

LIBERATION

INTERNATIONAL

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By Roselle Valerio

The 42nd anniversary of the New People's Army on 29 March became an occasion for the Filipino people and revolutionaries around the world to celebrate the victories of the armed struggle in the Philippines in the past year against the mercenary armed forces of the US-Aquino government.

Various revolutionary organizations, including the Communist Party of the Philippines and local organs of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines, sent their messages of solidarity and congratulations to the Red fighters and commanders of the NPA, exhorting them to persevere more in the coming years as the people's war marches towards the stage of strategic stalemate.  **page 3**



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NO TO IMPERIALIST WAR OF AGGRESSION

NDFP condemns attack on Libya

The National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) vigorously condemns the imperialist war of aggression perpetrated by the US, UK, and France and their cohorts against Libya and the Libyan people.

Under the pretense of protecting the lives of Libyan civilians, these imperialist powers are violating the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of Libya and are in the process of destroying the lives and property of the Libyan people. Deceptively declaring that they are undertaking a so-called humanitarian intervention, they repeat the imperialist wars of aggression in Iraq and Afghanistan.

They aim to set up a puppet government and take over control of Libya's rich oil, gas and other natural resources. For this purpose, they are coddling and supporting a traitorous and retrogressive opposition group that brandishes the flag of the former King Idris.

The imperialist powers collaborate with the Zionists in flouting UN resolutions. They refuse to lift a finger to save the lives of Palestinian civilians: the mothers, children, elderly who have been subjected to brutal and massive invasion and massacre by the Israeli armed forces in December 2008, January 2009 and to the present day.

Why is there no "no-fly-zone" over Gaza to protect the

Palestinian victims of Israeli aggression?

Why, despite massive protest demonstrations in the US, UK and other countries worldwide, have these imperialist powers not done anything to stop the brutal Israeli attacks on the Palestinian civilian population and the Israeli bombardments on hospitals and medical clinics, schools and universities, mosques and public buildings?

Instead of the "no-fly-zone" which has opened the way for the current imperialist military intervention, the peace plan offered by President Hugo Chavez of Venezuela and supported by Cuban leader Fidel Castro and four other Presidents of Latin America, which Libyan leader Moammar Qaddafi has accepted, ought to be carried out. This peace plan has suggested former US President Jimmy Carter to lead the peace delegation. There is also the appeal of Qaddafi to the UN Security Council for an emergency session and for the UN to send a fact-finding mission to Libya.

These constructive proposals can avoid the human disaster that has taken place in Iraq as a result of the US-British led war of aggression and occupation, involving the death of over a hundred thousand people, the destruction of the civil infrastructure of the country, and the mass displacement of close to five million Iraqi refugees. The Western mass media should now make an honest

reporting of the ongoing massive destruction of Libyan lives and property.

The imperialist war of aggression against Libya not only endangers the lives and safety of the Libyan people, it also causes grave danger to the many thousands of migrant workers who work and live in Libya. A special cause of concern for the NDFP is the safety of many thousands of Filipino workers. Among them are Filipino nurses who provide needed medical care to the population in the hospitals and medical centers in Libya.

The National Democratic Front of the Philippines, which condemns and opposes the increasing US military intervention in the Philippines, joins anti-imperialist and progressive forces throughout the world in vigorously condemning this latest imperialist war of aggression by the US, UK and France as a violation of the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of Libya.

Immediately stop the war of aggression by imperialist powers against Libya!

Support all initiatives to settle the conflict peacefully!

Uphold the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Libya!

**National Executive Committee
National Democratic Front
of the Philippines
22 March 2011**

NPA celebrates founding anniversary



The photos used for this article were taken during the 42nd anniversary celebrations of the Communist Party of the Philippines in December 2010



→ page 1

In its message, the CPP Central Committee congratulated the NPA for defeating the much-hated *Oplan Bantay Laya* (Operation Plan Freedom Watch), the “counterinsurgency” program of former president Gloria Arroyo, and for scoring significant victories in the process.

“We are well prepared and highly confident to confront and defeat one more US-designed plan to suppress the revolutionary forces,” said the CPP, referring to *Oplan Bayanihan* being implemented this time by the country’s new puppet president, Benigno Simeon Aquino.

“*Oplan Bayanihan* is the same creature as *Oplan Bantay Laya*, wearing the signature lipstick of ‘internal peace and security plan’. It advertises itself with the slogan of ‘winning the peace’ and misrepresents its brutal military campaign of suppression as ‘peace and development’ outreach operations in order to camouflage the escalation of military operations. In pursuit of the “US Counterinsurgency Guide 2009”, the Aquino regime can pay lip-service to peace and reconciliation and use peace negotiations as a mere disposable tactic or play.”

Strategic stalemate

The CPP explained that the crisis conditions in Philippine society and in the global capitalist system are favorable for advancing the people’s war from the current stage of strategic defensive to the stage of strategic stalemate.

“Under the weight of the worsening crisis of the world capitalist system and due to its backward character and chronic crisis, the Philippine ruling system is becoming ever more rotten and more exploitative and oppressive. It is hated by the broad masses of the people,” the CPP declared.

