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Editorial

Women, rise and oppose neoliberalism!

March 8 is commemorated throughout the world to pay tribute to women's role in society and struggle. International Working Women's Day was first declared in 1911 by socialist parties. This was a call for women's militant struggle, together with the toiling masses, against imperialist exploitation and oppression for a large part of the past century.

But for the past three decades, neoliberal globalization has dismantled whatever victories the toiling masses and women may have gained in their century-long struggle for rights against the capitalist system. This is none other than the intensified and more unrestricted extraction of imperialist superprofit from the world's toiling masses, especially in the backward countries.

It has imposed policies of liberalization, privatization, deregulation and denationalization, plunging the country further into crisis and the toiling masses into poverty and oppression.

It implemented the policy of cutting down subsidies for social services and exposed vulnerable sectors, including women, to difficulties and peril.

The hardships unleashed by

imperialist globalization's attacks are borne both by women and men. But women take on greater onus than men because they are subject to discrimination due to their low status in society.

At home, they are expected to take care of the children and elderly relatives who no longer have the capacity to work. This burden has become heavier since the reactionary government turned its back on social services. In addition to their assigned roles within the home, they also have to work outside to augment their husband's or father's dwindling income.

Neoliberal globalization focuses distinctly on demolishing the worker's movement. Contractualization and various forms of labor flexibility are extended to depress wages, extend working hours, cut

down benefits, and employ the most inhuman labor practices in the workplace. Trade unions are targeted for demolition to block workers' struggles.

The vast majority of contractualization victims are women, more so during the height of the financial crisis. They are the first to be fired and the last to be hired. They endure the lowest wages, absence of benefits, lack of social protection and increasing job insecurity.

Women work additional hours to cope with the rising prices of transportation, food and other basic needs which result from the deregulation and privatization of many goods and services. They make do with less in order to save more cash to extend the family budget.

Women's membership in trade unions is decreasing. In 1996, women comprised 59.6% of union members but by 2007, membership has gone down to 34.2%. About 80% of almost one million workers in export processing zones are women, especially in the electronics subsector. These places forbid trade unions and workers' strikes. Thus, women can not struggle for protection against sexual harassment and assault, and for women's health concerns. They are even subjected by the capitalists and their minions to the practice of "lay down or lay off."

Neoliberalism has given rise to the "call center" industry that employs thousands of women. Imperialists wring out huge profits from their wages which are much lower



than that of workers in capitalist nations. In addition, by working in precarious hours at night, their security, health, family and social life are put in danger.

More women join the ranks of the semiproletariat as they are the most willing to take on low-quality employment in order to ensure their families' survival. They make up more than half of all employed women. They have no protection or benefits, and are worst hit by the privatization of social services.

Peasant women are impoverished by expanding landlessness. Thousands of hectares of agricultural lands are converted into subdivisions, export processing zones, resorts, plantations, logging and mining areas. While devastating the environment, monopoly capitalists raise farm input prices and intentionally lower prices of agricultural products, particularly staple crops such as rice and corn. Food becomes scarce and markets are swamped with cheaper imported agricultural products.

Assisting the landlord usurers in

exploiting women are the finance agencies. Usurious microfinancing agencies such as SME Card that primarily target women as borrowers are multiplying in the countryside. These usurers operate in partnership with government agencies, imperialist and bourgeois-comprador corporations. These microfinance systems are so exploitative that even a bunch of sweet potato shoots goes to weekly debt payments instead of the family table.

The lack of jobs within the country forces women to seek employment overseas. More than half of documented migrant workers in 2014 are women. Around 83% of low or unskilled workers and 56% of service workers are women. They are the lowest paid and most vulnerable to abuse.

In the whole world, millions of women fall prey to trafficking for prostitution and slave labor, including thousands of Filipino women. Instead of giving them protection, the reactionary government, in cahoots with the imperialists, acts as

pimp to share in the income from whatever kind of job may befall the women.

Schools, mass media and social media continue to treat women as commodities and objects for pleasure. Government agencies and their adherents in the academe boast that women have achieved equality just because there are supposedly more literate women and they now hold high government or corporate positions. There are purportedly no more reasons for women's organized protest. Imperialism and its puppet states are removing the revolutionary and militant spirit from Women's Day and turning it into a simple day of praises or parades much like the commercialized Valentine's or Mother's Day.

In fact, due to the neoliberal privatization policy, the US-Aquino regime denies the most basic social services such as women's health care. In the name of reducing maternal mortality, women are forbidden to give birth at home to require them to go to expensive birthing centers. The truth is that more mothers and infants die during childbirth from complications caused by poverty-related health problems.

