



ANG

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Editorial

Gain strength in an all-round way in engaging the Duterte regime

Let us take every opportunity under the newly-installed Duterte government to all-roundedly strengthen and expand the Party, the NPA, mass organizations and organs of people's democratic power.

Indeed there is much potential in building and strengthening a progressive and pro-people alliance between Duterte and the national-democratic forces.

The national democratic movement is glad that Duterte himself is helping build and nurture this alliance. At the same time, it is also keenly aware that Duterte is the current chief of the reactionary state dominated by US imperialism, the big bourgeois compradors and big landlords.

The national democratic movement welcomes Duterte's offers of cooperation in order to forge a progressive and pro-people alliance as an additional means of advancing the people's demands for national freedom and social justice.

On the other hand, the revolutionary and progressive forces are aware of the limitations of such an alliance. They are also aware of the dangers of being tied down, completely swept or drowned into such.

They are also aware that the reactionary ruling classes remain dominant and that the potentials of a progressive and patriotic alliance remain very small.

Duterte's progressive aspect is being counteracted and overpowered by US imperialism and the puppet ruling classes.

Thus the revolutionary movement and legal mass movement must untiringly consolidate its own strength. Developing the people's independent strength is the key factor for a progressive alliance to emerge and serve as an effective weapon for advancing their interests and welfare. Such independent strength is also necessary to be able to persevere in advancing mass struggles in the cities and the people's war in the countryside with or without an alliance.

To effectively confront and take

advantage of the new situation, we must, above all, further expand and strengthen the Party. Build and implement a plan for ideological, political and organizational consolidation especially for the next six months. Carry out special Marxist-Leninist studies to strengthen our grasp of the particularities of the current situation and tasks in advancing the revolution. At the same time, continue with the three-level educational program.

The prevailing situation opens much political advantage for the national democratic forces. The people's agenda and the overall national democratic political line is now at the center of national political discussions, discourse and debate.

Members of mass organizations, Red fighters and commanders of the NPA and Party members and cadres



must sharpen their grasp of the line and analysis of the semicolonial and semifeudal social system and program of the CPP for a people's democratic revolution. Arouse the biggest number of people with regard the need to take action and struggle for national and social liberation.

Let us carry out a widespread education movement and enrol an unprecedented number of people over the coming months. Win over the support and cooperation of broad sectors, organizations, institutions as well as officials of the reactionary government who are ready to assist the education movement for rousing the people.

Build the national democratic schools in villages, schools, factories and semi-proletariat communities, government and private offices,

call centers, churches and other places. Ensure the supply of books and other reading references, as well as other equipment necessary to effectively carry out widespread mass education.

Continue to rapidly expand the NPA. While carrying out agrarian revolution, carry out widespread recruitment from the peasant youth masses. Undertake widespread enlistment of urban youth to undergo

training as new Red fighters. Carry out widespread propaganda for armed struggle. Further expand and consolidate the people's militias.

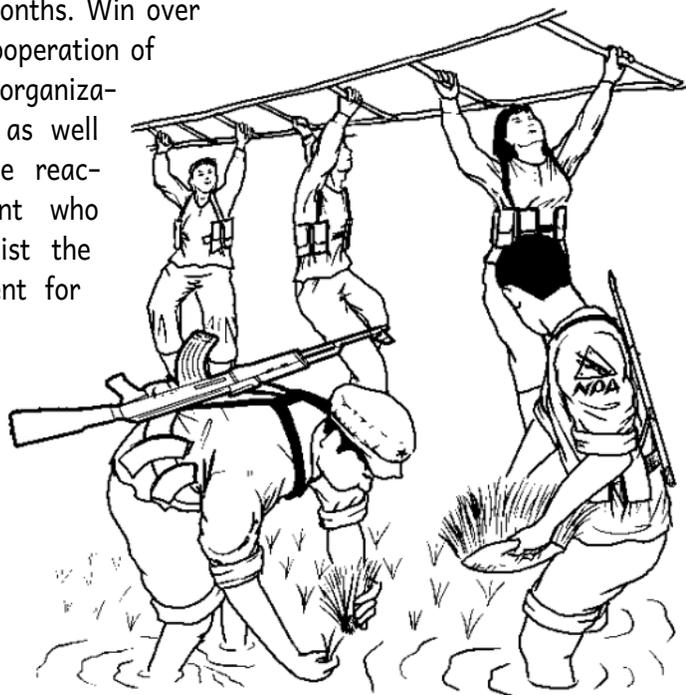
Strengthen the military, political, cultural and economic capability of the NPA. Continue to provide the NPA with weapons and military training. Continue to carry out tactical offensives targeting the worst units with fascist crimes against the people. Disarm and arrest the biggest criminals involved in trafficking illegal drugs. Undertake measures to defend the environment against destructive mining, logging and plantation operations.

Expand several-fold and consolidate the mass base. Aim to achieve unprecedented rate of expansion and strengthening of the mass organizations of peasants, women and youth. Undertake anti-feudal campaigns. Carry out production campaigns.

Rapidly expand the reach of organizing and mobilizing workers' unions. Take advantage of the favorable situation for advancing the struggle against contractualization and wage increases in order to reach out to hundreds of thousands of workers. Expand several times over and strengthen the mass organizations and education movement in poor communities, campuses, government offices, churches and others.

