



## "MARIA TEVES"—

# THE TEACHER GUERRILLA

(An Interview With Consuelo Fa. Alvear)

by GENOVEVA EDROZA

She walked about in her Girl Scout uniform, but the neck of her dress would now open to a pink shirt, now a white shirt, and at times a yellow shirt. Men in certain government offices, at the Treasurer's Office, Residence Tax Division, for instance, would look up from their work at the sound of her quick, hurried steps, see the pink short, and look happy. If it happened to be a white one, the faces would turn grim and hopeful by turns. And if it was a yellow shirt, the man she talked with usually took a nonchalant air but her straight, understanding look also usually pierced the veneer, and he knew he must do as Maria Teves ordered. Pink meant the accomplishment of an order; white: the combat units are engaged in a fight; yellow: it's hot for you. Go away.

In her home town in Pangasinan, Maria Teves contacted Lt. Fil (Felisa Fangon). The next day, Fil sat fanning herself, idly passing away the hour in front of the Esperanza Drug Store as newly-arrived Jap troops marched the street on their way to the station. The wonder was that soon after, the exact number of troops reached a certain Augusto Pereira, a Philippine Scout who hid a radio set in his home. At another time, after apparently enjoying the sight of Jap warships docked near Mabilao, a small and far-away barrio, Maria Teves trod her way home for the night. Soon after, August Pereira was relaying the news to the USAFFE.

It was not much later that this ex-teacher had to leave San Fabian, Pangasinan, hurriedly and in her bare feet. This she did six minutes after she

struck a tuba-drunk Ilocano-Japanese interpreter with a wooden club. Half an hour later, she was wanted by the Japs in San Fabian.

For a time, she stayed in Kamuning, Quezon City, all the while gaining more and more support for the cause which had gotten into her blood and would not give her peace.

Her next stop was the Manila City Hall, Residence Tax Section. It was not long before she noticed that the Japs were very fond of referring to old residence taxes duplicated for addresses. They were those of wanted men and women. Many were the times when the small and furtive girl in the Section beat them to those addresses. This resulted in her contact with guerrillas of other units. Nor did she stop at that. She and her sister also changed the American citizenship of a Mr. Baker of Cagayan to German; that of the Todd family to Spanish, changing the name to Rivera. They also issued residence certificates with faked names to guerrilleros of Ilocos Sur and to the Lawin guerrillas who were then wanted by the Kempeitais.

However, Lt. Col. Teves was slowly but surely getting herself into a tight spot. She felt uncomfortable in the City Hall. She felt she was being followed by civilian Japs because she was bringing food to Mrs. Carlson, principal of the Arellano High School, and to Victoria Louise Smith of the Dept. of Fishery, Bureau of Science, then interned in the Sto. Tomas University. Then Commander Col. Espinosa, the man who had all their original appointments, was taken to Fort Santiago.

was released seen after only to be taken in again. This time he never came out.

Later, she was picked up at the 5th floor of the Cu Unjieng Building, the building where the GSP held their headquarters during the Occupation. First it was a Filipino civilian who greeted her and asked her if she was Miss Alvarez. To this she promptly nodded. Then, a kempei led her to a car and took her to Fort Santiago. The charge was her having written a book called "Between Two Fronts," consisting of 363 pages in longhand, and found under the stove in her house at Kamuning. Apparently, an intimate friend of hers who had free access to the house, had betrayed her. The realization of this numbed her and to this day she could not keep the bitterness from her voice as she recalled the incident. She did not deny the charge once during the seven-day stay in the dungeon. She was given electric shocks on and off for three hours. How many times she fainted, she does not remember now. They took pleasure in seeing her in tears as they burned her book before her. They asked her if she knew Yay Panlilio, if she was a member of Marking's Guerrillas. Her one answer

was, "...akarimasen." At last she was released at 9:00 p.m. on Oct. 21, 1944.

Pride crept into her voice as she mentioned the names of Maj. Adj. Erfemejia, the man who led the GSP in a combat with the enemy troops at Marikina Hills on April 7, 1944; of Lt. Yabes, an ex-teacher from the Visayas, who led the Bolo Battalion in another combat; of Major Asis, ex-USAFFE aviator who directed the construction of a landing field in Sta. Maria, Piddig, Ilocos Norte, where the Americans actually made eight landings, and who was reported killed on Dec. 16, 1944; of Lt. Nenet (Conсорcia Fangon) who smuggel medicines while working at the Sternberg Hospital, and others who smuggled bullets and arms inside unripe papayas, bars of soap, and bundles of firewood.

At this late date the GSP has not been given recognition papers. I tried to detect the slightest hint of bitterness in her voice that old me his. But there was none. There was only stark sincerity and unaffected simplicity in the voice that said: "I really do not care, for myself. It's the people who worked with me that I am thinking of. They should be dealt with fairly and justly. More so, the families of the dead..."



*NOTE: Most of the drawings used in this issue are used with the courtesy of Mr. A. V. H. Hartendorp, formerly editor of the PHILIPPINE MAGAZINE.*

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