

## GUERRILLA PRESS OF THE PHILIPPINES, 1941-45

JOHN A. LENT

\*\*\* "Each page (of the *Cebu Times*) was printed four times, for the printing types evacuated to the mountains by the retreating USAFFE were so few, they were enough only for two or three inches of reading material. The types were redistributed and another third portion of the page was made, and so on and so on until the whole page was printed.<sup>1</sup>

"A strong current from a creek in the mountains of Barili turned the waterwheel that activated a dynamo to power a small Minerva press printing the guerrilla paper. The dynamo also produced electricity for recharging the batteries of the Cebu Area Command's radio receiving set. The *Cebu Times* got its up-to-date intelligence on the progress of war through the commentaries of news broadcasts... of American broadcasting agencies."<sup>2</sup>

\*\*\* The *Lico Chronicle*, advertising itself as "the only single copy newspaper in the world with the greatest reader following per copy," did just that—printed only one copy per issue. The one copy circulated to about 500 people and no matter how far it went, the paper was never seen by the Japanese. Every copy returned to the editor.<sup>3</sup>

\*\*\* When the *Liberator* editors felt they had to get rid of one edition (held up because the Japanese were keeping watch for it) which was becoming dated and useless, they put the papers on the false bottom of their jitney and stuffed them into *bayongs* which were covered well with fruits. Sentries stopped the editors who in turn offered the Japanese a bag of the sour fruit. Luckily the Japanese didn't want it and told them to move on. The guerrilla editors went into Manila to distribute the papers and while there received information from a spy on the condition of their captured *Liberator* friends. All this risk when it was almost instant death to be caught in possession of an underground newspaper.<sup>4</sup>

The above excerpts could have been from a war movie. However, these are just a few of the stories of the brave editors who went underground when the Japanese occupied the Philippines in late 1941

---

<sup>1</sup> Editor of the *Cebu Times*, now and during the war, is Pedro Calomarde. He recalled that during the occupation, the *Times* used folded 8 x 11 paper. The paper appeared every Saturday and copies were distributed to guerrillas "as far away as Mindanao, all parts of the Visayas and even in Cebu City." (Personal interview, Pedro Calomarde, Editor and publisher, *Cebu Times*, Cebu City, December 5, 1964.)

Another source added that Calomarde used coconut oil on the typewriter ribbon to make it last—not knowing when a new ribbon could be obtained.

(Smith, Mason Rossiter, "Journalism in Philippines retains old hell and brimstone tradition," *Quill*, February, 1957, pp. 7-8, 10.)

<sup>2</sup> I. T. Gica, "Cebu's deathless Times," *Kislap-Graphic*, February 18, 1959, pp. 20-1.

<sup>3</sup> Flor Borja, "Really the first," *Philippines Free Press*, May 15, 1948, p. 13.

<sup>4</sup> Benedicto S. Valenzona, "Guerrilla paper: The story of the *Liberator*," *Saturday Herald Magazine*, August 30, 1958, pp. 8-10.

and early 1942. As expected, the conquerors either confiscated or destroyed the mass media facilities of the islands; the prime media they took over for their own propagandistic purposes were the TVT interests of the Roceses. Left with only pro-Japanese media (which one source said was used only for wrapping cigarette tobacco), Filipino journalists faced three alternatives—work with the TVT, oftentimes for the purpose of hoping to foul up the well-oiled Japanese propaganda mechanism; head for the hills to join guerrillas and there publish underground information, or sit back apathetically and wait until everything blew over. Very few of the Philippine journalists chose the latter. Also, very few Philippine journalists opted to collaborate with the enemy.

#### FIRST GUERRILLA NEWSPAPERS

As is usual when trying to determine a “first,” historians have found it difficult to pinpoint the original guerrilla newspaper in the Philippines during the occupation. Manuel Buenafe’s *New Era* is given credit for being the first, having been published on February 4, 1942, only 33 days after the Japanese occupied Manila.<sup>5</sup> The one-page mimeographed sheet appeared almost daily during its six months of publication.<sup>6</sup> The newspaper appeared less regularly after the Japanese demanded that all mimeograph machines be registered. Two years later, when MacArthur returned to the Philippines, the *New Era* was resurrected in Central Luzon as the *Patriot*.

But, even before *New Era*, an anti-Japanese sheet existed, a second source has reported. The *Lico-Chronicle*, mentioned previously, was established January 3, 1942, and edited by Manuel Abad Gaerlan; it died after 48 days of continuous publication on February 20, 1942.

Typewritten, the eight- to ten-page paper incorporated headlines hand painted in ink for lack of display type. News was gathered from broadcasts via an underground radio. Gaerlan took notes of the broadcasts at night using a pocket flashlight. Because it was feared that Japanese were nearby, during the note-making sessions all electricity was turned off and windows were closed and barred. As an added precaution, the *Chronicle* maintained a corps of security guards who watched for the Japanese. After learning that the Japanese were conducting house-to-house searches, Gaerlan buried copies of the *Chronicle* in a

<sup>5</sup> Jose Rodriguez, “First underground newspapers?” *Philippines Free Press*, April 17, 1948, pp. 26-7.