The reproductive health bill being pushed by women's organizations and progressive political parties has been further diluted and the decision on women's health has been entrusted to the Catholic Church. Social services have been stripped and replaced by the 4Ps which further binds mothers to stringent conditionalities of reactionary state agencies. This has further curtailed their freedom, specially their involvement in open democratic organizations.

The government is doing nothing to protect women from violence. Its own organs of power such as the police, military, paramilitary, tourism and employment agencies, embassies abroad and prisons are the most zealous violators of women, especially women who have been driven by poverty into desperate

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straits.

The oppression of women will worsen further in the face of intensified military intervention by US imperialism. This includes the return of US military bases in the Philippines under the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement which is strongly opposed by women because this will worsen widespread prostitution and other hellish oppression by US troops on Filipino women.

Related to this is the present US-designed and imposed war under Oplan Bayanihan. In the military's attacks within this campaign, thousands of women have been killed, imprisoned, tortured and raped, widowed, orphaned, and forced out of their homes.

Women must fearlessly combat the havoc of neoliberal globalization which is the current face of imperialism. It is important for women to unite with all democratic forces in the world against attacks by the forces of neoliberalism—the monopoly capitalists and their states and militaries.

The imperialist distortion and deception about the situation and role of women today must be exposed. Develop the broadest participation of toiling women in the national-democratic movement in their home front and in different countries. Unceasingly fight against all forms of destruction by Oplan Bayanihan. Fight against the despicable crimes perpetrated against the people by bureaucrat-capitalists and military officers.

Women workers are more than able to initiate or participate in organizing and developing unions in the factories and lines of work. They are also more than able to initiate or help in setting up comprehensive organizations in their community and form women's chapters or carry out projects such as day care centers, clinics and

cooperatives.

Youth and students, especially women youth, must be made to understand that it is difficult for women workers who hold paid jobs, do union work and house work to still undertake community organizing. Youth and students must step in and help in community organizing and managing community projects, especially those near their schools or in their neighborhoods.

Women have the duty to help in organizing other national-democratic organizations wherever opportunities arise. Discussions on women's issues must be extensive and these should be linked at all times to the general aims of the national democratic revolution.

Peasant women must continuously advance the organizing of peasants, fellow women and their families for land reform and for consolidating the revolutionary mass base in the countryside. Here exist the closest opportunities for the initial liberation of women in the field of politics and economy, the democratization of the family, and the creation of new social relations that are truly equal and promote fighting for the people alongside each other.

There is no other path for women to liberate themselves from discrimination, oppression and exploitation by imperialist globalization but through participating in the revolutionary movement. Politically aware women are shattering the chains of traditional roles that limit their participation and taking up arms as Red fighters and commanders of the New People's Army.

Only by overthrowing imperialism, feudalism, and bureaucrat-capitalism and advancing to socialism can women gain real equality and liberate themselves from oppression in the present society. AB

Women and the NSS

The Obama government's National Security Strategy took particular note of women in its strategy for imperialist hegemony. The document mentioned the sector several times as a special group to which it will give attention. In particular, it emphasized the need to organize women under sham anti-poverty programs to supposedly give them sufficient and equal opportunities in employment, health, education and others.

The US uses deceptive programs that pretend to address women's miserable conditions to cover up the brutal effects of its military interventions and wars of aggression in various parts of the world.

According to the NSS, women have a role in "combating the persistent threats of terrorism." In target countries such as Libya and Syria, US imperialism props up

programs which specifically target women such as microfinancing, which have been touted to "empower women" and other loan schemes with stringent conditions.

The US also frequently exploits women's aspirations for study and employment. In Afghanistan, it boasted of setting up schools for Afghan girls. The US used this program to break into the toughest



strongholds of its Taliban enemy, and at the same time, peddle the war of aggression as "humanitarian" to the international community.

The US also actively uses women's groups as "peace mediators" and as parts of its counter-insurgency campaigns. In the Philippines, the 4Ps (local conditional cash transfer program), an import-

ant component of Oplan Bay-anihan, is aimed at mothers. The US is also very interested in Bangsamoro women. It established and funded various womens' groups tied closely to economic projects, which initially appear to promote women empowerment.

Longstanding imperialist misrepresentation

Imperialism has long been misappropriating women's struggle for empowerment. It negates women's struggles as part of a class, race or oppressed country as the path to their liberation. Instead, it propagates "women empowerment" through absorbing them into various levels of programs and structures of the reactionary government or capitalist corporations. It shifts women's struggles away from issues of poverty, national sovereignty, imperialism and geopolitics.