Expand and strengthen the underground movement in order to secure the Party, cadres and activists.

Let us maximize the NDFP's peace talks with the Duterte regime. Mobilize hundreds of thousands of people to support the 12-point program of the NDFP and the clamor for a just and lasting peace. In doing so, we can strengthen Duterte's progressive aspect and the potentials of forging a strong alliance through formal agreements that will serve as its general program of action.



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Activists present People's Agenda to Duterte

Positive and vibrant - this is how the delegates described the recently-concluded People's Summit at the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City last June 29. More than a thousand representatives from various sectors and organizations assembled to finalize the People's Agenda which served as the basis of their alliance with the Duterte regime.

The People's Agenda contains the 15-point program on nationalist and progressive change and a detailed program of what is doable under Duterte's administration in its first 100 days in power. In particular, the people's agenda is divided into five aspects: economy, social policy, peace and human rights, anti-corruption and administration, and foreign policy.

Before the summit, sectors and delegates from different regions conducted assemblies and consultations to gather the demands and calls of the people. The National People's Summit which was held in UP Diliman is the culmination of these activities.

Organizations from Southern Tagalog and Central Luzon held caravans before converging to the main program in Metro Manila for the People's Summit and mobilization last June 30, in time for President Duterte's inauguration. Delegates from Bicol, Visayas and Mindanao also attended the 2-day event.

"These (mobilizations) serve as our rally of support and to persuade him to act upon his pro-people pronouncements, peace talks between the GPH and NDFP, release of political prisoners and people's agenda for genuine change," said Renato Reyes, secretary general of Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (BAYAN).

More than 7,000 members of different organizations and supporters of the people's agenda attended the rally held in Mendiola, Manila.

Reyes also added that the people and the Duterte regime are in agreement on six issues: an end to contractualization, prohibition of destructive and large-scale mining, distribution of 6-million hectares of public lands to the farmers, safe return of Lumads to their communities, release of political prisoners and the resumption of peace talks.

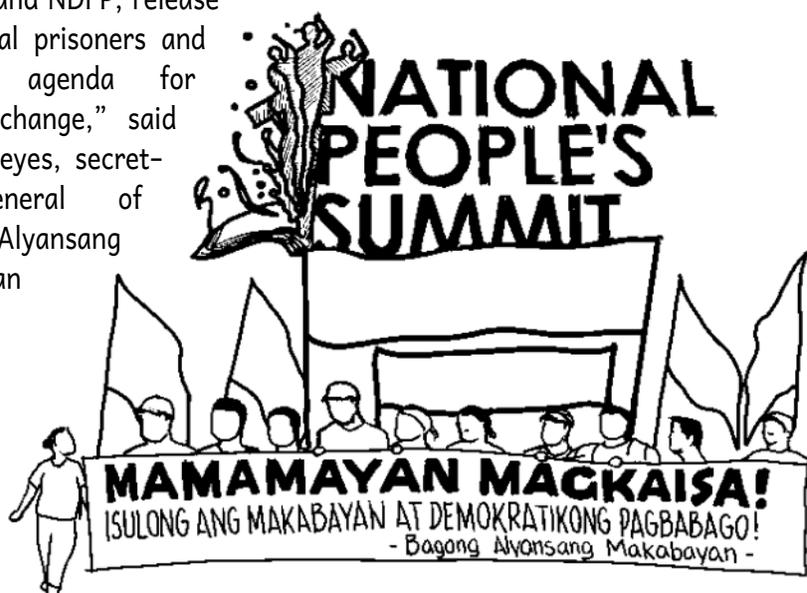
After the program, Duterte invited leaders of progressive organizations inside Malacañang to receive the People's Agenda and to consult with them. Their discussion lasted for about an hour. Later in the afternoon, Duterte dined with members of mass organizations and residents of Tondo, Manila.

Meanwhile, a day after their consultation in Malacañang, President Duterte appointed Liza Maza as head of the National Anti-Poverty Commission.

According to Maza, her priority is to address the needs of people in the countryside. AB

The People's Agenda

1. Uphold national sovereignty and territorial integrity.
2. Respect human rights and give full play to democracy.
3. Reassert economic sovereignty and conserve national patrimony.
4. Carry out national industrialization.
5. Implement land reform as a matter of democratic right and social justice.
6. Improve the wage and living conditions of the workers.
7. Expand social services, especially in education, health and housing, and improve public utilities.
8. Stop plunder and all forms of graft and corruption and prosecute perpetrators.
9. Reduce military expenditures and channel the savings to economic development and social services.
10. Promote a patriotic, democratic, scientific and progressive system of education and culture.
11. Uphold gender equality in all fields of social activity and combat gender/sexual discrimination.
12. Ensure wise utilization of natural resources and protection of the environment.
13. Respect the rights of national minorities to self-determination and development.
14. Resume GPH peace negotiations with the NDFP and complete those with the MILF.
15. Pursue an independent foreign policy.



Preparations for peace negotiations



The resumption of peace negotiations between the Government of the Philippines (GPH) and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) may be pushed back to the last week of July. Fidel Agcaoili of the NDFP Negotiating Panel said that the delay is due to the additional time needed to process the release of NDFP consultants.