<sup>6</sup> The Japanese raided the *New Era* headquarters looking for Buenafe. One source said Buenafe later organized a radio sabotage group, and that he was assailed violently by other underground workers, to the extent they wanted to shoot him when the war was over. (*Ibid.*)

can, but was later persuaded by neighbors to burn the papers so the Japanese could not get their hands on them.<sup>7</sup>

Besides claims to being first among guerrilla newspapers, there were boasts of being the last too—the last editor of a prewar newspaper to stop publishing when the Japanese landed. For example, in Iloilo, still unoccupied in early 1942, the *Times* was supposedly the last Philippine daily to fold up because of the occupation. Its publisher, Eugenio Lopez, was credited with bolstering local morale through his editorials in the *Times*.<sup>8</sup>

Elsewhere, Calomarde was the last newspaperman to leave Cebu when the Japanese occupied that city. He held his linotypists at their machines long enough to get an edition of the *Cebu Advertiser* in print announcing the fall of Bataan.<sup>9</sup>

### THE BIG THREE

Three newssheets mentioned frequently in the literature of Philippine World War II are *Matang Lawin* (Hawk's Eye), *The Liberator* and the *Voice of Free People*.

*Matang Lawin*, according to Armando Malay,<sup>10</sup> was among the first guerrilla newspapers on Luzon. It was founded by the guerrillas of the 14th Infantry Regiment of Colonel Guillermo Nakar. By June, 1942, Nakar had acquired a mimeograph machine and published the first issue of *Matang Lawin*, the “first guerrilla paper to come out in mimeograph form.”<sup>11</sup> Printed on one side of the sheet, two columns wide, *Matang Lawin*'s first issue contained “some news about the last days of Bataan and a warning to civilians to refrain from collaborating with the Japanese. . . . In a notice to the readers, the paper said it was adopting the name (Hawk's Eye) because it would serve as a watch over collaborators and the civilian population in general.”<sup>12</sup>

The second issue promise “truthful news about the war in Europe and in the Pacific.” This it promised to do by reprinting news commentaries gathered by a secret radio receiving set.<sup>13</sup> Later, when Nakar was arrested the paper died.

*The Liberator* is listed as the chief guerrilla paper in most of the literature on the World War II resistance movement. Malay calls it the “most famous paper of Central Luzon.”

<sup>7</sup> Borja, *op cit.*

<sup>8</sup> L. A. Angayan, “Journalism in Iloilo,” *Philippines Free Press*, January 28, 1950, pp. 26-7, 38.

<sup>9</sup> Personal interview, Calomarde, *op. cit.*

<sup>10</sup> Armando Malay, “The Philippine guerrilla press,” *Mirror Magazine*, February 12, 1955, pp. 10-1, 27.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

In August, 1944,<sup>14</sup> a former fingerprint expert of the Philippine Constabulary approached Leon Ty (who when the *Philippines Free Press* was closed, went into the hills with the guerrillas) and told him that the chief of President Quezon's Own Guerrillas (PQOG) in Cavite, Benedicto Valenzona, wished to publish a paper to bolster the morale of the guerrillas and to win adherents to the guerrilla movement.

Ty lost no time in contacting two of his colleagues in the *Free Press*, F. V. Tutay and Esmeraldo Izon, a cartoonist. The Manila newspaperman had to have a guide as he did not know how to contact the guerrillas. A former teacher, Agapito Canlas, took Ty to the PQOG headquarters. Four months later Canlas was caught by the Japanese circulating copies of the *Liberator* in Manila along with Fernando Zulueta, Dion Castello Ynigo and Librado Regalado. All but Zulueta were put to death.<sup>15</sup>

A number of guerrilla sheets<sup>16</sup> bore the name *Liberator* but it was Ty's that had the longest life of any resistance paper. A news-magazine with a *Reader's Digest* format, the *Liberator* published as many as 40 to 60 pages each issue. The paper was professionally prepared—so much so that the Japanese at first thought it was published in Australia and smuggled into the islands. According to Valenzona, the paper's aims in the beginning were (1) to defend Quezon's leadership against the propaganda issued by the Japanese, (2) to give the radio news from KZEI in San Francisco (the Japanese a short time before, had removed the short-wave apparatus from all Philippine radio sets so that Filipinos could not pick up San Francisco or Australia).

Late in 1944, when the Japanese Propaganda Corps had almost completely undermined the people's morale and Filipinos doubted whether MacArthur would return, the *Liberator* tried to sustain an esprit de corps and warn against collaboration with the enemy.

