The Forest

(1963)

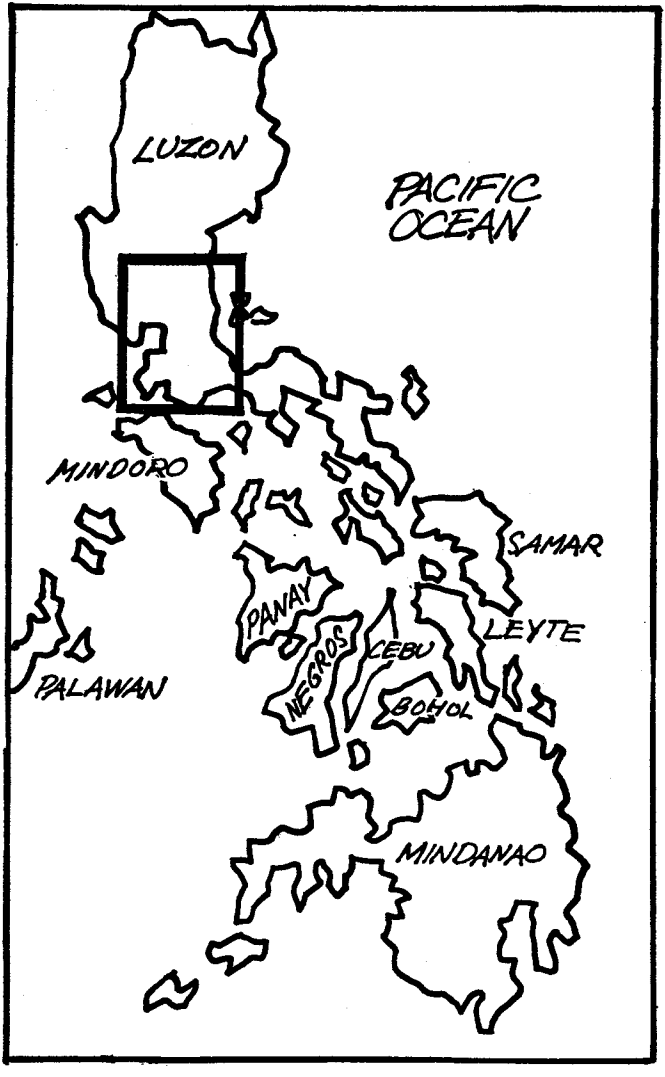
by William J. Pomeroy

Liberated from capitalist control to educate the masses by Socialist Stories

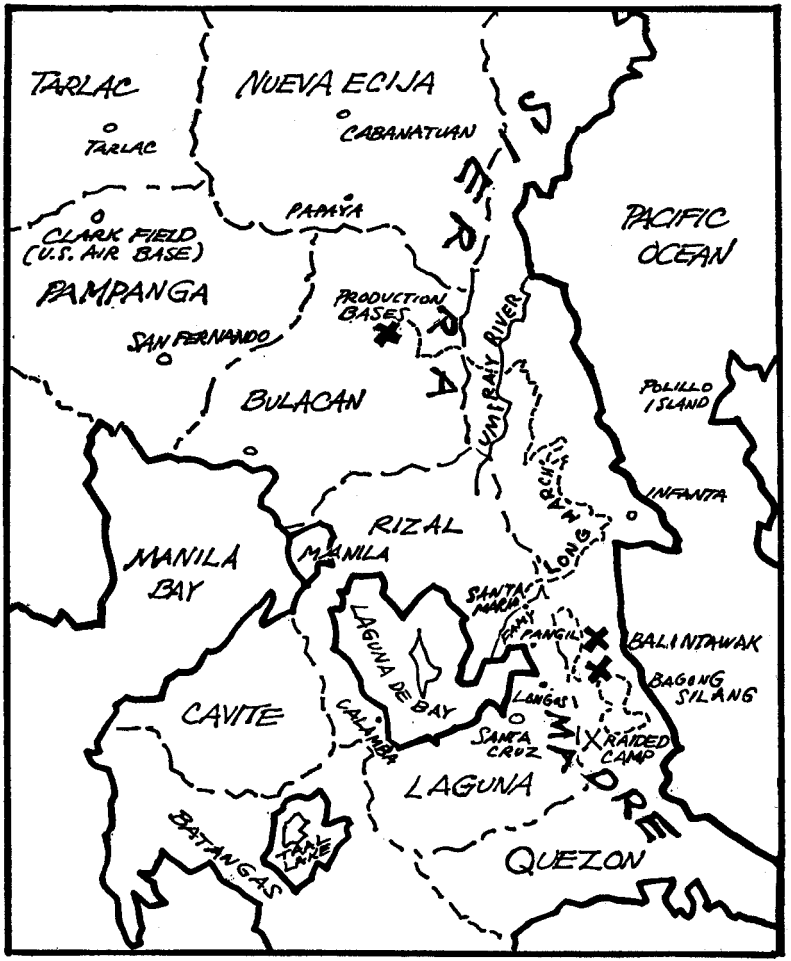
Publisher's Note

The author of this book, William J. Pomeroy, was born in a small town in upstate New York on November 25, 1916. He reached the Philippines during World War II, when he served in the U.S. Army as an historian attached to the Fifth Air Force. He came in contact then with the Huk movement and learned the meaning of colonialism and of a colonial liberation movement. After the war he returned to the Philippines as a free-lance writer of short stories, essays, and feature articles for the Manila press, and studied at the University of the Philippines. In 1948 he married a Filipina, Celia Mariano, daughter of a former auditor of the University and herself a U.P. graduate. Together they joined the Huk movement in the Sierra Madre mountains in 1950, in the role of teachers and writers. Captured in 1952 during a government military operation, they were both sentenced to life imprisonment for "rebellion complexed with murder, robbery, arson, and kidnapping." They served ten years as political prisoners before being released through pardon. William Pomeroy was deported immediately to the United States. His wife was prevented from accompanying him by American immigration laws and by the refusal of the Philippine government to grant her a passport, which also prevents her from joining him elsewhere. Separated ever since, they have been waging a fight to be together that has won broad support. The Forest *is an account of their experiences during the two years they spent with the Huks in the field. It was written originally in prison, scribbled on paper that had to be kept hidden from the prying guards. The finished manuscript finally had to be left behind because of the rigid shakedown that occurred when the Pomeroys were released. It was later rewritten from memory, retaining the intensity and impact of an immediate experience that was still being endured when it was transcribed.*

July 1963.



THE PHILIPPINE ISLANDS. *The heavy oblong indicates the area of the detailed map on the next page.*



ARENA OF THE GUERRILLA WAR. *Heavy crosses indicate the main production bases; the light cross shows the raided camp, and the dotted line the wandering after the raid. The dotted line to the North, marked "Long March," shows the escape route described towards the end of the book.*

1.

April 1950

Whoever enter forest leave behind the open world.

As Celia and I do on this summer Sunday in the month of April, 1950, walking out of our house in Santa Ana, Manila, locking the door and leaving all the furniture standing there behind us, to take the road to forest.

Our courier is a young girl from the provinces, a young round-faced girl with a kerchief over her head. She walks down Herran Street a little distance ahead of us, swinging the *pandan* basket called a *bayong,* and we follow, getting on the same jeepney with her with never a word or a glance at each other. At the terminal on Azcarraga Avenue we get on the bus and take the seat behind her and she sits quietly without turning her head, looking the way a shy provincial girl in the big city ought to look.

The big wide-bodied provincial bus rumbles down the sunny streets southward out of Manila and Celia and I look out upon the city for a final time, at the houses in their foliage, at the corner of Taft and Tennessee where we met when courting. We sit holding each other's hands. Behind us we leave two years of perfect married life, the two happiest years we have ever known or are ever likely to know.

The open world. The salt beds at Parañaque lying open to the sky; the church at Las Piñas where the road bends under shady trees; the young people in their Sunday best standing in the yards by the bamboo fences, the young girls in white dresses, the boys with pomaded hair; the bus station at Calamba where the little vendors swarm below our window calling out their wares of *sorbetes, calamay,* sugar cane and roasted corn; the leaden grey sheen of the inland lake, Laguna de Bay, on our left, supine and hazy in the heat; a lone peasant in a dry rice paddie wearing a broad hat and walking barefoot behind a carabao, the level brown sun-struck fields stretching far away to a rim of trees; the market place at Santa Cruz, where we change buses and sit in the other vehicle for a long time, waiting for passengers to fill it, with the

scent of *muscovado, bagoong* and dried fish coming in to us from the stalls, our eyes covertly upon the Constabulary troopers roving in the crowd.

They are an indication, those Constabulary men, that all is not open in the open world. A hidden world is here, too, under the murmur in the market place, extending all across this country. For this is a country in revolt, in these days of 1950, and everywhere there are people who talk and organize and work in hidden ways. The passive-faced vendor with eyes lowered upon her wares, the peasant walking in the field, the people on buses, even the young people laughing by a fence, may all be part of the hidden world.

Only a week ago the armed force called the Huks appeared suddenly out of forest and field at a dozen widely-separated places and attacked garrisons of Constabulary and police. Now, along the road, there are many military checkpoints, the bus stopping often and troopers armed with carbines coming into the aisles, hard faced, poking at parcels, walking around the bus and peering into windows as if trying to penetrate a screen. The eyes pass over an American and his Filipina wife, and a young girl in a kerchief. Now we sit in the market place and the eyes touch us and pass again.

At last, with an agonized clashing of gears, we start, swaying down a road lined with palm trees. We are in coconut country now, away from rice fields. Here the land problem is acute, little holdings measured in trees and in the few sacks of copra obtained from them. The poverty strikes one like a blow, little shabby towns, naked children, sagging huts beside a pit where copra smokes. People stand along the road, on Sunday, in faded patched garments, lifting lackluster eyes up at the bus.

We turn left along the Bay. To our right, hills suddenly lift, a steep slope, forested. This is the foot of the Sierra Madre, the long mountain range that runs like a spine along the entire length of the island of Luzon. We look upward at it, rim of the open world.

Cautiously now, we look too along the aisle. Who sits in these seats? Are they all the peasants that they seem, returning from market, or from church, or from a family visit? Nothing is re-

vealed in the impassive features, but what intent lies there? The government, too, has hidden people, the agents, who follow and watch and note. Are they watching where we go?

It is late afternoon. In huts we pass there is a flicker of fire under the *kalan* as the evening meal is prepared; the scent of woodsmoke comes into the bus. The falling sun is a glare across the Bay, covering seats and the faces of passengers with a sad unnatural red. Long poles of shadow lie across the road and we seem to be hurrying toward the dark as we rush along it with a roar and dust.

The courier shifts in her seat. We are nearing our destination. Houses bubble up out of the twilight on either side of the road, and the bus halts abruptly, the dust surging forward. It is the town of Longos, Laguna. We get up and follow the courier out of the bus. Are we imagining things or does everyone stare at us, the driver, the passengers, the bystanders at the dingy *tienda* by the road? Hurriedly we follow after the courier as she walks away between houses.

At a distance from the road she stops under the coconut trees and turns to wait for us, laughing and at ease. This is her town, an organized place of the hidden world, and she feels safe in it. We laugh, too, hesitantly, away from the eyes. She guides us quickly over a path through banana plants and past bamboo fences that have the film of dusk upon them, to a tiny house down near the Bay edge. We stand close to the side of the house while the girl calls softly. Frogs croak from the water and there is the smell of sedge. A woman appears at the door, at the top of the bamboo-runged ladder, and motions us to come in.

We sit in the one-roomed house, changing our clothes at the courier's suggestion, putting on rubber-soled canvas shoes. The night seeps in through a million cracks. Typical of peasant homes, there is no furniture, and we sit upon the floor. The woman in the house is alone and is one of the hidden ones, widow of a man killed in battle by government troops. She is very pleased at our presence and moves about the room preparing a meal between bits of low-toned conversation with Celia about the ways of an American husband. The coconut oil lamp on the floor throws her shadow grotesquely on the sawali wall and roof.

Everyone talks in low tones, as if the hushed illumination demanded a hush of sound.

Do they know we are here? we ask the courier. They know, she says.

When supper is ready it is rice and a small can of sardines, spread on a banana leaf upon the floor. The sardines, in the way that they are handled, are obviously something unusual and special in this house, given as a treat to visitors. We eat with our hands.

A step is on the ladder. We turn. A young man enters the house, clad in a white shirt with its ends tied in a knot in front. A .45 pistol is stuck nakedly in his belt. He is grinning, and nods to the woman and to the courier, and they look at him with affection.

Come, he says. We go.

We pick up our bags and follow him without a further word. Outside it is very dark and still, with here and there a slit of light from a hut. The young man walks swiftly and we stumble keeping up with him, following the faint white blur of his shirt. I have a flashlight but I dare not switch it on.

Our feet jar on a hard surface; we cross a road and dip down behind houses on the other side. Suddenly we are brought to a halt. I am aware of movement about us and hastily I switch on the light. A hand grips my arm. *Patay ang ilaw!* Put out the light! Immediately I kill the light but not before I have had a momentary glimpse of men, baggage, and the sheen of guns.

We are with the Huks.

2.

Immediately the ground rises and we are among trees. In the darkness I can see nothing and can follow only the sounds of motion ahead of me. Celia! I call softly. I am here, her voice comes out of the darkness ahead of me. I stumble over roots and blunder into trees. Hands come out of the night to assist me. I feel blind and guided by unknown forces.

For some time we climb in complete silence. Someone has re-

lieved me of my bag and I use my arms to feel the way. From somewhere there is the sound of water running over stones, and then my feet are in the cold flow of it. Damn it, I think, my new shoes.

Far below a car goes by on the road, an insect whirr, antennae of light wavering ahead of it. It is gone then into night silence. A last glimmer of the open world.

I am very tired, my legs heavy and tight from the steep climb. The phosphorescent hands on my watch tell me an hour has passed. When I slow down the man behind me in the single-filed line pushes my back gently and says, Hurry. So for another hour we hurry.

A word comes down the line, spoken, surprisingly, aloud: Halt! Abruptly I run into someone ahead of me. It is Celia. We are stopping to rest, she says. We sit down wearily in that spot, leaning into a bush.

All down the line there is a sudden eruption of sound. I hear baggage being dropped and men scrambling on the slope, calling to one another in Tagalog and in Pampango, then the hacking of bolos on trees. After the long silence it is startling and a bit alarming. What is going on? Do they know what they are doing? There is the sound of branches flung down near me. A match rasps and light flowers out of the dark.

We are on a side of the slope away from the town. Here the trail has broadened and made an alcove in the slope, the rock above projecting out and making of it a shallow cavern. A fireplace has been set up, two forked sticks with a crosspiece from which a pot of rice is suspended. The fire blazes up, transforming the night, and out of it loom our castaway faces.

For the first time we can see clearly our companions. They surround the fire, perhaps twenty of them, with eager, grinning faces, as anxious to get a glimpse of the *Amerikano* as I am to see them. They are all young, and some have long hair that gives them a girlish look. No one wears what could be called a uniform; all are dressed indiscriminately and shabbily, some with shoes and some without.

These are the Huks, the dreaded Filipino guerrilla fighters, whose name has spread a tremor of fear from landlord hearts in

the Philippines all the way to Washington. They have come out of the central plains, from the tenancy regions where the landlords use private armies to terrorize the people, to spread across the country carrying the revolutionary slogan of land and freedom. HMB. *Hukbong Mapagpalaya ng Bayan.* Army of National Liberation.

They do not at first glance look the role. One would take them for any group of peasants squatting by a roadside, except for one thing—the guns. It is the guns that catch the eye and turn this casual group into one that is somehow more frightening than any body of regular troops. These are not ordinary peasants; these are a people in arms.

Carelessly they hold them, at every angle—Garands, carbines, Browning automatic rifles, pistols, grease guns, the weapons of ambush and of swift movement. Some have bandoliers of ammunition; other carry bullets merely in a piece of sacking. Where do the guns come from? Jokingly, with little humor, they say, Washington is our arsenal. There are guerrillas who say that, with irony, around the world.

They are very curious about the American who has come to join them but they do not make their curiosity too apparent. They have pride. After a brief introduction they go about their business, tending the fire, looking to their arms, fixing the straps on their baggage. However, they joke among themselves as they work, with sidelong looks at me: Do not English me, I have not school.

In the town they have had another mission besides meeting Celia and me: they have obtained supplies, rice, sugar, salt, dried fish, *mongo;* each man carries a heavy burden in a burlap sack along with his weapon and his belongings.

The rice is cooked. It is dumped out on a long banana leaf, with pieces of dried fish scattered around the white steaming mounds. We squat beside it in the light of the fire and eat. They are delighted when I use my fingers, like them, but when I burn myself handling the hot rice everybody laughs and voices rise on the night air. I say, *Masyadong mainit.* It is very hot. They look at me in mock amazement. *Ay, Pilipino siya,* they say. Why, he's a Filipino. We are very cheerful. We are beyond the point where

Constabulary patrols usually come at night, so everyone is relaxed. Nevertheless, a guard is stationed down the trail to the rear.

The meal done, we immediately prepare to march. Traces of fire and eating are smoothed over and the remains thrown down a steep slope. It is easier to walk, somehow, when the relationship among us has been established, as if it has stripped away part of the screen of darkness. There is less hurry, and the camaraderie lightens feet.

Finally, at midnight, we come out upon the plateau that lies above Longos. Here are coconut plantations and the large barrio of San Antonio, an organized place. However, we skirt it, mainly to prevent too much notice of an American, about whom reports would spread in spite of caution. We wind through the groves of coconut trees. After the long climb it is pleasurable to walk on level ground and we move swiftly, but keeping utter silence.

The moon is up. We move under silver, the broad fronds and boles of palms burnished and looking as heavy as metal in the stillness. I look behind and ahead at the long file of marchers, moving ghostlike in and out of moonlight without sound, the silver showing on the barrels of guns.

One stop is made. We sit about under the trees, half-nebulous images of silver, while one man rapidly runs up a trunk, running up the outer arc of a bow-bent tree, and throws down coconuts. The husk is chopped away with a bolo and the eyeholes pierced and we tip up the rough nut and drink the tangy liquid thirstily.

I am now fully at home with this group. If one behaves in a strange place as if surprised at nothing, acting as if nothing is unusual or strange to him, he soon merges with the surroundings.

Near dawn we emerge out of coconut groves onto a grassy place beside a stream. We will stop here and have breakfast, says our escort leader, a young man of deliberate movement who is indistinguishable from the others in appearance. I am very tired and I fling myself down beside Celia and lay back in the grass, indifferent to the dew that dampens it. I close my eyes. When I awake it is full dawn.

I turn and see the forest.

Along the far edge of the field it rises abruptly, like an escarp-

ment, the reddish-brown trunks lifting branchless a hundred sheer feet before the massed green of foliage begins. Nothing stirs upon that cliff-face. Above, the green crown towers up and up in stages on the slope until it is hidden in the mist that roils in the early sunlight. The great trunks stand there brutally, the raw and sudden face of wilderness, and nothing can be seen of the interior, only those vast portals to shadow and to silence.

I am stunned by the sight of the forest. I can only tear my eyes away when I hear the men talking of this place where we sit. Here, a few weeks ago, these same men ambushed a Constabulary patrol that dared to come this far. Animatedly they point to where the firing line lay, to where enemies were hit, and to where two Huks were wounded. I am uneasy sitting there in full light in that open space, and I eat my rice and dried fish hurriedly. It is a relief when we rise to leave.

The line assembles and we go across the open space toward the forest wall that looms higher and more formidable as we approach. There is the smell of dampness and of vegetable decay as we enter the startling shadow. I turn for one more look at the open world. Across the open area in the grass we have left a dark trail upon the sunlit whiteness of the dew, a trail that will vanish in the morning as we, too, are vanishing. Far beyond it two men emerge from the coconut grove, our rear guard, and I see them there in the sun, figures of our time, unhurried, carrying their guns. I turn and follow the dim trail, running into depths.

We have lost the sky, and the forest is all around us.

3.

Always the mountain forest has sheltered the Philippine urge to liberty. When oppression has lived in the lowlands, the high forest has been the refuge of the hunted and harassed: Diego Silang, Dagohoy, Apolinario de la Cruz, Malvar, Sakay, Asedillo. In Philippine history there have been over 200 recorded revolts, against Spaniard and Englishman, against American and Japanese, and against Filipinos, too, and in most of them there have been flights to forest.

Who knows, therefore, how many camps have stood where this one does today, or how many shadowy elbows brush against ours? Plant and vine have covered all old traces, and new growth has sprung up to hide a new generation.

This camp to which we have come is built on a series of little ridges, five in number, heavily wooded, separated by ravines. On the outer ridges are the security huts, covering approaches. On the inner ridges are the camp households, each hut housing a unit engaged in specific work—military, education, organization, finance, couriers. A school stands on one ridge top. Between two ridges the ravine has a flat bottom and there stands the social hall, a structure larger than the others, with a floor of sawn lumber—a special feature because it is for the use of the whole group. Outside the social hall, a tall sapling has been stripped of its bark and its branches and there, on holidays, fly the Philippine flag and the red banner of the HMB.

This is a headquarters site, location of Huk Regional Committee (Reco) No. 4 and of the movement's National Education Department. Approximately 80 people live here. Literally hundreds of other camps, housing from ten to 150 Huks, are scattered over Luzon and upon other islands of the archipelago, in mountains, in forest, in swamp, in the grasslands areas, giving base and shelter to perhaps 10,000 Huks, armed guerrilla soldiers and political workers of one category or another. These are the people of the Outside, the hidden world that exists beyond the open world, and that gives direction to the large mass base of followers who live in barrios, towns and cities under the noses of the government troops.

This is a hiders' place and from no point can all of it be seen. Thick trees cut each hut off from other huts and no one moves unnecessarily or makes unnecessary noise. It is a deceptive quiet, however. Under the leaf screen this camp pulses like a dynamo. Couriers continually come and go, and there is much hurrying by armed men and supply units on the trails, trails that branch out through all the forest and to many barrios. All day long the click of the mimeograph machine matches leaf rustle and lizard rush.

Here in these still surroundings is a nerve center of revolution. Revolt is at a high tempo in the Philippines in these early months

of 1950, and in this seemingly remote place its dwellers have their fingertips upon the rapid pulse. In the lowlands, in the towns and barrios embraced by this region, a hundred underground groups and units await the directives, the guidance, and the inspiration that the people in these huts provide. Here recruits come to study and here new units are formed and equipped, sent out to reach new sectors of the country. Over the mountain trails that fan out beneath the trees the couriers come from other Regional Committees (Recos) and from central organs in Manila, bringing reports and orders. Here upon the edge of events one can feel their surge, as a person standing on a shore in surf can sense the power of the ocean from the touch of the waves that reach him.

Here in the timeless immutable forest is the bustle of change. Some of these trees were here when Salcedo passed by in the lowlands, conquering for Spain. Some of them have seen the people who fought that conquest, and, later, those who overcame it. This is the enduring place of renewal, where Filipinos have always come to reinvigorate themselves with that which is enduring in them as a people, their dignity and their desire to be free.

4.

The social hall is lit up like a gigantic firefly in the night. There is a program scheduled to celebrate our arrival today, and everyone in camp is invited.

We climb down through the ravine from our hut, feeling our way by flashlight over root and stone. Figures come from all directions and our hands are gripped in greeting a dozen times in the darkness before we reach the hall. Light sprays out from under the low roof of *anahaw* leaves, from a Coleman lamp. Beyond, green leaf and branch stand waxen, transfixed in the strange light.

Within, it is crowded, and all eyes follow us, the newly arrived. Huks sit on benches along the open sides or simply squat upon the wooden floor. There is much banter and boisterous greeting,

particularly by the young soldiers when the girl couriers come in. I note our escorts who have carried heavy loads over rough trails all night and day; they are fresh and pomaded, joking with the girls. Almost everyone is armed, the security men squatting with their rifles upright between their knees, holding to the barrels. It looks like a Saturday night gathering in a blockhouse on the old American frontier.

The chairman, Alambre, stout and fatherly, secretary of the Reco, rises and walks out before the assemblage. The program is about to begin. He quells the disorder by raising his upbent palm, which brings everyone to feet to sing the Philippine national anthem. Then all settle down for the first number.

It would be an odd program to one unfamiliar with why these people are here, entertainment with a heavy political tone. It is done Filipino style, with numbers called at random from the crowd and with the chairman making sly digs in the intervals at members of the audience. A pretty young courier sings a *kundiman,* a native love song, that brings wild applause from the security men. Andoy, an organizational cadre, gives a short vociferous speech about the need to recruit, punctuated with stiff jerks of the open hand. A soldier, still holding to his rifle before the group, recites a nationalistic poem about Mother Philippines. There is another song, a Huk song, with the sound of a machine-gun in it, and then a fiery speech about imperialism and foreign domination by a man who keeps his hand throughout on the butt of his pistol. One by one, without embarrassment, they rise at the bidding of the chairman and deliver their numbers, and all are applauded loudly.

Insects fly in and ping! against the Coleman lamp. Outside the vast night and the forest are held back by its white light.

A man volunteers to speak. When he rises we see he is unarmed. He is one who has "committed a weakness" and has been disarmed, and it is part of his punishment to stand before gatherings like this and to criticize himself. He recounts shamefacedly his failing: his has mishandled money of the movement. There is complete silence while he speaks and, when he sits down at last, no applause.

The chairman walks out again and, to my surprise, I hear my

name being uttered, Our American comrade. I get up, thread my way through people sitting on the floor, and stand before the group. The faces are all lifted in interest, brightly lit near the lamp, half in shadow in the rear of the hut.

I try to point out that it is not strange for an American to be in their midst, helping in their fight for liberation. Americans, too, fought a war for independence, long ago, and individuals who believed in freedom crossed the seas from Europe to help them. The American people should not be confused with the American imperialists, who are few in number just as landlords in the Philippines are few in number. The American people are just as ready to fight against oppression, when they understand it, as anybody else. I am here because the true American tradition of struggle led me here, and because I know that my own people can win more freedom when the people of the colonial countries have won theirs.

The applause thunders as I take my seat. Celia's fingers close over mine upon the bench.

There are other songs, declamations, speeches. Then the main speaker of the evening is brought forward. It is Comrade Bakal—Mariano Balgos. He gets up slowly and comes forward without haste, taking his time, tamping fresh tobacco into the pipe that is always in his hand or between his teeth. This is one of the great sons of the Filipino working class, leader of the printers' union for 30 years, guerrilla fighter against the Japanese, co-founder of the Congress of Labor Organizations, and now supervisor of Huk organization in Southern Luzon. He is extremely neat even in the forest, with shoes and belt polished, hair closely cropped. He speaks slowly, stopping now and then to draw upon his pipe or to gesture with it, face grave and expressionless except when the lips twist bitterly in denunciation of the people's enemies, voice rising and hardening only to make forceful points. His alias, Bakal, means "iron."

The theme of Comrade Bakal's speech is the present struggle and how it came about. He tells of how the hopes of the people were high in the days after the war, with the Japanese defeated and the native landlord collaborators exposed, with the promise of independence after centuries of foreign domination. But, when

the independence came on July 4, 1946, it had no meaning because it was tied up with so many American strings that the Filipino people could not breathe. He speaks grimly of what happened to the nationalist movement, how the people of Central Luzon and their mass organizations, together with middle class groups and workers in the cities, formed a new nationalist-type political party, the Democratic Alliance, after the war, and elected six congressmen on its ticket in 1946. He reminds us of how they were ousted arbitrarily from congress by the Liberal Party president, Manuel Roxas, for opposing the American imperialist-dictated Bell Trade Act that re-established colonialism in the Philippines. The audience is fascinated by his explanation of the Bell Trade Act and how it keeps them in a backward condition, without modern industry or a modern way of life, by continuing the same old process in which they remain peasant producers of raw materials for American industry and are forced to buy in return American-made goods that they themselves could easily make.

That was only the beginning, reminds Bakal. The imperialists and their Filipino puppets could not stand to have the masses organized in Central Luzon. The Democratic Alliance was an attempt to break the control of the landlord-imperialist dominated parties and to give the people a real voice, but the landlords and the imperialists did not want such democracy in the Philippines. As long as there is an organized nationalist movement, colonialism is doomed. So they set out to smash the people's organizations, with terror and with murder. But the people fought back. They regrouped the old guerrilla units that fought the Japanese and they gave battle to the Military Police and to the civilian guard armies of the landlords. Roxas said he would crush the Huks in 60 days, but what has happened? It is nearly four years since Roxas said that, and today the armed forces of the people, the HMB, are strong enough to challenge the very governmental power of the puppets.

The HMB, concludes Bakal, has the historic role of completing the colonial revolution in the Philippines that was begun over 50 years ago with the great revolt against Spain and that was crushed by American arms in 1902.

Everyone stands to applaud as Bakal walks unhurriedly to his seat and sits down, calmly puffing on his pipe.

It is the conclusion of the program and we all remain standing to sing the International. The massed voices shake the social hall. When the clenched fists go up at the end they fill the space under the low roof. Our ears still ring with the voices as we bend under the fringed *anahaw* roof and start to pick our way back to our hut.

The Coleman lamp goes out and night and silence rush in to reclaim the forest, to reclaim all but the small bright fire here in the breast.

5.

In the bookcase of my home in the city of Rochester, New York, when I was a child, there was a small volume, *Neely's Photographs of Our New Possessions.* It was printed in 1899 and it was filled with pictures of American troops in the Philippines.

That book haunted my childhood. There were pictures of dead people in it, called the "insurgents." They were scattered in fields, under embankments, and along roads, or lay in the ashes of burned homes. They were dark-skinned people, clad in abbreviated white garments, often ragged, without shoes. They were smaller than the American troops, who stood by them, leaning on rifles; sometimes they looked like children lying on the ground.

Who were the "insurgents"? I did not understand then. I was merely haunted by the sight of the dead, amidst whom Americans could stand so arrogantly and so indifferently. They were never referred to in the book as Filipinos who had their own government and who had died fighting for the freedom to keep it.

Years afterward I came to learn about imperialism, about the seizure of colonies and about the denial of freedom to their people so that industries in the home country could get raw materials from them cheaply. Even then, however, I did not know its meaning to a Puerto Rico, to a Cuba, or to a Philippines. Nor did I link it with the pictures of the dead.

In 1944 I came to the Philippines as a soldier myself. It was in the midst of a war against fascism, a war in which I believed deeply. We had come, I thought, as liberators, to oust an invader that was ravaging the country. I was not prepared for what I found.

Here was a country that had been under direct American rule for nearly 50 years. In that same period the United States had advanced tremendously, and had attained the highest standard of living in history. But the Philippines, its towns and its villages, the way its people lived, had not changed appreciably from the pictures of primitiveness that I had seen in *Neely's Photographs of Our New Possessions*. We were driving out the Japanese invader, but the imprint on that land had been left long before the Japanese had come.

Still, I thought, maybe the war would change this. The anti-fascist effort was bringing new freedom in its wake. Then I came to Central Luzon, where the finest of all Filipino guerrilla movements, the Hukbalahap, had liberated that great rice granary from enemy hands and had organized the whole people behind it in a way more democratic than they had ever known. There I saw the leaders of the Hukbalahap arrested by the American Counter-Intelligence Corps and thrown into prison. There I saw what happened to Huk units such as Squadron 77, its 108 members disarmed and shot to death in cold blood by landlord elements attached to the American army. There I saw American military forces acting in the interests of the big landlords to suppress the peasant movement that had grown out of the fight against fascism. Why? Because a Filipino nationalism that had been aroused against Japan might also be aroused against any other foreign domination.

To my intense shame, I was not a member of an army bringing freedom; I was the member of an army reestablishing an imperialist rule. I swore to myself then that I would not rest until I had done all that I could to correct that wrong, until I had wiped from my own hands the moral stain that had been placed there, until I had put my American strength on the side of those who had suffered from American imperialism.

Now I am here, at the side of today's "insurgents," fighting in a new struggle for their freedom.

6.

Our hut is a bit of forest growth on the side of a hill. From only a short distance it cannot be seen. It has been made to merge with bush, tree root, and the fronded plants that cover the forest floor.

It has been said that a guerrilla army is like a fish in the sea of the people. It can also be like the leaves in the forest, hardly stirring in the still air, blown about when a storm rages.

Every piece of this hut was obtained from but a few feet distant, its corner posts and ridge poles saplings chopped down and stripped with a bolo, its flooring the trunk of a palm split into lengths and fastened together with long strips of rattan, its walls and its roof the broad fan-like leaves of *anahaw* folded together to shed the rain. At our windows, for a touch of home, we hang the orchid and the air-plant, the fernlike growth that is found everywhere sprouting parasitically in the crotches of trees.

It is a split-level residence, hugging the hillside. The upper level is a simple long platform, without partition. There are eight of us living and working in the tiny space and we sleep here side by side in a row, using our packs for pillows. On the lower level is our fire-place, a hard-packed earthen hearth, where cooking pots can be set upon a triangle of stones or hung from a cross-piece by a thong of rattan; above is stacked the chopped wood, drying in the heat of the fire.

Beyond the doorway, where to leave we stoop under the roof's fringe of *anahaw,* a long line of small logs wavers along the hillside, leading to our toilet. There is no tiling or chrome handles here, merely a platform of sticks, roofed with *anahaw,* with a hole in the platform where one squats above the bare earth. In rainy weather it is a precarious journey over the slippery logs, carrying the canfull of water that is guerrilla toilet paper.

Down at the bottom of the ravine, at the foot of a stairway

notched in the earth of the hillside, is a smooth stone basin worn by the stream, where one can sit to bathe, pouring water over one's self from the same can.

It is peaceful in the little hut. The open world is far away, with its troopers manning checkpoints, its cordons thrown around city blocks, its searchers bursting into rooms, its arrests and tortures, its clashes of armed men in fields and in barrios. Here I am strangely contented, sitting on the floor, preparing the notes for the teaching I will do. Sunlight trickles down through the mat of leaves overhead and spangles the floor of the forest, coming in to touch my arm, moving as the leaves move. Cicadas drone their warm and even note.

I bend to write: The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles.

7.

A light wind lifts the *anahaw,* letting a spray of mottled sunlight into the classroom.

I stand before a blackboard made of a poncho spread tautly over a panel of bark and draw a diagram with a stub of chalk. When I turn, the double row of faces is knotted in concentration, trying to understand.

This is a school in the forest. Outwardly it is no different from any other hiders' hut, corner posts of logs driven into the ground, roof of *anahaw* sloped low. Within, it has two sections, unpartitioned. The classroom proper has for its floor the hard-packed earth and its rows of seats are made of logs with the bark still upon them, the desks of thin branches woven together with rattan. Behind the desks is the other section, the simple raised platform that is the living quarters of the students, with the strapped packs leaning neatly against the wall.

Thirty or 40 airline miles away is the university in Manila that I left but a week ago, the well-designed colleges with pillared porticos, large modern classrooms and an open spreading campus. It is the best university in the Philippines, but I think of how

many students in its hallways, mainly the sons and daughters of the well-to-do, are obsessed with sophistication, aping the ways of American students, concerned with personal advancement, good marriages, political ambitions, social affairs, and the latest fashions. Knowledge, they learn, promotes a career, an individual career. There are but few who learn that knowledge is a tool for the people to advance the nation.

These people in the seats before me know that. It is the first thing that they are told. There are no more than a dozen, peasants from the barrios of Central Luzon, a worker from a slum district of Manila, a woman who has been a barrio schoolteacher, two young students from the city. There is little sophistication here. In the rough unpressed garb of the forest, they sit with pistols strapped at their waists, a strange thing, one might say, in a school, but this is a school of struggle, and they learn for the sake of struggle: how to organize better, how to convince masses of correct programs, how to give leadership. They are not concerned with careers, but with their country, with what is best for their country, with what to do for it. Some of them will die for it.

This is not an easy class to teach. The students are of all ages and varieties of attainment. Some of them have had only a few years in the elementary grades in a barrio, some have had a little high school, only one has had a year of college. The thinking processes are at every stage of development, and brows are always furrowed here. It cannot be helped. A call has gone out to all Recos to send promising cadres for training, and these have come.

It is a hard curriculum, just as all phases of this struggle are hard. Philippine history, with emphasis on the many revolutionary strivings to be free. Political economy, stressing the colonial relationships and how a peasant is exploited by a landlord. The workings of the state, and how the rulers use its machinery to stay in power. Strategy and tactics, how the people's forces can be mobilized to change that rule. Proletarian ethics, the correct behavior of those engaged in a revolutionary struggle. The national liberation movement, what it is and how it can be built and developed.

This is as difficult for the teacher as it is for the unprepared student. Everything must be simplified, brought down to the

level of each one's understanding. How is one to tell the theory of surplus value to an unlettered peasant? I walk up and down on the hard-packed earth and make a diagram, always the diagram. If one is not clear, make another.

The foreigners came to this land and took away its culture, its history, its very language, leaving their own, teaching a foreign history with foreign heroes, flying a foreign flag with foreign meanings. A colonial Church came to shutter the minds of the people even with foreign superstitions. Now we are tearing away the blindfolds, letting them see their own land clearly.

The wind blows under the *anahaw,* bringing the sun and the warm smell of forest.

A clean wind, blowing clean.

8.

Two men from a nearby production base are in camp, carrying a dead wild pig slung on a pole between them, the feet tied and the wicked head hanging, the curved bloody tusks jerking to their jogging gait. They are thin wiry men, wearing pants cut off at the knee, and faded shirts, their skin grained like the dark *narra* trees growing around them. They come over to our hut and stoop under the roof to look inside, grinning red betel-nut grins. They have heard of the *Amerikano* in camp and want to get a look at him.

These men are part of the Huk supply system that is spread all along the Sierra Madre, from northern to southern Luzon. There are hundreds like them, some of them having lived in the mountain forest for decades, land-hungry men who left the crowded lowlands to eke out a livelihood in clearings (*kaingins*) chopped out of the forest; others were sent up from the peasant organizations to help support the Huks.

Huk "production bases" are glorified *kaingins,* some of them very extensive in area, cut out of the forest with immense labor. One, two or three families stay in them, planting mountain rice, *camote* (sweet potato), *camoting kahoy* (cassava), *calabasa*

(squash) and other vegetables which, when harvested, are distributed to the Huk camps. A share is retained by the production base people, for their own use or for trading in towns for other necessities. In addition, these skilled forest dwellers hunt and trap deer and wild pig, as these two men have done, and sell it to the Huk camps, where the meat is properly weighed and a standard price is paid.

The Huk organization did not always function on a business-like basis. Throughout the Japanese occupation and in the early years of the postwar repressions, food was obtained simply by asking for it from the barrios. The mass organization or the underground barrio council would be contacted and it would collect the required food from the people. Often an entire Huk squadron of a hundred or more would pass through a barrio and be fed in this fashion. By 1948, however, with a long struggle in the offing, it was decided that this sort of procedure was anarchistic and put too much strain on a people.

A many-sided system was devised. Basically the supply system was made a financial matter, with the movement using its money income (which came from a variety of sources, from mass organizational quotas to commando-like operations called "economic struggle") to purchase its needs in towns. Secret posts were set up everywhere in the towns and barrios, to which "shopping lists" and the necessary funds are sent, the buying done in marketplaces or even as far away as Manila, the accumulated stocks picked up in the middle of the night by armed supply units such as the one that met Celia and me in Longos. These posts operate even in the most tightly enemy-patrolled areas.

The production bases were established both as a backstop to the posts and as a supplement to relieve the financial problem, money being required for arms and ammunition as well as for food. They are also important in new expansion areas, where it takes time to establish a firm mass base and to guarantee secrecy for posts.

The yearly rice harvest in Central Luzon is a busy time for the finance department. In all the barrios the mass organization turns over a quota of the harvest—often taken skillfully from the landlord's share—some of which is sold and some stored away

for use. For the authorities this is complicated by the fact that some landlords themselves maintain bodegas of rice for the Huks (for there are enlightened landlords).

The Huks, of course, do not live abundantly under any system of supply. We live under a rationing system that is very strictly maintained, eating the Filipino diet of rice and a "viand." Our ration of uncooked rice per meal is one-half of the smallest size can in which Hunt's tomato sauce is contained; we call it the "Hunt ration" (and joke about the fact that an American import is the measuring rod of our meals). Along with this, for viand, we might have one or two of the small dried fish called "*tuyo*," or else a soup made of *mongo* (when uncooked, one-third of the Hunt can per person). We supplement this with coconuts brought up from the groves below us, with fish caught in streams, or with the meat brought in occasionally by the production base men.

Over at the supply hut Comrade Cardinal (Cardi), the camp supply officer, is cutting up the wild pig for distribution. Each household sends over a representative with a *bayong*. The meat is carefully separated into piles, the size of the pile depending on the number of persons in a household. Everyone must get exactly the same ration.

One pig—and eighty people.

9.

In a hut on the ridge beyond us lie two wounded men. They are the two who were shot in the encounter with Constabulary troops at the edge of the forest a few weeks ago.

Celia and I stoop and enter the tiny "hospital." A thick smell is there. It is not much more than a lean-to, to keep rain and the filtered sun from the two men. They look up at us from a simple platform of twigs, their sunken eyes burning with fever yet with a gleam of pleasure at the visit. Their names are Jesus and Fighting.

Both of these men have been wounded in the legs, one in the

thigh, the other in the lower limb. They have been lying here ever since then, their only attention a washing of the wounds each day. This is not due to neglect; both are cared for to the furthest of their comrades' capability. There are hardly any medicines available, and no doctors with the Huks. Plans have been under way to carry them to a lowland hospital, or to a doctor's home, but that is not easily done. All hospitals and surgeons are watched by government intelligence agencies. Besides, a private car would be needed for transportation, and how many Huk sympathizers have private cars?

In the meantime Jesus and Fighting lie here with the large ugly purple-red circles puffed on their legs about the black bullet holes. They even manage a half-smile. They are Huk veterans of the Japanese time, but they are still very young.

We know we will lose our legs, they say. We would cut them off ourselves if we know how. Half a Huk, they say, is better than no Huk.

Again, the little half-smile.

Celia and I stay for a while, then take our leave, hardly knowing how to say good-bye. What words does one speak before courage like this?

10.

May 1950

I am down at the stream taking a bath in the sun-dotted, leaf-shadowed water when I hear an old familiar sound reverberating in the distance. In one jump I am out of the water and into my clothes, wet, and leaping up the notches in the side of the ravine. Casto Alejandrino (G.Y.) is over from his nearby campsite for the day, waiting for a courier. He comes out of the hut at the sound of my rush.

Listen! I shout. Do you hear it?

G.Y., calm as *narra,* listens to the sound on the wind.

Kulog, he says. Thunder. The rainy season is on the way.

The distortions of the forest, where even thunder sounds like automatic rifle fire.

11.

Night comes early in the forest, sun going down all glimmer behind dark branches on a wooded slope. The *kalaw* sounds his shocking hoarse note in the twilight, and numb silence follows. Night and forest merge into a solid mass.

With arms over upbent knees, cheeks on arms, we sit along the platform, waiting for the evening meal. Silhouetted by the fireplace, the one who cooks the rice squats motionless, a graven worshipper of flame. Over the walls and the roof leaps the shadow of the fire, a frantic dancing ceremony to keep the night at bay.

Our light while we eat, sitting in a circle on the floor around the simple fare, is a burning bit of rag lying in coconut oil in a coconut half-shell. Afterward, by the glow of the fading coals on the hearth, we lie spokewise in another circle, heads at the center where our tiny battery radio is turned on.

The radio is our tenuous link with the open world. Over the miles of trees and rock and lowland beyond comes faint and wee the sound of the city we have left. We use it sparingly, for batteries weaken rapidly and are not always procurable. We listen to the daily news and, once a week, to the Filipino comedy program of Pugo and Togo, relishing a laugh. We lie there and think of the neon lights along Avenida Rizal, the crowds milling in Plaza Miranda, the *balut* vendors and the newsboys crying, and the silken passage of bus tires on rainwet pavement, taking the people home, to Pandacan, Makati, Santa Ana.

Later, as we lie in our blankets in the long row in the silent hut, the moon comes up. In through the window and through the many cracks and crevices in the *anahaw* it enters, touching sleepers and the row of bundled packs where the heads lie. I lift myself on my elbow and look out to where the forest has half emerged from the blanket of the dark and is held now in the gauze of moonlight.

On tiptoe, so as not to wake the others, I rise and go outside. The forest is utterly still, but alive in the dim white light. On the slope to one side of the hut there is a small open space, where trees have been cut for firewood. The moon is there, deeply.

I step into the clearing. At once it seems that I am surrounded by a hundred shapes that stand behind every trunk and bole. I imagine that I am in Sherwood Forest and that at any moment men in Lincoln green will spring out with a shout, the bows aslant on the backs and the arrows thick in the quivers.

This is the forest, where the hiders come, alive and free in every age of man. This is the forest where their shadows swarm, jostling me in the present time. Standing there in that charmed light, I can hear their unstilled voices, singing and triumphant, rising to the moon.

12.

I watch Celia, sitting on the floor of the hut, preparing her lesson plan. A sliver of the sun, entering through a tiny hole in the *anahaw* above, is thrust into her dark combed-out hair that falls over the round cheek and the shoulder as she bends there in concentration in the loose blouse and the slacks, feet tucked beneath her.

