

# BULLETIN

## OF CONCERNED ASIAN SCHOLARS

Vol. 12, No. 3/July-Sept., 1980

---

---

### Contents

- Robin Broad* 2 "Our Children Are Being Kidnapped"
- Jose Maria Sison* 9 "The Guerilla Is Like a Poet"/poem.
- Robert B. Stauffer* 10 Philippine "Normalization": The Politics of Form.
- Robert L. Youngblood* 19 The Protestant Church in the  
Philippines' New Society
- Craig G. Scharlin* 30 "A Filmmaker and His Film"/cinema review.
- Charles W. Lindsey* 33 *Marcos and Martial Law in the Philippines*  
ed. by D. A. Rosenberg/review essay.
- Rob Steven* 38 The Japanese Working Class
- Nini Jensen* 60 Nakane Chie and *Japanese Society*/  
review essay.
- Ronald Suleski* 66 Ameyuki-san no Uta by Yamazaki  
Tomoko/review.
- Kenzaburo Ôe* 68 "A Strange Job"/short story translated by  
Ruth Adler.

---

---

VOLUME TWELVE, NUMBER THREE  
1980, \$4.00

## “Our Children Are Being Kidnapped!”

by Robin Broad

The people of Bukidnon\* are talking. They whisper their stories to me—in jeepneys riding, in rivers bathing, in fields plowing. One story is repeated time and time again. It becomes their theme: “Our children are being kidnapped,” they say. “Each night during the full moon, some disappear. We hear jeeps, company jeeps, driving slowly down the road. And, afterwards, children are missing.”

“Why?” I ask each teller. “Why is this happening?”

Different lips mouth similar answers. “It is that big corporation building here,” they reply. “It has built bridges that have killed mermaids,” continues one. “It has built buildings that have disturbed the tree spirits,” says another. “Its development has angered the gods of nature, and so, in return, they demand human sacrifices from the company owners. They ask for our children.” Sometimes it is Imelda, President Marcos’ wife, who is said to make the contract with the angered mermaids. Sometimes the Japanese businessmen, sometimes the American corporate owners, sometimes the rich and powerful Filipino families.

One hears the story whispered over and over again. Throughout Bukidnon, at each site of a large corporation, at each big development venture. The story begins to swim in one’s head. Always there. Always the background script for what one sees happening in Bukidnon.

Is the tale true? On a literal level, perhaps not. But on a mythical level, undoubtedly so. The people of Bukidnon are wise. They see what is occurring around them. They see the destruction that corporations leave in their wake—the ecological and the human damage. They see the tremendous costs associated with this form of development. They see the harm to their land, to their families, to their whole way of life.

The story of sacrifices, of blood offerings, stands as their theme.



Member of cultural minority of Bukidnan, Mindanao—dressed for PANAMIN tourist show. Photo by R. Broad.

Take one case, that of Del Monte’s local affiliate, the Philippine Packing Corporation (PPC):

In the 1920s, Del Monte’s Hawaiian plantation seemed threatened by a plague of insects, and it sought the security of greener pastures elsewhere. In 1926, Del Monte began its pineapple plantation on about 10,000 hectares of land in Manolo Fortich, Bukidnon. Within four years, a cannery was opened nineteen miles away in Cagayan de Oro.

The terms of the plantation lease could not have been more inviting. Although by Philippine law a private corporation may own only 1,024 hectares, the National Development Corporation (NDC) was formed by the Philippine government to hold public agricultural land in excess of this amount for the corporation. PPC’s lease with NDC, signed first in 1938 and later renewed in 1958 for thirty more years, required it to pay a nominal rental fee, based on the value of raw pineapple produced. Most of PPC’s profit, however, is made on its canned goods, not on the raw pineapple. Moreover, the price pegged for this computation is 12 pesos\* per ton—the 1938 value.

PPC grew. And grew. And grew. By the 1970s, it stood as the largest food company in the Philippines and as the number one exporter of pineapples and bananas, two of the Philippines’ top ten foreign exchange earners. Its plantations now yield tropical fruits, tomatoes, cucumbers, and asparagus, as well as

---

\*The province of Bukidnon is located on the island of Mindanao, the southernmost and largest island in the Philippines.

bananas and pineapples. Eight hundred hectares of land in central Bukidnon grow PPC rice on what is considered to be one of the most successful largescale rice growing operations in the Philippines.\*\* One of the country's biggest cattle feedlots belongs to PPC.

With all this, by 1974, PPC, the 37th largest foreign-controlled corporation in the Philippines, was looking to expand out from its original plantation. PPC's goal was the 14,000 hectares of the Pontian Plain in the municipality of Sumilao, Bukidnon. The plain, lying just east of the original plantation, had been partially under ranch lease, but, by the sixties, was subdivided and released for agriculture. PPC moved in quickly. The land survey commenced in 1974, and in 1976 the corporation launched operations. A road to the area was started, and planting began. By 1978, 6,000 of the 14,000 hectares were PPC's; two thirds of this were already planted with pineapples, tomatoes and papaya.