The paper was created despite what seemed very discouraging circumstances. First of all, other resistance newspapers had short lives, the Japanese finding them and doing away with both the papers and their editors. Secondly, Valenzona's companions, Hans Menzi, "Manny" Manahan, "Gumsy" Alba and Alfredo Filait were too weak to help him, having just been released from nine months confinement at the Japanese internment camp at Fort Santiago.

Valenzona, in describing the beginnings of the *Liberator*, said:

<sup>14</sup> Valenzona said the first issue of *The Liberator* was July 31, 1944.

<sup>15</sup> Malay, *op. cit.*

<sup>16</sup> One *Liberator* appeared as the official organ of the 7th Military District of Negros Occidental in 1943. A second paper by that name was subtitled "American Broadcast in the Headquarters of General MacArthur" and appeared in Manila, July 3, 1944. *The Liberator, The Voice of the Free Philippines* was published in Manila during 1942-3.

(Office of Chief of Counter-Intelligence, Philippine Resistance and Information Section; GHQ, AFPAC, APO500, *Newspapers and Magazines Published Since Re-occupation of the Philippines (1945) in the files of the Philippine Resistance and Information Section*, July 14, 1945, pp. 21.)

So there we were. With a typewriter battered by age and abuse, a mimeograph machine that squeaked with complaints every time we turned its drums, a quire of stencils and a few hundred reams of mimeograph paper we had swiped here and there, we set out on our ambitious task of gumming up the well-oiled Japanese propaganda machine.<sup>17</sup>

First issue of the paper did not carry a nameplate — just a photograph of Manuel Quezon to let the people know Quezon was still their leader. It was difficult for the citizenry to know he was their leader because the Japanese used Radio Tokyo, the Japanese-sponsored KZRM and *Manila Tribune* to play up Quezon's serious illness while also calling him a traitor for leaving the country during this time of peril. When Quezon died in the summer of 1944, the *Liberator* found itself "like a babe orphaned in its mother's womb." As the Japanese were harping triumphantly and telling the people "... your wishful thinking should find its death too ... unite now ... help rebuild your country," the *Liberator* came out with a supplement, confirming Quezon's death and asking the people to support the new president (Osmeña).

Throughout its lifetime, the *Liberator* suffered from a lack of supplies and efficient distribution. For example, at times the paper was distributed by men who kept the copies in their underwear. Staff members scouring the countryside for paper supplies and food, would not bother the barrio people; instead, they would go into Manila to beg. On one occasion they stole a Japanese supply truck and some food. Later, the truck was sold piece by piece and the money used to continue publication. But PQOG's short-lived prosperity ended when another guerrilla unit, jealous of PQOG's success, told barrio people that the PQOG received payments from the Japanese.<sup>18</sup> After being ordered out of the area by the other guerrillas, the unit hauled its equipment to Cavite via a Japanese Navy truck driven by a Filipino who worked for the enemy and unbeknownst to the Japanese helped other Filipinos on the side.

Issue number two was devoted to Osmeña. It employed the writing skills of Ty and Tutay whom Valenzona had recruited on a trip to Manila. This issue of the *Liberator* was a dare to the Japanese to "come and get us." At first, suspecting the paper was printed outside Manila, the Japanese heavily guarded all approaches to the city. On August 16, 1944, the enemy raided a secondary headquarters of the *Liberator* in Manila; fortunately, no copies of the paper were stocked there.

The third issue, MacArthur edition, sounded a direct threat to the Japanese and their collaborators. In large letters, the words "I shall

<sup>17</sup> Valenzona, *op. cit.*

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

return” adorned the pages. The 7,000 copies were distributed in one day in Manila. The fourth issue was the Guerrillero Issue.

Awakened by gunfire on September 23, 1944, the *Liberator* camp of 400 men sneaked off into the darkness, even though half of the men suffered from malaria. From a new camp, a more strongly worded *Liberator* was published. “Patriots, rise and strike, for our liberation is at hand” it declared.<sup>19</sup>

Finally, a last daring episode of the PQOG produced another issue of the *Liberator*. On February 5, 1945, the PQOG fought the Japanese at the Bureau of Prisons in an effort to keep a few political prisoners from being executed. The strategy worked, the Japanese fled and the prisoners were saved. With the capture of the prison the *Liberator* made its first appearance in the open as the city was now occupied by American soldiers.

In Eastern Leyte, the fortnightly *Voice of the Free People* was the chief resistance publication. Dr. Ralph Posuncuy, intelligence head of the Eastern Leyte guerrillas, was responsible for this, and a few other, publications. The *VOFP* first published in November 1942. Editor Pedro L. Yap discussed the beginnings:

The Japanese had full control over the press and radio. Japanese periodicals, leaflets and pamphlets literally rained over the country giving the Japanese side to the news and issues of the day. The people were tired of hearing of the exploits of the invincible Imperial Japanese Fleet, the ever-victorious Imperial Japanese Army... They wanted to read some real, honest news — not the sort of hash ground out by the sleek Japanese propaganda machine in Tokyo. If a guerrilla newspaper could only be published...

