any lawyer we may want to accompany us to this meeting". They suggested holding the meeting in early January 1979.

The most outstanding feature of these Tinggian-BFD contacts was the decision of the Tinggians to assure themselves of full legal assistance in their negotiations with the BFD. A negotiated, legal settlement was therefore quite obviously foreseen by the Tinggians.

### *A Tubo Backlash*

The Tinggians of Tubo were extremely upset by the abruptness of the two October 18 visitors. Wittingly, or unwittingly, the two Ilokano visitors

had committed grievous cultural indiscretions. In November 10 representatives from 10 Tubo barrios attended a district meeting in Kili, Tubo. One delegate summarized the mood thus:

We the people of Be-ew are poor, all we have now are the mountains, trees and especially our freedom. All these the CRC is threatening to take away from us.

Another delegate said:

We must create laws to serve us not to destroy us. That is the reason why we have the right to stand for truth, so that we can prove ourselves true to those whom we hold dear in life.

The meeting reiterated the Tubo stand taken in Bangilo and the people remained "united in their firm, solid unconditional opposition to the entry of Cellophil Resources Corporation".

In November 22 the peace pact holders of Tubo followed up their October 18 decision and sent out letters of invitation to their fellow peace pact partners in Mountain Province, Kalinga and Abra to attend a *budong* to be held in Poblacion Mayabo, Tubo from January 25-26, 1979 to discuss "the big problem, that is Cellophil, which affects us all, our properties, mountains, water, customs and lives".

#### *Colonel Lasaten Searchers for a Solution*

The thought of Tubo which had always taken a hard-line against Cellophil inviting delegates from the Mountain Province and Kalinga where the National Power Corporation has been successfully kept at bay in its efforts to build the Chico Dams must have caused much consternation among CRC and its allies.

In December 6 Colonel Lasaten wrote CRC saying that "while I am aware of the company efforts to dialogue with the people, such dialogue came to a point that the demands of the people border along the line where peace and order may likely be disturbed". He requested CRC to suspend its activities in Bangilo and Mataragan until January 15, 1979 "for the sake of peace and order, while I personally take the initiative of looking further into the merits of the demands of the people without necessarily disregarding your side".

CRC replied on December 7 stating:

While the request for suspension of our activities in the area is a great sacrifice and hurts our overall program, plans and timetable, we share with your command's efforts in exploring all possibilities if only to find lasting solutions to problems thereby ensuring harmonious relations with the people and maintaining peace and order in the area. With this in mind

we wish to put on record our desire to abide by your suggestion.

CRC, however, warned that if a solution was not forthcoming by mid January "the company will be suffering from innumerable losses which might force us to take the necessary legal action against those responsible for the disruption of our peaceful operation".

Two apparently contradictory sequences of events were emerging in early December 1978. The Tinggians of Malibcong were arranging for a BFD team to come to their barrios to hold direct dialogues with them and their legal counsel. BFD Dagupan had indicated a willingness to undertake such a dialogue. Simultaneously, however, CRC and Colonel Lasaten were perceiving the problem in Malibcong as a peace and order one requiring a "military" solution rather than a legal one. CRC thus repudiated all its earlier advice to the Tinggians that they should direct their problems regarding the company to the BFD (which administers CRC's TPLA). Instead, CRC opted for an extra-legal solution.

In December 27 the World Bank finally sent a response to the Bangilo resolution. It argued that "the Tinggians would benefit [if the BFD plantation sold its output to the CRC mill] as the substitution of large volumes of plantation-grown pulpwood from the BFD area for the natural pinewood from the CRC concession would relieve pressure on the natural forests and thus help to preserve the existing environment in Abra". This was little comfort to the Tinggians because the BFD pines would take 20 to 30 years to mature, and in the meanwhile CRC would have to operate in their areas.

In December, Governor Barbero presented his philosophy of development in writing. He said:

Industrialization cannot be grafted to a country or province like a foreign body. It has to grow within it and be tested against the temperament, attitudes and cultural background of the people, and at their own pace.

What is required is that development, economic growth and technology be subordinated to social and human needs. And from the process shall come the discovery of our own potential power to initiate development ourselves with minimum outside aid or assistance.

(Gansa, December 1978)

CRC is a perfect example of a foreign-body industrial project which is heavily dependent on foreign financing and foreign technical assistance, and it has so far failed miserably when tested against Abra's Tinggian background. Subsequent events in early 1979, however, showed that the Tinggians could take little comfort from these words written by the Governor.

## THE TIEMPO BUDONG: PAGTA VS. A MUTUAL AGREEMENT

Colonel Lasaten accomplished very little in his self-appointed mission to resolve the problem in Malibcong. The end-of-year festivities probably did more than anything else to frustrate him.