PPC seemed set on even further growth.

At the same time, the Pontian Plain remains the site of 5 barrios (Vista Villa, Ocasian, Puntian, San Roque, and Kulase) with a population of 371 families, 80 percent of whom are native Bukidnons, one of the cultural minorities.† The families claim the very land on which PPC workers are planting their pineapple suckers: 371 families, 2259 individuals.

These are the statistics, the bare facts. Figures are important to the story, but they miss much. The real story is a story of the natives and their fight against this growth, against a type of development that refuses to consider them as more than mere statistics. These are families like yours and mine. That man who works his land—he is a man like your father. His hands callous like yours and mine do. That crying child sheds tears like you and I. That woman—she is a mother with all the fears, the worries, the love that your mother had.

It is a story of people like Carlito Sumagpi.

A horse stops outside the house in San Roque. A man, young and slender, walks inside. He looks directly into our faces. "How can you help me?" he asks.

This, Carlito Sumagpi. Carlito who has been farming six hectares of land in San Roque under tax declaration since 1966. It was his hands that toiled over the two hills of jackfruit, the fifty hills of bananas, the one marange, four avocados, and corn and abaca. This, his cultivation, his life since 1966.

Carlito knew enough to apply to the Bureau of Lands for a title, and he did so repeatedly. His first attempt was turned down. At 17, he was too young to be a titled land owner. But once he was no longer too young, the rejections still came. And PANAMIN (Presidential Assistant on National Minorities),‡ supposedly set up to aid natives like Carlito, was no help either. In the meantime, the land was titled in 1975 to Ramon Gaspar of Kisolon, Sumilao, who in turn leased it to PPC. Ramon Gaspar? "A notorious land speculator," comes the answer from a member of the Kisolon Sangguniang Bayan. A land speculator whose lawyer just happened to be the very lawyer employed by PPC. A

land speculator who had never seen the piece of land he claimed as his own.

Carlito fought. He filed protest after protest with the Malaybalay Bureau of Lands, always receiving promises of action, but, in reality, always finding inaction.

PPC waited until January 14, 1978, to move on its claim. On that day, Max Magdaleno, a PPC canvasser, and two security guards came to Carlito's field to begin the pineapple cultivation on four hectares. Carlito approached them, questioning. "PPC orders," was the reply. Carlito begged them to stop, to wait for a Bureau of lands decision on his protest. "PPC orders," was the reply.

Carlito plowed off his own land.

"How can you help me?" he repeats. We walk to his field, to see the land that he plowed only to have it replowed by PPC, to see his house, his fruit trees, his corn plants. He stops in front of a patch of green onion plants. "Take them!" he says disgustedly to some of the barrio girls who have accompanied us. He points to the onions. "You might as well take them."

These are now PPC fields, these four hectares. PPC's, by matter of force.

Carlito talks of using force to retake what is his, of planting corn in the PPC furrows. PPC, however, lets it be known that it has put chemicals in the soil that will kill the corn seed. Corn seed is precious. And so the four hectares sit, waiting for pineapple suckers to be planted.

Yes, PPC has offered to pay Carlito for his "improvements" (house, fruit trees, and the like). A thousand pesos or so for all his sweat. Carlito snickers. It is his land he wants, not the money. "If I have land, I can always take care of myself."

Carlito's land—his child—has been kidnapped.

As has the land of others. The statistic of 2259 individuals in the PPC expansion area doesn't tell much. But with each, one finds another tale of exploitation.

You people, you there behind the statistics, you come to tell your stories.

Wilfred Marquez, you who have returned to your farm in Vista Villa only to be held at gunpoint by PPC guards and charged with the theft of your own corn. It is PPC land now, my friend. It has been taken. And should you try to return again, you will be shot. Are you content now with your job as a part-time laborer at PPC? You, who labor on their land, while their pineapples grow on yours.

You, Mr. Jeremis, man of twenty-two, you who have toiled at San Roque for the past eight years of your youth. Where is your house now? Carried off by PPC personnel so they could cultivate your land, was it? After all, PPC did lease those six hectares from a land speculator, and they did pay you 1,500 pesos for your improvements. What more could you want, my friend?

Alena Listohan, you young orphan, you who inherited four hectares of the plain from your parents. What has happened to your inheritance now? How did Vicente Cadigan, PPC security guard, obtain the Bureau of Lands title to your land, your

---

\* At the time of writing (1979), US \$1 = 7 pesos approximately.

\*\* This is in keeping with the Corporate Farming decree, issued on May 27, 1974, requiring corporations with 500 or more employees to grow or purchase enough rice to feed their employees. Companies like PPC are finding that this can indeed be profitable.

---

† Approximately two-fifths of the Mindanao-Sulu population of over 10 million belong to the cultural minorities.

‡ PANAMIN is headed by Manuel Elizalde, a member of one of the five wealthiest families in the Philippines.

parents' one gift? Ah, Alena, driven off your land to watch pineapples planted in your wake.