Soon Capt. Posuncuy and Company got busy translating the idea into reality... Somehow they got together some non-descript equipment and materials; a battered but still serviceable mimeograph, several radio sets badly needing repair, some stencils and paper salvaged from school houses and municipal buildings. The press looked more like a junk room than anything...

The first issue made its debut unobtrusively, with no fanfares and without benefit of any prominent man's benediction. It was a modest beginning, containing some war news and a reproduction of President Roosevelt and President Quezon's inspiring messages to the Philippine people given on the seventh anniversary of the Philippine Commonwealth, then an exile government. The news had to be checked and rechecked carefully against errors; atlases and encyclopedias had to be consulted — a tedious process which became a matter of routine with every succeeding issue and which eventually earned the paper a reputation for accuracy and reliability.<sup>20</sup>

Editor Yap said the public reaction to *VOFP's* appearance was gratifying. The paper gave people information of Allied air, naval and land victories, of Japanese and Nazi losses and of the “gigantic war

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> P. L. Yap, “The story of a voice,” *The Voice of the Free People*, January 18, 1945, p. 3.

production of America.”<sup>21</sup> The outer cover of the paper was an original sketch which was varied from issue to issue. Each issue contained editorials and commentary on all phases of the war, Japanese intentions in the Philippines and policies of the local puppet officials, a feature section of moralistic, literary and political matter and a wind-up of world news. In a tidbit column, items such as weddings of guerrillas and new experiments accomplished to push the war effort (such as using tuba for alcohol in motor vehicles) were mentioned.

To give an idea of the content of *VOFP*, here is an editorial that appeared June 19, 1943, discussing the Japanese independence pledge to Filipinos:

But if the Japanese propaganda magicians think that they can hypnotize us into submission by continually harping on the prospect of our getting independent within this year as Premier Tojo promised, they are sadly mistaken. We cannot be easily hoodwinked into accepting promises — especially when such promises came from Tokyo. We know exactly just what value to attach to Japanese promises. . . . Japan is suffering terribly from the heavy blows. . . . If she withdraws from the Philippines, Japan would lose face. And to lose face, for Japan, is unthinkable. For this reason, she must be thinking now of a good face-saving excuse. By promising to grant us our independence on condition that we cooperate with her wholeheartedly, Japan could say later, when she will be forced to withdraw from the Philippines, that she is only making her promise good. . . . Japan’s version of independence is freedom granted to a people to obey and follow her wishes and her dictates. . . . America has promised us real independence. We believe in America’s word. We are fighting side by side with her.<sup>22</sup>

The *VOFP* played war news temperately rather than in “blood-thirsty war-whooping against Japan.” Editors kept the press on the move; making sure they did not stay in one place very long. However, the Japanese still surprised the newspaper personnel with a midnight raid on November 7, 1943. Most of the men escaped but three editors were killed, two were captured and the printing equipment was smashed. Yap said of the raid, “equipment at the time was harder to replace than editors.”<sup>23</sup>

The difficulty of maintaining a guerrilla newspaper that encouraged the citizenry when everything around them was so discouraging was discussed by the *VOFP* editor:

The *VOFP* job was made harder by the fact that Mr. and Mrs. Average Reader opened their paper expecting to read of the bombing of Tokyo, the landing of American soldiers in the Philippines or the sudden miraculous end of the war. But the day’s news told only of the fighting in remote, far-flung places. . . . The local situation did not lend encouragement to despairing hearts. People

---

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> *VOFP*, June 19, 1943.

<sup>23</sup> Yap, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

scanned the sea and air in vain for a sign of those planes and ships which, they were told, were coming out of American factories and shipyards by the thousands. Not a few Thomases shook their heads in doubt. Japs [sic] and more Japs were pouring into the island. The guerrillas, already running low in ammunition, were carrying on a fight, brave, but seemingly futile and hopeless. The job of the man who has to soothe a suffering patient by telling him that the doctor would surely come—in spite of the fact that a fierce storm is raging, the bridges are down, the rivers swollen, and the roads badly destroyed—has never been easy or enviable. And yet that in effect was the VOFP's job. To tell the people that Americans were coming back, no matter what. . . .<sup>24</sup>

#### OTHER RESISTANCE PAPERS

The more than fifty underground newspapers listed here are by no means a complete tally. Scores of others were so clandestine that no traces of them remain today.