The NDFP will also ask the GPH to have the US delist the CPP, NPA, and NDFP Chief Political Consultant Jose Maria Sison from its "terrorist" list. Agcaoili clarified that it was the Philippine government, during the Arroyo regime, which was responsible for the revolutionaries' inclusion in the US list.

The continuing inclusion of the CPP, NPA and Sison in the said list is a major impediment to the latter's

return to the Philippines. This possibility has been suggested by the GPH supposedly for Sison and Duterte to meet. According to Agcaoili, the US must give assurance that it will not intervene to derail the peace negotiations. He said that there should be guarantees from the Dutch, Norwegian and US governments to respect the sovereignty of the Filipino people in their desire to pursue a just and lasting peace

by allowing Sison to come home without interference.

Meanwhile, Sison is optimistic over the prospects of the peace negotiations with the Duterte government." Let us take advantage of a new situation in which the worsening crisis of the ruling system, the growing strength of the people's revolutionary movement and the failures of previous administrations have brought about a president who is courageous and proud to say that he is the first Left president of the Philippines," he said. Sison likewise stated that Duterte is willing to adopt and implement the necessary reforms for a just and lasting peace. AB

40,000 march for peace in Davao

Around 40,000 delegates from various sectors and parts of Mindanao attended "Pukaw Kalinaw: Unity for Justice and Lasting Peace," a two-day forum on the root causes of armed struggle among the communities and different sectors.

The activity's highlights included discussions, cultural performances and a program which was attended by delegates from the negotiating panel of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) and the Duterte regime. Attendees marched around the city on June 29, to express their support for the resumption of peace talks.

Before the event, activists commemorated the first anniversary of the murder of Leoncio Pitao (Ka Parago) in Barangay Pañalum, Paquibato District.

This has been the largest assembly in the region since 1984, said DOLE undersecretary Joel Maglunsod. The activity was led by Exodus for Justice and Peace (EJP). Peasants, Lumad and sectors from Caraga, Central Mindanao, Western Mindanao and Soccsksargen attended the event.

The root causes of armed conflict must be resolved, and this entails economic reforms, especially land reform and national industrialization, EJP said. After the march, a peace forum was held in Almendras Gym.

Sectors in Mindanao presented their demands which were consolidated into the Mindanao People's Agenda.

Following are some of the demands: remove military camps and disarm paramilitary troops in Lumad communities; resolve cases of illegally dismissed workers in Nakayama Technology Corporation, Nakashin Davao International Corporation and Radio Mindanao Network; release Moro prisoners who were illegally accused of being members of Abu Sayyaf and immediately expel large-scale and destructive mining in Mindanao.

The Mindanao People's Peace Agenda was submitted to Fidel Agcaoili of NDFP and Silvestre Bello III, chief negotiator of GPH panel who attended the event.

In Butuan City, 3,000 members of progressive organizations marched to express their support for the upcoming peace talks. The group also demanded accountability of the previous Aquino regime and pushed for the people's demands in CARAGA. AB



The CPP's campaign against illegal drugs

Revolutionary forces have long been carrying out a campaign against illegal drugs. The New People's Army has been assiduously implementing the orders of the CPP Central Committee to disarm and arrest the most notorious criminals including the biggest drug traffickers, in order to subject them to prosecution and just punishment.

They are in the top echelons of the AFP and PNP, who are also in cahoots with key officials in the local and national bureaucracy. The NPA is ready to give battle to those who will resist arrest with armed violence.

For the CPP, the proliferation of illegal drugs, especially shabu, and the concomitant rise in incidents of violent crime serves the perpetuation of the ruling system. Historically, the colonizers and ruling classes have

deliberately encouraged the propagation of drugs as a means of desensitizing the oppressed and exploited masses. Drug abuse numbs them of the acute effects of poverty, hunger and state violence.

Drug abuse disunites the people and prevents them from effectively carrying out revolutionary struggle. The use of drugs as a weapon to oppress the people is starkly clear in areas where the AFP conducts its counterinsurgency operations.

Wherever there is heavy military presence in so called "civil-military operations", illegal drugs are allowed to proliferate together with other anti-social acts.

The CPP welcomes President Duterte's call for cooperation with the revolutionary forces against widespread drug trafficking. While anticipating the possibility of a mutual ceasefire in the coming weeks as a result of negotiations between the NDFP and the Philippine government, the NPA can continue to carry out select operations in defense of people's rights and welfare, especially against the biggest criminal syndicates and their nefarious military and police cohorts. AB

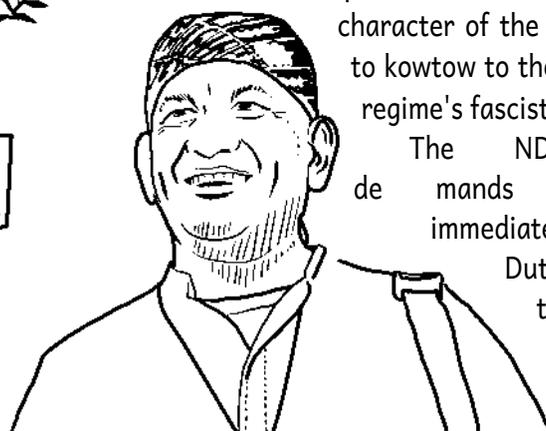
Release Ka Lando!