“The Aquino regime is bound hand and foot to the US policy of neoliberal globalization. Its so-called Philippine Development

pradors and landlords like the Aquino and Cojuangco families rake in profits.”

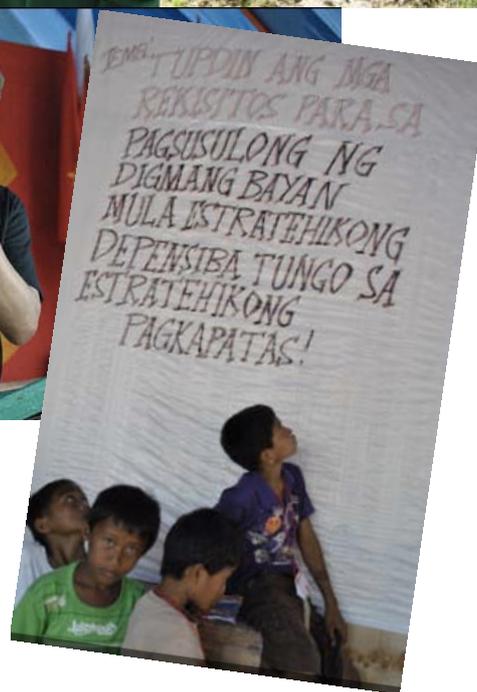
The CPP continued: “The Philippine economy is being made ever more dependent on the export of cheap raw materials and cheap labor, on low value-added processing for reexport on call-center employment and rising levels of foreign and local public debt.

“The crisis conditions, the growing strength of the revolutionary movement, the rapid rate at which the Aquino regime is being exposed as antipeople, antinational, anti-democratic, corrupt and brutal, are such that the revolutionary forces can build a broad united front and generate a mass movement to isolate and remove the Aquino ruling clique from power in a relatively short period of time.”

The CPP directed the NPA to carry out “a war of fluid movement” and to avoid decisive engagements with the enemy which might put the existence of any NPA unit at risk. It advised the people’s army to wage only battles that it is sure of winning and be always ready to trade space for time.

“The existing guerrilla fronts must continuously be developed so that all or most of them become company-sized fronts and give rise to new guerrilla fronts,” the CPP instructed. “They must increase to at least 180 guerrilla fronts in the next five years... A relatively stronger guerrilla front must be able to extend the support needed by a weak guerrilla front. In the same manner, relatively stronger regional commands must be able to extend the support needed by the weaker regional commands.

The people's army must relentlessly launch tactical offensives in order to seize weapons for creating new units, to increasingly change the balance of forces and to move from the stage of strategic defensive to the strategic stalemate.



“Guerrilla fronts adjacent to each other are clustered to form a wider war theater... This should provide more and better options for offensive and defensive purposes, further speed up the growth of guerrilla warfare and enhance the building of the complete structure of force of the NPA from the regional force down to local guerrillas and the people's militia.”

The CPP stressed that, “The NPA has already accumulated a critical mass for bold intensification of guerrilla warfare and advance toward a higher stage in the people's war. The people's army must relentlessly launch tactical offensives in order to seize weapons for creating new units, to increasingly change the balance of forces and to move from the stage of strategic defensive to the strategic stalemate. It must aim to accumulate 25,000 rifles in order to develop into the stage of the strategic stalemate.”

Tactical offensives

In late March and early April [as *Liberation* goes to press - Ed.], the NPA launched various tactical offensives.

In Abra province in northern Philippines, fascist troops suffered seven killed and three wounded in a string of offensives launched by an NPA unit from 29 March to 2 April. Two helicopter gunships of the regime tried to retrieve their casualties were

damaged. They were forced to leave without completing their mission.

On 24 March, NPA forces in Laguna province, just south of Manila, raided a poultry farm of notorious landgrabbers. The NPA unit seized 18 shotguns and five VHF radios from the security guards. Earlier, the NPA there also raided the compound of Dole Philippines – Banana Plantations, confiscating a shotgun and a pistol from the security personnel.

In Capiz in central Philippines, an NPA unit arrested Cpl. Joebert Glindro, alias Mino. He was killed while resisting arrest and attempting to escape. Mino was a notorious and vicious operative of the Military Intelligence. He was accused of many murder cases and violations of human rights against the people. Seized from him were a cal. 45 pistol and a cal. 38 revolver, three grenades, and ammunition. Also seized were a cellphone, a list of his assets doing work for the military, their cellphone numbers and Philippine Army identification cards.

In Northeastern Mindanao, southern Philippines, 17 soldiers under the 29th Infantry Battalion of the Philippine Army were killed in sniping and ambush operations of the NPA on 30 and 31 March. ■



NDFP's Luis Jalandoni (right), with GPH's Alexander Padilla and Norway's Special Envoy, Amb. Ture Lundh

AFTER SEVEN YEARS

Formal peace talks resume

By Ed Ladera

Formal peace talks between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP, now calling itself Government of the Philippines-GPH) and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) resumed on 15-21 February 2011 in Oslo, Norway, after almost seven years. The resumption has been received enthusiastically by peace advocates in the Philippines and abroad.

