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Editorial

Duterte is undermining the chance for change and peace

Contrary to his promises, GRP President Duterte has yet to implement substantive changes to address the urgent needs of the people. He has been more accommodating to big business, the US, the military and bureaucrat capitalists. The people have yet to experience the much-vaunted claim that “Change is Here!” These last few days, the measured undermining of the peace process has reduced the possibility that changes sought by peasants, workers and ordinary citizens will be realized.

Even as the national democratic forces are conscious that the current regime is reactionary at the core, they have sought a tactical alliance with Duterte on the basis of his promises of progressive change and history of alliance and cooperation with revolutionary forces in Davao. The alliance’s potential was enhanced when he appointed mass leaders and elements of the national democratic movement to his cabinet, repeatedly promised to release political prisoners and NDFP consultants to

boost peace negotiations, and held dialogues with the national democratic forces.

The national democratic forces have meticulously put together and advanced the people’s agenda for change. They have presented Duterte the urgent demands for land, jobs, higher wages, lower prices, housing, and health and education services. They have demanded the release of political prisoners, an end to militarization in the countryside, junking the EDCA, dismantling of US military bases and

the pull-out of all US foreign troops in the country.

For those who had hoped for substantive changes, Duterte’s State of the Nation Address (SONA) last July 25 did not run deep. Upon closer study, he failed to present any concrete steps to address the people’s biggest and most urgent problems. Attention and immediacy was not given to joblessness, low wages and high prices of food and other commodities.

Instead, Duterte boasted of his stepped-up “anti-drug war” that has grown into a large-scale campaign of extrajudicial killings. More than 800 have been killed by police and vigilante groups under the control of police and drug syndicates. Duterte’s success is measured by counting body bags and its terrorizing effect



across the nation. Duterte should be criticized for his defense and avowed indifference over the large number of killings. The victims, whether truly involved in drugs or not, should be unified to defend their rights and attain justice.

The rampant drug epidemic will be solved by addressing the problems of joblessness, hunger and poverty which has pushed millions into its clutches. It is wrong to treat drug victims as criminals. The state has turned the full force of the state against them, instead of providing them care and assistance. Worse,

they are made into targets of the PNP and the AFP which are controlled by rival syndicates. Eventually, the drug war will be lost and exposed as nothing more but a violent competition for influence, control and territory of rival syndicates.

While Duterte deals brutally with drug victims, he has been cautious and restrained in dealing with suspected big-time criminals. Some of them have been entertained in Malacañang, while others are treated as visitors in the PNP headquarters and given the chance

to exonerate themselves in the media even as they are being accused of being heads of drug syndicates.

As Duterte treads carefully around big drug lords, he has also been accommodating to big businesses, criminal bureaucrat capitalists, the military and police, as well as the US.

Despite his never-ending threats against capitalists who utilize the “endo” system, he has not taken any concrete steps against it. He has not even paid attention to the much-publicized Tanduay case where the company continues to refuse to implement the court’s order to regularize its contractual workers.

Big capitalists applaud Duterte’s continuation of neoliberal policies, which includes relaxing policies and regulations for investments. He has repeatedly threatened perpetrators of destructive mining, but refuses to heed anti-pollution standards in the name of “industrialization,” which, based on his statements, is no different from the foreign investment-driven programs of the past. Duterte is also being hailed by big bureaucrat capitalist criminals, namely Benigno Aquino III and the recently released Gloria Arroyo and their plunder cohorts. He has dispensed with the people’s demand to hold Aquino and Arroyo responsible and punish them when he declared that he will not waste his time with the sins of the past.

Duterte is also accommodating the US. He no longer spouts statements against US military use of facilities in Davao. A visit from a key US official was met with the Supreme Court’s favorable final ruling on EDCA. He cheered when presented with \$32 million fund supposedly to modernize the AFP.



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In all likelihood, he will not transfer Scott Pemberton, the US soldier who raped a Filipina transgender, to a local cell from his current US-protected jail.