It obscures the fact that working women's struggles served as the inspiration to the Socialist Party of America in declaring the first International Women's Day in 1909. It deletes from memory the role played by the "Bread and Roses March" in March 8 (February 28 in the Russian calendar) in the 1917 February Revolution. It has attempted to strike out the historical role of socialists such as Clara Zetkin, V.I. Lenin and Alexandria Kollontai who advocated its commemoration as an international event since 1911.

"Planet 50-50 by 2030: Step it Up for Gender Equality", the United Nations' 2016 theme for Women's Day, attempts to confine the women's movement to the mere issue of gender equality. This is being supported by finance companies through organizing activities under the #PledgeforParity campaign. **AB**

On the 30th year of EDSA Uprising



NPA-NEMR launches synchronized offensives

On the 30th year of the EDSA uprising, the New People's Army - Northeastern Mindanao Region (NPA-NEMR) launched coordinated and synchronized attacks last February 25 against camps of reactionary state troops.

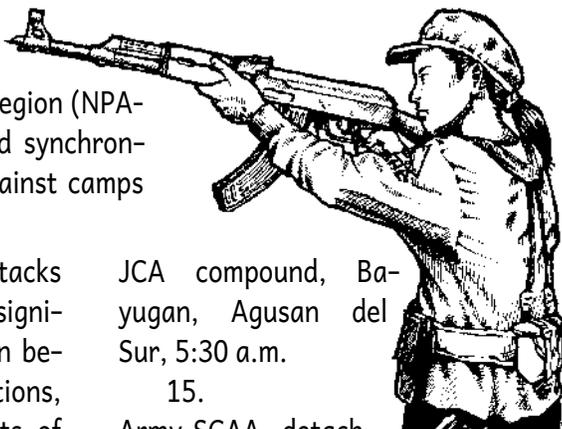
"These synchronized NPA attacks are launched to underscore the significance of the people's revolution because during the EDSA I celebrations, the US-Aquino III regime boasts of its 'peaceful revolution', while it currently wages its brutal military attacks in the countryside," said Maria Malaya, National Democratic Front-NEMR spokesperson.

Based on initial reports from the various commands of the NPA in the entire region, 19 tactical offensives were launched against the following:

- Army-CAFGU detachments in:
1. San Pedro, Lianga, Surigao del Sur, 1:19 a.m.
 2. Panaytay, Bayugan, Agusan del Sur
 3. Ugoban, Tagbina, Surigao del Sur, 6:19 AM
 4. Sitio Kusip, Bayugan 3, Rosario, Agusan del Sur, 6:44 a.m.
 5. Tagasaka, Hinatuan, Surigao del Sur
 6. Villa Undayon, Bayugan, Agusan del Sur
 7. Mt. Carmel, Bayugan, Agusan del Sur
 8. Bunyasan, Malimono, Surigao del Norte, 12:00 a.m.
 9. Tagbayani, Sison, Surigao del Norte, 12:05 a.m.
 10. Cabongbongan, Surigao City, Surigao del Norte, 12:06 a.m.
 11. Mayag, Mainit, Surigao del Norte, 12:10 a.m.
 12. Bunyasan, Malimono, Surigao del Norte, 10:00 a.m.
 13. Tagbayani, Sison, Surigao del Norte, 5:00 a.m.

Other detachments and outposts raided include:

14. Army-SCAA detachment in



JCA compound, Bayugan, Agusan del Sur, 5:30 a.m.

15.

Army-SCAA detachment in JCA Compound, Bayugan, Agusan del Sur, 6:00 a.m.

16. Alpha Company 29th IB headquarters in Bangonay, Jabonga, Agusan del Norte, 4:07 AM

17. Alpha Company 29th IB outpost in Bangonay, Jabonga, Agusan del Norte

18. Troops of 26th IB conducting combat operations and Community Organizing for Peace and Development in Imelda, Bunawan, Agusan del Sur, 5:00 a.m.

19. Illegal and destructive sawmill owned by a policeman in Bangonay, Jabonga Agusan del Norte

Malaya added that these NPA tactical offensives show that armed revolution is imperative because the so-called 'peaceful people power revolution' of EDSA was not able to provide genuine solutions to the basic problems of the Filipino people. Thirty years after EDSA, the big bourgeois compradors, big landlords, their US imperialist masters and political dynasties are still in power and dominate the nation's economy. Thus, the national-democratic revolution remains the only solution.