On December 29, 1978 while the Kalinga were holding their inter provincial budong in Bugnay, Kalinga at which they renewed their 1975 Pagta Ti Kalon (Conditions of the Peace Pact) protesting the Chico Dam project, Deputy Minister of Defense for Civilian Relations Carmelo Z. Barbero called a meeting in his Ministry of National Defense office in Metro Manila which was attended by officials of CRC, the BFD and Colonel Lasaten. It was billed as an "initial step to resolve the problem of the people". No Tinggians were invited to this preparatory meeting. Maintenance of law and order was high on the agenda. Continued Tinggian opposition to the company was deemed as threatening to law and order, even though in reality it was CRC's insistence on operating in the affected areas before the BFD could even begin studying the people's demands that was the direct cause of the tensions in the area.

On January 7, 1979 it was announced in Abra that Governor Barbero and Monsignor Etspueler would meet with the people of Malibcong either in January 31 or February 1 to try and resolve the CRC controversy. The clergy later decided that Bishop Etspueler should not go to such a meeting.

In January 16 the 5th Civil Relations Information Service Group (CRISG) of the Philippine Army Civil Relations and Information Service opened a public assistance office in Bangued to handle such problems as "unattended community projects, complaints of civilians against military personnel, missing persons and breach of contract" among others. This considerably strengthened the new law-and-order stance, and the office's sudden appearance made many people very nervous as they tried to explain to themselves the arrival of the army. In February 1 the 5th CRISG began sponsoring a daily radio news program over DZPA.

On the second week of January, first over the radio, then later in print, CRC launched a renewed campaign against "outsiders" and "vested interest groups" which it accused of engaging in "vicious unmitigated smear campaign ... in the Tinggian communities" against CRC (Rangtay, January 1979).

### *The Bangued "Mutual" Agreement*

In January 19 the Governor suddenly called a meeting to be held in January 23 in Bangilo with the people of Malibcong. Among those who would attend were the Governor himself, Colonel Lasaten, national and regional officials of BFD and top CRC officials including President Altura. Scheduling the meeting just two days before the long-planned Tubo budong has been widely interpreted in Abra as an attempt to disrupt the budong at worst, or to make it unnecessary if an agreement could be worked out at

best. An urgent request sent by the people of Bangilo for a lawyer to be present at the meeting was delivered in Manila only after the meeting.

In January 23 in Bangilo the Tinggians were again warned not to allow themselves to be misled by "outsiders" and "white foreigners" and they were urged to compromise with CRC. The Tinggians, however, stood firm on their past communal decisions and refused to allow themselves to be badgered into any agreements. CRC states that while no written agreement was reached in Bangilo "the people already accepted an offer by BFD to send land classification teams to Malibcong (Rangtay, January 1979).

The next day Malibcong local government officials were "invited" to go to Bangued to continue the dialogue, this time in the presence of Deputy Minister Carmelo Z. Barbero. BFD, CRC and the Development Bank of the Philippines were also represented. The Tinggians now outside the familiarity of their mountains were urged to sign a document. Minister Barbero emphasized the need for a spirit of peace to attain national objectives and he expressed concern over reports of "some people trying to undermine the efforts of government in establishing a new society". To encourage the Tinggians, some P46.8 million was offered to build barangay roads in all the Tinggian municipalities. Quite a few Tinggians were reported to have walked out of the proceedings in protest of the tactics being employed to effect agreement.

Finally, at 7 PM in January 24 Mayor Dayag gave in and signed the "Mutual Agreement" which purported to answer the demands of the September Bangilo budong. His was the only signature on the document which is Tinggian. BFD guaranteed to dispatch land classification teams to Malibcong; the Tinggians were assured that they would not be forcibly ejected or relocated; and CRC guaranteed to take all safeguards in its use of rivers and waters, and to protect all "critical watersheds" in the area. In return, CRC was allowed to undertake preliminary timber activities (though not logging) including "river works".

The fact that the "Mutual Agreement" was signed under conditions almost approaching duress, and without the benefit of independent legal counsel, raises serious questions as to its legality, and most certainly its morality. Further, the Agreement is vaguely worded and there is doubt that the Tinggians could use it in a court of law to protect the rights the document purports to embody. For example, the mere guarantee that CRC will "take all safeguards in its use of rivers (Section 7) does not adequately meet the Tinggian demand that they at least be given a justiciable guarantee that CRC will not adversely affect their rivers and watersheds. As the Agreement now stands, if CRC can prove it took all reasonable safeguards, then the company may well be protected against charges of damages even if these may be directly attributable to its activities. All the Tinggians can show would be negligent safeguards, not environmental damage. The pledge to safeguard critical watersheds, similarly, becomes less meaningful when it is realized that as of now

there are *no* critical watersheds in the area. *The Revised Forestry Code* defines such watersheds as "a drainage area of a river system supporting existing and proposed hydro-electric power and irrigation works needing immediate rehabilitation as it is being subjected to a fast denudation causing accelerated erosion and destructive floods." These defining conditions do not yet obtain in the Abra uplands. Indeed, it is the fear that CRC's activities will lead to such very conditions that have prompted the Tinggian demands. Further, the *Rev. Forestry Code* clearly states that "critical watersheds" will be "closed from logging until . . . fully rehabilitated". The Mutual Agreement would apparently allow CRC to continue operating in critical watersheds so long as it agrees to "protect" them.