The Duterte regime is vigorously pushing for charter change for federalism to replace the current system of government. The reactionary politicians, especially the warlords and political dynasties, applaud the move because this will further strengthen their power in their own regions and provinces.

The US government and its puppets are also elated because the *chacha* will serve as an opportunity to remove provisions from the constitution that prohibit foreigners from fully operating their businesses and owning land in the Philippines. The US has long been pushing for such as a prerequisite for the Philippines to join the Trans-Pacific Partnership.

Duterte has been in power for more than a month but has yet to release a single political prisoner. While the CPP welcomed Duterte's unilateral ceasefire declaration during his SONA as a peace talks booster, what is more important is for him to fulfill his promise to release NDFP consultants to allow them to participate in the upcoming negotiations.

Duterte has accommodated the police and soldiers more. He dishes out praises for the soldiers and police and promises to double their salaries and give additional benefits. He ignores the very long list of crimes and human rights violations. Despite his ceasefire order, he allowed to AFP to continue its combat operations, psywar and militarization of communities. The militarists applauded Duterte when he withdrew his ceasefire declaration.

Duterte repeatedly claims having indigenous blood, but until now, he has failed to help several hundred Lumad families who evacuated in Davao City to return to their homes safely. Their communities are still militarized. Duterte seems deaf to the clamor to pull out troops encamped at their schools, barangay halls and homes.

The peace talks were first set for the first half of July. This was postponed after Duterte did not use his powers to immediately effect the release of 22 NDFP consultants and around 550 political detainees. He instead subjected it to a circuitous legal process. As a former fiscal, Duterte knows fully well how charges are trumped-up and filed against activists and revolutionaries to cover up what essentially is political repression against them.

The revolutionary forces may long for the resumption of peace negotiations but they are also ready to wait for Duterte to fulfill his promise of releasing the NDFP consultants. Aside from paving the way for their participation in the negotiations, their release will also serve as proof that Duterte is a man of honor and can be trusted to carry out whatever agreement he commits his signature to.

After casting aside his earlier promise to release NDFP consultants, Duterte has come up

with another ultimatum against the NPA's use of explosives as condition for peace negotiations. If we are to go by Duterte's actions over the past weeks, it would seem that the potential to attain substantial changes through peace negotiations is dimming.

Despite all these, Duterte's openings to the national democratic movement, including the appointment of mass leaders in government offices and opening his office for direct consultations in order to present and assert the people's demands, must continue to be utilized to advance the people's interests.

More important, the Filipino people must firm up their national democratic stand and organized strength. It is fine that the Filipino people are enlightened and determined to advance their fight. They know the potentials and limits of the tactical alliance with Duterte and that it is more important for them to advance their struggles.

The struggles against imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism must be advanced vigorously. The people are beset with problems that must be addressed and opposed. Workers, peasants, urban poor, youth and students, government employees, women, migrants, small professionals and other democratic sectors must advance their struggles.

While closely awaiting a ceasefire declaration to boost peace talks, the New People's Army (NPA) must wage all-out tactical offensives nationwide to advance the people's war and accumulate more victories. Carry out ambushes, raids and other annihilative tactical offensives with the aim of seizing a bigger number of weapons to arm the growing number of NPA Red fighters.



Resumption of peace talks may be delayed—*NDFP*

The National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) is studying the possibility of postponing the formal opening of peace talks previously scheduled on August 20 if its consultants are not released. Thus declared Luis Jalandoni, chief negotiator of the NDFP, last August 6. This was after the Supreme Court refused the petition to release eight consultants and two political prisoners last August 5.

Prior to this, the government's lawyer, the Office of the Solicitor General, asked for the provisional release of Tirso Alcantara, Alex Birondo, Winona Birondo, Maria Concepcion Bocala, Reynante Gamara, Alan Jazmines, Ma. Loida Magpatoc, Adelberto Silva, Benito Tiamzon and Wilma Tiamzon. The said detainees are facing trumped-up criminal cases in regional trial courts.