Negros. NPA-Negros ambushed the Candoni Municipal Police last February 18. Identified dead in the offensive were Police Officer 3 Joe-harry Peralta and PO1 Henry Pacheco, while three others were wounded.

According to Andrea Guerrero of

the NPA-Southwest Negros Island Front (Armando Sumayang Jr. Command), the Candoni Police is involved in the town's illegal drugs and gambling operations. The NPA confiscated two armalite rifles and a caliber .45 pistol.

Guerrero also added that they will continue to launch their offensives to weaken and stop the ruling

system of the comprador-landlord class.

Albay. A soldier was wounded when a team from the NPA-Albay fired at the 22nd IB detachment in Barangay San Ramon, Daraga last February 26 at around 6 a.m.. The wounded soldier was identified as Sgt. Lorenzo Hernan. The said detachment was constructed only last February 12.

AB

Aquino's 6-year obstruction of the peace negotiations

The US-Aquino regime is responsible for the suspension of peace negotiations between the Government of the Philippines (GPH) and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP). This was declared by NDFP Negotiating Panel Chairperson Luis G. Jalandoni after Edwin Lacierda, the regime's spokesperson, lied in public that the NDFP refuses to return to the negotiating table.



According to Jalandoni, the regime never showed interest in forging a peace agreement with the NDFP. When it first met with the NDFP in formal talks on February 2011, the Aquino regime immediately declared the 1992 Hague Joint Declaration as a "document of perpetual division." This was an attempt to disregard the said declaration, and other historic agreements that it has paved way for, such as the Comprehensive Agreement on the Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL).

The GPH likewise arbitrarily declared the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees (JASIG), which secures personalities involved in the peace talks, as "inoperable." Disregarding the JASIG, no less than 16 NDFP consultants were arrested and detained. Moreover, cases of extrajudicial killings, disappearances, bombings of communities, and many other types of human rights violations have worsened. Also, the GPH refused to reconvene the Joint Monitoring Committee as indicated by the CARHRIHL to review cases over such violations.

Negotiations were stalled by the GPH in June 2011 when it refused to release NDFP consultants in accordance with the JASIG. Subsequently, the GPH proposed in 2013 a meeting between Benigno Aquino III as GPH president and Jose Maria Sison as the Communist Party of the Philippines founding chairman. In exchange, representatives of the GPH insisted on having immediate, unilateral, and multiple indefinite ceasefires. Once again, the GPH refused to discuss the release of detained consultants and the disappearances and extrajudicial killings.

Likewise, the GPH rejected the discussion of the fundamental issues of land reform and national industrialization, which is central for framing an agreement on so-

cio-economic reforms. Instead, the GPH regarded these as "ideologically charged concepts." On April 2015, GPH panel chairperson Alex Padilla declared that the GPH is merely interested in obtaining a ceasefire agreement and that it has no plans of discussing the social roots of the armed conflict.

"Special Track" of the talks

As early as June 2011, the NDFP presented to the US-Aquino regime a Proposal For Alliance and Truce. This was eventually referred to as the "special track" and presented a ten-point Concise Agreement for an Immediate and Just Peace. As with the formal talks (or "regular track"), the "special track" likewise aims to attain a just peace. Its proposal of an alliance and truce is a confidence-building measure for the formal talks to progress, which included cooperation on doable projects undertaken by both sides. The NDFP affirms that the civil war between the GPH and the NDFP shall cease and a just peace shall ensue within the very day that the GPH and the NDFP co-sign the proposed agreement.

Nonetheless, the GPH refused to discuss the "special track" in all of its peace negotiations. Also, no less than Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process Secretary Teresita Deles admitted that they have no intention of reverting to the "regular track".

On October and December 2014, the NDFP received a delegation from the GPH headed by former Department of Agrarian Reform Secretary Hernani Braganza. Both parties aimed to forge a Draft Peace Agreement which proposes cooperation and truce within Aquino's term. On February 2015, both parties met once more to present each of their drafts. However, these initiatives, as well as efforts from the Royal Norwegian Government

as Third Party Facilitator, have come to nothing due to Secretary Deles' rejection and Aquino's inaction.

US imperialism's role

In truth, the Aquino regime's attempts to thwart the negotiations since February 2011 are in line with the US imperialist design. Its schemes on the peace negotiations are carried out alongside the brutal Oplan Bayanihan which commenced on the same year. This is the US-Aquino regime's primary method of confronting the revolutionary movement, and is patterned after the US Counterinsurgency Guide of 2009. For the US, the peace negotiations is a psywar instrument to coopt the revolutionaries or force them to capitulate.