The National Democratic Front-Southern Mindanao Region condemned the arrest and detention of Red commander Eduardo Genelsa (Ka Lando) by the AFP last June 29 in Sitio Sangi, Barangay Bongabong, Pantukan, Compostela Valley. Genelsa was arrested by combined elements of the 10th ID, 46th IB, PNP and operatives of the Intelligence Service of the AFP. His arrest aims to sabotage the upcoming peace talks, NDF-SMR said.

Ka Rubi del Mundo of the NDF-SMR said that Ka Lando was conducting special consultations with residents in a known NDF territory in Pantukan. He was tasked to unite the mass base on the upcoming peace talks, and on the proper conduct of the People's Democratic Government and revolutionary forces when the proposed ceasefire agreement takes effect.

Ka Lando was then investigating activities of a certain druglord in cahoots with some AFP units and officials in the area, the NDF-SMR stated. This was in line with the NPA higher command's directive for the revolutionary movement to conduct parallel efforts against drug lords and criminal syndicates.

Ka Rubi further said that Ka Lando's arrest is a reprehensible, premeditated act designed to preempt mutual peace efforts by the revolutionary movement and



the Duterte government. This clearly exposes the innate warmongering character of the AFP which continues to kowtow to the previous US-Aquino regime's fascist Oplan Bayanihan.

The NDF-SMR expressly demands concrete and immediate action from the Duterte government for the immediate and unconditional release of Ka Lando, as well as

the cessation of military operations and atrocities against the people.

Meanwhile, 39th IB troopers earned widespread condemnation on social media for their desecration of the remains of a Red commander who was martyred in a battle last July 1 along the border of barangays Basak and Balite in Magpet, North Cotabato.

Photos of Noel (Ka Jepoy) Gulmatico's corpse spread on the internet when radio broadcaster Abner Francisco posted them on his Facebook account. Francisco described the anger felt by Ka Jepoy's family. In his post, Francisco said that: "Both his eyes were gouged, his tongue cut, his neck slit. His family accepts his death as a result of his joining the revolution, but they could not accept the desecration of his remains..." AB

Groups oppose US Pacific Partnership in Albay

MULTI-SECTORAL organizations under Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan)-Bicol gathered last June 27 in Legazpi City to protest the "humanitarian" program in Albay where around 1,000 combined troops from the US, Australia, Malaysia and New Zealand participated.

Dubbed as "Pacific Partnership," the program likewise featured Philippine Navy forces in Southern Luzon, as well as the US' vaunted largest naval hospital ship USNS Mercy. The foreign troops will remain in Albay until July 11.

Bayan-Bicol's Pastor Dan Balucio said that the continuing presence of US troops will only bring trouble to the country because it raises military tension not only in the province but also in the Asia-Pacific region.

The Albay People's Organization (APO) likewise criticized the involvement of US troops, including the AFP, in humanitarian activities and disaster response as these militarize the said efforts. APO's Fred Mansos stated that construction using government facilities and equipment should be undertaken by personnel from the Department of Public Works and Highways, with the help of other civilian agencies, and not by military forces.

Residents also reported that even before the Pacific Partnership officially started, US troops have already been seen in Albay. According to APO, in the town of Daraga, American soldiers have been present since May 15 in the barangays of Mabini and Kinawitan, and in Camalig's Barangay Comun. Areas surrounding these villages were also militarized. AB

Anti-mining struggles claim victory

A BARRICADE by the people of Barangay Didipio, Kasibu, Nueva Vizcaya was successful in stopping the destructive mining company Oceana Gold Philippines Inc. (OGPI) in its drilling operations. Large-scale mining operations in Zambales were also brought to a halt after the provincial governor suspended their licenses.

OGPI withdrew its equipment on the third day of the barricade by Samahang Pangkarapatan ng Katutubong Manggagawa at Mag-sasaka Inc. (SAPAKKMI), Didipio Earth Savers Multi-Purpose Co-operative (DESAMA), and the Didipio Barangay Council. (*Read Ang Bayan, June 21, 2016.*) The protesters also gained the support of newly-elected Governor Carlos Padilla who promised to stop OGPI's drilling and expansion operations.

Nonetheless, the protesters are aware that their victory may be temporary. Ernesto Bobola of SAPAKKMI said that they will continue to be vigilant given OGPI's underhanded practice of sneaking equipment into the area. On the other hand, DESAMA's Myrna Duyan said that they need to unite the residents and the whole village council to stand firm against destructive mining. OGPI has attempted to disunite the residents by coopting individual landowners where OGPI's drilling equipment would be positioned.

In Zambales, newly-elected governor Amor Deloso ordered the suspension of all mining operations in the province. Last February, residents from Barangay Bato, Sta Cruz have put up barricades against some of these companies—Zambales Diversified Metals Co., Filipinas Mining, Benguet Nickel Mining Inc. and Eramen Minerals Corp.—to protest their destructive operations.

Meanwhile, 32 environmental organizations crafted a 14-point agenda for President Duterte's first 100 days. The agenda called for the abrogation of Mining Act of 1995, suspension of large-scale mining and construction of coal-fired power plants, and resolving issues related to toxic wastes. The organizations likewise pressed Duterte to junk Executive Order 79 signed by Aquino in 2012 which prohibits local government units from suspending mining contracts in their respective areas.