Instead of ordering their immediate release, the Supreme Court instructed the solicitor general to deal with the respective regional courts where the detainees' cases are filed or undergoing trial.

At the same time, the Supreme Court revoked the provisional freedom given to Rafael Baylosis, another NDFP consultant, after he ceased attending court hearings due to state forces' threats on his life.

Meanwhile, lawyers and human rights defenders expressed concern over the Supreme Court's imposition of limitations on the movements of Vicente Ladlad and Randall Echanis. While the court confirmed their temporary freedom in relation to the bail they posted while their cases are being tried, it was made to appear that they are in detention.

The Communist Party of the Philippines has previously declared on July 31 that it is ready to declare a unilateral interim ceasefire on August 20, simultaneous, but separate from the Duterte government. The time-frame would be determined through

negotiations.

In its statement, the CPP reiterated its full support for the resumption of the NDFP-GRP peace talks as a means of discussing the roots of the armed conflict. It expected the Duterte government to make good its promise to release all peace consultants of NDFP as well as all political prisoners arrested and detained under the Arroyo and Aquino regimes.

As earlier planned, the negotiating panels of the NDFP and GRP could thereafter exchange these declarations in order to discuss points for cooperation and coordination and determine ways of preventing armed skirmishes, misunderstandings and miscommunications during the course of the peace talks.

Duterte declared a unilateral ceasefire on July 25 but withdrew it after five days, purportedly because of the NDFP's failure to reciprocate.

When GRP President Duterte declared a unilateral ceasefire, the CPP and NPA immediately reciprocated with an order for all units of the NPA to go on active defense mode, a state just a notch below a ceasefire, as it evaluated the situation. But the AFP chief ordered combat troops to continue with so-called "civil-military" operations under Oplan Bayanihan, a euphemism for combat, psywar, surveillance and intelligence operations targeting civilian communities, which resulted in the Kapalong, Davao del Norte encounter.

Duterte used this encounter to

impose on July 28 an ultimatum within a few hours for the CPP to explain. After an accounting was made by the responsible NPA command on Friday afternoon, he imposed another ultimatum the next morning for the CPP to issue a reciprocal unilateral ceasefire declaration until 5 pm the same day. Half an hour before the CPP was to issue its declaration, Duterte withdrew his ceasefire declaration and ordered the AFP to continue with its combat operations.

According to the CPP, "It was quite capricious for the GRP President to have imposed such ultimatums of a few hours or several days for the CPP to act in accordance with his whims."

Since June, the CPP leadership had been preparing a draft for a unilateral ceasefire in anticipation of peace talks with the Duterte regime. It had long expressed willingness to engage in a ceasefire for as long as there are peace negotiations.

However, GRP President Duterte unilaterally declared a ceasefire even before he could fulfil his promise to release all NDFP consultants and political prisoners. The CPP took the more prudent path of moving cautiously while studying the situation on the ground level even as it ordered the NPA to stay on active defense.

"The CPP will not allow itself to be browbeaten to order the NPA to go on a ceasefire while operating troops of the AFP showed no plans on letting up in their search-and-destroy operations and frenzied offensives that terrorize civilian communities. To say the least, continuing offensives of the AFP prevented the CPP from declaring an interim ceasefire sooner," the CPP added. AB

AFP ignores Duterte's ceasefire declaration

Duterte's July 25-30 ceasefire declaration was not only ignored, but was even mocked, by the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and its paramilitary groups. The AFP's public expression of support for the ceasefire declaration did not reflect on the ground.

Not a single AFP command ordered its troops back to barracks. Palparan-trained AFP Chief Gen. Ricardo Visaya's order of "suspension of offensive military operations" was merely a continuation of so-called "civil-military" operations under Oplan Bayanihan.