There is so much of love in this wife of mine, and so much of loyalty to all that she holds dear. She is so soft and feminine that one would not think on first meeting that so much of strength and determination is in her. Before I met her I had been told about "Lydia," and her four years with the Huk guerrillas during the Japanese occupation, and I had expected a toughened woman. Then this gentle creature entered a room and put her tiny hand in mine in greeting.

In this marriage of ours there is so much that is not present in the ordinary relationship. A Filipina and an American, a twain met in perfect harmony, we throw Kipling's phrase back into his teeth. But, more than that, we stand together in the love of man, enriched by it, and adding to it our own little glory.

I think of the day when I proposed. We sat on a patch of grass, in front of a house destroyed in the war, on Dewey Boulevard, looking out over a Manila Bay that was crimson at sundown.

Do you know what it would mean to marry me? she said. These are not normal times, or, rather, in my country people like us cannot live normal lives. Already I am wanted. You know that. We may have a short time together, of real peace and of the happiness known by others. But sooner or later, there will be decisions to make: I cannot go to your country for I am known as a Huk; you could not stay in mine if your sympathies for us are discovered. If we would want to stay together, there would be only the mountains for us. Do you know that? Are you ready for that?

I know it, I said. I love you. I am ready for it.

I think of how we were twice-wedded, once by a justice of the peace, and once by the movement to which we belong, in a little ceremony in a small house in Manila, to which the leaders of the movement came and where the principal leader spoke the words that bound us closer than any document of the state, and how we swore in the name of the Philippine national liberation movement to be loyal to each other but never to let our own relationship stand in the way of our loyalty to the cause of the people.

And how we began our marriage in a tiny house in Makati, where a bench and a table were the only furnishings, and how we furnished it with our love.

Yes, and how we decided, advisedly, to postpone the having of children until the struggle is won. So many women in this country, we were told, have been drawn to the movement and have had their contribution ended by marriage and by the having of children too soon. There must be examples.

I lean forward and touch Celia's hand. She looks up and smiles. She understands.

13.

We awake at night to an enormous rustling in the forest. Rain. Every leaf is a drum to the pounding drops. We hear it coming over the ridges, the beating hands of a horde, and then it is upon us, a giant palm smashing at our frail roof. Tropical rains I have

seen, but not like this, when the branches and great limbs rain down with it, crashing through their fellows to the ground, and to our roof. I think that we will be broken apart and washed down the slope with the torrent.

Wet streams pour on our blankets. We are all up in the night with flashlights, the beams stabbing everywhere in the hut. Our roof is a sieve where the insects and the rats have bored in the dry weeks, and water is in upon us in showers that sparkle in the flashlight glare. Everyone is shouting and no one can hear a word. We tear a box apart and cover the main holes so the water will be guided off harmlessly.

Lightning and thunder split the drums of the night. Outside in the white irregular flashes I see huge limbs break and go down in ponderous horror, leaving raw gashes on the sides of trees. We lie down in the wet blankets and huddle together, holding to each other while the world is destroyed.

The great flailing hands are dragged on, over the forest, and the drumming subsides. I hear the runnels of water beneath the hut, mining away the slope. Single drops fall from the roof and break crystalline in pools. I lay and listen to the liquid sound of drip and flow through all the cool forest.

14.

Our class in the school is having a production meeting. It is a meeting of criticism and self-criticism that is held every Sunday afternoon, when there are no regular classes. Here all problems and complaints that have arisen during the week are threshed out and antagonisms bared and settled. As the teachers, Celia and I also attend, together with Peregrino Taruc, director of the movement's schools and head of its National Education Division. Peregrino, whom we call Reg, is from Pampanga Province and is the younger brother of Luis Taruc, commander of the Hukbalahap during the Japanese occupation.

A camp wit has said that these Sunday sessions are a substitute for the Church confessional, but we teachers are also put on the

carpet, and who ever heard of the Father Confessor being criticized?

The meeting is rather slow in getting under way. The students rotate each week as chairmen, the chairman this week sitting rather stiffly before the others and saying, Well, comrades? Well? The customary complaints about the food ration come out first: couldn't it be cooked better? and couldn't there be more of it for a change? This is discussed for a while and then the meeting lapses again. Is everything then so harmonious?

Finally one of the students rises and contends that a companion has not been fulfilling his share of the daily chore of sweeping around the school. The one accused leaps up and hotly denies it, charging his critic with having bad feeling against him because he had not loaned him his pencil. It is as if a dam had burst and spilled out a reservoir of feeling. The mute group with the subdued air of harmony is suddenly violently agitated as all want to talk at once and to air criticisms, waving hands wildly to get the chairman's attention. The chairman, however, is eager to get his complaints voiced, too, and is on his feet with charges to the disregard of rules of order. Reg finally has to intervene and to insist on proper procedures.

As in all groups of diverse personalities, thrown together in compressed quarters, little resentments have festered into grievances, and here in this meeting the infection is removed. The dispute between the original complainants is resolved, with each confessing to a shortcoming, one of laziness and the other of lack of the proper spirit of comradeship.

The older members of the class have pointed criticisms against the younger students and against the women. The young men are not showing the proper respect for age; just because they have had better chances to go to school doesn't mean that they know everything; instead of finding fault with the opinions of elders, they ought to be taking advice. And as for the women, one of them is very argumentative; if you tell her something she always has something to say about it.

After a long discussion that gets heated it is decided that the older men, who are peasants, suffer from a feudal outlook that makes them less ready to accept youth and women as equals.

Celia has to point out the role of women in the struggle, and that a woman who can stand on her own and argue should be encouraged rather than repressed. One old peasant is stubborn about accepting his weakness; he wants to "study" the matter.

A student is put under fire because he has not taken a bath since his arrival. His classmates claim that they have to sit and sleep close to him and that therefore he must keep himself in good odor. They made a decision that he should bathe and since he has not obeyed he has violated democratic centralism. The student involved insists that his rights as an individual are not being respected. The ideology here gets very complicated; it is evident that they are trying to prove how much they have learned of principles in the class. It is decided that the student should bathe, not only for the good of the group, but also for his own health.

A more serious criticism comes out about a student who has been seen copying answers from another's paper during the weekly quiz. He maintains vociferously that it is not true, but there are three witnesses. Here it is a question of intellectual honesty, the most important virtue that is stressed in the movement, and the one considered most carefully in the development of cadres. There are no clear-cut admissions or findings in the case of this student, but he is put under a shadow and we will watch him closely during the remainder of the class.

Our turn is next—Reg's, Celia's and mine. In the classrooms of Manila this is a feature never to be found: the invited criticism of authority. But here it goes for all, the lowest and the highest, from the lowest to the highest. Nor do the students take advantage of it, but go about it gravely, treating us not as taskmasters but as comrades.

There is the question of discipline. One of us is too strict, says a student, demanding standards that are too high, giving assignments that are too long, questions that are too hard. Not true, says another, he is right to demand the most discipline and work. Then there are mannerisms before the class, the gestures and the dress; a teacher is a leader and ought to be impressive and a model. One of us doesn't explain in enough detail or with enough simplicity, leaves too much to be taken for granted.

All Sunday afternoon the give and take goes on, with admission or refutation. Cicadas buzz in the sun-speckled forest. A lizard drops from the roof to the floor and wriggles away unnoticed. We do not hold back with criticism, demanding candor and truth.

In a revolutionary struggle, the revolutionaries must be as strict with themselves as they are with the enemy.

15.

There is a common belief that Filipinos are a volatile people, quick to anger and to action. Like all beliefs about a people, it is generally untrue. The Filipino has known foreign domination and a feudal oppression for so long that they have numbed him into resignation. *Bahala na,* he says, leave it to God.

Who that is free can know the meaning of a colonial mentality? Every white man who walks in the streets, even though he be a beachcomber, is deserving of respect and of special consideration. The landlord is a lord indeed; when you pass before him bow low, with your hand to the ground like a plow. When you enter a *tienda* and see on the shelf the foreign and the Filipino product, buy the foreign, of course, it must be superior. And don't ever forget to raise the hand of the parent to the brow, to kiss the hand of the priest, to watch the hand of command raised by the *kapitas.*

When this occurs for 400 years under the arrogant Spaniard, and for 50 more years under the brashly superior American, there is something that happens to the temperament of a people. A theory exists that misery breeds revolt, but that is true most often when misery follows from a loss of what one has had. But when one has known nothing but misery for 450 years, it crushes, subdues, becomes a pattern of life. The few who revolt are butchered; the *amok* is shot down in the street. The many squat in the door of a hut and look out with lackluster eyes at the will of God.

Only the most powerful of reasons can stir such a people to

revolt. They will not rise merely if a man stands before them shouting, You are miserable! A revolution is not easy, it can mean death, and even with misery life can be precious. Such people only turn to revolt when between life and death there is little difference.

But what can a man do when the soil that he turns cannot be his, nor the fruits that he grows, when the land that he was told would be free remains in the control of foreigners, when the foreigner drives over his roads in a shiny car that blows dust in his eyes where he sits in his carabao cart, when the men that he really elects to office are ousted without cause as they try to speak for him, when he sees his leaders murdered, his unions outlawed, his barrio raided and looted, his home burned in the night, his wife and his daughters raped before his eyes, when he knows that he must go gaunt all the years of his life?

There are some things that cannot be left to God.

16.

A supply unit is in from the post in town. The men come up the last slope in a strung-out ragged line. It has rained on the trail and they are muddy to the waist; they have cut *anahaw* leaves and tied them over the loads they carry to keep them dry. One by one they come in and drop the heavy sacks by the supply hut, and Comrade Cardi comes out to check the "shopping lists." Others from the camp come up to tease the weary arrivals about going to town for a good time.

Nothing could be said more truly than that this struggle is borne on the backs of the people. Everything is carried—food, utensils, office equipment, arms and ammunition, supplies of every variety. I am continuously being amazed at the weights the ordinary HMB soldier can bear, not only to lift but to carry for days at a time.

Here is an average Filipino peasant, five feet and a few inches over in height, body thin with undernourishment, legs covered with the scars of *beri-beri* sores. He stands ready for the trail.

Slung low on his back is a burlap sack one-third full of rice (try hefting it), with straps of rattan cutting into his shoulders. On top of this is a typewriter, standard size, fastened to the same straps, and covering it one of the large iron frying pans called *kawali.* Besides this, tied to the same bundle, that now towers, is his own pack of personal belongings. His bandolier of ammunition is carried forward at the waist and his rifle cradled forward, too, ready to fire. He is barefooted.

This man is not an exception. He is an average Huk on the trail, and such a load may be carried all day and every day for weeks, depending on the length of the trip, over steep mountains slick with mud, through rivers, upon cliff-side niches. The load may vary: instead of a typewriter he may have a sack of mimeograph paper, or other food (*mongo,* sugar of the crude brown variety that is cheap, salt, canned goods), or iron cooking pots called *caldero,* or a five-gallon can of kerosene for lamps, or a mimeograph machine. He is also expected to, and will, fight.

Ask him how he manages to do this, as I have done, and his answer will be, Exploitation is a heavier load.

The enemy has all the transportation facilities that he needs, swift trucks on a good network of highways, trains, motorboats on the rivers, planes to drop supplies daily. The Huks have not one truck, not even a pack animal, no highways but the narrow footpaths, often treacherous. Each Huk is a transportation unit in himself.

The men joke about the loads they carry, and boast a little, too. When they are not on supply detail (the squad *balutan,* it is called), they take a squad *balutan* holiday and go down to the groves to get a load of coconuts. They rate each other by the number of coconuts they carry (the husked nut, cracked open, with the water drained out). Him? they say. Oh, he's a 40-coconut man.

There is a joke, too, around the fire in the hut at night, the "carry heavy, study heavy" joke. Those who learn faster and have the potentialities of development as leaders are sent to schools (like our school). They graduate from the squad *balutan* and become study heavy types who have other work than carrying loads. Around the fire they say, They have brains, we have backs;

it is easier to have a back. This joke on themselves is hardly accurate; every Huk has a book in his pack or a mimeographed text.

17.

The forest, enclosing the hidden world, hides, too, the system by which it works and fights. Beyond the eyes of enemies is the shadowy framework of an army and of a political system.

Here in our buried camp are Regional Command No. 4 and its complement, Regional Committee No. 4. The former, the Command, directs the organization and operation of the armed force of the national liberation movement in this region, embracing the provinces of Laguna, southern Quezon, Batangas, and Cavite. The latter, the Committee, is the regional organization of the political wing of the Huk movement.

The Reco system was not set up until 1948. Prior to that, there were, roughly, Central Luzon and Southern Luzon districts, in each of which repressions and fighting were going on. A loose, rather fluid condition existed then, much of it a spontaneous struggle of resistance against the government campaign of suppression, which was directed in the main against the peasant unions. There was much confusion and a lack of central guidance; old anti-Japanese guerrilla units had re-formed to fight, new units had arisen, and independence and anarchy characterized their operations. The Communist Party itself, committed to legal struggle after the war, now also the object of suppression, was disorganized and without clear strategic and tactical aims.

But a struggle of this kind demands firm centralized guidance. For all its informality, a guerrilla movement degenerates without such leadership. A political organization, therefore, separate from the armed force but protected by it, was gradually evolved. Many of its members are Communists, many have been local organizers of the Democratic Alliance, some are leaders of guerrilla units other than the Hukbalahap who fought the Japanese for real freedom and were disillusioned by what happened after the war, many also were peasant union leaders and trade union leaders.

The HMB (which, strictly speaking, is the armed force alone, although we all call ourselves Huks) functions like a mass organization. Only a few of its members are Communists; many of the commanders of the guerrilla units do not belong to the party, and the overwhelming number of soldiers do not. It is considered a privilege for a Huk to become a party member. In the barrios and towns, where the whole population usually belongs to pro-HMB mass organizations and each locality has its underground barrio council, there are only a sprinkling of Communists, none in a great many barrios. Yet the party is known and accepted, its individual members known and idolized. It has gained its influence by the heroic example of its members, who have shown themselves ready to die for the people.

In some of the towns near this camp of ours there is not a single Communist Party member, but the entire town is solidly pro-Huk, up to and including town officials.

During the Japanese occupation, Central Luzon—particularly the provinces of Pampanga, Nueva Ecija, Bulacan, and Tarlac—was the center of the Huk struggle. Since 1948, however, the entire Philippines has become an expansion area for the movement and has been divided into Recos like this one, the official maps, to us, bearing the invisible lines of our own world's demarcations. (Reco 4 has become particularly favorable for headquarters sites because of its mountainous terrain near mass-base towns.) Each Reco has its Command and its Committee divisions, with a military representative belonging to a Political Coordinating Committee. This committee handles educational, propaganda, mass organizational, and united front work.

Below Reco level the military and political divisions become even more clearly defined, with District Organizing Committees (DOCs) and, under them, Section Organizing Committees (SOCs), giving political guidance to barrio mass organizations. The DOCs and SOCs usually are maintained in "posts" or camps not far from towns or barrios. Operational guerrilla military activities are carried on by Field Commands (FCs) that have their own camps and facilities. Liaison, however, is maintained between political and military elements, with the DOCs and SOCs supervising intelligence, supply, and recruiting needs for the FCs.

The open world is defined and mapped; we know its ad-

ministrative capitols and even the homes of its leading people. Nothing of our world is known to any enemy. In the region of Central Luzon, where a map indicates Neuva Ecija, eastern Pangasinan, and northern Quezon is our Reco 1. No map of an enemy shows the DOCs into which that Reco is divided, each DOC having its towns, nor the SOCs that are burrowed deep among the people in towns and barrios. The western half of Central Luzon, covering Pampanga, Tarlac, Bataan, Zambales, and eastern Pangasinan, is our Reco 2, living secretly in the Huk heartland.

What is known as Bulacan, Rizal, and the city of Manila, is Huk Reco 3.

The Bicol provinces, in the southern tail of Luzon, below our Reco 4, are being transformed now into our Reco 5.

The Visayan Islands we know as Reco 6, with its main base in Iloilo province on the island of Panay.

Mindanao is the still largely unorganized territory of Reco 7, a future expansion area.

At present expansion is being consolidated in Northern Luzon, with the creation and functioning of Recos 8 and 9. Where an ordinary map defines the Ilocos region and Mountain Province is the place, known to no map maker, of Reco 8, while to the east in the vast Cagayan Valley lies the invisible domain of Reco 9.

Plans are now under way for the creation of a Reco 10, which would spring up in the provinces of Batangas and Cavite, mist-like, relieving some of the administrative burden from fast-growing Reco 4.

Every Reco has from four to five Field Commands, and an equal number of DOCs. The FCs, like the DOCs, are numbered, the numbering based on the particular Reco in which it is located. Thus, here in Reco 4, we have FCs (and DOCs) 41, 42, 43, 44, and 45. In Reco 2 there are FCs (and DOCs) 21, 22, 23, 24, 25 and 26. Each has its area of operation, and for large operations several FCs can be assembled together.

The Huk Field Command has no regular table of organization. It has only two regular officers, the Commanding Officer, the CO, and the Executive Officer, the Ex-O, the latter being somewhat of a political supervisor in the ranks of the armed forces. Sometimes a large FC will have a G-3 and a G-4 as officers in addition.

The FC is simply divided into squads, with squad leaders who have no particular military designations. No officer caste system is desired. The number of men in an FC can be rather elastic, depending on recruiting and supply, running anywhere from 100 to 400 men.

Above all the Recos and the Field Commands and the DOCs is the most hidden of all the organs, the Secretariat. It is the executive body of the political wing of the Huk movement. The Sec today lives and functions in Manila itself, the hidden world having its center at the center of the open world. The Sec is also known as "the PB in" (in the city) to distinguish it from "the PB out," the Political Bureau members "out" in the field who head the Regional Committees in the key Recos.

Soon, however, the Sec, too, will join us in the forest, and all will be hidden here, and ready.

18.

In the early morning, in front of the social hall, the Bicol Expansion Force is assembling. The whole camp has turned out to watch the departure of this group. Up on the sapling pole the flags are flying.

For weeks the expansion force has been assembling, coming secretly through posts in the towns and over long mountain trails all the way from provinces to the north. There are 50 in the group, their leader Mariano Balgos, Comrade Bakal. Their assignment is to march down through the Sierra Madre mountains into the Bicol provinces at the southern end of Luzon (Camarines Norte, Camarines Sur, Albay, Sorsogon) and there to establish a new Regional Command, Reco 5.

These people have been carefully chosen from all the other Recos and from Manila. The Bicols are a strategic region, gateway to the southern islands, and competent cadres are needed. Here is the nucleus for the whole Reco, with Bakal the overall supervisor for the top command, Cruz from Nueva Ecija the secretary, Romy of Tarlac the organizational chief, Nagy of Nueva Ecija heading the educational work, Bundalian from

Pampanga the military department leader. Each person in the group besides these leaders has the capability of becoming a district or a section head or a field command officer, and will become such as recruits are forthcoming and as the organization is established in the region.

This group carries everything that it needs upon its back, food for the journey, extra clothes, an extra pair of rubber shoes for each person, the equipment to set up a headquarters. The supplies have gradually been accumulated through the post in the town below. The group has its own couriers to send back reports of progress and to obtain directives. And it travels heavily armed, with many automatic weapons, for it may have encounters with the enemy on the route and may have to fight its way through the narrow peninsula that leads from Quezon into the Bicols.

When the history of the Huk movement is finally told one of its greatest epics will be that of the expansion forces that flowed out of Central Luzon after 1948, when the decision was made to take the initiative and to bring to the whole country the revolutionary leadership that it was waiting for. The bones of thousands of Huks whiten the trails north and south, in the first wave, the second wave, and the third wave that fought and starved their way into new territories to set up mass bases for national liberation.

There are men in the Bicol group who were in the expansion forces that were sent northward out of Nueva Ecija, and who proved themselves there. They tell me how it is:

The first wave is the hardest. We go into areas where none of us has been before, taking the most inaccessible trails so no one will know of our passage and report us to the enemy. Often there are no guides and we get lost with our limited food. If the enemy finds out, they ambush the trails and we have to fight. Some of us die, before the new place is reached.

Even when we reach our destination, it is only the beginning. The enemy has propagandized ahead of us, telling the people that we are outlaws who will abuse them and rob them, and spies of the enemy are placed in the barrios. Often we have to crawl on our stomachs into the barrio so the people will not see us at a distance and run in fear or run to tell the enemy of our

presence. But even when we can speak to them it is not easy; the stranger is always distrusted.

If there are bandits in that place we hunt them down and kill them, bring their bodies into the barrios and throw them there, to show the people that we will rid them of their enemies. We take not one bit of food from the people, even when we are hungry. We sit in our camps and starve, looking at the crops in the fields. It rains and we are miserable and some of us die of hunger.

One by one we make friends, for we always talk to them, talk to them. Soon we have a small group, a nucleus in a barrio, and they are the ones who organize the rest. All we need is one or two who are respected on our side. They arrange for us to have a meeting in a barrio, and that is the first time we go in as an armed group. The people are always impressed by the arms, not out of fear but out of a feeling of strength. We get up before the people then, backed up by our arms, and give them the message of the struggle. It is never difficult after that.

First we have a small group, then the whole barrio is organized. A spy cannot live there then. We recruit young men of the barrio into our armed force. That gives them a stake in the Huks. It is only then, when everyone is with us, that we can say that we have a base. Then the enemy can raid those barrios and for every abuse that they commit the people will be the closer to us, for they know that we do not harm them but that the forces of the government do. It is very hard then to break our base.

Bundalian, the short stocky energetic commander, wearing dark glasses and with two pistols in his belt, shouts the group into formation and he and Bakal go down the lines, jerking at straps of packs and inspecting weapons. The men, and the women, too, stand very straight. They are wearing every variety of guerrilla garb, but their lines are rigid and their eyes seriously forward.

When the inspection is over, the Bicol Expansion Force, thumbs hooked in rifle straps, bursts into song. With heads thrown back they sing the Philippine national anthem and then the International. It is very moving in the quiet forest to hear the voices.

Momentarily the lines break up and there is much shaking of

hands and embracing. We may never see many of these comrades again. I grip the shoulder of Bakal and hold his hand tightly, the impeccable calm Bakal with the short warm smile, who is to me the embodiment of the Filipino working class. Then the lines reform and move off in single file down the slope from the camp, the long file appearing and disappearing as the trail winds amid the trees.

We walk slowy back to our hut, feeling that something has somehow gone out of our lives. We are stooping to go inside when we hear a faint sound drifting up through the forest.

They are singing again.

19.

June 1950

I find that, as the only American among Filipinos, I must be very circumspect in all that I say or do. Always I must remember that through my words and my actions American people in general will be judged. Having committed myself to a struggle of Filipinos, I must stay with it to the end, or else the brotherhood of which I speak will be considered hollow and the unity of our peoples thought of as an empty slogan.

In no way, therefore, should I act as if I were an exception but must share all that these people endure, eat what they eat and the same amount of it, wear the same type of clothes that they wear and have no more personal belongings than they own, even if I can afford better and have the means of getting it, even if my adjustments are more difficult to make than theirs are. I must be uncomplaining of any hardship, and ready to face any danger they face.

The awareness is always with me that I am in their eyes, not as one who is watched, but as one who is conspicuous. If I conduct myself as they do themselves, I will not be noticed. If my behavior is bad, I can well be thought of as having "imperialist attitudes," or as exhibiting the white man's superiority complex.

There are men in the camp who do not fully accept me, who

are suspicious of all Americans, and who merely tolerate my presence. One man hates Americans so much that when I enter the hut where he lives he pulls out his pistol; his sister was one of the members of Squadron 77 that was massacred by the thugs of the landlords attached to the American army in Bulacan in 1945. I do not resent this; I understand. I realize that I can only win the comradeship of these men through my own behavior at their sides.

Then there is the other extreme: those who still possess so much of colonial mentality that they defer to an American even in these surroundings. They do not call me by the name of comrade; they say "sir" when they address me. I find the time to speak to them alone: Why do you call me "sir"? You know my name and you know that I am a comrade. I am no different from anyone else in this camp and we should all speak to each other in the same way. So, no more "sir." Okay?

Yes, comrade, they say. But when I see them again I notice their tongues falter on the word and it comes out "sir."

Here, too, only patience and my own behavior will break down the barriers.

20.

Over by the social hall I meet one of the security boys and I ask him, Have you seen Celia? He looks at me blankly and then I remember and hastily amend myself, I mean, have you seen Comrade Rene?

It is odd to think that in this camp I know the real identity of only half a dozen people. The others are all in camouflage, as I am to them, as the forest acts to all of us. Here in the hidden world we hide even from each other. None of us uses a real name; all have aliases, some having half a dozen, depending on their work and on the variety of their contacts. Celia is Rene; I am Bob. After a time the real name is strange to the tongue, just as the old open life is now remote.

There is a great vying in the adopting of names of Filipino

heroes, especially those associated with Filipino struggles to be free. Thus we have among the Huks "Del Pilar," "Mabini," "Andres" (for Bonifacio), "Malvar," "Luna," "Lapu-Lapu," "Mactan," "Lakandula," "Dagohoy," "Vibora," "Plaridel." Or names drawn from the nationalistic novels of Jose Rizal: "Simoun," "Ibarra," "Elias," "Noli," "Dimasalang." And then there are those who name themselves after the qualities to be desired in a revolutionary: "Courage," "Honesty," "Loyalty," "Strength," "Dakila" (grand), "Bakal" (iron), "Alambre" (wire), "Acero" (steel). One simply calls himself "Never," meaning, he says, never falter, never surrender, never betray. Or there are "*Liwayway*" (dawn), "*Ligaya*" (happiness), and, simply, "*Pilipinas*."

And yet, in all of this changing of names there is not so much the desire to hide, to become shadows and ghosts in the process of deceiving the enemy, as there is the desire to be new, to be something different from an individual tied to an old hated life of despair. Most of these aliases are attempts at achieving identification with the struggle, the struggle for a change, so that, in the mere joining of the movement, one becomes the new man, the true man, the man transformed.

In the process we become almost impersonal. During a meeting, when I refer to Celia it is almost of someone outside of our relationship: According to Comrade Rene . . . Or she will say: As Comrade Bob has said . . . But in the night when I turn to her it is not different. Darling Rene . . .

The anonymity of the forest.

21.

Alarm. A man on patrol is up from the coconut groves on a run. He comes into the camp covered with mud where he has stumbled on the trail in his hurry, gasping with exhaustion. The enemy has entered the forest. A Philippine Constabulary patrol in company strength has penetrated at the point where Celia and I passed.

Labong, the security commander, his big-brimmed straw hat

pushed back on his head nonchalantly, makes the rounds of the households at a stroll, to reassure everyone. He pokes his head in our window, leaning on the log sill, and says conversationally, I think we'd better pack up, *pero, palagay ko, walang panganib.* But I think there's no danger.

His words, however, galvanize us into action. We have visions of armed troops pouring up the trail. Still, we do not want to exhibit concern to each other, so we do not speak and try to make all moves with deliberation. It is only our fingers that become incoherent at ropes and at straps.

When we finish stuffing everything into packs and into boxes, gathering utensils and equipment, we stand back and are appalled. There it stands, a great heap, impossible for two dozen men to carry. The mere sight of that heap affects us worse than the report of danger, making us feel helpless and impotent in the face of it. We attack the heap, throwing aside things that will be left behind, hating the idea.

We cannot stand there waiting. We cross over to the social hall, where everyone has gathered anxiously to hear further news. It is nothing, says Alambre. We will just walk out into the forest a short distance and wait until they go away.

After an hour of our fidgeting, Labong, with the hat still on the back of his head, comes strolling over the ridge, his hands in his pockets. All clear, he says. The enemy poked their heads inside and then went away again. So we go back to our hut, thinking to ourselves how homey and comfortable it looks sitting there. We unpack and arrange our home as before. No one feels like talking.

The first fine thin wire of uncertainty has been touched in our breasts.

22.

In the forest, in the dry months, it is the time of the *basil.*

High in the tops of the trees it comes to life and rides to earth on its filament of silk. The *basil* is a caterpillar, but unlike any

soft fuzzy innocent creature that any one ever saw in a garden. For this is an inch of horror, every hair of it a thread of agony upon the skin.

No words can describe this creature's incredible itch. When the sun is in the halls of the forest the high ceiling seems to break, and out tumble the *basil*. The air is full of their tiny ropes and, when people are about, their favorite resting place is an open collar or the bare skin of an arm. Woe be unto the one who scratches with the first faint tingle, for the intolerable itch spreads across the body and makes one want to rend the flesh.

Celia gets a *basil* flush upon her body while bathing and I have to stand over her in the hut and hold down her hands so she won't rend at herself. One remedy is to hold a glowing wood ember scorchingly close to the skin; perhaps it burns out the hair; at least it brings relief. The best remedy is to watch out for danger in the air until the dry days end.

In the forest, in the rainy months, it is the time of the *limatik*.

Over the forest floor it comes, a wriggling black inch, looping and stretching itself over the mud, lifting its blind mouth and waving it about for a surface to suck. This is the forest leech, and when the rains begin it swarms. Sometimes the ground is covered with the little black monsters, so that the mud looks alive and writhing at a passerby. Or else they lean from leaves on a low branch and fasten themselves upon a cheek.

No matter how one dresses, no matter how tightly the limbs and the feet are covered, they find their way through a weave and to the skin. They are quiet workers and one does not know that they are there until a sock is stripped away or a pair of pants removed, and there they are, ugly, swollen, blue-black, enormous with one's blood. It is difficult to tear the rubbery things off and when one does there may be a little round red scar left and a trickle of blood that runs down the leg. Sometimes the supply detail comes in from a journey to town on a wet trail with their legs covered with *limatik,* hanging like bunches of purple grapes on the muddy bare skin.

Some of the men carry a bit of laundry soap or a handful of salt wrapped in a rag. At a touch of it the leech will drop away and writhe upon the ground, but one must see them first. In the

middle of the night one of our household members wakes up shouting, with a *limatik* fastened to his eyeball. A solution of salt water makes it let go, but it is not a nice thought upon which to sleep.

23.

Over at the school the class is packing up, preparing to disperse. For six weeks we have plied them with more knowledge than any university curriculum would ever attempt. Some of it will stick, much will not, but there will be other classes, lectures, discussions, self-study, that will help bring order out of the ideas they have received. In the main, what we want them to have is a new outlook. Once that has been acquired, the details will gradually fit into place.

Now, at a high point of enthusiasm, they are going back to the barrio, to the city, to the expansion forces, to put a richer content into the varied phases of the struggle. Each one will be, in his turn, a teacher.

Tonight, however, on the eve of their departure, they will have their graduation exercises. It has not been all monotonous study during these six weeks. They have had their cultural activities, too, have put out a weekly class newspaper, *Pakikibaka* (Struggle), have composed a class song, "The Sierra Hawks," and have their own dramatics group. Tonight we will have a varied program, and everyone in camp has been looking forward to it eagerly.

Once again the social hall is lit up by the Coleman lamp. There are variations tonight in the arrangements. Blankets hung over a rattan line make an intriguing curtain and a buzz of anticipation runs through the audience, which loves nothing so much as a drama. Our students sit on benches in the first row, simple clothing washed and ironed, hair combed, a glow on their faces.

Reg, as the director of the school, is the chairman. We start off with the national anthem, then the class rises in a chorus to sing their own song, "The Sierra Hawks." This is not really an

evening of entertainment, however, as Reg points out in his opening remarks. Study is a serious matter; the whole struggle depends upon how well we can educate our own people and, through them, the masses. This whole program has been prepared by the students and we must look upon it as in implementation of what they have learned.

First on the agenda is the salutatorian, a young worker from the city. He bounds up from the bench as if a spring had launched him, startling some of the audience. He is a little overeager, perhaps, and he doesn't know when to stop once he gets started, but his points are well taken. His theme is, the ruling class rules through our ignorance, the people take power through our understanding.

A girl student rises. She says, I am going to sing you a song, and then I am going to tell you about it. She sings the poignant patriotic song, "Filipinas," and then in a tone as if in echo of it she tells of how the songs of the people can be happy ones.

One after another the students get up and recite. They want to show what they have learned and how they are going to speak to the people when they go out on their assignments. Some of the speeches are filled with classsroom phraseology like "the crisis of the imperialist system," or "the direction of the main blow," or "the dialectics of our struggle," but the enthusiasm is there and the audience responds with cheers and clapping.

Finally the students all get up and go behind the curtain. A rustle of satisfaction goes through the social hall. Drama! No one minds when the blankets catch on slivers of the rattan and require considerable tugging to be opened. What follows in the first presentation is a satire, on the conduct of the school and on the camp administration. No props are used; a student leans from the curtain with signs that read "The Classroom" or "The Clearing by the Flagpole."

The satire is very funny and all of the characters are easily recognizable, the teachers, the camp leaders, the chairman of the student mess. Food, of course, is one of the subjects; it is always a subject. A meeting is planning the menu for the day. Comrades, tonight we will draw our recipe for supper from Chapter Ten of Political Economy: The Impoverishment of the Working Classes. Again, a teacher stands before his class. Today,

he says, the lesson is Strategy and Tactics. Strategy defines the main goal of the struggle in a given period; tactics are the day-to-day steps to get there. That is all. Student: Is that all? What about the details? Teacher, in astonishment: Details? Why, they're understood, aren't they?

It is getting late and we have arrived at the main part of the drama, a little play in several scenes, a serious episode about the recruiting of a new comrade into the movement. In the course of convincing the hesitant person, all the arguments about why a Filipino should join the national liberation movement are cleverly presented.

The climax of the graduation exercises is the giving of diplomas. A small pile of rolled-up papers tied with red ribbons is brought out on a little table, and Reg calls out the names of the students one by one. It is very still in the social hall for this is a solemn moment, broken only by grave applause as each student is handed his diploma. It is hand-lettered and bears the inscription, "The Sierra Madre Training School: The People's University."

The last student speaker, the valedictorian, a Manila student, delivers his address, on what the school has meant to him and what it means to the country. Then Reg takes the floor, to make the final remarks.

When I congratulate you, as I am doing now, he says, the congratulations are not for you twelve comrades alone. They are for the Filipino people for having produced you, for having, in this moment of our history, given forth those who will fight for them and who will lead them to their freedom. While you have been studying here how to bring about the changes that are needed in our country, thousands upon thousands of ordinary students have been studying and graduating from schools in Manila, and in all the towns and cities of our country, from schools where all the subjects have to do in one way or another with maintaining the existing system with all its evils. They have been taught with whole libraries, with the best equipment, with highly paid teachers. Many have been sent abroad to the United States to have their minds even more completely molded to accept a colonial status.

They are thousands. You are a handful.

But let me tell you that you must never feel outnumbered. What you have in your minds and in your hearts is a greater force than all the indoctrinations of imperialism. If that were not true then they would not have to send armed forces against us to try to kill the ideas and the knowledge that we have. A handful of men can change the world, if their ideas are what the world needs. One novel by Rizal tore down the framework of Spanish rule. One Bonifacio brought to life the Katipunan. If what you stand for is close to the people and to their desires, you are not one man but a majority.

Today you are not a handful. You are the nation.

I congratulate the Filipino people for contributing their sons and their daughters to the struggle for national liberation. I congratulate you for accepting the terms of that struggle. And I congratulate you for trying to equip yourselves to carry on that struggle to its triumph. You will win to your side the thousands and the hundreds of thousands for you are armed with the invincible weapon of your ideas.

Let us go forth and use that weapon to strike from the bodies of our people the bonds of colonialism.

24.

War in Korea.

We hear it at noon on the radio, a far excited sound touching us in the forest. I lean back against my pack in silence, thinking of American troops being used in Korea. At this moment along a Korean road my fellow countrymen, perhaps the son of my neighbor in my home town, are shooting down Asians who want the untrammeled freedom of their country after centuries of a colonial status. And I am here, with Asians.

I think of the pictures of "insurgents" lying disheveled 50 years ago in Philippine fields. Do they look like the Koreans lying disheveled in their rice fields now? In 50 years there has been no change. American guns are still at work in Asia.

It is strange to think that, in Asia today, with all its wars, the guns are foreign made. Dutch troops used American guns to

shoot down Indonesians before that people fought back and gained their freedom. Chiang Kai-shek used American guns to shoot down Chinese before they turned the guns on him and drove him into the sea. French troops are using French guns and American guns to shoot down Vietnamese. British troops use British guns to shoot down Malayans. American guns in the hands of Filipinos are used to shoot down fellow Filipinos. And the Asian people who fight back have merely seized the foreign guns and use them against their owners.

My country's government held arms away from the Spanish people when they needed weapons to fight fascism. Not one shipment of arms has it sent to a colonial people struggling for freedom. Tons of arms have been sent to those who suppress struggles for liberty. And when the mercenaries are no longer effective, the American troops themselves are sent.

What if American troops should intervene when the Huks overcome the mercenaries here? What would I do then?

What did Tom Paine do in a country oppressed by his native England?

25.

When our couriers go down to the towns, laden with concealed messages, we say, Watch out. Be careful so the enemy will not catch you.

When a newspaper comes up from the post, with lurid stories about the Huks, we comment, Ah, the enemy are stepping up their propaganda.

When the comrades sometimes boast of Huk abilities, we tell them, Don't underestimate the enemy.

Who is the enemy?

There are those who say that the enemy is the government. The government passes bad laws and makes decisions harmful to the people; it defends the landlords and the foreigners and turns its back on the people when they complain.

Others say it is the landlords who are the enemy. They own the land while most peasants have nothing, they take the biggest

share of the crop, they are arrogant, they hire civilian guards to terrorize the peasants.

But others insist the Constabulary is the enemy. They are the ones with the guns who shoot down the people when they stand up for their rights. If it wasn't for the brutal men in the Constabulary how could the landlords or the government last for long?

No, it is imperialism that is the enemy, say some. The imperialists are the ones who bribe the government and tell it what to do, who give guns to the Constabulary, and who keep our country poor by not allowing it to industrialize.

It seems that there are many enemies. But then someone says, Wait a minute. There are many good men in the government. Some of them even contribute help to the Huks. And the landlords are not all bad. Some of them give the peasants a fair share and treat them decently. Some even give rice to the Huks. And as for the Constabulary, have not many of them deserted and joined the Huks or left ammunition behind during an operation for us to pick up?

Today some of those who used to be our enemies are coming over to our side. We keep sending out our propaganda, Filipinos, do not fight your brothers! It is very confusing in a revolution; friends and enemies are always changing sides. Even some of those who used to be Huks are now working against us, are now our enemies.

Who is the enemy? The enemy is any man who says, Yes, to the exploitation, to the deprivation, to the abuse or to the torture of a fellow human being. A friend is any man who says, No, I am against it.

26.

In the U.S. army air force during World War II there was issued a booklet called a survival manual. It consisted of advice to flyers and other personnel who might be forced down or set adrift in the jungle, advice on how to find direction, on how to

make a fire, and, most intriguing, on what to eat. The forest, it implied, is literally teeming with food, animals and birds, roots and shoots and insects.

I wonder now how many flyers ever survived in the tropical forest. Even when one is equipped with all the necessary weapons it is not an easy task to hunt a wild pig or a deer. And what if one cannot shoot for fear of attracting an enemy? One does not catch fish with one's hands. As for the proper roots and shoots and insects—they are the needles in the forest's haystack.

Granted that one lost man in the forest might scrounge around and find a shoot here and an insect there, but what do a hundred men in the forest do when their supplies run out? What does an army of national liberation do when its posts are cut in the towns? This is a critical problem that production bases do not solve: it takes three months to grow crops.

There are certain things in the forest that can be eaten and the supply is strictly limited. There is the *ubod*—ah, the *ubod.* It is the heart of trees of the palm family, the soft crunchy part embedded in the trunk at the point where the leaves sprout. The *ubod,* one might say, is the national dish of the Huks. For miles around every Huk camp the *ubod* is gone, from the *tukyong,* from the *anibong,* from the *kaong,* from the *lulog,* even from the bitter rattan. The best *ubod* is from the coconut palm, but people depend on the coconut for a livelihood, so we do not cut those. *Ubod* can be eaten raw, or boiled; either way it is flat, tasteless, without a calorie in a carload, but it is something in the stomach when the supplies run out.

There is that crisp variety of fern, the *paco,* growing delicately green along the banks of streams. And there is the *catmon,* the wild green fruit that is peeled away like a cabbage, and is inordinately sour. All fruits in the forest are sour, bitter, astringent, like a struggle for freedom. But they are something in the stomach when the supplies run out.

Better than these is the long lizard, the *bayawak,* ugly to look upon but with tasty tender meat that is not unlike the taste of chicken. A shout goes up when someone comes in from a hunt dragging a *bayawak* by the toothed tail. Or there might be a can full of boiled snails. Or a frog skinned and spread-eagled in a

frying pan. But these are all rare items, good for one meal in a household, and after that what is there for the stomach when the supplies run out?

The manual said that cicadas are excellent, toasted.

Did anyone ever try to catch a cicada in the forest?

27.

July 1950

Suddenly our post in the town is raided.

The squad *balutan* comes up in the morning with empty sacks. The civilians in the fields had warned them not to enter the town. PCs were there. They had come in a truck and with them was one of our couriers, a young girl, who had pointed out the post. The man there had been beaten until the blood ran out of his head, had been thrown into the truck and had been taken to PC headquarters in Santa Cruz. So we have no supplies, and we have danger.

The girl was a post-to-post courier, from a District in Batangas; she does not know our campsite. However, the enemy know that where there is a post, with supplies waiting, somewhere there are Huks. At the very least they will cordon the town, try to make us go hungry. Alembre shrugs. So we'll set up a new post for the time being in another town. It sounds easy but, to be on the safe side, this night our household cuts its ration down by one-half.

In the morning we are in our hut working on new textbooks that we are preparing for our next school when a great crash occurs in the forest not far away. It sounds like all the crockery in a restaurant smashing at once on a tile floor. Mortar fire! We scramble out of the hut and stand anxiously under the trees. In a moment there is another shattering crash, far to the right of the first. Then another, midway between the two points, but not yet deep enough into the forest to reach us.

We discuss the matter, trying to be calm. It is random fire; the enemy knows we are somewhere around, but doesn't know

exactly where. If they intended to come in after us, why should they warn us in this way?

For 15 minutes the mortar fire goes on, ranging about the forest between our camp and the town. Then it ceases, and the natural quiet that is unnatural now, returns. Uncertainly we go back into our hut. Shall we pack, just in case?

The matter is decided for us by the regular patrol, sent out every morning. It reports the coconut groves on the edge of the forest filled with Constabulary troops. A squad of our security force is promptly sent to form an ambush on the trail midway to our camp. And we pack. This time there is no lack of preparation or sense of panic. A dugout has been constructed at some distance from the camp and here all of our heavier equipment that cannot be immediately carried is transported and the location screened. Our men can return to it at leisure to get what we leave behind.

It is decided that we will move to G.Y.'s camp, an hour or two's journey into the forest, away from the main trails that the enemy might follow. Celia and I give a last tug at the strings of our rubber shoes, tuck our trousers into socks to discourage *limatik*, pull hat brims down low to fend off branches, and work our shoulders into the straps of our packs. We stand a moment, with all of our possessions on our backs, looking back at the hut that has been our home.

Then we join the laden, single-file line of our comrades. In a moment we are among the trees, the hut is out of sight, and the forest is our home.

28.

G.Y.'s way of life is something at which to marvel. He is the completely dedicated revolutionary who lives for only one purpose: the fully-achieved national liberation of the Philippines. Unlike most of the Huk leaders, who had a breathing spell in the open world between the end of the war against Japan and the beginning of the present struggle, G.Y. passed in an almost un-

broken stride from the rigors of that war to the rigors of this one.

His origins might seem odd for a revolutionary, since he is the son of a Pampanga landlord and has been a student at the Jesuit university, Ateneo de Manila. But he is also the grandson of a general in the revolution of 1896. He abandoned his studies at Ateneo because he could not stand the stiff-necked Jesuits, and his sympathies did not go to the landlords but to the peasants. He passed from prayers to protest and to political economy and became one of the activists of the Pampanga Socialist, Pedro Abad Santos. In 1940 he was elected mayor of his home town, Arayat, on the Socialist ticket. When the Japanese invaded a year later, he opened the town's bodegas of rice for distribution to the people and went underground to become the vice-commander of the Hukbalahap. He was the provisional governor of Pampanga, liberated by the Huks, when the American army arrived in 1945, but American authorities arrested him immediately for his anti-imperialist orientation and put him into a concentration camp together with other militant Huks. He was there for several months, and shortly after mass peasant demonstrations freed him, he disappeared one night from his home in Arayat: he had gone "outside," to join other Huks who were hiding from landlord persecution. He was the first important leader of the movement to return to mountain and forest.

He calls in greeting to us now from his house, on the far side of a deep stream that we cross one by one on a small jiggling log that takes all my balance to negotiate. My jouncing in midstream makes him grin, that uneven grin that gives a Chinese cast to his face and that gave him his alias, Guan Yek, by the initials of which he is known. His handclasp when I finally make it is hard and firm, like the lean body and like the lean mind.

