

LIBERATION

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**Moving the
Peace Talks Forward**

By consensus of the parties, the sequential formal peace negotiations are aimed at ending the armed conflict—and attaining just and lasting peace for the Filipino people—by seriously addressing and resolving its root causes. Happily, this has been grasped and persistently supported by a growing network of peace advocacy formations and people's organizations. However, this consensual objective has yet to be deeply understood and appreciated by the general public.

For a deeper insight on this matter, **Liberation** readers may refer to the article, “*NDFP Framework in Contrast with the GRP Framework*”, written, on May 15, 1991, by Jose Ma. Sison, founding chairperson

“The struggle for national liberation and democracy against US imperialism and local reactionary classes [embodied by the people’s war] is a struggle for a just and lasting peace,” Sison succinctly writes, “because it strives to solve the fundamental problems of the nation and people, fight and defeat the violence of oppression and exploitation, and bring about the basis for a just and lasting peace.”

In contrast, the GRP's strategic view is to preserve the oppressive and exploitative system and to defeat and pacify the revolutionary forces. Almost all

*“The NDFP has manifested its just and reasonable position by declaring that although the optimum condition for a just and lasting peace is the total victory of the people in their national democratic revolution, (it) is willing to engage in peace talks for several important reasons, including the promotion of national independence and democracy and **a number of basic reforms, immediately beneficial to the people** (emphasis ours).*

This flexibility has been amply shown in the current peace negotiations, enabling these to move forward relatively fast. That, until President Duterte irascibly cancelled the talks in February, then calming down, agreed to continue them as scheduled, in April. The CPP-NPA reciprocated the GRP's unilateral ceasefire declaration in August and (after two months of withdrawal) has acceded to restore it and to work on an interim bilateral ceasefire agreement for the duration of the peace talks.

These developments in the peace talks with the Duterte government have played out essentially as Sison envisioned in his 1991 article. Consider these passages:

“Revolutionaries determined to carry out the objectives of the (National Democratic Revolution) can logically and legitimately consider peace negotiations as a way of pushing forward the aforesaid objectives in the same way that the other side considers the same peace negotiations as a way of pushing forward its own objectives. Inevitably, the struggle across the table reflects, first of all, the struggle in the battlefield and then influences further developments in the battlefield.”

"It takes the two basic parties in the armed conflict to agree on a truce and what national purpose is to be served. Even if the peace talks were to fail... the people can see who [of the two parties] has the just and reasonable position." **LIB**

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The NDFP is the revolutionary united front organization of the Filipino people fighting for national freedom and for the democratic rights of the people. Established on April 24, 1973, the NDFP seeks to develop and coordinate all progressive classes, sectors and forces in the Filipino people's struggle to end the rule of US imperialism and its local allies, and attain national and social liberation.

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Moving the Peace Talks Forward

by Victoria dela Gente

Is there a probability of the current peace talks achieving any palpable change beneficial to the Filipino people considering the diametrically opposed positions of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) and the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP)?

The strategic line of the NDFP to achieve a just and lasting peace is by solving the fundamental problems of the Filipino people—namely, imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism—and putting an end to the violence of class oppression and exploitation through a people's democratic revolution. The NDFP believes that a just and lasting peace would result from genuine national freedom and social emancipation.

On the other hand, the GRP's concept of peace is the pacification of the people and the suppression of all forms of dissent. It uses reactionary violence to defeat and pacify the revolutionary forces and to preserve the oppressive and exploitative system.

Nonetheless, the NDFP has consistently shown willingness to engage in peace talks—as one

of the arenas of struggle—to promote national independence and democracy and to push for basic reforms that shall benefit the vast majority of the people.

Achieving concrete gains in peace negotiations with the reactionary state was initially proven possible during the regime of Fidel Ramos, a West Point graduate and a known US puppet. Almost all the critically important procedural agreements resulting from the peace talks were forged during the Ramos regime, such as The Hague Joint Declaration and the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees (JASIG). Also forged was a landmark accord on the first substantive agenda in the peace negotiations—the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL), which was formally signed by the principals on both sides under the Estrada regime. Despite the prolonged suspension of the peace talks under the Arroyo and the second Aquino regimes, these agreements have not been invalidated—in fact reaffirmed under the Duterte government.

RISE OF NEO FASCISTS, RIGHTIST TREND IN THE WORLD

Meantime, the unresolved, debilitating crisis of the world capitalist system has been intensifying since it imploded in 2007-2008. Imperialist powers barely staved off the collapse of the global financial system through the bailout of giant banks and financial investment houses. But the massive, expensive bailouts took their toll on governments as the world capitalist system reeled again, this time from a sovereign debt crisis by the end of 2009, which further worsened the crisis of the world capitalist system. Currently, both purveyors and critics of neoliberalism are predicting that a corporate debt crisis would soon plunge the world capitalist system deeper into crisis.

The crisis of imperialism has sharpened the contradictions among imperialist powers, between capitalists and the working classes and between foreign monopoly capitalists and oppressed peoples of the world.

Imperialist countries have been engaging in regional proxy wars in Syria, Yemen, and other North African states, and the Balkan states. The US has tried and failed to assert its hegemony and this has intensified its contradictions with Russia and China.

Neoliberalism and the worsening economic and financial crisis have become an increasingly

heavier burden on the peoples of the world, as foreign monopoly capitalists have been passing on the deleterious impact of the crisis on them.