*The Flash*—Initially a typewritten sheet of two columns, *The Flash* first appeared on June 13, 1943. After ten issues, it was mimeographed. Chief writer for the paper was Pedro de la Llana, who, according to Malay,<sup>25</sup> “ironically was later to be killed by guerrillas in the Ilocos on suspicion he was a collaborator.” *The Flash* maintained editions in Tagalog, Spanish and English. Copies of the paper reached Mindanao by the batels that traveled between Luzon and the Southern islands.

*Pioneer*—“The Abuyog guerrilla brigade had its own propaganda. On the morning of March 30, 1943, *Pioneer*, a mimeographed tabloid containing but four pages greeted the people for the first time in many months . . . contained foreign news, local briefs, editorials, columns and a vernacular section.”<sup>26</sup> Only four issues were published. “It could not come out beyond June 1943, since we who stood behind it ran short of stationery and were called to teach when schools were re-opened in places not occupied by the enemy.”<sup>27</sup> A staff member of the *Pioneer* listened to radio 24 hours a day, alternating with his wife—not wanting to miss any of the news reports. When he heard the Japanese were starting a mopping up campaign, he tore his radio apart and hauled it deeper into the mountains.

*The Thunderclap*—The first few issues were typewritten; later issues were mimeographed. The organ of the Counter Intelligence Propaganda Corps (CIPC), *Thunderclap* was established July 26, 1943. The chief editor was Jose Resurrecion who wrote under the pseudonym of General Victor Terrible. The paper came out as often as it could and published anywhere possible. Once it was published in a house in Rizal “just a stone's throw from the Japanese barracks,” on other occasions it was

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>25</sup> Malay, *op. cit.*

<sup>26</sup> Francisco Aurillo, “The Philippine resistance movement—Abuyog version,” Abuyog 1945, pp. 15 (typewritten).

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*



printed under a choir loft in a Manila church. On February 2, 1945, *Thunderclap* changed its name to *Liberty*.

*Kalibo War Bulletin* — A unique newspaper in that it was published in Capiz, an area which cannot maintain newspapers even today. After Pearl Harbor, five young men of Kalibo pooled their talents and published the *War Bulletin* “to rally the people and to give them a factual report of the war’s development.” A daily, the paper was a one-page, coupon bond paper size pamphlet printed back to back. A stenographer among the five partners transcribed radio broadcasts he received from Corregidor and the United States. Although the paper sold “like hot cakes”<sup>28</sup> at a centavo a copy, it lasted only a few months.<sup>29</sup> One day, the printer, a nephew of a partner, printed more copies than ordered, sold the extras and pocketed the profits. This led to a number of petty misunderstandings among the owners and eventually the paper’s demise.

*The Bugle* — Appeared November 11, 1942, an outgrowth of *News-Highlights*, which was first published October 19, 1942. “This news sheet shall be, as heretofore, issued daily and on a non-profit basis. And for our sources of news we use the daily broadcasts from the following stations: KGEI [sic] San Francisco; KWID San Francisco; KET San Francisco and BBC London,”<sup>30</sup> the editor stated.

*Karatung* — A twice weekly paper distributed widely by intelligence operatives and their agents. Friends provided supplies and recharged radio batteries for the staff. The paper was raided June 19, 1943, by the Japanese.

*Ing Masala* and *Aspirant* — Both publications of the Hukbalahaps of Pampanga. Former published in barrio of Arayat in October, 1942. *Aspirant* was a literary magazine of the Banal Regiment of the Huks.

*Ang Tigbatas* (Common People) — A bi-lingual (English and Hiligaynon) paper created by Tomas Confesor, governor of Free Panay. Although aimed at the civilian population, the paper on occasion even reached MacArthur’s headquarters in Australia. Malay said: “so hard up [sic] were the publishers that sometimes pad paper (the kind used by grade school students) was used to print it on.”<sup>31</sup>

*Commentator* — Published in Sorsogon by Juan Frivaldo, the *Commentator* appeared irregularly — only when Frivaldo received news from

<sup>28</sup> Nick Marte, “What’s wrong with the provincial newspapers,” *Philippines Herald Magazine*, May 28, 1955, p. 8.

<sup>29</sup> Another source said the paper lived from 1941 to 1944 and had a circulation of 1,000 to 5,000 per issue. He said the paper was closed down twice — each time the Japanese occupied Kalibo. When the school building which housed the mimeograph machine burned down, the paper ceased operations. (Malay, *op. cit.*)

<sup>30</sup> Elmer Lear, *Japanese Occupation of the Philippines*, Data Paper 42, Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, Ithaca, 1961.

<sup>31</sup> Malay, *op. cit.* See also: Angayan, *op. cit.*

the Allied Intelligence Bureau. Mimeographed on bond paper, its number of pages varied. Died at time of liberation.

*Onion Skin*—Published on onion skin paper which facilitated the hiding of issues. Chief writer was Guerrilla Captain Mena Lardizabal. It published a parody on the Japanese Patriotic March and later the “On to Tokyo” article which caused the zoning of Manila and suburbs by the Japanese.