G.Y. is head of the military department of the movement and this house in the forest is his headquarters. It sits all alone under the trees on the tongue of a U-shaped turn in the river, an enormous rambling structure that is known all over the Sierra Madre as the "Big House," built originally as the site of the conference at the end of 1949 that decided that a revolutionary situation existed in the Philippines propitious for a transfer of power to

the people. From this house issue the directives for ambush and attack that go out to Huk Field Commands all over the country.

G.Y. was a minority of one who disagreed with some of the conclusions of the conference, that projected a two-year period of preparation for the seizure of power. It is his opinion that a ten to 15-year armed struggle will be necessary to achieve liberation. Since he has had almost nine years of almost continuous guerrilla life already, that means that he is prepared to spend 20 to 25 years in this type of struggle. It is no wonder that the imperialists gnash their teeth over this kind of an opponent.

Because of his long-range orientation, he believes in conserving his energies for the more crucial struggles and the attrition that lie ahead. In all things he is calm and deliberate, never getting excited, yielding that grin when others are agitated. He even eats very slowly, to preserve his digestion. In time of danger he is the last one to pack up and to leave a location. There is no need to hurry, he says. The enemy are not fools. They will not rush into a place where they might get shot.

To make sure that the enemy is kept in that frame of mind, he takes care to practice his marksmanship. The back of the Big House projects out over the river; he sits out there at times with his Luger pistol, taking potshots at mudfish. I remember the Luger. On brief trips to Manila he used to stay with Celia and me in our house. He had to be left there at times alone, and when I opened the door on my return he would be crouched at the top of the stairway with the Luger in his hand, ready.

Since the forest is his home, he believes in making it one. A neat shelf of books is on a table. He loves music and has a portable phonograph which he winds up and plays after the evening meal, lying on his mat in the dark. Down at the wide deep bend in the river is a diving board, made of a rough plank with a rock weighting its end. On a large limb extending over the water is a rattan rope, for water acrobatics. His body must be fit, he says, for the long struggle.

When G.Y. has an attack of malaria he runs down to the river in the early morning and dives into the cold water.

Courage, he says, is better than techniques.

29.

We are learning the meaning of mobility. We have moved, but nothing is interrupted. In G.Y.'s Big House we strip off packs, pull out the typewriters, and we are in business again. If necessary, I can get along with a pencil and a notebook, to write leaflets and textbooks.

Across the river a new camp is rising, swiftly. There is the ring of axes and bolos, the rush and thud of falling trees. It reminds me of a frontier settlement going up in the old forested Ohio country. Men came in bent under great lashed bundles of *anahaw* leaves or carrying long poles for hut frames. Bolos swing at their waists and perspiration darkens their clothing. The supply line has not yet been fully restored but the men work anyway, confident that it will be. And in a few days it is, and we are back to a full ration again, as full as our rations are.

This, it is said, will be a permanent camp, with sawn lumber for floors and walls. The old camp that we left lies untouched; the enemy came only a short distance into the forest but turned back before reaching our ambush point. However, it lies on a known trail and bolder enemy troops could easily find it. Here it is different. The enemy, say our people, will never come this far into the forest.

The men sing as they work. All is busy stir and motion, here and in the open world, for couriers come and go again. For them, it does not matter where our headquarters is. We are the fixed point; it is the world around us that changes.

30.

A court martial is meeting and all life in camp curdles.

The man on trial is the security soldier, Ete, who was married only two weeks ago to one of the girl couriers. The whole camp celebrated the occasion, for he is popular. Now he has a serious charge against him: desertion in the face of the enemy.

When the enemy entered the forest a few days ago he was in

the unit sent to ambush them. He left the firing line without permission, merely telling the man next to him that he had a headache, and returned to camp. He said the headache made him dizzy and that he was afraid of committing a blunder if a fight occurred. But everyone believes that he went back to be at the side of his wife, Anita, in a time of danger.

There is not a sound in the camp. No laundry is being pounded today down by the riverside. The axes are still. At the fireplace in the Big House two helpers squat hunched together, cooking the noon meal, talking in low inaudible whispers, muffling the little noises of pot covers. Celia and I sit writing in our notebooks, listening to silence.

Ete is not confined; he has merely been disarmed. He is a veteran of the Japanese time, and he says that he is ready for any punishment that the movement thinks is necessary. But he cannot sit still. He wanders about the camp from house to house, followed by Anita, coming up to sit for a moment on the top of each ladder. Comrades smile at him and say Hello as if nothing has happened, but turn their eyes away.

He comes into the Big House, a strained smile on his lips. He crossses to G.Y.'s phonograph, which he is fond of playing, and puts on a record. It is a song that is popular, "In Despair." The mournful tune grates along the edges of the mind. Ete stands listening to it gravely, then he takes off the record and puts it gently to one side. He leaves, followed by Anita, walking like an automaton.

The court martial deliberations are over. Eyes in all the houses watch the three men leave the meeting hut and part. G.Y. comes into the Big House and sits down on the floor with us to speak of the decision. The sentence is death by firing squad, to be carried out immediately. It is a harsh decision, but the struggle is entering a crucial phase in which the strictest discipline is demanded of each and all. Can we meet the enemy in battle with every man his own officer? Can we afford to be humane in small matters and let the larger aspects of humanity be endangered? Ete will die so that the others will know how to fight for life.

The sentence is to be carried out at three o'clock. An order goes to the heads of all households, forbidding anyone to leave a hut in the afternoon. In the heavy quiet we peer out and see the

squad of men with rifles moving through the trees with Ete in their midst. He matches his stride to theirs, walking with his head up. They disappear in the foliage at the edge of camp. The seconds tick thickly in our breasts. The ragged volley is shatteringly loud in the silence.

The members of the firing squad are coming back. They are crying.

31.

Celia and I talk of what we will do in case of a surprise attack by the enemy on our camp. They may come in upon us before we are aware of it, firing before we see them. It has happened before. At a time like that there is no opportunity to think, to gather belongings, or to look to each other's safety if each would live and be free.

The natural impulse of a man and a wife is to protect each other. But we have joined with this struggle to fight for the many. In this movement it is not the individual that counts, but the cause of all. If one cadre is wounded or captured, shall we risk the lives of two for a personal attachment, and thereby injure the whole? We tell each other that when that moment comes, neither will wait or look to the other's welfare.

I look at Celia and think of her soft self in the hands of the enemy.

Decisions in the forest.

32.

The forest is a strange place for freedom to live. Wherever one would turn there is the wall of trees. It is a wall to all sides and a wall above, shutting out the sky. In the open world there were horizons; here the only horizon is in the heart.

When we were in the city, living openly but moving in the underground, we felt compressed, aware of eyes. From our window

we peered forth at the street, wondering, Who is standing under the light upon the corner? When we were on a moving bus, how many agents sat between us and the door? We longed for the sanctuary of the forest, where no eye could spy or agent seize.

Now we are here, in the forest, where no one moves freely, as he will. No one takes a stroll upon a forest trail. Only those with assignment pass through the guard posts on the camp's perimeter. To do otherwise would invite suspicion, and, besides, the enemy, too, moves on the trails.

Sometimes, upon the trail ourselves, we come to a river, cutting a twisted avenue through the trees. Crossing it, we stop in the middle, look up at unexpected sky, feel sun, feel unimpeded air, see blue. For a moment the world is open. Then we plunge back into the forest, as if afraid of day.

We think now of the time of coming out of forest, into the free streets of cities.

A revolutionary who fights for freedom savors it least, knowing it only within himself.

33.

August 1950

Something is astir in the Sierra Madre.

G.Y. packs up and departs, staying away for several days, attending a conference, he says vaguely. When he comes back he is very tired and muddy and sits down at the riverside for a long time with his feet in the water before plunging in. He comes up to the house dripping, rubbing himself pink, very cheerful, but he has nothing to say about his trip.

Couriers come in more frequently from the Secretariat in Manila, bearing reports. G.Y. is up late into the night, poring over papers and a map, scribbling. We do not ask him what is up; in this movement few matters are spoken of freely, for security reasons. We are given the task of preparing a leaflet for August 26, the day of the Cry of Balintawak, when the Katipuneros began the revolt against Spain in 1896. It is to be a stirring call to the people to support the Huk in destroying the imperialist-

puppet regime. Great piles of the leaflet are run off on the mimeograph machine and carried away from the camp in sacks.

Large groups of armed Huks, heading south on the trails beyond the camp pass by from the Field Commands to the north. Their commanders and a few others come in to confer with G.Y.; their packs are light but they are weighted down with ammunition. They have the taut and confident look of men upon a mission.

Other groups come through the camp, too, from the production bases. They carry empty sacks tied across their shoulders, like the squad *balutan* on an errand of supply. It is unusual to see the production base people on the move this way. The whole population of the forest seems to be in motion.

On the evening of August 25, as we are about to retire, G.Y. comes and sits beside our *banig*. Even when he is excited, it is a calm excitement. There is no longer need for security, he says. I can tell you now. Tonight we capture Santa Cruz.

34.

The story of Santa Cruz comes up to us in driblets.

First there is the radio, with a garbled, almost incoherent report by a rapidly talking newscaster about thousands of Huks pouring out of nowhere into towns and military installations, not only in Santa Cruz but elsewhere in southern and central Luzon. The big constabulary headquarters at Camp Makabulos, in Tarlac, has been captured, its garrison killed, and its installations razed to the ground. As for Santa Cruz, it is, in that voice of despair, "in the hands of the Huks."

In mid-afternoon a running courier is up from Longos. He had left the town at ten o'clock in the morning, and at that time the sound of firing was still audible from the direction of Santa Cruz and a great pillar of black smoke hung in the sky. The alarm had come in to the PC detachment at Longos shortly after midnight, and the captain there with a jeepload of men had sped off toward Santa Cruz. Near Lumbang, however, they had run into a barricade of coconut trees felled across the road and had been fired

upon by Huks in ambush. The captain fled back to Longos but he had no sooner arrived there when somebody—Huks or town partisan units—fired a volley out of the darkness into the PC barracks, and the whole detachment ran away.

At dawn the courier had clung to a truck crowded with curious civilians and had traveled down the road toward the heavy firing going on at Santa Cruz. However, the barricade was still maintained near Lumbang, with a group of Huks strolling up and down behind it, telling the people politely, Don't go there. Let us take care of the enemy. All along the road people had swarmed out of houses and were milling in the highway, laughing and telling each other in high spirits, The Huks are killing the PCs. They clustered at the barricade, asking the Huks, Is it true that you are now the government? It was like a fiesta.

It is not until after two days, however, that we get a full report. A special courier arrives with an armed escort. He carries a heavy black bag, which is emptied out upon the table. It lies there, a heap of banded sheaves of pesos, tens of thousands of pesos, confiscated funds for the struggle.

From the courier and his escorts we get our picture of the raid on Santa Cruz. All talking at once, they give to us some of the splintered turmoil of the event:

Four hundred Huks in two main bodies had gathered east and west of the town, waiting in concealment for the pre-arranged hour. Then they climbed into prepared trucks and drove into Santa Cruz simultaneously from both directions. Ambush parties on all the roads leading to the town at that moment felled trees across the highways and cut telephone wires.

These images loom out of the night: The packed anxious men in the trucks as they approach checkpoints at the town's entrance and at the gateway to the PC camp. The PCs caught in the headlights coming out at a routine gait for inspection, shot down at once in the road, and the trucks roaring into the town and into the camp. The trucks slewing round into the night quiet of the plaza and spilling out armed men in the heterogeneous garb of the forest. The wild scene of men with guns scattering in the headlight glare, shouting to each other for contact as they rush to assigned missions.

In the camp there is something awry. Some of the officers are

caught in their quarters and killed and everywhere PCs are trying to flee. Some of them run out into the mudflat swamp along Laguna de Bay and bury themselves in the mud. Others try to hide in houses in the town. But a sizeable number with a lieutenant get into a concrete barracks and turn it into a fort. The Huks surround it and a frantic seige begins. A clean sweep of the garrison is wanted. Here the night becomes a chaos of gunfire.

All the other targets in the town are taken: The jail, where several imprisoned Huks are released, and where one who has turned informer is shot in his cell. The bank, where cashiers are brought from homes previously pinpointed and made to open safes. The homes of informers, who are dragged into the streets and shot. The hospital, where a production base man, skilled in the paths of the forests, gets lost in the corridors while assigned to collect medicines, and shouts desperately for someone to let him out.

Government buildings and military installations are burned and the glare of flames lights up the town. Civilians pour into streets despite Huk urgings to remain inside. They hug the Huks and bring out food to them. They guide Huks to the hiding PCs, who are shot. They swarm in the marketplace where the attacking party, going by a list drawn up in advance by intelligence units in the town, breaks open the stores of elements hostile to the movement and confiscates their goods, piling them in trucks—canned goods, clothing, shoes, anything useful in the mountains. The civilians help, and all that cannot be carried is turned over to them; people hurry in streets under great burdens of goods. Looting of other stores is halted by armed guards. Up on the back of a truck, in the glare of flames, a Huk with a rifle strapped over his back is delivering a speech, denouncing the criminal acts of the Constabulary who abuse the people, denouncing the traitorous government that sells out the country to imperialists, urging the people to support the Huks. Squads go about distributing our leaflet to the people in the marketplace and plaza, and throwing them into the frontyards of homes. Everyone is hoarse from shouting.

In the camp the seige of the barracks goes on, in the dark hours and into the morning. Molotov cocktails are thrown against the building that is scarred with the black smoke of their burning

and with hundreds of bullet marks, but it holds out. Gasoline drums are set afire and exploded against the doors but the PCs fight on in desperation. The camp commander is discovered behind a barracks hiding in an empty oil drum, but the Huks are impatient now and when the man pleads for his life, promising to order his men to surrender, they shoot him. Time is running out.

Erning, Huk vice-commander of the attack, one of the best of the military cadres from Pampanga, stands up in a truck to direct firing on the barracks and is killed. He is one of the three casualties suffered in the raid.

It is crude and clumsy, this taking of a town by guerrillas, but it is the way the people fight in a civil war, until they have learned how to do better.

By now it is late in the morning and Samonte, the over-all commander of the attack, is concerned about planes. Planes may come and catch trucks on the road. He gives the order to withdraw. Units assemble and climb into the laden trucks, speed out of town.

A strange silence comes over Santa Cruz. The smoke of burning still drifts, and there is the heavy smell of gunpowder. Mashed trampled goods lie littered in the streets, and the scattered bodies of PCs and informers lie where they were shot in the streets, lie, too, across the area of the camp. But the people have all disappeared, hurrying home before the reinforced enemy returns, after the Huks have gone.

It is several days before Samonte, commander of the attack, comes up the trail to the Big House. He comes slowly and wearily across the log spanning the river. Tall, raw-boned, he stands awkwardly on the ground below the house and removes his hat, wiping his arm over his reddened brow.

We lost Erning, is all that he says.

35.

This revolution is a battle of strategy and tactics. It is not an armed mob rushing through streets bent on death and destruction. It is not destruction and death that is its end, but creation

and birth, and the blood that is shed is like the placenta that accompanies the arrival of life.

For all its appearance of disorder, this revolution is not disorderly or blindly spontaneous, but is led, led with a scientific knowledge of society and with the precise guidance of main forces, allies and reserves, based on the most nearly correct estimate of given situations.

In the Philippines it has been decided by a leadership, after much debate, that a revolutionary situation exists. A revolutionary situation, says the socially scientific definition, is the point where the ruling forces can no longer rule in the old way, and the forces of the people can no longer accept the old rule. Here in the Philippines the ruling forces are discredited and can no longer maintain themselves with a semblance of democratic processes; they resort to frauds, to terror, and to the suspension of rights. Here the people can no longer stand for the old rule and look about for changes, and with no other means to change it permitted, are prepared to resort to the ultimate means of arms.

The situation is estimated by the leadership in this way:

The main enemy are the imperialists, and their allies are the puppet comprador groups that profit from a close relation with the imperialists. They defend themselves with the armed and suppressive agencies of the state that is within their grasp. Their reserves are the unenlightened, uncommitted masses of the people.

The main force of the revolution is an alliance of peasants, workers, and intellectuals. Their allies are all the elements that suffer from, are exploited by, and are denied development by the imperialists and pro-imperialists. Their revolutionary fighting arm are all those who are prepared for advanced struggle. Their reserves are the unenlightened, uncommitted masses of the people.

At present the fighting forces of both sides are already joined in battle. The revolutionary situation is flowing toward a revolutionary crisis, which is the eve of the transfer of power. We are in the period of preparation for the strategic aim of seizing power. Our tactical aims are all those steps that can effectively mobilize the allies and the reserves of the revolución into an increasing assault on the main enemy and their allies.

At this time the most crucial concern is the battle for the re-

serves, for the unenlightened, uncommitted masses. To win them to the side of the revolution it is necessary to heat up the struggle, to demonstrate the power of the revolutionary forces, and to expose the weaknesses of the ruling forces. We do this in two ways: through the propaganda of word and through the propaganda of action; by explaining to the people, and by showing them and by involving them in advanced struggles. Hence expansion of the HMB. Hence armed attacks on the suppressive agencies of the state, and the temporary seizure of towns to exhibit the strength of the HMB to the people.

Main forces and reserves. Exhortation and implementation. Strategy and tactics.

36.

Pedring, one of the members of our household security force, is out beside the Big House, chopping a log into kindling wood with a bolo. I go out and sit on a chunk of the wood and watch him. There is no wasted motion in his strokes, and his blows are clean, splitting a piece of wood completely and without splinters.

Ka Pedring, what does the taking of power mean to you? I ask him.

He stops for only a moment to look at me. Many things, he says and goes on with his work.

What things?

He splits several pieces of wood, and then says:

I will feel the power is mine. Oh, I will not be the one to make the big decisions in the country. In this camp I do not make the decisions. That will be for the men with big minds, like *Ka* G.Y. But I will do my work then like I do it now, knowing that my work is important, too, and that they will treat me as if it is important, like here.

In my own town I think I will feel the power more. You know, today it is the landlord who is the power. No job is given in my town without the approval of the landlords. Jobs are favors given to those who are loyal or subservient to the landlords' interests. If you want to be a policeman or a teacher or even a man who

fixes a road you go to the landlord or to a henchman of a landlord and he will get you the job, if he thinks you are good, meaning if he thinks you are not militant and will vote always for his men in the elections. Any time the landlord wants to call on the Constabulary to protect him or his property, he just has to lift his finger. If a peasant goes to the Constabulary for protection against the landlord, they laugh at him or slap him. The peasant, well, you know the peasant is made to be the slave of the landlord.

But when the power is changed it will not be like that any more. The jobs will be held by the people who have abilities and who are loyal to the interests of everybody. Everything will be run by committees, and the people will elect the committees, without any pressures. No one man will make decisions or give the orders. Maybe I will be on a committee. I would like that. I think I can help decide many things for my town. Of course, if we have a Constabulary then it will protect only the people.

I think that I will have more to eat. I think that I will have shoes. I think that I will have a better house to live in. My kids will go to school, to all the grades. We will all have good education. I think there will be more of those things for everybody because most of the money will go for our good and not to the landlord or to his crooked henchmen politicians or to foreigners who take it out of the country.

But I think most of all the power will mean good comradely relationships for all our people, like in this camp, no abuses, no cheating, no working against each other. We will all be equal in our rights and helpful to each other.

He is silent a moment.

I can go into the offices of the leaders of my country and be treated like a comrade.

37.

A young girl in a white dress, frightened, sits before a ring of men, answering questions. This is Virgie, the courier, who, when captured by the enemy, pointed out our posts in Longos and in

other towns. Several people were arrested and tortured because of her revelations, and much dislocation of activity occurred. She was in the Santa Cruz jail at the time of the raid there and was released from her cell. Her brother was killed in the attack on the PC barracks. Now she is here. She is undergoing revolutionary trial.

Yes, she admits, she talked. She went with the enemy in a vehicle and pointed out the posts in the towns. But the comrades should understand that she was tortured. They raped her and they did things to her. . . . Her wide eyes that are moist go around the circle of faces before her that nod and say little, but ask the next question. The quiet questions and the answers go on and the shadows of late afternoon gather in the hut. Then the talk trails away and all that is written on the papers is placed in front of her and she signs it.

Outside it is late afternoon and blue shadows pool at the bottom of the forest. A small group of armed men is standing there in the dusk, leaning on rifles, silent. They are the firing squad, for betrayal has a penalty in this struggle.

Menong, member of the security detachment, walks disarmed in the camp. He has been caught in a guard post at night, asleep. Uneasiness is in the air. The thought of Ete, and of Virgie, hovers in all the huts.

However, this is not a movement of blood purges. Discipline and loyalty are demanded, but restraint, too, sits along with determination among those who make decisions. There is no hasty ordering of punishment for Menong, merely because punishment has come to others. If anything, there is a tendency to be more careful, more certain of what is just. An investigating body is set up and for two days they sift the facts.

Fact one. The night before the incident Menong had spent in the squad *balutan,* carrying supplies up from town, and he had been put on guard duty without having slept. Fact two. The Officer of the Day had been negligent in making his rounds and had failed to visit guard posts regularly as required to keep those on duty alert. Fact three. The guard post where Menong had been stationed had been made in the form of a comfortable bamboo seat, conducive to slumber and not to staying awake.

There is much arguing over these facts, much weighing of them against the need for a sense of responsibility. There are those who demand the death penalty for Menong, but they are in the minority. His sentence, finally: three years at hard labor, cutting wood, carrying baggage, cooking for his household. Hardest of all is the additional penalty that he must go disarmed.

Menong walks in the camp, shouldering an ax like a gun, but with his eyes downcast, knowing that he is not a soldier now.

38.

September 1950

We have become over-confident, and now we pay for that carelessness.

The attack on Santa Cruz, it is felt, has demoralized the enemy in this region. Without waiting to investigate conditions in the lowlands, therefore, it is decided to send couriers to Manila, to the central command, with reports on the details of the attack and with part of the money confiscated in Santa Cruz. G.Y.'s two young girl couriers and the boy, Ruming, prepare to leave. They are excited about going to the city, where they always have the bonus of a movie. Messages and the money are stuffed into *bayongs* that are doubly woven, with a space between the two layers of *pandan*. They are off with an armed escort, their gay voices carrying back to us.

In the early morning the escort is back, hurriedly. They are very grave and squat outside the house with G.Y., in a head-bent circle, scratching at the ground with twigs. It is a serious report. They brought the couriers to the edge of town, as usual, at night-fall, and the couriers entered between the usual houses. In a few moments there was a great commotion, with shouting, and shots were fired. When the men went back to investigate, the town was swarming with PCs and they barely escaped having an encounter. They waited at the outside post in the coconut groves but no one came, so it looks as if our couriers were all caught.

It is an anxious time. No one in the camp can work. We wonder if the lesson of Virgie has had its effect, but even then, there are the captured messages. In the afternoon there is partial relief. Ruming arrives! We are overjoyed, until he tells his story. He and the girls had entered the town and were almost at the house used for a post when they ran right into a pair of PCs who nearly encircled them all with their arms. The three couriers ran and tried to get into some of the houses, but the people were afraid and shut their doors or let the *nipa* window panels fall because the PCs were shouting and firing in the air. Ruming saw both girls caught only a few feet from him—yes, and they were carrying the *bayongs*—but he is small and he ran under houses and got away, in the dark.

What to do? There is nothing to do but wait, and worry. Only a cursory reading of the messages will enable the enemy to know that top organs of the movement are nearby. We will need to send out patrols, in all directions, to feel out enemy movements. Ruming wants to volunteer; he is only ten years old, but he thinks he has failed as a courier and he wants to redeem himself. G.Y. grins and gives his consent. Ruming's carbine is almost as long as he is. He and Sisu, the youthful security companion of Samonte, go out together.

Late in the afternoon there is the sound of firing in the distance, in the direction of the coconut groves, single shots at first, then a long burst of rapid fire that lasts for three or four minutes. After that there is silence that is drawn out like a rubber band into the twilight and into the night. We lie with everything packed, waiting for it to break, but it does not and the night passes. In the morning the patrols are back.

There is much news, and all of it is bad. Longos is full of heavily armed PCs and more are arriving in trucks. The civilians have all been ordered out of the fields and forbidden to go into the forest or into the coconut groves. Civilians are being hired as carriers, to bear the equipment of troops. All signs point to an operation of some size, and it will be into the forest, there can be no doubt.

As for the firing, there is a story to tell, and Ruming to tell it. He and Sisu, scouting in the coconut groves, ran into a full com-

pany of PCs. The enemy had a guide at the point whom Ruming recognized, an ex-Huk informer named Caballes. The two boy Huks, without hesitation, promptly knelt down and opened fire on the company of the enemy. Caballes was hit and fell and so did a PC. Then the two ran, bending low, in a storm of bullets from the whole enemy force, and got away untouched. So Ruming is redeemed and is a hero, the ten-year-old Huk.

It is a small victory, but it doesn't reverse events. Now it is our turn to run.

39.

Production bases, I find, are like hostelries, set up along trails for homeless Huks.

There are two main sets of Huk trails along the Sierra Madre. The outer one, closer to the towns, is called the military line; that is where our armed forces in the Field Commands travel. The inner one connects the camps and the production bases. It is this latter one that we take now, in late afternoon, the camp personnel moving out in segments, by household, as each completes its packing and hides away its excess materials in secluded dugouts; we will reassemble at the first production base, a two-hour hike distant.

It is late when we arrive. The production base is like a deep pool in the forest, the pale sky of twilight overhead the luminescent lid of the sea, and we walk upon its bottom in the blue-green depths. Around the edges the trees have merged to become the dark sheer walls of this rift in the bed of the sea. The floor is covered with the vines of *camote* and *calabasa* that have matted over the cut trees and the stumps, and we walk across it as if we were walking on green coral reefs on the bottom of the sea. At the far edge of the trees a deer stands motionless and then goes plunging away with a slow grace, the dusk-dim shape moving as if through rippled water.

This production base is a succession of clearings strung together by paths like a necklace. We stop at the first one, the sea-pool,

where there is a tiny hut no bigger than a corn crib. There are five of us, Celia and I and three escorts, but we crowd inside with our packs and cook a meager supper in a makeshift fireplace. We are crowded and a bit hungry after eating and we have the indefinite sensation that comes with flight, but we are somehow happy and cozy jammed in there, and we sing, the moving songs of the Huks that have marching and battle in them. I step out once and see the incredible mass of stars above the open clearing.

But in the morning there is rain. We awake to a grey dawn, with mist, the white fingers of mist and rain trailing across the forest walls. We have a little breakfast, merely of some boiled rice, and move off in the dim wet daylight to the next clearing, which is our assembly point.

There are a hundred or more of us, drawing together from huts scattered about the clearings. Our line forms on an open slope where trees have been newly-cut and have been half-burned away for planting. Single-file, it stretches over the slope with both its ends extending into the dripping trees. Standing there hunched in the rain, the line has the look of all bands of refugees that ever have been in history—bedraggled, stooped in the rain, wearing every variety of mixed garb, some with hats and some without, some with rubber shoes, others barefooted, men and the slacks-clad women wearing cuffs tucked in socks, the enormous packs like monstrous tumors on the back covered with *anahaw* capes, lengths of canvas or ponchos, pots and utensils hanging everywhere down along the line, rifles and carbines carried barrel-down and dripping. Commanders of the march run down beside the line, feet sinking in ooze, pistol holsters slapping soggily, shouting for a report from the household heads. The cry of Roll! comes out of the mist and we start, slipping and sliding on the wet slope.

It is pouring rain now and the forest is no cover. Every leaf and branch is a surface or a pocket for water, spilling off at a touch, and every seam in the bark of a tree has a runnel to flow up a sleeve. Bits of bark and the powdering of wood borers are mixed with the rainwater and cover our bodies. Celia and I have plastic raincoats, fine for the streets of a city, but here they are impediments, catching on every twig, so finally we strip them off

and merely tie them over our packs. In a few moments we are wet through. The rain smears and fogs my glasses and I streak them further with my muddy fingers, trying to see. Everywhere there is the multitudinous noise from the rain on leaves.

The line winds torturously all morning up and down steep hillsides where the runoff flows in streams. The trail is a slick strip of ooze, made liquid and footholdless by those who go ahead. It is slow exhausting travel. I haul myself upward by clutching at roots and grass that snaps, and going down I fall and slide for 50 feet to end up painfully against trees or rocks. The thick mud upon shoes and clothing makes a footstep arduous.

Toward noon there is a dull roar ahead, heard through rain and wind. A river is there somewhere, the roar eminating from its gorge. We come at last to a long deep slope down into the gorge, a precipitous plunging trail on which a fall is perilous. I sit in the mud and inch my way down, hanging to the trees. Then through a screen of brush to the riverside.

The riverside and the riverbed are boulder-strewn, where great rocks have been rolled down by rains like this, and the rain-fed water foams over them. It is difficult to cross but cross we must, the swift current boiling to the waist and tearing at legs. Wind drives the rain down the gorge in grey sheets that lash at our bent backs and mist half-obscures the opposite side of the river. We have finally to form a human chain across the river, the sturdier men anchoring themselves to rocks and passing the others hand to hand, a long and difficult process. We stumble ashore and slump down amid the boulders on the far side, indifferent to the rain pouring upon us.

Here we stop to eat. It seems impossible that a fire can be started in this wholly wet place, but it is done, under ponchos, with sticks found under rocks. We eat the hot rice hurriedly, the rain turning it cold and soupy in a plate. As we do so our teeth chatter from the cold wind upon our wet bodies.

There is little time to wait or to rest, for we have an afternoon of the same kind of travel ahead of us. We climb out of the gorge, back to the mud again. After a time it seems that we are on a treadmill, the upward climb to the ridge, the downward climb to the ravine, and always the same forest, the same stolid

trees that blur into mist and rain a few feet from the trail, the same mud. The *limatik* wriggle there and we are always pulling them mechanically from our legs. The day shades into afternoon and the rain has a lulling sound, making the eyes in the tired head droop and the muscles in the moving limbs lax. I do not think of a destination; I think only of the next spot to place a foot.

Half asleep on our feet, after eight hours we splash across a little stream and part some foliage and we are in the open where the rain falls unhindered on our faces, and people come out with calls of greeting from huts at the production base and relieve us of our burdens, and take us in to warm hearths, food, and sleep.

And we all have rooms with a view.

40.

Bagong Silang. New Birth. That is the name that its people have given to this production base. All Huks, I conclude, are dreamers and poets.

No more appropriate name could have been given to this lovely spot, cut like a carving into jade between the green forested hills. A wide brawling stream makes a deep U-turn here, and in its loop and on its outer banks the land is flat and rich and open like a tiny valley. High hills lift steeply from it, massed with foliage. Rice is planted here, already tall and waving, and *cassava, camote, calabasa,* tomatoes, tobacco.

After rain, the sky is clear and blue, and brooding peace is over Bagong Silang. Smoke plumes up in the rich sunlight from huts that could be log cabins at the rim of the clearing. They might be homes of settlers in the wilderness in the Boone days of Kentucky. And those men going up the trail to forest could be frontiersmen with long rifles out for game. It is exactly what they are doing, for those are comrades assigned to hunt for deer to replenish our scanty larder. Scouts, too, are watching for traces of those who might be trailing us.

The production base has blossomed out with a new growth,

patches of color and bits of white, all of our belongings spread to dry in the sun. It was miserable yesterday in the rain and mud, but after rain there is sun and after journeys there are huts. We lie in the sun ourselves and soak up renewal from the warmth and soil.

Down by the stream a woman of the production base is catching fish with a bent pin on a piece of string tied to a stick, small *bia* that flicker silvery in the sun. Dip, quick tug, and a silver flash. Dip, quick tug, and a silver flash. There is an easy rhythm to it.

Celia and I look for food, too, plucking *camote* leaves for supper, the tender *talbos* at the tips of vines. Now and then we lift our heads to look out over the clearing, at the stream sparkling in the sun, at the quiet yellow light upon the green.

One does not mind a little hunger in the midst of such beauty.

41.

Now that we have moved from our base, we have the task of relocating ourselves. Bagong Silang is a pleasant place, but it is not feasible for a large camp, being far from towns, with those posts in reach incapable of supplying many people.

Advance parties, taking most of our security personnel, who double as construction workers, continue on south, to set up camps within range of markets in Cavinti and Luisiana towns. Our ED group will stay at Bagong Silang, since we have a school scheduled that we do not want to interrupt, the students arriving even in the middle of a government operation, filtered through their cordons. It is a happy decision, to teach and study in the place of New Birth.

From here our supply units travel eastward, to the coastal barrios of Mauban, on the sea. Let the enemy enjoy themselves in the empty camps near Longos.

We are on a chessboard. Checked at one point, move to other squares.

42.

Low sky of bluish-black is over Bagong Silang. We stay close to huts, awaiting rain. Then dull sounds rumble to the north.

We come out of huts and look at each other. Brief stuttering crackles follow on the booms. Thunder? Lightning? It is neither. It is bombing and strafing. The enemy is using planes.

All afternoon the reverberations and the ripping of machine-gun fire come at intervals, now near and loud, now faint and distant. What are they hitting? The Big House site? Production bases? The FCs? We walk up and down under the trees, away from the open, wondering what to use for shelter if the planes come here. There are trees with great roots, like entrenchments. We tell each other that the forest is fortified.

Then, just before sunset, two planes appear swiftly over the rim of a hill and dip down into the hollow of Bagong Silang. They are P-51's, the sharp-snouted fighters from World War II days, now part of American military aid to the Philippine Air Force. In the American Fifth Air Force, to which I was attached during the war, we used to love the sight of the P-51, built to fight fascists in a war, we thought, to preserve freedom. Now the same planes are used against people who struggle for freedom. I watch bitterly the planes that I loved on their errand of terror. I think of the workers in the American factories who made them. Was it for a day like this?

Round and round the rim of our clearing they fly, almost touching the forest wall, the roar of their engines making the trees tremble. They are so close to us that we can see the heads of the pilots leaning and peering for us, and the wicked bombs poised under the wings. Perhaps the dark clouds and the late hour make visibility difficult, for they do not drop their loads. But there is the shattering racket of machine-gun fire and we taste earth and the bark of roots as we go flat. It is random fire, sprayed into the trees. Then the planes lift abruptly and vanish over the ridge. The sound of the engines diminishes and dies.

We come out and stand uncertainly in the clearing, listening.

43.

Patrols are back, covered with mud and weary. They have been stalking the PCs in the forest. The enemy have captured our first camp, long evacuated, on its set of ridges. Our patrols lay in the forest within a few yards of them and watched them cook and eat in our old huts and then burn the camp before leaving. All is ash there now. Our comrades were angered by it and wanted to open fire, but they had orders not to reveal themselves.

The air attack reached rather deeper into the forest. The Big House was strafed but not really damaged. Two production bases were bombed, but the bombs missed and fell among the trees. Our people easily evaded the attack. The enemy on foot did not go that far. They contented themselves with burning the old camp and then returned to the town.

We are two moves ahead of them.

44.

Up on a shelf on a hill overlooking the production base we build our new school. The students themselves, now all arrived, go to work with bolos and with bare hands, and in three days it is ready. Completed, it is not much more than an oversized lean-to, with one wall at the back, and the sides and the front all open. A fireplace is at one end of a long platform that has very irregular and knotty flooring, and just in front of the platform, so that students can roll out of blankets and into them, are rows of logs for seats. We tack up the same poncho for a blackboard (now cracked and scuffed because it was used as a pack in the recent move) and the school is open.

The students have insisted on having a campus. With rakes made of twigs they have cleaned off the whole shelf of ground until it is as flat as a parade ground under the trees, and here they have their calisthenics early in the morning and stroll about reading like any other undergraduates in the afternoon. A tremendous tree with roots as tall as a man stands across the campus

from the school—its roots have really made this flat shelf possible —and here the students make a nook with seats cut in the roots where they gather to discuss and argue points raised in our class. They are all possessed with an immense eagerness to learn, to develop themselves for the struggle.

I am somewhat humble before these people who are supposed to be my students. They have come here through an enemy cordon, by ways and distances that would make an ordinary student shudder. Because our new supply line is still rather tenuous, the usual ration we try to maintain for our schools has had to be cut drastically. They refuse to be downhearted. On with the school, they say.

These are Huk students:

Jorge Frianeza (George), who has long been wanted and is known to the enemy and has come in disguise by the highway through a score of checkpoints. George is one of the two or three Huks who have been outside of the Philippines, having lived in Chicago in the 1930s and worked as a dishwasher. Two years ago he was a top leader in the Huk movement but was demoted, for errors in policy, to field organizing, which he has done well and faithfully and so is being trained for higher responsibilities again. His only possession outside of the clothes on his back is a heavy jacket which he uses for both blanket and garment. His pillow is a block of wood.

Ignacio Dabu (Cente), has come all the way from Pampanga in Central Luzon by mountain trail, walking for weeks to get here. He could not risk the highway. The mountain trail itself has been risky enough: he and his escort of two men had to fight two encounters with PC patrols en route. He has been a military cadre and is a veteran of innumerable battles.

Miguel David (Peping) has also come from Pampanga by the "military route," over the mountains, a journey of weeks on foot. He has come with one escort. Peping's right arm has been shattered by a string of bullets from an automatic weapon during a raid by PCs on a camp and hangs grotesquely and useless; he has learned to write with his left hand. He is the head of the ED of Reco 2.

Amando del Castillo (Alunan), son of Mateo del Castillo who was president of the National Peasants Union (PKM), has come

up from the Visayan island of Panay. He has come the farthest, over land and sea by the "legal route" though much wanted, slipping through astonishing dangers to get to this hut in the forest.

There are others, too: Algo, Luz, his wife, and Waldo, from the Reco 4 area in Southern Luzon. They have not had to travel so far but all of them have been in the mountains since 1942. Waldo was a companion in the early 1930s of Asedillo, the legendary labor leader from Longos who took to the mountains when charged with sedition in a strike and fought off the whole Constabulary for months until they killed him and stuck his head on a pole in the town plaza of Cavinti.

Sun is on our campus, filtered through the trees, throwing leaf-shadow over the chalked phrases on the poncho. Comes wind, comes rain, blowing spray in upon the students. Mud is underfoot where we walk up and down in lecturing. What is weather? What is distance? hunger? discomfort? We go on, teaching and learning in the forest.

45.

A day of rest. Celia and I go off together, finding our way through trees where there is no trail, going upstream from the production base. We come through leaf-screen to the riverbank, holding hands, hesitantly, looking to left and right, like fawns come to drink.

Here the stream in times of overflow has made a little beach of white stones that gleam in the sun. We blink, creatures of the shade, at the unexpected glare, then take off our shoes and walk upon it, the stones hot underfoot.

This is the first time that we have been alone in all these months. There is no privacy in a camp, where we sleep with others like one giant body upon a floor, and where we move always in the vision of others. Now we have found a room of our own in the forest, a green wall of trees on either side, a blue ceiling, a white floor with a strip of blue carpet running upon it.

We take off our clothes and are strangely pale, like the growth

under leaf mold on the forest floor. The sun is richly warm upon our backs. We lower ourselves into a deep cold pool where the current has worn a smooth basin in the rock bottom. Celia sits there, back to the current, with her legs straight out, the sunlight on the water dimpling them as they waver and ripple liquidly. We splash in the water and our laughter echoes along the forest wall.

Afterwards we sit upon a large rock to dry and Celia combs out her long black hair that has little red tints in it found by the sun. We have a single can of meat that we have saved, half-guiltily, for a moment like this, and we open it and eat it with our fingers, a feast, pushing back the thought that comes, Have we the right to this?

We sit closely, talking quietly of our lives together.

It is not long. The shadows of the trees creep over the beach toward us, reclaiming us. Our afternoon is over. We rise and go, back into the forest and affairs of all.

46.

Letters and newspapers arrive from Manila, voices from the open world. We see the courier climbing up from the production base and go out to meet her by the great tree, sitting on its roots and tearing open the little parcels eagerly. We are anxious to know of events and of the welfare of our comrades.

The reports swirl up to us from the pages. Since August 26 there has been panic in the administration of Quirino. A private launch waits in the Pasig River by Malacanang Palace, ready to evacuate the president and his family if the Huks enter Manila. In the Philippine army, officers at the level of major and colonel are contacting the movement, preparing to make a switch if the deterioration continues. Desertions from the rank and file of the army to the Huks are becoming a steady trickle.

These are straws, but not the only straws. There is much coming and going of American missions in Manila, too. The Bell Mission, to make a survey of economic aid to shore up the crumbling government and to advocate what reforms to make to

placate the people. The Melby Mission, to assess the amount of American military aid that is needed to cope with the internal affairs of the Filipino people. A top intelligence mission of former American OSS officers to train and to advise the military intelligence service of the Philippine army. These are the reflex actions when imperialism is in a crisis.

Already the shakeups have begun. Out goes the Defense Secretary, Kangleon. In comes a man picked by the Joint U.S. Military Advisory Group, Ramon Magsaysay.

The enemy must be kept off balance as they try to strengthen themselves; the initiative must remain ours. Therefore, says the Secretariat, on November 7 coordinated large-scale attacks will be made by all Regional Commands, including an attack on the suburbs of Manila. Prepare all commands. Prepare leaflets and pamphlets for the "dress rehearsal."

We look up from the words with our minds whirling. It is almost a shock to see the forest standing there, motionless and calm, with the imperturbability of centuries.

47.

There are too many trails leading into Bagong Silang: supply routes, courier routes, the trails of military units, the hunting paths. The production base people complain, How can we fulfill our duties if you will expose us? They are right. We have been careless in our security measures. It is decided that we will move the school.

An hour's journey down the stream is an old abandoned site, where an FC once was based. There we go, walking in the rocky water to avoid leaving a trail. Our students were school-builders; now they are a transport corps. They joke along the route about what they are learning in this class.

Our new location is an odd mixture of the uncomfortable and the beautiful. Behind the trees that border the stream is a gentle rise that is all open, one of many such patches that dot the mountains, perhaps the places of old primitive *kaingins,* covered over with *cogon* grass as tall as a man's head. Above this the forest

rise is steep, and here, hidden, in a crescent that rims the *cogon,* we occupy huts. Our schoolhouse, where Celia and I live with some of the students, straddles a knife-like ridge so steep that we have to cling to branches when we step outside of it. On one side, in a deep ravine, is a little creek; on the other side we can look out over the open rise where the *cogon* bends and ripples in the sun like a field of wheat.

One of our students has the vision of an engineer. He constructs a lengthy aqueduct of palm logs, which have a pulpy interior easily chopped out, running from a waterfall of the creek above us onto our *batalan.* So we have running water in our hut.

48.

October 1950

Hunger in the forest is a hard and mocking thing.

All about is frantic growth, tree and bush, plant and vine, drawing nourishment from the rich rain and from the fecund earth. And out of all the proliferating leaf and the multiplying branch, none of it is nourishing to man. Hungry men can look upon luxuriating foliage and go mad.

We are hungry. The enemy has cut the supply line again, raiding posts. Our squad *balutan* must go far down along the mountains to a distant town. After they depart, typhoons sweep across the Sierra Madre, dropping their tonnage of water, and all rivulets turn into deep rivers. The creek in the ravine beside us foams up in minutes to the corner posts of our hut, yellow and frothing with debris. There are many large rivers for our men to cross, with unfordable water.

Days go by and the rain falls and falls. Our food runs out.

At first we cut the ration in half and try to supplement with *ubod.* But soon all the *ubod* as far as our comrades can travel in this weather is gone. They come in sodden and exhausted, after many hours, with one or two small pieces. All we have is rice, a little knot of it in the corner of a sack. We revert to *lugaw,* the thin porridge that is mostly water.

The rain batters the hut with a sound so loud that we have to

raise our voices to be heard. Outside we cannot see across the *cogon,* the grey curtain hanging there.

We have a meeting of the student body of our school. Shall we continue or shall we suspend the classes? There is little discussion. Continue, they say. We expect hardships in a revolution.

The classes go on. Some of the students have headaches and they are too weak to sit up all day; they lie down on the log seats, listening to lectures. We eat *lugaw* twice a day, then once a day, and then it is gone and we have nothing. At night we all lie huddled together for warmth in the cold damp hut where nothing will dry and the rain blows in continually. In the morning it is an effort to rise.

Standing before the class, after days without eating, I become dizzy seeking for the words to speak. When I can no longer stand without feeling faint, I sit down and slowly talk. I watch Celia with her gaunt look lecturing and even sounding cheerful.

The revolution goes on, the students keep saying, the revolution goes on.

And the day comes when the rivers go down, and our comrades come in at last, dragging themselves up the slope with their clothes clinging soggily and the wet hair plastered to their heads, and the food on their backs is wet, too, but we eat it joyously, and the classes go on.

And the day comes when we graduate our students and we send them forth, proud and eager.

And the revolution goes on.

49.

At times, oppressed by the dark of a storm in the hut, I step outside, and, clinging to bush and low limb on the steep rise, I go upward a little way and look out over the clearing toward the stream below. There are two palm trees there, elevated slimly over the other growth. In the storm they bend and their long fronds are shaken like hair upon the wind.

Wind gusts and the driven pillars of rain strike at the two

trees and they go far over in a bow until it seems that their slenderness will break. Or they shudder and whip about in the twisted air. But always they come back again, into the same upright posture, returning with a casual grace.