Recent years have seen the steady rise of fascist parties and movements. Neofascist parties have been increasingly winning seats in parliaments in Europe. The conservatives in Great Britain attained a problematic victory in the referendum for the Brexit on a strong anti-immigrant line. The victory of Donald Trump in the US presidential elections came as a shock even among the Democratic and Republican parties. But the Trump victory merely reflected the rightist trend in world politics—oddly spurred by the rejection of elite domination in both governments and the economy.

All these on top of the revisionist betrayal that once saw powerful socialist movements and countries turning to the right or taking the capitalist road. Support for revolutionary struggles and movements in different parts of the world has subsequently waned.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEACE UNDER DUTERTE

The backlash of the revisionist betrayal and the consequent rightist drift in the world does not augur well for democracy, even of the capitalist kind. Pushing democracy forward has become more difficult with the current international situation.

The victory of Rodrigo Roa Duterte, a foul-mouthed maverick, in the 2016 presidential election was also viewed as an aberration



ESarmiento is Eduardo Sarmiento, a political prisoner and NDFP peace consultant

Freeing Political Prisoners: A MATTER OF OBLIGATION AND JUSTICE

The release of over 400 political prisoners is a key issue in the peace negotiations between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP).

The NDFP stands on just ground when it calls on the GRP to release all political prisoners in compliance with the agreements previously signed by the two parties, specifically, the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees (JASIG) and the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL). Both parties reaffirmed the validity of the CARHRIHL and JASIG in a joint statement on Aug. 26, 2016 and also during the third round of talks in Rome, Italy on January

in Philippine politics but not necessarily as a similar rightist drift. What it evinced was that the election was also viewed as an aberration in Philippine politics. The suffering Filipino people has had enough of trapo politics, corruption and criminality, and the crushing attacks of neoliberalism on their jobs and livelihood.

Although he has compared himself with Trump, Duterte is not exactly like the latter. On the one hand, Duterte has publicly declared his political affinity with the late dictator Marcos and his family, to the extent of facilitating the late dictator's burial at the Libingan ng mga Bayani. He has been severely criticized by a broad array of sectors, locally and internationally, for his deadly war against illegal drugs. He has shown intolerance for criticisms; and has, time and again, threatened to declare martial law.

On the other hand, Duterte has provided an opening for the struggle for fundamental reforms and the propagation of

patriotic and democratic principles and ideas. He has declared his government's desire to pursue an independent foreign policy, veer away from kowtowing to US interests, economic and foreign policy, and even threatened to rescind unequal defense and military treaties and agreements that the GRP entered into with the US. He has even declared that he is the first "leftist, socialist" president of the country.

Duterte has also demonstrated his willingness to engage in peace talks with the NDFP to address the roots of the armed conflict.

Coming from a long history of friendship and cooperation with the revolutionary forces and progressive mass movement in Davao, Duterte offered Cabinet positions to the NDFP, and has kept three NDFP-nominated Cabinet members and some sub-Cabinet officials. He also immediately instructed a reconstituted government negotiating panel to push the peace talks forward and aim for a final peace agreement before his term ends.

However, war hawks in the administration, led by pro-US defense and

military officials, soon began undermining the strides made in three rounds of formal peace talks in the first six months of the new government. The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), for instance, aggressively pushed its counterinsurgency operations in areas under the control of the New People's Army (NPA) after both sides declared separate unilateral ceasefires. The NPA consistently evaded engaging the AFP forces in combat. Although the ceasefires held for five months, the situation on the ground became untenable as to impel the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP)-NDFP-NPA, after giving fair warning to the GRP panel, to withdraw its reciprocal unilateral ceasefire. The GRP armed forces waged vicious black propaganda and disinformation campaign to discredit the Red Fighters, to cast doubt on the sincerity of the revolutionary forces in the peace negotiations.

The peace saboteurs fed President Duterte with maliciously distorted information about the NPA violating its own ceasefire declaration. That pushed Duterte to peremptorily cancel the peace negotiations and

even to publicly call the CPP-NPA "terrorists". In no time, the nation was aghast as the Defense Secretary declared all-out war against the NPA. A month later, as he took steps to continue the peace negotiations, the President himself perplexingly egged on the AFP and PNP to use all their assets and "flatten the hills" with aerial bombings. The aerial bombings in rural communities led to new mass evacuations while AFP-led extrajudicial killings targeting peasant and national minority leaders greatly escalated especially in Mindanao.

Despite these, the NDFP maintained a principled stand. It defended the besieged rural communities. It criticized Duterte and his administration when needed, while pushing for the continuation of the peace talks. The NDFP believes that through the peace talks, its negotiating panel and a wide array of peace advocates can convince Duterte to take the side of the Filipino people and implement progressive reforms that will address issues pertaining to national sovereignty, democracy, social justice, development, education and culture and international solidarity—ultimately addressing the fundamental ills of Philippine society.

As of this writing, the peace talks have just concluded the fourth round of formal negotiations in the Netherlands. The fourth round hurdled one thorny issue: forging an agreement on an interim joint ceasefire, which is expected to take effect upon the approval and signing of the guidelines and groundrules in time with the projected signing

2017. They also completed the supplemental guidelines for the full implementation of the CARHRIHL.

The CARHRIHL, signed and approved in 1998, guarantees the immediate release of prisoners who have been charged, detained, or convicted with common crimes instead of political offenses like rebellion or sedition. Part III, Article 6 of the CARHRIHL states that the GRP "shall abide by its doctrine laid down in People vs. [Amado V.] Hernandez... and shall forthwith review the cases of all prisoners or detainees who have been charged, detained, or convicted contrary to this doctrine, and shall immediately release them."