The formal talks were hosted and facilitated by the Royal Norwegian Government, as the Third Party Facilitator of the GRP-NFP peace negotiations since 2001.

The following main points were agreed upon or taken up in the formal talks:

Release of political prisoners and NDFP consultants

Both negotiating panels agreed that the release of about 350 political prisoners be worked on by the GRP/GPH in compliance with the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL) of 1998. The CARHRIHL stipulates that detainees and prisoners charged, detained or convicted for common crimes in violation of the GRP Hernandez doctrine of 1956 be released

immediately. Moreover, the NDFP Panel pointed out that the Oslo Joint Statement signed in 2004 stated that the release of prisoners and detainees is a continuing goodwill and confidence building measure to improve the atmosphere for peace talks and is an act of magnanimity.

Both sides likewise agreed that the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees (JASIG) is binding and effective and therefore the seventeen NDFP Consultants and JASIG-protected persons must be released before the next round of formal talks.

Joint Monitoring Committee reconvened

Both Panels reconvened the Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC), which had not met since 2004 due to the previous Arroyo regime's refusal. The JMC is mandated by the CARHRIHL to monitor the implementation of CARHRIHL and to meet at least every three months. Numerous cases of violations of human rights and international humanitarian law by the GRP's security forces, including more than 1,200 extrajudicial killings, 200 enforced disappearances, thousands of cases of torture, need to be investigated. Recent extrajudicial killings under the Aquino regime have to be likewise

investigated. The JMC is scheduled to meet at the end of March.

Committees on Social and Economic Reforms

The Reciprocal Working Committees on Social and Economic Reforms (RWCs-SER) also restarted their meetings. They agreed to have internal meetings and consultations until June 2011 when they will have their first bilateral meeting. This will be followed by two bilateral meetings in August 2011. They are targeting September 2011 for finishing their Tentative Comprehensive Agreement on Social and Economic Reforms. After the CARHRIHL, the SER is the second item in the four-point substantive agenda of the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations.

Working Groups on Political and Constitutional Reforms

The Working Groups on Political and Constitutional Reforms (WGs-PCR) held their initial meeting in the 15-21 February 2011 formal talks. They have agreed to meet again in April 2011 and two months after that. The WGs-PCR prepare the ground for the formation of the RWCs-PCR which are tasked to prepare the third item in the substantive agenda, the Comprehensive Agreement on Political and Constitutional Reforms (CAPCR). According to previous

agreements signed in 1995 and 1997, the RWCs-PCR may be formed only after the CARHRIHL and the CASER are signed by the Panels and approved by their respective Principals.

Aquino must exercise political will

While both Panels agreed on a prospective time frame of 18 months to complete the four point agenda, ending with the End of Hostilities and Disposition of Forces, the NDFP has declared its standpoint that the GRP/GPH President Aquino must exercise political will to implement CARHRIHL and forge and carry out social and economic reforms. The NDFP points out that Aquino must commit himself to genuine land reform and national industrialization, two key points in the agenda on social and economic reforms.

Hacienda Luisita litmus test for Aquino

The militant peasant organization, Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP, Peasant Movement of the Philippines) has already submitted to both Panels a list of crucial land issues which must be resolved. Among these is the Aquino family-owned Hacienda Luisita comprising more than 6,000 hectares. Hacienda Luisita workers and farmers have been fighting for their rights to the land for many decades. In their struggle, they launched a strike in November 2004 which was met by brutal military repression by the Aquino family and the state's armed forces. Fourteen workers and peasants were killed. Subsequently, those supporting them were also killed, among whom were Bishop Alberto Ramento, Fr. William Tadena, Councilor Alberto Ladera, and several trade union leaders. Aquino's response to the just demands of the Hacienda Luisita workers and farmers will be the litmus test of his commitment to land reform and to serious peace negotiations.

Reaffirmation of previous bilateral peace agreements

A major point in the resumption of formal talks was the reaffirmation of The Hague Joint Declaration and eleven other bilateral agreements. The NDFP proposal for a joint reaffirmation, which was the practice in the



past, was rejected by the GRP Panel. While the NDFP wanted to reiterate past joint reaffirmations of The Hague Joint Declaration and other bilateral agreements as “the framework and foundation of the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations”, the GRP Panel insisted on making their separate affirmation with qualifications. In their qualifications, they declared The Hague Joint Declaration as “a document of perpetual division between the Parties”. The NDFP Panel was moved to make a strong rebuttal to the GRP “qualifications”. The NDFP Panel cited the Joint Statement of March 9, 2001: “The Parties uphold and affirm the validity and binding character of the ten bilateral agreements (Annex A hereof) that were entered into between them from 1 September 1992 to 7 August 1998 as the framework and foundation for the resumption of the peace negotiations.” It also cited the Oslo Joint Communique of 30 April 2001: “We have exchanged the pertinent documents on the reinstatement of the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees (JASIG) and the approval by our respective principals of the 09 March 2001 Joint Statement that affirms the validity and binding character of the ten bilateral agreements entered into between the GRP and the NDFP ...”

A compromise formula came out in the Oslo Joint Statement of 21 February 2011 that states: “The aforesaid agreements are essential and instrumental in moving ahead and forging agreements on the remaining substantive agenda on socio-economic reforms, political and constitutional reforms, and end of hostilities and disposition of forces.”