Every day I go out and watch the two trees. It is as if they are telling me how to survive.

50.

A day of sun and warm wind. Celia and I walk up along the slope above our hut. The trees are black from rain and have a clean smell. Wind rubs the sunny *cogon* below in long streaks, like fingers on velvet. It tugs at our clothes and rattles all the the leaves with an immense chatter.

Higher up, on a terrace of the slope, we come upon an empty hut. Some of our students lived here, and have now gone after the end of the school. The hut has the vacant, lost look of abandoned homes. The wind lifts old ashes on the fireplace. A torn *banig,* left behind, flutters its broken strands. Scraps of paper move listlessly under the floor. A part of the *anahaw* roof already flaps untied.

Above the hut a great tree throws out its branches like arms, leaning from the slope in a vast reach. There is something of horror in the sight, as if the tree were reaching for the hut. We notice the plants springing up under the floor, and the wind that tears at all the apertures of the hut.

All the features of the forest seem impatient to reclaim that place where people have been. There is something terrible in the relentless press of it, and we are uneasy and go away from there.

51.

Supper is over and we are sitting crosslegged around our tiny lamp, reading, when there is the sound of hurrying footsteps in the mud outside. We look up and Reg is in the doorway, the

canvas raincape thrown over his shoulders dotted with the dark spots of rain. The lamp throws upflung shadows over his face, highlighting the solemn mouth and the strain at the jaw.

Comrades, he says, I have bad news, very bad news. It came on the radio a few minutes ago.

We continue to sit there, waiting.

All of our leading comrades in the city have been arrested.

We continue to look at him, blankly. All? we say.

All, he repeats. There were mass raids. They were caught in different houses in a simultaneous operation. The names were all given and there can be no doubt. The Secretariat of the movement is in the hands of the enemy, and so are most of our city cadres. They claim to have hundreds of documents, and some of them were quoted. They have our whole tactical plan and our details of organization.

It is the worst possible news, for the whole direction of the struggle was in the hands of those arrested.

We are all upon our feet, talking, trying to place the blame, to estimate the errors and the damage. It was a traitor. It must have been a traitor. It was carelessness. How could they be so careless with so much at stake? Security! Who was in charge of security? It's a disaster. Let's wait until we get the details before we leap to conclusions.

Ours is the feeling that divers have when their air hoses are cut deep down in the jagged caverned coral reefs, or that men have in mines when the tunnel behind them caves in and the choking dust rushes through the dark hole underground.

After a time there is nothing left to say. Reg leaves for his own hut, his shoulders bent to the rain, and to winds. It is awkward for us to be standing, and one by one we sit down.

I have a book in my pack, a copy of Fadeyev's magnificent novel, *The Nineteen,* about the Siberian guerrillas in the Wars of Intervention, who struggle to break through an enemy cordon and of whom only 19 finally remain to carry on. We sit in a circle, around our little lamp in the forest, and I read it aloud, and the quiet courage in the book comes out and fills the corners of the little room.

52.

Our movement is not a mortal creature with a head, that dies when severed at a neck. It is a living organism that grows and multiplies, by fusion and by fission, closing over its wounds and continually reshaping itself.

It is true that we have leaders, but who are the leaders of our movement? They are not carvers of wood, who whittle out a figure, give it limbs, and jiggle it about on strings. The movement is not a carving of wood; it is a living plant that puts out branches, and fruit; pluck its fruit and it grows others. Our leaders are the fruit of a plant whose seed was among the people.

The people are a rich soil. What does not grow among the people? And in this climate of heat that is a revolutionary period will not the fruits be in profusion?

When the seed has sprouted and the impulse of life is there, nothing can reverse it. If a leader should take it into his head to stand with outstretched arms and shout, Stop! You have grown enough! That is all there should be!—the movement would cast him aside and go its way. There are leaders who falter; there are leaders who betray. They do not stop movements. There are leaders who die in the struggle, and they become the remembered heroes of the people. There are leaders who are arrested and imprisoned, and from their very cells they become martyrs and symbols that feed the growth of a movement.

No, we do not lie down and die. We fill the empty places of those who have gone, and we look to our growth.

53.

November 1950

Reports come in from all along the Sierra Madre. The enemy is becoming more aggressive.

Spies are everywhere in the towns, and patrols are often in the forest now, where once they never came. Our FCs ambush them,

shoot up their vehicles on the roads, make death traps of mountain paths, but the patrols do not stop. They know our plans now; they know roughly our dispositions. And they have power.

The docks of Manila are crammed with great crates of military equipment, American military aid rushed to the Philippines, and trucks shuttle endlessly from army bases, bringing it to the new army that the Joint U.S. Military Advisory Group (the JUSMAG) is creating to fight the Huks. The Constabulary, discredited and hated and incapable, is no longer the instrument used against the people. The Philippine army, put on a war footing, has been thrown into the field, and American military specialists from Greece and from Korea, where imperialism has had the experience of suppressing people's movements, are organizing and training it.

The Philippine army has been reorganized by these professional interventionists into Battalion Combat Teams, each assigned to a sector where the Huks are known to be, groups of them clustered in areas of Huk strength. The BCTs are 1,200-man units, independent fighting teams, each with its infantry and artillery and service companies, with its intelligence and psychological warfare teams, heavy with fire power based on an abundance of automatic weapons. They are equipped from helmet to shoes, from howitzers to pistols, from tanks to jeeps, by American military aid.

There are being organized 28 BCTs. These are in addition to the normal headquarters, service, and supply units of a standing army and a vast intelligence apparatus that bring total Philippine army forces up to 54,000 men. To these are added the Philippine air force and the Philippine navy of coastal patrol boats, both fully committed to the anti-Huk campaign. A Constabulary force of 8,000 continues to guard roads and towns. This does not include the 20,000–30,000 civilian guards hired and paid by the landlords, the town police forces, and the innumerable agents hired and armed by senators, congressmen, and the various government departments, all employed against the Huks and to terrorize the people.

All told, there are 100,000 or more government armed forces or suppressive elements being flung against the Huks, a ratio of

perhaps ten of them to one Huk. That is the measure of our challenge to imperialism and its allies.

As for us, with the arrest of leaders in Manila and with the seizure of documents in their possession, we are in the position of troops caught by a flank attack while in movement. Our major operation for November 7 is completely known and must be discarded. A broad conference of the movement's leadership, scheduled for the near future to map the tactics of the decisive period of the struggle, must be reset and prepared for by an entirely new set of leaders, who are now scattered from one end of the country to the other. All we can do in the meantime is to tighten our security, to prepare for mobility, and to shadowbox with the enemy's offensive.

54.

We awake one morning to the sound of planes. They are small observation planes, combing the forest in the area downstream, in the direction of the nearest FC. They leave, but at noon the fighters are there, bombing and strafing. They circle in a long arc that carries them over our camp and we hear the long whine of the following bomb run and the rumbling boom that comes after.

In mid-afternoon a courier is up from the nearest FC, leaping from rock to rock in the stream, his shirt out and flying behind him. Army troops have captured the forward post of the FC in the forest, and the FC will evacuate its camp. The Huk commander in the district is urging us to move, too, to avoid possible surprise. It is a little late in the day to be moving, and we know that the enemy has the habit of making bivouac in the afternoon, so we merely pack and we sleep that night in the huts amid the litter of our baggage.

At dawn we assemble by the security post hut down by the stream, 27 men and five women, plus the two small girl children of Reg and his wife. There is no tarrying. The line is formed quickly, advance guard and rear guard, security forces distributed along the line to guard political cadres. We leave at once, walk-

ing in a sidestream that winds south, in which no trail will be left.

It is a strange world into which we wander. The stream meanders sluggishly over flat and swamp land. Festoons of moss and parasitic vines thicken the foliage, deadening light and sound. Where the sun penetrates, it forms upon the stagnant water little coins that have the color of iron oxide. Strange big-leaved plants of smooth green grow into the water, and roots send up knees. We seem to have moved backward into time, to a primeval place. Behind us the sound of planes begins again, the bombing and the machine-gun fire, an odd unreal echo here in a timeless world. Planes, too, are hunting again, and they pass low above us, and we duck in ancient slime as if from wings of pterodactyles.

On the surface of the dark water around us little circles begin, widening and vanishing and coming again. Rain. It is welcome because it blinds the eyes that fly above us, but it means misery. In a few minutes a downpour boils the water at our knees. We eat at noon in rain, shielding the cold chunks of pre-cooked rice and the gelid *mongo* unsuccessfully.

Our route is south toward the new campsites that our comrades went ahead to build a month ago. To get there, the only feasible route is a *bankero*'s trail, used by lowland men to haul out logs that are then hollowed to make the rude *bankas,* the river boats of the barrio people. Carabaos are used to drag the logs, and over time they have made a deep trench down through the forest. It is filled with mud to make a slick riding surface and this the rain has churned into a yellow ooze. It is a river of ooze twisting through the trees. This is the trail that we follow.

All afternoon we follow this devil's highway, plunging into potholes that are waist-deep. In an hour's time we are exhausted, covered from head to foot with the yellow ooze, pack and all. No one speaks; we breathe through open mouth in long shallow breaths. If we slip into a hole, we pull ourselves out slowly on roots, with a sucking sound. The rain drums monotonously in the forest and we hold our faces up to it for coolness. Celia is so weary that she merely holds onto the back of my pack and I pull her along, her feet dragging in the mud. I hardly know where I am going myself, my glasses covered with mud and rain.

The grey rain and the greying light of dusk. The trees into which I blunder and feel no pain. The fall. The rise. The weariness that is akin to sleep. The twilight coming like the blurring of sight. The mud, and the rain. On what circle of hell are we doomed to wander?

We are stumbling in the dark, knowing the trail only by its depth of ooze. Strange red shadows pulse up in the forest ahead, figments of a fevered dream. Then we abruptly curve down a slope to a river, into the reddish glow.

Across the river a great fire blazes on the bank, leaping shadows of the flames lighting up the towering wall of the forest in the background. The black night and the red fire. Figures move about the fire and over there are huts. Voices call indistinctly over the river sound, James Joyce's washerwomen in the twilight by the River Liffy. We walk dreamily into the dark water, wading into the swirls of red reflected on the surface, as if through a river of lava. Hands come out of the dark to assist us up on the other side.

This is only an outpost; there are few huts here and they are very small. Nevertheless, we crowd into them out of the rain, too tired to cook supper, and sleep in our wet muddy clothes, with arms and legs interwoven like worms. When we crawl out in the morning our muscles are like leather that has hardened after soaking.

In the wind-driven dawn, in the rain, we climb to a bluff above the river, the assembly point for our group. One of our households is late, very late, and we stand there, mutely waiting under the dripping trees. A wind from over the highlands blows the rain in cold lances upon our bodies, and the sound of the wind in the trees pierces like the rain.

Suddenly, in the midst of misery, I am lighthearted.

There is a certain point, known to troops in trenches and in the mud of drawnout battlegrounds, where all misery ceases to matter and one becomes a fellow to discomfort. In the ease of cities, for the sheltered man, the body and the mind are betrayed to comfort and the spirit is seduced. For the man of purpose, for the revolutionary especially, this is a dangerous condition, for ease then becomes a necessity. Either one is able to pass beyond such

a point, and to gain an indifference to it, or he is lost to his purpose. But once that point has been passed, and one does not care, one is not likely to be bothered by it again.

Here, in this guerrilla struggle of the Huks, the point is a very far one indeed to go beyond, for it is beyond even the misery of the ordinary battlefield. In a regular army, where one is exposed to hardship, the hardship is of a limited nature, for one always knows that a time will come when he will be relieved and will go behind lines to comfort; if he misses a meal or has rations that are poor he knows that great forces behind him will supply him soon and that it is only for a time that he knows denial. That is true of the enemy whom we now flee, who are in the forest for a few days and then go back to barracks, to beds, and to mess halls. But for us it is a permanent way of life, the hardship and the hunger. Either we become the master of it, or we break; so we go beyond it, beyond the meaning of it.

Today I have reached full indifference, and out of indifference there proceeds, not stupor, but cheerfulness, for that is the way of this struggle. The late household comes, arriving in rain. We stride off on the trail southward. The pack is light, and all the songs of the movement are in my mind.

The way itself is less arduous. We are on long curved slopes where the trees have more space between them and not so much of underbrush, great descending halls filled with columns that are half misted in rain. Then, as if to match my mood, the rain withdraws, as if some upper indrawn breath had sucked it away with its mist, and sunlight cautiously enters the wet colonnades, touching all the shaken drops on leaves like a note that trembles on a string.

At noon we come out of thinning forest into an open grassy valley, the place called Mayapis. We walk amazingly upon the open face of the world. Little round dumpling hills of green, without a tree upon them, border a flat corridor threaded by a very blue stream that is so cold that it numbs our feet. I look at our line of march, walking in the open, figures humped under baggage, raggedly spaced, a safari trudging on to what new undiscovered lands for men? It is the first time that I have seen us all out of shadow, free of the cupped hand of the forest.

An enemy force, lying at the fringe of forest, could slaughter us here in the open, under the lovely sky, so we hurry soon beneath the lid of foliage again.

After light and air, dark cavernous trails. All afternoon we push our way into dense jungle growth, trees that smell of decay and fronded plants through which we plunge up to our armpits, our feet feeling their way in mud that never dries, never touched by sun. I keep turning to retain Celia in my sight, seeing only her head and shoulders, the elbows lifted, the set weary face like a flower floating toward me on the dim green sea of fronds.

We are in a dark ravine where water trickles with an oily flow when we hear ahead a sound, regular, thumping, like a tight drum beaten with the heel of the hand. Thud. Thud. Thud. What is this unknown sound in the forest? Is it friend or enemy? Thud. Thud. Then we know. It is a *lusong,* the scooped-out butt of a log in which rice with the hulls upon it is pounded with a long wooden pestle. Comrades must be there. We get up, renewed, to hurry on, come up out of dank vegetation to a little plateau in the evening where there is a production base.

Production base. The trail along the tall cassava. Calls of welcome. Empty waiting huts for transient HMBs. The bath by flashlight in the rocky stream. The fire in the hut, and the heat against the squatting limbs and on the nodding face, and the sleep-song of the rice boiling in the swaying pot, and the hot food, and the hard log sleeping platform, not as hard as sleep.

55.

December 1950

We have come to a dark part of the forest, in a dreary time of the year. Here our huts are shut away from each other by dense undergrowth that hides the light. The trees are scabrous and black with age and fallen trunks lie about that break with a hollow sound when one climbs over them, leaving a litter of crumbled debris made by insect hordes. Smooth boles, too, lift above

the tangled floor and send down long showers of roots, great obscene things that protrude like phalli. Thick heavily-thorned vines writhe from tree to ground and back to tree, interwoven with mats of creepers. I hack endlessly at their screen with a bolo, to let in the sun.

But there is no sun. Through foliage sky is grey and featureless and lets down its skeins of rain. There are late dawns and an early dark. And it is damply cold. We hunch over our work with blankets around us, sitting cross-legged on the floor.

To wash we go down a steep incline, stepping carefully on little notches in the bank where twigs have been set, to where a stream has widened into a great still pool. It is as dark as a tarn, the water black and silent under festooned trees. When I lean over it my face swims up to me disembodied out of the murky depths.

Behind our hut is an ancient leaning tree, covered with the pustules of decay. Some of its limbs have broken off, the hollow stumps lifted in a mute agony. It leans so far, there above us, that one would think that it is in the very act of falling. It haunts us, that tree. I dream of it falling upon us and smothering us in its black limbs and in its crawling moist dust.

56.

Each morning a far sound brings me out of the hut to stand where foliage parts and permits a glimpse of sky. The distant hum grows to clamor in the air and a shadow flickers on the leaf screen until directly overhead I see the full body of the plane soaring there, the most beautiful of machines, above the wilderness.

We are under the daily route flown by the Philippine Air Lines, and I always take that moment to watch the plane. It is an evanescent link to the open world, and a moment of free beauty in the tangled smother of the forest.

Who rides there, freely, in the upper air? Indolent matrons

from the sugar haciendas of Negros, up to Manila for expensive shopping? Banking agents on inspection tours of clients and borrowers? Chinese merchants out to corner markets on lumber and rice? Provincial army commanders on assignment in the anti-Huk campaign? Representatives of American oil companies, textile firms, packaged food corporations, making market surveys? Politicians home to mend fences with the district leaders? The tycoon, the landlord, the archbishop, the army officer, the foreign investor, the corrupt politician? The proud, the powerful, and the parasitic.

In a moment they travel farther in clean grace than we can walk in a tortured week. The forest to them is a piece of ugly terrain, to get over and beyond as quickly as possible. Who of them look down and think of it as a green lid upon endurance, hunger, and suffering?

But it is not the passengers for whom I care. It is the plane itself, sleek and lovely in the air, that can carry and will carry the peasant as well as the profiteer.

The shape is gone, the shadow runs down through the forest in grand impervious flight, the sound dwindles and ends. I go back into the still, rooted hut, in the silent, primitive place.

57.

There was a forest in my youth, seen imaginatively through windows of a high school English class. The Forest of Arden, where books were in the running brooks and good in everything. There Orlando hung his verses on the bough, and his fair Rosalind would find them. Green foliage was a screen for absurd misunderstandings, and the groves were scenes of tender reconciliation.

But for us the brooks are the silent paths, and there is no good here. Sometimes, when we evacuate a site, we, too, leave leaflets pinned on the trees, but they are appeals to army troops to turn their guns on their officers and to come over to us. No simple misunderstanding is here but deadly enmity in an uncompromising

drama, and when the protagonists meet, the screen is shattered with their gunfire, and death litters the glades.

Another part of the forest.

58.

Our hut is an office in the forest.

I sit here and think of the lives of revolutionaries in cities of the western world. They rise in their apartments to a leisurely breakfast, reading the morning paper delivered at the door, then ride the subway or the bus to an office building where the elevators have a smooth and rich hum, where the offices have venetian blinds and telephones, where committee meetings can be planned and called in a day, where the mimeograph machines run electrically with a low-toned whirr and the leaflets can be delivered immediately in the street. And afterwards return to a well-cooked supper, to the TV or perhaps to a theater, or a book with the bed-light turned on. Even the underground is upholstered.

But in a country like this he who would be a revolutionary abandons home and lives upon the margin of life. He goes hungry and his family goes hungry. He takes his life in his hands and hangs it upon a thread. His underground is a draughty cave where he guards a little flame on a windy night.

Our office is a hut in the forest.

59.

The rain.

It is the enemy that follows us forever, striking upon all the trails and beseiging every hut. We hear it at night tearing with countless paws at our roof and walls. It turns every campsite into mire, making even a visit to a neighbor, to a latrine, or to the stream for a drink a tedious sucking journey in the mud. We

squat upon the little platform that is our latrine holding a branch of *anahaw* above us while the sailing rain drives under it. We come up from a bath with legs streaked with mud. Our canvas shoes are always wet and clotted with mud; they are disgusting objects left at the doorstep.

After being wet, however, it is easy to dry ourselves, and mud can be cleaned away. It is the slow rotting of the damp that is the real, insidious enemy, the rotting of the clothes, the shoes, and the pack. The clothes that never dry in the rain-marooned hut, the shoes that come apart in shreds on a trail, the pack-straps that break, the musty blankets with the odor of mold. Food, too, molders quickly in the forest and cannot be stocked. Mold forms on the typewriter ribbon, the platen becomes sticky, mimeograph paper dampens and the ink smears upon it and blots through it, rust puts a binding upon all metal parts. In the dugouts that we leave behind the moisture finds a way in and ravages all stored matters. The rain will never be content until we are worn away.

We are most concerned about what happens to our books; we have so few of them and those on theoretical subjects are almost irreplaceable. As it is we have such a lack of books that we have to write and to mimeograph all our own textbooks for our schools. No matter how we wrap them, in clothes, in plastic, in paper, in canvas, the moisture gets in and works its ruin. Our first act after a river and rain soaked march is to take out our books to dry, by a fireplace or in the sun. They are stored in the driest corner of the hut. It does no good. Bindings become unstuck, the cloth of covers falls away from the cardboard, pages loosen and come out tragically in the hand. Painstakingly we sew pages together and when they crumble we copy the book on a typewriter. A book survives among us defiantly, as we do ourselves.

60.

There are arrivals in the forest.

Somewhere in this general area, in the Luisiana, Cavinti, Sampaloc triangle, the enlarged conference of the movement's

leadership will be held. Communications have gone out by courier to every corner of the mountains and to the southern islands, and, gradually, seeping through cordons and by long circuitous routes, leading cadres are filling the camps and the production bases around us, waiting for the time to assemble at a meeting site, waiting for the accumulation of supplies to maintain a large body of people for a period of several weeks. Not only the leaders must be provided for, but also a large number of picked security forces. It is not easy to prepare and to hold a conference of this type, which must be well-guarded and kept absolutely from the knowledge of an alert and active enemy.

On a wet morning, figures come one by one out of the veils of the rain. We recognize the man in advance and we jump out of the hut to greet him. It is Luis Taruc, walking in the mud like a long-legged bird, under a great pack, with an automatic carbine cradled in his arms. We embrace in the rain. We have not seen him for two years. Beneath the familiar peaked cap his face is thin but laughing as ever. He and his group have come from Pampanga, a month's journey over muddy and dangerous mountain trails.

Another figure, like a slim boy in slacks and jacket, comes up beside him. It is his wife, Patty, recently wed, a pharmacy graduate of the University of the Philippines. I take her slender fingers. She is thin and extremely weary from the march, but there is warmth and strength in her grip and I like her at once.

Security men, unshaven, muddy, resembling camels with their ponchos draped over baggage, file in, tough, picked men, carrying BARs and Garands slung downward with the rain dripping off the barrels. Paul Aquino and his brother Felix are there, sons of old Bio Aquino, the Pampanga peasant leader. Another stands quietly and at ease to one side, so casually that I do not recognize for a moment Linda Bie, the most famous of all the Huk military commanders. He grins at the greeting, surprisingly shy for a man of his fighting record, which is easily unique in Philippine history.

Luis and his party jam into the household of Reg Taruc, his brother. It is a boisterous, crowded hut, but they do not mind; they are all Pampangos, and in the regionalistically-minded Philippines people of the same province gravitate together. It is

something that is fought against in the Huk movement but never entirely overcome. Only G.Y., among the leading elements, is largely free of the tendency.

In a few days, one more arrival. It is one to twist the heart in admiration. Jesse Magusig. Jesse had been assigned in Batangas province. In an encounter with the PC he was shot in the head. The bullet paralyzed his entire left side and he was brought secretly into Manila for treatment. Nothing could be done for him. He lay helplessly, hidden in a house, refusing to surrender, although it may have meant a chance of treatment. When the raids and arrests occurred in the city in October, the house where Jesse was staying was on the list. He had a friend among the authorities who sent a message tipping him off. However, there was no one in the house and the messenger did not wait, out of fear, and Jesse had mere minutes to get away. He dragged his paralyzed body into the street by sheer will and managed to hail a taxi. The raiders entered the house as the taxi turned a corner. For a while Jesse hid out with friends, but the city is a hot place and the best of friends become afraid. At last he managed to persuade them to provide him with private transportation to be brought here to the south.

Now he comes. Since he cannot walk he is carried, astride the back of comrades. They have taken turns in carrying him, through rivers, up and down gorges and mountainsides, through dense forest. They stagger from fatigue as they arrive. Hugging his bearer's neck, with his legs locked tightly by the man's arms, Jesse loosens a hand and waves. A smile is on his weary face.

Hi-O, Silver! he calls.

61.

In the middle of 1947, while I was living in Manila as a free-lance writer, arrangements were made for me to go "outside" to collect first-hand material for a book about the Huks. It was then that I first met Luis Taruc. For a month I roamed about in Pampanga province with him, on Mount Arayat, in the Candaba swamp, across rice paddies at night, evading Constabulary patrols.

After I met Luis, my whole concept of a book changed. Instead of writing a history, I wrote his "autobiography," calling it *Born of the People*. I tried to put into that book not only Luis but the Filipino peasantry and the Filipino people in general, struggling to be wholly free of colonialism. For a man like Luis, a leader like Luis, was truly born of the lives and struggles of the peasantry of Pampanga, and I saw him as a symbol.

Smiling, cheerful, determined, ready for hardship and sacrifice, he is the natural revolutionary who comes to struggle from the logic of his class position. And yet it is not he as an individual who is significant, but he as a member of the movement to which he has attached himself. It is his role in a movement that has given him stature and prestige and leadership. Like all of us, he moves with a stream of history, and apart from it he would be as a stranded forest log, carried down from mountains in a flood and left upon a shore to dry. So, too, with all of us.

When I first met Luis in 1947 he was the military commander of the Huks, a role carried over from the Japanese occupation. In 1948 he was replaced in this position by G.Y., and became instead the head of Reco 2, the strongest and most important of all the Recos. A lesser man might have considered it a demotion. It was felt that he needed more political development, which could be gained in the political arm of the struggle.

Now, as we sit by the hearth fire at night in a hut, talking of the problems of our struggle, he stares often into the coals, chin upon his arms over upbent knees. With the arrest of our leading comrades in the city, there are new roles and responsibilities for those who remain. Perhaps he thinks of what his role will be and of how he will carry it, of what new chapters will be added to a book already done.

62.

A message is here by courier from another camp. It is from Jesus Lava, requesting some of us to come to see him for preconference talks. Luis and Reg go ahead; after a day, I follow.

His camp is a good eight-hour journey distant. I leave at the shimmer of dawn, with two security companions. Celia, not feeling well, remains behind, unable to travel. It is our first overnight parting since we were married, and we cling by the still dark side of the hut. The fire on the hearth is a crimson jewel in the grey light behind me.

Since there are only the three of us, we can travel very fast. I am used to moving in the forest and in the mountains now, and there is an exhilaration in our journey, even in the misty rain. In my youth the Indian trail was always a great fascination; now we hurry on forest paths, cross glades, and wade streams, that might have been met by LaSalle, Champlain, and the *coureurs de bois.*

Jesse's campsite is intended to be the location of the forthcoming conference. It is a unique place. Old *kaingeros* have dammed a stream here and created a large pond in a cup between hills. In its center is an island, heavily wooded, linked to the shore on three sides by dilapidated causeways of bamboo that have broken and sagged until they are half under water. We cross on one of them precariously, feeling under the surface with our feet for the bobbing bamboo. The Huks have left them in a half-demolished state for the benefit of enemy aerial observation. The island is a hive of activity. New strong huts are everywhere, hidden in the trees, with others being built, and everywhere is the song of the bolo and of the crosscut saw. A squad *balutan* is unloading at a *bodega* that is stacked with rice, sugar, *mongo,* canned corned beef, flour, lard.

Jesse is at the door of his hut when I arrive. He is wearing a pair of well-used grey pants tucked into heavy socks and an old navy-blue turtle-neck sweater with patches at the elbows. On his features are the invariable wide smile and the crinkled eyes that quickly show amusement behind the gleaming eyeglasses. He leans out to give me a handshake and, although I have not seen him in three difficult years, greets me as if we had parted only the previous weekend. It is a custom in the movement, as if to show that hardships are nothing and that time does not dissolve comradeship.

Jesus (Jesse) Lava is the youngest of the remarkable set of

brothers that have contributed the key leadership to the Philippine national liberation movement. There were, originally, five Lava brothers, sons of a small landowner in Bulacan province. (Bulacan has always been a center of Philippine nationalism, the home of Balagtas, its poet, and of Marcelo H. del Pilar, its outstanding pamphleteer, in the days of the Spaniards.) Vicente Lava, the oldest brother, was a scientist, specializing in coconut derivatives that would aid the growth of a national industry; as General Secretary of the Communist Party, following the killing of Crisanto Evangelista by the Japanese, he was the political leader of the Huks during the Japanese occupation, and died from the effects of guerrilla life in 1947. In 1948, Jose Lava, a younger brother, a lawyer and a bank examiner, became the outstanding political leader of the movement. Jose was the one with whom Celia and I worked in Manila and who proposed that Celia and I go to the mountains to aid the movement; such was my very great respect for him and for his integrity that I agreed without a second thought. When he was arrested in the October raids in Manila, Jesse automatically took his place as the prearranged "second front" leader. Two other Lava brothers, Horacio, an outstanding nationalist economist, and Francisco, a lawyer and member of the Civil Liberties Union, are not in the political or Huk organizations but have a high prestige among intellectuals for their nationalist principles.

Although he has given direction to the Huks since the arrest of his brother, Jesse must wait for the conference to give the final stamp of approval to his assumption of leadership. There is little doubt that he would be chosen, for he stands head and shoulders over all others in capability and he is, besides, much loved in the movement.

For two days I stay with Jesse in his hut, talking of the problems of the struggle. That first night we lie on our *banigs* with the coals of the fireplace dimly lighting the hut with dull red shadows, and empty out our minds to one another. I have the impression that he is trying to feel his way, to assess the people with whom he now must work in the reaching of critical decisions. Jesse has been a doctor, and a good one, and the smiling pleasant manner that he has, even in delivering criticisms or in

driving home sharp points, has something of the bedside practitioner in it. He is also an astute politician and was one of those elected to congress on the Democratic Alliance ticket in 1946.

Other leading cadres have arrived from scattered points in the mountains and the following day we have a long political discussion—Jesse, G.Y., Reg, Luis, Mateo del Castillo, Jorge Frianeza, and myself. The central problem is the tactical line to pursue in the context of the arrest of the movement's leadership and of the counter-offensive by the enemy. There are some sharp exchanges of opinion, especially over the ideas of Jorge Frianeza. He was removed from leadership in 1948 for advocating what was termed an appeasement policy which involved the projection of legal struggle tactics and support by the trade unions of elements in the ruling Liberal Party. He is now pessimistic about the course of the armed struggle in the face of a strong imperialist enemy. In general, however, the main trend of the discussion is in favor of a continuation of the tactics devised by the arrested leadership—expansion, building of the armed forces, and general preparation for the gaining of power. The basic contentions are that the material conditions in the country have not altered and that the subjective revolutionary force, the Huks, has not been defeated or weakened.

Our discussion lasts well into the night, but the next morning Luis, Reg and I get up early and return to our camp where Celia is waiting.

The conference will occur in two weeks.

63.

Christmas 1950

The Pampango hut of the Tarucs is overflowing with people and with gay activity. Every hut in the camp, indeed, is busy with preparations, but the Taruc hut is the central kitchen for our Christmas day festivities, has the most interesting aromas, and therefore has the greatest power of attraction. It is raining, of course, but who cares? The security boys, each carrying a big

green *anahaw* leaf for an umbrella, stand outside the hut singing to the music of a guitar, as verdant a group of carollers as any forest ever saw. Inside, the girl couriers shriek with laughter at the words interpolated by some of the singers, which have little relation to Christmas.

The chief cook is Luis Taruc, in a role that he loves. He has a big white hat made of paper and an old sack for an apron, and he dances between the *kuwalis* and the pots and throws back jokes to keep the girls swaying and bending in mirth. Rain, blown in under the roof, spatters and sizzles in the *kuwali* and clouds of woodsmoke blow back into the crowded hut, where we sit in tiers in the windows and on the edge of the sleeping platform.

Couriers have made special trips to Manila to bring back the ingredients of our dinner—*lumpia, pancit, morcon,* and flour for hotcakes. Hunters have gone out and shot a wild pig, and some of the men have gone far to coconut groves for nuts. A production base has sent over some cassava and this is pounded and cooked with coconut milk and sugar for a sweet. For one day in the year, at least, we can have something besides guerrilla fare.

It is a mad day. Each hut has been included in the fiesta. We all journey from hut to hut in the rain for the numbers of the program. In the Taruc hut there is dinner, with everyone bringing his own plate. In our hut, in the afternoon, there is dancing for the courier girls and the security boys. The guitar twangs, we all stand about clapping to make a tune, and the hut sways wildly and threatens to collapse. Here, too, we have a skit, in which Santa Claus turns out to be a Huk with a BAR. Elsewhere there is *merienda,* with hotcakes, and, in another hut, coffee. We finish in the evening back in the big Taruc hut, for an amateur program of songs and poems in which everyone is required to participate, sweet voice or squeak. The Coleman lamp is lit and there is plenty of rice "coffee" to warm the vocal chords.

In the middle of the evening program, Celia and I slip away and go back to our own hut, picking our way by flashlight from fallen branch to stone across the mud. Our hut is empty, cold and damp, and full of forest shadow in the flashlight beam. We

kneel by the fireplace and brush away the heaped grey ash to find an ember, then blow it gently into flame. We spread our *banig* and our blankets near the fire. Through the echo of rain we hear faintly the sound of the guitar, and the singing. And we bring back our days together through the echoes of the struggle.

64.

New Year 1951

A typhoon is blowing away the dead year, across the heights of the Sierra Madre.

The original banshee, I think, was a storm in the forest. The wind shrieks and moans and plays the agony of its passage on a hundred shrill keys in the trees. All the giants of the forest bend and fling their arms and their hair in a frenzy of pain, crying A-h-h-h-h-h-h-h-h-h, A-h-h-h-h-h-h-h-h-h. We cannot hear ourselves within the hut above the howling in the mad throat of the wind.

Branches rain upon our roof with now and then the shuddering thud of a great limb. It is dangerous to venture outside, for the air is filled with flying debris and flailing fingers that could pluck out an eye. We peer out of our window and see a huge tree bend in the wind and keep going down, down with slow horror, the great roots coming up and snapping like cables until the earth shakes and it lies there with the monstrous viscera of its base exposed.

Into the wind's vacuum is hurtled the rain, lashed helter-skelter in the forest as a madman would swing the nozzle of a high-pressure hose. Or the rain comes in visible ranks, like vast banners on parade, each trailing on our hut with a sound of ripping silk. Or it comes in masses that drop upon us as if from a tipped barrel, stunningly.

We had a New Year's program planned for today, but it is cancelled. We cannot even make a fire: the rain has been driven in and has flooded our fireplace. Rain sprays through the hut. We huddle under blankets or leap up to tie down a section of the roof or to patch a bit of wall that has been ripped away.

Nothing is certain. We lie in the wild eye of the storm, awaiting anything, here at the rim of an ending, indecisive year.

65.

January 1951

Clean wind and broken fragments of the sun are in the forest, drying up the littered avenues. We wipe and dry our things, ready for work again. Then, suddenly, not far away, there is the sound of gunfire.

All households are on alert. In two hours the report is in. A group of our security men on patrol were seen by a large body of government troops across a stream uncomfortably nearby, and were fired upon. Our men fired back, and the enemy retired the way they had come. However, we do not feel secure now and we decide to move our camp. The enemy is smelling out the trails we use. Reg, however, has a bad case of malaria and cannot walk, so we put off moving for a day. In the meantime, half of our security force is sent out to form an ambush at the top of a gorge where the trail is precarious.

At noon I return to the hut after a conference with Luis and Reg. We have been studying a map, choosing a site to which to move. I drop my muddy shoes at the door and we sit about on the floor, eating a lunch of rice and a soup made out of *togue,* the sprouted *mongo.* Belen, our courier, gets up and walks over to the little waist-high cubicle of *anahaw* adjacent to the *batalan,* used for a urinal.

Suddenly she is back across the floor in violent haste, skirts flying, shrieking, PC! PC!

For a moment we do not comprehend what she is saying, but in that moment a deafening outburst of gunfire comes from but a few yards beyond our hut. The enemy is in our camp, firing upon us!

In one single motion, without thought, we are up and out of the hut, running for the river. The pop-pop-pop, bang-bang-bang of automatic weapons fills the air behind us. Bits of shattered bark and twigs hit my shoulders and the ground at my feet is

chopped and spurting. Jorge Frianeza is running at my side, Celia just behind. Jorge is hit; I hear him gasp and see him fall full length forward. Then I am over the bank, plunging down the steep side to the black water of the river below.

Before, I have always climbed carefully down this bank, but now I leap and hurtle downward, in my bare feet, sped by the adrenalin of fear, in a haste to get away from the death at the rear. I vault into the deep wide pool and swim desperately for the other side. It seems to take hours and in my haste I swallow much water. Wet clothes weigh me down. Then my feet strike stones and my hands find the roots of a tree. I haul myself upwards, but after that great burst of energy I am as limp as a flung down rag. I hang there on the roots, dripping, unable to see clearly from my river-streaked glasses, hearing the shooting swell and roar above, waiting for the bullets to rip into my back.

I think, dully, Celia! I have lost Celia! What does it matter for me now? Then slowly, not looking behind for fear of seeing the guns pointed at my back, I pull myself up and over the roots, lie there with sobbing breath, lift shaking cement legs and stand.

Bullets fly overhead in the trees with expiring sighs. I stumble into the forest, vaguely wondering why I live. My glasses are still on and that small blessing gives me hope. Then, through the trees to one side there is a glimmer of red. Celia was wearing a thin red coat. I run that way. It is Celia. Celia. This is more than hope; this is life itself. She, too, is soaked from the river, barefoot, her hair scattered wetly, safe. I hold her briefly.

Together, holding hands, we run through the trees, away from the river, away from the camp, where the shooting goes on and on, now slackening, now breaking out in fury. We meet other figures moving in the forest. Paul Aquino, his brother Felix, and Meding the wife of Felix, who carries a small newly-born baby, than Nanay, the old wife of Alambre, and one security man, Carlos. The eight of us come together and halt finally behind a large tree to assess our situation.

The firing is spasmodic now, a volley, an occasional shot. Now and then a bullet goes lazily by above us. There is no way of telling how many in the camp have fled, have died, or live. We could look for others, but we might run into enemy patrols. Knowing that we are around, the attackers are likely to base themselves at

the camp and comb the forest for us. Our total arms are the carbine of Carlos, for which he has two clips, and the .45 pistol of Paul, which has one clip. We decide to get as far away from the camp as possible, and we strike out at once toward the northeast where we know no trails are that the enemy could use.

I have not noticed before that my feet are bare, but now feeling begins to return to them. In all my life I have never gone barefooted, unless on the soft sand of beaches. But there is little softness on the forest floor, only rocks, roots, and carpets of thorn. My feet are cut and pierced before we have gone a hundred yards. I know that Celia, too, is having difficulty. Nevertheless we hurry.

As we go, little scraps of memory return through the shock of the raid. Reg, who was too sick to walk. Jesse Magusig, who is paralyzed and unable to do more than crawl. Jorge, who was hit and fell. Our belongings. We have lost everything that we own, left behind with our packs in the hut, all of our money, our clothes, my typewriter, our personal papers, my passport. We have nothing but the dirty wet garments on our backs.

For hours we weave about, wading in streams, hopping along stretches on rocks and along fallen logs, to avoid leaving a trail. We are easily startled, and every snapping branch or lizard running over a crisp leaf brings us up taut and half in terror.

In the declining afternoon the forest becomes very still and in the very silence there is menace. The tall trees with their aloof foliage appear to be waiting for awful events. I remember all the secret things about a woods that I knew as a boy in the American countryside—the ghost-talk of breezes in the trees, the bleached dead trunk where crows would perch like ghouls and call forlornly, the rumors of dead men hidden under fallen leaves, the scuttling shadows in the deep recesses. That feeling is here now, where men with guns whom we do not even see stalk us in the forest.

Twilight finds us in a ferny hollow where there is soft mud and a rank odor of decay. Grateful as we are for the screen of night, we have now another concern, a place to rest. It is almost complete darkness when we come out of the squelching mud to an old rock-filled river bed. Along its bank is a shallow cave, into which we crawl. It is not large and the eight of us are closely

crowded in it. Old Nanay groans and weeps a little. What is to become of us? The baby lies without sound in the mother's arms. There is nothing to eat and no water to drink. Paul has a single box of matches and we make a fire at the cave's entrance out of dry driftwood caught among the rocks.

The fire flares in the dark. We look out upon its shadows moving wierdly on the wild and primitive rocks of the river bed. Thus did the neanderthals lie and think of survival.

66.

What is the forest now, a friend or an enemy? In the morning, when we crawl out upon the rocks, it stands there on either side of that dry river of stone, mute and expressionless. It hides us, and is therefore our friend, but it does not feed us, or show us the way to go, or spare us pain. It is, indeed, its indifference that we feel.

Since there is nothing to eat we go directly to the matter of a course to follow, holding a consultation on a flat boulder. We have no idea where we are, but that is less important to us than is the atlas of our struggle, telling us that there are two regions, where the enemy is and where the enemy is not. I remember the features of the map that Reg, Luis and I were studying the day before, particularly the way the main rivers run, and I draw an outline of it on a scrap of damp paper with a charred stick from the fire. Somewhere to the north is a sizable river that flows eastward to the coast, and a grid of streams runs north to that river. North of the big river, somewhere, is Bagong Silang. That is all that I remember.

We will go to Bagong Silang, we decide, as if there were nothing to it. Carlos is a dissenter; he wants to linger in this area, which he claims to know, but he is a minority of one. We will go north. When the sun has risen high enough, we see that the river bed leads north; so we set out immediately down the rude sunlit white highway through the green forest, walking gingerly on the rough stone.

In less than an hour we pass through a declevity in a wall of

stone and are in a canyon where a hurrying stream is turning to rush north. It is as if the forest had relented, and smiled. In the sunlight the blue water is tossing up and catching its diamonds. We lie down and drink the cold clear water. It is our breakfast.

As we rest there, a long ripple of shots occurs behind us, in the direction of the camp. We wade the stream and strike northward.

It is unwise, however, to remain at the riverside. The enemy, too, uses the waterways for roads, and we might encounter them. Therefore we turn aside and climb straight up the canyon wall, to follow the stream from above. It is a hard decision because it means making our way through unpathed forest on rugged terrain, but we do it nevertheless, because we are determined to preserve ourselves for the struggle and not to be beaten. Going up, the stone is very rough and we have to pull ourselves on roots and vines. Angry red ants pour out of disturbed homes and lance our bare feet with their mandibles of fire. We stop frequently to rest, feeling the raw grate of hunger in our stomachs.

As we climb, a familiar sound comes out of the sky. It is the daily PAL plane, majestically proceeding in the unhampered air. If we were ordinary travellers, lost normally in the forest, we would run to the open river bank, wave, spread clothes for a signal, light brush, even shout. But to the open world that might see us we are not people, we are wanted ones, to be hunted. They would not bring help but would direct troops to us, hunters to the game. We hide on the cliffside, hide from the proud object of man's achievement.

We are a strange group that inches its way in the wilderness. Felix is a silent one who never speaks his thoughts, never gives an opinion, never objects to one, follows. His wife Meding utters sounds only to the baby, and it is a marvel to me that she can cling to it in places where both my hands are needed; at every rest she seeks to give it nourishment from her breast. Nanay is old and from the beginning she complains; we have to help her over everything. Carlos is sullen, a young man who wants his way, to stay in this area, and we won't yield to him; he barely speaks to us. Paul, too, is quiet, but he is rather cheerful, having been through peril often; he tells us how in a cordon he went for 25 days without food, drinking merely hot water when a fire could be risked; we have reliance on Paul. Celia and I, being cadres in

the movement, tacitly assume the responsibility of prodding and pushing this motley group forward.

Our only tool is a pocketknife of mine with two small blades, a pocketknife against the forest, but this is what we use, hacking at creepers and dense growth. It is slow, painful work and we find that we cannot follow the river closely atop the ridge, due to thick underbrush, vines and outcroppings of rock. Finally we no longer know where the river lies. It is only the sun that is our guide, lifting overhead, then sliding to the west.

At one point we stop, at a clump of *anibong,* and try to cut one down and to cut the *ubod* out of it. Everyone waits, hungrily. With the little knife it is a long task, and the one piece of *ubod* gives little more than a mouthful to each of us. We decide not to waste the knife and time on something that gives so small a return.

In late afternoon we are on a long gradual rise where the trees are spaced and the ground mossy and smooth. We are very tired and stop, almost abruptly. There is *anahaw* nearby and we cut many leaves, leaving the hard stalks long. These we thrust in the ground in a circle, and the interlocking leaves make a round roofed shelter. Within we pile more *anahaw,* over dry leaves and branches. Since we are creatures of the forest, we must live as such creatures do.

Twilight seeps through the forest. We sit about, on roots, outside our shelter, waiting for the night. No one speaks. What is there to say? We lock arms over upbent knees and stare at the twilight. The spaced trees throw long poles of shadow and the ground is dimly russet and purple between them. The forest is absolutely still, with the immense lonely silence of an uninhabited place. Darkness comes like death.

67.

In the morning we awake to tragedy. There is no sky, no sun. A grey blanket is low above the trees. Silently we scatter our shelter down the slope to leave no trace of it, and begin to climb. As we do so, the rain begins.

It is not the discomfort now that we mind—the hard rain on unprotected heads, the wet clothes cold against the body, the mud in which we now slide without traction. Our problem is a blurred sense of direction. We have no sun to guide us. On the dirty yellow-grey sky all points are the same. We know this season's prevailing wind direction, but no single moving cloud is visible in the solid overcast.

Direction. In the mountain forest, even in sun, it is impossible to pick out a high point ahead and to walk straight to it. Innumerable detours occur—a ravine, a bulging mass of rock, a river—that throw one aside, so that soon even the point ahead is lost. It is worse in the rain, when the air itself thickens creamily with mist.