The Mutual Agreement violated one central demand laid forth in the Bangilo resolution: that all transactions "involving matters dealt within this resolution must be made in direct consultation with and receive the following consent of our [peace pact holders] representatives". Mayor Dayag can hardly claim to speak for all the peace pact holders. Further, the community did not give him any authority to make decisions on its behalf.

In January CRC flew in Mayor Dayag and Malibcong Sangguniang Panlalawigan representative Francisco Elvena (who also supported the Agreement) to visit the worksites in Tineg. Colonel Lasaten helped brief the visitors on CRC's reforestation program (*Rangtay*, January 1979). CRC reported that the visit was prompted "by the gross misrepresentations and vicious campaigns perpetrated by a self-serving group which fomented wild speculations and fears among the people of Malibcong" (*Rangtay*, January 1979). The two visitors were suitably impressed and promised to "allay the unfounded fears of our constituents".

### *The Tiempo Inter-Provincial Budong*

On January 25, 1979, even while the authorities and CRC sought to get their Mutual Agreement signed in Bangued, the inter-provincial peace pact meeting called for November 22 began, not in Mayabo as originally planned but in Tiempo, Tubo just a few kilometers further up the Otip River. Some 21 different Tinggian and Bontoc communities from Abra and the Mountain Province attended.

Over 500 persons, peace pact holders, elders, children and some 30 observers from Manila met for two days to discuss the CRC issue in a manner which one journalist likened to "a Makati board meeting" (*Panorama*, March 25, 1979). Each delegation reported on the activities of CRC in their area and described the people's response. A Sagada delegate mentioned the sad experience with an American logging company which had caused the drying up of two rivers in the Mountain Province. The Salapadan delegates noted that while they were outside the concession the floating of logs downstream would affect them (at least 25,000 persons living outside the concession will

be affected by the river transportation of logs). One delegate from Kili, Tubo said:

My heart cries out because the cause of this problem is the government which I thought would protect peace and order and not bring harm to the people. Who is the government? It merely comprises the people.

The company is an outsider and it will destroy us. It is looking for things to grab, and because it has plenty of money it can bribe people.

A Boliney spokesman said that "democracy prevails in the Philippines not dictatorship, so it is not necessary to blindly believe those in power; hence we are opposing the company." Other delegates warned that CRC's promises of employment and scholarships will benefit only a few persons. Warnings of cultural disintegration and environmental degradation were made.

The Bangilo delegation reported on the recent visit to their area by the Governor and his team in search for a written agreement, and they described what then transpired in Bangued.

During the first ballot, 12 delegations voted for straight opposition to CRC, 8 for imposing conditions on CRC, while one remained neutral. In subsequent balloting, 20 delegations agreed on outright opposition, and one remained neutral. In January 26 they agreed on a resolution addressed to President Marcos in which they noted that "little if anything has been accomplished since the September meeting to meet the various demands". They accused the CRC and BFD of not making enough serious effort to dialogue with them *in good faith* and they noted that those meetings which were held "sought to harass us into submission". They deplored the strategy of accusing "individuals" and "outsiders" of organizing them which they pointed out was contrary to their peace pact system. They feared CRC would bring "moral, cultural, and economic, political as well as physical displacement and the loss of their ancestral lands which they have safeguarded for centuries". And they demanded that the President cancel CRC's license.

Later that evening the budong agreed to establish a federation called the United Communities of the Cordillera comprising the peace pact holders and it drew up a seven-point Pagta Ti Kalon which prohibited members of the federation from working in CRC and other such companies which destroy their means of livelihood; threatened to punish anyone accepting bribes; and pledging to help any federation member who lands in court because of opposition to CRC.

For the participants in Tiempo, the Bangued "Mutual Agreement" was irrelevant. In Tubo, following long established tribal customs and procedures, and in an atmosphere which encouraged the free expression of ideas, both pro- and anti-CRC, the Tinggian peace pact holders and their tribal brothers

from the Mountain Province had democratically agreed on a course of action well within the laws of the Philippines and their own customary laws. They called on their President — the final arbiter in civil matters such as this — to heed their demands. And they sought to consolidate tribal ranks to maintain tribal unity, and hence preserve peace and order.