The majority of the more than 400 political detainees has been charged with trumped-up and common non-bailable crimes—a serious violation of the CARHRIHL and the Hernandez "political offense" doctrine, which was upheld by the Supreme Court in many instances. The release of the political prisoners, therefore, is a state obligation and not a favor being handed by the GRP. Hence, this is not a mere matter of confidence building measure for the peace talks.

President Duterte himself agrees that the practice of criminalizing political acts is unjust; a practice that was started under the Corazon C. Aquino government. In a meeting with NDFP leaders and consultants at Malacanang Palace in August 2016, Pres. Duterte promised to stop the practice of criminalizing the actions of political prisoners in pursuance of their beliefs. The practice, however, continues as 30 activists

arrested and detained under the Duterte administration are still being charged with the same criminal offenses.

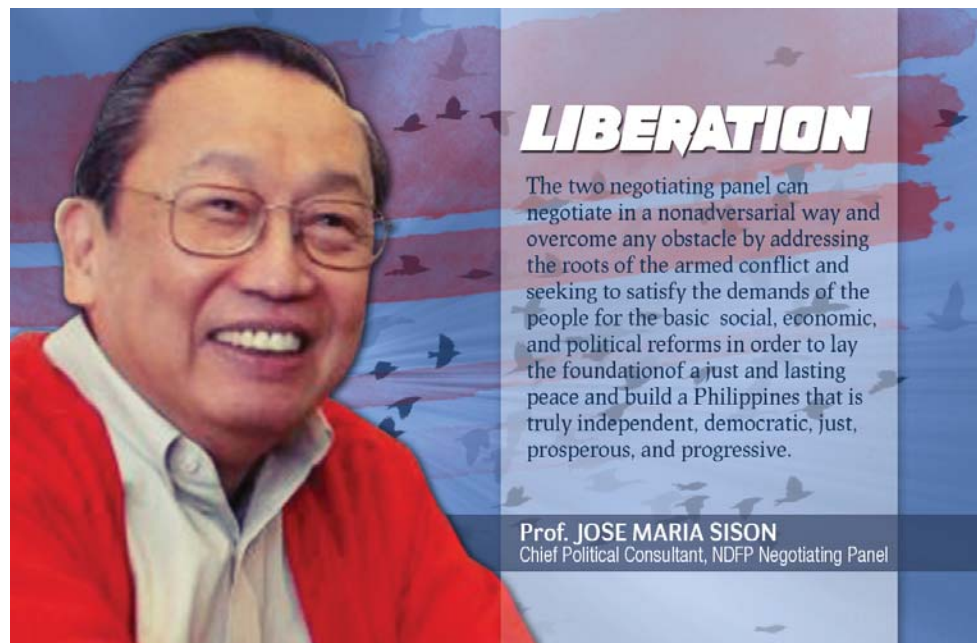
CARHRIHL is intended to correct the injustices done against political prisoners as far back as the Marcos Martial Law Dictatorship, including the nullification of repressive presidential decrees carried over to the succeeding administrations. With the signing of the Supplemental Guidelines for the full operation of the Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC) of CARHRIHL, there should no longer be any hindrance in the government's commitment to adhere and fully implement the CARHRIHL. The JMC is the body tasked to administer the GPH-NDFP implementation of the CARHRIHL.

The JASIG—which is again operational after the Duterte government unilaterally terminated it in February 2017—also guarantees safety and immunity for the unhampered participation of NDFP personnel involved in the peace negotiations and "to avert any incident that may jeopardize the peace negotiations."

The two agreements are more than enough legal bases for the Duterte government to release political prisoners and render justice and rectify their unlawful and unjust detention.

And while the prospects for a general amnesty proclamation still hang in the balance, the NDFP and its legal consultants are working for other modes of release of political prisoners, even if temporary such as in the cases of the peace talks consultants. **LIB**





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The two negotiating panel can negotiate in a nonadversarial way and overcome any obstacle by addressing the roots of the armed conflict and seeking to satisfy the demands of the people for the basic social, economic, and political reforms in order to lay the foundation of a just and lasting peace and build a Philippines that is truly independent, democratic, just, prosperous, and progressive.

Prof. JOSE MARIA SISON
Chief Political Consultant, NDFP Negotiating Panel

of the Comprehensive Agreement on Social and Economic Reforms (CASER) before the end of 2017.

The interim joint ceasefire agreement shall be effective until a permanent ceasefire agreement is forged as part of the Comprehensive Agreement on End of Hostilities and Disposition of Forces (Final Peace Agreement).

More important is that the GRP and NDFP Reciprocal Working Committees on Social and Economic Reforms agreed on the “free distribution of land” as the basic principle of genuine agrarian reform. This is a major breakthrough, a giant step not only in the peace talks, but also in the road to peace as the principle of free distribution of land addresses the main democratic demand of the people’s democratic revolution. The next major items in the negotiations for CASER are agrarian reform and rural development (ARRD) and national industrialization and economic development (NIED). Once agreements on these two major items are finalized, there is a high probability of forging the CASER by the end of 2017.

To follow are discussions and negotiations on political and constitutional reforms towards forging a Comprehensive Agreement on Political and Constitutional Reforms (CAPCR), largely supplementing the CASER.

If the positive forces within the Duterte government could hold sway, the NDFP is confident that the CASER could be signed by the end of 2017 and the CAPCR could be signed by next year. If the implementation of the CARHRIHL, CASER, and CAPCR would be successful for a minimum period of two years, the NDFP would be ready to sign the final agreement End of Hostilities and Disposition of Forces before the term of the Duterte government ends.