In this regard, the organization Kalipunan ng Katutubong Mamamayan ng Pilipinas (Katribu) asked DENR Sec. Gina Lopez to remain true to her stance against destructive mining.

The group urged Secretary Lopez to investigate all mining operations and hold accountable those who destroy the environment. Katribu also demanded that the government suspend the approval of new mining applications. Around 60% of approved applications cover ancestral lands, resulting in the destruction of the indigenous people's livelihood.

On her first day at the DENR, Lopez ordered that the investigation of all mining operations be completed in a month. In the past, Lopez has joined forces with Kalikasan People's Network for the Environment in opposing destructive mining in Palawan and Mt. Lobo in Batangas. AB

Neoliberal policies' devastating effect on local industry and agriculture

(Fourth in the series on neoliberalism. Previous articles discussed the history of neoliberal policies in the Philippines and the series of laws and orders which implemented neoliberal privatization, deregulation, liberalization and denationalization in the country.)



Almost four decades of neoliberal policies in the Philippines have brought about the wholesale destruction of the local economy and the people's livelihood.

Import-oriented industry growth was stunted, rendering it unable to generate more jobs. Agricultural growth tapered off in the face of all-out trade liberalization and flooding of the local markets with foreign agricultural products. Agricultural production remained backward. Due to its inability to generate employment, the number of unemployed rose (and became farm workers) in the countryside. As a manifestation of uneven growth, the service sector, specifically retail, consistently grew.

Having so-called "solid economic fundamentals" is a lie. In fact, the local economy remains pre-industrial, backward and agrarian. Export-oriented manufacturing is dependent on imported machinery and materials, resulting in a chronic trade deficit and a cycle of incurring debts to keep the economy afloat.

For decades, the state has been insolvent due to low revenues resulting from the abolition of tariffs and awarding tax holiday incentives to big companies. To reduce its deficit, the state passed the burden to

ordinary citizens by imposing taxes on income, basic commodities and services.

Deindustrialization

The industrial base shrank as local production became more and more dependent on imported machinery and materials, foreign capital and loans. The local manufacturing subsector is an adjunct to the international chain of production of big capitalists. It is separate from local agricultural production and does not serve in building a self-reliant economy. Manufacturing makes up half of the industry sector.

From 7.6% in the 70s, industry growth plunged to 0.5% in the 1980s to the 1990s. During the same period, its share to the local production dropped from 39% to 20%.

Northern Luzon's indigenous peoples fall prey to militarization

SIXTEEN members of the Aggay tribe, including women and children, were reportedly abducted by 86th IB troopers in San Mariano, Isabela last June 17.

According to Karapatan-Cagayan Valley, the Aggays were abducted while members of the 86th IB were conducting military operations in the Tappa-Cadsalan-Buyasan area. In a search mission conducted by Karapatan, the Social Action Center of the Archdiocese of Ilagan City, and representatives of the Isabela local government, the Aggays reported that the soldiers also illegally searched their huts.

In addition, the group said that the 5th ID, which commands the said battalion, denied that they have custody of the Aggays. However, interviewed residents belied this, saying that some of their fellow tribesmen were forced by the military into a helicopter.

In related news, the Abra Human Rights Movement (AHRM) and Kakailian Salakniban Tay Amin a Nagtaudan (KASTAN CPA-Abra) condemned the abduction of four Tingguians by soldiers belonging to the 27th IB last June 25.

The Tingguians were identified as Teddy Ngikit Wagwagan, Godfrey Ngikit, Marvin Dugayon and Bello Batang-i, all of Bangilo District.

According to AHRM and KASTAN, the four were hunting in the mountains of Malibcong when chanced upon by the operating troops. The group further said that the Tingguians were released only last July 1, and were threatened by 27th IB commanding officer Col. Thomas Baluga with charges of illegal possession of firearms.

Murder attempt on journalist condemned

THE NATIONAL Union of Journalists of the Philippines (NUJP) condemned the assassination attempt on Radio Mindanao Network-dxRS broadcaster Saturnino "Jan" Estanio in Surigao City last June 30.

Estanio was shot by two gunmen riding in tandem. Also wounded were Estanio's 12-year old son and a neighbor. According to the NUJP, there is a big possibility that the attempt to kill Estanio was in connection with his hard-hitting criticism of illegal drugs and illegal gambling operations, as well as corruption in some government agencies. Estanio maintains a nightly program with dxRS.

Before the attack, Estanio said that he has been receiving threats telling him to stop criticizing the widespread illegal gambling operations in Surigao City.

Industry share in over-all employment failed to grow, and even fell at times. It remained at 10% in the 1980s up to the 1990s, dropped to 9% in the 2000s. It rose to 15% in 2010-2015 but only due to the temporary job growth in the construction subsector. Manufacturing's share in employment dropped to 8% during this period.

From more than 10 subsectors in the 1970s, export manufacturing shrunk to three subsectors in the 1990s: electronics, garments and textile and machinery equipment and transport. By the end of 2000s, 66% of exports were produced by the machinery equipment and transport subsector.

It was also during this period that food manufacturing and agricultural exports fell, from 17% to 5%. Garment and textile production, one of the stronger subsectors during the 1970s, dropped from 21% to 5%.

