

EDITOR'S PREFACE

RICARDO G. ABAD

To many, the 1984 Batasang Pambansa elections signaled the triumph of the opposition and showed the state's allegiance to a democratic electoral process. To some observers like Rene Ofreneo, however, the 1984 elections was a political exercise to satisfy one of the "five requisites" which the state must fulfill to obtain a substantial loan from international money-lenders — a loan urgently needed to heal, even partially, a battered economy. And battered indeed was the economy: the rate of economic growth declined, prices of basic commodities soared, massive layoffs of workers continued, and journals like the *PSR* saved on paper and printing costs by publishing a single annual issue this year.

Gary Hawes can probably relate our worsening economic situation to the state's hold on Philippine agriculture, specifically on the manner in which politically influential interest groups exert control over the production and distribution of agricultural commodities. Isaias Sealza supplements this observation by claiming that plantation diversification, a phenomenon related to the entrance of multinational corporations, has led to occupational heterogeneity. Some of these conclusions may displease Chester Hunt who argues, after examining the July-December 1983 issue of the *PSR*, that analyses of the Marxist variety are academic and policy dead ends. Instead, Hunt argues sociologists to pay closer attention to population size, and other demographic variables as the chief correlates of a worsening economy — a viewpoint consistent with Josefino M. Magallanes' findings on the determinants of human nutrition in Mindanao.

Whatever the correlates, or the interpretation of these correlates, the fact remains that the year 1984 spelled hard times for many Filipinos, an increasing number of whom chose to migrate to the U.S. in search of a better life. Belen T.G. Medina's research note shows that Filipino migration to the United States stood unabated in the 1980s, this time with a more pronounced chain migration pattern. While in the U.S., Filipinos may get jobs, join American organizations, gain permanent residency status, and still identify themselves as Filipinos, or to use Josefina Jayme-Card's phrase, become "structurally" but not "culturally" assimilated. In some instances, however, as Michael Haas documents for Filipinos in Hawaii, the assimilation process is hindered by a covert system of institutional discrimination. One wonders, then, if Filipinos really improve their lot by residing abroad.

Back home, work continues to promote rural development despite the economic crisis. Attempts by the National Irrigation Administration (NIA) to increase farmer's participation in the construction and maintenance of communal irrigation system are examples. These attempts are painstaking, and social scientists who seek to document NIA's efforts find it necessary to use innovative methods to analyze the participatory process and assist program planners at the same time. Romana P. de los Reyes describes one method, the process documentation approach, and Jesus R. Volante offers a manual for persons interested in using this approach in the Philippine setting.

The articles by Reynaldo C. Iletto and Emmanuel N. Santos also underscore the need for new approaches. Iletto's essay does not merely answer critics and justify the use of the *awit* as the basis for

interpreting historical events; it also asks social scientists to remain open to non-traditional sources of data for interpreting Philippine social life. If Iletto's use of the *awit* enables us to understand history from below, Santos' use of symbolic interactionism as a theoretical framework enables us to understand marijuana use from the viewpoint of the users themselves. While not legitimizing marijuana use, Santos' approach permits a less value-laden analysis of the drug scene in the country.

Big Brother wasn't around in the year 1984. Had he been, he would have disallowed boycotts and free elections. But should these elections and boycotts continue, and social scientists remain free to express their diverse views on the crises facing Philippine society, Big Brother will never be around to give a short speech, even in the year 2084.

The 1984 directory of PSS members and subscribers closes this issue.