You, Julianna Pasuelo, were you surprised when you returned from visiting your daughter that day, when you returned to discover that the corn you had planted on the three hectares you rented from the farmer Sumanghid was no more, and that in its place was brown soil, freshly plowed by PPC? Didn't the 500 pesos the farmer gave you soothe you? You, my friend, do you think the farmer should have warned you in advance that he was renting the land that was your life?

Sergio Paelden, you whose thirty years were ended by the shots of three Sumilao policemen. Why were you walking towards the municipal hall that day? Why did you clutch a bolo (knife) in one hand and a plastic bag with your land papers in the other? Could it be that you were angry, my friend, angry because your land at San Roque had just been leased to PPC by another person?

You, farmers of Vista Villa, you whose corn was trampled by 400 head of PPC cattle. You had refused to lease the land to PPC. And so PPC fenced its cattle nearby, and the cattle "escaped" to wreck your crops. You, do you believe that a company like PPC doesn't know enough to use steel bars for its fences? Angered, you filed a complaint against PPC and the absentee landlord, Jose Neri, charging harassment and unfair labor practices. You three farmers, did you begin to feel helpless and powerless in your fight against PPC? Is that why you eventually dropped the complaint and accepted the consolation prize of 3,000 pesos and job promises that PPC offered you? You, my friends, are you content, or do you miss the land that is yours?

You, Fedal Suminao, you who have plowed your six hectares since 1946. You who keep plowing, waiting, expecting PPC to pounce. You, one of the ten men from San Roque who say they will stand up to PPC. Ten against the power of a multinational corporation intent on expansion. Ten who, like Carlito, are kept alive by their land, not by money.

You, who live on the land, who as tillers of the land should own the land. While instead Bureau of Lands hands out the land titles under Free Patent or Homestead applications to others, others who have never even seen that land—to Tirso Pimentel, for instance, the Provincial Land Assessor, or to Jaime Piloton and Cadigal, PPC employees, or to persons working for the Lims, those land speculators from Cagayan de Oro City. You farmers to whom PPC offers to pay only for "improvements," if they offer to pay you anything at all before they push you out. How much can you take, my friends? How much before you explode?

On October 21, 1975, Higinio P. Sunico, the Chief of the Land Management Division of the Bureau of Lands in Manila, wrote a letter to the Sumilao "Sangguniang Bayan" (elected assembly). From Manila, came the words:

*According to investigation . . . about 70% of lands in San Roque are left abandoned; most of the lots are applied for by absentee applicants; the abandoned lots are presently occupied by persons other than the applicants; and some lots are titled but unattended by the owners.*

The letter continues, ending with a recommendation that:

*. . . applications filed by absentee applicants be cancelled and the lands covered thereby be allocated to the actual occupants. Steps are now being taken by this Office to cancel those applications accordingly. Regarding the entry and occupation by some people on abandoned lots without the consent and knowledge of the owners thereof, it is informed that such act may be subject to further court litigation.*

The words sound good. But they remain merely words, like the words of various resolutions by the Sangguniang Bayan itself.

On February 26, 1976, for instance, the Provincial Sangguniang Bayan of Malaybalay passed a resolution ordering PPC to "temporarily suspend fencing of their rented lots and to pull out temporarily existing fences giving way to the occupants to cultivate in the meantime pending settlement of the conflict." Words.

On March 25, 1976, Felix Dela Cerna introduced a resolution to Ferdinand Marcos in the Municipal Sangguniang Bayan of Sumilao. The resolution was to decree capital punishment for land speculation. The resolution passed, but the penalty was changed from "capital punishment" to "a stiff penalty." Words.

On April 20, 1976, the sixty families of the Barrio Pontian condemned the Municipal Sangguniang Bayan for not implementing the resolution it had passed to limit PPC's expansion area to 5,000 hectares. The people had come to know the futility of such words, the meaninglessness of such promises. "Mayor Sumbalan [of Sumilao] has connections with PPC," they whisper. "There will always be words and no action."

Words can soothe a population for only so long.

The pressures on the small farmers of Sumilao are great. They are pushed. They are shoved. Those who refuse to move face the threat of having their rights-of-way cut off by PPC. Those who continue to try to get land titles through Bureau of Lands are told they must wait, or that they have no witnesses, or that they are lacking the proper forms, or that their lands have already been applied for, and, eventually, that they will be given titles only if they promise to lease to PPC. And there in the title of the land it says just that: I am the tiller and occupant of this land provided I lease to Philippine Packing Company.

What about those who finally sign the lease, the Crop Producer and Grower's Agreement? Their signature is affixed to a ten page document of such intricate English that it is highly unlikely that any know what they are signing. PPC can afford the best legal minds, and the Crop Producer and Grower's Agreement is testimony to their brilliance. In 25 paragraphs, the lawyers produce what is in effect a 10-year lease, with PPC maintaining the sole option to extend for another 16 years. The lease does permit the farmer to grow the pineapple himself and sell it to PPC for a share in the profit—provided he can meet all of PPC's specifications. It is, however, the "producer" (PPC) that "shall be the sole judge as to the amount and suitability of equipment and labor and materials necessary and other improvements required for an efficient and economical agricultural operation." And what small farmer has the capital or the experience to do this? Who has the money to build a road if PPC says it is needed? Who can afford the high-priced fertilizers PPC deems necessary?