Ceasefire

A unilateral, joint and reciprocal ceasefire was held on 15-21 February 2011 as a common goodwill measure to mark the resumption of formal talks after more than six years. Due to numerous ceasefire violations by the

Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Philippine National Police (PNP) during the 19-day Christmas ceasefire from 16 December 2010 to 3 January 2011, the NDFP demanded that the AFP's Suspension of Offensive Military Operations (SOMO) must explicitly prohibit so-called Civilian Military Operations (CMO) which attack

and harass civilian communities. The AFP, however, did the opposite. It explicitly allowed the CMO operations during the ceasefire from 15-21 February.

The NDFP likewise demanded that the AFP and PNP must withdraw their troops to their regional and provincial barracks respectively, and their patrols may not go beyond two kilometers outside their barracks. This was completely ignored by the AFP and PNP. As a result, numerous violations of the ceasefire were committed by the GRP/GPH security forces.

US counter-insurgency guide

Another huge problem of the peace negotiations is the Aquino regime's following the line of the US Government's Counter-Insurgency Guide of 2009 which aims at undermining and militarily defeating the revolutionary movement. While using deceptive words like “winning the peace,” this US document negates serious peace negotiations that address the roots of the armed conflict. Moreover, the Philippine Development Plan 2011-2016 announced by Aquino recently is no different from the old World Bank-IMF scheme of liberalization, privatization, deregulation and denationalization which has led the country to an ever deepening and worsening economic crisis.

NDFP offer of truce and alliance

Despite these negative factors impeding the peace negotiations, however, the NDFP has offered the Aquino regime the special track of alliance and truce, based on a 2005 NDFP proposal of immediate just peace by signing a joint statement asserting the basic people's demands for land reform, national industrialization, sovereignty, social justice and democracy. Indeed, Aquino must have the political will to cut himself loose from US imperialist dictates and take the path to a just peace. ■



EDUCATION BUDGET CUTS

Protest actions against government plan

By Isah Antonio

Thousands of students launched protest actions against the plan of the Aquino regime to cut the already meager budget allotted for state colleges and universities (SUCs). They held strikes, protest

marches, demonstrations, walkouts and teach-ins. The week of protests started on 26 November with walkouts and pickets in campuses and capped by demonstrations in front of the Department of Budget and the Senate.

In Metro Manila on 1 December, more than 8,000 students from the University of the Philippines (UP), Polytechnic University of the Philippines (PUP), UP-Philippine General Hospital, Rizal Technological University and Philippine Normal University (PNU), walked out of their classes and marched to the Senate to express their anger and disgust over the massive budget cuts. Students from various high schools also walked out of their classes in support of the demonstrations.

In Quezon City, the convoy of President Aquino was jeered by the protesters and blocked from entering the UP-Ayala Technohub, forcing him to take another route.

Protest actions were not confined to Metro Manila. Simultaneous actions were also held at universities and colleges in Northern, Central and Southern Luzon, the Bicol region, the Visayas and Mindanao.

The students were supported by the Philippine Association of State Universities and Colleges, members of

the academe, Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan, New Patriotic Alliance), progressive party lists Kabataan (Youth), Bayan Muna (People First), Anakpawis (Toiling Masses) and Gabriela. The students also got support from some senators who stated that budget for SUCs should be steadily increased and not decreased.

The students were protesting against the budget cuts for the operations of 97 SUCs by a total of P1.1 billion; zero allotment of capital outlay for SUCs, reduction in the scholarship funds of the Commission on Higher Education by P650 million and inadequate funds for basic education in the Aquino regime's 2011 budget. [US\$ 1 = P 43]

The UP and PNU are among the top five SUCs that will suffer the biggest budget cuts. UP's budget will be reduced by P1.39 billion to P5.5 billion in 2011 from P6.9 billion in 2010, while PNU's will be slashed by P92 million to P295.88 million from P387.23 million.

The government expects the SUCs to put up the money for the deficits by requiring them to increase tuitions fees when people's education at all levels is a responsibility of the government. Higher tuition makes education unaffordable for the majority of Filipino youth thus increasing the numbers of out-of-school youth.

The cuts are being carried out under the anti-people and pro-imperialist and pro-capitalist program of the US-Aquino regime. The 2011 so-called reform budget of the regime is based on the imperatives of structural adjustments which is an imposi-

tion of US imperialism and in line with the policies of neoliberal globalization.

Over the years, education has been the target of decreasing subsidies in terms of real money value and inflation. The Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses, a component of the budget allocated for payments of basic needs such as water and electricity and the purchase of office and laboratory supplies, is being cut by 1.1 billion pesos while the student assistance fund has been reduced by 43 percent.

Education has never been the priority of past regimes nor the present one. In fact, the Aquino government is spending only P5.79 (US\$0.10) per day per Filipino for basic education. There is a shortage of more than 152,000 classrooms but the regime is only providing for 18,000; there is a current shortage of 95 million new textbooks but only 32 million are planned to be purchased; and target for new teachers is pegged at 10,000 when the shortage is 103,000.