The main difference between the Tiempo and Bangued agreements was that while the former was obtained in the open under conditions of free debate and represented a consensus of opinions, the latter was signed by one Tinggian municipal mayor under heavy pressure in some Bangued back room far from his community.

### THE AFTERMATH OF THE TIEMPO BUDONG

#### *The Mutual Agreement is Rejected*

In February 5 a community meeting in Bangilo, Malibcong formulated a letter which was signed by 132 persons and which denounced the mutual Agreement as “highly insulting, invalid and null”. They pointed out that Mayor Dayag was *not* “the duly designated representative of the people” and they demanded that the land classification teams due to come in their areas be accompanied by a lawyer they would designate. They reiterated their support for the decisions taken in Tiempo.

The Bangilo letter is consistent with the stand taken ever since September 1978 which is that the Tinggians will only recognize “duly designated” (at community meetings) tribal leaders and not just any leader. They agreed on this move because of sad past experiences which proved that local civil officials were very vulnerable to outside political pressures primarily because forces outside the control of the community have the power to appoint or dismiss these local officials. Further, the insistence on the presence of a lawyer is in keeping with the legal-based strategy the Tinggians have always adopted viz CRC.

By mid-February it was reliably reported that the pre-Tiempo Abra Police Constabulary strength had abruptly doubled to 190 men.

#### *An Anti-Tiempo Campaign is Orchestrated*

Between February 14 to 22 a plan to utilize the Tinggian mayors to discredit the Tiempo budong was put into effect. In February 14 CRC's Rangtay (February 1979) reported that “peace pact holders, *lallacay*, barangay officials and religious leaders of all the seven barrios of Boliney municipality unanimously and completely rejected the *Pagta Ti Kalon* and denied having participated in the promulgation and signing of the said pact”. Further, they “called on all laborers from Boliney working with CRC to continue with their jobs without fear of being penalized”.



Independent observers, however, reported that what actually happened was this: when the Boliney representative to the Tiempo budong was briefing a community gathering as to what had transpired in Tiempo, Mayor Fred Luben attacked the Tiempo agreement. This apparently was the basis for the CRC report that leaders from all the barrios of Boliney "rejected" the Pagta.

In February 19, the *Rangtay* (February 1979) reported that a meeting in Luba disagreed with the Tiempo Pagta and declared that the federation of peace pact holders established in Tiempo was "not binding". The meeting then opposed "subversion in any form within the municipality" and agreed to fine anyone in Luba who "becomes subversive or who influences or induces subversion".

Reliable witnesses said that this declaration was made at a specially called session of the municipal Sanggunian at which the mayor sought to pass a resolution condemning the Tiempo budong. He managed to get a few signatures. The disturbing element of this "resolution" is the equation of opposition to the commercial operations of CRC with "subversion". Apparently, Colonel Lasaten's categorical statement made on May 11, 1977 that opposition to CRC was *not* subversive was no longer applicable.

In February 22, the *Rangtay* (February 1979) reported that peace pact holders of the municipality of Malibcong rejected the Pagta in a written agreement. It reported that the agreement stated that the Tiempo pact was anti-government and very much contrary to Tinggian traditions and customs, and that its framing was influenced by "foreigners" and "non-Kalon" members. The agreement claimed that the Pagta "will destroy the jurisdiction of the peace pact".

It was also reliably reported that there was no community meeting held to discuss any such document and that the "agreement" was probably drafted in Bangued. Mayor Dayag then circulated it among the peace pact holders asking them to affix their signatures. A few did.

The charge that the Tiempo budong and pact is "anti-government" is illogical because the resolution was directed to the President and it cites the 1973 Philippine Constitution as the basis for the favorable consideration of their demands. It only becomes logical if opposition to CRC is equated with opposition to the government, an equation which has no legal, constitutional or common sense basis whatsoever.

The strategy to thwart Tinggian opposition to CRC was now quite public. The assumption made in response to the Bangilo budong that the Tinggians were incapable as a community of organizing themselves was reasserted with a vengeance. "Self-serving groups", "subversives", "foreigners" and those seeking to "undermine . . . [the] new society" were being said in a carefully orchestrated campaign of instigating the Tinggians to obstruct the commercial operations of CRC. Why were they instigating the Tinggians? According to CRC, as yet undefined "vested interests" were involved (*Rang-*

tay, January 1979). On the other hand, CRC was being portrayed as the aggrieved party, a “responsible change agent”, a “novel and humane” company which would never “betray the people’s faith in nature” and which had made great efforts to reach “the hearts and minds” of the people in both public and private sectors and most especially the Tinggians (all quotations from the *Rangtay*). By implication – but for obvious reasons never publicly stated – the Tinggians were being characterized as incapable of self-leadership, too readily influenced by “outsiders” (one wonders then why CRC’s hearts-and-minds campaign failed dismally), anti-development and anti-modernization, and hence wittingly, or unwittingly, obstructing the very rationale of the New Society: growth and progress leading to a reformed society.