*The Saber*—Published by R.O.T.C. guerrillas of Laguna and Bicol province. The paper was first typewritten, then mimeographed later. Chief writer was Wenceslao Q. Vinzons who “carried the Filipino and American flags in every encounter with the Japanese.”

*Bahala Na*—Edited by Colonel Benito Razon, it first appeared in June, 1943.

*The Avenger*—A mimeographed two-column paper printed on one side only. The first issue was devoted to the war news in the Pacific and Europe and the second issue to stories of Japanese atrocities and Japanese desires to rule the world.

*Palaso*—Published December 25, 1944, first as a poster which could be found pasted to buildings and fences early in the mornings.

*Kalayaan*—A guerrilla paper of Bulacan, named after the famous underground newspaper published nearly fifty years before.

*Bolos and Bullets*—Published in Bohol from April, 1943, to June, 1944. Fortnightly. Organ of Bohol Force. News of Allied effort and local guerrillas. English and Visayan.

*The Bombshell*—Manila. 1943-45. Transcripts in pencil and crayon of American short-wave broadcasts. Sometimes written on reverse of Commonwealth Government (Philippines) stationery.

*Fortnightly Publication*—Panay. January 15, 1943. Typewritten. Radio and local news.

*Free Philippines*—“Somewhere in the Philippines.” February 12, 1944. Official organ of the United States forces in Philippines. Printed. News reports and editorials. Maintained as a free paper for Filipinos after liberation.

*Free Sulu News*—Sulu, February, 1945. Weekly official news organ of Sulu Area Command. General and local news.

*Freedom*—Panay. 1942. Published by the Propaganda Unit, Second Section of U.S. Army. Mimeographed. English and Visayan.

*Liberty*—Manila. February, 1945. General news. Typewritten.

*News*—Leyte. 1943. Mimeographed.

*News of the Day*—Iloilo City. 1943. Mimographed.

*Patnubay* (Direction)—Manila. 1944. Mimeographed. Tagalog with English section. Left-wing publication.

*The Patriot*—1944. Published by the Hunters or R.O.T.C. guerrillas. War news and history of the organization. Mimeographed.

*Press of Freedom*—1944. Published as official organ of the 5th Military District, Philippine Army, USAFFE. Biographical sketches of local guerrilla leaders. Typewritten.

*Red, White and Blue*—Manila. December, 1944. Issued by employees of Bureau of Science and Bureau of Mines. Transcripts of radio broadcasts. Typewritten.

*Red, White and Blue*—“Somewhere in the Philippines.” 1943. Fortnightly. By Propaganda Corps, 94th Infantry. News and editorials. English and Visayan. Mimeographed.

*An Tanauan*—Leyte. 1942. Daily except Monday. News and briefs. English and Visayan. Mimeographed.

*Thirty-fourth Anniversary of the Chinese Republic*—January 1, 1945. Anniversary brochure edited by publishers of *Sentinel*, Chinese organ in Bicolandia. English and Chinese. Typewritten with pen illustrations.

*The Thunderbolt*—“American Broadcast in Europe.” March 24, 1944. Handwritten transcript of American news broadcast from Europe. Under blue and red colored pencil headings, accounts of the news were written in long hand with ordinary lead pencil. Halved legal size bond paper used.

*Tingug sang Kalwasan* (Voice of Liberty)—1943-44. General and local news. Ilongo and Visayan. Mimeographed.

*Torch*—Cebu. 1942-43. Official organ of Free Cebu. English and Cebuano. Printed.

*USAFIP, NL News Letter*—“Somewhere in Luzon.” 1944. By the United States Armed Forces in Philippines, North Luzon. Monthly. Local news.

*Victory Herald*—1943. “Published irregularly under the noses of the Japanese,” the masthead read. News and editorials. Mimeographed.

*Victory News*—1943. Negros. Branch edition in Negros as well as another called “United with ‘The People’s Gazette.’” Editorials and news. Mimeographed.

*Victory News*—A Free Panay news broadcast. Panay. 1942-43. Official statements by officers of 61st Division. Later issued with Visayan supplement. Mimeographed.

*Vigil of Freedom*—1944. “Monthly news magazine of LGV.” News, editorials, poems, correspondence. Typewritten.

*The Voice*—1943. Fortnightly. Mimeographed.

*The Voice of Free Samar*—Samar. 1943. “Official news release of the Free People of Samar.” Visayan and English. Mimeographed.

*The Voice of Freedom*—1942-44. Visayas. General and local news. Mimeographed.

*The Voice of Liberty*—1942. Tacloban. General and local news. English and Visayan. Mimeographed.

*Weekly News Bulletin*—1943. Propaganda Section, 6th Military District. Transcripts of radio broadcasts. Mimeographed.