Not one AFP encampment in civilian communities was taken down. AFP armed combat troops stationed in and around the scores of Lumad communities did not budge an inch. Thousands of Lumads remain in evacuation centers as they are unable to safely return to their homes.

AFP combat units remained active in civilian communities throughout the country. On July 27, the NPA ambushed operating troops from the 72nd IB and the paramilitary group Alamara in Kapalong, Davao del Norte. (See related article on page 6.)

On July 26, 24 AFP combat troops launched operations in San Miguel, Catanduanes and tortured Gerald Teves, a young abaca farmer. He was bound on the wrists and neck, tied by wire to a tree with his head wrapped in a plastic bag, and kicked at the back three times. His uncle Undang Teves was subjected to interrogation and was pressured to admit that he was a member of the NPA just to save his nephew from further torture.

In Sorsogon, additional operating troops of the 31st IB were deployed, according to Ka Samuel Guerrero of the Celso Minguez Command (NPA-Sorsogon). On July 26, a platoon of the 31st IB moved into Barcelona's upland barangays. For five days till July 30, their operations covered the barangays of San Vicente, San Antonio, Fabrica, San Ramon, Sta. Lourdes and Bagacay.

In the municipality of Juban, government soldiers conducted operations in barangays Catanusan and Calateo and also in the barangays of Sinibaran, Balocawe and Bariis in the municipality of Matnog. Combat operations were also monitored in the barangays of Busay, Lote and Bulala in Magallanes town since July 26.

Rigoberto F. Sanchez, spokesperson of NPA-Southern Mindanao Regional Command, reported that in North Cotabato, the 39IB recently identified 13 barrios in Kidapawan City to be placed under Peace and Development Outreach Program (PDOP) to purge them of

"communist-influence." Clearing operations continue in Magpet town. On July 27, platoons of the 84th IB were deployed in far-flung communities of Toril, Davao City. In Sta. Cruz, Davao del Sur, troops of the 2nd Scout Rangers Battalion conducted combat operations on July 29," the NPA-Southern Mindanao said in the statement.

In Southern Tagalog, Patnubay de Guia, spokesperson of NDF in the region, reported unabated military operations in the guise of peace and development team (PDT) operations, and anti-drug and anti-criminal operations. Combat operations were carried out in Barangay Dela Paz, Lopez, Quezon where Ka Raymart, a Red fighter was martyred.

Meanwhile, forces of the 8th ID in Northern Samar continued to occupy public facilities such as schools, chapels, daycare centers, waiting sheds, even homes, of the farmers. According to reports from Rodante Urtal Command (NPA-Northern Samar), combat operations were conducted to search among homes and forested areas from July 25-26. The soldiers' presence generated such fear among the residents that they avoided going to their farms. AB



Paramilitary group kills pregnant woman

A PREGNANT WOMAN was killed and seven others wounded when members of NIPAR (New Indigenous People's Army for Reform) indiscriminately opened fire at a gathering in Sitio Tibugawan, Barangay Kawayan, San Fernando in Bukidnon last July 30. The victims were attending a wedding together with 150 other Lumads. The NIPAR is a paramilitary group run by the AFP unit in the area and headed by Alde Salusad, known as Butsoy.

Makinit Gayoran was hit on the chest and was instantly killed. She was holding her first-born child. Five of the seven wounded were children. Many of the wedding guests, including the elderly, jumped into the nearby ravine to avoid getting hit. Prior to the rampage, Arnold Manhura saw Salusad and his group fully armed and wearing soldiers' uniforms in Sitio Spring. He advised them against going to the wedding. Manhura is the indigenous people's representative in the local government.

NIPAR and Salusad were also responsible for killing Jimmy Laguyon, Barangay Dao's captain, in March 2012 for the latter's refusal to grant big mining companies entry to their areas. Salusad and his group were also involved in killing Datu Asa Aranyo for the same reason.

According to Datu Jimboy Mandagit, a community leader, the indiscriminate firing is part of NIPAR and the 68th IB's campaign to drive them out of their communities so that San Roque and Apex Mining can gain access to their area.