Manufacturing has almost no linkages to other aspects of the local economy. Electronics manufacturing is limited to assembly, packing and testing of semiconductors. Automotive manufacturing is limited to welding, painting, trimming and inspection. In the garments industry, there is no local processing of materials and more than 80% of materials used are imported from China, Taiwan, Hongkong and India.

Production is concentrated to a few companies. Comparison of the production of four biggest companies to all others shows that almost all subsectors are monopolized. Some of the most concentrated subsectors include the processing of petroleum products, food, beverages, tobacco products, cement, non-metallic construction products such as glass, machinery equipment and transport. The biggest companies are run by the biggest compradors and their foreign partners such as Eduardo Cojuangco's San Miguel Corporation and Lucio Tan's For-

EFFECTS OF NEOLIBERALISM



UNDEREMPLOYED

2005	20.14%
2011	18.8%
2015	21%

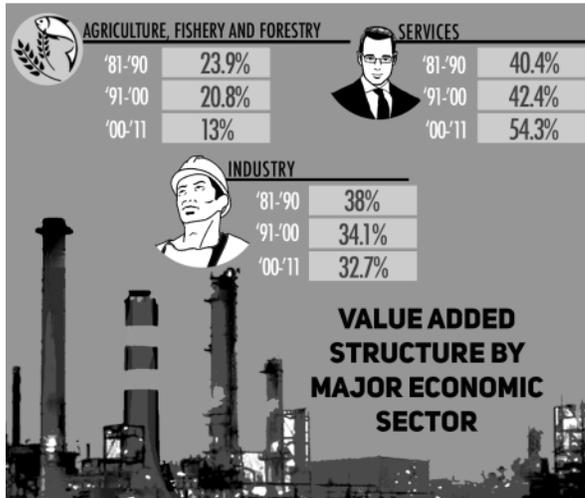
*except Leyte

UNEMPLOYED

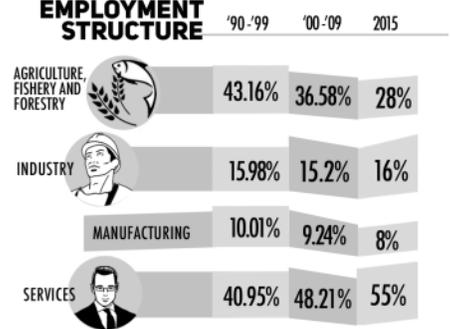
2005	7.57%
2011	7.2%
2015	10%

**except Leyte
data from IBON Foundation

Starting April 2005, unemployed persons include all persons 15 years old & over & are reported as (i) without work & currently available for work & seeking work & (ii) without work & currently available for work but not seeking for work due to the following reasons: tired/believed no work available; awaiting results of previous job application; bad weather; & waiting for rehire/job recall.



EMPLOYMENT STRUCTURE



tune Tobacco. Others are subsidiaries of imperialist companies like the Texas Instruments.

Foreign capitalists and their local partners acquired and killed small and medium-scale companies which were largely owned by local entrepreneurs. This disproves the claim that liberalization opens opportunities for more industry players. From 1997-2006, for every three new investors, a total of 20 companies closed shop. Most of these were small companies, almost all were run by Filipino entrepreneurs and oriented towards the local market.

Though a majority (89%) of companies in the sector are in the micro category, they are not in the position to compete with bigger companies. They only contribute up to 7% to the overall production. There are so few small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) in the subsector. In 1996, they contributed 1% to the overall production and in 2006, the contribution dropped to 0.4%.

In manufacturing, majority (53%) of the workers are concentrated in big factories, even though these comprise only 0.8% of the total companies. Up to 19% are found in micro companies while 28% are in small and medium enterprises (SME). SME production has no upward or downward linkages with big

companies. Large companies rely solely on imported materials. Capitalists do not invest both in new machinery and trainings to improve labor.

Agricultural decline

Under neoliberal policies, agricultural production remained small, backward and separate even as the use of foreign inputs (seeds, fertilizers and pesticides) increased. At the same time, local production fell as imported agricultural products flooded the market, and as haciendas and capitalist plantations converted thousands of hectares of agricultural land for export production. From 1980, agriculture's overall GDP share fell from a third (1/3) to 1/12 in 2010. From the 1980s to 2000, the sector's growth barely reached 3%. This is far from the 7.4% high in the 1970s. On the other hand, agribusiness' GDP share rose to 15%.

Large tracts of farm and agricultural land remain in the hands of a few landlord families. The CARP failed to distribute land even within its neoliberal frame. In 27 years, it has distributed only 88% of its target. Up to 76% of CARP beneficiaries have failed to pay amortizations and are in the brink of losing their land titles. Only 9.7% have made payments and up to 15% are still in the process of paying their debts.

Small landholdings increasingly fell under the control of commercial production as foreign companies exerted their presence and dominance in the production process. These companies control the supply of seeds, fertilizers and other production materials. They are also behind the “contract-growing” of crops such as cassava, oil palm, rubber tree and other similar crops for their needs in the country or overseas. They come into agrarian venture agreements, which now encompass around 1.2 million hectares of agricultural land. These agreements can stand from five to 75 years. This is in addition to the big plantations directly run by foreign companies and local compradors.