Concurrently, the GPH's sole purpose is the pacification and capitulation of the revolutionary forces through indefinite and unilateral ceasefires without carrying out the basic reforms stipulated in The Hague Joint Declaration and other subsequent agreements. On December 2014, the GPH attempted to lure the NDFP into a ceasefire. But behind its platitudes of peace, the GPH carried out massive deployment of AFP-PNP forces in Mindanao to attack the revolutionary forces and the people in the island.

The GPH pretends to promote the peace negotiations. In truth, it throws in all sorts of obstacles to

hinder its progress. The NDFP condemned the lies and distortions by the GPH that seek to blame the NDFP for the collapse of the negotiations.

Since the beginning, US imperialism's "counterinsurgency" framework has been the foremost impediment to the peace negotiations. Under Oplan Bayanihan, peace talks are acceptable to the GPH only if these can lead to the surrender or neutralization of the NDFP. In the face of the NDFP's firm stand to resolve the roots of the armed conflict, the US and the AFP have no use for the talks.

Furthermore, subsequent agreements being crafted discusses basic reforms on the ruling system which exposes the fundamental problems of the country. This is contrary to US imperialist interests.

Nonetheless, the NDFP has no illusions that genuine peace will be attained through peace negotiations alone. This is just one form of struggle to end the evils of US imperialism, feudalism, and bureaucrat capitalism.

To uphold its political initiative in negotiations with the GPH, the NDFP derives its strength from the people's armed struggle, the democratic mass movement, the parliamentary struggle, and the legal struggle in the courts. The entirety of the people's revolutionary struggle will bring about the desired just and lasting peace. AB

Aquino's debt legacy

At the end of its term, the US-Aquino regime will leave behind a P6.4 trillion national debt (actual and guaranteed), equivalent to P62,000 per Filipino.

The debt influx during its term is one of the factors which gave rise to the US-created illusion of development. It worsened the trade and budget deficits and gave local and foreign banks, as well as financial speculators, greater control of the local economy.

From 2010-2015, the Aquino regime borrowed P4.16 trillion to pay its outstanding debts and fund the annual deficit of its bloated budget. The Aquino regime has the highest average of annual debts incurred among the post-Marcos regimes.

From 2011 to 2015, an average of 48.2% of all borrowings is automatically appropriated to pay old debts. For 2016, \$1.5 billion of the \$2 billion foreign loans will go to debt payments.

Longstanding debts from inutile and anomalous projects are among those automatically given appropriation. Among these are loans incurred by the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant which was never operated since its construction during the Marcos dictatorship. In 2015, Aquino paid debts incurred by five anomalous and abandoned projects.

Aside from this, the P900 billion

guaranteed profits of partner corporations under its PPP program is funded by debt. These include 38 energy projects, 10 transportation projects, five water projects, seven information technology projects and nine real estate projects of local governments favored by the regime.

Debt also keeps the regime's local conditional cash transfer program (4Ps) afloat. Among these are the \$400 million loan from the Asian Development Bank and \$450 million from the World Bank. An estimated one-fifth of the country's foreign debt is owed to these institutions alone.

	2010	2015
National debt	P 4.718 trillion	P 5.954 trillion
<i>local</i>	2.72	3.884
<i>foreign</i>	1.99	2.07
Guaranteed debt	P 550 million	P 438 million
<i>local</i>	100	137
<i>foreign</i>	450	303
Total	5.27 trillion	6.4 trillion

A large part of the regime's debt program (more than 93%) is done through bond offerings to local and foreign commercial banks and the international market dominated by the biggest finance speculators. Majority of these (89%) are long-term and dollar-denominated, and are thus prone to the fluctuations of its value.

The Philippines' rapid debt

growth under the Aquino regime is proof that the local economy stands on weak foundations. Its backward economy relies on foreign

capital. It is bound to collapse once the new international financial crisis explodes, and loans used to float the economy dry up. AB

	Debt (PhP)	Years In power	Average borrowings per year
Cory Aquino	565.7 billion	6	94.28 billion
Fidel Ramos	372.3 billion	6	62.05 billion
Erap Estrada	571.6 billion	2	285.80 billion
Gloria Arroyo	5.4 trillion	9	600.00 billion
Benigno Aquino	4.16 trillion	6	693.33 billion

US paved the Marcoses' road back to power

The growing clamor against the vice-presidential bid of Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. in the May 2016 reactionary elections reflects the Filipino people's discontent over the continuing failure of the ruling classes to put to justice the Marcoses and their cronies for all the crimes perpetrated during the Marcos 1972-1986 fascist dictatorship.