Meanwhile, harassment against Lumad teachers and supportive activists continue. Last July 24, soldiers wearing civilian clothes approached Ronnie Garcia in an attempt to intimidate him while he was attending to his grandfather at Davao Regional Hospital in Barangay Apokon, Tagum City. Garcia is the executive director of the Salugpongan Ta Tanu Igkanugon Community Learning Center.

In Abra, Ronald Gustilo, Makabayan-Abra provincial coordinator and Kakailian Salakniban Tay Amin Nagtaudan officer, received threats via three successive text messages.

72nd IB ambushed in Davao del Norte

The NPA-Comval-North Davao-South Agusan Sub-Regional Command of the New People's Army in Southern Mindanao thwarted a military offensive by the Civilian Auxiliary Force Geographical Unit (CAFGU) of the 72nd Infantry Battalion and armed Alamara paramilitary troops and carried out an ambush that killed Alamara member Panggong Bukad, and wounded four others in Bagnakan, Sitio Muling, Brgy. Gupitan, Kapalong, Davao del Norte, July 27.

The ambush was staged after the NPA learned that government soldiers, together with the Alamara, were conducting operations in an area the latter believed was an NPA position, around 20 kilometers from the government detachment. The ambush was in adherence to the NPA-National Operational Command's orders for Red fighters to maintain alertness and active defense in the face of Rodrigo Duterte's unilateral ceasefire declared in his State of the Nation Address last July 25.

AFP and Alamara troops ignored the orders when they took off for combat operation from their detachment in Barangay Patil on July 26. To cover up their disregard of Duterte's orders, they spread lies that they were going back to their detachment when the ambush happened.

"The NPA abides with the spirit of the resumption of the peace negotiations in addressing the roots of the civil war, respects the ceasefire order of GPH Pres. Duterte, and strictly adheres to the directive of the national leadership and the CPP. It is the militarist clique in the AFP and its paramilitaries like the

Alamara that ridicule their Commander-In-Chief in virulently sabotaging the peace process," said Aris Francisco, spokesperson of the NPA-Comval-North Davao-South Agusan Subregional Command.

Meanwhile, the Antonio Licawen Command (NPA-Ilocos Sur) punished a small plant using cyanide in Sitio Nacawcawa, Barangay Patiacaan, Ilocos Sur on July 23. As early as January, the NPA had warned the plant to stop using poison in its operations. This has long been endangering health by contaminating the sources of drinking water of Sitio Madapoy, Patungcaleo and other downstream villages.

A dialogue was held last year between the mayor, the peasants of barangays Patiacaan, Patungcaleo, Lamag, Malideg, Banoen, and Cayos, all in the municipality of Quirino which was attended by one mining company. The dialogue was held after the peasants petitioned for the closure of mining operations in Patiacaan due to a fishkill in the Balas-iyon river. The mayor did not promise to halt destructive mining operations and the dialogue came to nothing. **AB**

Ka Wendell, student Red fighter

THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC Front-Southern Mindanao Region and the entire revolutionary movement pay tribute to Wendell Gumban (Ka Joaquin), 30, communist and Red fighter of the New People's Army (NPA). Ka Joaquin was killed in an encounter in Sityo Pongpong, Andap, New Bataan, Compostela Valley last July 23, together with Sario Mabanding (Ka Glen.)

Ka Joaquin became a member of the Kabataang Makabayan while serving as an editor of the Philippine Collegian in the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City. He was recruited into the Communist Party of the Philippines not long after. He worked in the legal mass movement, particularly in the workers movement, before serving full time in the NPA-Southern Mindanao Region.

Inside the NPA, he took on important tasks in consolidating the Party in guerilla bases and among the ranks of Red fighters. As a Red fighter, he overcame his weaknesses borne out of his class origins, as well as his physical limitations. His difficulties included the study and familiarization of new languages and cultures. He is remembered fondly by the Lumads and peasants he served as a happy and brilliant comrade.