Blindly we go on, up slopes and down slopes, plodding with the silent dull motion of automatons. The woman with the baby has deep hollow eyes; when she falls in the mud, as we all do, her arms stay up, the cocoon-like bundle held in the air. Old Nanay is the only one who makes a sound. Stumbling behind Celia, she whispers over and over, Stop, I can't go on. Stop, I can't go on.

To the west of us, time after time, there is gunfire. The enemy must be raiding all along the rim of the mountains, where our camps extend. We move parallel to it.

Crises come now in our little group.

In the silent forest, in the whispering rain, the baby begins to cry. The thin wail unwinds and fills the air, piercing the ears. We hear it with teeth set. Sound carries far in the wet forest. If the enemy is near, the cry could give us away. We gesture anxiously to the woman to quiet her child. She tries; she fondles it, she coos to it. The cry goes on, the high thin lament of hunger, carrying under the trees. She puts her hand over its mouth, and the baby's face grows purple, so she releases it, releases the cry. The woman looks at us with dumb pleading eyes.

Carlos, whose turn it is to lead and to cut vines for our passage, stops to argue that we must go west, to find barrios that he knows, where food can be found. As before, we oppose him, pointing out the sound of operations that lie that way. He cuts viciously at a vine with his knife. Now, as he leads, we can tell that he continually veers to the left, toward the west. When we order him

to the right, he throws black looks over his shoulder and clutches his carbine. Celia and I fall back and confer with Paul. If Carlos shows any sign of mutiny or refuses to obey orders, Paul will shoot him. There can be no hesitation, because the man is armed. Paul agrees and begins to carry his .45 in his hand.

We are a group of eight, but we are not just eight human beings. We are members of a revolutionary movement upon whom depend the future of millions. It is not merely a matter of looking to our lives. If that were so, we would go west, to the barrios; we would even seek out the enemy to surrender and to be fed. But we cannot think of living merely as human beings; we must think of living as revolutionaries, who can continue to work as revolutionaries. Not only that, but there are those in this group who have more to contribute than others. We could abandon our goal for the sake of Nanay; we could abandon it for the sake of Meding and her baby; but we cannot abandon it and give up cadres who are needed in the struggle. Therefore we are going to go on; we are going to suffer hunger, hardships, pain; we will crawl on our hands and knees to get to our destination, if necessary, and we will kill the malcontents and those who bring danger upon us, if necessary, but we are going to restore ourselves to the movement, we are going to survive as active revolutionaries.

Those are our driving thoughts.

Sometime in afternoon we come shockingly upon footprints, muddy tracks in the forest, and the evidence of vines newly cut with a knife. The enemy, on our trail? We have a terrible moment of panic, and the guns go up, the pitiful two guns. Then we look more closely. The tracks are our tracks. We have wandered in a circle.

It is hopeless, then, to walk in the rain, under the mocking, featureless sky. We will only exhaust ourselves. After conferring, we decide that we will pick a site and rest there until the rain has ceased, until we can find our way. We choose a flat place on a hillside, near a stream, above a ravine that offers a line of retreat, and there erect a shelter of *anahaw*. It is our third day of hunger and our strength is diminished, so it takes us a bit longer in the making of this one.

Then we lie down in the timeless forest, and we wait.

68.

I have never held credible the belief that a drowning man relives all of his past in a flash before his eyes. Even here in this slow sinking down beneath moss and leaves and the wet drip of rain, it is not the past of which I think. It is of this moment, in a primitive shelter of leaves, with these people.

Whatever lived in my American past to shape and to mold me for this moment, I do not search it out. That I should be here in the Philippine forest with a Filipina wife by whom I lie on the ground in wet muddy clothes and feel it wholly logical, raises no question nor probing of reason. That I should be here in the same circumstances as unlettered peasants of another race—an old woman who has known fields and harvests, a dull girl unknowing in the cycle of life, two brothers and a youth who have been ground in the dust and who have squirmed out from under a heel with guns in their hands—has nothing of strangeness in it. This sense of oneness with the oppressed, the hunted and the undaunted, is my identity.

Two days pass, and we lie here. The rain falls unceasingly. For five days now we have eaten nothing. We make receptacles of *anahaw* and boil water in them, drink the hot water. It eases the stomach. Occasionally we rise and stumble outside to find wood for the fire. It takes a long time, standing in the rain, to look at a fallen branch before nerve-ends bring the hand down to pick it up.

I lie and look at my feet. They are not recognizable as my feet, so covered are they with cuts, swollen, dotted with the innumerable black pinpoints that are thorns in the flesh. Celia and I lie quietly, touching each other. The woman, Meding, endlessly tries to feed the baby, but there can be no milk left in her breasts; the baby lies still and bluish looking, with its eyes closed. Nanay moans and moves in her sleep. The men sit staring into the fire, where blue flames lick the black wet logs. In the night it is like the day; I wake and find someone always there, staring into the fire.

Toward the end of the second day, Carlos gets up and goes

outside. It is his turn to collect wood. Times passes. The blue-grey film of dusk begins to form upon the hill. Carlos does not return. We peer from the shelter. He is nowhere to be seen. His carbine is gone. Immediately our conclusion is that he has deserted. We talk angrily about him in the shelter.

Out of the twilight, heavy and loud on the sodden air, the sound of a shot comes, just over the rise above us. Then another. In a moment we have scrambled out of the shelter and down the steep side of the ravine, sliding and panting, all the way to the brush-filled bottom. What were those shots? Did Carlos walk into an ambush? Was he signalling to the enemy? We are dry-throated at the thought of the enemy pursuing us in our helpless condition, but we are ready to flee down the ravine.

Above a voice calls and calls. It is Carlos! Is he calling us into a trap? What is he saying? He has a pig. Carlos has shot a wild pig! We have food! We come sheepishly back up the side of the ravine and we are ashamed to look at Carlos. He and Felix go off in the gathering dark and return with the pig lashed by vines to a pole. It is a small pig, but we are wildly happy around the fire. We are victorious!

All night long we stay awake, cutting up the pig, cooking it and eating it. The liver is first, the great red juicy half-raw liver, trickling sweetly in our throats. Then broth from the meat boiled in cauldrons of *anahaw,* the rich steaming broth stratified with bits of the meat. Chunks of meat that have roasted and sizzled on sticks, half-charred on the outside, half-raw on the inside, but all delicious to us. With every morsel we can feel the energy flow back into us. Through the night we laugh and talk, cutting up the pig with the little pocketknife that is chipped and broken now, cooking all the pig that we cannot now eat to carry with us.

In the morning the rain is only a fine drizzle and the drift of clouds is visible. We pack what is left of the pig into *anahaw* and tie it to our backs with vines. Celia is so weak that she cannot carry any of it. Our shelter we tear up and throw into the ravine, along with traces of the fire. We strike out over the rise, heading north again.

Somewhere is the river of the map, but we walk all day in our torturous sore-footed fashion without any sign of it.

In late afternoon we come out suddenly onto the open flank of a long steep slope. It is overgrown with a thick ferny plant, so thick that we walk on it as upon a dense carpet. I stand there, knee-deep in the ferns, appalled at the open view that is flung before us.

There, rolling to the horizon like the waves of a gigantic sea, are ridge after ridge of the Sierra Madre, blue-grey in the declining light, like the gun-metal swell of the ocean in storm. Above, the billows of blue-grey cloud are identical waves in the sky, so that, if I tip my head, it is difficult to tell which is the earth and which the sky. Across the deep valley above which we stand the first bulging wave of mountain with its foam of green forest seems to lift up and to plunge toward us. I have not felt until now the real sense of being lost or of my own puniness in this wilderness. I have the terrible feeling that I will fall out into that landscape and be engulfed, that I will drown in that sea of forest and of plunging peaks. So affected am I by it that I can hardly walk through the fern to the secure enclosure of the trees.

As on each afternoon, our problem becomes *anahaw,* for shelter. It is very late before we find some, and it grows in a low marshy declevity. We have no choice but to make camp there, with beds of piled fern over the ooze. It is discovered that there are no more matches. We can have no fire, nor can the meat be reheated to keep it from spoiling. Already it has a disagreeable smell, but we eat it. We lie there in the damp darkness, with the odor of dank vegetation in our nostrils, hearing legions of frogs singing the elegy of night, and we are filled for the first time with the quiet despair of the lost.

We have gone no more than half a kilometer in the morning when the rain arrives. This is hard, brutal rain, that mines away the slope beneath our feet and sends us rolling in the little torrents. I have thinned so much that my pants keep slipping down over my hips; my feet step on the wet cuffs and I trip and go down. We are a strange sight, staggering and falling on backs and on faces in mud, all gaunt and hollow-eyed. There is mud in Celia's hair and over her clothes; her mouth is a little, firm, set inch and large dark patches underline her eyes. The woman, Meding, walks as if blind, going down to her knees, with the

staring eyes lifted and the baby lifted, mechanically. Nanay doesn't want to move when she falls. We drag her along, knowing we are cruel, refusing to stop for her, refusing to let her lie down and die.

It is in this way that we half-tumble down a rocky wall to the river. The river that runs to the east, roaring amid its boulders and pouring in slick channels to the sea. We stumble along its stone bank, pummeling each other's arms and laughing. See? See? Then we cross, halting in its current and letting it wash the mud away, the friendly river.

But from here, where?

As far along the river as we can see, the other side is a precipitous climb. We can do nothing but go up. It takes us hours and it takes all our remaining strength. At each tree root jutting from the cliff we have to stop and wait for the strength to assemble in our arms and to permit us to go over it. The last hundred feet is a perpendicular wall. Far below the river booms faintly. We go up the wall on little roots that break, that break. To fall is death. How do we do this? One by one, with bleeding fingers, we haul each other over the top and lie there on our stomachs, panting.

A hundred yards from that edge there is a trail.

A trail in the forest. Where does it go? And what lies in wait along a trail in the forest? Well-beaten and wide it lies there in silence, telling us nothing. Perhaps it leads to comrades, perhaps the enemy is upon it, hunting us all. But we are too weak to talk of possibilities or of alternatives. We follow it leftward, where it curves to the north.

Already it is late afternoon of this seventh day of our journey. We have a terrible sense of a need to hurry, that if we don't hurry now we will never arrive, wherever it is that we are going. We begin to run on the trail, in the rain and the mud. My feet now are extremely painful and every step is agony; they are puffed like small cushions. But I run, with a kind of mad pleasure in the mingled pain and speed, until I think that I cannot stop. I am out of sight of the others, and I cannot stop. Finally I have to seize a trunk of a tree to stop myself, crash into it blindly, sinking to my knees, sweating.

Night finds us still upon the trail, on a long downward slope. It is too dark to go any further. We cannot see where we are going. Carlos says that he will go on ahead; he thinks we are near a production base. We let him go, give him a password, *Hotchet,* the guerrilla call to dinner, in case he is successful. We do not think he will be.

There is no *anahaw.* We sit down on the wet ground in the rain. Celia and I huddle together, our arms locked, our heads upon our knees. The wet forest has an eerie look; phosphorescent patches shine where leaves have moldered, spectres of decay. Everything drips. We sink into the swamp of night and rain.

Hotchet!

Far down the slope we hear the faint call. It is a fantasy of the forest night. Then we see the darting eye and beam of a flashlight, far below, and hear the repeated call, *Hotchet!* With a great rush of joy we get up and stagger in the dark down the slope. Arms come out of the darkness to assist us. In the swinging beam of the flashlight we see familiar faces, and known voices call our names.

We are at Bagong Silang. We have come through.

69.

In the hut at Bagong Silang we lie in warmth and safety and we cannot sleep.

Rain beats at the roof and walls and cannot enter. Night presses on the hut. We hear the forest move and reach and sigh. Fireglow throws warm shadow in waves over the ceiling and over our faces where we lie. Pain throbs and burns in our feet, whichever way we turn. Our bodies ache. We lie awake numbly.

We have beaten the enemy, because we live, intact, ready to fight again. This struggle of ours does not depend on the capture of camps, the burning of huts, the chasing of men into the forest. What counts is the ability to survive, the preservation of cadres, the retention of an organized force. Camps can be built in a day, bases can be shifted, flight is a part of mobility. It is we who count, the humans and the human will, and we live.

We have beaten the forest. We thought the forest was our

friend, because it gives shelter to us, but we are not in a friendly place; it is testing us. We are undergoing trial by forest, a contest of endurance, of will against men and wilderness. It is our will that has won, this time.

At Bagong Silang we are safe and warm and we cannot sleep.

70.

Now it is touch and go. The enemy is everywhere, moving on the trails, probing for our camps. Word comes to us at Bagong Silang of the raids to the south, from where we have come. All camps and production bases in the area where we were staying have been captured and burned.

Up from the south, pursued, comes Jesse Lava and his large group, with G.Y., del Castillo, and many conference delegates. The island site has been raided, our people escaping over the sunken bamboo causeways minutes before the attack. All the stored supplies for the conference have been captured—the rice, the flour, the canned goods, the sugar, even the mimeograph paper for reproducing reports. Jesse's rear guard has had to fight along the trail, to prevent close pursuit.

The enemy must know that the conference was scheduled in this region and that the top cadres of the movement are somewhere here. They can be expected to intensify their operations.

Jesse's group halts at our old ED site downstream from us, in the crescent above the *cogon*. The site was never found by the enemy. Celia and I leave Bagong Silang and go down to join them. My feet are still infected and swollen and I still have no shoes. It is a slow, painful trip. We are still adjusting ourselves mentally to what we have experienced, and to the fact that we have nothing. We are becoming aware of details such as the lack of a toothbrush, soap, or a blanket. We clean our teeth on bits of coconut husk. Comrades, who themselves travel light, have difficulty equipping us—a shirt here, a bit of soap there. It will take us many weeks to contact our family and friends in Manila and to bring ourselves up even to guerrilla standards again.

From Jesse we learn of the fate of our camp-mates. Most of

them are safe, although dispersed. Reg, sick and with fever, had stumbled away with one of his children in one arm and a pistol in the other hand. But Jorge Frianeza is dead, his body found along the river bank where he had evidently crawled after being hit; it was his last small act of resistance to the enemy, who failed to discover him. Jesse Magusig was less fortunate. Unable to move, he fought from his hut with his pistol until he was riddled with bullets. When the enemy burned the camp on their departure they threw his body into the fire.

We mourn for Jesse and Jorge, killed in action, heroes of our struggle.

71.

This is an exposed area. From north and south army troops are converging upon it along our trails. Several times a day Huk military couriers come in from FC patrols, reporting enemy movements. G.Y. sends out an order for diversionary ambushes to be staged far in the south, near Lucban, to draw away enemy attention. But there can be no doubt about our immediate situation: no camp, production base or trail on the Laguna side of the Sierra Madre can be considered safe at this moment. We must go deeper into the mountains.

I am trying hard to get my feet into condition so I can keep up with what might have to be fast flight. All day long, with a needle and a cauterized knife, I cut out thorns and drain the infections. There is only a day that we dare to linger here, and then we must move. On the morning of our departure I can still only hobble, but one of the security men of Jesse, Ading, lets me have his shoes. My feet are tough, he says, I have life-time Keds. Now I can walk.

Our guide is Walter, a large burly man from Longos, one of the old companions of Asedillo, who has been a *kaingero* most of his life and who knows the Sierra Madre better than any man alive. Like many big men, he is quiet, easy-going, with a slow smile, indifferent to danger; for all of his bulk, he has crawled up on

enemy bivouacs to watch and to listen. He has a small boy for a companion, and a shotgun. He is a great inspirer of confidence. Whenever I see Walter moving unhurriedly into a camp or leaning by a hut with a shotgun, I always put my fears away and relax. I think of Walter as I do of the old mountain men of the western lands, who guided the wagon trains over the plains.

Now he takes us down the middle of an east-running river. Special orders are sent along the line of march. No smoking; no cigarette butts in the water. Secure all papers. Tie up all loose items on packs. Let nothing fall. Do not step in mud. Walk only in water and on rocks where wet prints will dry.

And yet, it is a splendid day for danger. Sun is out and balloons of white cloud float on the blue river above. The green cliffs that lie on either side of us, the forest walls, are filigreed with vines like an ornate tapestry. The river catches the sunlight and breaks it into bits, flowing like a dancer in a sequined gown. It seems impossible in this living scene that we are in flight from death, that hate and war follow at our heels.

I stand on a rock and look along the line of march. There are nearly one hundred of us strung out raggedly in the river, some knee-deep in water, some leaping on rocks, dressed in every variety of garb and hat and pack, the rifles tipped at every angle. Arnold's men up the Kennebec on the wilderness route to Quebec. George Rogers Clark's Rangers in the drowned lands on the road to Vincennes.

Almost to the sea we follow the river, then turn off where a thin creek comes in like a veil over green-covered stone. The creek runs in a narrow gorge where stratified rock goes up sheer and hides the sun. The rock trickles water and there are cool liquid sounds in these depths. For a long distance we penetrate the gorge, then the line halts. Walter stands at the head of it, conferring with Jesse, stroking his jaw. He points upward. At his gesture, the whole line turns and climbs by flank, like an assault on a fort, straight upward. In this way, no well-worn marks are left behind.

Above is broken terrain, with many steep hills that resemble inverted cups. Here, like the embattled Romans of old, we build our huts on seven hills and await the coming of the barbarians.

72.

I am ill. Coming up the hill to our hut from the stream below, I became dizzy and I faint. For days I lie on the rough log floor of our hut, half insensible, with a high fever. Perhaps it is the aftermath of our week of exposure and hunger in the forest. No one knows. Jesse Lava comes with the cheerful bedside manner and injects some anti-biotic from our scanty store into my stringy buttock. I cannot turn over myself; Celia has to turn me. I am too weak even to lift a spoon to my mouth; Celia feeds me, on the watery *lugaw* to which all our rations are reduced.

Lying motionless, all I can see is a little screen of vine and leaf at the end of the log platform. The wind stirs it. Bits of the sun come through in shifting forms. Beyond the screen the world lies, blurred and indistinct, and I am here, behind the screen, hidden. The forest is the screen and I cannot see through it, to the world. Everywhere I turn, there is the screen, above, on all sides. I cannot see out, but I cannot be seen, either. I chuckle at my screen.

Then I study the screen, an individual leaf, the serrated edge, the veins visible where the sun has made it translucent. The vine twists and winds, has little whorls like an arabesque. The more I study it, the more I see, the tiny cells in the leaf, the thin wrinkled surface of the vine. There are designs within designs, worlds within worlds. Deeper and deeper I go into the screen.

Reports are in the camp. I hear them in the hut, hear the voices somewhere around me, vaguely. The enemy has gone down the river, toward the sea. We may have to move. How can I move? I cannot stand. They will give me a carbine, I think. I will lay behind my screen, like Jesse Magusig, and shoot the enemy when they come.

Give me the carbine, I whisper. Celia leans over me. Hush, she says. Do you think that we would leave you?

The enemy return. They come up the narrow gorge. Our security men lie above, a few yards from them, rifles and BARs ready. But the enemy turn unsuspectingly, go back, go back down the river.

But they have captured Bagong Silang. They have come into its meadow with fire, burned all of its huts, cut down the waving brown rice, uprooted the *camote* and the cassava, trampled the vegetable beds, laid waste to the place of new birth. I lie awake in the night, weakly mourning for Bagong Silang.

Gradually my strength comes back. I sit up in the hut and listen to my companions. They are not talking about the enemy operation. They are talking about the conference and about what will be discussed there, about the work to be done. I, too, begin to think about our problems, about the life of the movement.

In the forest beyond the enemy forces pass and are gone. Slowly the Huks take to the trails again, to the old trails, and move back into the vacuum that is left behind.

73.

February 1951

We will now proceed to have our conference.

With the capture of our supplies on the island site, we have had to begin all over again, accumulating a few items from one town, a few items from another. We will not be as abundantly equipped as in the first effort, for the enemy is watching marketplaces; it will be a leaner conference. Our main base, again, is Longos. For months, during army operations, our squads have stayed away from that town. It has lain dormant, like a fallow field. Now the posts spring up in it again, and we harvest the good will of its people.

Surprisingly, with all the parading of the BCTs on our trails, they have never found the Big House. It lies there in the forest, with the periphery of houses across the river from it, where once there was thought of building a "permanent camp." Machine-gun fire, from the air attacks of last September, has riddled one end of the Big House, and put holes, too, in some of the other huts, but they are all serviceable.

One morning we pack up and leave the cluster of hills where

we have lain hidden and move down to the Big House. I am still a bit shaky from illness, and my legs tremble on a long slope, but the earth is dry and the walking easy. It is the end of February, and the long rains fade. Sun is coming back into the forest, for the brief dry season of the Sierra Madre. There are some high trees that stand up on a hill and take the full light of the sun like men who climb out of a trench with shoulders back and take deep breaths with faces to the sky. Cicadas whirr in the gold and green of massed leaves. Death is somewhere else.

The Big House is very quiet in the freckled shadow, a summer house to which we come after the winter days. It is only after we enter that we see the little changes that the forest makes—the tiny heaps of sawdust where the boring things have hollowed out posts and roof pieces, the covered avenues of termites winding up a corner log, all the soft sifted evidences of a silent decay.

The quiet breaks. Bolos chop at firewood, a wooden paddle pounds on laundry down by the river, voices call from bank to bank. The Huks are home. G.Y. is back at his home in the bend of the river.

74.

This place has become, in a sense, the heart of the Philippines, to which the life blood of its people pours, to be pumped later into all the arteries of struggle.

Each day delegates arrive, coming 100 or 200 miles down the rugged mountain trails from far scattered areas to the north, coming by secret sea and land routes from the farthest southern island, coming by disguise through checkpoints over the roads from Manila. I watch them come in, dirty, tired, with great sweaty patches on their shirts, weighted with packs. Each has an armed escort of picked Huk troops, fighters, veterans of hundreds of encounters, carrying guns with the swinging ease of athletes with their bats and racquets.

It is like the gathering of the clans. With each arrival we pour

out of huts in greeting, with laughter, shouting and the shaking of hands. Fatigue is forgotten, and no one minds mud and sweat in embraces. Most of these comrades have not seen each other since the last conference in 1948. They have been assigned in widely separated Recos, in expansion areas, in mobile Huk units as military commanders.

Under the trees knots of Huk soldiers gather, exchanging experiences. In casual tones they speak of ambush, encounter, raid, pitched battle in town and in rice paddie, along mountain trail, in swamp and in *cogon,* in sugar cane field. They speak of tactics and draw diagrams on the ground with sticks, describing the destruction of an armored car or the entry of a town in the night. They squat with heads down, tossing pebbles in the hand, talking briefly of the death of brave ones.

How far away are the conventions I have seen in New York and in other cities, the arrival by sleek train and plane and private car, the checking in at huge hotels, and the reserved rooms, the talking in the coffee shops and the hotel lobbies of picket lines, petitions, and of getting out the vote.

75.

Here in the forest, under the towering trees, I have come to realize, as I never did before, the awful isolation of the man alone.

The forest, where all growth is in the mass and one can hardly separate a single tree from its swarming kin, is an awesome reminder of the collectivity of life. Who can walk within it and not feel its multitudinous presence, the impressive intertwining of branch and root and looping vine? Let axmen come and cut away all but one tree and it will stand there like a shunned and naked wretch tied in the sun for punishment.

Before, when I had not yet come to the Philippines, I had thought that I was a man involved, one who had identified himself with the many, with the whole, an integral part of the forest

that is society. I accepted certain principles, I had my name put on the roster of pertinent groups, I gave to them a pledged portion of my income. Two or three nights a week I showed my sincerity by attending meetings or gatherings. When petitions came around with protests against injustice I readily added my name to others. Occasionally I passed out leaflets at a factory or on a street corner, appealing to united action. I had thought that I was committed to a broad cause.

I did all of these things, and every day I worked for my own living and kept the bulk of my earnings for myself. I had my own home and, after work or after meetings, I would retire there and shut the door on the world and relax in my own little and lovingly-assembled place. That part was for the cause, this part was for me. I spent much time, too, cultivating the solitary pleasures of books, the theater, the concert, and the galleries of art, telling myself that the arts are social institutions.

But I was only on the outskirts of the forest then. Now I am within it.

At times, now, upon the trail, out of weariness I fall behind. I look up and I am alone among the trees, the others are out of sight. The horror of being alone! Frantically I run, through the teeming forest, until I see the line again, am restored to humanity again.

Today I have nothing that does not belong to the whole, time, life, possessions. All of my working hours go to this cause. My home is a hut shared with a dozen others in which we live without partitions on a single narrow width of floor. At any time we may simply abandon it. In my pack is a single change of clothing and a blanket; they were donated to me. I have no money in my pocket, and nothing else that cannot be shared with other Huks. Even the marriage of Celia and myself is no longer wholly ours, we have given so much of it to the movement. It has no privacy and lives in the eyes of dozens.

None of this is regretted. In this group lie my safety, my enjoyment, my meaning. I have merged my identity completely with that of the movement to which we belong.

I am in the depths of the forest.

76.

Forty men and a woman sit in a long low hut in the forest, discussing the fate of a nation.

At one end the chairman sits, cross-legged, and the others line the two long walls, sitting on the mats where they also sleep. They lean back on ready packs and their pistol belts are strapped on, or else carbines lie along the sleeping mats. The walls of the hut are not solid; *anahaw* covers only one-third of their height; the rest is all open, in readiness for a leap and swift flight. We are an armed and vigilant conference.

The hut is built on the side of a shallow ravine, its entrance flush with the ground, its far end on high posts out over a creek. The sound of the creek mingles with the murmur of voices. Thick foliage closes in the hut from all sides, but the sun strikes through a hole in the leaves and falls with glitter on the creek which is reflected with a rippling light on the ceiling of the hut, tinting the faces of its occupants with an oddly-peaceful green and gold glow.

This hut is on a rise beyond the Big House site, which is now the base for our security force. We have more than 150 fighters here, the cream of the people's army, every man of which is ready to die to safeguard the movement's leaders. They ring the meeting site in wide concentric rings of perimeter. An interior guard is on post around the hut itself. Another ring has posts on all trails and on all other avenues of approach. Another ring patrols continually in a sweeping circle about the outer reaches of forest. Patrols, too, scout down toward the towns and keep in touch with intelligence units scattered all along the rim of the forest. In the towns themselves our contacts are kept on alert for evidence of spies. Our security is in depth.

We have an agenda that, it is calculated, will consume one month of continual meeting. First, a political report, with discussion, in two parts, the international scene, and the national situation, by Jesse. Then, organizational reports to cover all aspects of the movement itself and its activities. Following this, a setting of the tasks ahead and the adoption of resolutions.

Finally, criticism and self-criticism, laying bare weaknesses to be overcome, by the organization and by individuals, to be capped by the election of a new leadership.

I look at these men, leaning back easily or coming erect with the urgent address of, *Kasamang* Chairman! Some of them are famous among Filipinos, almost all have been with the Huks since the beginning of the liberation struggle against the Japanese invaders. This is a cross-section of the nationalist groupings in the Philippines.

The great majority are peasants: Dimasalang, the military commander (Jose de Leon); Luis Taruc and his brother Peregrino; Alembre (Domingo Castro); Linda Bie (Sylvestre Liwanag); Cente (Ignacio Dabu); Fred Laan (Agaton Bulaong); Samonte (Pedro Caguin); Algo (Briccio Almiranes); Fabian (Bonifacio Lina); Ramson; Dimalanta; Capuli; Ramirez; Basa; Sagasa. And Mateo del Castillo, once a landowner in Batangas, who gave all his property to the movement and became the head of the National Peasants' Union.

Here there are only a handful of trade union leaders: Magno, who had been a leader of the Congress of Labor Organizations; Jolo, who had been, too, in the CLO. The great majority of CLO leaders have been arrested and imprisoned, men like Ramon Espiritu and Honofre Mangila. One other, Guillermo Capadocia, is in the Visayan Islands, unable to come because of the intensive expansion campaign there. Mariano Balgos (Bakal), also a top CLO leader, has begged off attending here with his Bicol group because they do not want to slacken the tempo of their successful expansion drive.

And there is a handful of middle-class intellectuals: Jesus Lava, Casto Alejandrino (G.Y.), and Celia.

These are the people who are leading a revolution in the Philippines. One cannot help but be impressed by the determination, the spirit, and the astonishing courage that typifies them, but other factors are here, too. They are also determined to seek political and theoretical clarity, and they hold lengthy and heated discussions over policy and its implementation. Many do not easily comprehend the strategy and tactics, the forces, the problems and the tasks of this struggle, and there are many complex problems. Even minor points that have relatively little im-

portance lead to long debates, and it takes hours before all are satisfied with the definition of a term or with a theoretical formulation. Only patient explanation, over and over, by Jesse and by a few others, will clear the frowns of doubt and perplexity.

As the discussion unfolds I myself begin to be aware of the long struggle that actually lies ahead of us.

There is a deadly serious atmosphere here, under the shadow of guns, and yet these people know how to relax as well as to fight and to persevere. There is humor in the reports, and, during mealtimes, when we all eat together in the same places where we meet and sleep, there is much banter shouted down the length of the hut. The different regional groups, from Southern Luzon and from Central Luzon, the Pampangos and the Bulakeños, the Lagunenses and Nueva Ecijanos, are constantly challenging each other as to who can do the most recruiting, raise the most funds, conduct the most successful ambushes. In rest hours there is joking with the theoretical terminology that has been raised here—the dialectics of love (ah, that unity of opposites) or the strategy and tactics of a courtship (with the girl I'm courting, her father is the direction of the main blow). In the evenings we light lamps and there is chess. Jesse is the champion, playing on four boards at once and winning all games with ease.

At eight o'clock there is Lights Out, and the call of *Tulog na!* We are dawn risers in the forest. Lamps are extinguished, and all down the hut there is the rustling of sleeping mats. A few last cigarettes glow in the dark, and then there is silence, except for the breathing of sleepers and a soft movement on the earth outside, the footfall of a sentry on guard for the revolution.

77.

February–March 1951

Somewhere at a command post men in uniform bend over a map. They are the hunters. They have flushed us out of the south, and they have been combing along the mountain forest ever since, from here to Northern Luzon, searching for traces of the quarry. Now the fingers go over the gridded map and come

to rest upon a green patch that is our area. What led them to this point? Who knows? An informer in a town who had a glimpse of a squad *balutan* moving in the dusk in a field? A courier followed from the city? An exasperated guess? It is immaterial. The orders are given and the troops begin to move.

This is the great Operation Sabre, the biggest military operation the Philippine army has ever made. Every BCT is put into the field, in the forest or in the fields and swamps of the central plain, 54,000 men, with the entire air force overhead or on call. They strike at us in the south with the greatest strength, but they have penetrated the mountains everywhere and deployed themselves on all the routes north and south to prevent a retreat or a movement by us elsewhere. They believe that they have bottled up the whole leadership of the movement.

The first inkling we have that something is afoot is when G.Y. is called away from the conference. When he comes back he sits down by Jesse's *banig* and confers with him quietly. There is no interruption of the discussion. When the current point on the agenda is finished, the announcement is made. Everyone will pack at noon and assemble on the riverbank across from the Big House at one o'clock. There is a turning of heads and an exchanging of glances but the conference goes on until noon. We have trust in our security forces.

We have done this so often now that the assembly is prompt and the line is formed without delay. The news is around that our intelligence has reported large numbers of troops in the towns below and the ordering of civilians away from fields and forest. High spirits, however, bubble along our line that winds single-file around the little clearings for huts in the camp. Sun is all through the forest, and the river has a sleepy golden flow at its deep bend, bordered with the green reflection of its banks. One by one we cross it, over the single swaying log, go by the Big House (I touch its corner post affectionately as we pass), and climb the steep trail behind it. Our line is very lengthy—there are perhaps 250 of us—and it takes a long time for it to unwind and to disappear into the forest, like a looped string on a floor that is wound up on a reel.

The military line that we follow is dry and firm and we roll fast, except when we come to a log over a ravine or a stream that

can only be waded slowly, then the line tends to telescope to a halt like a braking freight train. Orders go down the line, passed over shoulders: Keep three meters distance. Put safety on all arms, no accidental firing. Stop the singing in the column!

At sundown we stop along the trail and erect rude shelters of ponchos and of *anahaw*. A score of fires flicker in the night, each a red cave with its tree pillars and roof of leaves. We rest easily on the ground and are up before light, eliminating traces of the camp. The next afternoon we come to our destination, a site chosen by Walter. Where the military line crosses a stream, a brown flow that is waist deep, we turn abruptly up the middle of the stream and follow it for a long distance. There are strict orders: Stay in the water. Do not break or touch any branch. Do not leave anything floating. For nearly an hour we wade in the deep water until it becomes a shallow flow over a bed of small stones and makes a wide turn against the base of a stone cliff. Within the loop that it makes, a 45-degree slope rises like a great tree-covered amphitheater. Here we build our huts, and at the very top a conference hall is erected.

While the conference site is under construction, we hold our sessions down by the side of the stream, sitting on rocks and on heaps of the little stones that lead us to call this camp *Maliit na Bato* (Small Stones). With the amphitheater of the hill above us we might be characters in a Greek drama. Flecks of leaf shadow and sun are upon us and words of class struggle and of political power are interwoven with the sound of water over stones.

As we talk here the first ripple of gunfire and the drone of planes comes faintly to us, half heard over lilt of water.

Calmly we stay where we are, letting the operation go on around us. When we move to the little conference hut on the hill-top, with its terraced tiers of logs for delegates to sit upon—its builders seem to have obtained their construction ideas from the shape of the hill itself—we can hear very plainly the sounds of Operation Sabre. Every day, as we go methodically through our agenda, we hear gunfire, automatic weapons, sometimes near, sometimes far. The army troops must be shooting at the trees, because our FCs are under orders not to have encounters in this vicinity.

The little aerial grasshoppers, the Piper Cubs, observation

planes, go up and down above the roof of trees, a zipper of sound opening the air above us, but never opening our roof of green. They are so low that our men with BARs could easily shoot them down, but we let them go. No looks go up in the little hut, no halt occurs in the discussion. Companies from the BCTs go down the military line, past the stream that is the entrance to our hide-away; our security forces lie in ambush, watching them, let them go. Not for one moment do we interrupt the conference.

For one month it goes on, the operation, and our conference, side by side, at times at carbine range apart. It serves to heighten the quality of our discussions.

Tremendous bombing and strafing occurs from the direction of the area from which we have come. Patrol reports come in later that the Big House site has been captured and burned. The Big House. Like hounds that have caught the scent, the fighter planes of the Philippine air force scream over the forest, at tree-top level. Time after time they roar directly above our huts, gigantic roaring birds that silence all the ullulating life below, but see nothing. We peer out from under our *anahaw* roof and see the fat bombloads under the wings and the tubes of death that are machine-guns. One well-aimed bomb could wipe out the leadership of the Huk movement, but that bomb does not fall because no target is visible. That is the weakness of planes used against a guerrilla movement. Perhaps they are used mainly as a terror tactic, in the hope that we will flee them and run into the arms of the BCTs. But there is no terror here.

We are indistinguishable from the forest. It is over us and around us. We are a part of it, merged with root and vine, tall tree, and the green moss-covered stone.

78.

March 1951

We are those who, at the fire's center, plan for the new world to rise out of the ashes.

We are a handful of people, hiding in a forest, and our enemies are on all sides of us. They are numerous, and they are

armed with all the glistening machines of death that can murder a people's movement. They have might. Under the shadow of it, we plan on how to bring that might down shattered.

They are strong, but it is not the strength of endurance. Across all the continent of Asia, and on the islands of its seas, imperialism is being driven to the beaches. They can use guns to hold on, but can guns put rice in the mouths of the restless? They talk of reforms, but can they make reforms that would interfere with their profits and their power? They talk of ending corruption, but can they end corruption that is the root and branch of the control of puppets? They talk of "restoring faith in democracy" in the Philippines, but was there ever democracy here, and can it be "restored" by denial of right and of freedom?

We are under repression, but recruits still flock to the HMB, the mass bases remain intact, the expansion drives are successful, the government is more discredited than ever in the eyes of the people. The revolutionary situation remains.

Therefore, the national liberation movement will continue to prepare for the seizure of power and to call for the overthrow of the imperialist-puppet regime.

Therefore, preparation will be made for the establishment of provisional revolutionary governments at the town and at the provincial level.

Therefore, the HMB will prepare for the conversion of the guerrilla forces into a regular army.

Therefore, preparation will be made in our mass base areas for the setting up of peasant committees for land distribution.

Therefore, a call will be made for the boycott of the forthcoming election in November 1951.

Thus do we, in convention assembled, throw down the gauntlet to the enemy.

79.

April 1951

Now we have come full cycle in the forest. We came here in the dry season, when the trails were hard and streaked with sun; now

it is dry again, after a shift in wind and the swinging passage of the rain. The enemy, too, came in upon us like storm and tide, and now they recede, leaving quiet under trees and in our undiscovered camps. It is like the old days of our arrival, when the lizard's chirp and the rasp of the cicada were the only sounds.

We, too, have added to our rings of growth. Last year's leaders were tall and strong, and they fell as trees fell, but new leaders have taken their places, as in the forest a crown of foliage constantly remains against the sky.

It is odd how our conference ends, at the close of March, with the end of Operation Sabre, as if a shadow dance had occurred: when the dancer tires and is seated, the shadow, too, relaxes. We, however, do not really relax. There has been much talk, now there will be implementation.

One by one the delegates leave, many to new assignments in expansion territory. Sagasa will go north, into the Cagayan Valley; Katapatan south, to reinforce Reco 5 in the Bicols. An entire Reco staff is sent to Mindanao, to create a new base there. An entire new City Committee into Manila to rebuild there the organization disrupted in the October 1950 raids. In the region just to the north of us, in the forest beyond the town of Santa Maria, a military school is established under the joint command of Dimasalang, Cente, and Victoria; promising military cadres from all the Recos will be trained here by manual to create the nucleus of officers for a regular army.

The rest of us wait until all those on assignment have gone, and then we move our camp, a security precaution to prevent the revealing of our new site in case one of the many departees is captured and compelled to talk.

It is a unique camp that we now build, different from any that we have had in the forest so far. It is erected on a long low wooded ridge that runs like a great letter J between a river and a stream. Our huts we build in a staggered line along the spine of the ridge, 25 of them, housing approximately 200 people.

Here are housed all the top organs of the movement: the Secretariat and most of the political bureau, the organizational department with its subsidiary national courier division, the educational department with its publication division and school division, the finance department, the military department with

its ordnance and training sections. In addition to these, there is a camp committee for camp affairs, with a security section, a supply section, a cultural section, an athletic section, and a medical and sanitation section.

Among our facilities we have a large social hall, a schoolhouse, a barbershop, and an athletic court. At several points along the ridge long elevated walkways lead to covered toilets built on very tall poles set into the lower slope, giving a picturesque spidery appearance to our community.

We call it Camp Balintawak, after the place north of Manila where the great Filipino revolutionary, Andres Bonifacio, uttered the cry of revolt against Spain in 1896.

This is not only to be an administrative headquarters. It is to be a model camp, run with the most complete efficiency, in accordance with the principles of the new society that we seek to create, and with the widest variety of educational and cultural activities. Here are retained as many as possible of the delegates to our recent conference, so that when they return to their posts they can use this example to raise the level of the life of the movement everywhere, to give a healthy background to those who will contribute to the improvement of the life of the country.

Each household is organized in such a way that every member of it has an active and a useful role. Those who are not involved in national leadership assignments, have camp committee work or a task in the household; some have assignments in all three divisions of the camp. All non-productive elements, such as children and very old people, are sent either to production bases or to the shelter of mass supporters in the barrios. Each hut has a household committee with a chairman and members responsible for equipment, cooking, sanitation, and education. We are trying to develop in each person a sense of responsibility and of an organized approach to life, so every person must submit a schedule of his or her daily activities that includes time for self-study. The schedule goes to the household chairman and is checked and forwarded to the camp chairman, who periodically requires the household chairman to check up on the observance of the schedule by each. The household chairman must also maintain a weekly schedule of activity for his group as a whole that includes a general meeting of all household members for criticism and

self-criticism and the resolution of any problems of personality clash or of disruption of harmony in relationships. Besides this there is a weekly household educational meeting, with either a lecture or an open forum discussion.

This group life at the lower levels is extended also to the organization of the camp as a whole, with a monthly general meeting for criticism and awards. The awards go to the neatest hut and to the hut with the best and healthiest household life. A weekly inspection of the whole camp area is carried out by the camp committee. Once a week there is a cultural program in the social hall, and every Sunday afternoon all political cadres hold an educational lecture and open forum in the social hall. Holidays of a nationalist character are set aside for full days of sports events (volley ball with net and ball of rattan, ping pong on a table of sawn lumber, a chess tournament, races down the ridge), food that is a little better than usual, and a program of cultural activities, usually a play by the camp dramatics group.

This is the framework of the new society, here in the ancient forest.

80.

It is a sad illusion to think that colonialism can be destroyed merely by overthrowing a government. Here in this camp alone there are over 200 people who have taken up arms in readiness to do that. But the very system against which they turn their guns holds the hand that grips the trigger.

The change is needed not only in the methods of rule, but in those who will do the ruling. There is a theory that a new individual will be created when the material conditions of society have changed. We look at it a little differently: we believe that the individual must be made new in the very processes of the struggle to make the change. There cannot be a new, free society without new, free people to give it direction. Put people in power who are still affected by the corruptions of colonialism and the new society will be smothered in corruption before it is fully born.

Consider the average HMB who holds his gun proudly. He is a peasant who has never known the absence of foreign rule, nor have his ancestors, as far back as they can be traced. What does a foreign ruler expect of a colonial peasant? He must be subservient, he must use the word Sir, he must express respect for and admiration of the foreigner, the foreigner's ways and the foreigner's material possessions; he must never speak otherwise or he will lose his job, or he might be whipped, or even put in prison.

This peasant has lived in a society in which everyone cheats him. The landlord takes not only the major share of the crop that the peasant has sweated to produce and that the law supposedly allows him to take, but he goes further and takes more than the law allows. If the peasant protests, there is always eviction or a civilian guard to quiet him. Left with not enough to eat for the year, he must borrow, from his own landlord or from some private source (what bank would deal with a peasant?). He is charged the common usurious rate of 100 percent or 200 percent. If he goes to a lawyer, to a politician, or to an officer of any police agency, for protection, each takes from the peasant and gives nothing in return.

The peasant or the worker (who usually comes from a peasant background) must labor in an atmosphere in which it is respectable not to work hard. The landlord, the politician, the foreigner, do not soil their hands. Labor is not dignified, and it has little reward. It is a system that breeds indolence and lack of responsibility.

This is the background from which the ordinary HMB soldier or the ordinary political worker has come. It has implanted in him traces of all the bad features in the society around him, which he is forced to adopt in many cases for his own survival—petty dishonesties, unfairnesses, opportunist behavior, irresponsibility. They are not the normal features of his class, for his barrio life teaches him communal living. They are features of a corrupt and corrupting feudalism and imperialism that rule and profit best when they have demoralized him.

These are the attitudes that we seek to change, that must be changed in a people's movement. Two weaknesses in particular are anathema for Huks: one is intellectual dishonesty, the other

is opportunism. Nothing is to be hidden here, nothing is to be false. A ceaseless process of criticism and self-criticism, of appraisal and self-appraisal, goes on. If a man in a hut says he has no cigarettes when his comrade asks for one, and then is found smoking in private, it is an occasion for the calling of a meeting. If a man says he did not break a bolo and all signs point to his guilt, he will be talked to in a meeting until he admits he is at fault. If a man in the squad *balutan* steals an extra ration of rice on the trail up from town (by hiding it, let us say, in a hollow coconut), he is punished for it.

The punishments in camp go beyond criticism. The camp disciplinary committee ties a sign around the neck of the one in error, with the mistake lettered on it. He must go then from hut to hut, standing before each household, to show the sign, explain the fault, and promise not to repeat it. He must be made to feel the social onus of his offense. Grave offenses lead to removal from positions, to disarming, or to assignments at hard labor.

One of the most heavily-punished crimes in the movement is finance opportunism, mishandling of the movements' money, of the people's money. This is the counterpart of graft or the embezzlement of public funds in the government against which we fight. The most serious cases of this, where stealing or personal appropriation is clearly involved, result in death by shooting.

G.Y.'s boy companion, Ruming, was sent on a courier mission, to buy supplies in Manila. It was the first time that he had ever had money in his pocket and he was so carried away by the idea of it that he proceeded to buy soft drinks with it for all of his young friends in Longos. It was a minor matter, but it did not escape punishment: he was forbidden to go on courier missions for six months.

There is no place for corruption in the new society.

Every corrupting influence is banned in the camps. Gambling is strictly forbidden. Drinking is completely prohibited: I have never seen a trace of anything with alcoholic content in a Huk camp. One leading Huk military commander here in the south got drunk in a barrio and intruded on a community dance floor with his gun in his hand; he was removed indefinitely from any position of leadership.

Abuse of the barrio people, looting, rape, are punishable by death.