Should the grower discover he cannot meet these specifications, he is directed to a letter that is attached to the Agreement. There he signs a statement saying that the Agreement has "just" been concluded "but due to the technical ability involved to grow these crops and the sizeable amount of finances and equipment needed, I cannot comply and meet this particular condition. In view of this, I am giving the Company or your representative the absolute authority to take over the entire area . . ."

Clearly, PPC expects this letter to be signed. "Do you ever buy pineapples from individual farmers?" I ask Henry Reyes of the PPC Research Department. "Oh, no," he laughs. "Bananas sometimes, but never pineapples. They don't have the technical expertise." "What about this profit sharing?" I ask Angel Javellana, a top PPC executive. "Oh that," he laughs. "That's just for legal purposes. No farmer would understand those terms. In fact, when we talk to them about the agreement in the local dialect, we use the word that means lease. We're really renting the land."

Without any real profit sharing, the people are given little for their land. Two hundred pesos per year per hectare of arable land, and 2 pesos per hectare of nonarable land is the price the contract eventually sets. PPC, of course, is the sole judge of what is defined as arable and what nonarable. And so, in San Roque, one can see slightly sloping lots that have been classified as nonarable, supposedly to be used as rights-of-way, but, indeed, planted with just as many pineapple suckers as adjacent flat areas classified as arable.

Again and again in the Agreement, the producer is given the sole right to judge. The grower's books may be subject to an audit by the producer's representatives. The producer's books are completely restricted from the growers. The producer has the right to terminate the contract at the end of any cycle. Moreover, should "regulations or restrictions of any governmental authority" bind him, the producer may "be excused from performance by reason of inability to perform." The cards are all stacked in favor of the producer. The grower gets little—except the right to continue paying the property taxes. And yet, either not knowing better or not seeing himself as having any other choices, he, the owner and tiller, signs.

But he does not merely sign the Agreement and the cover letter. He also signs the bottom of eight blank pages. These are for a map of your land, he is told by the representatives of the company. The blank pages are perplexing. Why not have the map drawn before the paper is signed? Why must it be a true signature and not just a label by PPC? Why must it be signed at the bottom of the page, and not at the top? The farmers, not knowing better, sign, sign without questioning. Will the pages be filled with lease extensions in later years? One can only wait to see. "Not only have you just signed your land away," explains a local priest, "but you have signed away your wife and seven children."

Yes, your children are being sacrificed.

And you are being turned out from your land to join a population of landless agricultural laborers.

Another family wants to tell tales of PPC and its land-grabbing expansion. Another Bukidnon farmer, trying to feed his family from the Pontian Plains.

I go to the house to talk, to hear the story. It is night, the dark, quiet night that those with electricity will never know. We

sit and drink coffee and eat rice cakes. Around us, the children play. We sit and talk. But this time everything about PPC is described as being wonderful. This time, there seem to be few problems, few irregularities. This time, PPC seems the farmers' friend.

I rise to leave. The farmer motions to a teenage boy who comes toward me. "This is my nephew," the farmer says. "He is visiting us. His father works for PPC."

The pieces fall into place. The people are scared. They know PPC's power. They know it all too well. And they are scared, some of them. Understandably, they are scared.

The PPC officials sit at their desks in a compound of white buildings behind a tall fence at Camp Phillips, Manolo Fortich. I pass through the gate and by the uniformed security guards. Today I will be given an official tour of the PPC grounds. "Only



San Roque, Bukidnan: subsistence farm in area where DelMonte is expanding (Broad).

because you're a young and beautiful girl—and negotiable," one of the secretaries confides to me. "You know, they wouldn't do this if you were a boy."

The Red Ford pickup truck takes me first to the pride of the PPC executives—Cawayanon, the executive compound. Large suburban-type houses painted pretty colors sit behind plush green lawns. One or two cars are parked in each driveway. We pass the homes slowly. My guide is the most talkative here. "This is Mr. Moran's house . . . This is Mr. Javellana's house . . . This is . . ." We stop at the clubhouse to watch the golfers tee off. And back again past the homes. "This is Mr. Javellana's house," my guide reminds me. "This is Mr. Moran's house . . . This is . . ." The compound is tightly guarded. It is undoubtedly supposed to be the highlight of my tour.

We drive more quickly through the other housing areas. At each, the buildings get smaller and smaller. The fancy exteriors fade to weathered wood. The lawns disappear. Driveways become fewer. Cars are not to be seen. Electric lines are no more.

The homes stand in neat rows, as if on graph paper, closer and closer together. One can guess the level of the workers in each compound. Here, the supervisors. Here, the office staffs. Here, the drivers. Here, the field laborers.