During the 1970s, the country’s main agricultural products were coconut, banana and poultry. By the 1980s, almost all agricultural sub-sectors fell, except for meat. During this time, forest resources, one of the main sources of agriculture’s growth, were depleted due to large-

scale foreign and local

production of coconut, sugar and other traditional crops have been on a downward spiral. Corn production only went up after farmers shifted from planting corn for consumption to corn for animal feeds.

Due to land conversion, land for planting further decreased. From 2.5 hectares in 1975, average farm size fell to two hectares in the 2000s.

In terms of land area, palay is still the most widely planted, followed by other traditional crops such as corn, coconut and sugarcane. But rice production has declined relative to the rise in local consumption mainly due to land conversion of rice farms. In the past 30 years, palay production has been declining and by the 2000s, the Philippines has become



the biggest rice importer in the world.

In the fisheries sector, production for local consumption dropped as commercial fishing and aquaculture for export rose. Aquaculture’s production volume rose by 75% from 1.2 million metric tons (MT) in 1974 to 4.7 million MT in 2013. Meanwhile, production of small fisherfolk who were limited to municipal waters only rose by 15%. From 1984-2013, fish exports rose to 65%. At the same time, sea imports for local consumption rose by 100% due to the export orientation of the country’s fisheries. AB

US anti-Cuba offensive in the guise of “normalization”

Anti-imperialist countries are concerned by US imperialism’s interventionist moves in Latin America. According to Cuban President Raul Castro in his speech at the Association of Caribbean States on June 4 in Havana: “We can’t remain indifferent before this turbulence in Latin America and the Caribbean, which is a consequence of an imperialist and oligarchic counteroffensive against popular and progressive governments”.

US imperialism continues its intervention and other forms of bullying in Latin American countries. It initiated the coup d’état of the Brazilian president and is creating trouble for the Maduro regime in Venezuela. (Read Ang Bayan, *June 21, 2016*.)

Behind the so-called normalization of relations with Cuba, the US hopes to undermine the political and economic system of a nation that is a bulwark of anti-imperialism.



This “normalization” was announced by US President Barack Obama on December 2014. It was supposed to end more than a half century of imperialist persecution of Cuba that started when the anti-imperialist and declared-socialist leadership of Fidel Castro gained power in 1959.

“Normalization” agreements came after a year of secret talks in Canada. In March, Obama visited Cuba, with ample coverage by the

US mass media. He called the visit “historic” and one that will change the whole Latin America.

But with several months gone, the promise to close down the US naval base in Guantanamo Bay, illegally occupying Cuban soil, is nowhere in sight. This base holds the prison notorious for inhuman torture of suspected terrorists by American soldiers. The US-imposed trade embargo remains in force. On the other hand, Cubans are be-

coming increasingly worried by “normalization” for the dangers that opening US relations will bring.

Opening relations with Cuba is a US imperialist measure to expand new spheres of influence for investments in Latin America.

Since diplomatic relations were established in 2014, there have been commercial deals on telecommunications and an airline service. A system of direct post has been established and Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide inked an agreement to construct three tourist hotels in the Cuban capital Havana.

Even as the US focuses its attention to the “Asian pivot”, it is also consolidating its position in Central America, which it considers its backyard. By declaring “normalization”, the US wants the Cuban people to believe that it is no longer an enemy, therefore placing it in a better position to push changes in Cuba that are favorable to US interests.

The US has sought to overthrow the Cuban government for more than five decades since the latter won its freedom from the US-controlled Batista dictatorship. It has planned more than two hundred assassination attempts against erstwhile president Fidel Castro. More than half a century of trade embargo has been imposed, although this has caused the US economy itself to lose more than \$1.2 billion annually. In 1961, the US assaulted the Bay of Pigs and in 1976, it planned the bombing of a Cuban airplane that killed 73 people. The US government also spends \$27 million annually, or half a billion for the past 20 years, to broadcast imperialist propaganda on Radio and TV Martí, though the Cuban government has effectively blocked the signal. Today, the US expects its strategy of economic engagement to win where the Cold War strategy of confrontation failed.

During Obama’s visit in March, he was allowed to broadcast his speech directly to the people of

Cuba. But the Castro government and the people were incensed when he called for “political freedom and democracy.” Raul Castro announced that they are aware of the US intention to generate Cuban agents to finish off the revolution. He said, “The goals are the same, only the methods have changed.”

Former President Fidel Castro then wrote that Obama’s words were “honey-coated” and are asking the Cuban people to forget “a ruthless blockade that has now lasted for almost 60 years”. He added, “we don’t need the empire to give us any presents”.

People also complained about the influx of tourists, a fashion show and shooting of a movie that insulted the country’s culture and morality and largely ignored the ordinary citizens. A critic wrote that “we must, above all, fight for national sovereignty... in every case, and demand respect for the dignity of every citizen.”

The US’ treatment to Cuba as a field for investments has encouraged other imperialist states to establish their own relations. Nine days before the Obama visit, the European Union signed an agreement for cooperation on economic reforms and trade.

Through its superficial show of diplomatic goodwill, the US is taking advantage of the economic and political crises in Latin America to bring down the Castro government in Cuba. US imperialism has instigated trouble in Venezuela, which is Cuba’s main trade partner and supplier of 95,000 barrels of cheap oil daily.