Here in Camp Balintawak the educational process, the molding of the new person, is continuous. It is projected that the Huk must be morally superior to his oppressors, that an act of protest against corruption or tyranny is not enough, that all the rotten values of the old society must be repudiated and replaced by living examples of the values of the new society.

There are those here who were once bandits or dissolute members of what is called the lumpenproletariat. Today they are among the most industrious and responsible members of our households.

A sense of responsibility is a highly lauded virtue. Anyone who fails to do an assignment out of irresponsibility is made to feel shame, not only shame to his or her companions in the hut, but shame to the nation and to the people for whom we fight. Qualities are emphasized not merely as Huk qualities, but as *Filipino* qualities.

A comrade in a hut fails in his task of sweeping the surroundings and he is sent around the camp with a sign and is told, If you were a barrio lieutenant is that the way your barrio would look? The camp supply officer fails to keep his accounts straight and he is arraigned before the whole camp and told, If you were in a government office is that how you would look after the property of the people?

These attributes are demanded of every Huk, but a leader, a cadre, must be above reproach. A cadre is not without weaknesses, but he fights them, he overcomes them, or he does not remain a cadre. The criticism in the meetings of the leading organs is almost brutally frank. I have seen it employed in American left-wing groups, but never as it is used here, where no man has a hidden portion of himself, no man deviates from a code of conduct without being put on the carpet.

Not only must a leader have the fewest weaknesses, but he gets no rewards for his position, only the reward of additional responsibility if he shows that he is capable. A leader eats the same food, the same amount of it, at the same table as does the merest rank-and-file member, he wears the same weathered and frayed clothes,

he has the same articles of equipment in his pack. Even if he has wealthy contacts in the lowlands he cannot receive as a personal donation any more than a peak of P200 per month ($100), and out of that he must pay his quotas to the movement. Any donation over that amount goes to the movement.

He must exhibit complete equality in his relations with all Huks, the highest comradeship, without favoritism, without arrogance, with patience, with fairness. He must be personally unambitious and self-sacrificing.

It is felt that this is the only type of person that can truly look after the interests of the people.

Belen, the courier, comes to Celia with pleading eyes. Tell me how to be a cadre, she says. I want to be a cadre.

81.

Celia and I have an advantage in the forest. We have each other. It is not a small factor in the balancing of life in this inhibited place. We all know deprivation, but the great majority of Huks know a strained, eroding form of it, the unhappy problem of men without women.

A large number of the men in this movement, particularly the cadres, have wives and families, whom they have not seen for many years. For one thing, in their barrios and towns, or in the city, they are wanted men, and they cannot return home. If they ever do, it is once in six months or more, under cover of darkness, for an hour. For another thing, they are assigned by the movement, and out of discipline they go, to regions far from their own, on expansion, or to fill needed posts in other provinces. They are away for years, and have years of absence ahead of them, for there are no leaves of absence or furloughs in the people's army.

But in our camps there are many girls and women—cadres, couriers, nurses—and there are the girls and the women of the organized barrios in the expansion areas. No promiscuity is allowed in our camps; a promiscuous girl is sent home. But relationships spring up, they cannot be denied. So if they are going to exist they must be controlled.

For the unmarried men this is not so much of a problem. They are free to court any unmarried girl in a camp or in a barrio. Some want to court Belen, the courier in our hut. They come to Celia, chairman of our household, and ask her permission first. Celia will discuss it with Belen and ask her if she minds. If there are no objections from either the chairman or the girl concerned, the courting can go on.

If a couple want to be married, obviously they cannot go to town for a ceremony. They are given a Huk marriage. A Huk marriage is performed by any ranking leader. Celia and I were married in this way in Manila, in addition to the legal ceremony. In the forest the ceremonies are much more elaborate, held in the social hall, with the whole camp attending. The soldier comrades prefer to swear fidelity with their hands and those of their brides joined upon a pistol, and to take their vows under an arch of rifles held by their comrades. The marrying leader swears them not only to loyalty to each other, but also to loyalty to the movement, above their relationship, and to loyalty to the principle of the equality of men and women, about which he gives a lecture that is the core of the ceremony.

Huk marriages are generally lasting and faithful ones, based upon a mutual service to the people's cause as well as upon mutual affection. They are found to be more enduring than the ordinary "legal" marriage.

For married men the problem is different, and not so easily solved. It has existed from the time of the Japanese occupation, during which many uncontrolled extra-marital relationships occurred, which were termed "*kwalingking* cases" in the movement. These were the source of much bitter criticism within the movement, and from families in the barrios.

To settle this problem on a moral plane, and to correct the feudal attitude that shapes the relationship in many of such cases, the movement has evolved a policy that is known as the revolutionary solution of the sex problem.

It is acknowledged that the work of a man, or of a woman, for the movement can possibly suffer because of prolonged sexual frustration. A lengthy discussion on the biological aspects of this took place at our recent conference. The decision is that extra-marital relationships are permissible under our circumstances,

that a man can take a forest wife, if it serves the interests of the movement. However, it can only be done with the observance of strict regulations.

Firstly, a married man cannot take a forest wife unless he can convince the leading committee in the Reco to which he belongs that either his health or his work are being adversely affected by absence from his wife.

Secondly, he must write to or otherwise communicate with his wife in the lowland and inform her of his intention and need to take a forest wife. He must, at the same time, under the principle of equality, give his wife the freedom to enter into a similar relationship in the barrio or city if she, too, finds herself unable to withstand the frustration.

Thirdly, the forest wife must be clearly informed that the man is already married and that their relationship will terminate when he is able to return to his regular wife. In other words, there must be no deception of the regular wife and no deception of the forest wife. If, at the end of the struggle, a man should decide that he prefers a permanent relation with the forest wife, he must completely separate from the previous wife.

These regulations are strictly followed. A national leader of the movement from Nueva Ecija was removed from his position of leadership and reduced to the rank and file for violating the procedures of the revolutionary solution of the sex problem.

This solution was not adopted without acrimonious debate. There were those who insisted that the regular wife must give her permission to the forest relationship. There were those, also, who argued that self-control and sublimation helped rather than hindered the work of a comrade, by heightening his sense of discipline and his sense of dedication to the movement. There have been those, too, who have thought that they could apply for a "revolutionary solution" every time they had a vagrant desire, on the grounds of being "oversexed," but they have been sharply criticized and turned down.

In general, it is a rigidly followed policy. Celia and I were involved in its formulation. We insist that many men would have no problem if they had overcome their feudal outlooks and had involved their wives in the struggle beside them.

82.

May 1951

Often, in the middle of the night, I am awakened and raise on my elbow to look outside. A lamp is burning in our little publication hut and Velas is there, running off pages on the mimeograph machine. The insect click of the mimeographing goes on all night long.

We are sending out a stream of written material, to the Recos, to the FCs, to the city, through the mail to our own selected mailing list of people. Since one of my tasks is to do and to supervise this work, and since our writers can be counted on one hand, I am busy from early light until one tree cannot be distinguished from another, scribbling or typing. The written word is the bulldozer of the national liberation effort, opening pathways to freedom in the minds of Filipinos.

It is rather astonishing how much we turn out with our limited facilities. This movement has no printing presses, only mimeograph machines. When one is captured or broken, a raid is staged to seize one in a government office in a town. Every store in the city that sells them is under surveillance by army intelligence. The principal charge against Amado Hernandez, arrested CLO president, is that he turned a mimeograph machine over to the Huks.

Half the labor of our squads *balutan* is bringing paper and ink up the mountain trails, and then back down again in leaflet or in pamphlet form. Leaflets are turned out to clarify every major issue and to project the theme of national liberation on every date with a nationalist significance. We have a newspaper of eight pages, *Titis* (Spark), in Tagalog, issued every two weeks. A pamphlet dealing with some major aspect of the struggle, running to 50 pages and including attempted illustrations, is produced at least once a month. *Kalayaan* (Freedom), a periodically-issued cultural magazine in Tagalog, includes stories, poems, and essays, and is very popular in Huk ranks. For use principally of cadres in the movement is a monthly theoretical magazine,

containing from four or five to a dozen articles on theoretical problems of the struggle.

In addition, we write and mimeograph every month two self-study booklets, one for Huk soldiers, one for political workers, very simply written, of four to six pages, with such titles as: What Imperialism Does to the Philippines, The Character of a People's Army, The Meaning of Discipline, Why the Working Classes Are Leading Our Struggle, Our Agrarian Program, Why We Criticize Each Other, Who Our Enemies Are and Who Our Friends Are, The Story of the HMB. At the same time, our textbooks for our schools are being completed, a difficult task because we lack source material and must make all our own formulations. Special study documents are also done, on How to Make a Leaflet, How to Run a School, The Techniques of Teaching, Propaganda Techniques, How to Organize the People.

We run off many copies of all of these ourselves, but this camp cannot take care of the whole country's needs. Therefore, we send sample copies for reproduction to all Recos, which have their own mimeograph machines and paper supplies. The Recos, too, produce leaflets and other materials to fit the issues and requirements peculiar to their regions. Most of the materials we ourselves produce is in English; much of it, however, is translated, mainly by Celia and Saulo, into Tagalog. In the Recos, Pampango, Bicolano, or Visayan translations are made.

At times, when I stop to think of it, I am rather surprised that our minds can function at such a high pitch on our meager diet.

83.

Over at the hut of the National Courier Division, Andoy, the supervisor of the girls, is leading them in a song. Every evening, after the end of working hours, at five o'clock, the young girls sit outside their hut and sing in chorus. The high delicate voices go through the rough environs of the camp with an almost painful sweetness.

I am fascinated by these young girls who flock to our camps, to become couriers, nurses or cultural activists. They come from

the barrios, simple, unsophisticated, ready to accept any hardship or discipline without a murmur. Most of them are pretty; they do not need to come here in search of courtship. They die in raids and in encounters as men do. When captured by the enemy they are abused and tortured in the special ways of indignity that women have to endure; some break, some never break, like men. They are all soldiers of the struggle.

In my years in the Philippines it is the Filipina that I have found the most interesting, perhaps because, in a colonial country, she is bowed under a double weight. She lacks the independence of her nationality, and she lacks the independence of her sex. In her soft, round face is mingled sadness, patience, and yet an almost tremulous eagerness that can only be translated as hope. In her eyes is a certain far away look as if they were fixed on horizons over which she would like to run. Under the calm features is a straining at the leash.

In the barrio, where there are no diversions and there is nothing to absorb her, her future is settled at sixteen or seventeen, when she is married. That is when the tremulous hope goes and the patience remains.

Just as the Huks are the avenue for the anger of the young men, so are the Huks the gateway to the hope of the young women. Hope for what? For a break in the dull monotony of barrio life and of the early future awaiting her. For the tremendous release of her personality that is found in the equality of life in our camps. For the chance to contribute to her country more than just the act of giving it sons. In the Huks she is a Filipino, whose purpose is the nation and not the mere confines of a single home and of a single man.

Here hope is alive. She has run over the horizon, taking the path to forest.

84.

On a May afternoon, when all the forest halls are open to the sun, we are clustered in our hut around the little battery radio. Jesse, lying on his stomach with his cheek on his hands. G.Y.,

lying on his side with his hand cupped to his ear. Luis, sitting with hands locked over his knees, staring expressionlessly at the ceiling. Reg, cross-legged, holding open fingers over his chin. Celia and I, lying flat on the opposite side of the radio from Jesse and G.Y.

We are listening to a judge pronounce sentence on our arrested comrades in Manila.

The announcer has described the scene. Soldiers, arms at the ready, crowd the courtroom, leaving little room for the spectators. Army troops, outside the courtroom, line the corridors and the stairway of the Manila City Hall. In the street, thick knots of troops are along the curbs and at every intersection, accompanied by tanks and armored cars. On the roof of the City Hall are machine guns, directed at the street. Out across the city, at all highway entrances, are checkpoints, strongly garrisoned. The army has declared a red alert for the day.

We smile at that. How they fear us. They have our leaders, and how they fear us.

The judge's voice comes faintly to us over the distance, reading a prepared statement. He has not prepared it himself, we know. His voice is strained and he stumbles a bit, as if he were unfamiliar with the text. He is saying that the Huk revolution is not a true Filipino revolution, that it is not like the revolution of 1896 or like all the hundreds of other revolts of Filipinos against colonial domination. He says that the Huk leaders are not nationalists, that they are agents of a foreign power who are taking advantage of the people and are betraying them into alien hands. So says the judge, reading the statement that has been coursed through (or prepared by) the American JUSMAG.

He finishes his reading and he addresses our comrades. We can visualize them, lined before him, under the guns, staring at him with level gazes from unemotional faces. All of them have upheld their actions, whatever actions there might have been. The judge is reading the sentences, for "rebellion complexed with murder, robbery, arson and kidnapping."

Federico Maclang, death.

Ramon Espiritu, death.

Honofre Mangila, death.

Magno Bueno, death.

Cenon Bungay, death.
Iluminada Calonje, death.
Jose Lava, *reclusion perpetua,* life imprisonment.
Angel Baking, *reclusion perpetua,* life imprisonment.
Simeon Rodriguez, *reclusion perpetua,* life imprisonment.
Federico Bautista, *reclusion perpetua,* life imprisonment.

On and on the flat tones drone, sentencing 15 others, to life imprisonment, to 17 years, to ten years. Six are women, one a 12-year-old girl, Naty Cruz, a courier, who is to be kept under "correction" until 18 then sentenced again as an adult. Filipinos, sentenced to cells and to the death chamber for struggling to be free.

The voice stops and we turn off the radio. I go out of the hut and take a deep breath. In every direction around me the forest is wide and free under the sun.

85.

The case of our Manila comrades (called the "Politburo Case" by the press) is a typical example of imperialist justice.

You see, say the imperialists and their puppets, we believe in legality. There exists the law. The law says that whoever has a grievance should take it into the courts, and the judge will decide it in accordance with the law. Of course the judge got his appointment at the recommendation of a landlord, but is that unlawful? Whoever takes the law into his own hands is acting illegally, and must suffer the consequences of the law. The Huks do not follow the law, therefore they must be given the legal penalty of death and long imprisonment.

There is no law in the Philippine Penal Code that defines a crime of "rebellion complexed with murder, robbery, arson and kidnapping." But the army says it is legal, the landlords say it is legal, the imperialists say it is legal, and lawyers and judges are always available to say it is legal, so men are sent to death under it, "legally."

When the army, or the PC, or the civilian guards enter a barrio and machine-gun rows of people selected at random without warrant or due process, or when they torture to death a man in

interrogation, it is done to establish law and order, and is legal. But when Huks in a civil war kill soldiers in battle or kill an informer who endangers the lives of many, it is murder and is illegal.

When the army and its agents raid the homes of peasants and and loot them, it is part of the anti-Huk campaign and is legal, but when the Huks raid their enemies and confiscate materials to further a rebellion, it is robbery and is illegal.

When an entire barrio is put to the torch and is burned to the ground by the army, it is destruction of a Huk base and is legal, but when the Huks burn army installations and government buildings during a civil war, it is arson and is illegal.

When government agents arrest people en masse and hold them in detention without bail, it is an emergency measure to thwart Huks and is legal, but when Huks capture and hold a soldier or a civilian who has abused the populace, it is kidnapping and is illegal.

Power is legal for those who have it; for those without power it is illegal to take it.

What is more legal than a colonial system? International law will uphold it. The Bell Trade Act is a legal agreement; the papers were signed with witnesses. The American army and navy is legally on Philippine soil; the Military Bases Agreement will stand up in the courts. When a national liberation movement comes into being, it is legal to suppress it, with the advice of the legal JUSMAG, with legal arms that are imported legally, under the legal Military Assistance Pact.

What exists is legal; what seeks to change it is illegal.

The law is always legal, but there are many kinds of law. Revolutionary law, for instance.

86.

June 1951

A report is received from civilians in the town. During an army operation a few days ago an American officer was observed in the field with the Philippine government troops. My country-

man—engaged in the suppression of Filipinos who want land, three meals a day, and the right to determine their own destiny.

I see their pictures in the newspapers that come up to us, JUSMAG officers, attending the social functions of the landlords and of the *compradores,* dressed in formal attire, holding cocktail glasses, with the lifted chins that pass for dignity in a military official on foreign service. Or pictures of them posing with officers of the Philippine army, in the attitude of chairmen of the board touring a subsidiary firm.

What do they think about, driving in a shiny official car with a retinue through squalid towns, making half-clad children and gaunt peasants in carabao carts jump aside, on tour of the "disaffected areas"? What do they think about, staring down at a ragged, dead peasant on a trail, slain with the American guns the delivery and use of which they have supervised? Do they have a sense of accomplishment? Do they have a pride in the doing of their duty?

Are these the descendants of Israel Putnam, who held the line of colonial farmers against the arrogant redcoats? Are these the heirs of General Sherman, who broke the back of the southern slaveholders in the days of a rising nation?

Is this the image that Americans would project to the world?

I reject that image, as all the world will reject it. It is not the democratic American that looks down at the dead and the deprived. It is the naked face of imperialism that holds on to colonies and investment areas with military force and that slaughters the people who oppose it.

My companions say, If that is not America, why don't the Americans stop what is done in their name?

They do not realize what it means, I answer. Believe me, they do not realize what it means.

87.

Who speaks for a people?

It is not so easy to say. For the most part every man speaks for himself, of what he knows, of what he believes, of what he wants.

Majorities are made when many people know and believe and want the same things.

When I speak to my Filipino companions and tell them that I believe in democracy, in equality, and in the right of all people to be free, I am speaking as an American, who acquired those beliefs in America. Am I among the majority in my own country? I think I am, but no one will know until the other Americans have finally spoken up, too.

My Huk comrades listen to me, and they say, You are a good American. When they talk of the JUSMAG they say, Those are the bad Americans. In their eyes there are two different kinds of Americans.

There are two different kinds of Filipinos, too: those who fight for greater freedoms, and those who try to suppress them. The Huks speak for the masses who want more freedom.

Who speaks for Americans, the JUSMAG, or a man like myself?

88.

Can a man in his heart belong to two countries, loving each for its people, for its traditions, and for the beauty of its land?

I am such a man, born under northern skies and won by tropics, having known love and suffering and fulfillment in countries half a world apart, having found in each a home for honor and a hearth for joy, having fought and sacrificed for both.

I am an American, and I love American earth as only one born upon it can love it. The rivers mirroring the hills, the infinite shapes and colors of the many-featured land, the cities sprawling where the harbors are, the places where strong dreaming men dug and fought and bled and stayed, the last cluster of homes upon a rocky height where the dreams ran out—it is all in my heart forever, and I can never let it go.

But in my heart as firmly is the feathery lift of bamboos beyond a sunlit field, a line of tufted palms along a coast, the brilliant sun that shimmers upon color like the echo of a struck gong, the

green rice in paddies in the water resembling brush strokes in an Asian painting, the places where for centuries the people have clung desperately to land denied to their belonging and that they have made beautiful even when their dreams remained but dreams.

The country of my heart is all the earth, and the people of my heart are all those who live upon the earth. I dream of a time when there will be no boundaries, when no lines will be drawn upon the earth to say, There is your home, and all else is foreign soil. In that time all those who draw lines now will have no place, and those who now stand behind the unreasoning barriers—Americans or Filipinos, Russians or Chinese, Indian or Arab, British or Kiyuku—will know only the divisions of the human family that mark and join brothers.

If I am beside my Filipino brothers today in this struggle it is because I realize that this lovely country cannot be fully enjoyed by any of us, its traditions cannot be alive, its people cannot fully flower, until they have driven out those who have drawn the lines that restrict these things. It is because I realize that there cannot be mutual respect in the world until the dignity of all is established. The road to the brotherhood of all lies through the struggle for the achievement of the dignity of each.

Here I do not stand beside Filipinos alone. I stand beside mankind.

89.

It is the time of our monthly camp meeting, and all households suspend activities and gather in the social hall. In the afternoon sun everyone comes down across the ridge, strolling in twos and threes, to meet in clusters on the clean-swept, park-like area around the social hall, to gossip and to chatter until the meeting is called to order. Although we live in close proximity in the camp, we always greet our neighbors as if we had journeyed across a city to meet.

Our social hall is a large rectangular structure, with an earthen

"dance floor" occupying the center surrounded by tiers of log seats like the bleachers about a basketball court. At the far end is a big stage where our dramatic group performs and where the orchestra for the weekly dances sits (a guitarist, a man with paper-and-comb, and a group that claps hands and sings). Today the hall is jammed, every seat occupied and an overflow crowd on the stage; everyone is here except the security detail on duty in the outposts.

The agenda is long, as it always is at every meeting, and nobody minds. Late arrivals are derided, the cry going up to, Give them a sign! Alambre, chairman of the camp committee, gets up and waves the bit of paper with the agenda scribbled on it, and the noisy talk from the tiers is ended. First is a long series of reports, from every section of the camp committee and from every household, but it is not a dreary recital. Each report is listened to closely to be checked for accuracy. There is an astonishing civic consciousness here. When, for instance, the camp supply officer reads off his accounts, giving the monthly budget and expenses and the exact amounts purchased of rice, *mongo,* sugar and other items, someone is certain to leap up and challenge his figures or to demand why so much *mongo* was bought and not enough lard with which to cook it *ginisa.*

Echoes of a New England town meeting.

In the case of household reports there is competition to quicken the attention. The neatest and best-run households are given awards. When a representative makes a report, therefore, his or her neighbors have ears cocked and will quickly challenge a claim that calisthenics have been held every morning and that surroundings have been swept daily; the representative is not even secure from his own household members, who will just as quickly leap up to deny that a claimed educational discussion was held on, let us say, The Rise of Nationalism in Asia. The camp interest takes precedence over the household interests, just as the interest of the household takes precedence over the interests of its individual members.

The awards follow the reports. There are no material prizes. It is a matter of honor, of prestige, but much desired.

We have new business. Announcement of forthcoming camp

meetings. The next midweek debate is on the subject of, The November Elections Should Be Boycotted. In such programs, cadres are excluded from active participation; it is the rank and file that conducts them and that speaks in them; it is part of their education and development. Announcement, too, of the all-day festivities on August 26, anniversary of the Cry of Balintawak, date of the launching of the revolt against Spain, the first Asian revolution against colonialism. A flurry of suggestions comes on what to include in the program for that day—tournaments, special food, a drama. A group of security men volunteer to make an extra trip to the coconut groves for nuts, so we can have *guinatan*.

Finally, on the agenda, is criticism. This is the occasion when the highest cadres in camp can be criticized by the least of our number. It can be done at any time, of course, but usually through organizational channels. Here, however, it can be done directly and before all. Alambre, of the camp committee, gets the first blow. Corn was harvested recently at a nearby production base, but he did not send anyone to get our share. He is negligent of the camp welfare, says a soldier. Jesse is criticized for giving his support and applause to one team as against another in the last volleyball tournament; as the highest cadre, it is claimed, he has no right to take sides or to show favoritism. G.Y. is on the carpet for the failure to hold meetings in his household; his helper, Douglas, says that they only "caucus" once in a while.

An HMB soldier also gets assailed by leaders. He had tacked up a note on the camp bulletin board making sarcastic remarks about a leading cadre. That, it is pointed out, is a harmful and sneaking way of making criticisms that can only cause unhealthy relations in our camp. If criticisms are to be made, let them be made here in the open, in the proper way.

It is late when the meeting is adjourned. Twilight is rising up the sides of the ridge like a tide. Household cooks run ahead of the rest, to get the fires started. In the huts that we pass on the way to our own, woodsmoke comes out in long swirls to merge with the greying light. The red patches of fire are reminders of the common flame that burns in us all in this place in the forest.

90.

July 1951

And now in the forest a strange time begins.

For months we have been pouring out our literature, our directives, our appeals, sending them from this far point in the Sierra Madre to Recos, to the lowlands, to people in barrio and in city. We are like those who lean over a deep well and drop pebbles into its interior, waiting to hear the far hollow echo of them striking water. Now when the sound comes back to us it is a strange echo, like the lost cry of someone drowning in that depth.

The echo that comes is that only a part of the leaflets and the pamphlets that we send out are being distributed. Fear is beginning to replace daring in many places. Enemy agents swarm everywhere and have arrested some distributors in Manila and in towns. In areas where our leaflets appear there are retaliations, with serious abuse of the general population. Our members in nucleus and in section begin to lie low, afraid. Literature piles up in huts and in homes, rots unused in hidden places.

In the Recos there are continuous operations by army troops, and our people have to be mobile, to change camps often. Camps have been raided and the mimeographing equipment seized. You are sending us too much, comes the complaint. We do not have the means or the time to reproduce it. Or, there is the report, Our school that we planned has been postponed because of the operations. Or—there is no report at all.

Stranger still is the echo of something of which we have not heard before: the surrenderee.

In Nueva Ecija, a leader of Reco 1, Taguiam, surrenders. In Rizal and in Laguna, HMB soldiers surrender to the authorities, taking their arms with them; they reveal the location of camps and raids follow. In the districts and in the sections, too, there are surrenderees, and, eager to avoid punishment or maltreatment, they turn over the names of comrades and sympathizers to the enemy; arrests follow. An uneasiness is in our camps; every time a man surrenders a camp has to be abandoned and relocated.

Why do they surrender? Because many have joined in the hope

of quick victory, and now that the struggle is prolonged they have lost their taste for it. Because the enemy have the advantage in firepower and in modern weapons and more Huks are dying now than ever before. Because the raids and the bombings are often and the food runs out and they lie often hungry on the wet ground in flight. Because they worry about a family back in a barrio without a breadwinner. Because their families are contacted by government agents and word is sent up that they will be treated well, that their offenses will be forgotten, if they come down. Because they violate discipline in the HMB and surrender to avoid revolutionary punishment. Because in the long history of the Filipino people there has always been oppression, and hardship, and is it not better to endure it than to starve in the forest? There are many reasons. When the tide of the struggle is running our way, individual weaknesses are submerged in the flood of high spirits; when the enemy is strong and the tide is not our way, those weaknesses emerge and turn men into the slimy things that scuttle for safety on the exposed shoreline.

The dead leaves are falling from the tree, says G.Y.

The dead leaves.

A storm is shaking the forest, and the leaves are falling. In the forest there are always falling leaves, and new ones that grow to replace them. But in the HMB there are fewer recruits now, too, and no arms for the new ones. It is a bad season.

We had thought that the people moved at our pace, to the rapid click of the mimeograph machine. We had thought that the morale and the discipline in this camp was the morale and discipline everywhere. We had thought that by the leaders setting a high tempo we could set high the tempo of the revolution.

We have been living in a fool's paradise.

91.

Lawin, one of the security soldiers assigned as security to our household, is sitting in the hut, cleaning his Garand rifle. He is leaning on a corner pole, his feet upon a railing that was once a

sapling, those feet that never know shoes, with soles like brittle horn. While he works he murmurs a little song to himself, *Ang ibon pipit* . . . It is the rifle that makes him happy. Rubbed to gleaming, it lies across his ragged lap.

Something is curious about the gun. The sights have been removed. *Ka* Lawin, I say, why are there no sights on your gun? Sights? I have to point out the place. Oh, that. It got in the way. It was always catching on something.

It seems that he doesn't know the use of the gunsight. In the camp I begin to notice the guns of the others. Many have the sights removed.

The men in our camps are supposed to be picked men, security men for the leading organs of the movement, but many do not know the full use of the weapons they hold to defend us. They do not know how to take aim, or how to hit a target. In an encounter they merely point the gun and fire it. In an ambush they just blaze away and knock over the enemy, when they do knock him over, with a hosing effect rather than with accuracy.

There are, of course, many HMBs who know how to shoot. They have learned before joining the movement or from the sheer long period of holding a gun. The average recruit, however, a peasant who has never had a gun in his hands before, receives no formal training in the HMB. Ammunition is very limited; none can be spared for target practice. There are few HMBs, indeed, who are in a position to give instruction. The recruits go along with the veterans and do what they see them doing.

The gunsight question is an inkling of the very low technological level of this people's army. It is on a par with the half-primitive methods that the average peasant uses to work his farm. It is a matter that could, of course, be overcome, if the know-how were supplied. However, in the entire Philippine national liberation movement there is not one military leader of any professional caliber. Neither G.Y. nor any of the staff of his Military Department has had formal military training nor has had the means for studying it. On the Field Command level, one, Victoria, has been a Philippine army non-com. Less than half a dozen cadres have had some ROTC training—Cente, Ledda.

Others who are well-known as guerrilla commanders—Linda Bie, Viernes, Malabanan, Estrella, Dimasalang, Bundalian, Nelson, Sumulong—have picked up competence in mobility, ambush, and surprise attack from experience in doing it. Elementary ambush tactics are about the limit of understanding in any others.

Huk weapons themselves are almost entirely of the small arms category, the Browning Automatic Rifle being the heaviest and that relatively scarce. In this important camp there are perhaps ten. A few machine-guns have been captured from the enemy, but they rust in the mountains, unused and lacking ammunition. No one has grenades, or would know how to employ them. There are no mortars, and very few Huks have ever seen one; no one knows how they operate; when we are shelled by mortars by the army, no one knows what kind of weapon is shooting at us. The bazooka is known only by its name.

In the case of other techniques usually associated with guerrilla warfare there is incredible ignorance. The knowledge of dynamite or explosives of any kind is extremely meager, and they remain unemployed. An effort was made to develop explosives in Bulacan, but the man experimenting was blown to bits and the project was dropped. Land mines are wholly unknown, with no application. Even a technique such as that of the Viet Minh of denying highway mobility to the enemy by digging ditches across roads is unconsidered here. Economic or military sabotage to cripple the enemy's potential has neither been tried nor conceived of. The fact is, the HMB does not have technicians nor any branch assigned to develop techniques.

Yet this is the movement that years of repression have failed to crush, against which the entire weight of the Philippine army has been flung, that is enduring in the face of massive military aid from the country that has had the most advanced technology and the greatest abundance of weapons in world history. Some of the best minds from American military academies are out here meeting their match from untrained peasants.

What do the Huks have? They have their courage and their hope. Put but an idea as a weapon in their hands and they are ready to storm the future.

92.

A leaflet, dropped from a plane. It comes fluttering down on the forest, all along the Sierra Madre.

We stare at it, spread out upon the floor of our hut. Wanted: Dead or Alive, it reads, and our pictures look up at us, the queer, retouched, sinister pictures of a police circular. Jesus Lava, P150,000. Luis Taruc, P100,000. Casto Alejandrino, P50,000.

I have a P30,000 reward on my head.

Wanted, for the criminal act of desiring and fighting for independence and freedom. Wanted, for the crime of trying to abolish colonialism. Wanted, for the offense of trying to do away with feudal landlordism. Wanted, for the despicable act of upholding the dignity of man.

This is a new tactic in the suppression campaign. It is aimed at tempting the Huk soldier to betray his leaders, to surrender and to point out the camps of cadres, or to shoot a leader to claim a reward. It is intended, too, to propagandize us as bandits, to produce a mass impression of us as criminals before the people.

The enemy is introducing many refinements, impatient at being unable to crush us. They have dog teams, now, great massive brutes, trained to rend a man to shreds, used on our trails by army patrols. The air force has resorted to the use of napalm, the jellied gasoline bomb, a terror weapon. We have reports of the bombings, of the hell of fire gushing through the forest.

When one of our posts in a town is detected now, it is not raided. Agents let the purchased food go through, but they inject poison into the canned goods and put ground glass in the sacks of rice. In the mountain camps our comrades die in agony.

This is a deadly game, played with deadly rules.

93.

Sound of a whistle, raw-toned and startling.

Down through the camp everyone runs for cover. Clothing or blankets drying on a rattan line between trees are snatched off

and thrown into huts. Nothing that is not the color or the shape of the forest can be left visible.

An observation plane is over the trees.

The slow little craft, with the unhurried engine, taking its time, goes up and down above us, back and forth in parallel lines, like a man plowing a field of air. Innocuous in appearance as an insect, it is the dangerous eye of the enemy, trying to peer beneath our lid of green. As long as it is there we lie and hold our breaths, as if our breathing could be heard.

We peer out under the *anahaw* of our roof at the plane. It seems to hang there over our heads. What does it see? It goes, then suddenly it turns and comes back again, circling. The sound drifts away until we strain, imagining it. It is gone, but what did it see?

We are living under constant alert, for the planes are always there. Whoever violates aerial security in our camp is severely punished. No cooking can be done in daylight hours now; smoke can lift like a signal over the forest. Cooks rise before dawn and cook for both breakfast and lunch; at noon our food is always eaten cold, unless there is heavy rain, when the ban is relaxed. The evening meal must be cooked after dark. At times when the fires are blazing in the dark, a plane will suddenly come in a night reconnaisance. Then there is wild scramble in the huts to throw water or earth on the flames, to beat out embers.

The enemy's eye must never see, and his ear must never hear. The chopping of wood and the pounding of wooden paddles on clothes down by the stream are forbidden in the morning, not allowed until mid-afternoon, when army patrols are least likely to be upon the trails. We are quiet whispering things, hidden in the corners of the forest.

All children are removed from our camps, sent to lowland friends, to stay with peasant families. The old and the infirm, too, are removed, to barrios and to production bases.

Our huts no longer have sides built upon them; they are all open, ready for the swift roll and for the springing leap into the forest in case of surprise. Our belongings are always packed; if we take out any article for use, we immediately buckle straps again. We sleep fully clothed; we have not slept disrobed since

we came into the forest. Even when taking a bath we do not strip completely. One ear is always cocked for alarms.

We are living on the rim of peril.

94.

In the early dawn I go down the steep path by our hut to the stream to wash, half-clinging to branches and to tree trunks on the way. The forest is filled with mist and bushes around me loom out of it with the arms of the drowning. I look upward and only the roofs of one or two huts are visible, floating on the mist. The boles of trees emerge from it and vanish again in the upper swirls, rootless growth and disembodied limbs. A guard goes up and down, only his head and his shoulders and the end of the rifle moving in the air. I think now that we are all ghosts in a phantom forest. . . .

In late afternoon, on the trail, we emerge in rain from forest into an old, abandoned production base. It has been raining but the rain has lifted and under the nacreous clouds there is the strange pearly pre-twilight clarity that makes all colors vivid. The enemy has been here and has burned everything. Now it is overgrown with tall grass and vines. The fallen charred roof-poles of a hut protrude mutely from the dense growth. I see the tiny bright wet green leaves of a vine upon the wrinkled black surface of the wood. From far down the slope, carried a long way on the moist air, comes the boom of a fired gun. . . .

At noon, in our hut, I sit listening. All around the others lie, breathing in siesta. There is something in the noon, the stillness of it. Ever since our camp was raided at that hour, and we fled into the forest, there has been a menace in the noon. The forest stands in the hush of sun. No leaf moves. All shadows are immobile. I sit unmoving too, hearing the silence, waiting for a shot to ring out in the forest. . . .

95.

August 1951

An ES unit is in camp, resting. They sit on the log benches down by the volley-ball court, surrounded by an admiring crowd, telling with modest grins of their latest operations. The uniforms they wear, exact replicas of the Philippine army Ranger Units' garb, are oddly incongruous in the haphazardly clothed camp.

These are some of the men engaged in Economic Struggle, Huks carefully selected for their daring and for complete trustworthiness. They are, to put it briefly, money-raisers for the movement, in ways unorthodox in normal times but wholly suited to a revolutionary period.

During the night or day in some town believed secure a landlord or a wealthy merchant or a politician who has lined his pockets with public funds, all hostile to the Huks, will receive a knock on the door, and will of course open it to army men, and will have himself thoroughly relieved of all valuables. Or a checkpoint manned by what appear to be army men will be set up on a road and all affluent vehicles will be detained for investigation (and confiscation). Banks, the offices of alien businessmen, government warehouses, all receive their official-looking visitors. Sometimes these units are detected, and they have to shoot their way out of a town.

ES teams in civilian garb also levy taxes, especially on alien-owned enterprises in the Huk areas. An American owner of a lumber mill can get his logs out of the Sierra Madre if he donates to the Huk fund-raisers. An American who owns a transportation line in the provinces can avoid having his buses shot up and burned if he will help subsidize the revolutionary movement. This is the practical business of promoting a struggle.

We are always happy to see an ES unit arrive in camp. It indicates that we have the means to eat for another month or two.

In the American Revolution there were the same type of units, employed to confiscate from the Tories. They were called Committees of Public Safety.

96.

Maneng, short, stocky commander of the ES unit now in camp, is sitting on a log bench, his arm spread out on the backrest, casually. On the under part of the forearm is a large red swollen area with a purplish hole where the bullet went in. Jesse Lava stands over him, probing in the hole with an instrument. Sun and leaf shadow mottle them and the silent circle of watchers. Up in a tree a lizard says, in even tones, *Tuko, Tuko.*

There is no anesthetic. Maneng's arm lies on the bench without a tremor. In Pampanga, he has the reputation for capturing armored cars single-handed, leaping upon them and pistolling the machine-gunners. He talks quietly, in a soft conversational voice, telling of how he was shot. Now and then Jesse, working unhurriedly, asks him a question, conversationally.

The ES unit had made a successful operation in a town, netting P11,000, and were resting on boulders beside a stream, when army troopers, following fast, overtook them and made a surprise attack. In the hasty retreat the comrade carrying the money was killed. Maneng, already secure in the forest, saw the man shot. In the hail of enemy fire, he ran back amid the boulders and recovered the bundle with the money, but was shot in the arm in the process. No one else, escaping, knew that he had the money; everyone thought it had been lost, with the dead man. So it was reported by the first arrivals in camp. But Maneng went to the finance officer and delivered the P11,000.

The lizard chirps his sleepy note. Over the sun and leaf pattern on Maneng's brown cheek a single drop of perspiration runs. No trembling touches the fingers of his hand. A faint smile comes to his lips as he says that he was clumsy amid the rocks.

The probe comes out of the dark hole with a dull lump at its end. It tinkles when it is dropped into a basin. The bullet. A trickle of blood runs over Maneng's arm.

After the bandaging, he gets up and pulls his sleeve down over his arm. He doesn't look at those who watch him. He walks away, buttoning the sleeve.

97.

Day after day one can see the wall that is the forest and never be aware of its individual features. The eye sweeps over detail without being aware of separate trees, as one is unnoticing of separate buildings in a crowded street or of single columns in the Parthenon. A single tree. It is no more to be noticed than are single ants or single blades of grass. The pattern of its growth is lost in the woven mass of the forest. It is as tangled with its kind as is a human life.

Here is a tree, one of a multitude, clutching at the soil, reaching for the sun in mute desperation of life. Its roots have grabbed the nourishment from other roots, it stunts all other growth around it, and in its turn it is the prey of parasites that wind upon its skin and spread their mats upon its smothered limbs. Higher up, in foliage, its identity is lost. Great vines link it with its fellows there, and when it is cut it does not fall, but dangles, legless and horrible, suspended by the hair.

98.

There was a time when the forest was wholly ours and we lived in it as within a fortress, issuing forth at will to spread panic among our foes. The enemy does not dare to enter, we would say. We will carry the fight to him.

Now the forest is like a breached wall, through which the government troops pour at their will. There is no place in the forest to which they cannot go, armed with their massive firepower, and we are the ones who move, step aside, take cover. There are Ranger units, American-trained, that enter the forest at a far point and travel through it quietly, seeking out our camps. Our forces, too, rove about, seeking them. It is like two blind men in a darkened room who, when they come into contact, lash out desperately, bloodily.

We do not seek encounters now, only rarely entering a town or

attacking army garrisons. Ammunition is hard to get, and it is difficult to replace a gun that wears out or is taken to the enemy by a surrenderee. Ambushes, once a prime source of weapons, are hard to stage now, when army troops move on the highways in large convoys, heavily armed. Of course, there is always the black market and the smugglers, but the prices have gone up fantastically, and we lack also funds.

The trails, too, are no longer ours. When our units go down to the towns to pick up purchases, the army often lies in ambush, and our men are slaughtered. At times ten or a dozen die upon emerging from the forest. Our squads *balutan* return to camp with one man missing, two men missing, familiar faces gone from the huts and the social hall. We used to ask them, Where is Pedring? or Where is Sorsogon? and they would go on by with averted eyes, answering in the brief way of men who do not wish to talk about the matter, He is dead. Now we merely count them, silently, as they come in tiredly, one or two at a time. The others are not discouraged, after losing a comrade. They tie on the empty sacks and go off on the trail whenever their turns arrive. We will be more careful this time, they say.

Enemy raids go on continually along the forest edge, striking at our district committees that have the direct contact with organizations in the barrios. Our organizers die in lonely huts in sudden bursts of fire that come out of underbrush. And yet, somewhere, a new hut goes up, smaller, more skillfully hidden, with someone new assigned to occupy it. But we are being bled of cadres.

In the barrios the army or the civilian guards have permanent barracks now and are always among the people. There are more informers because they feel protected and it is harder for Huks to reach and to liquidate them. Our contact men have to crawl past guards to get into a barrio.

Some of the Huks are bitter about the people. The people, they say, are opportunistic. When we are with them they are friendly to us; when the enemy is with them they are friendly to the enemy. But it is wrong to be idealistic about the people. They are flesh and blood and they suffer much. We are in the forest, where we can hide and fight, but they are naked to suppression.

They are helpless before abuse, and who can stand up to abuse and robbery month after month after month? They make their compromises, but the other side does not win them. They are ours, and they will always be there, ready to follow us, when we are able to lead them.

But when we try to take the offensive today, our comrades die, die by the dozens, and arms and equipment still pour ashore in Manila from American ships, and new BCTs still take to the field.

The truth is, we have lost the initiative that we sought to take. We are back where we started from, completely on the defensive.

99.

There is the sensation, now, of being in a vise. From the beginning of this struggle, in 1946, the movement was on the defensive. The struggle began with the use of the mailed fist against us, and not with our bold launching. For years the Huks have fought to get out of the vise of repression. For a time, many months ago, we thought that all signs favored it, and we took the offensive ourselves, but now the iron sides of circumstance close in on us again.

In Manila, where a few months ago we had sent a whole new team of cadres, almost the entire City Committee is arrested in a single night of raids. It has sought to organize too boldly and too quickly, without proper safeguards against a greatly intensified enemy intelligence. Here, too, there is betrayal, by a woman whom we had trusted, who had been approached by Magsaysay with money, and who had put agents on the trail of a courier who had visited her.

In the Visayas, on the island of Panay, Reco 6 is broken through the act of a leading cadre, Alfredo Gloria, who went over to the enemy and who led military intelligence agents disguised as Huks into the Reco camp and who himself helped to shoot down his former comrades. And a civilian informer from a barrio, on Panay, leads army troops to the camp of Guillermo

Capadocia, and they shoot him down in the dawn when he emerges from his hut. (Cap is gone, the slim electric Cap.)

These are betrayals. There are uglier forms. The district committee member who kills the district secretary, decapitates him, and brings the bloody head in a sack to the army to claim the reward. The Huk in the outpost who rises in the middle of the night and tommy-guns his two companions, trading their heads, too, for his freedom and money.

Betrayals seldom occur when the tempo is high, when victory is a talked-of thing. They happen when the ground gives way, and uncertainty yawns. Then the weak run to make their accomodations with those who appear strong.

The tempo is slack. The struggle is now prolonged.

It is time when renewals are needed, but the well of determination is not equally deep in us all. We sit upon this island and see the guns pour in for those whom we fight. Whatever allies we might have, they can reach no hand to us, the sea is there between us. The sea, too, is a vise that squeezes in our isolated lives.

We do not have space here. We live and move in the same space that the enemy occupies. There is no place to retreat, no place that is not accessible by road, by plane, or by a couple of days on a trail; no question here of liberated areas. And the sea is always at our backs. In this confined space, with an aggressive enemy, there is only continual movement that can preserve us. But mobility, too, has its menace. Our armed forces fight, march, fight, march, fight, until they are exhausted, with no time or place to rest and to recuperate.

We look at a map and wonder where to move next.

It is no longer victory that preoccupies us. It is survival.

100.

September 1951

Suddenly the towns below swarm with enemy agents. All civilians must give an accounting of themselves; all transients in a locality must be reported. No civilian can purchase more food in a marketplace than his family can consume in a week. Check-

points are more numerous, and undercover agents ride on all the buses and the trains, watching for couriers.

It is the purchase of food that bothers us. We are a camp of 200 people, with a major supply problem. When the enemy begin their system of limiting purchases in marketplaces, our organization in the town devises a system of counteracting it, going to each family and collecting a ganta of rice apiece from their weekly quota. It is something, but it is not enough; our ration of rice is cut in half and we take up notches in our belts.

To the north, near Santa Maria, our military training school and a nearby FC camp become exposed. They are bombed from the air, and all day long we hear the rumbling booms. Days later a wounded survivor comes, half-crawling, on the trail. The military students have been driven north, toward Central Luzon, harassed on the route by ambushes, in which he himself was shot. He tells of the death of Malabanan.

Then come the unmistakable signs of a major operation. The banning of civilian movement in the fields. The arrival of troops in trucks, carrying walkie-talkies, hand-cranked field generators, boxes of ammunition, cartons of rations. In the city raids, some of those who were arrested have been in this camp, studying in our school. Who knows if others who have passed through here in recent months have not surrendered or been captured, and exposed our site? Anyway, this camp has been here for some time, and the supply trails that lead to it are deeply worn and obviously much used. It would be a miracle if troops, once in the forest, would not come upon them. In our camp, twice a week, we hold evacuation drill, simulating alert, packing and moving out upon the trail, while security officers time us and check the area to see that no papers or other revealing material is left behind.