The truck turns onto the grid of dirt roads that pass through the plantation—through pineapple plants as well as papaya, tomatoes, and other vegetables. The workers are in big straw hats and netted masks, their faces hidden. They stoop over, weeding, picking, checking. "Progress," my guide notes succinctly. He points to the line of workers, throwing the picked pineapple from one to the other until it reaches the truck bed. And then he points to another set of workers who follow a large vehicle with wide wings of conveyor belts. The boom harvester, PPC's newest joy. The workers bend over, plucking the pineapple, placing it on the conveyor. No more tossing back and forth from one to another. Mechanization. Speed. "Progress."

It is hot in the truck, much hotter outdoors. I look up to the noonday sun. I watch them, bending over time and time again. The more fortunate receiving the minimum wage, 1.11 pesos an hour. And only that for fulltime workers. Most of those outside sweating receive the pay of the casual worker, less than 7 pesos a day. But they and their families still have to live, a cost the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA)\* estimated in 1976 to be 45 pesos per day for a family of six.

My guide looks at his watch. "Too late," he notes. We do not have time to travel through the pineapple plants to San Roque, to the site of the expansion area. "Too bad," he says. "The sunset is beautiful there."

"You do not really want to talk to the workers," the parish priest at Camp Phillips has told me. "They are biased. They will not tell you the truth. If you want to know the facts, you must go to the PPC office."

The executives sit there, behind their desks, sit there amidst all kinds of bound volumes filled with information that they clearly have been instructed not to divulge to outsiders.

"How many workers do you have here at the plantation?" I ask Angel Javellana who is in charge of the expansion program in Sumilao.

Mr. Javellana, dressed all in white, smiles from behind his desk, and explains that he's not very good at remembering figures. The books remain closed. Both cattle and people are under his domain, and he confesses, "I forget if I'm counting heads of cattle or people."

"How many hectares do you have here at the plantation?" I ask time and time again.

It is a secret—highly confidential information. The figures stay hidden within the pages of those books. "Oh, I don't really know, maybe about 5,000 hectares," offers Javellana. "11,000 arable hectares," says Marcelino Chan, Senior Department Head of the Research and Development Division. "12,000 hectares owned and 4,000 more leased," guesses Henry Reyes, one of the men in Chan's department.

And the expansion area?

"About 1,000 more hectares of arable land," Reyes says. "I'm not good at statistics," Javellana repeats. "Maybe about 4,000 more hectares." He goes to a map on the wall to point out the Pontian Plain area, and explains to me why the whole landgrabbing story is false. As he sees it, if his company were

really landgrabbing it would already control the whole contiguous area. But it doesn't. There are still individual farmers scattered here and there. Point proven: PPC is not landgrabbing.

Wage levels?

"Most people are in the bracket above two pesos an hour," Reyes summarizes, after explaining the three categories of workers—fulltime regulars whose base pay, as of April 16, 1978, is 1.64 pesos per hour, intermittent regulars whose base pay is 1.50 pesos per hour, and seasonal regulars whose base pay is 1.25 pesos per hour. No mention of the nonregular labor, the casual workers, who make up 3,000 of the 5,000 plantation workers. Three-fifths of the labor force, three-fifths whom PPC executives find so easy to dismiss from their minds.

As Javellana sees it, the base pay for the regular workers is 1.54 pesos per hour. He explains that the base wage must be negotiated with the union. "Don't say this too loudly," he adds, explaining one aspect of the labor situation in the Philippines that is beneficial to PPC, "but, unlike the United States, we don't have to negotiate anymore than this [the base pay]."\*

The subject of wages is quickly changed. After all, what are mere monetary wages that do not take into account all the nonmonetary benefits for which a worker at PPC is eligible? Javellana expounds on these: housing . . . free water . . . power allowance . . . subsidized schooling . . . hospital (free up to a certain point) . . . pension. . . .

"Do all workers get housing?" I question.

No, it turns out. Not really. PPC, you understand, has expanded and a shortage of housing has resulted from this growth. "Sound investment policy," Javellana explains. It just would not be economically wise to put too much money into new housing all at once. So, for example, only 24 homes in the supervisors' compound are available for 45 eligible families. Those left out will be given housing in the next lower level enclave. And the extra from there will be placed back one more level. And so on, until it is the bottom segment of laborers who are left without housing. "Many of them do not want to live here anyway," Javellana offers. "They like to live in their own barrios where they have always lived." Problem solved in his mind. But what of the inequality of salary that thus results? The lowest paid get the least benefits—no housing, no free water, no power allowance.

What of legal arrangements with the Philippine government?

Each man mentions the Laurel-Langley Agreement, the Parity Agreement, which gives Americans the right to own land in the Philippines. ("They gave us our independence and we gave them this in return," goes the saying.) "It's just expired, I think," says Reyes, "but (there are) exceptions for some companies, of course."

And the lease agreement with NDC that expires in 1988?

Javellana chuckles. He's not worried about that one. After all, "I'll be retired by then."

---

\* A study by the accounting firm Sycip, Gorres, Velayo and Company compares the cost of labor throughout Southeast Asia. In almost every occupational classification, the wages in the Philippines were the lowest. This low level of wages has undoubtedly been strengthened by General Order #5 of 1972 which prohibits strikes, assemblies, and collective bargaining.