Still other underground newspapers were: *Emancipator*, *Many Voices*, *The Unknown Soldiers*, *Chronicle*, *Multimes*, *Poetry*, *The Serviceman*, *Harbinger* and *Coordinator*.<sup>32</sup>

#### RADIO'S IMPORTANT ROLE

Radio, although relatively underdeveloped in the Philippines at the time, was a prime news source during the Japanese occupation. Initially, the people used their short-wave sets to pick up San Francisco and Australia stations but the Japanese eventually controlled such listenership by first placing a license on all radio sets and later by taking the short-wave apparatus from the sets.

Filipinos who were able to smuggle their short-wave radios into the mountains automatically became sources of news for pamphlets, posters and underground newspapers.<sup>33</sup> "Owners of short-wave sets curled up under tables, in toilets and in dark, hot and sound-proof cellars and attics to hear William Winters or Sidney Rogers of KZEI San Francisco. Then they transcribed this information to leaflets. Many people were thrown into torture chambers for reading the leaflets."<sup>34</sup>

On these nights at the end of the year, when it was increasingly necessary to find relief from the hot violence of the day, Filipinos (men, women and children) gathered at every house where there was still a radio that worked, and whenever it seemed momentarily safe enough to listen. The punishment for listening to the radio was death, but greater than the Filipino's fear was his need to hear words that promised life.<sup>35</sup>

KZEI, "This is San Francisco," was the station Filipinos risked death to hear. It was called by one Japanese colonel as "Enemy number one of the Filipinos" because so many Filipinos lost their lives listening to it. Stenographic notes of "Mariano" news digests of the Pacific

<sup>32</sup> See: Eufonio Alip, "Fifty years of Philippine progress," *Journal of History*, XV, Nos. 3-4, pp. 205-42.

<sup>33</sup> See: Filemon Guiang, "Our underground journalism," *The Filipino Observer*, October 24, 1945, p. 9.

<sup>34</sup> Valenzona, *op. cit.*

<sup>35</sup> John Keats, *They Fought Alone*, (New York: Pocket Books, 1965), p. 370. (This book gives an interesting account of Colonel Wendell W. Fertig's campaigns in Mindanao.)

According to Noli Olarte, Fertig posed as a general to get the support of the local people. "He had missed the last boat to Australia during the war and had to stay here and survive," Olarte said. "In late 1943, when Fertig's guerrillas had contact with Australia, the 'general' ordered Australians to send shiploads of American magazines to him. Any news from America meant the people would identify with America. It worked. This was the first time there was good communication with the outside world. Some of these magazines even reached Luzon as did matches and cigarettes marked 'I shall return!'" (Personal interview, Noli Olarte, *Manila Times* correspondent, Cagayan de Oro City, December 13, 1964.)

situation and William White's news commentaries were surreptitiously distributed (sometimes at fantastic prices) throughout the islands.

Manila citizens even had to depend on San Francisco for news developing right in Manila. When Premier Tojo made a surprise visit to the city, it was San Francisco which explained to Manila residents the purpose of the visit. Filipinos, aided by Americans attached to OWI, were responsible for the 24-hour a day, seven day a week broadcasts. They used pseudonyms to protect their families and friends in the Philippines; thus, Jaime Catuira's family did not know that it was their son who did the "Mariano" digests.<sup>36</sup> Other broadcasters on KZEI were Eddie Ramos, Dr. Hilario Marquez (pseudonym of Tio Kiko), Victor del Rosario (pseudonym of Florencio Marquez). Broadcasts occasionally were made in Pampango, Ilocano, Pangasinan, Tagalog, Ibanag, Cebuano, Bicolano and Hiligaynon.

How did the news leave the Philippines? Until November, 1943, only sketchy and spasmodic messages had been received from the islands. In 1943, the U.S. War Department activated the 978th Signal Service Corps to establish radio stations and act as scouts in the Philippines. The first party of men landed in the islands for this purpose was captured by the Japanese.

In November of that same year, another group docked near Mindanao. After making contact with several Filipino fighting units, the corps told the world of Japanese atrocities. The next month, KAZ radio, designated as the Philippine Guerrilla Net Control Station, was taken over by the 978th and made into a network which extended to every major guerrilla unit in the Philippines. By August, 1944, KAZ had given MacArthur, and the world, all the information MacArthur needed to know about Leyte, preparatory to his invasion.<sup>37</sup>

#### SUMMING UP

Most guerrilla newspapers provided vital services during the occupation — giving the people some grounds to be hopeful, as well as disseminating radio news from Allied sources.

That the efforts of publishing a guerrilla newspaper were worthwhile might be surmised from the risks taken by those who printed the sheets and those who read them.

There was a group called the Porch Club which before the fall of Bataan engaged in anti-Japanese propaganda in Manila. Manuel Arguilla lead the group. Working with the Japanese at the time, Arguilla doubled up by working as an underground man for the Markings (a guerrilla outfit). The

<sup>36</sup> Anonymous, "This is San Francisco," *Sunday Times Magazines*, September 15, 1946, pp. 6-7.