Each day now, somewhere in the forest or on its margin, comes the sound of gunfire. It comes from army patrols, and only rarely are they engaged with our men. They are very much afraid of ambush, and they fire at anything they see. When they come upon a hut or a clearing, whether abandoned or not, they open fire. The forest is filled with abandoned huts and clearings. In the newspapers the report will appear: Huk stronghold reduced.

In the middle of September we have intelligence advice to

evacuate our camp. There is no delay. It is hard to leave Balintawak, the longest and the dearest of our forest homes, but sentiment, like inertia, is deadly to guerrillas. We leave it empty and open under the trees.

For two hours we walk in the water up river from Balintawak. Planes go over, flashing silver in the sun. We scatter to either bank to kneel in the water under the spread of trees. We do not go far. A kilometer in the forest is a deep enough hole in which to hide. At a long curve in the river, with a high steep bank on one side and a low flat stretch on the other that has sand and bleached white driftwood, we stop and erect huts, back in the trees. It is pleasant here, full of sun, and we are unworried, resting in the warm sand, the high bank covering both river approaches. We call it Malibu Beach.

Four days pass here. All is quiet. We think of digging in, building stronger huts than the temporary shelters we have erected. Supplies are very low. Can we risk sending out a squad? A group leaves early on the fifth morning.

We are at the river washing clothes, half an hour later, when a thunderous racket of shooting breaks out down river, so loud that it seems just around our bend. We are packed and ready when the squad *balutan* comes tumbling back, breathing hard. They had passed through Camp Balintawak and on its outskirts had run with almost physical contact into army troops thick on the trail. Fortunately our men fired first, dropping an army man, and got away in the confusion.

At once the command to move. Into the river again and upstream for half a day. It is rough traveling, the water running in rapids, with little islands of rock and tough bushes dotting the river. The army troops must have radioed for planes, because they appear above the river, following its route. The river is the worse place to be caught for strafing, the deep water and rocks making running difficult. We duck for cover along the banks or simply dive under the scrubby bushes in midstream, feeling naked and vulnerable. It is still better than making a trail walking in the forest.

We have Walter with us whose eye knows all the forest. He has a site in mind that he has been saving for an emergency. Suddenly he guides us through thick brush to a little creek flowing

secretly in a green tunnel of trees. Up this a short distance, then aside, to climb a very tall, steep, overgrown cliff. It is a long climb and we sit among roots often to rest. At the top we are on a plateau with gently rolling terrain, threaded by a creek. Here we camp and call this place Tibet.

Again, for a few days, a hiatus of quiet. The food supply is very precarious; we even try eating the starch used for ironing clothes. An emergency supply squad goes all the way south to Pagsanjan, by a circuitous route, a journey of several days for fast men, to bring back a couple of sacks of rice. It is enough to continue us on *lugaw*. The squad passes Balintawak on the way back. The army has burned it and has left. It is a place of ashes now, the scorched trees standing there to make of it a black tomb.

At Tibet, one evening, I find G.Y. in his hut, crouching by his little battery radio. The batteries are so weak that he must put his ear against the set to hear. In a small notebook he is jotting down lines. It is some important news item, I think, probably bearing on our situation. I peer over his shoulder, where the light of the fire is on the page. He is writing the words of a current popular romantic ballad, something to sing in the next camp program.

On a quiet morning, a roar in the sky. Planes again! Whoever is in the open leaps for cover. A flight of P-51s comes over the forest at tree-top level. They go over and they come back, over and over again, at the same height, precisely above our camp, lifting only to circle and to dip again. We are certain that they have discovered us. The shrieking of the engines is deafening. One of our companions has his pistol out, instinctively, a pistol against planes. The only clear thought in my mind is of the ack-ack we had in World War II and of how we loved it, and of the fact that guerrillas have no defense whatsoever against planes. Except their invisibility.

The planes disappear as if they had plunged into the forest, and then we hear the machine-guns at work. They have dived below the plateau, to the river's course. They go up and down the river, machine-gunning the banks, where a few days ago we had lain in cover. So they think we are there, along the river.

The planes are still diving along the river when great explo-

sions erupt in the forest on the other side of our camp, toward the sea. They do not have the shattered-crockery sound of mortars. It is a deeper hoarse crash. Artillery? Howitzers? Either that or naval patrol boats off the shore, firing inland. There are no direct hits, but we feel nevertheless that we are a target. Someone at headquarters has studied reports and concluded that we are in this area.

This is further confirmed by the arrival of intelligence men, with reports that in the towns the army elements are boasting to the civilians that they have the top Huk leadership surrounded.

Without delay a meeting is called of leading cadres. It goes on all afternoon and through half the night, in Jesse's hut. We have a scarcity of fuel and no lamps are lit, the voices coming strangely out of the dark. We are in a dangerous position. It is evident that the enemy knows who we are, or has had the means to guess. We can be cordoned in here with little chance to escape, in this narrow strip between Laguna de Bay and the ocean, the patrolled sea to the east, the troops on trails and in towns to the west, the guarded Famy-Infanta road to the north, rivers to the south where fords can be watched. Here we can starve or the army can thrust in and trap us. We are a large group, outbalanced by the considerable number of nonmilitary cadres. Once fully cordoned, we can suffer bad losses.

The only alternative is to split up and to move fast and far. One large group will head north at once with cadres to be dispersed among the Central and Northern Luzon Recos. Another group will move simultaneously to the Bicol region, to reinforce Reco 5. Jesse, G.Y. and old Pando will divide the remaining forces and stay in different sectors of the Reco 4 area. Our orientation had been to keep the leading organs together, but that is all changed now. We have finally been driven to adjust ourselves to the reality of our overall situation. We cannot function like an organization on the eve of power; we must exist like an organization fighting for its life. In one abrupt evening the pattern is altered. We move within twenty-four hours.

It is decided that Celia and I will be sent north, with the northbound group, to Reco 1.

101.

A year ago Celia and I would have been appalled at the thought of the journey for which we now so calmly prepare.

We have what is estimated to be a one month march ahead of us. The enemy is in the midst of an operation all along the Sierra Madre, seeking to draw a cordon in upon us, and, it can be assumed, will be on the alert for movements, ready for interception or pursuit. We have almost no food, and start only with the uncertain hope of picking up some along the way. Our security forces have but limited ammunition, and our clothing, shoes, and equipment are in a battered condition.

In our little hut we sit quietly, going over our few possessions, exchanging a few soft words now and then. Our packs are lightened by the discarding of what, after so long in the forest, we term non-essentials. Books are the first to go; we retain no more than two in a pack, the slimmer volumes; the rest we leave to Jesse. Much of the time we spend reinforcing our rubber and canvas shoes, sewing heavy strips of cloth along the seam where sole and uppers meet, the most common point of wear. Shoes are the most precious of items, and a needle is a treasure.

We have in our household nine people: Celia and myself; Alfredo Saulo; Lawin, Ginto, Maligaya, and Sunday, security soldiers; Ben, our typist; Leonor, a courier and nurse. There are five other households of varying size containing, like ours, non-military political cadres, and then four units of security troops that make up an advance guard, a rear guard, and interior guards. Among other cadres with us are Luis Taruc, Reg Taruc, Dimalanta, Davidson, Willy Gonzales, Alambre, Rivera, Maneng (the ES man). We are 90 in all, with seven women.

In recent months we have had the foresight to equip ourselves with ponchos, the rubberized army raincoats that drape about a man. We do not use them for raincoats, however, but for shelter purposes, for roofing a lean-to. Each of our households has at least two ponchos. Fastened together over a frame of sticks, they roof a sleeping group of up to ten—a very tightly packed ten.

In the evening, behind G.Y.'s hut where the ground has been

swept clean and logs have been rolled up for seats, we have a *despidida* program. The enemy is not far away, and his menace is in the air, but we cannot part from those whom we love without the right farewell. A Coleman lamp, with the last hoarded kerosene, is hung on a tree. It makes a strange, garish tableau under the night-time trees. The leaves have an artificial tint, as do those on branches that hang by streetlights in a city.

The edge of light that holds back the vast shadow of the forest, the black shadows of the nearby trees reaching outward to draw it in upon us. The lit faces of all those whom we may never see again. The sadness that hovers with the years over this group that laughs and sings valiantly in an aperture in darkness. The girl who stands against a tree, her hands clasped behind her, her head tipped back upon the bark, singing, *Ang Bandila Punit-punit* (The Ragged Banner). The young couples on the uneven ground dancing to the rhythmic clapping of our hands and to our humming. The fiercely-recited patriotic poem. The joking across the tiny clearing that loses none of its spontaneity. The singing of the national anthem, very solemnly, and of the International, the serious thinned faces and the upraised fists in the light of the lamp. The flashlights that guide us homeward with the good-byes called across the creek in the dark. Our hut caught in the flashlight beam, with everything packed inside, having already an empty and abandoned look.

Early in the morning we are assembled in the same place, behind the hut of G.Y., fully packed. It has a different look with the shadows gone and the bits of sky overhead. The sad magic is no longer there. Now there is business-like preparation, the checking of packs and of guns, the arranging of places in a line. Relaxed in camp we are any community of people; in line of march we are an army, with discipline and with armed vigilance.

There is a forced gaiety in the group, but under it there are hints of sorrow and of grimness, of sorrow for what might have been, of grimness for what will be. Those who will stay behind cluster along the tight coils of the line that is twisted through the trees. There are hard handshakes. Pando's, with the off-handedness of an old man who has seen much of this. Pando. G.Y.'s grip, and the little confident Chinese grin. G.Y. The handshake

of Jesse, and the smile with the crinkled eyes that say, we will see each other tomorrow. Jesse.

The head of the line moves off, and the call of Roll! comes back. The line unwinds slowly into the single file with spacing. We turn to wave and the cluster around the huts waves, too. See you in Muntinglupa, we call to each other.

Last year we said, See you in Malacanang.

102.

At the outset we have two problems. The first one is food.

In the city, even the beggar or the starving man can find a scrap to keep himself alive. Somewhere there is always pity, to drop a coin into a cup or to give the little left-over at a door. But we are less than beggar; we are the hunted. There are guards at all the doors along the forest, and for those who would show us pity there is the rifle butt and the bruise upon the cheek.

As we start our journey we send out a supply unit from our group to the town below, to Pakil, then travel slowly, keeping on the move, until it catches up. The first night we stop at Malibu Beach, amazingly undiscovered by the army. We have but a tiny bit of food and we eat it sparingly, lying in the ghost camp. In the morning we follow the river cautiously, down past Balintawak, barely visible on the far side, a charred ruin. An undiscovered outpost hut gapes by the trail like a mouth empty of teeth. The forest is full of ghosts.

It seems that we are retracing our past, with the wind in the forest whispering, No more, it is past. No more, it is past.

We wind westward to the military line, the advance guard far ahead, for this is a risk, and we camp at the mouth of the stream that was our entrance to Maliit na Bato, camp of the defiant conference. (That was yesterday, we seem to hear the whisper.) Our shelter here is a lean-to amid the rank reedy growth that is dense by the stream, with the wet heavy smell of the forest's fecundity around us.

Here the supply unit returns. They are empty-handed. The

cordon is there. Pakil is garrisoned with many troops, and the people are afraid. However, there is a contact in the next town, Siniloan, and few troops are said to be there. Hope lifts, and even the rain that comes does not diminish it.

Our thoughts, oddly, are not of hunger or of the march ahead. We are buoyed up by the thought that we are on our way, out of the cordon and of the compression of danger.

It is too dangerous, however, for us to be moving like this on the military line. After half a day of it, we turn off into the forest in the steady rain, to camp for two days on a knobby rise covered with giant *pandan* plants, where thick ropes of rattan are looped in the trees, while the supply unit goes off again, the wet men stumbling down the hill to disappear in mist. It is a dreary site, where we move gingerly amid the cacti-like *pandan* with their hard-tipped leaves as sharp as poinards. The thin rain bears a mist with it and everything drips. There is no sound in the forest but the whisper of the rain. All about the mist moves, like phantoms. Our rations are very low and we try to eat the bitter *ubod* of the rattan. The taste lingers in our mouths, the bitterness matching these days.

On the third day our comrades are back. They straggle out of the rain, weary and sodden. The sacks they bear strapped to backs have only slight bulges in them. They come in and stand wordless and with eyes down under the dripping roof of Luis' lean-to. It is then that we see that one man is missing.

This is the story they tell:

In Siniloan the house of the contact was on the outskirts of town, across the road and by a clump of trees down near the Bay. On either side of the road are open fields. A detachment of troops are in the town, and there is a highway patrol. After nightfall our comrades had crawled across the fields and then over the road, between the passage of the patrolling vehicles. The man in the house was frightened by their coming in the night but finally he agreed to purchase the supplies, except that he would have to make several trips to avoid suspicion from buying so much. Our men did not want to be crossing the fields and the road so often, so all that night and throughout the next day they lay in the little clump of trees in the rain, without eating, watch-

ing the army patrols go by within hailing distance. The man in the house went out in the morning and made one trip to the market, in a *caretela;* they listened to the slow clop-clop of the *caretela* go out and after a while come back, with part of the supplies, and they waited. In the afternoon the man went out again and was gone all afternoon, while they sweated under the rain. Toward evening they heard the *caretela* coming. Then a vehicle roared off the highway after it. Peering from the trees, they saw the *caretela* overtaken, the man pulled down from it by troops, the sacks of rice thrown on the road, the man slapped and pummeled. Our men could not stand the thought of losing everything after all that waiting. They rushed to the house and seized whatever they could in a hurry, knowing the troops would see them. They were fired upon and returned the fire. The army troops took cover, and our comrades ran through the trees, over the road and across the fields. That was when a comrade was shot and killed, but the others got away in the twilight.

So the cordon is there, too, and we are moving parallel to it. In the sacks of our men are no more than three *gantas* of rice for each household, a little sugar, and half a dozen cans of Hemo, the chocolate powdered vitamin drink. The amount is pitifully small for the journey we have ahead, but we move. We cannot stay here.

The forest chuckles and whispers around us.

103.

Our other problem is a road.

In afternoon, one day later, we lie in a coconut grove on a little rise beyond the town of Famy, waiting for the night. Below us, the Famy-Infanta road runs nakedly along Laguna de Bay. We are on a civilian trail, where the army would least suspect us to be, and we have taken a risk.

The Famy-Infanta road, running from the Bay towns to Infanta on the Pacific coast, is the only highway crossing the Sierra Madre in the 200-mile stretch between Mauban and Baler. It bi-

sects the Huk trails running between northern and southern Luzon, and therefore is heavily patrolled by the army; in these days it is doubly guarded. Because of its strategic location, it is the scene of bloody encounters between the Huks and the army. To the army it is known as Ambush Alley, for the number of times that Huks have destroyed its convoys here. Occasionally, army patrols catch a Huk column crossing the road, and another type of bloody fight occurs.

On this road there are several major crossing points, known by the numbers Three, Five, Seven, Nine, in reference to their distance in kilometers from Famy. Since Huks cross there, those are the places most closely watched by the army. We will take a daring chance, therefore; we will cross one kilometer from Famy, almost within sight and hearing of the army garrison.

The sun is out, in a coppery sky. It is hot under the coconut trees. We leave our packs on and they are sweaty on our backs. The dead brown fronds hang down in motionless air above us. Up under the green fronds the cool nuts are in clusters. If we could only get at the cool liquid that is in them, but the orders are to lie still.

I lie and look out at the road. It is the first time in 18 months that I have seen the open world. The road runs along the Bay and no trees are there, no trees are there, only the flat shoreline. Beyond are fish corrals in the unrippled water that has a grey sheen and fades into haze in the distance.

As far as I can see, the road is empty except for an old dilapidated truck crawling toward Famy. I am fascinated by the truck, it has been so long since I have seen one. I can hear the chug-chug of the engine, every groaning stroke of its pistons carried on the air, even after it has gone from my sight. Directly below, where the road bends, is a house, an ordinary Filipino nipa house, with papaya trees, banana plants and a rude bamboo fence. No one moves there, although I strain and strain to catch a glimpse of a housewife on the *batalan* or of a child in the yard. The window panels are down and all is still. Has life gone out of the open world? The truck could be the last car on earth, going to its grave. Or has the army driven everyone into the town, shut up life to leave the earth free for death?

Lying there, I have a horrible fear of tumbling out into that

open space, exposed to all the world. I clutch at stems, sweating, anxious to be back in forest, hidden. I have been so long in forest that I am like the savage who comes down to the edge of wilderness, fascinated by towns yet afraid of them.

The afternoon declines. Shadows are in the coconut groves. The order comes to roll. Relieved, but with the dryness of the coming peril in our mouths, we rise and stamp at stiff muscles. The trail goes downward, back from the road, through *kaingins* and trees, circuitously, until at twilight we come out of forest onto cleared land.

It is the hour when the sun has dropped away, leaving a sky of pale green blending into cobalt overhead. The hills are dark green oval shapes against the sky, and along the fields clumps of bush and tree are dark olive masses with the texture of velvet. The air is crystalline, and we walk without talking, carefully, along the bushy margins of the land, as if a sound would break the stillness like the shattering of thin glass.

We cross over grassy places, seeking to merge with every outline of growth, a hesitant winding line walking as if on tiptoe, to the edge of rice paddies that flow toward the dusk, newly planted, mirroring the pale sky. The advance guard runs ahead, over the crisscross of paddy dikes, stooped under packs and the ready weapons. They disappear in the dimming light. Over there is the road and perhaps the enemy.

The signal comes for us to follow, from Davidson peering at his watch. I stay close to Celia. My mouth is dry and metallic. We try to hurry on the paddy dikes, but the paths are narrow and slippery and one foot keeps going off into the water and mud. The line bunches up impatiently, and then we are all off in the paddies, floundering forward with desperate lunges in the sucking mud and thigh-deep water.

At that moment the last rays of sun turn blood red, staining the water around us. It is as if machine-guns had opened up on us from behind the dikes and reddened the water with our blood while we plunge on through it, mad and battle-crazed. Then the light is extinguished and we are in darkness, in the endless mud and water. Our breath is gone and our limbs tight with fatigue; we stagger with long shallow gasps.

I stumble and fall forward on a bank, climb up; it is solid

ground. Celia clambers up beside me. I cannot see her, but I sense that it is she. Shapes are running past us. We go on, stumble again on a hard wooden object. It is a carabao sled. Where is the road?

Figures are ahead, darker shapes against the darkness. A hoarse whisper, *Bilis! Bilis!* Hurry! Hurry! My feet scuff on a hard surface. I am so surprised, I stand there. A dim greyness goes off in either direction. It is the road. A hand roughly grabs my arm and thrusts me forward. I see the glint of metal on a rifle barrel. One of our security force. *Bilis! Bilis!* I take two steps on the hard surface and then my feet are on soft earth again and I am running in the night, away from the road.

I look for Celia. I am always looking for Celia. She is there. We are running together on a cart path that borders open fields. Ahead of us is the dark bulk of hills against stars. We are across the road but we are not safe. An enemy patrol could catch us here in the open and annihilate us. Comrades are in ambush down from our crossing point, but the town is so near that reinforcements could arrive in minutes. Even if we all get across, patrol vehicles could spot the muddy tracks that we have left.

For hours we hurry, running for a time, then walking, then running again. Our line is ragged, bunched, with great gaps. We must get as far away from the road as possible. There is the shock and chill of running blindly through a creek. Then we are on cleared land, on a trail winding through tall *cogon*.

In that grass, Celia gets a pricker in her eye, the menace of the *cogon* country. It is painful, and dangerous, for it might work its way into the eyeball. We stop in the first open area. Celia lies down and a nurse with a deft and delicate touch seeks to remove the pricker.

It is a strange brooding tableau. Around us the great secret night, and only the pale flower of Celia's face embedded in it, seen in a flashlight beam. No one speaks. In the hush, the comrade, with a bit of cotton on a grass stem, gently works upon the eye. The silence is like a held breath. Then the cotton is held up to the light, with the tiny sharp fragment upon it. The light goes out. We belong to the night again. There is a stir, the line reforming, the march resuming in the dark.

Until midnight we hurry. We have been on the trail for 18

hours. Then the ground rises sharply and we are on a little plateau, in a coconut grove. A full moon is up. The tall palms have silvered fronds and the slim pale boles are carved of the metal. It is decided to rest here. The line falls out in tall grass covering the grove. Ponchos are erected but no one lies under them. Everyone is in high spirits, lounging in the springy grass or climbing the trees and throwing down the nuts. All night long we stay up, drinking the tangy water of the coconuts, talking and laughing gaily in the moonlight.

104.

In the geometry of a guerrilla struggle there are no fixed points in space or in time. A man in uniform, with a compass, who draws a circle on a map and says, They are there, is thinking of a plane on which all things lie rigid, in known dimensions. He does not realize that the forest itself is a dimension, in which one point, however located, lies hidden from another, or that there is such an immeasurable dimension as the human will, that recognizes neither space nor time. He does not know that there are shifting planes, which continually change the relationship of all fixed points, such as movement, which is a plane unto itself.

The enemy has drawn a line in the forest, encompassing a fixed place, but we are not bound by lines. Beyond the line that is a guarded road we continue moving, changing relationships.

Morning comes, with the pale moon still enormous in the pale sky. Beyond coconut groves, full light finds us in rolling foothills covered with the tan-colored *cogon* dotted with dark green clumps of low-growing trees. We are up above the northeastern tip of the Bay, with all the open lowland lying below us. I fear that we are naked and visible, as if we walked upon the skyline of the world.

From the top of a rise I see our line twisted down through the shoulder-high *cogon*. With the packs and the rifles that thrust above them, it is as if we are on safari, hunting lions on the veldt. But we are the hunted, not the hunters. Planes go overhead, fighter planes roaring southward toward the cordon. Frantic

signals come for us to duck, under the *cogon*. It is as if the line had disappeared beneath the sea, leaving only a wind ripple on the surface. Then, one by one, the heads again come up, Davidson's head, the head of Ginto, Alembre, the packs and then the heads of security squads, above the waving *cogon*.

Our plan is to travel by the Daraitan trail, the customary Huk route that swings westward in Rizal province, closely bordering the Rizal towns, on up into Bulacan. In Bulacan we have production bases, large ones, deeply hidden in the mountains. We will send supply units ahead of us to the Rizal towns as we move, and rest finally in the production bases. In a month we will be in Nueva Ecija.

We forget that trails, too, are fixed points that can be drawn upon a map, for all to see.

In the meantime, our food is practically gone. A squad *balutan* is sent down, in the direction of Santa Maria, to contact the district committee near there and to use the district's posts, while we veer eastward for protection, into forest, to make camp. Far to the south the sound of bombing comes. Is it Tibet? Have they located our comrades? We have the mingled feeling of relief and anxiety.

Above the road a large river courses eastward to the sea, with deep gorges. At the rim of this roaring place we follow the gorge on a bare crumbling slope where the sliding foot rolls rock into the far white dash of water, or we follow a worn trail by a cliff where dense slender trees are like poles to which we cling and flung river spray comes up in mist. The trail bends deeply down to the riverside, and we camp in a tree-covered cove with the water loud beside us.

There are old rotted huts here, black with decay, where other Huks in other seasons have come and gone, moving on the shifting plane. We do not build huts any more. We merely spread the two ponchos, tied together, over a slanted frame of poles, making a lean-to, with the sides and the front open, sleeping with our heads at the vertex. Our sleeping mats we place on grass or ferns spread upon the ground, and we build our fire just under the upper edge of the ponchos. All nine of us sleep here, crowded together.

At four in the morning I awake, the night black and thick beside me where the shelter is open and moving red waves above me on the poncho. A fire burns beyond our feet and Ginto is squatted there, cooking the rice for breakfast and for noon upon the trail. His lips move silently and I see that he holds a mimeographed pamphlet of the movement, which he is laboriously studying by the fire light.

It is dangerous to linger by this river, which is like a highway. It is dangerous to be on any point known to a map. How dangerous is immediately seen. Along the riverside, an hour's walk away, we come in morning upon traces of a camp, the ashes of fires, scattered debris. Ration cans with bits of food still untouched by ants. A broken belt buckle with an insignia upon it. They are not Huk signs. An army unit camped here last night, just ahead of us.

The cordon, reaching for us.

A strong advance guard is sent ahead, and at the first tributary stream we go up the rough water tumbling down over rocks, turn aside from the river.

But in this strange dimension of the forest nothing is certain. We go over a ridge and descend another stream and, caught among rocks in a swirl, I find a scrap of paper. Paper in the forest? Someone has defecated here, used the bit of paper. Who? I am not squeamish. I wash the paper and it has writing upon it. It is the report of an infantry point, spearheading an army unit, it is addressed to a captain, and it is dated today.

At once we move into the forest and lie still, a firing line spread out. A scout reports the enemy in a grove of trees, in company strength, no more than a shout away. We are very quiet in the forest morning, with an order for utter silence. A bit of rain patters down, dies away. Sun appears, to put a sparkle on the leaf tips. There are sounds. The enemy is moving, back down the little stream, retracing his steps. The sound goes on and on, then there is only the drip from leaves. We get up from that place and go, walking lightly as the wind walks.

This is the strange geometry of our struggle, two objects occupying the same point, on different planes, like the invisible man walking through a wall.

But we are not entirely invisible, nor can we move at will. Our

supply unit returns, with nothing. The district committee was contacted and it sent to its post for purchases. When the man from the post came back, however, he was followed by an army raiding team that killed two of the district members. No supplies in Santa Maria, but that is not the worst. The enemy has ambushed and is blockading the Daraitan trail. They have guessed our moves and have leap-frogged ahead of us, and they are sending troops along all the avenues we can travel. Wherever we move, the cordon is there.

There is one other possibility for food: Infanta, on the Pacific coast, across the Sierra Madre. The weary supply unit goes out ahead, again, and for two days we wander, pointless, between the Bay and the sea, hungry, following the large river. It is a frightening route. For hours we crawl along a sheer rock wall, at the water's edge, with only crevices for the tip of a shoe or for the nail of a finger to cling, the heavy packs pulling us backward toward the deep water. The footholds have slime where the river laps at them, and often our feet go down and we are left supported by the bloody fingertips and by the broken nails.

It is a primitive region through which we move as through a fevered dream, full of chasms and the raw faces of cliffs where the earth has slid away, bringing down giant boulders and great trees in a cataclysmic tangle. Here it rains and rains and the clouds come down into the gorge, sealing us against the rock. At one place the river has spread out over a large area where the ground has sunk in some convulsion of the earth, the trees standing submerged and leafless, with blackening limbs. The drowned forest. We know the terrible feeling of natural impermanence, the earth, too, a shifting plane without fixed points or features.

A guide from Reco 4, sent to aid us in our meanderings, takes us up a tall veil of a waterfall and on the cliff above is an empty camp, onetime headquarters for the Reco, abandoned in a previous operation by the army. The empty huts in the silent forest. The forest is full of phantoms, now. We feel them in all the corners of these huts, the death and the life that are together in the movement now.

Here the report comes up at last that our comrades have obtained supplies, and that is life, that is the fixed point.

105.

The Dumagats, too, are figures in space and time.

They are the aboriginals, the primitive ones, the original inhabitants of the forest. South of the road, oddly, there are none, but above the road they are everywhere in the Sierra Madre, all the way up to the northern tip of Luzon.

The Dumagats are creatures lost in time. The lowlands keep pace with the years; the cities grow, and the people, stabilized, evolve in act and word. Here in the high forest there is the nomadic drift, the spear and the bow and arrow, the fire made by friction, the naked body and the loincloth.

And yet, we who are the new forest people have much in common with the stone age throwbacks. They, too, cling tenaciously to a way of life, to their own values, and to a sense of freedom. They are oppressed ones, driven from lowland and foothill by the land-hungry lowlanders who have troops to back them up, denied protection, ignored by all the agencies of government. When the Dumagat seeks to protect himself, to hold on to what he thinks is his own in his own primitive way, the modern instruments of punishment and death pursue him in the forest, as they pursue us, too. The Dumagat, for that reason, is a potential ally of the Huks.

But an ally who is not to be trusted, for these people have no loyalties, as we understand them. Living close to the margin of existence, their loyalty is to their survival, to that and to their clan: few in number as the Dumagats are, the clans are divided in fierce feuds, warring continually over stolen wives, *kaingins,* or a place where wild pig is abundant. For a pound of salt or tobacco they will sell out any friend, any ally. They are possessed with the terrible honor of the primitive: molest a woman, insult a man, and they are savage silent ambushers with poisoned darts —or guides for the army in a place where they know every tree and every scent in the wind.

With these people we must live, for our own survival. When the Huks first met Dumagats and suffered from camps raided because of their misunderstood betrayals, there were enraged reactions. One FC commander ordered the liquidation of all

Dumagats, but one cannot liquidate people who merge like their own *anitos* into rock and tree. So we have organized them, as much as they can be organized, promising land and fertilizer, schools and medical care, in the society to come. In many regions they are good allies, the alliance only failing when the tribal prejudices are at odds with the demands of our modern survival.

It is a strange unity in dimensionless time, the primitive ones and we who would be advanced, living together in the vague dimension that is the forest.

We come upon them now, as we move to meet our supply squad, along the river near Infanta. They are perhaps 30 in number, a clan, wholly or half unclad, men, women and big-bellied children, small dark people, bodies covered with sores and grey-streaked from sleeping in the ashes of fires for warmth. They have lean-tos on the stony bank, single panels of leaves propped up with sticks, and they are fishing, diving under water and spearing fish with a length of wire and a rubber band, a compromise with modern technology.

My companions fear that my white skin is a danger, that these people, without our sense of security, would spread the rumor of my presence, and bring the army after us. So our advance guard goes ahead, borrows a rude Dumagat *banca,* claiming that there is a sick man to transport. They bring the *banca* back and I huddle in it, with my face hidden, while I am sped down in the rough and rocky water, past the primitive camp. I am almost sick from the journey itself when I climb out, far down. The Dumagats are not deceived for an instant; they run down the bank wanting to see the white man who is sick.

These are a friendly clan, who have often warned our camps about army patrols and operations. They tell us that the Daraitan trail is still blocked by "many many" troops. When we meet our supply unit, along a wide sandy beach with dunes that is like an inland seashore, we find that we have a two-week supply of regular rations. If we sit here and wait for the trail to be cleared, our rations may well run completely out.

We have an old map that we spread out on the sand. On all of the area north of Infanta, on the eastern side of the Sierra Madre, is a blank space where the large chilling word "Unexplored" is printed.

Luis Taruc goes to confer with the Dumagat chieftan, an old proud man with a back as straight as the staff that he carries. Is there a way northward to Bulacan, on the eastern side of the mountains, from here? Yes! The old man is vehement. In ten days' time it can be reached. In a week we can cross the Umiray River, and be in Bulacan. When the map-makers said Unexplored they ignored the knowledge of Dumagats. Luis holds the shotgun that he bears so the old man can admire it. Could he provide us with guides to take us to Bulacan? The old man does not look at the shotgun; he has seen it all along. Yes! Yes!

So it is done.

But the Dumagat has no conception of time or of space.

106.

October 1951

On this first day it is all sungleam and music underfoot in the water where we walk. We have outwitted the enemy and we go in places where no curved compass line is likely to be drawn. The forest welcomes us with arches into secret inner depths.

The Dumagat guides run ahead, two of them, naked, bearing some of our baggage by rattan bands strapped about the forehead. We grin at them affectionately. I think of the old man, standing with his shotgun in patriarchal dignity upon a rock in midstream, hand upraised in benediction to our waves, as if he had opened up to us vast mysteries.

How different the Dumagat trails are from those of the Huks. Here every feature of the terrain has been chosen to advantage, no steep treacherous climbs or descents, but easy ways that do not tire. What would be an obstacle on our route is here an assistance; a stone or a root becomes a step. We seem to move without effort in the way a train flows over hilly regions. In no time we are high on the crest of a ridge. Far to the south are the green convolutions of the Sierra Madre, the too-well known ringed redoubt from whence we have escaped. We turn from it and plunge into the green unknown on the other side, the present led by the past.

Everything is light, packs, sacked rations, hearts. At night, when we camp along a stream, the fires wink by the poncho shelters and the water takes their ruby tint. Cheerful voices call from one household to another, and we go to sleep to the sound of water running over stones.

But that is only the beginning and it does not last, for on the third day is rain. The smiles end along the lines when the rain falls, and we bend our backs and plod. The trails, too, seem to have ended with the sun, for now we are in rocky cuts made by streams, clambering over great stones. All day long we climb on the stones, smooth grey monsters that are the color of the sky that lowers upon us.

There are some who complain that this cannot be the way. The line halts and Luis and Davidson, commander of the march, talk to the Dumagats. The two naked ones squat there with heads down, expressionless, not saying a word. We go on, deeper and deeper into rugged terrain. The Dumagats keep running far ahead.

On the fourth day we come upon the baggage that they have been carrying, lying on a rock by the stream. The Dumagats have deserted us.

107.

When in a crowded city one makes the wrong turning at an unknown intersection, one can walk on without knowing that he wanders, until on all sides the strange buildings loom like questions, and he knows that he is lost. Even though he knows that anyone upon a street can give him directions, there is that momentary excitation that comes from realizing that he is cut away from that which is familiar and therefore secure.

When Celia and I passed beyond the open and comprehended world to enter the unknown forest, it was without any sense of being cut adrift, because we felt part of a great movement that had direction and a goal, and every trail in the forest was an avenue to it. It was not until the trails, and the goal, began to be

blocked that we felt the forest loom around us and had the sensation that we were cutting paths blindly through it.

Now, in this remote and unknown region, where every intersection of rivers poses an unanswered question, this group of ours is the epitome of our struggle, lost and driven into unknown courses.

In the stony ravine where it rains and rock and tree have moss of an unreal emerald green against their dark wet surfaces, we cluster about the abandoned baggage of the Dumagats and talk in quiet tones. We stand packed among the rocks, unnoticing in water that runs over feet, wet, stooped a bit under packs, impassive faced, women, men, young armed HMBs. Why did the Dumagats run away? Who knows? They missed their families, they feared spirits in a far place, dislike of strangers, a trick of betrayal by the old man.

Not one voice here is raised in dismay. There is no panic, no eye of fear that rolls whitely to a neighbor, no curse is heard against those who have fled. There is only the shrug of Alambre, the slow nod of Reg, Davidson's finger stroking his cocked jaw. Leaders have been chosen for this march; the others wait to accept their decision.

We cannot go back. The enemy is there, and how do we know that the Dumagats might not have informed upon us? We have ten days of rations left. The old man said ten days to Bulacan, one week to the Umiray. We are 90 people who have lived for long in the forest. We will find the Umiray.

Brave words. But what other words does one speak closed in in the forest, with a known peril behind and an unknown peril ahead?

In unexplored mountain forest the rivers are the highways. They are the only avenues with any sort of beginning and end that are traversable; they begin at the tops of ridges, they run into valleys. If we follow them up and follow them down, we go over mountains as one would go over a washboard. Only, mountains are not arranged in the order of a washboard: the ridges curve, bend at angles, are unimaginably confused, and so are the rivers. Nevertheless, to turn off into trackless forest is to move slowly and utterly blind. So it is the rivers in which we walk.

We have no map. No map exists of this region. We have no compass. Overhead, in the rain, the drift of clouds is lost in an indistinguishable mass. It is all chance, and for five days this is the way we walk, in the waters of one river, then in the waters of another. At the meeting of streams, it becomes purely a matter of haphazard choice. Led into impenetrable ravines, we retrace our steps, make another choice.

In the midst of that over which we have no control, we set the control upon ourselves, with discipline. This is a march strictly governed. We put in ten or eleven hours upon the trail. At six in the morning every household must be in readiness, pouring rain or not, packed, shelters struck, breakfast eaten and lunch cooked for eating on the march. During the day there is rest for ten minutes out of every hour, with half an hour at noon to eat. Places in line are alternated each day. In a long column those ahead make a trail muddy and difficult for those behind, so households take turns in being up forward or to the rear. Lateness or indiscipline loses a household its place. At four in the afternoon the advance guard begins looking for a camping site; sometimes it is not found until dusk, or we have to settle for a miserable wet bed without cushion for a body.

But we have food, there is a fire, and there is hope. We talk lightly in the shelters at night.

We are making progress, we say, we are covering ground.

Yes, but all this is blind chance, a decision founded on a blank rock, a silent tree, an unknown turning at a river's bend.

108.

I have the dread *alipunga.*

Walking in water all day long, with sand that sifts into a shoe, with sharp stones that bite into the feet, an abrasion, a breakage, is made upon the skin, or some infestation enters with the muck. I see it begin, the little circular patches that look like ringworm around the toes. My companions look at my feet when I pull my socks off at noon or at night; they say nothing and their eyes go away. We all know what it is, and what will happen.

Within one day both of my feet, from ankle tops to soles, are a mass of scored and bleeding flesh, bright red, with the look of rot. Every step I take, into water or upon stone, is vivid agony. But this is not a march where one can stop, or fall behind. We move ahead with a stern insistence that increases with each day. I stumble, I sink to my knees, I tremble with the pain, but I force myself to keep up.

At night my feet burn and ache and I cannot stand the touch of a blanket. I lie in the night, beside Celia under the poncho, thinking of the day ahead and of the decision that will have to be made. This line of 90 cannot wait for one man. Cases like this have happened before, and the man has been left behind, to manage as best as he can.

Then, in the night, we awake to deafening sound and the insane glare of lightning. A tremendous rain is upon us, as if rivers poured out of the sky. The stream beside which we camp is up into our beds before our minds are clear. A wild scene ensues along the river bank, naked men in lightning flare and in swaying flashlight beams leaping in the solid pillars of rain, pulling down shelters and transferring them with belongings to a higher site. On my raw, painful feet I can only hobble, striking them on rock and root and thorny vine. Many of us lose bedding and other belongings, carried on the foaming torrent.

In the morning the river is far too high and too swift for travel, and we are compelled to rest. Sun comes out, hot and steaming in the forest. I lie on the river bank, with my feet up in the sun, with a vague desperate trust in the sun. Marvelously, they dry, the open places close, the healing begins. I sew my shoes tightly, double my socks. The next day I can walk, a bit delicately, but I can walk, and the healing goes on.

This, too, is blind chance.

109.

Out over the Pacific a storm begins and rolls upon the land above a raging sea. Planes have tracked it, men with instruments have marked its course. Ships run for shore. Warnings fly or

sound along the coast, and in Manila people batten up for wind and rain. In all inhabited places people know its coming and prepare.

But we are not linked to the woven, signalled safety of men. The storm comes to us unheralded, a wind fanning the forest, then whipping at the trees. The fine steady rain of days increases in the way that a drummer shifts from light tap to riffle to the pounding rhythm. Wind picks up the heavy fall of water and dashes it upon the forest in the way of waves hurled upon a sea wall. Every slope pours water. Yellow runnels, mining at the mountains, turn all watercourses into flood and fury.

This day we are in a wide ankle-deep stream with a bed of gravel and of stones the size of baseballs. Within minutes the clear water is tinted with solutions of the earth and it rises up our legs. The wind comes down the open avenue in the forest, flapping its drenching banners that lash at the body like the beating of wet towels. The great trees along the banks are like the brown legs of women huddled against walls with green skirts blown up to the waists. Stones come rolling down the hysterical river to bound against our legs. I cannot see more than three people in the line ahead or behind. The brown water is tugging at our waists.

In this way we go on through the day. Banks have vanished, water running into the forest and the reedy growth. There is no place to stop even to eat. And how can we dare to stop, we who are lost and nearly without food? It is not until late in afternoon that we find a stony height on which to climb, and then it is a wet miserable problem to erect a poncho shelter. We crouch together in damp beds and the wet wood smoke blows in upon us. We sleep exhausted with the rain coming in on us, waking frequently with chilled bodies, no one able to turn in our crowded place without disturbing all the others. In the morning we rise, cramped, and let ourselves down into the waist-deep water to continue.

For three days we walk—wade—in the storm. It is pitiful, slow work. There is a day when we can move no more than half a winding kilometer, keeping to banks and pulling ourselves along against the current by clinging to tall grass and branches. The rain beats, beats, beats upon us. Drowning or death by falling

trees are unconsidered: we think only of reaching our goal before food runs out. Days ago we have cut our ration down to one-half.

At night in our wretched shelter wood is so wet that it takes half the night to cook a meal, hours of rest foregone. Up to now we have tried to keep a dry change of clothing in our packs, in which to sleep, but now everything is wet, packs, sleeping mats, blankets, clothing. We try to dry our river-soaked clothes over the fire, but they never dry, and become stained dirty brown from the wood smoke, so that we are all figures out of earth and root. In the morning we rise from the damp blankets and pull on the cold wet muddy clothes. Then into the river again, with a numb unthinking urge.

The rivers are all alike now, one brown flood blending into another, and the forest is a waving mass of limbs and flung-about leaves. Where are we? Where is the Umiray? To be lost upon the surface of the earth. To be buried in wind, water, and the unending forest. To have no home where death does not sit, with gun, hunger, or the sucking of currents.

On a wild morning into which light hardly filters, we find the river at our shelter front swirling with turbulence, the surface torn with rain as by charges of buckshot. When we try to wade out into it we are spun about like the bits of bark that it carries. We struggle back to shore and huddle in batches until the order is passed along, to stay encamped. We cannot move. We are marooned.

110.

November 1951

In the beginning the test of man was here, in the unmastered places, when all the earth was forest, and survival was in the bare hand that gripped the stone. It was only later that the test of man lay in man himself and in his relations with other men. But for us history has been suspended, and we are back in the beginning of things, driven from one level of endurance to another, merging in our survival the testing of man and of wilderness.

Along the swollen river's bank we have burrowed like primitive ones, walling out the water with little heaps of mud and weaving leaves around the poncho to extend its cover. Expeditions in the rain provide us with a heap of soggy wood that we dry in an immense fire that slowly warms and bakes the ground on which we lie. We look out through the flames at the turbid sinews of the river flowing by, and we are beseiged, sipping at the *lugaw* that remains to us.

We have time now to talk. In a day of journeying there is little room for words, and in exhausted twilights a bare communication serves for the nine of us, who in travail become like a single being. But in our warm ponchoed cave, life seeps back into us and we become individual lives again. Lying in our blankets, we talk all day and on into the windy night, the glow of the fire's embers coming and going in the wet gusts.

We do not talk of our predicament. We exchange humorous examples of the differences in customs between the provinces and the city, the Philippines and the United States. For one whole day we argue languages. We are from Manila, Nueva Ecija, Pampanga, Bataan, Laguna, and upstate New York, and each has his or her own dialect, intonation, figures of speech, or shades of meaning. Take the word "love," for instance: there are dozens of words for love in Tagalog and in Pampango. What a poor language English is for making love! It takes a Filipino to make love, they chorus to me. Oh, I reply, you need all those words because you don't sound convincing enough with one or two. Ah, who needs words at all, says Lawin.

Two days go by and there is debate along our camping site. We send representatives to each other, fighting their ways in the water, to discuss what to do. There are those who wish to move, move, to force ourselves over the mountains, and there are those who want to recuperate. But how can one recuperate with less and less to eat? On the third morning a courier goes from shelter to shelter, half-swimming in the high water, to give the order to roll.

Battered by the wind, rain and the river, we struggle along the bank, holding on to tall reedy growth that cuts the fingers. It is torturous travel, a foot in five minutes. After a whole morning we can still see behind us in the murk of rain the site that

we have left. Then we are at a turning where water is very deep by a high bank, and we have to cross the river, to find footing on the other side. It is almost an impossible task to get across the river. A ford is here where the water is only midway on the thigh, but the wind is so strong and the current has such a ruthless sweep that nearly all afternoon is consumed in making a human chain of the sturdier men to pass the rest of us across. One moves a leg as if all the powers of gravity held it and as if all the weight of space leaned upon one's body. The screaming wind is like a mindless fiend that wants to flail us down into the river. In the whole day we have come no more than a hundred and fifty yards.

We are on an island. We have not crossed the river after all. The river has divided here and left high a large area, ringed with trees that toss in the storm. At its center is an open space covered with tall grass that was at one time a Dumagat *kaingin.* Exhausted, we put up our shelters, grateful for the abundant grass that makes deep soft beds for our weary bodies.

Threaded in the grass are old *camote* vines that have run wild. They have no tubers, but the tough yellowing leaves can be eaten. We show our hunger here. We are all out in the clearing in the rain, silent, with set faces, snatching at the leaves, looking askance to see how much another household has. We stew the leaves in the pot, saving our meager rice, chewing at the tough fibrous stems fixedly.

In the morning the wind is gone, bearing its whips and fists over the forest, but as in all typhoons it drags after it the real rain, the heavy steady masses of it. We cannot leave the island. The river tears at its sides with great smooth ridged power. We lie under our ponchos and in our eyes are the sunken doubts that come with hunger and fatigue.

Someone—who?—remembers the date. It is November 7th, the anniversary of the Russian Revolution. It stirs us, that remembrance, we who are revolutionaries and who have a tie with all peoples' struggles. We remember why we are lying here, and that the wet rags that cover us should not be confused with the bright cloth of our dreams.