---

\* NEDA is the highest economic planning body in the Philippines.

Philippine Packing office again. Once more inside the tall, well-guarded fences. To another desk in another department.

"Asparagus," says the man behind this desk to me. He looks at me seriously, solemnly, and explains his dilemma. It seems that PPC has begun to grow asparagus for the local market. But, somehow, Taiwan asparagus is being imported to the Philippines and sold more cheaply. "Smuggled in illegally," he suggests.

He continues, for this is only part of the asparagus problem. "Filipinos do not yet eat asparagus very much." He looks to future advertising campaigns to change this unhappy fact. "Indeed," he muses, "Why shouldn't they eat asparagus every day?"

We talk further of advertising and of the awards PPC has won for its past advertising campaigns. He points to an ad posted on the cabinet door—a blonde-haired, dungaree-clad woman lounging amidst the green; a Del Monte insignia in the lower corner. He smiles. Perhaps there is hope for the asparagus market yet.

PPC's other markets present little problem. In fact, at 33.4 percent, its profit rate is extraordinary. The bulk of its money is not made in the local markets but on its exports. Fresh pineapple is shipped to Japan, while most of the canned product ends up in Europe or the United States. Two out of every three cans of pineapple in the United States are from the Philippines. And what of the 10 percent of PPC's goods that are sold locally? Well, Del Monte appears to have few problems here either. After all, those cans on the local shelves include the ones that would not meet foreign health standards.

Still another family.

The father sits beside me. A man of some twenty-nine years. Of dark skin. Dark penetrating eyes. He sits there, wrapped in Muslim cloth, wrapped against the cool mountain air. A Bukidnon like Carlito. A Bukidnon like the majority of the people who are being pushed by PPC.

"I am teaching my daughter irreverence," he tells me.

I look at him silently, questioningly.

"I can give her little," he continues. "I am poor. My people are poor. But my heritage, my culture, must survive. And so I give her irreverence. Because my people have been too filled with shame to fight. They have felt too inferior to other peoples to push back. And so I teach my daughter irreverence. So she will stand up and fight for what is hers and what is ours."

The people of San Roque become angry. With anger comes more boldness. They demand a confrontation with PPC officials in charge of the expansion area, demand that these officials come to San Roque to hear what they, the people, have to say.

In March of 1978, it happens. Javellana and six others\* come to San Roque. There is an air of temerity in the group of farmers who await them. Some Tanduay rum has flowed. Some shame is put away. Some feeling of powerlessness leaves. Together, there can be strength, even against PPC. The group from Sumilao is ready.

"We demand to know your connections with the Bureau of Land," says one of the 25 San Roque residents present. He laughs aloud.

"And Carlito. We demand justice for Carlito." Javellana looks to Carlito, asking his yield per hectare. "One kaban," Carlito answers honestly. He is promised compensation for that. But money was not what Carlito Sumagpi wanted.

More demands come. "Javellana's lips kept trembling," one observer tells me. Is it true? It does not matter really. All that is important is that in the people's eyes they were trembling. The people grew in stature and strength in their own view—grew enough to make a PPC official's lips tremble.

"It is an American company," Javellana repeats over and over again, as if wiping away all blame.

Results of the confrontation? Answers to the petition the people presented to the PPC representatives that day? As yet, there is little in terms of concessions by PPC. But promises of more confrontations. And the roots of solidarity among the farmers of San Roque.

Outside the window, the barrio people weed the corn. One man sings a beautiful Visayan song. "Ngano?" "Why are my people suffering?" it asks. He sings, seemingly to himself, but really to the others.

He sings. And then there is silence.

"How do we get united?" he asks the people around him.

"In heaven," answers an old woman, bent over, hacking at the weeds.

"But how do we get to heaven?" he asks.

There is silence. The people move about the rows of the tall plants. Looking to each other. Silently.

"No," the man continues. "It has to be here. It must be through acts here."

There is silence. And then it is strains of "Ngano?" that again fill the air. But this time, he does not sing alone.

Another man. Another pair of tattered pants. Another "Bukidnon My Home" t-shirt. Another pair of calloused palms, of muscular arms. Another pair of mud-stained feet.

\* Included in the PPC contingent were Villanoy, the assistant to Javellana in the Sumilao expansion program; Macaranas, in charge of feed operations; Abella, the Barrio Development head; Magdaleno, an ex-barrio captain; and the canvasser and security guard from Vista Villa.