### *Implementing the Mutual Agreement*

In February 27 CRC’s Resident Manager Edsel Salvana wrote to Sangguniang Panlalawigan Representative Elvena of Malibcong informing him that CRC would start work in “the Central Abra Area which covers the whole municipality of Malibcong” in accordance with Sections 4 and 6 of the Mutual Agreement. CRC intended to conduct preliminary activities such as timber cruising and skyline surveys in preparation for actual logging operations.

In the latter half of February the BFD dispatched three land classification teams to Malibcong to survey the proposed pasture lands, communal forests and to identify alienable and disposable lands. They were accompanied by a land capability survey team which would “determine the suitability of the surveyed areas for particular types of land uses” (*Rangtay*, February 1979).

The reception accorded the BFD survey teams by the Tinggians varied from reluctant assent to outright rejection in the more remote barrios like Bangilo. In March 6 the people of Pakged, Malibcong, wrote to CRC prohibiting them from operating in the area unless they received BFD’s approval of their requests for communal forests and pasturelands. They also repeated their long standing demand that CRC enter into a separate agreement with them.

Meanwhile, the Governor toured CRC’s operation sites in Palsuguan and Anayan, Tineg and in Lamunan, Daguioman where CRC has its experimental cutting station. That same day, February 28, he told CRC’s *Rangtay* that

unless you intentionally showed me only the good aspects [of your operations] the rumors reaching me [like your alleged laying waste of Palsuguan] are totally unfounded. From what I’ve seen, there is no cause for fear. (*Rangtay*, February 1979)

He went on to stress that the difficulty with developing the mountain municipalities is that “the people do not come up to required levels of competence.” He said that the development of people through training and edu-

cation must be undertaken or else even "a million-peso worth of infrastructure. . . . those roads, those bridges and irrigation dams will just go to naught." He then admonished CRC because "it seems to me you are not making any headway towards establishing competent relationships with the people".

For a person who had written only in December 1978 that industrialization must be consonant with the attitudes and cultural backgrounds of the people, and that "development, economic growth and technology [ must] be *subordinated* to social and human needs" (*Gansa*, December 1978) these words spoken in February represented a complete about face. Now the Tinggians are "incompetent" and must be molded to fit into the modern infrastructure and industrial development being imposed on them from the outside.

### THE ABORTED BANGILO INTER-PROVINCIAL BUDONG: MARCH 30-31, 1979

It was now obvious to the Tinggians that since they were being labeled as "incompetent" who were being led by "self-serving" outsiders, there was not very much hope that the authorities, in whom they had placed all their faith, were taking their appeals seriously. Another inter-tribal community meeting was suggested to discuss the implications of all the latest events and to democratically decide what to do next.

#### *Another Inter-Peace Pact Partners Consultation in Bangilo*

In March 4 a community meeting was held in Bangilo, Malibcong at which Mr. Francisco Paganao, a peace pact holder and Bangilo representative to the Tiempo budong, explained the purpose of the formation of the peace pact federation in Tubo. Each Bangilo peace pact holder was then invited to express his views on the matter. Most expressed a desire to hold another peace pact partners consultation to work out more carefully the full implications of the Tiempo Pagta, and especially to resolve problems such as what to do in the case of logging related accidents and deaths within the peace pact territory.

One peace pact holder deplored the Mutual Agreement signed in Bangued on the grounds that "Mayor Solomon Dayag is a representative of the government, and he cannot represent the people. The representative of the people must be chosen among the people, a direct choice by them". He then went on to express the general feeling of the people thus:

To kill is against the law of the government. We protested against the CRC because we demand for our rights, and not to wage war.

Two days later, in March 6, an official invitation to Bangilo's peace pact partners in Abra (in communities located in the municipalities of Tineg, Boliney, Lacub and Lagangilang) and Kalinga-Apayao was sent asking them to a budong to be held in Bangilo on March 30 to 31, 1979. The attendance of the Kalinga delegates was deemed vital because the Kalingas have had considerable experience in implementing their own Pagta formulated as far back as May 13, 1975 in reaction to the Chico River Dam controversy. The invitation sought the presence of the peace pact partners in order to provide "solidarity in protecting that which we value. . . our valued peace pact and brotherhood in the face of the entry of different companies which affect us."

Mayor Dayag and Vice Mayor Benigno Dagwat were among a handful of peace pact holders who did not sign the invitation letter.