But, if the pro-US war hawks within the Duterte government would be able to take control and frustrate the peace negotiations, then the CPP-NDFP-NPA would even be more relentless in bringing the people’s democratic revolution, through the protracted people’s war, to a new and higher level until victory and a just and lasting peace is achieved. **LIB**

Nothing but Change

by Vida Gracias

I wanted to give him a face, but this once university-educated youth who turned NPA guerrilla would rather live in anonymity. He is known simply to his comrades and the masses in the barrios as Ka Carlo.

By his looks and sun-baked skin he would appear to anyone as ordinary *masa*. But, when he started to talk I knew he was no ordinary fighter. What struck me was not so much his background (as more and more university students to this day—yes, under the Duterte regime—go up the hills to fight) but how he articulated his thoughts about the current regime.

The day I met him he was wearing his standard faded jacket and a cap, his M-16 rifle slung on his side. His rain boots were caked with mud. Probably in his forties, after two decades of guerilla struggle he had seen a dozen battles, sometimes on the offense, sometimes on the

defense. A bullet had torn his flesh and hit a bone and took him a year to recover. But he never waived, he went back to the hills, and now sat on a ridge in chilly weather overlooking the vastness of the Cordillera mountains, talking about the armed struggle and the Duterte regime.

He said he had his doubts over the election of a president who claimed to be socialist and leftist. But he recognized that Duterte’s rise to power was phenomenal and rode on tremendous popular support. But he has battled too many regimes to believe everything said about the new president.

Ka Carlo was willing to give Duterte the benefit of the doubt and see what promises are fulfilled. “It is just Duterte,” he remarked, “and he is lording over a reactionary regime.” How Duterte could make true his promise of change remained a mystery to him. Especially when in the following days Duterte would flip-flop on his statements, run aground with his own words, and rant about anti-people and anti-poor programs from “tokhang” to demolitions to bombing New People’s Army (NPA) territories. Definitely, Ka Carlo made it clear he would settle for nothing less than a change in the semi-colonial and semi-feudal system that brought widespread poverty, injustice and plunder in the country.

So there would be no laying down of arms, he said firmly. There maybe times the guns were silenced, he said, just like in a ceasefire, but “you cannot trust the military.” In previous ceasefires, he explained,

state troopers would take advantage of the situation and arrest comrades who were visiting their families. Most of the NPA guerrillas are farmers whose families live in the barrios.

Ka Carlo’s words rang true when the unilateral ceasefires both by the revolutionary left and the Duterte regime were withdrawn and President Duterte “cancelled” the peace talks arbitrarily and ordered the arrest of consultants of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) who had been freed on bail by the courts. The NPA charged the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) that during its own ceasefire had launched counter-insurgency campaigns in no less than 500 barangays

“You cannot leave the masses defenseless, even when there are peace talks.”

within the areas of the revolutionary forces and killed activists and suspected NPA fighters. Also, President Duterte continued to hold off the release of all political prisoners that he had promised to do, through general amnesty, in the early days of his regime. The NDFP has emphasized that releasing the political prisoners would be in compliance by the GRP with the Comprehensive Agreement on the Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL).

The AFP countered with a “total war” against the NPA, a boast that rang hollow as the AFP had always threatened to do the same thing in the past—yet the NPA has survived over four decades of counterinsurgency campaigns. The AFP raised a lot of complaints and accusations over the killing and arrest of soldiers by the NPA but it kept silent over its own atrocities and violations of human rights against those they deemed enemies of the state.

Thus the fighting could definitely continue until reciprocal unilateral ceasefires were to be declared before resuming the peace negotiations in the first week of April. “You cannot leave the masses defenseless, even when there are peace talks,” Ka Carlo stressed. The ceasefires would remain interim or temporary for as long there is no resolution to the armed conflict. No bilateral ceasefire agreement could be forged during the peace negotiation that would only lead to the surrender or pacification of the armed movement. The negotiation could proceed but the matter of attaining just and lasting peace would ultimately hinge on the strength of the revolutionary forces on the battlefield as well as their mass support.

I stared at Ka Carlo’s battle scars and counted the years he had been fighting. The Duterte regime, I concluded, would be up against fighters with such deep resolve for change that nothing can draw them away from battle except genuine change itself. **LIB**



Communiqué of the 2nd Congress of the *Communist Party of the Philippines*

Communist Party of the Philippines
29 March 2017

The Second Congress of the Communist Party of the Philippines was held successfully on the fourth quarter of 2016. It was historically dated October 24 to November 7, 2016 as a way of setting off the celebration of the 100th year anniversary of the victory of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution.

The historic significance of the Second Congress of the Party is indubitable. For the first time in nearly five decades, key leaders and cadres representing the Party's close to seventy thousand members, were assembled to strengthen the Party's unity, amend its program and

constitution based on accumulated victories and lessons and elect a new set of leaders.

The successful convening of the Party's Second Congress is a testimony both of the accumulated strength and capacity as well as determination to assemble a big number of cadres. It underscores as well the inability of the reactionary state to destroy the armed revolutionary movement.

Despite relentless enemy military operations, the Second Congress was successfully held inside a guerrilla base. It was secured by a battalion of New People's Army (NPA) Red fighters and enjoyed

boundless support of the peasant masses and indigenous minority groups in the area.

The Second Congress was composed of 120 delegates, both attending and non-attending. Of those who attended, around 30% were above 60 years old, while around 60% were in the 45-59 years age bracket, while 15% were 44 years and younger. The oldest delegate was 70 years old. The youngest delegate was 33 years old.