The Marcoses and their camp are deviously painting a completely different picture of Marcos' 14-year military rule. This is part of the strategy of the Marcos family and their allies to complete their political resurrection, three decades after they were overthrown by the Filipino people in the 1986 EDSA uprising.

The Marcoses' road back to power was paved by the US imperialists and all the post-EDSA ruling class regimes. For 20 years, the Marcos dictatorship dutifully served the economic, military and geopolitical interests of the US imperialists. When Marcos imposed martial law in 1972, he had the all-out support of the US government.

Although kicked out of Malacañang in 1986, the Marcoses were allowed to retain a large part of their vast wealth accumulated through corruption and stored in foreign banks and real estate properties. To a large part, the supposed government sequestration since 1986 of the Marcos wealth has been a political show. The cases filed against the Marcoses by the post-EDSA governments have been dismissed one after another while the dynasties in power padded their pockets with the sequestered

wealth.

The US imperialists imposed a policy of accomodating and allowing the return and rehabilitation of the Marcoses and their biggest cronies. The aim of the US is to retain the trust and fealty of the Marcoses whose removal from Malacañang was facilitated by US government officials amid the massive people's uprising at EDSA in 1986.

The US imperialists also aim to attenuate the contradictions between the Marcoses and other factions of the ruling elite and stave off EDSA-like extra-constitutional methods of regime change that tend to destabilize the reactionary state.

Under US advice, not one among the post-EDSA regimes undertook any serious measure to prosecute Imelda, other Marcoses and their biggest cronies. Not one was subjected to justice.

Not soon after 1986, one of the biggest Marcos cronies, Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco, would regain control of San Miguel Corporation empire. He would run for president in 1992 and later become kingpin of the Nationalist People's Coalition (NPC) in order to assert political influence. He would exercise strong political influence over all

successive regimes winning big contracts and other favors. The large funding and political support of his uncle Danding Cojuangco played a major role in Benigno S. Aquino III's election campaign as president of the reactionary government in 2010 to manipulate elections using Smartmatic.

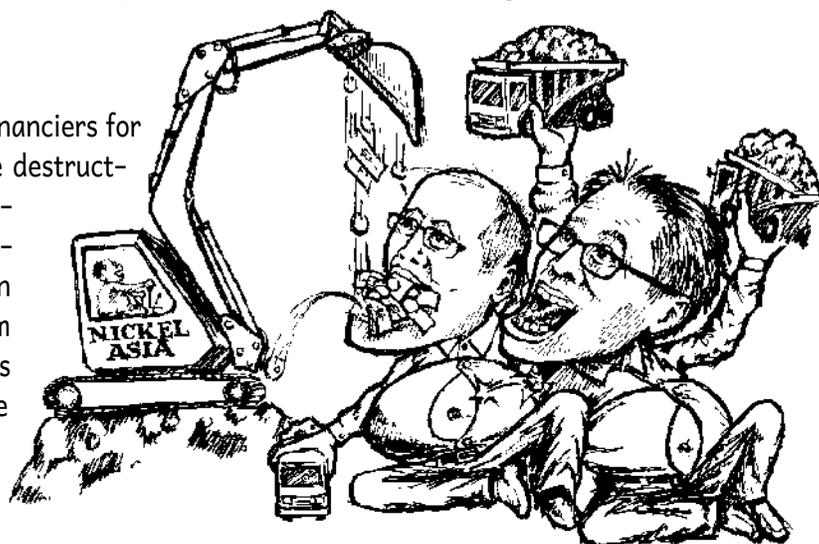
Over the past week, Aquino has joined the clamor against the election of Marcos Jr. He is clearly a hypocrite in riding on the popular call first issued by national-democratic activists and organizations. He assails human rights abuses under Marcos but covers up the continuing abuses and brutalities perpetrated by the AFP, the paramilitaries and police under his regime's US-designed Oplan Bayanihan counterinsurgency plan. He denounces corruption under the Marcos dictatorship but whitewashes corruption under his regime with endless repetition of the "daang matuwid" slogan.

In truth, Aquino as well as all the post-EDSA presidents should all be put to task for having failed to bring to trial and justice the Marcoses and all their cronies and collaborators.

The Filipino people are fully justified in opposing the vice-presidential campaign of Bongbong Marcos as well as the historical cover-up of the crimes of the Marcos dictatorship. AB

Destructive mining companies among Roxas backers

Recent developments reveal that two major financiers for the presidential campaign of Mar Roxas are destructive mining companies with long histories of plunder, landgrabbing and militarization. In particular, Roxas' use of Cessna airplanes owned by San Roque Metals Inc. (SRMI) as well as funds from the Nickel-Asia Sumitomo Corporation for his presidential bid and to vilify Jejomar Binay were exposed.