<sup>37</sup> Anonymous, "Underground radio in Luzon aided Liberation strategy," *Manila Post*, October 25, 1945, p. 2.

Japanese found out and executed him.<sup>38</sup> Liling Roces, who wrote "Thorns and Roses" for the *Tribune*, was executed in this same group. I was in the group with Arguilla as we were childhood buddies. Also doing propaganda work with us was Salvador P. Lopez. The Porch Club used mimeograph machines to duplicate its information. I did the translating. We'd listen in on the San Francisco broadcasts and then deliver the information to Arguilla. Then we'd run stories and editorials off by the thousands and disseminate them. We rode bicycles and in the handlebars were the mimeographed newspapers. I'd translate the San Francisco news into Ilocano (I did it left handed so the Japanese could not trace my handwriting if the translations were ever picked up by the Japanese). The papers were one pagers with little poems and news included. When the Japanese sent out notice that all mimeograph machines and typewriters had to be registered, Arguilla registered our machine (remember he worked for the Japanese). Our runners were often caught by the Japanese. . . . All equipment was supposed to be registered, even radio sets. The radio sets were reconditioned so that nothing but local stations could be picked up. The papers were sent all over the city. At twilight, when everything was quiet, people would drive by and throw these sheets out of cars anyplace where a number of people were gathered. Later when everything had to be registered, the news spread by word of mouth.<sup>39</sup>

Not only was it perilous to publish a guerrilla paper in the face of the Japanese threat, but editors faced still another threat—the jealousies and fears of other guerrillas. Guerrillas were known to have killed or run off other underground workers, thinking them to be collaborators. Yay Marking, a colonel in the Markings guerrilla unit, said of one guerrilla paper and its editor:

This paper was hanging people by its headlines. The editor was ferocious with many sick hates. His paper was sensational and he didn't bother to verify stories. He was fueling his fires with people's lives—a throw-the-maid-into-the-volcano type. He hurt some of our Markings too. For example, we had some of our people posing as collaborators with the Japanese so they could obtain information from the enemy. This other editor accused our people of being Japanese sympathizers.<sup>40</sup>

We have already discussed the methods of obtaining news from abroad; getting the local news for the underground newspapers was oftentimes even more difficult. Here's how Pedro Calomarde picked up local intelligence for his underground *Cebu Times*:

(He'd) leave the publications cave and go down the hills to play the role of a wartime farmer tilling a small tract of land in the occupied areas. He

<sup>38</sup> According to Salvador P. Lopez, Arguilla was not too secretive about his double life. He was captured by the Japanese and placed in Fort Santiago August 29, 1944, which was the last time he was seen. (Lopez, Salvador P., "How Manuel Arguilla died," *Orient*, December, 1960, pp. 36-44.)

<sup>39</sup> Personal interview, Atmadedo Dacanay, ex-editor *Evening News*, Manila, November 5, 1964.

<sup>40</sup> Personal interview, the Markings, Manila, November 3, 1964. See: *The Crucible and Where a Country Begins* (both by Yay Marking) for more on the heroes of the underground during World War II.

kept his eyes and ears open for news on the raging war funneling this both from civilian populace and the Japanese officials whose friendship he cultivated for the newspaper ends.<sup>41</sup>

To avoid detection when the Japanese raided the guerrilla headquarters, newspaper editors often buried equipment and copies of the papers while other guerrillas fought delaying actions. The ingenuity Filipinos employed to avoid being caught reading underground papers are exemplified by the late archbishop of Cebu. He hid his weekly copies of the *Cebu Times* in his shoes and read the papers inside the comfort room, disposing of them after reading the welcome news.<sup>42</sup>

A section of an official report released by the Philippine Resistance and Information Office generalizes the underground press movement quite well:

Most of the publications reflect the acute shortage of paper during the period, being published on the reverse side of copies of government notices and stationery . . . these publications vary from sporadic, spontaneous ventures, usually anonymous, to official organs of established and recognized groups, which published the names of their responsible officials. The latter were usually mimeographed (a few even printed) but among the former were typewritten sheets and some pen and ink offerings, passed from hand to hand. Only a few issues of each paper are available. In addition to newspapers, a continuous flow of guerrilla counter propaganda in leaflet form supplemented the more regular publications. These consisted of typewritten and mimeographed flyers of pro-Allied interpretations of the war, condensations of 'traitorous collaborators' and appeals for faith in an American return. Some titles: 'How the Japs tried to break the Filipino spirit,' 'A breeding place for rats,' and 'to puppet Laurel and his Quislings.'<sup>43</sup>

---

<sup>41</sup> Gica, *op. cit.*

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> Office of Chief of Counter-Intelligence, *op. cit.*