Reflecting the relative size of the Party's membership, cadres from five Mindanao regions constituted around 45% of the regional delegates; while those from Luzon constituted 40%; and Visayas, 14%. The other delegates represented the Party's central leading organs and its commissions.

Guided by the theme "Greater unity, greater victories," the Party's Second Congress took a long view of the Party's 48 year history, took stock of the current objective and subjective conditions and reaffirmed the Party's determination to advance the national democratic revolution to greater heights.

AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

The Second Congress amended the CPP Constitution to reflect the Party's experience in applying Marxism-Leninism-Maoism as ideological guide in its concrete revolutionary practice.

The biggest important amendment to the Constitution was the elaborated preamble which enshrined the Party's

basic principles including its analysis of the concrete conditions of Philippine society, its national democratic line and program for waging a people's democratic revolution to pave the way for socialist revolution and construction, its stand and history of struggle against modern revisionism, its strategy and tactics for advancing protracted people's war and waging armed struggle as principal form of struggle, and establishing the people's democratic government.

A new article enunciating the role of the Party in the united front was introduced. Amendments were also made to complete the enumeration of the economic classes and their arrangement in terms of membership acceptance. A new provision was inserted to allow members of foreign fraternal parties assigned to work within the scope of the CPP to be accepted as members of the Party.

Another provision was inserted to specify the right of Party members who have reached the age of 70 years to retire from Party work but retain Party membership and to receive subsistence support and medical assistance.

A new provision was also approved specifying the formation of advisory committees to which Party cadres who have opted to retire can be organized into.

To ensure the vigor and vibrancy of the Party, a provision was introduced specifying that steps be undertaken to ensure that the Central Committee shall have a

balance of young, middle-aged and senior cadres.

UPDATED GENERAL PROGRAM

The Second Congress updated the Party's Program for a People's Democratic Revolution. It presented an updated critique of the semicolonial and semifeudal social system, giving particular attention to the post-Marcos succession of pseudo-democratic regimes, the worsening forms of oppression and exploitation of the broad masses of workers and peasants and the deteriorating socio-economic conditions of the Filipino people in almost four decades under the neoliberal regime.

Drawing lessons from the Party's rich history, the Second Congress presented a clearer picture of the strategy and tactics for taking advantage of the insoluble and worsening crisis of the world capitalist system, the strategic decline of US imperialism and the chronic crisis of the domestic ruling system in order to advance the protracted people's war towards complete victory.

The Party's general program calls on all Filipino communists to "be ready to sacrifice their lives if necessary in the struggle to bring about a new Philippines that is completely independent, democratic, united, just and prosperous."

The Party program reaffirms the necessity of waging armed revolution in order to counter the armed violence employed by the US imperialists and the local

reactionary ruling classes and end the oppressive and exploitative semicolonial and semifeudal system.

The updated program presents ten general tasks and then proceeds to lay down the specific tasks in the political, economic, military, cultural and foreign relations fields.

ELECTIONS

The Second Congress elected the new Central Committee and Political Bureau for a five-year term. More than half of the newly-elected CC members are from the young and middle-aged cadres of the Party, ensuring that the Party leadership will remain vibrant, tightly linked with the lower levels of leadership and capable of leading the practical work and day-to-day tasks of the Party, especially in waging revolutionary armed struggle against the reactionary state.

The combination of senior Party members with the young and junior Party cadres will ensure the ideological, political and organizational training of a new generation of Party leaders who will be at the helm of the Party in the coming years.

It is the task of the senior cadres to transfer knowledge and skills by summing up their individual and collective experiences in order to help guide the present work of the younger generation of Party leaders.

RESOLUTIONS

The Second Congress resolved to give the highest honors to Comrade Jose Maria Sison as founding chair of the CPP. It extolled Ka Joma as a

“great communist thinker, leader, teacher and guide of the Filipino proletariat and torch bearer of the international communist movement.” The Second Congress recognized his immense contribution to the Philippine revolution and the international working class movement.

It likewise resolved to continue to seek counsel and take guidance from his insights on the ideological,

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political and organizational aspects of the Party’s work. It also endorsed the five-volume writings of Ka Joma as basic reference and study material of the Party.

The Second Congress averred that the Party having the treasure of Marxist-Leninist-Maoist work that Ka Joma has produced over the past five decades will ever be capable of leading the national democratic revolution to greater heights and complete victory in the coming years.

The Second Congress also resolved to honor all the heroes and martyrs of the Party’s Central Committee “who served as models of selfless dedication and served the Party to their last breath.”

The Second Congress also approved the official Filipino lyrics of the Internationale, the Party’s anthem, which includes a translation of the third section of the original French, and improves the translation of some other parts. The Second Congress also resolved that only the Filipino lyrics will be sung in official Party gatherings.

The Second Congress approved to celebrate with boundless joy and appropriate festivity the 100th year anniversary of the victorious 1917 Bolshevik Revolution in Russia on November 7, 2017.

The objectives are to draw lessons and inspiration from the first successful socialist revolution and the unprecedented rapid economic and social progress achieved from 1917 to 1953 under proletarian leadership as well as to reaffirm the continuing viability of the socialist revolution in the face of worsening crisis of the global capitalist system.

The Second Congress also approved to mark the 50th anniversary of the Party on December 26, 2018 by summing up the Party’s history and celebrating the victories achieved by the Party and people in the past five decades of revolutionary struggle.