**Dole**  
**crushed pineapple**  
 IN UNSWEETENED PINEAPPLE JUICE

**IN ITS OWN JUICE**  
 no sugar added

NET WT. 8 OZS  
 (227 GRAMS)

**Dole** **crushed pineapple**  
 IN UNSWEETENED PINEAPPLE JUICE

CONTAINS CRUSHED PINEAPPLE AND PINEAPPLE JUICE

DISTRIBUTED BY CASTLE & COOKE FOODS  
 SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94111  
 A DIVISION OF CASTLE & COOKE INC.  
 HONOLULU, HAWAII 96802

PACKED AT DOLE PHILIPPINES INC.  
 POLOMOLOK, SOUTH COTABATO  
 REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES

PRODUCT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES

APPROXIMATELY  
 1 CUP  
 NO. 1 FLAT CAN

**NUTRITION INFORMATION**  
 PER SERVING SIZE: 1 CUP WITH JUICE. CONTAINS APPROX. 1 SERVING.

CALORIES	140	CARBOHYDRATES	35 GRAMS
PROTEIN	1 GRAM	FAT	1 GRAM
PERCENTAGE OF U.S. RECOMMENDED DAILY ALLOWANCES (U.S. RDA)			
PROTEIN	2%	RIBOFLAVIN	2%
VITAMIN A	2%	NIACIN	2%
VITAMIN C	10%	CALCIUM	2%
THIAMIN	10%	IRON	4%

\* CONTAINS LESS THAN 2% OF THE U.S. RDA OF THIS NUTRIENT.

Another set of eyes filled with frustration and fatigue, flashing with anger as his words begin.

"We, the people, give them a whole full platter," he says of the encroaching corporation. "We serve them a full platter, heaping full, for them to feast on. And what do we get in return? One small measly teaspoonful."

This time, the teaspoonful of which he talks is given not by PPC, but by another of the agribusinesses invading the cultural minorities of Bukidnon. That is, PPC is not an isolated case. Unfortunately, there are others who repeat the saga of PPC.

The man talks of the Construction and Development Corporation of the Philippines (CDCP). In 1974, CDCP bought an old ranch in Don Carlos, Bukidnon. The government changed the lease from a pasture lease to an agricultural one, and CDCP began growing rice and corn under the Corporate Farming program. It also kept livestock, and, by 1976, was growing sugar for the nearby Bukidnon Sugar Corporation (BUSCO).

Like PPC, CDCP soon began to itch for expansion. It increased its holdings to 4,000 hectares. This next year another 1,000 hectares is to be added. The expansion program hit Maraymaray, a barrio of 80 families and 2,000 hectares. And there, one sees the landgrabbing tactics of these big development ventures at work once more. It was the barrio captains that CDCP bought off to canvas the people and convince them to leave their land. After all, they were told, it is useless to stay: CDCP will control all rights-of-way; you farmers will need a pass to go through; you just won't be able to continue farming here.

Not surprisingly, CDCP was able to acquire much of Maraymaray. Its renting price was between 200 pesos and 250 pesos for the first year, with the promise of a yearly increase. Most people, however, opted to sell the land—at CDCP's price of 1,500 pesos per hectare for titled land and 1,000 pesos per hectare of land untitled but under tax declaration—rather than

rent. Like PPC's Crop Producer and Grower's Agreement, CDCP's conditions of rent made the people uneasy. The company appeared to be given all the power. For example, if CDCP chose to install improvements on the rented land, it seemed virtually impossible for the farmer to get out of the rental agreement.

And so they sold. Except for twenty families, twenty who will stand up and fight for what is rightfully theirs.

There is also talk of the San Miguel Corporation\* coming into Sumilao to grow coffee, although some say it is being scared off by what it sees happening nearby at PPC's expansion area. San Miguel has, nonetheless, already acquired 200 hectares. Estimations are that the company needs a total of 2,000 hectares before its operations would be profitable. It seems that San Miguel is impressed with the success of PPC's leasing contract, and would like to use something similar. In fact, word has it that San Miguel is trying to get its hands on a copy of that very Crop Producer and Grower's Agreement so it too can profit from the legal minds at PPC.

A \$48 million sugar mill with about 23,000 hectares for milling contracts has also made its way into Bukidnon. This is the Bukidnon Sugar Corporation (BUSCO), supposedly owned by Robert Benedicto, although it is rumored that behind Benedicto is Marcos himself. With BUSCO comes one more national development project that is depriving the cultural minorities, this time the Manobos of southern Bukidnon, of their lands.

In March 1976, twenty-five Manobo families were evicted and brought to the Quezon parish school. Theirs is a story of a weary fight against the powers of large corporations. The farmers had long lived in Barrio Butong in Quezon. Some were born on those lands; others had tilled the soil for over 20 years. The land, they thought, was theirs.