Ka Joaquin is an epitome of an educated youth who chose to serve the NPA and took active part in the people's war.

His remains were interred at the UP-Diliman where his schoolmates and fellow activists in the student movement, as well colleagues in Kilusang Mayo Uno, paid him tribute.

Peace talks 2016

The agenda for socio-economic reforms



Essential socio-economic reforms will be discussed at the resumption of formal peace talks between the Government of the Philippines (GRP) and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP). This aims to solve the roots of the armed conflict and lay down requisites for a just and lasting peace. This agenda was set by the 1992 The Hague Joint Declaration of the GRP and NDFP as the second substantive item in the negotiations.

In the talks that is set to start this August 20, the NDFP will discuss and lay down its proposal in order to forge a Comprehensive Agreement on Socio-Economic Reforms (CASER).

The NDFP's proposed CASER is based on its analysis that Philippine society remains semicolonial and semifeudal, and that the solution to this crisis is the struggle for genuine national freedom and democracy and social justice.

The NDFP has already constructed its draft proposal as early as 1998, and has improved on it in the succeeding years. The proposal is divided into eight categories:

- 1) economic sovereignty and national patrimony;
- 2) agrarian reform and agricultural development;
- 3) economic development and national industrialization;
- 4) economic planning;
- 5) rights of the people, livelihood and social services;
- 6) environmental protection, rehabilitation and compensation;
- 7) monetary and fiscal policies; and
- 8) foreign economic and trade relations

In general, socio-economic reforms are the main content of the peace negotiations. The backwardness and worsening state

of Philippine society with regards the areas of reforms mentioned, and the resulting extensive poverty and oppression of the people, are the basis for widespread discontent and armed protest.

The revolutionary movement is aware that in the main, these reforms are difficult to attain as long as there remains the dominance of US imperialism, the big landlords and the big bourgeois compradors, and as long as they continue to hold control of the reactionary armed forces. Hence, armed struggle remains the primary method for change, while legal democratic mass struggles is secondary, and negotiations place tertiary. Since the 1980s, the NDFP has welcomed peace negotiations with the GRP in order to seize the opportunity, however small, to forge an agreement for the peaceful resolution of the armed struggle through basic socio-economic and political reforms.

The Filipino people and the revolutionary movement have a deep desire for a just and lasting peace, and are prepared to exhaust any means in order to attain this. **AB**

(Specifics on each field of reform will be discussed in succeeding issues.)

40,000 join People's SONA

This year's State of the Nation Address (SONA) was the largest and most peaceful for the past two decades. This is how Bayan secretary general Renato Reyes described the rally that day.

Around 40,000 participants from different parts of the country joined the People's SONA to call on Rodrigo Duterte to advance a nationalist and progressive program for the people.

Unlike past SONA protests, police officers greeted and shook hands with the protesters on their way to Batasang Pambansa.

Groups carried huge murals depicting people's demands. For the first time, they were able to reach the Batasang Pambansa during SONA.

The rallyists pushed for the 15-point People's Agenda—a program for pro-people and patriotic policies to address the roots of poverty. Among these calls are the abolition of contractualization, release of political prisoners, genuine agrarian reform and prohibition of large-scale mining.

The protest also highlighted their support for the resumption of peace talks between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and National Democratic Front of the Philippines.

A 5,000-strong delegation from Mindanao, almost 4,000 from Bicol and thousands from Eastern Visayas, Southern Tagalog, Central and North Luzon attended the rally.

According to Bai Ali Andaya, 3rd

nominee of Gabriela Women's Party and spokesperson of the Mindanao delegation, they intend to submit the 10-point Mindanao people's agenda to Duterte.

They also asked Duterte to act on the recent cases of Lumad attacks. "Primarily, we ask the president to pull out military troops from our schools and communities so thousands of Lumad can go back to their homes," said Indayla.