The Second Congress finally resolved to salute all Red fighters of the NPA composite battalion force, as well as members of the people’s militias, and all other Party members and activists who helped secure the delegates, assist in their travel, prepare meals, provide medical assistance and other support services. **LIB**

CPP’s 48th Anniversary: *The Masses’ Revolutionary Power at Work*

by Iliya Makalipay

Brgy. Lumiad, Paquibato District, Davao City— “Naa pa si Tatay, o! (Look, Father is still there!),” A child on board a passenger bus called out in Cebuano. “Tatay” was the slain New People’s Army (NPA) commander Leoncio “Ka Parago” Pitao, who was killed in a special military operation by the AFP on June 28, 2015 in one of the villages in Paquibato District where he was undergoing treatment by a woman NPA medic who was also killed.

It had been three days after the 48th anniversary celebration of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) on December 26, but Ka Parago’s standee remained atop a makeshift platform near the gymnasium. The huge photo was among the features of the celebration before which villagers and visitors, young and old, had their pictures taken. A giant hammer and sickle lantern was still mounted behind the standee. The huge lantern was lit up along with 48 sky lanterns to cap the December 26 event.

At the sight of Ka Parago's standee, the bus passengers were transported back to the anniversary celebration and the weeks leading to it. Three days after the event, the stories told around sounded as fresh as they had been the morning after—

where people on street corners, in sari-sari stores, at the front yard of houses huddled and shared anecdotes and laughter. They bantered at how they had to walk sideways to navigate through the huge crowd at the gathering. They laughed at how they panicked over preparing and distributing food to the crowd. They marvelled about the program and how their sons and daughters fared in the cultural numbers. They laughed at each other's gaffes in performing their assigned tasks.

But all their faces beamed with pride.

The NPA members who marched in battalion-size formation during the anniversary celebration earned the public's awe. The crowd—the almost 20,000 masses who came on foot, and in buses, jeepneys, cars and on motorbikes from all over Mindanao, Visayas and Luzon—was equally remarkable. Everyone was in high spirits in that all-inspiring moment—a spectacle never seen before.



REVOLUTIONARY MASS MOVEMENT

Call it a show of force, yes. But, the other lesser-known force behind that spectacular show were the members of the Party units and various allied organizations of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) who worked enthusiastically with the NPA members to prepare for the event. They comprised the revolutionary organs of political power in the district.

"It's a first in our barrios and we were so nervous. We never thought we could pull it off," said Ka Deling, a member of MAKIBAKA or the Free Movement of New Women, a revolutionary women's mass organization allied with the NDFP. The MAKIBAKA members were among the almost 4,000 revolutionary masses from different barrios mobilized to take on different tasks for the celebration.

Many of those mobilized were assigned in the food committee. Food preparation needed more people compared to other tasks as thousands of visitors expected to attend must be fed breakfast,

lunch and supper. About 700 men were assigned to cook the rice, said Ka Deling. Other MAKIBAKA members were assigned in the kitchen and food distribution. Packed lunches were distributed through the team leaders of each delegation from the different regions of

Mindanao and from Luzon and the Visayas. (At midday on December 26, more food packs and roasted pigs came in as gifts from city, provincial and even national government officials.) "Cooking involved several villages, and the cooks brought their own pots and pans and other cooking utensils. They also brought their own firewood," said Ka Jose, a member of the Pambansang Katipunan ng mga Magbubukid (National Association of Farmers), a founding member of the NDFP.

Others members of the revolutionary organizations were assigned to take care of transportation, mobilizing at least 40 drivers for the borrowed buses and motorcycles. A temporary clinic was set up manned by the barrio's health committee and NPA medics. Another group of men and women were assigned to help in the construction of the stage and in decorating the covered court where the program was held. They, too, brought their own tools. Houses in the barangay, and even the barangay hall, were opened to visitors who chose to spend the night in the barrio, especially those from Visayas and Luzon.

Local Kabataang Makabayan members and city-based artists who were members of or mobilized by ARMAS (Artists and Writers of the People), another NDFP allied organization, worked with the NPA-based director, production manager and choreographers to mount the six major production numbers and oversee the day-long program. There was a group assigned to liaison with the media.

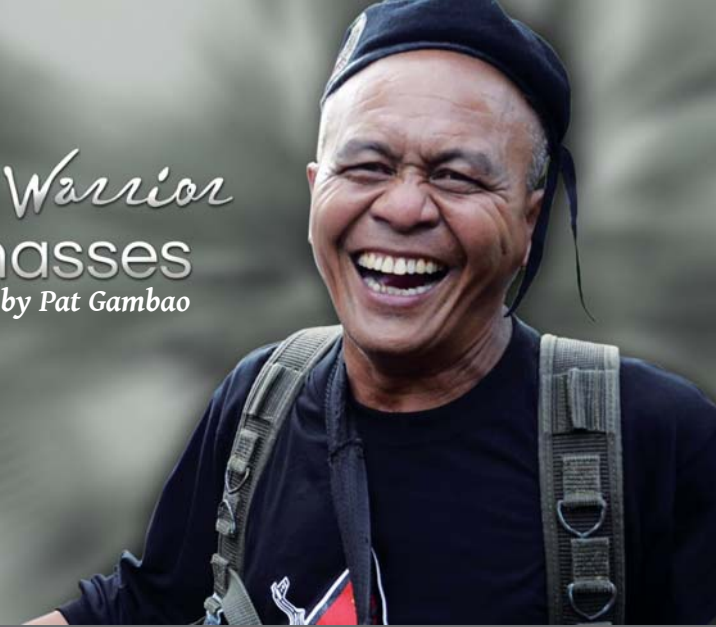
Two platoons of the Milisyang Bayan (MB, People's Militia) beefed up the NPA security force to thwart any untoward action by the military during the celebration. Ka Deling recalled that four days before, members of the paramilitary group CAFGU put up a blockade on the road leading to the venue. But this was immediately dismantled by the people. On December 23, a group of policemen wanted to check whether the village is "drug-free". But the people only jeered at the policemen. Warning that the NPA forces are around, the masses told the policemen they could enter the village only if they left their weapons behind.