### *Bangilo is Harassed: A Seminar, A New Mayor*

It is likely that the fear of the Kalingas attending a Tinggian-initiated budong and bringing with them their considerable success in frustrating the National Power Corporation's persistent efforts to construct the four Chico River dams explains what happened next.

In March 11 an assembly of elders and peace pact holders in Bangilo called to prepared for the consultation was interrupted by Mayor Dayag and Vice-Mayor Dagwat. They strongly protested the holding of the consultation. The gathering, however, decided to go ahead with the budong.

In the meantime, Governor Barbero scheduled a meeting of all Tinggian peace pact holders for March 20 in Bangued, but this was postponed a couple of days before that date because of a "gasoline shortage". In March 18 Mayor Dayag informed all the peace pact holders of Bangilo to prepare for a "seminar" to be conducted by the Governor in Bangued from March 27 to 29. Three days later Dayag announced over radio DZPA that he would pay the fares of the peace pact holders if they attended the seminar.

In March 20, at an assembly of elders planning for the forthcoming budong Dayag announced that on April 1, 1979 Major Cuyupan (the non-Tinggian PC mayor of Tineg since 1977) would become Malibcong's new mayor, and that Mr. Alfredo Bagayao of CRC's Community Relations Office, and a native son of Bangilo, may become the new Municipal Secretary.

In March 22 Governor Barbero in an official letter to all Tinggian peace pact holders and elders requested them to attend a seminar on Presidential Decree No. 1508 (Barangay Justice) in Bangued from March 27 to 30. He wrote that "it is important you come to this meeting because it has a bearing on your being a peace pact holder." He promised to pay their fares and to provide free meals and merienda.

Mayor Dayag and Vice Mayor Dagwat summoned a meeting of the peace pact holders of Bangilo in March 25 and informed them that they should attend the Governor's seminar and that they should cancel the proposed tribal consultation. In the following days various persons were ques-

tioned by the now enlarged PC detachment in the area as to who the organizers of the consultation were, and who were making contributions to it. Some peace pact holders were forcibly convinced to accept the Bangued invitation and military personnel threatened to arrest anyone contributing rice or any other material to the consultation. In March 26 peace pact holders preparing the plaza for the consultation were threatened by a policeman.

In March 28 Major Cuyupan arrived in Bangilo and announced to everybody that he was the new mayor. He ordered the peace pact holders to attend the seminar in Bangued. In March 29 some peace pact holders were summoned by Cuyugan to Dagwat's home and forced to agree to go to Bangued. Cuyugan then insisted that the budong be discontinued because it was "illegal". He vowed to sacrifice his life to prevent the consultation from going through and to stop all opposition to CRC. When the peace pact holders informed him that much time and expense had gone into the preparation of the budong and that their peace pact partners were on the way, witnesses report that Cuyupan called them "stupids" and "monkeys", whereupon some elders cried. At the same time, the people of the neighboring valley of Mataragan were threatened with arrest if they attended the consultation.

To prevent the invited peace pact partners from making it to Bangilo some reports circulating in Bangued said that troops had blocked the Kalinga-Abra highway, that military units in Kalinga had gone on alert, and that a similar blockade had been established in the upper Daguoman valley to discourage attendance from Southern Abra.

In March 29 Governor Barbero announced a meeting of all Abra mayors in Bangued in March 30 to discuss "matters of vital importance." On that same day it was announced over DZPA that new Tinggian Mayors for the upland municipalities of Tubo, Tineg and Bucloc and the lowland municipality of Langiden would be sworn in by Deputy Minister Carmelo Barbero in March 30. Malibcong Mayor Dayag was announced to be "thinking of resigning." Tineg barrios hastily petitioned that they did not want Sangguniang Panlalawigan Alfredo Pioig (he spoke favorably of CRC at the Tiempo budong) as their new Mayor, and they suggested several other names.

In March 30 Deputy Minister Barbero swore in the five new mayors of the above mentioned Tinggian municipalities and he had a conference with them. Tubo got Pioig as mayor. Malibcong got a non-Tinggian military man with a reputation of being a very hard taskmaster and a pro-Cellophiler.

All the while, government and military transportation was being used to ferry peace pact holders down to Bangued for the seminar. Major Cuyupan personally escorted the Bangilo peace pact holders and elders down to Bangued.

This carefully conceived plan put into operation at both the provincial and interprovincial level (the latter indicating that the plan was probably conceived and directed from Manila) successfully disrupted the Bangilo interpro-

vincial peace pact consultation. Only a few of the invited delegates were able to reach Bangilo. The opening ceremonies of the budong were conducted, but the consultation had to be discontinued because the peace pact holders and elders were supposedly attending a seminar on barangay justice in Bangued.

### *The "Seminar"*

At the present moment of writing, the full details of the Bangued seminar have yet to be collated, but it is clear from eyewitness accounts that barangay justice was *not* the main item on the agenda.