In Bicol, the region's delegation welcomed the Mindanao contingent before going to Manila. Participants from Bicol were mostly farmers from different towns. According to them, it was very difficult to be away from their farms for five days but because they understood the need to participate in the struggle, so they joined the caravan.

Bicol delegates also said that there are various issues in their region that they want to bring to the Duterte regime. Among these are the airport being constructed in

Camarines Sur which is a threat to their livelihood. The said airport will cut through the irrigation canals of their rice fields, said Jen Nagrampa of Gabriela – Bicol.

Singer Aiza Seguerra also attended the rally to express solidarity with the Lumad people in their campaign to stop militarization in their communities. Partylist representatives from Makabayan attended the program before proceeding to the Joint Session of Congress.

Lumad leaders and representatives from progressive organizations met with Duterte after his SONA. Duterte shared his desire to achieve peace under his term and allot funds for social services once armed conflict is resolved.

"This mobilization is positive and historical, but we should be vigilant because our alliance with Duterte is not a guarantee that we will have 100% agreement in economic, social and political reforms and direction in our country. We will pursue our struggle and we will not bring down our banners," Reyes added.

Similar mass actions were held in Cagayan de Oro, Cebu and Tacloban.



The revolution's local teachers

Indeed, having local instructors for the Basic Party Course (BPC) offers great advantages. Thus observed Ka Eddie, a member of the local Party branch (LPB) in a village in Bicol and one of the course's local instructors. Ka Eddie was speaking at a meeting which was being held to prepare for the course. With him were three other members of the LPB who are likewise instructors. They take part in the efforts to consolidate and expand the Party in their province.

Ka Mari, one of the comrades tasked to administer the province's instruction staff, shares that the Party calls for the increase in membership to take on greater tasks in advancing the people's war. "It was in the latter months of 2011 when the Party laid down the objective of increasing membership twofold every six months," said Ka Mari. In order to rise to this challenge, there was a need to increase the BPCs being given as a requisite for increasing the number of full-fledged Party members.

"Primarily, the number of instructors had to be increased," said Ka Mari. "One of the issues identified was to develop LPB cadres to become local instructors for the BPCs to be continuously administered even when the fulltime cadres for instruction are assigned elsewhere."

Fellow local instructors Ka Norman, Ka RM and Ka Harry recall that it was in February 2012 when they were directed by the guerrilla front's leading cadres to attend a BPC-Instructors' Training (BPC-IT). The three welcomed the task. For his part, Ka RM understands that taking on teaching tasks in their own village and in three other adjacent barrios is no small feat.

In the two consecutive BPC-ITs held that year, more than 20 participants studied methods of teaching the course. How are major points expounded? When are visual aids best brought into play? How is team teaching developed? How do we spark the interest of the students?

Instructors need to gain the

trust of the students, said Ka Norman. This is why preparations, as well as proficiency of the topics, are essential. In line with this, Ka RM recalls that he requested a special study session on Political Economy so that they can understand the subject more clearly. For his part, Ka Harry said that although teaching gives him a headache, he strives to overcome his difficulties in his desire to clearly explain the subject to the students.

Two weeks after the first BPC-IT batch was held, Ka Norman and his team set out to their first teaching task. Three days prior to the opening of the course, the instructors had already gathered. "Nobody thought of going home. All instructors went through their subjects," Ka RM remembers. "We also dedicated a whole day for practice teaching."

More batches followed that first BPC session. According to

reports reaching Ka Mari's committee, the guerrilla front was able to launch 14 BPC batches within that year. "This will rise further," said Ka Mari, "because we have already put up the machinery for instruction."

On the average, each BPC takes up six days and is usually conducted within houses in the villages. Members of the people's militia secure the area. While conducting reconnaissance around the villages, they are also able to gather vegetables and other food crops. Allies are also asked for support for other provisions. As classes go on, other members of the LPB and local activists do support tasks and provide other needs. Comrades assess that BPCs launched this way, compared to customary methods, are faster, safer and require less expense.