On the other hand, money is flowing into graft and corruption ridden programs such as the pork barrel for legislators which will be increased by P13.9 billion; P68 billion audit-free presidential pork barrel; and the P29 billion dole-out and patronage funds under the Conditional Cash Transfer program. The Philippine military, infamous for its violation of human rights and killing of civilians, is given an increase of P10 billion or a total budget of P104.7 billion. Debt servicing gets the largest chunk of the budget with an increase of P80.9 billion or a total of P823 billion for interest payments and principal amortization.

Initial gains were garnered by the protesting students and their supporters when the Senate was compelled to add 146 million pesos to the SUC budget for 2011. But the students vowed to continue with their actions.

Meanwhile, in a statement on the occasion of the 46th anniversary of Kabataang Makabayan (KM-Patriotic Youth), the revolutionary movement called on the youth and students to undertake more mass actions within their campuses and in the streets in order to advance further their struggles not only against the budget cuts but also for other social needs. ■

ILPS STATEMENT

On the centennial of the First International Toiling Women's Day

By Prof. Jose Maria Sison

We, the International League of Peoples' Struggle, express our most militant greetings to women all over the world and join you in the celebration of the centennial of the International Women's Day. The history and current trend of militant women's struggle must be highlighted in the midst of the global depression and chaos that pervade the various regions of the world today.

The first International Toiling Women's Day was proclaimed in 1911, to mark the role of the women in the industrial revolution and celebrate the gains of the women who marched to the streets to fight for their rights and welfare. During that time, the exploitation of women and children in the factories, in the fields and in their homes fed capitalism and allowed it to flourish.

One hundred years later, women continue to struggle, this time against global monopoly capitalism that unleashes the worst forms of exploitation on the toiling classes. Imperialism has worsened the condition of women. Although women produce 60 to 80 percent of the food, they comprise 75 % of the 1.3 billion people who subsist on less than \$1 per day. They are the majority of the more than 800 million people who are deprived of food security.

In the countries impoverished by imperialism and local reactionaries, women are displaced from their lands and livelihood as peasants and agricultural workers. As workers, they receive lower wages and are deprived of benefits, from health care and social security to overtime pay as labor contractualization became the norm to extract more profits for the capitalists.

They comprise about 50% of migrant workers who are forced to leave their families to seek employment abroad only to face discrimination and abuse in the host countries. The exploitative labor export policy in

their home countries is within the imperialist scheme of extracting superprofits from cheap labor. In extreme circumstances, women fall prey to human trafficking and are forced into prostitution because of sheer lack of viable and decent employment opportunities and systematic deprivation of rights.

With the current protracted global economic depression, women and the rest of the people are more exploited and abused. As imperialism tries to save its decadent and moribund rule, it directs the servile local reactionary powers and its puppet regimes to adopt uniform last-ditch measures of intensified exploitation

struggles in Asia, Africa and the Middle East.

In the current sweep of people's uprisings in North Africa and the Middle East, the authoritarian regimes of Tunisia and Egypt have collapsed. Those in Bahrain and Yemen are tottering. A full-blown civil war is in progress in Libya and the imperialist powers headed by the US are maneuvering to launch aggression and seize the oil wealth for themselves. As part of the people's movement, women in these countries have found their voices and raise their strength to fight for their rights, welfare, and emancipation, despite the deep-seated feudal and patriarchal culture.

There is no room for complacency as the struggle of the peoples against their oppressors intensifies and spreads. Imperialist powers led by US will not allow their grip on the global economy to loosen and slip with the fall of their lackeys and the rise of the people's movements across the world. They will try with might and main to retain or regain their dominance and apply measures for their client-states to appear stable.

As part of the people's revolutionary struggle, the women's movement is continuously challenged to maintain vigilance and engage in militant work against the imperialist powers and all their machinations. The seeds for the triumph of a people's democratic revolution have been planted and the ground is fertile to nurture the revolutionary fervor that is spreading across the world. It is essential for women to play their vital and crucial role in the people's struggle for national liberation, democracy and socialism.

Long live the toiling women of the world!
Resist imperialism and all forms of reaction!
Strive for women's liberation!
Fight for social revolution!
Long live the proletariat and peoples of the world! ■



through neoliberal economic policies, constitutional reforms, and outright repression under the US-instigated global war of terror.

The miserable conditions, made more intolerable by the global crisis, incite the people to resist and build their revolutionary strength. Across the continents, mass uprisings and revolutionary struggles for national liberation and democracy are toppling dictators and lackeys of imperialism and are opposing the intervention and aggression of the US and other imperialist powers. Women are rising up in great numbers with the men and taking a prominent role in all the mass

PROGRESSIVE MIGRANT MOVEMENT

Exposing the pro-imperialist GFMD

By Jose Emilio Jacinto III

Dlegates to the Third International Assembly of Migrants and Refugees (Third IAMR), which was held last 6-10 November in Mexico City, Mexico, capped their gathering by leading a protest march to expose and condemn the “pro-imperialist and anti-migrant group” Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD). The march was held in Puerto Vallarta, the venue of last year’s GFMD meeting.