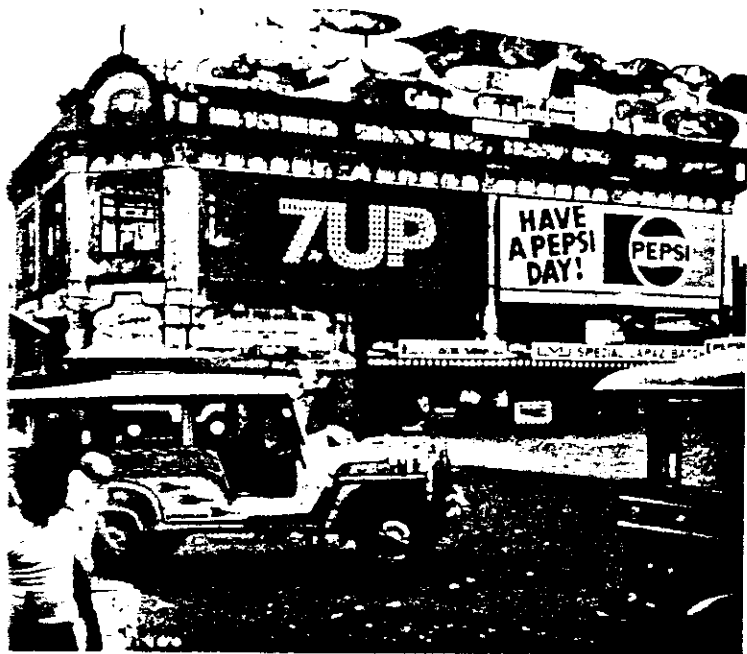
And yet, in 1974, the court, terming the Manobos squatters on ranchland, decided in favor of the rancher Escaño. The court argued that the land, as forest land under special use, was properly leased for pasture purposes, not agricultural. The reasoning is intriguing—especially in light of the fact that Escaño turned around and sold the land to BUSCO for its sugar cane.

The 25 families stayed. They were not to be moved so easily—at least not until they were given a place for resettlement. Even as BUSCO moved in, they stayed. They stayed amidst constant harassment by BUSCO security guards as well as by the local PCs (Philippine Constabulary). They stayed, moving to their roofs when their doors and windows were nailed shut. They stayed—until they were informed of an agreement between Governor Lopez, the PC, and BUSCO that their houses would not be destroyed until each family was resettled on six hectares of land, with a house and a carabao. Only then did they sign.

Words again. Mere words and promises. Easily broken.

On March 17 and 18, 1976, their homes were demolished by the sheriff and 12 armed men. And the people, those 25 families? No six hectares. No home. No carabao. Only the ground to sleep on during that cold, windy, rainy night, and, the next day, the Quezon parish school.

Their neighbors, 40 more Manobo families, tell a similar story. BUSCO had purchased their ancestral lands from Escaño.



Ilo Ilo, Panay Island: three U.S. soda companies compete atop old Spanish building. In foreground, a jeepney.

\* In 1976, SMC ranked fourth among Philippine corporations in net sales.



## “The Guerilla Is Like a Poet”

by Jose Maria Sison\*

The guerilla is like a poet  
Keen to the rustle of leaves  
The break of twigs  
The ripples of the river  
The smell of fire  
And the ashes of departure.

The guerilla is like a poet.  
He has merged with the trees  
The bushes and the rocks  
Ambiguous but precise  
Well-versed on the law of motion  
And the master of myriad of images.

The guerilla is like a poet  
Enrhymed with nature  
The subtle rhythm of the greenery  
The outer silence, the outer innocence  
The steel tensile in-grace  
That ensnares the enemy.

The guerilla is like a poet.  
He moves with the green brown multitude  
In bush burning with red flowers  
That crown and hearten all  
Swarming the terrain as a flood  
Marching at last against the stronghold.

An endless movement of strength  
Behold the protracted theme:  
The people's epic, the people's war.

\* Sison is a Filipino poet and historian who has been detained, tortured and held incommunicado since November 1977. This poem was supplied by the Philippine Research Center in Connecticut, U.S.A.



And once more, the company brought with it harassment and destruction. This time, however, it was the PANAMIN main office that sent the orders to have the Manobos taken off their land. PANAMIN, the supposed friend of the cultural minorities, ordered their evacuation. And so they were trucked in a BUSCO vehicle like cattle, and dumped at the Quezon public school and Catholic chapel. Dumped and left there. With little food, little medicine, little shelter. It was there they lived for one month. One long month.

Their promised resettlement did eventually come. They were squeezed into the Dalurong PANAMIN reservation, a 1,300 hectare area which accommodated 200 families and was to accommodate an increasing number of evicted Manobos. Here again, BUSCO is the winner. PANAMIN plans for Dalurong include having the Manobos plant sugar cane on the surplus land (What surplus land? one wonders.)—and sell it to BUSCO.

Justice?

Your lands, lands of years of life and death, grabbed by BUSCO. And you, left to live and die in strange, new lands while growing cane to feed the very mill that destroyed you.



Family in San Roque (Broad).

Rufo (“Dodong”) Honongan, leader of the farmers at San Roque, sits on the wooden bench there in the kitchen. His feet are bare. His pants ragged. His face and arms deep brown from the Bukidnon sun. A half-empty bottle of Tanduay stands in the center of the table, stands in the middle of the five of us.

He looks at me. Our eyes meet and lock. “We will win,” he says in slow, carefully enunciated English. His eyes flash. His smile widens. It is a grim but sure smile. “We must win for our children.”

There is silence.

He takes a gulp from his glass.

It is his voice that breaks the hush. “I will die for my children’s future.” He fingers the glass, but does not lift it to his mouth.

The voices seem to explode.

No, we will not allow the sacrifice of our children—of our land—and of our heritage—and of our very existence—to continue.

Our children are being kidnapped.

We must fight for them.

