

This Infamy Must Never Happen Again!

(Statement of BAYAN or New Patriotic Alliance, August 31, 1987)

The smoke of battle has cleared; Col. Gringo Honasan's rebel forces have fallen. Another coup try has ended but at what tragic expense?

Scores were killed while hundred others were injured in last Friday's assaults on Malacañang, Camp Aguinaldo, Broadcast City and Channel 4. Of the fatalities, majority were civilians. Likewise were the majority of the injured who were caught in the crossfire between battling government and rebel troopers. Damage to property could run into the millions especially with the heavy pounding that rebel-occupied government and private buildings took from rocket and .50 cal. machinegun-equipped Tora-Tora attack planes and Huey helicopters.

And all these for what? The bloody episode had nothing to do with resolving the worsening economic and political problems confronting the people. On the contrary, the national trauma that issues from this has only exacerbated the people's problems.

Last Friday's coup attempt occurred while the Aquino government was busy setting up checkpoints for alleged "terrorists" and suppressing the protest movement against the oil price hike. While singling out the leaders, members and sympathizers of Wednesday's successful transport strike whom it had ordered arrested, the Aquino government's police and military forces proved themselves to be thoroughly incompetent in even monitoring the presence and arrival in Metro Manila of large contingents of the coup forces. This despite the fact that a total of 90 checkpoints were in place throughout the metropolis and that the National Intelligence Coordinating Agency (NICA) had actually filed a report on the rebel troop movements. The decision to move against the rebel forces was given by President Aquino and Gen. Ramos several hours after the start of the coup, when 18 persons were already dead and 105 others wounded.

It is ironic that the Aquino government has chosen to adopt a hard-line policy on popular dissent against the backdrop of its kid gloves treatment of rebellious militarists in the past. This has encouraged the latter to launch another bid to seize power. To many minds, last Friday's events can be construed as simply a conflict of two factions of a repressive government on the question of who between them can be more effective in suppressing the political rights of the people.

For despite both factions' declarations that they are for the interests of the people, their practice indicate the contrary. The Aquino government, prior to the coup, had shown dis-

regard for its avowed democratic concern by going on a rampage against oil price hike protesters. The bloody records of Honasan and company even during the time of the deposed dictator Marcos are already known. Today, still unsatisfied with the repressive measures already employed by the Aquino government, they are out to accelerate the return to open terrorist rule.

For the people, therefore, there was no choosing sides. They did not support the military nor did they rally behind the President nor respond to her call for people power in defense of her government. This was unlike EDSA in February when the people went out in their numbers to brave the tanks and advance what they then believed was the alternative to the dictator Marcos. In last Friday's conflict, there were no alternatives, no democratic interests at stake. They couldn't care less for it was nothing but a fight between two sides of the same coin that spells poverty, oppression and exploitation.

The bloody, albeit historic, events provide lessons for all of us — including those in government most especially — to heed. That only a force or a government which truly stands for the interests of the people will merit the support of the people. Only a government that is supported by the people can resolve the serious problems tearing this nation apart. Both Cory Aquino and her militarist opponents, by their own anti-people actions, have turned their backs on the trust placed on them by the people only a year and a half ago.

For the people, it has also become clear that in their nation's continuing struggle for genuine peace, justice, freedom and democracy, there is no one or nothing that can be relied upon except their own unity and strength.

We in the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (BAYAN) feel a heavy sense of loss and grief for the innocent civilians who died or were injured in this unnecessary sacrifice that was neither their doing nor their choosing. We likewise grieve for the soldiers who were wounded or killed in the fierce battle that could have been avoided in the first place. Never again must this infamy happen.

**ORGANIZE AND RESIST ALL FORMS OF REPRESSION
AND MILITARISM!**

**INTENSIFY THE PEOPLE'S STRUGGLE FOR
DEMOCRATIC RIGHT AND LIVELIHOOD!**

INTENSIFY THE STRUGGLE AGAINST MILITARIZATION!