The Third IAMR condemned the GFMD as a sham, saying it does not protect the rights and welfare of migrants and refugees but rather works for the interests of the corporations and neoliberal policies that further exploit and oppress the migrants all over the world.

Joining the protest action were members of Madres de los Desaparecidos (Mothers of the Disappeared) from Honduras, ex-braceros (manual laborers) from 24 Mexican states, indigenous peoples of Michoacan, and students from Tamaulipas, which, incidentally, was the site of a 2009 massacre of 72 migrant workers.

The marchers were initially blocked by state soldiers and police but they stood their ground and managed to hold a program. “While they [GFMD participants] discuss how to exploit us, they silence us and they shut us out. We say to them, as long as the GFMD exists we will come back year after year to continue our fight for migrants’ rights,” Eni Lestari of the International Migrants Alliance (IMA) declared.

In a statement to the Third IAMR, Prof. Jose Ma. Sison, chairperson of the International League of People’s Struggles (ILPS), remarked, “The GFMD is a propaganda mechanism controlled by imperialist and puppet states. It makes migration a



topic for periodic palaver among representatives of such states, big business interests and imperialist-lining academic institutions and nongovernmental organizations and excludes the migrants themselves.”

The Third IAMR lambasted the GFMD for glossing over the fact that migration is the consequence of exploitation and oppression of the people by foreign monopolies and local exploiting classes. “The sending countries are characteristically afflicted with poverty and underdevelopment. The states of both the sending and receiving countries have no interest in development but in the further exploitation of cheap migrant labor,” it said.

The Assembly also dismissed GFMD’s claim that its purpose is to identify practical and feasible ways to strengthen the supposedly mutually beneficial relationship between migration and development. “In reality, the GFMD is merely an instrument for justifying the massive export of cheap labor to the imperialist countries under the policy of neoliberal globalization,” it explained.

The Third IAMR was attended by organizations of migrants, refugees, families of victims of human rights violations, workers and youth from 15 countries.

During the Assembly, an International Tribunal of Conscience was also convened as part of the People’s Caravan against the GFMD. The case of ex-braceros in Mexico and the demand for justice for migrants all over the world was presented in the tribunal.

The Tribunal, composed of 15 jurors from Mexico, Honduras, the United States, Canada, the Philip-

pinas, the Netherlands, Malaysia and Hong Kong, made the following declaration: “The US and Mexican governments are guilty of crimes against humanity and violations of international law with respect to the

cases of the ex-braceros. The [two] governments are liable for all the hardships, suffering and pain suffered by the ex-braceros and their relatives who are until now seeking justice.”

The braceros, who worked in the US as guest workers between 1942 and 1964, have yet to receive the millions of dollars in back wages owed to them, the Tribunal noted.

The “Bracero Agreement”, signed in 1942 by Mexican President Camacho and US President Franklin D. Roosevelt, was a temporary workers’ program that exported Mexican laborers to the United States through the US Farm Security Administration.

The braceros were subjected to fumigation, made to live in cramped quarters and served inadequate food rations. According to the Tribunal, throughout their period of grueling labor, the braceros lost 10 percent of their wages, which was supposed to go to the workers’ savings fund that not a single worker managed to avail of.

The case of the braceros was especially highlighted in the protest march. Antonio Cheverria, a former bracero from the Alianza de Ex-braceros del Norte (Alliance of Ex-braceros from the North) recalled: “The salary was miserable, and in our sleeping quarters we slept like animals in extreme heat or cold and many braceros died of hunger.”

The Tribunal committed “to bring the case of the ex-braceros before the United Nations, provide support to Mexican lawyers in pursuing the case, and mobilize internationally in front of US and Mexican consulates whenever the case of the ex-braceros is being heard.” ■

WIKILEAKS CABLES

US as world's leading rogue state

By Bagani Dong-Illay

Wikileaks founder, Julian Assange (photo), is under arrest in Britain and undergoing extradition proceedings for alleged sex crimes in Sweden. Everyone knows this is a joke. His real "crime"? Exposing the rogue behavior of the US before the eyes of the world.

Allegations of criminal conduct by the US government such as "rendition", its support for rightist groups to overthrow Left-leaning regimes, etc. have been going around for some time. But Wikileaks provided the smoking gun when it published secret US diplomatic cables confirming these allegations.

No wonder the US and its most rabid apologists have cried out for blood. They want Assange extradited to the US for espionage. (This is quite ironic coming from a country that employs the greatest number of spies to spook other countries both friend and foe.) Other unabashed right-wingers are even publicly calling for his assassination.

Shrill rhetoric has spewed out from the lips of many US politicians. Vice President Joe Biden has accused Assange as "closer to being a high-tech terrorist than the Pentagon papers" and made a gesture mimicking shooting with a rifle. Former House Speaker Newt Gingrich said: "Information terrorism, which leads to people getting killed, is terrorism, and Julian Assange is engaged in terrorism. He should be treated as an enemy combatant."

Right-wingers have also called for the head of Bradley E. Manning a US Army soldier charged with the "unauthorized disclosure of US classified information." He is accused of providing Wikileaks with damning materials. Former presidential candidate Mike Huckabee and ex-Pentagon official KT McFarland are calling for Manning's execution.