Nickel-Asia Sumitomo Corporation is owned by Manuel B. Zamora, the 29th wealthiest Filipino, while SRMI is owned by Miguel Alberto Gutierrez. It was previously headed by Roxas' campaign Manager Rep. Edgar Erice. Zamora is the brother of the current House minority floor leader, Ronaldo Zamora. Zamora and Eric Gutierrez, father of the SRMI owner, are among the top three contributors in the 2010

Aquino campaign.

Nickel-Asia is the largest supplier of laterite nickel in the world. It has mining concessions and other firms in various parts of the country. Among its latest acquisitions is Geogen Corporation in Dinapigue, Isabela. It also owns Hinatuan Mining Corporation (HMC) in the island of Manicani, Guian, Samar;

Taganito Mining and Cagdianao Mining in Mindanao, and the Rio Tuba Nickel Mining Corporation in Palawan. It has geothermal plants in Mindoro and Surigao under Emerging Power, Inc. (EPI). In 2010, Nickel-Asia bought the rights from the Anglo-American Mining Company for the Cordillera Explor-

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Thousands protest on EDSA

THOUSANDS gathered in Mandaluyong City to commemorate the 30th year of the EDSA Uprising last February 25. They marched to the People Power Monument, where Filipinos once assembled, but were blocked by the police force. Groups were able to break police barricades four times before finally deciding to hold their program at Ortigas Avenue.

Martial law victims joined the protest and pledged to stop efforts of Ferdinand 'Bongbong' Marcos, Jr. to return to Malacañang.

"It is apparent today that our democratic and nationalist aspirations after EDSA were forsaken or suppressed by those who held power. EDSA changed the country's rulers by overthrowing the dictatorship, but it has not changed the country's ruling classes. We remain under the control of the foreign imperialists, big businessmen and landlords," said Bagong Alyansang Makabayan.

It also added that 30 years after the EDSA uprising it has become clear that genuine change lies in the hands of the people, through united action and continuing struggle against oppression and exploitation.

Protests were also held in Davao, Cagayan de Oro, Baguio and Bicol where hundreds of activists and organizations upholding human rights attended. Before the activity, national democratic organizations criticized Aquino's maneuver to divert the occasion solely in praise of his mother, Cory Aquino.

AB

Campaign against Marcos launched

"WE have never lost hope, even during the darkest times of Martial Law, when all the forces of the dictator were against us," said Boni Ilagan, spokesperson of Campaign Against the Return of the Marcoses in Malacañang or CARMMA.

CARMMA was launched last February 22. It aims to foil attempts of Marcoses to return to Malacañang.

Eight-hundred CARMMA members assembled at Bahay Alumni in the University of the Philippines-Diliman to kick-off a nationwide campaign to stop attempts of Ferdinand Marcos Jr. to win the country's vice presidency. CARMMA fears that if he wins the vice-presidency campaign, the presidential post will only be a heartbeat away for the younger Marcos.

According to Ilagan, as long as Bongbong Marcos does not admit the sins of his father in his 20 year-dictatorship, there is a huge potential that he will also be a dictator.

Even though there is a saying that the sins of the father cannot be transferred to his son, it is a fact that Bongbong and the Marcoses used and benefitted from the plundered wealth during the dictatorship.

AB

ation Inc. (CEXI), a company that has an Application for Financial Technical Assistance (AFTA) covering 14 towns in Ilocos Sur, Mountain Province, Abra, Kalinga and Benguet.

From 2010 to 2015, the company's export of nickel rose five times. Even if businesses declined throughout the world, its nickel export still rose by 10% last year, and reached 19.7 million tons compared to the 17.9 million tons in 2014.

Concerted action and struggle

The mining companies associated with Roxas and Aquino have a long history of destruction. Last year, residents lambasted Geogen for its failure to fence off siltation ponds and rehabilitated operations of the mine covering 2,391 hectares. In the island of Manicani, farmers complained of the loss of farmlands due to the open-pit mining operations of Nickel-Asia in the area. Fishermen suffered lower incomes upon the return of the mines. More than a million tons of nickel are still stored in the island since the mining operations were suspended due to the destructive effects of the mining firm.