We go out and stand in the rain in the clearing, and we hold a commemorative meeting.

I look at the 90 of us standing in an irregular cluster in the wet trampled grass, the rain coming down, all stooped a bit under makeshift capes of *anahaw,* sheaves of grass, bits of plastic or of canvas. Our faces are all thin, serious, with darkening under the eyes. We sing the national anthem, the raindrops running over our faces and into our mouths.

Up on a fallen, grey, weather-beaten log the speakers stand, Alambre, Luis, eyes narrowed against the rain. They shout into the storm.

We celebrate this day for its meaning to all the colonial struggles for liberation. It reminds us that we are not the only ones who have suffered hardships and difficulties in the attainment of freedom. The Russian people had to go hungry and to sacrifice to fight off the combined invasion and encirclement of all the imperialist countries. It took 22 years for the forces of liberation in China to win. Remember the Long March of the Chinese Red Army. This is our long march. This is our test. It is only for a time, comrades, it is only for a time. What are these few weeks of hardship to the miseries that our people have known for centuries? Let us prove to the world that the Filipino people have the courage and the determination, the strength and the endurance to meet a test and to survive, and to win.

And we take off our hats, there in the clearing, and bare our heads to the rain, and stand in silent commemoration of all those who have died in the long struggle to make this country free.

In the morning our comrades fell a great tree across the flooded river, we walk upon it over the raging water, we climb a ridge and descend into a new valley, and we go on.

The test of man.

111.

The Umiray.

We come upon it at the close of a day, emerging from a tangled ravine. A lurid yellow light of sunset suffuses the low grey clouds, tinting the grey hurrying masses of water and putting an unreal yellow filter over the green forest shore. We stand there trans-

fixed in the unearthly yellow-grey light, looking upon the river of our search.

And what a river it is. Boiling and tumbling, swollen with rains, with a rushing flow and a roar, too impossibly broad for crossing, the Umiray pours toward the sea.

Stunned, we stumble along the bank in the twilight. Stiff reedy growth is here, thrust up tall between stones, and it rattles as we force our way through it. Here we camp, upon hard stubble cut away by bolos. There is no firewood and the reeds will not burn; we lie down without eating. In the night a cold thick mist settles down and swirls over the river and the reeds. The dull roar of the river is in our ears.

We lie and curse the Umiray, curse the river of our searching.

In the morning there is still mist, obscuring the far bank. We assemble without breakfast. A household is late and we stand in the cold water, slipping on the rocks toward the shelving depth. When we finally start, we slip and flounder for an hour along the bank in the water, hunting a crossing, until a sheer wall of rock forces us to turn away overland. The terrain here is cut and scored by innumerable ravines that empty streams into the Umiray, and we go up and down them as on a hellish vine-covered roller coaster, forced further and further from the river. Within a kilometer we are exhausted. We have to fight our way back to the river, debauching onto an open sandy bank.

The river curves here, in a deep channel, around the sandy place and against a steep hill on the opposite side that rises in a 60 degree angle, studded with huge trees that thrust up out of lesser growth. We study the brown muscular current. We cannot wait for this river to subside; in this season it might take weeks. This is a relatively narrow place. Here, in one way or another, we cross. A problem like this needs only a decision to be overcome.

Our strongest swimmer, Dante, from Luis' household, is sent to the other side, with a bolo. Celia, who can hardly swim, and I, who am a poor swimmer, watch the small dark head, carried along in the thick ropes of water, fight its way over. On the far side, however, the largest tree, if cut, would fall only one-third of the way across. Instead we build a raft, logs lashed together

with vines. But when we try it in the water it has little buoyancy and sinks beneath weight.

How to cross?

The poncho. Why not the poncho? Laden with packs, buttoned up and tied, wonderfully it floats. It can be clung to and swimmers can propel it to the other side. Two persons to each loaded poncho, a swimmer and a non-swimmer, a good swimmer and a poor swimmer.

Without hesitation, pushing aside fears, we load up the ponchos, strip and pile our clothes in with the packs, and pair off. Ponchos and bobbing heads begin to dot the surface. With the swift water, launching must be made upstream at the start of the wide curve, the poncho carried fast in a long diagonal while its passengers kick and fight it to the other shore. There are not enough ponchos, so they must be unloaded and carried back by the better swimmers. After swimming the river twice, comrades drag selves ashore and fall down coughing and twitching on the sand. Those who stay across hack away at the hillside, clearing a place for camp.

Celia and I cannot go together. We do not have the ability or the strength to support each other. I am paired with an HMB soldier named Narding.

We step into the river, holding to the rubberized skin of the poncho. My mind is utterly without thought; I have pushed all impeding thought away. I look at neither shore nor people, only at the poncho and the impatient water. At once we are caught by the current and swept out onto the convoluting surface of the river. I kick desperately, feeling helpless and whirled. Beside me Narding, too, kicks, but I see his wild eyes and open mouth, soundless with fear. A strangled cry comes finally from him, his fingers slip away, he lets go, and strikes out alone for shore. I am left with the poncho that, lightened, spins and is carried swiftly with me down the middle of the river. Steel fingers are at my feet, pulling me under. I swallow great mouthfuls of the brown water. I cannot see. I am weak from hunger and from weeks of marching. But I will not let go of the poncho. I cling to it with the same grip with which we all cling to faith and hope in our purpose. I am almost around the far bend of the river. With all my strength I kick and haul at the poncho, fighting the enemy

that is the river. My feet strike stones. The poncho drags at the bank. I stumble at the edge of the river and collapse beside it. My fingers are so rigid in the skin of the poncho that I cannot open them to free them.

Death draws back into the mist over the Umiray.

For a long time I lie on the bank, unable to move. Then I pull myself up to untie with trembling fingers the load that seems a living part of me. When I get our packs I have to crawl on my knees uphill in the mud with them, they are so heavy for me.

I turn to look down. Celia is crossing with a man who has swum back and forth many times. Now he gets a cramp and hangs in the water, agonized. He and Celia begin to be carried away. I see my wife's wide open eyes and her arms go up. She is drowning and I cannot move. The horror of helplessness. Have I won my own life only to lose her? Someone else—it is Luis Taruc—dives into the river, swims strongly, and bears her up to the other side. Again it takes me long to move, the weakness in me again.

But there is not time to think of these things, to stop for words or for thoughts. There is work to be done in making camp. I join Celia and we climb silently up the hill. We have no words to spare on dangers that are past. Below us the figures bob and swirl in the water, swimming and struggling, crossing the Umiray.

112.

Hunger.

Somewhere along this bank of the Umiray, where we wander seeking a way westward, our food gives out. We eat the last mouthful of rice at dusk beside the river that is black and misty under the overhanging trees, the river running secret and evil through the forest.

We had thought that when we reached the Umiray our journey would be almost ended, but now we find that it has been just one more river in the wide and rivered wilderness. To the west is Bulacan, but no one knows just where, or how long it will take to get there. Only discipline will get us there. We look at each other and try to think of little immediate things, the folding of

the ponchos in the morning, the way the back of a comrade looks in the line ahead.

Along the river, one morning, we come dreamlike into a place of hope. In trailing skeins of rain we blunder upon a Dumagat *kaingin*. The mist-hung trees and the blued hills looming beyond them frame the luxurious sight of thick *camote* vines, papaya trees laden with fruit, big-leaved *gabi*, bananas in great clusters. Food. But the Dumagats have fled. We see their huts at the edge of the clearing, thin tendrils of smoke rising on the hearths, but no people. They are hiding in the forest, watching us through the leaves. We call and echoes run along the wet hills, but no one comes. Only the sound of rain answers. We stand in a long winding line in the *kaingin*, not breaking ranks, looking at the food. No order is given, so nothing is touched. We could take it and leave money, but what would a Dumagat do with money? This is their harvest for these hard months, and it cannot be replaced with money. We could take it because we are armed and by the right of our arms, but that could leave enemies behind, enemies in the forest, and comrades coming this way again might be ambushed or informed upon. So we take nothing, not a leaf. Starving, we walk out of the *kaingin*, leave all that food behind.

Discipline.

The days begin to blur. There is no change in our march. Each day we rise, a little weaker, at dawn, and go on until nightfall, wandering in endless ravines. The rain falls constantly. Every day we are in the rivers, wading, or sloshing in little rivulets. We cannot remember when we were last dry. There is no memory of how long we have been marching, or of the point in time that we have reached.

We think little. Our horizon is mist lowered on a slope. Food is there, on the fringes of the mind. *Ubod* is sometimes found along the way. The trail is marked with the tangle of felled trees, lying ugly with the heart hacked out, and the one who cuts is the one who eats. Our line is becoming somewhat ragged, with men falling out to pull down the vines of rattan, *away*, and *alimuran*, which have grape-like clusters of fruit with a soft shell. But it is all sour, so sour that the mouth contracts and rejects it, and the stomach twists. None of it is nourishing.

It is terrible to think that food exists in the forest but is beyond

our reach. To catch a pig or one of the small forest deer may take a day or two days of hunting, hunting made difficult in the heavy rains, and even then a single pig would mean but a mouthful of meat to 90 people, with precious time lost in an already precarious journey. It is the same with efforts to fish, which is not easy in muddy, swollen rivers; the few fish we may get would be a mockery to our number.

In the baggage of our household we have one thing left to eat. A can of Hemo. It is incredible that it has been saved for so long. During a noon rest the nine of us squat in a circle in a deep slate-lined ravine, the water running over our ankles, and Celia passes around the Hemo, a level spoonful at a time, as if she were feeding children, all eyes following a mouth closing over the spoon, the mouth of Ginto, the mouth of Leonor, the mouth of Sunday, the gaunt cheeks stretched with the lips.

Then we have nothing. At twilight we halt in some dripping place, let our packs drop, wearily put up the ponchos, and lay down like fallen sticks in the dark forest and sleep without eating.

113.

Somewhere on open earth, where people are, and homes, a struggle is going on. It is a struggle for the minds and the hearts and the hands of men, in plowed field and in street, a struggle taking place in written word, in speeches before a crowd, in huddles by lamplight in a barrio, in courtrooms, in armed clashes on a highway or on the outskirts of a town.

What does that struggle mean to us, here in this primitive place? The profound sweep of events, the issues that grip a nation, movements that rally masses, are here narrowed down to the momentous act of lifting a wavering foot upon a stone, to the revolutionary passage of a little creek. We who would strike the chains from a people find our triumph in the liberation of a palsied arm from a clinging vine. The struggle for dignity of man lies here in being able to lift up a thin body from a bed of weeds and to lie it down again upon a bed of rock. How can we imagine more? The forest is the boundary of our lives.

The struggle is a line of 90 people writhing over wilderness. I lift up my eyes each day and see it ahead of me; I turn and see it behind. I am an inseparable part of it; I move because it moves; I stop because it stops. All that I have ever loved, and sought, and strived for, is in this line, the meaning of my past and of my future, and of my numb burning present. It is my conscience, my faith, my hope, my living dream.

As long as it lives and moves I know that I too have life and can go on.

114.

Life walks always balanced on the brink of death, even in the tight design of cities, where no law can bar the hurtling accident, no regulation halt the strangling of a heart. We are all hostages to the great conspiracy of death that is around us.

Here in the primeval forest, I have never felt so overwhelmingly that human insignificance. Life means nothing in this geological immensity. We could lie down here and the forest would grow over us as if we had never been, making us indistinguishable from fallen covered tree or mossy stone.

But we stumble, fall, rise, and stagger on again, because we refuse to accept the fact of death. We refuse to lie down and die. How can we die? We are RIGHT, and all that we fight is WRONG. That is the morality of life to us, and our tenacious reason for living. Every step we take, every breath of ours, is one more blow against the denial of life that is the colonial system.

We fight ancient death and imperialism in the same drawn breath.

115.

The forest.

How long have we been in its green deep regime? Is there no end to it? We come up out of it to the crest of a ridge as if

out of a sea and its green billows roll there behind us, then we turn to descend and it closes over us again.

In dark ravines, where vegetation flows to the shoulder like another river, sometimes I am caught in a thorny vine and held there, unable to move; I have the sensation of being sucked down into green quicksand and I thresh about wildly to free myself.

The forest now has many shifting forms, becoming animate, and then abstract.

Sometimes the forest is a sly creature that reaches out to trip me or to throw its arms into my path. When I stumble on a root I kick at it for its deliberate meanness. When I run into a tree I strike with my fist its malevolent trunk. I curse a thorny creeper for its cunning malice.

Then sometimes the forest is the colonial system and all the features of this journey are episodes in the long struggle of the colonial peoples for liberation. I force my way through a tangled ravine and I think, This is the fight of the Indonesian people to throw off the bonds of the Dutch. I clamber over mammoth roots and stones, thinking, This is India and its people overcoming the obstacles to independence. I come up a long difficult slope and I think, This is China, the Long March, and the fight against the running dogs of imperialism.

And then, at times, the forest is all the evil forces that have held back the advance of civilization, and I am man, fighting his way through the dark underbrush of ignorance, intolerance, and misunderstanding, toward an open world of enlightenment, of freedom and of brotherhood.

All existence now is one impulse. The forest and the struggle have become inseparable.

116.

On a dateless day, on a hillside somewhere west of the Umiray, we come in afternoon upon a Dumagat, squatting before a fire, roasting a heap of bitter roots. Quickly we surround him and he looks up at the menacing guns and the gaunt unsmiling faces. When we ask him to guide us into Bulacan, he agrees, unsmiling.

We are elated. We have a guide. Rain and rivers have no more terror. And he guides us into a dank gloomy cul-de-sac where moss hangs in dreary streamers from the trees and in the night he runs away.

It is two weeks now since we have eaten anything of substance. Prior to that there were the months of semi-starvation. I am so thin that the clothes flap on me in the wet wind; I have made five notches in my belt, bored with a knife point beyond the normal holes. Celia is a wasted figure, dark loops beneath the eyes, the full breasts almost disappeared; for two months, in the cold rivers, her menstruation has not occurred. For weeks neither of us has had a bowel movement. I did not know that the human body could take such punishment.

Patty, the wife of Luis, thin in the best of times, has so little of substance to her now that I think that if I took her arm my hand would close only upon clothing. She is nurse for the 90 of us. In the evening she comes along the scattered shelters, looking in to say, Is anyone sick in here? We look up at the sunken eyes and at the wraith-like figure, and who would confess to weakness to one who must cling upon the shelter-frame to speak?

When we stop at night it is mechanically; we stop when those ahead of us stop. We put up the ponchos because we have always done so, and we crawl beneath them without regard for cushioning a bed. If we go past a shelter of another household the hollow eyes look out at us, and it is hard to tell what is in them—pity, weariness, hate, or nothing, nothing at all.

There is a morning when the comrades in a security unit say they cannot stand, cannot go any further. Celia, my wife, her face like a frail flower on a thin stalk, hardly able to walk herself, goes to their shelter. What are you? she says. Do you call yourselves men? Must I, a woman, carry you? They look up at her with weak pained expressions, holding to the rifles with the butts upon the ground. *Ka* Rene, they say. Please don't say those things. They pull themselves up, stagger into line, and we go on.

On that day Tessie, the courier, is carried. On that day a man falls behind, and when men go back to find him he is dead, dead of starvation.

It is not unusual now to fall asleep while walking, to lose the

sensation of motion or of what is around us. I have dreams in the rain of being in another place. I have one dream of us discovering two Dumagats, a man and wife, in a ravine, of surrounding them and of demanding to be guided, of them agreeing. My vision of the man in loincloth and of the woman in single loose dress of cotton is so vivid. Then I feel the water running on my limbs, hear the clamor of voices. It is not a dream. We have found Dumagats. They are friendly. They know where our production bases are. However, we have no room for mercy or for kindness now. We separate the man and wife, put them at either end of our line, threaten to shoot the woman if the man does not take us where we want to go.

We are guided to a wide river, running between high canyon walls. There is our road, the man says, that will bring us to production bases.

It is our salvation, and it is a waterway to hell. Between the high walls, its banks alternate between narrow strips of sand, shelving slippery rock, and stone cliffs that rise sheer from the water, without a foothold. When brought up short at impassable points we have no alternative but to cross the river. Twenty times a day we cross the river. It is deep and the current surges in the middle, or it breaks and sprays on rock. In most places the water is neck deep and each time we cross we strip and place pack and clothing on our heads, crossing with the yellow water swirling at our chins, feeling with our feet on the bottom for stones and holes. Celia and I are so weak that we cannot cross alone; we have to be supported on either side by two of our security comrades, and they, too, are enfeebled.

For one more whole week, the third without food, we stagger on this nightmare trail, crossing and recrossing the river endlessly. We are no longer a line, but merely fragmented groups strung out along kilometers of canyon. There are many who no longer make a shelter, flinging themselves down at dark on slimy rock or on pockets of sand. Our typist, Ben, is sick, with a high fever; I wonder vaguely that he stays alive and moves. Once he is carried away in the river, turning over and over and bobbing like a light stick, to be beached at a curve. We pick him up and he rises with vacant eyes and stumbles on.

At a rushing point I come ashore exhausted, on my knees. Celia is behind with another comrade, Sunday. She is torn from his hold by the river and I see her falling away, the helpless eyes level with the surface, but I am so weak I cannot move. The tears run out of my eyes and I can only gesture feebly toward her, as she drowns. Ginto, our household security member, plunges in and seizes her. There is no greater horror than these episodes in which Celia's life is threatened and I am impotent to go to her aid.

Hunger is only a numbness, a gradual blanketing of thought and of sensation. There is no stomach pain, only great weakness of the limbs and a dizziness. If I come to an obstacle it takes a long time before I can muster a decision as to where to place a foot to climb over it. I fall and I lie there, supported on my trembling arms, giggling over it; it is so ridiculous. I look up and I see the tops of trees going around, the canyon walls whirling, the world whirling.

We scrabble on rocks for the snails fastened there under water, breaking the end of the shell and sucking out the hard, rubbery creature. Or there are the occasional soft-shelled crabs, as big as a quarter-piece, that we tear open alive and raw and suck for the juice. Or the *tambelok,* the yellowish grubs that burrow in some rotten trees, fat, squirming things that I think taste like scrambled eggs.

To keep my senses awake I strive to fix my wavering mind upon some piercing thought. It is hatred that comes to drive me on. There are those who say the revolutionary must be objective, must not be swayed by subjective emotions. And I have always been guided by the love of man; it is the love of man that beats in my pulse. But now I lean a little crazily against the wall of the canyon and when I grip a bit of rock or root it is not objectivity, it is not love, that puts the strength in my fingers; it is hate, hatred for the cruel and unfeeling ones who bring death and suffering to fellow men.

It rains. The golden sun comes. It silvers into rain again. It is the same.

It is 63 days since we started out upon this journey from Tibet.

We come at last to a bend in the river where a comrade stands in the rain, hunched there, the rifle drooping, directing us upward. We turn automatically and climb. It is very steep and very muddy from the feet of others, a flow of mud winding through *buho,* the brittle bamboo that is covered with hair-like prickers. I am on my stomach in the mud, uncaring, pulling myself up by clinging to the *buho,* my trembling hands filled with the prickers.

In this way we go over a crest and see a slope all open there, with huts at its margin, and smoke rising over the production base.

117.

December 1951

Chill wind blows through the hut upon the mountain top. The rain falls and we are cold, cold. Clouds come low and there is always mist in the forest, mixed with the rain. Far below, seen through trees that grow at angles to the perpendicular cliff, the river is a twining thread whose roar cannot be heard.

The struggle is far away from this place. Did it ever occur? We lie here day after day, Celia and I, with three companions, hardly aware of life. Each move requires a long fumbling in the avenues of thought, a gradual reviving of the reflexes. After an hour of need I summon up enough energy to shuffle to the door to urinate. Every rib upon our bodies stands out starkly. I look at myself in a small pocket mirror and I am shocked; my face resembles the edge of a dime. Celia and I try to play a game of chess; we have to stop; we cannot figure out the moves. At night we lie beside each other, inert, passion dead in us.

All others have gone below to the lowland, to recuperate in or near the barrios, where there is food. I cannot do that. My American features would be recognized and the rumor would spread, unintentionally; curiosity is hard to prevent in the barrios. So we stay here, gathering strength. We subsist mainly on *camote* roots and on *camote* leaves.

One day I go down the path to the creek below our hut. Sun is out and the ground has dried a bit, but I go very slowly, clinging to the trees, stopping every few steps to rest. I squat by the side of the creek and I forget what I came there for. I stare at the water. There is something about the sun falling on the water with ripples of light on the yellow sand and on the white stones. After a long time I realize what it is. It is beautiful.

It has been so long since I have noticed anything of beauty around me.

118.

January 1952

In the middle of January 1952, we go over the rugged mountains east of Sibul Springs and descend into Nueva Ecija. It is three months since we left Laguna and the hungry camp at Tibet. Time is a swollen mountain stream in which we wade.

On this date comrades from Reco 1 are supposed to meet us here, by a gushing stream. We find a pair of abandoned, dilapidated huts. No one is here. No one has been here for a very long time. It is like so many features of our movement now, the plan, the pledge, and afterward the silence, the missing ones, the unattended rendezvous. We crawl into the huts, where the floors have broken free for the rattan thongs and sag, and wait.

Days go by and no one comes. Our little food runs out, the rice gone, the *ubod* back in the pot. Flesh goes tight upon our bones again.

In Bulacan, a month after the event, we heard the news of the election in November, and of the utter failure of our boycott policy. Even in those barrios where people were willing to follow it, they were rounded up in army trucks and driven to the polls, to register and to vote.

I am obsessed by the thought of isolation. For months we who are in a deadly struggle have done no work for it except the desperate measures of survival. I long to be able to work, to throw

myself into any useful task, anything but this waiting in the silent forest, where decay, too, is a waiter. . . .

I am going along the stream, to keep myself busy, catching the tiny crabs for their few shreds of nourishment. I have an old piece of pigskin which I tie on a string and throw into the water. A horde of crabs swarm upon it and I pull them as they cling voraciously. They could strip a body in an hour. Decay, and tiny claws. Into the underwater grooves of rock ledges I insert my fingers to pull them forth, biting frantically. With each little creature captured comes a surge of triumph.

So in need are we of victories. . . .

I am downstream behind a large rock, on guard, with Ginto's carbine. We are a little group of six and the stream is a highway for enemy patrols. We take turns guarding against surprise. I have not handled a gun before in the forest, but a time of grimness has come into our lives. I have been touched with fatalism. I think that I am going to die in the forest, and I want it to be a good death.

A limb of a tree arches over me and I am in the patina of its leaf-shadow. I am under its silence, too; nothing moves in all the forest. A stillness like death. Perhaps all the others are dead, and we are the last survivors of the movement, here behind the last rock, and in the last rotting huts. Is this to be the end, the weakened hands lifting the gun in the final hopeless gesture of defiance?

A leaf moves. Leaves move. I watch the moving leaves. The forest lives. The movement lives. Why should I think of death? The movement itself is life, fighting the encroachment of death. I know that we shall go on, enduring, even if we are the last, and with hope, because the very act of doing so transfers the life that we embody to the hands of others who will come after, as the falling leaf is supplanted by the outgrowth of another, as the forest endures against decay. . . .

Ginto comes to Celia one day, entering the hut where we are lying down to save our strength. He sits beside her and whispers softly, eyes down, to his household chairman. He is asking for her permission to court Leonor. . . .

After many days a courier comes over the hill behind us.

Supplies and a Reco camp await us by the Sumukbao River, the river in the valley beyond the next ridge.

And so we come at last to our living destination.

119.

February–March 1952

It is not safety and stability to which we have come after our march. The Reco cadres are scattered and harrassed by continual army operations. Slowly and painfully, moving often ourselves, we contact them, call them all together for a conference. It is late in March before we are ready, with a precarious supply line into the barrios of the town of Papaya, and with a camp site just below the peak of a high steep mountain.

Many of the conferees are sullen and dispirited. We listen to their reports. It is increasingly difficult to maintain contact with the people. Numbers of barrios have been evacuated entirely, their inhabitants moved bodily into garrisoned towns. If there is work to be done in the fields, the people are taken out under the escort of civilian guards or army detachments.

Nueva Ecija is now divided into military zones, with garrisons so situated that reinforcements can be rushed to any point within half an hour. All highways have patrols and checkpoints. Fields of *talahib,* good guerrilla hiding places, have been burned, extensive areas that are leveled by bulldozers and the soil smoothed to make footprints noticeable. At key points across the plain tall watchtowers have been erected, with machine-guns and searchlights that sweep usual Huk trails. Huks cross the lowlands at night in brief rushes in the dark intervals between the searchlight beams.

A litany of difficulty. Demoralization in the camps. Surprise raids. Surrenderees. Informers. A mimeograph machine is lying unused in a dugout in Western Pangasinan while leaflets are being written out in longhand for distribution to the people. Lack of food. Lack of paper. Lack of guns and ammunition. Lack of discipline.

Those are the problems. Now we draw from reports the posi-

tive features. The people remain uncowed. If we had the arms we could recruit a thousand men in a week, say the Nueva Ecijanos. We still have a good core of cadres. All we need is organization and a realistic set of tasks.

What we set before this conference is the perspective of protracted struggle, to be continued indefinitely. Forget the idea of quick victory, of the seizure of towns, of the setting up of provisional government. We will concentrate on the immediate matter, the small task, the achievable aim, that will restore morale, add confidence, assure the people that we are intact and functioning. We will set up a political school. We will set up a military school. We will reorganize the Reco.

We may have to tighten our belts and be mobile, but in a year's time we can be stable again.

In the midst of our talk planes appear, a squadron of fighters. They whistle down so low above the mountain, and so suddenly, that we think that we are their target, and we scatter from the conference hut and over the slope, seeking cover behind rock and tree. It is soon apparent, however, that they are making a bomb run on targets in the valley below, using our peak as a sighting. All morning they scream overhead to bomb and to strafe just below us, alternating in flights that go back to base to reload and return to renew the attack. They are hitting one of our abandoned camp sites that we had left not long before. We go back to the conference hut and continue our discussion, pausing only when the noise above obliterates our voices.

In the night, on the still mountain air, the grinding gears of trucks climbing a slope or crossing a rocky stream reaches our ears. Troop movements are going on in the foothills of this part of the mountains, the bringing in of equipment, the setting up of command posts. We lie and listen to the sounds of an operation beginning and know that our presence has been exposed.

A squad *balutan* comes in with empty sacks in the morning. The barrios are full of troops, our contacts arrested. The food supply is critical. It is decided to terminate the conference, to leave this camp site, to disperse cadres. We break off on the grim note of protracted struggle, the groups leaving in different directions, grim lines about the mouths and eyes.

Celia and I, with our group, will be the last to leave. We will

stay in the operation area, mobile, evading enemy movements. All the other huts are empty now, the occupants gone. It is summer again and sunlight comes down quietly through trees. Another cycle has come in the forest. We sit on a log near our hut and the immutable stillness is all around us. It seems to penetrate into our very bones, as if we were being immured in the forest forever.

120.

April 1952

A day in April 1952.

We are in the hut, completing last minute preparations, writing messages to go out by courier. Tomorrow we move. Celia sits upon the floor, feet tucked beneath her, leaning to write upon the little elevated bed against the wall where we sleep. I am at the typewriter, set upon its ledge of vine-tied sticks. Ginto splits firewood by the hearth. Suspended over the cold fireplace in a pot is our dinner, a cup each of *lugaw* mixed with *ubod,* cooked before dawn.

Cicadas whirr in the forest down the steep decline on which our hut is perched. The creek murmurs cleanly in the ravine.

When the rapid fire begins we are for one moment stunned, heads jerked to each other. Then we are on our bared feet, racing for the edge of the drop beyond the hut. The enemy has come over the top of the mountain and has descended behind us, into the middle of the camp, and is firing upon us from among the empty huts. The noise is deafening. The ground is churned at our feet and bits of twig and bark fly about our heads.

A bullet grazes my ankle and I am tripped as I leap down the steep descent. Headfirst I fall and tumble a hundred feet through bushes and small trees. My glasses are smashed and my head cut and I lie half senseless behind a large tree. Bullets thunk into the tree.

Dimly I am aware that Celia is there too, crouched beside me, her face close to mine. Her lip has been cut and there is blood

upon it. Through all the whirling moment the only thing that registers in my mind is the blood upon the lip of my wife. I can't see! I shout to her above the continuing sound of gunfire. I can't go any further! We exchange a look of love, pity and terror. But I have to leave you! she cries. There is no more time to talk. I do not try to stop her. I understand. Our hands touch and then she has slid away and is gone, my wife.

My wife is braver and more determined than I am; she is a true Filipina fighting for her country.

I give a great shout from behind the tree. The firing above slackens and I hear voices calling me to come out. I do not know what will happen but I step out from behind the tree. It is the last tree in the forest for me.

Something is waving up above where the hut is but I cannot see clearly. The firing has stopped so I begin to climb, stumbling, expecting every moment to feel a bullet smash into me. When I am close to the top I see the men, pointing rifles at me and cursing me. It is the first time in these two years that I have seen those whom we fight. Strange, blind struggle in the forest.

The army troops are dressed irregularly, like Huks. They are wild and excited, with the half-fear that is in men in battle and that is hidden by shouting and gestures. I am pulled up over the brink and knocked to the ground, picked up and knocked down again. A man with mad eyes aims his Garand at me as I lie on the ground. A sergeant strikes it aside and the bullet goes off into the trees. I do not know whether to be thankful or not. They kick at me and empty my pockets.

A lieutenant comes running along the slope. He is startled to see an American. I tell him my name and he shouts. He shoves the men aside and escorts me to a log to sit down. He is very happy. I am his promotion.

I sit upon the log. Probably I am in a state of half-shock, but everything is very clear and distinct around me. The firing has stopped. The men are quieter now. They are dumping our packs on the ground, throwing our belongings about, looking for anything valuable. Two young women lie on the ground nearby, dead. They were unarmed. One is a courier. The other is Patty, the wife of Luis Taruc, left in our care. Who were they? I am

asked. I do not know, I say. It is better that they are left anonymous now, like all the dead trees in the forest, where beginnings and endings merge and are as one.

121.

A command post in the foothills below. We come in at dusk, after a two-day hike on the trails outward. The army men come to watch me curiously. It is odd: most of them are friendly and decent, officers and enlisted men alike. Is it because I am an American, or is it because of respect for those whom they fight? It is confusing to find that those whom one fights can be likeable.

An officer comes to tell me of the capture of Celia. She ran into an army detachment by a river two or three valleys beyond our camp. She is unharmed and we are together even in captivity. I do not know whether to be happy, for us, or to be sad, for the movement. I turn my face away, so that nothing can be read upon it.

122.

The jeep runs out from amid the trees, down through the foothills covered with *cogon,* and then we are in the eye of the sun, upon the great plain. My eyes hurt looking at the unhindered distance, where the horizon vanishes in heat haze. The jeep runs smoothly over the free and open face of the world.

In the jeep with me, besides the driver, are a captain, and two enlisted men armed with tommy-guns. For lack of manicles, my wrist is bound to that of the captain with a roll of first-aid bandage. Behind us and in front of us are trucks, loaded with armed troops. There is no freedom for me in the open world.

I look out curiously at the first towns that I have seen for two years. It is Sunday, Easter Sunday. People are going through the unpaved streets with slow dignity, dressed in their finest clothes,

to the old, old churches, or else they stand along the bamboo fences, chatting. They do not look up at the troops hurrying by their homes. Who would know that a bitter struggle has occurred upon this countryside? In these very homes are families whose members have died in it. No one looks at me, comrade of the dead. For these people life has resumed its inexorable ways. They have seen many troops and captives. So many waves of conquest and of oppression have passed over this land that they have been numbed by it. I think how people learn to live with tragedy.

We go by the dried brown rice paddies, and the barrios where peasants squat under the houses in the shade, looking on the fields, thinking of rain. To the left, over field and bamboo grove, beyond the plains of Bulacan, the slopes of the Sierra Madre rise. They are blue and massive in the air, except where sun has touched a flank to illuminate it. I can see the yellow-green of foliage and the tall tufts of individual trees.

The forest is there, unchanged, unconquered, waiting.

Epilogue

February 1963

The open world.

I walk along a New York street and although the buildings shut out the horizon like stands of gigantic timber, it is all open. At a thousand points it is possible for one to dart away to unimpeded sight of river, sea, and land. In this city I can come and go marvelously at will, to move with multitudes or to sit alone in my own room.

It is eleven years since Celia and I were taken out of forest. Ten of those years were spent by us in a Philippine prison, and whoever enters prison leaves behind the open world. Now we are free, of that prison at least, but I do not walk here freely: it is as if all the underground and shut away places in the Philippines are around me.

It should be familiar here, in this open world that I have known before, but it is really strange; I keep seeing through it into a world that no one here knows. The wind that I feel in a New York street roars down a canyon in the Sierra Madre and spins me about in the rivers of hunger. In all the windows of the supermarkets I see the gaunt faces of Filipino peasants, the thin limbs of the hungry in the Tondo slums, the sunken eyes of Huks who took starvation in the mountains rather than surrender. I walk through the incredible open abundance of New York and it crumbles away before me like a dry honeycomb and I am left with the sight of a nipa hut in a barrio, the wood stove, the water borne from the creek in a can, the single cotton garment on the body, the sleeping mat alone in a room, the mere rice and salt on a banana leaf upon the floor. In the night I awake and the dim bedroom has the configuration of a cell in a Philippine prison, the sound of steam in the radiator is like the groans along the cellhouse corridor.

I am here, and I am not here, for I have two countries, now and forever. Ten thousand miles away there are still Huks in the forest (I am with them), and the same struggle goes on in the

Philippines. It has gone on now for 17 years, 21 years if one will count the guerrilla war against the Japanese. It has become the longest armed struggle for liberation in the world today. The meaning of it lies not in the years. It lies in the continuing misery of masses of Filipinos and in the refusal of their vanguard fighters to accept anything but an eventual victory for the people. Whenever a man falls in that struggle it strikes upon my heart.

An epilogue, it is said, should tie up the loose threads of what has gone before. How does one tie up the loose ends of an unfinished struggle? The only threads that can be finally tied are in the lives of the dead, and they actually live on. Bakal (Mariano Balgos) is dead, killed in the Bicol region, along with Bundalian and Cruz and Romy and countless others. Pando (Mateo del Castillo) is dead, killed in the mountains of Laguna, with his son Amando (Alunan) and his son, Ben. Dead are Capadocia, Dimasalang, Ramson, Basa, Sagasa, Ledda, Viernes, Walter, Maneng, Dimalanta. Ten thousand are dead.

G.Y. is in the enemy's hands, captured, along with Alembre, Cente, Linda Bie, Fred Laan, Reg, and scores of others of whom I have spoken, and what is to be tied in their lives except the cords that bind them as prisoners? The cords bind also Luis Taruc, who surrendered in 1954, but he sits in a cell with his back and his tongue turned against his comrades, and that, too, is a thread without yet an ending.

Or what thread can be tied neatly together that trails from those who have been in a Philippine prison since 1950, still under sentences of death or of life imprisonment—Jose Lava, Federico Maclang, Ramon Espiritu, Federico Bautista, Angel Baking, Simeon Rodriguez, and many others? When will the free men in the open world take hold of that cord and cut it from their wrists and their bodies?

Free and alive and out of the reach of prison cells up to this moment are only Jesus Lava and a handful of other cadres, continuing to maintain an HMB and to act with the integrity and determination that a mass base demands of its leaders. There are many new faces in the HMB now, new inhabitants of the forest,

replacing the dead and the imprisoned; another generation is continuing the struggle.

There is a living thread, indeed, and may it lead to a new Philippines.

Here is another thread, that touches me:

For ten years Celia and I sat in our own separate prison cells, with life sentences given to us for rebellion ("complexed with murder, arson, robbery and kidnapping"). There is no room in these pages to tell of those years—of the five years of solitary confinement, of the continual pressures and of the attempted brainwashing, of the denial of privileges given to even a common criminal. (And of the mass heroism of Huk political prisoners growing firmer and stronger in the hands of their enemies.) In December 1961, Celia and I were released through pardon, after a campaign conducted on a world scale in our behalf, and that is a victory that belongs to the open world. But that is not the end of the thread. I walk in the winter wind of New York, and she is in Manila, for we are separated by American laws that deny her entry to the United States (the open world) and by conditions that bar my return to the Philippines. No, it is not possible yet to tie the ends of that thread.

But this is a story in which all people can help to make a fitting end. Freedom is an issue that belongs to the world. I take up these threads and I hand them to Americans and to the people of all lands.

Glossary and Notes

alimuran: Sour fruit of a forest vine.
alipunga: Virulent skin infection.
amok: One who goes berserk; a relatively frequent occurrence in the Philippines; undoubtedly arising from distorted sociological conditions.
anahaw: Philippine forest plant with great fan-shaped leaves.
Ang Bandila Punit-punit: The Ragged Banner (name of a song).
anibong: Philippine forest plant.
anitos: Spirits, in primitive superstition believed to live in inanimate objects like trees and rocks.
away: Sour fruit of a forest vine.
bagoong: Sauce of fermented salted shrimp or fish.
balut: Steamed duck egg containing embryo of the duck, a delicacy.
balutan: From word meaning bag or package; in other words, baggage.
banca: Canoe made from hollowed log.
banig: Sleeping mat.
bankero: Craftsman who carves out the *banca* from a log.
barrio: Philippine village, smallest political unit.
basil: Hairy forest caterpillar, causes itch.
batalan: Rear of house, used for bathing or laundry.
bayong: Shopping bag made of woven strips from leaves of tough plant.
bayawak: Large forest lizard.
BCT: Battalion Combat Team.
BELL TRADE ACT: First filed in American congress July 1945, became law April 30, 1946. Approved by Philippine Liberal Party-controlled congress July 3, 1946. Provided for 8 years of absolute free trade with United States and 20 years of gradual application of tariffs until 1974. Also contained provision giving American investors equal rights in exploiting Philippine natural resources, which necessitated an amendment to the Philippine constitution.
beri-beri: Disease of undernourishment.
bia: Small fish.
bodega: Warehouse.
BONIFACIO, ANDRES: Organizer in the 1890s of the Katipunan that carried out Revolution of 1896 against Spain.
buho: A variety of bamboo.
calabasa: Squash.
calamay: A sticky rice cake.
caldero: Iron cooking pot.
camote: Sweet potato.
camoting kahoy: Cassava.
carabao: The water buffalo, general work animal.

caretela: Horse-drawn carriage with sun-shade top.
catmon: Forest tree with sour green fruit.
CIVILIAN GUARDS: Private armed units organized and paid by the landlords for repressive purposes.
cogon: Very tall grass.
compradores: Native economic interests closely allied with foreign trading policies and groups.
DAGOHOY: Filipino leader of revolt against Spain on island of Bohol in 18th century; it took the Spaniards 85 years to suppress it.
DEL PILAR: MARCELO DEL PILAR, of Bulacan, was the foremost revolutionary propagandist against Spain and the friars in the latter part of the 19th century; GREGORIO DEL PILAR was the youngest Filipino general who fought the American troops in 1899 and who died heroically at Tirad Pass.
despedida: Farewell party.
DIMASALANG: An alias of Jose Rizal, Filipino hero; means literally, cannot be touched.
ES UNIT: Economic Struggle unit, organized for confiscation purposes.
DOC: District Organizing Committee.
FC: Field Command.
gabi: Philippine plant with tuber.
ganta: A Philippine dry measure.
ginisa: A method of frying foods.
guinitan: A sweet dessert made of rice, mongo, sugar, and coconut milk.
hacienda: Plantation.
HMB: Initials of *Hukbong Mapagpalaya ng Bayan,* or Army of National Liberation, name adopted by Huk movement in 1948.
Hukbalahap: Contraction of *Hukbo ng Bayan Laban sa Hapon,* or National Anti-Japanese Army, name of Huk movement in World War II.
JEEPNEY: Small Philippine bus built on a jeep frame.
JUSMAG: Joint U.S. Military Advisory Group, the American military agency in the Philippines.
Ka: Short for *kasama,* comrade.
kaingeros: Those who work in a *kaingin.*
kaingin: Clearing made by landless peasants for planting crops in the mountain forest.
kalan: Wood-fire stove.
kalaw: Large, horn-billed forest bird.
kaong: Philippine tree with clusters of hard small fruits that can be softened by boiling, often cooked with sugar for sweet.
kapitas: Work foreman.
Katipunan: Short for *Kataastaasan Kagalanggalang na Katipunan ng mga Anak ng Bayan,* or Most High and Most Venerable Association of the Sons of the Nation, the organization of Bonifacio that led the revolt against Spain.

kawali: Iron frying pan.

kwalingking: A slang word in the Tagalog or Pampango dialect, invented in the Huk movement, applied to adulterous or extra-marital relationships.

LAKANDULA: Early Manila chief who resisted the Spaniards in the 1570s.

LAPU-LAPU: Filipino leader who killed the Spaniard, Magellan, in 1521.

LIBERAL PARTY: Philippine political party organized in 1945 to carry out U.S. postwar policies, including Bell Trade Act with its parity provision, Military Bases Agreement, Mutual Security Pact (which established JUSMAG in the country), etc. The other principal Philippine party, the Nacionalista Party, has carried at times a moderately nationalist line. The Liberal Party was in power 1946–1953 (under Presidents Manuel Roxas and Elpidio Quirino), the Nacionalista Party governed 1953–1961 (under Presidents Ramon Magsaysay and Carlos P. Garcia), and the Liberal Party regained control in 1961 under President Diosdado Macapagal. A minor party, the Nationalist-Citizens Party, organized in 1957, has a nationalist program. The Communist Party is outlawed.

limatik: Leech.

lugaw: Rice porridge.

lulog: Philippine tree of the palm family.

lumpia: Chopped pork, vegetables, bean sprouts, etc., wrapped in lettuce leaf and thin wafer, served with sweet-sour sauce and garlic.

LUNA, ANTONIO: Commanding general of Philippine army that defended the Philippine Republic, proclaimed in 1898, against American colonial aggression; killed by treachery in 1899.

lusong: Scooped-out butt of log, used for pounding rice to remove husk.

MABINI, APOLINARIO: Foremost political leader of Philippine Republic of 1898; exiled to Guam by American authorities when he refused to take oath of allegiance to United States.

Mactan: Island on which Magellan was killed by Lapu-Lapu.

Malacanang: Presidential mansion in Manila.

MALVAR, MIGUEL: Last major Philippine leader to surrender to Americans in 1902, following infamous reconcentration policy in Batangas.

merienda: Mid-afternoon snack, a Philippine custom.

MILITARY POLICE: Repression organization that preceded Philippine Constabulary in 1945–1946, officered by Americans in first anti-Huk operations.

mongo: Small round bean.

morcon: Meat roll, with vegetables, raisins, boiled egg, bits of liver cooked within.

MUNTINGLUPA: The Philippine national penitentiary.

narra: Hard red-wood tree, one of the high grade Philippine mahoganies.

nipa: Low-growing palm, the leaf of which is used for house construction.

NOLI: Alias derived from title of novel by Jose Rizal, *Noli Me Tangere,* which exposed and attacked rule of the Spanish friars.

paco: An edible variety of fern.

PAL: Philippine Air Lines.

pancit: Chinese noodles mixed with chopped sea foods, meats and vegetables, with sauce.

pandan: Philippine forest plant with long hard spiked leaves.

papaya: A large heavy melon-like fruit.

PC: Philippine Constabulary.

PLARIDEL: Alias used by Marcelo del Pilar, an anagram of his name.

REBELLION COMPLEXED: Crime with which Huks were charged beginning in 1950, "rebellion complexed with murder, robbery, arson and kidnapping," concocted by army prosecutors to prevent bail for accused and to give maximum sentences aimed at discouraging Filipinos from joining Huk; charge was ruled illegal by Philippine Supreme Court in 1956, which asserted that "simple rebellion" carrying maximum sentence of 12 years was all that could be charged; nevertheless, major Huk leaders are still in prison, since 1950, with death sentences and life sentences given for "rebellion complexed"; after Supreme Court ruling, Philippine congress, at insistence of army, passed Anti-Subversion Law in 1957, providing death sentence for membership in Huk or Communist Party; Casto Alejandrino (G.Y.), captured in 1960, and others, are charged under this.

RECO: Regional Committee, or Regional Command.

RIZAL, JOSE: Philippine national hero—doctor, novelist, leading intellectual—shot by Spaniards December 30, 1896, at instigation of friar religious orders.

SALCEDO: 16th century Spanish conquistador, first governor-general of the Philippines.

sorbetes: Ice cream.

talahib: Very tall grass.

talbos: Young, tender edible leaves of *camote* or *camoting kahoy.*

tambelok: Yellowish-white tree grubs.

tienda: Small neighborhood store.

togue: Mongo bean sprouts.

tukyong: Philippine forest plant.

tulog na: Tagalog phrase, time to sleep.

tuyo: Dried salted fish.

ubod: The heart of certain trees, especially of the palm family.

VIBORA: Alias of Artemio Ricarte, Filipino general who fought Americans at turn of century and who went into exile in Japan rather than live under American rule.