Manning is being held in solitary confinement at the Marine Corps Brig, Quantico, Virginia, and is expected to face a court-martial in the

spring of 2011. His family is not allowed to visit him. Only his lawyers have access to him.

Manning reportedly passed on to Wikileaks material he allegedly downloaded from SIPRNet — the Secret Internet Protocol Router Network — used by the US Department of Defense and Department of State to transmit classified information. The materials included the video of a July 2007 helicopter airstrike in Baghdad — the "Collateral Murder" video, which Wikileaks published in April 2010 — a video that shocked television viewers throughout the world.

Manning was assigned to a support battalion with the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, based at Contingency Operating Station Hammer, Iraq, which gave him access to SIPRNet.

Wikileaks published thousands of secret cables originating from US embassies in many parts of the world, which reveal the criminal activities being carried out by the US government to defend and pursue its imperialist interests abroad.

A secret cable from the US embassy in Managua dated May 2008, for example, reveals the substantial financial and logistical support the US offers to political forces opposed to Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega. The cable states "we have begun a USD 1 million small grants program for our democratic civil society friends... Several times a week we are approached by local candidates for campaign financing, voter registration support and the like."

Daniel Ortega, leader of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), was elected president in 2006 and since then has adopted an anti-imperialist position with his government joining the Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas (ALBA) together with Bolivia and Venezuela in opposing US imperialist domination of Latin America.

A 2006 cable from the US embassy in Madrid shows the Spanish government's complicity in allowing "rendition flights" of prisoners to be tortured in US client-states. The Spanish government allowed these

flights to make stopovers in Spain. The cable refers to certain requests from Spanish officials for the US to act more discreetly to avoid political fallout.

Another secret cable from the US embassy in Lima, Peru reveals the high-degree of US support for the right-wing government of Alan Garcia. The cable mentions the "wish list" of Alan Garcia's government for military aid. The government of Peru remains as one of the remaining US puppet regimes in Latin America. In 2009, this government massacred 20 indigenous demonstrators protesting against exploitation and environmental destruction in the Amazon.

The "Collateral Murder" video



mentioned earlier showed a US Army Apache helicopter in Baghdad in 2007 repeatedly firing on a group of men that included two Reuters journalists and later on a van that stopped to help one of the wounded men.

In all, 12 civilians were killed and two children wounded. The children, a 4-year-old girl and a 7-year old-boy were inside the van which was driven by their father. The father was killed trying to cover his children with his body from the machine gun fire.

In the video, crew members of the Apache can be heard celebrating their kills. "Oh yeah, look at those dead bastards," says one crewman. Two crewmen can be heard laughing when a Bradley tank runs over one of the corpses.

An "investigation" into the incident was carried out. The US military concluded that the actions of the Apache crew were in accordance with the law of armed conflict and its own "Rules of Engagement". ■

IN STRUGGLE FOR LAND AND SOVEREIGNTY

Filipinos, Maori weave closer ties

The National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) through international representatives Luis Jalandoni and Coni Ledesma forged closer ties with Maori, indigenous people of New Zealand, during their speaking tour from 28th October to 12th November around the country.

Inspired by the clarity of the NDFP's 12-point program, Maori activists were especially interested and challenged to develop their own *kaupapa*, a set of values, principles and plans for Maori to agree upon as foundation for their actions to reclaim land and sovereignty.

Maori and Filipinos share a common history of valiant resistance to colonizers and local ruling elite who systemically robbed the people of land and sovereignty. Today the governments of New Zealand and Philippines are both negotiating for US-designed free trade deals, promoting large-scale mining and further sell-out of ancestral domain and sovereignty to foreign powers and local business elite.

Addressing an audience composed of Filipinos, Maori and Pakeha (New Zealanders of European descent) including youth and senior activists, trade unionists, clergy and community leaders, Jalandoni and Ledesma spoke in a series of public meetings around the theme "Justice and Liberation: The Road to Peace in the Philippines."

"Land reform is a principal issue that must be addressed to pave the way for just and lasting peace in the Philippines," they stressed.

The peace tour was organized by Philippines Solidarity Network of Aotearoa (PSNA), Wellington Kiwi Pinoy (WKP) and Auckland Philippines Solidarity (APS) in Blenheim, Wellington, Palmerston North, New Plymouth, Hamilton, Whangarei and Auckland.

Interviewed by media and asked by audience why a former Catholic priest and nun now represent a group waging revolutionary armed struggle, Jalandoni and Ledesma shared their various experiences in communities of sugar workers, mining-affected indigenous people and other heavily oppressed people who realized that sending a petition to the government is not enough.

"The people themselves who were forcibly displaced from their land and livelihood, bombed and threatened by armed forces of the government, logging, mining and other big business, voluntarily support

protest against land grabbing in the 1870s and 1880s. Two Maori leaders, Te Whiti o Rongomai and Tohu Kakahi led protests to defend Maori land that the colonial government had confiscated.

"The memory of my visit there in 1987 remains etched in my mind" says Jalandoni. "It was great to go back to Parihaka and again draw inspiration from the heroic Maori people and their just struggle. The Filipino people can learn much from their many creative forms of resistance against oppression."