Caraga Watch, an environmentalist group, charged SRMI of overextraction and widespread destruction in

the vicinity of Tubay, Agusan del Norte. This is due to the company's mining in excess of the limits set by law and the use of large-scale equipment and explosives. Due to this, the DENR was forced to temporarily close the Tubay mine in 2006. Despite this, Aquino awarded SRMI an "environmental award."

In the Cordilleras, indigenous communities filed a petition against the application for Free, Prior and Informed Consent for the four exploration permits of CEXI.

Armed resistance

In support of the people's struggles, the New People's Army launched punitive action against these companies. In October 2015, the Reynaldo Piñon Command of the NPA-Isabela raided Geogen. Among the 14 mining vehicles destroyed were five backhoes, one bulldozer, two 6X6 trucks, one Isuzu Dmax 4X4, one payload loader and a Pajero.

It would be recalled that the NPA-Northeast Mindanao Region simultaneously raided the Taganito Mining on Claver, Surigao del Sur and SRMI in Tubay, Agusan del Norte in 2011. Some 200 heavy equipment of Taganito including dump trucks, bulldozers, backhoes and seven barges were then razed. AB

Military elements torch Haran compound



MILITARY and paramilitary elements torched the Haran Compound which served as temporary shelter to some 700 Lumads who evacuated their communities due to militarization. Among those injured were Elondia Dumol and her son; Loloy Manayab and his 2-year old son and another minor. Three, including the 2-year old child, had to be hospitalized.

According to Jong Monzon, secretary general of PA-SAKA, an alliance of Lumad organizations in Southern Mindanao region, they were awakened by the smell of gasoline poured on the roofs of their tents and makeshift homes inside the evacuation center at around 2 a.m. Five structures were burned before the fire was stopped.

Monzon also added that they found a container with gasoline which the suspects used.

Ten minutes after the fire inside the compound, a

dormitory inside the United Church of Christ in the Philippines compound was also set on fire, which was almost 100 meters away from the evacuees. The dormitory housed 20 college students and employees of the Haran compound. Their group also discovered a one-liter bottle filled with gasoline and at least two strings of barbed wire that were cut to create an entrance inside the compound.

Suspects were seen riding on a motorcycle, a known modus of the military. After the Lumad exposed the incident, they were even insulted by the AFP who alleged that they burned their evacuation center themselves "to gather funds." The Lumads condemned this distortion of facts. Church workers also denounced the attacks on their properties, while the support for the Lumad people poured in from within and outside of the country. AB

Corn prices raised in ComVal

PEASANTS from Maco, Compostela Valley won their struggle to raise corn farmgate prices against the town's main merchant who also owns the biggest corn mill in the area. From P12/kilo, they were able to raise corn prices to P13.50/kilo while prices of other corn residue were raised from P8 to P10 per kilo.

They also managed to lower the buying prices of corn products from P24 to P23, prices of empty sacks from P9.50 to P8.80 and milling services from P3 to P1.50/sack. The peasants confronted the merchant Eduardo Gonzaga after a two-day barricade in front of his mill in the town center in the last week of February.

According to the peasants' calculations, Gonzaga makes a profit of P1,050/sack at his previous price of P24/kilo. Aside from this, he also rakes in P4,500 from the chaff residue and P900 from other residue for every 15 sacks of corn. Thus, his profits reach up to P26,000 for every 15 sacks of corn, which is the average harvest of one farmer. The peasants have endured Gonzaga's low prices for eight years.

The barricade was launched by peasants under KAMMAO and Hugpong sa Mag-uuma sa Walog Compostela (Peasant Association of Compostela Valley), both allied organizations of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas. AB

Ukraine favored by IMF

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) arbitrarily revised its debt policies last year to strengthen US imperialism's position in Eastern Europe. In particular, it altered existing standards for debts incurred by its puppet regime in Ukraine, a country that has become an arena for its proxy war with Russia.

In 2014, the US instigated a coup d'état by a Neo-Nazi group that overthrew the legitimate and democratic pro-Russian government in Ukraine. Before falling, the government incurred a \$3 billion in soft loans from Russia.

Upon grabbing power in 2014, the new pro-US Ukraine government declared a default of its debt to Russia. It restructured its own debts affecting securities reaching \$15 billion and arbitrarily wrote off the \$3 billion debt to Russia.

Last December, the IMF governing board decided to allow Ukraine's debt restructuring despite provisions in its policies prohibiting additional loans to member countries who defaulted on debts to other member countries of the IMF. Russia is a member of the IMF. The debt restructuring for Ukraine by the IMF also contravenes existing policies that ban new loans for countries engaged in civil wars or strife with other member countries of the IMF. AB