On the day of the celebration, no uniformed military or police was visible in the barrio. Instead, there were two NPA checkpoints installed on the main road leading to the venue "to ensure that only those invited could enter."

The day after the event, the masses and a unit of the NPA cleaned up the whole village. In a matter of four hours, everything was back to its proper place—save for Ka Parago's standee and the huge hammer-and-sickle lantern. "We did not expect the event would be this grand. But, *kaya man diay* (We made it), with the guidance of

Beloved Warrior of the masses

by Pat Gambao



In life and in death, he remained an unfading inspiration to the entire revolutionary forces and the masses. His selfless commitment to serve the exploited and oppressed, his unflinching sacrifices and his relentless perseverance and valor bespeak of the communist spirit. His significant contributions to the revolutionary movement and the people's democratic revolution for national liberation and social transformation are etched in the hearts and minds of every fighter, every man and woman, every child in the areas where he left his imprint.

Commander Ka Parago had lived with the masses for decades, zealously serving them, protecting them and helping them with their problems. He loved the masses so much and he in turn was dearly loved by them. For these, he has been revered. Even children who barely had a glimpse of him when he was alive fondly call him tatay (father) to these days.

Leoncio "Commander Parago" Pitao joined the New People's Army in 1978. His mastery of the Marxist-Leninist-Maoist (MLM) principles was manifested in the excellence of his practice. He held on to the correct political line as he built organs of political power and mass organizations. He led the pursuit for land reform while advancing the struggle. He also developed close ties with the masses—the peasants, workers

and indigenous people, as well as built relations with allies. A brilliant strategist and tactician in guerrilla warfare, he led the First Pulang Bagani Company in the Southern Mindanao Region to many victorious offensives against the reactionary government's military forces. Commander Parago was the most famous NPA commander of his time. The local reactionary forces dreaded and hated him.

Commander Parago was captured by enemy forces in 1999 but was released on recognizance in 2001, a confidence and goodwill measure for the resumption of the peace talks between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP). Upon release, he went back to the countryside to continue with the struggle.

the comrades from the Party and the people's army," Ka Manding exultantly remarked.

Ka Tien, the political officer of the Pulang Bagani Battalion (PBB) and Ka Led, the event's production manager, attributed the success of the celebration, specifically the

masses' active participation to the years of painstaking organizing and consolidation work in the district, initiated by the Party and the PBB led by Ka Parago. Both claimed they were "standing on Parago's shoulders."

Ka Jose, a long-time organizer in the district, acknowledged that he doubted for a moment the movement's future after Ka Parago was slain. "But we realized there are many Ka Paragos in the Party and in the NPA. The years of hard work by comrades have paid off," he said.

Soon after Ka Parago's funeral march through Davao City to his final resting place, the masses and their revolutionary mass organizations were in fighting form again, mindful that many tasks lie ahead. "We have become more conscientious because we cannot fail our slain leader and the martyrs of the revolution," Ka Jose stressed.

PEOPLE'S WAR LEADS TO JUST PEACE

The Davao City celebration was the center of the nationwide



political prisoners through general amnesty. The masses had expressed their desire for the NPA to end its unilateral ceasefire in the face of the escalating attacks by the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Philippine National Police (PNP) against them and their communities.

At bottom, the celebration of the 48th anniversary of the CPP was a pledge to continue to raise the people's war to greater heights towards achieving genuine and lasting peace over the long haul, while building up revolutionary gains that benefit the people. Across the country, the slogan "people's war is for people's peace" reverberated.

VICTORY FOR THE MASSES

Many take up and vigorously echo the call. The sound of the numerous voices of the masses is indeed contagious, inspiring and invigorating.

"*Daghan man diay ta, dili lang diay kami ang nakigbisog*, (I realized there are many of us. We are not alone in this struggle)," said one resident of Bgy. Lumiad. The visitors and the host communities drew inspiration from each other to push forward the people's war and face down enemy threats.

"*Pagkakita nako sa mga tao, kit-an gyud nako na mudaug gyud ang rebolusyon*. (When I saw the crowd, I knew the revolution would be victorious. No doubt the masses will triumph)," he gushed. **LIB**

But the enemies never stopped to wreak vengeance on Ka Parago. They abducted his daughter, Rebelyn, and ruthlessly killed her. That great blow in his life almost broke him down. For three days, the tough commander locked up himself in his shack, crying, not wanting to talk to anyone, refusing to take in any food, not so much from grief but from rage. No one among his comrades dared to disturb him. So they turned to those they knew Ka Parago could not refuse—the masses in the community who became close to him. And it was them who convinced him to eat, calmed him down and brought him back to his senses; the masses he loved so much. He had lived his life for them since his awakening to the wretchedness of their plight; for them he had pledged to die fighting.

For some time, Ka Parago had been sick with diabetes, hyperthyroidism, hepatitis and hypertension. His comrades

advised him to take a leave for medical treatment and rest outside the area of his command but he opted to stay and live with the masses.

On June 28, 2015, an enemy team raided Purok 9 of Barangay Panalum in the Paquibato District of Davao City where Parago was undergoing medical treatment. He was with NPA medic Vanessa Limpag, Ka Kyle. The enemy immediately riddled Commander Parago with bullets upon sight of him. Vanessa, who had raised her hand and made known she was a medic was also gunned down. Ka Leoncio Pitao passed away at 57.