Jalandoni and Ledesma also saw for themselves the infamous Waihopai

spybase near Blenheim. Waihopai's primary role is to spy on citizens and groups in countries like the Philippines deemed inimical to US interests. "We support the struggle to have this closed down," Jalandoni conveyed to New Zealanders as he also expressed gratitude for New Zealanders' support for Filipinos' struggle against continuing US military intervention in the Philippines.

The tour organizers affirmed that like Norway, New Zealand can play a positive role by supporting the peace process and

campaigns to stop human rights violations and US military intervention in the Philippines.

"International solidarity is very important as demonstrated by New Zealanders who protested at Waitangi over human rights abuses in the Philippines during former president Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's visit to New Zealand in May 2007. We are very grateful for New Zealanders' support to the Filipino people's quest for justice and peace just as we admire your support to the historic fight to end apartheid in South Africa, the struggles against US aggression in Vietnam, Afghanistan and Iraq as well as the US-backed Israeli occupation of Palestine," Jalandoni stated. ■



Wise Women Speak Forum in Auckland where Coni Ledesma was one of the speakers

and join the New People's Army (NPA) to defend their lives and fundamental rights. Peasants and indigenous peoples look for the NPA to help them defend their sacred land, trees, mountains and their very own survival as a community," Jalandoni explained.

"We have been living as political exiles in The Netherlands since the Marcos dictatorship. Today around 10% of the Philippine population are also forced to be 'economic exiles' because there are not enough jobs and vast tracts of land remain in the hands of multinationals and traditional elite in the Philippines," Ledesma shared.

Jalandoni and Ledesma visited Parihaka, a historic place of New Zealand's most visible episodes of

TOUR OF AUSTRALIA

NDFP reps meet up with parliamentarians, migrant and non-government groups

NDFP representatives meet up with parliamentarians, Filipino migrants, and members of non-government organizations from 14 to 28 November last year.

Luis Jalandoni and Coni Ledesma's tour of Australia was sponsored by Migrante Australia, Search Foundation, and other support organizations. During this visit, Jalandoni and Ledesma were able to meet various influential parliamentarians and senators, mostly in Canberra. Accompanied by Peter Murphy of Search Foundation and Jane Brock of Migrante Australia, they met with parliamentarians Laurie Ferguson, Claire Moore, Ed Husic and Maria Vamvankinou of the Australian Labor Party; Senator Gavin Marshall of the Labor Party, Senator Scott Ludlam of the Greens, and Senator-elect Ms. Lee Rhiannon of the Greens for New South Wales.

The parliamentarians and senators expressed support for the NDFP-GRP (now called GPH) peace negotiations. Scott Ludlam said he would submit a resolution in the Australian Parliament expressing support for the NDFP-GPH peace talks. So did Ms. Lee Rhiannon for the New South Wales Parliament. Senator Marshall and Ms. Rhiannon want to question the unjust terrorist listing by Australia of the Communist Party of the Philippines, the New People's Army, and the NDFP Chief Political Consultant Prof. Jose Maria Sison.

Ms. Rhiannon said she would also question the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) between the GPH and Australia and the latter's training of about 130 Filipino military officers every year. She wants to find out if the notorious General Jovito Palparan is one of those trained in Australia.

While in Canberra, Peter Murphy arranged for a meeting of Jalandoni and Ledesma with officials of the Aus-

tralian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). Jalandoni presented the NDFP position on the peace talks while Jane Brock, speaking for tax-paying Filipinos in Australia questioned the Australian government's support of the Philippine military. She asserted their right to demand that Australia play a peace-building role in the Philippines. Senator Gavin Marshall said he would follow up with the DFAT on their role regarding the Philippines.

Jalandoni and Ledesma spoke at several forums of significant trade unions in Sydney and Melbourne, church leaders in Sydney, overseas Filipinos, academicians and student youth. Ledesma spoke at a meeting of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) in Blue Mountain. They spoke about the NDFP program for national and social liberation and on the peace talks.

Through a nation-wide TV interview in Melbourne and several radio interviews, Jalandoni was able to project the NDFP position on peace talks and other social issues. Both he and Ledesma were interviewed twice at a popular Filipino radio program in Sydney. The radio program personnel expressed support for the land reform program of the NDFP.

Migrante Australia sponsored "Yugyugan para sa Kapayapan" (Dance for Peace), in Melbourne and Sydney. Over a hundred attended in Melbourne, where Ledesma spoke as NDFP representative. In Sydney, a descendant of Philippine hero Andres Bonifacio was among over a hundred participants. In both places, the popular Filipino dance "curacha" was used to raise funds.

Their visit was also a good occasion to integrate with compatriots, learn more about their situation and struggles for their rights. The support of the Filipino community in Australia was a significant factor in the success of this tour. ■



Luis Jalandoni and Coni Ledesma gracing a forum (above) and with Greens Senator Lee Rhiannon (below)



The National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) is an alliance of revolutionary organizations with roots in the various sectors and regions of the Philippines. Its goal is to build a society that enjoys national sovereignty, genuine democracy, social justice, progress and peace.

It seeks to unite with all forces willing to achieve these goals.

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