The Tinggian peace pact holders and elders met with Governor Barbero, his father Deputy Minister Carmelo Barbero, and representatives of the Abra provincial government and military command in the PC Headquarters Camp Villamor. They were urged to modify or withdraw the decisions made at the Tiempo budong in January. The Tinggians reportedly held fast to their resolution which petitioned the President to cancel CRC's license, but the Pagta Ti Kalon, which gives the teeth necessary to make CRC take the various Tinggian requests seriously, was attacked as "illegal", not in keeping with traditional peace pact arrangements (which are bilateral, whereas the Tiempo Pagta is directed against a third party—CRC) and therefore null. The now familiar arguments regarding "subversives" and "interfering foreigners" were repeated. The Tinggians were requested to retract the Tiempo Pagta.

The "seminar" went on for three whole days. In March 30 a document was drawn up withdrawing portions of the Pagta (most notably the prohibition against working for CRC) and the Tinggian representatives were asked to sign it. This resolution was addressed to CRC, Colonel Lasaten the PC Commander, Minister of Defense Enrile, Governor Barbero, the BFD and Bishop Spueller.

In April 2 CRC's Pete Tabili in his regular Monday morning broadcast jubilantly announced the rejection of the Tiempo Pagta. He too attacked foreigners "who say they are helping in the name of the minorities" but who instead divided the unity of the people. He described the gathering in Camp Villamor as "more representative" than that in Tiempo because "the majority of the peace pact holders and elders were in attendance." He overlooked the fact that they were practically forced to attend.

Tabili announced that the gathering in Camp Villamor had formed an Association of Peace Pact Holders and Elders of Abra; that it had elected its own officials (Eduardo Layugan, ex-mayor of Boliney heads the association) who had taken their "oath of office" in front of Deputy Minister Barbero; and that a "Board of Advisers" to the new association had been formed which included Governor Barbero, Colonel Lasaten and all the Tinggian mayors.

## *A Question of Justice*

The attack on the Tinggian peace pact tradition and system was now complete. A duly called budong was forcibly disrupted and would-be participants and organizers were called away under the pretense of discussing PD 1508. The Tinggian elders were not duly authorized by their respective communities to discuss, let alone retract decisions taken at duly constituted peace pact gatherings. The conditions in which the Tinggians met in Camp Villamor bordered on duress; furthermore, they had no recourse to legal counsel. The association established is clearly intended to rival the United Communities of the Cordillera Federation established in Tiempo. But in keeping with the belief that the Tinggians are not yet fully capable of governing themselves, this non-Tinggian proposed organization came with a board of advisers all of whom are appointees; hence, in Tinggian eyes, easily manipulated by political forces.

A peace pact agreement cannot be "retracted" arbitrarily by some of the original peace pact participants and by those who never signed the original agreement. Further, such a retraction cannot be made at a meeting which is not a duly constituted peace pact gathering.

The following conclusions are inescapable: from the viewpoint of Tinggian customary law any decision taken in Camp Villamor is *illegal*. From almost any viewpoint one cares to choose, such decisions are *immoral*. Hence, justice was not served at the "seminar" called to discuss barangay justice.

### WHAT NOW?

The systematic assault on the communal decision-making processes of the Tinggian is now, in retrospect, quite obvious. The assault was first initiated by CRC and then when it found that it could not break the Tinggians, it sought the help of the local military and provincial government authorities and then took the problem up to the national level for resolution. The budongs have been the special target of this counter-offensive. In September 1978 CRC called for a community meeting in Bangilo to "settle" the problem just one week before the Bangilo intertribal gathering. In January 1979 the Governor, top government officials, and CRC representatives descended on Bangilo seeking to wrest a "Mutual" Agreement from them just two days before the interprovincial budong in Tiempo. In March 1979 the Governor organized a seminar which coincided with the Bangilo interprovincial budong at which attendance was compulsory, and simultaneously a military man was appointed mayor of Malibcong (presumably by President Marcos himself).

Why this persistent assault on Bangilo? In 1977 a similar, though a less elaborate sequence of events preceded CRC's entry into Tineg which was designated the company's first operational area. Malibcong's 31,600 hectares of pine forests comprise CRC's second area of operation. It is now clear that despite all CRC's flattering words about preserving and promoting Tinggian

culture when that culture, or elements of it (such as the peace pact system) stand in the way of commercial operations, commercial interests must prevail over cultural ones.

On April 21, 1977 President Marcos in remarks made at the annual meeting of the Board of Governor's of the Asian Development Bank said:

We cannot procure our development at the expense of the rights of those whom we are, in the first place, pledged to liberate.

There can be no trade-off of human rights with economic development.