Having a local machinery for instruction hold distinct advantages. According to Ka RM, because they are villagemates, students are more at ease with the instructors, hence, students are more comfortable in raising questions during lectures. Because the instructors are familiar with their students, discussions are made more relevant to their lives, adds Ka



Norman.

An example, cites Ka Eddie, was when he had his sister, Ka Daisy, as one of his students. At that time, he knew that his sister was in the process of weighing her decision to serve fulltime in the people's army. Therefore, in discussing the Fundamental Proletarian Viewpoint and Standpoint of the Revolution, he appropriately illustrated his sister's situation in order to encourage the rest of the students, and on the other hand encouraged Ka Daisy to go fulltime.

The BPC aims to equip the students with the fundamental principles of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism to guide them in their daily revolutionary tasks. "Indeed, formal education is important because through these, revolutionary tasks are properly introduced," remarked Ka RM.

Likewise, instructors' ideas on how to improve on their tasks spring up. "I told myself to master a subject before moving on to another or taking on more," said Ka Norman. In order to increase the number of instructors, the LPB as well as the other instructors identify villagemates who may be trained to become instructors of formal Party courses.

Having local machinery for BPC instruction rendered conducting the courses faster, resulting in increasing numbers of full-fledged Party members. Ka Norman, Ka RM, Ka Eddie, Ka Harry and the rest of the local instructors prove that local Party branches are not only capable but should be performing educational tasks within the villages as their exercise of leadership and establishment of the democratic government. AB

Lumbia Airport protest launched anew

ACTIVISTS HELD A protest action, together with three Americans, in front of Lumbia Airport on July 29.

American activists Arturo Viscara, Luis Patterson, and Kelsen Caldwell tied themselves to the Lumbia Airport gate to protest US use of the airport under the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA). They were with more than 60 local activists.

Lumbia was the domestic passenger terminal in Northern Mindanao before the airport was transferred to Laguindingan three years ago. It is now under the Philippine Air Force.

The American activists said they will petition the US Congress to stop funding for the EDCA. Meanwhile, local activists submitted a petition to Cagayan de Oro Mayor Oscar Moreno and the City Council in support of the local government's plan to ask the national government to transform the old airport into a socialized housing community and commercial center.

Groups hold international conference of people's rights in Davao

THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE for People's Rights in the Philippines (ICPRP) was convened last July 23-24, in Davao City by the International Coalition of Human Rights in the Philippines in cooperation with Karapatan and Bayan. More than 300 delegates from different countries attended, which included activists, educators, students, church people, lawyers, human rights workers, and indigenous people.

The conference celebrated the 40th anniversary of the Algiers Universal Declaration on the Rights of Peoples. This 1976 declaration recognizes the formation and legitimacy of people's liberation movements and other mass movements for change, especially in places where these contradictions are most intense. The conference clarified the distinction of "people's rights" beyond individual liberties and emphasized collective rights.

Conference delegates called for resumption of the peace talks, abrogation of EDCA, release of political prisoners, and respect for people's rights.

Before the conference, delegates were divided into teams for integration in ten selected areas in the Philippines to show their support for ongoing mass struggles there. Among the areas visited were the Buffalo-Tamaraw-Limus communities in Maramag, Bukidnon, Arakan Valley in North Cotabato and Zinundungan Valley in Cagayan.

Management lays off MRT contractuels

IN CONTRADICTION TO the Duterte regime's promises, lay-offs of contractual workers or "endos" (end-of-contract) continue. Fifty Metro Rail Transit (MRT) employees, who have served the company for 10 years or more, are among the latest who were "endo-ed" as their contracts were not renewed. Consequently, 70 other employees were made to sign one to three-month contracts. At present, their contracts run up to six months. The employees who were laid-off did not receive their last salaries and overtime pay. To fill in vacated jobs, the MRT management employed contractuels with lower pay and even shorter contracts.