It also messed up Brazil, one of Cuba’s main suppliers of food, a source of credit and a partner in tobacco and sugar companies. Cuba earns \$12 billion annually from these two countries for supplying medical services. Temer, Brazil’s interim president favoured by the US, announced that they will not add to the 11,400 Cuban doctors, and payment for services may not be sent

to Cuba but be given to the doctors themselves.

Cuba opened diplomatic ties with the US amid a series of measures to address the economic problems resulting from US intervention in Latin America and the Caribbean. Cuba hopes that this “normalization” will open trade relations with different countries. Trade with different countries is crucial for Cuba especially since a large part of its needs are dependent on foreign trade.

Despite the embargo, cooperation with friendly governments in Latin America continue to strengthen. Though limited in resources, Cuba allocates the biggest portion of its resources to provide high-quality social services to its people. This country presently maintains one of the best health care and education systems in the world. The United Nations and World Health Organization has upheld it as a model for delivering quality social services by poor nations. Cuba also leads in social security, housing and low unemployment rates.

Lifting travel restrictions on US citizens is expected to add income from tourism. This income has shown record highs the past year but still contributed less than one-third of the traditional \$7 billion from health and education exports in 2014.

In 2011, Cuba opened up to local small-scale private enterprises and foreign capital. Last May, middle enterprises and foreign investments were allowed. But the Communist Party of Cuba reiterated in its congress last April that there will be no privatization of state property and social services such as education, health care and social security. The congress also stated that they have no intention of moving towards capitalism, emphasizing that social ownership and cooperatives were mostly preferable to private property. AB

Brexit reflects the people's discontent over neoliberalism and the capitalist crisis

Last June 25, majority of voters in the United Kingdom voted in a referendum to leave the European Union (EU). This ended almost seven years of the country's membership to the European Economic Community, the bloc which made the emergence of the EU in 1992 possible. The EU is an economic block comprised of 28 countries in Europe and its nearby regions.

What was called the Brexit or British Exit shook the world's markets and caused an uproar in Europe. It encouraged the clamor for at least 34 calls for a similar referendum in other countries.

The triumph of the Brexit vote reflects the working class and the people's wish to seek an end to the current economic and social crisis. It mirrors their anger and rejection of the neoliberal policies of the EU, together with the International Monetary Fund, which has dismantled victories and services won by their unions and movements over the past decades.

But at the same time, right-wing and ultra-nationalist groups have exploited the people's call to push for their own anti-immigrant and anti-worker agenda. These groups, with the United Kingdom Independence Party at the helm, blame the high unemployment rate on foreigners or immigrants who supposedly appropriate jobs meant for the British.

They embody the strong current of racism and discrimination against immigrant families who are looking for better lives in Europe. In the past years, hundreds of thousands of refugees from the Middle East and Africa have been desperate to enter the UK and other European countries to get away from the US wars of aggression which the UK has fully supported.

Conditions of the people in the UK have deteriorated under the neoliberal regime. Budget cuts for services and benefits have been increasing since 2009. The largest cuts have been in pensions (35% since 2010), food subsidy and environmental and disaster protection (30%), and funds for local com-

munities (51%). Billions of pounds have been cut from programs benefiting the most vulnerable in society, such as immigrants, victims of abuse and persons with disabilities. In the next four years (2016-2020), the UK government plans to decrease social spending by an additional 40%.

Through the Brexit vote, the people in the UK strengthened their call to junk austerity, stop privatization and the dismantling of their national health system, and the plan to further lay off hundreds of thousands of government employees. They also demanded the re-nationalization of their transport system, an end to the commercialization of the educational system and reinstatement of housing benefits. They likewise called for the decrease in taxes which the government has been using to bailout big capitalists and banks.

Nevertheless, Brexit will not resolve the basic issues the people of the UK face today. Aside from high rates of unemployment, the UK economy is stagnant and is currently burdened with debt.

Brexit's triumph and the clamor of other right-wing groups to leave the EU shatter the illusion of neoliberal globalization. This illustrates that despite the neoliberal doctrine of liberalization and deregulation, monopoly capitalists will always prioritize their own interests through investment regulations and other protectionist trade policies.

The EU has served as an instrument of big capitalists against smaller capitalists and backward countries for some time. It used its control on the common currency to blackmail Greece, Portugal, Spain,



Ireland and others into implementing neoliberal policies which are damaging to their economies and peoples. Only last year, it pressured Greece to significantly reduce services and benefits in exchange for fresh loans.

In the midst of the world economic and financial crisis, competition and rivalry between the biggest capitalist countries inside the EU has intensified. Not all EU members are under its total control. The UK, for example, has refused to use the Euro for trading.

The EU also imposes limitations on investments among its member countries, such as investment restrictions on China.

Brexit's triumph is an indication of the weakening British, and in general EU monopoly capitalism. But as there is no strong workers' party in the UK, it has not been sufficiently explained to the people that capitalism is at the root of the intensifying economic crisis which has been accelerated by neoliberal policies. Because of this, right-wing and ultranationalist groups have found it easy to ride on the struggle and propagate their anti-immigrant and anti-refugee sentiments.

In big capitalist countries such as The Netherlands, Germany and France, Brexit has given ultranationalist groups renewed vigor. But in countries like Greece, Portugal, Spain and Italy, it can revitalize left-wing parties and groups which have struggled against dictates of monopoly capitalists represented in the EU.