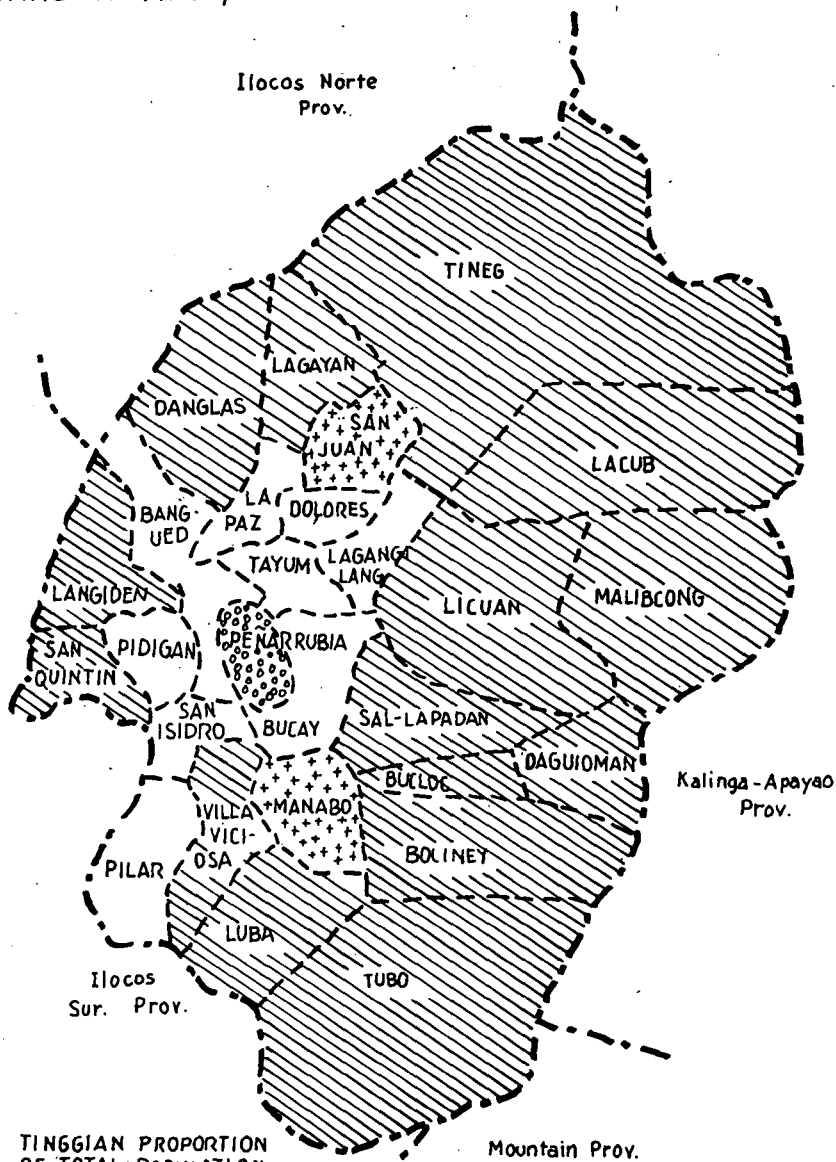
The human (especially cultural) rights of the Tinggians have been traded-off in exchange for a very dubious "development" backed up by the combined corporate might of CRC and that of the military and politicians.

CRC has proclaimed itself to be Abra's "new promise" (*Rangtay*, October 1977). While CRC builds its industrial version of the New Jerusalem in Abra what are the Tinggians going to do? The Tinggian wry sense of humor has not entirely deserted them despite the upsetting events in late March. Indeed, one quip making the rounds of the province states:

Cuyupan said we are Monkeys. The more do we need to defend our trees because if they are cut down we will lose our only means of sustenance.



THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE  
TINGGIANS IN ABRA, 1975



TINGGIAN PROPORTION  
OF TOTAL POPULATION



over 66.7% } TINGGIAN AREAS



50 to 66.7%



33.3 to 50%

} MIXED AREAS  
[Tinggian/Ilocano]



less than 33.3% } ILOCANO AREAS

Note: The Tinggian population figures used in this map are estimates based on extensive field observation. Census data are very unreliable.

CELLOPHIL AND BFD  
OPERATION AREAS, ABRA

5 0 5 10 km

1 : 500,000

N

ILOCOS NORTE

KALINGA

KALINGA

LEGEND

- Provincial Capital
- Tinglian settlements
- Negrito settlements
- All weather roads
- ~ Rivers
- CRC Cellophil Resources Corp.
- CPC Cellulose Processing Corp.
- BFD Bureau of Forest Development
- Project boundaries
- ▨ Land over 300 meters a.s.l.
- BUDONO SITES
- T Tiampq Tubo
- B Bangliq Malibcong