In contrast to the lenient and humane treatment that Commander Parago and his unit rendered to captured enemies and prisoners of war, he was summarily killed in stark violation of International Humanitarian Law (or the laws of war).

For some time, his men who had always hung on to his shoulders

were disheartened and, like the enemy, entertained the thought that the revolution in that part of Mindanao would crumble. But then, the legacy he had left behind—the education and training of so many revolutionaries who will carry and pass on the torch till victory of the Philippine revolution, the burning desire he sowed in the hearts of the masses to be freed from the bondage of exploitation and oppression, the life he lived, the communist virtues in his being—fired the revolution to even greater heights, delivering fatal blows to the enemies.

It was harvest time for the seeds that Commander Parago had sowed. The First Pulang Bagani Company has since become a full battalion. His successors have become more determined to advance the revolution to victory. The grief for the loss of the beloved comrade and valiant hero has turned to revolutionary courage as a lasting tribute to his cherished memory. **LIB**



The speeches, songs, dances, music and poetry were woven like red and gold thread through the fabric of the 48 years of the people's war. They were almost seamless. The crowd alternately sighed, sobbed and chanted slogans as the cultural program progressed in the fully-packed gym, on the streets and on every empty space around.

"This is a 'tactical offensive,'" was the slogan of the cultural workers who were tasked to prepare and perform for the 48th anniversary celebration of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) in the Southern Mindanao region. 'Tactical offensive' or TO involves strength and flexibility, harmony and coordination, timing and rhythm. These are all within the discipline of the people's army. These, too, are the same elements required of the cultural workers and artists involved in the cultural program for the Party's big day.



Theatre of War, Theatre of the Masses

by Iliya Makalipay

STRENGTH AND FLEXIBILITY

Assigned to prepare the anniversary program was a core staff of cultural workers who are now fighters from various units of the New People's Army (NPA) in the region. The first task was to assemble the cast and crew. With a month to implement their concept, the most accessible to them were the NPA medics who had earlier gathered for a regional medical training and later, medical missions to the villages. While a number of medics had a background in cultural work, the majority were new to the terrain of the stage. "That's part of the NPA's flexibility. You undergo medical training and you practice it through cultural performances," said the director, Ka Alwin, in jest.

But, three weeks before the event, adjustments had to be made when the regional celebration became the centerpiece of the nationwide commemoration. With delegations from all over the country, the number of those attending the activity had tripled. The initial 20 performers would be dwarfed by the crowd's number, the staff thought. Thus, they spared no effort to comb for performers in every NPA unit and artists' organizations in the city and in the villages. In no time, they assembled 77 performers, 43 dancers/movers and 34 singers.

Members of the local Kabataang Makabayan (KM, Patriotic Youth) were mobilized. Other NPA members whom the core staff knew as singers and performers

were pulled out of their units. City-based members of ARMAS (Artists and Writers of the People) and allies backed up the countryside (CS)-based cultural workers.

They also adjusted the stage design according to the available budget, materials and manpower. "We wanted fresh flowers for the hammer and sickle logo of the CPP. But we ended up with gold glitters and anahaw (palm) leaves," Ka Led said in between laughs. "We had to make use of everything available in our surrounding and only bought the essentials, like the pieces of cloth." But there was, on the day itself, a giant LED screen posted outside the gym to ensure nobody misses out anything that was happening on the stage.

HARMONY AND COORDINATION

The rehearsals for the program, including five major production numbers, started on December 8, two weeks before the event. Aware of a tight schedule and a host of

related tasks before them, the core staff emphasized the importance of collective work—something they are all used to. To hasten learning in between rehearsals, the performers were divided into teams where those who learned the choreography or voicing faster took care of those who needed help.

Urban-based artists, however, had to cope with the level of skills of their performers, rehearsal time, and style and methods of work.

The choirmaster who lives in the city, for example, had to ask her children to alternately train the CS-based choir on days she was not available. At times, Ka Tien, the political officer of the Pulang Bagani Brigade (PBB) of the NPA had to be dragged from his other tasks when no guitarist was available to accompany the choir's practice.

A city-based choreographer had to adjust her original design and tailor her choreography to the movers who came mostly from the peasantry. "Their class origin defines the body movements they are familiar with. The choreography should fit their ways being sons and daughters of the peasantry and fighters in the people's army."

All through the gruelling two-week rehearsals, Ka Alwin and the other core staff members made sure the difference between the urban and CS-based cultural workers in terms of skills and content would not be manifested. "We have to achieve unison and break this idea that the urban-based are better in skills and the CS-based are better in content." Expectedly, there were misunderstandings but, to safeguard the group's cohesiveness, they practiced

'Criticism and Self-Criticism' (CSC), a Party principle of correcting wrong attitudes and style and methods of work. "No one shines individually, this is a collective endeavor," said Ka Alwin.

TIMING AND RHYTHM

As D-day neared, most of the performers already had evident bruises and cuts from moving about on the rough wooden planks of the stage. Some of the choir members had lost their voices. But they all agreed to do their best even when their voices and movements falter.

And shine they did on the day the revolutionary movement honored the founding of the Communist Party of the Philippines. Collectively, the movers and the choir performed as one and moved to the beat of the heart of the masses. Their voices and movements became the movement of the revolution, the masses, the people's army and the Party.

The masses sang with the choir. They groaned as movers mirrored the hunger that preceded the Kidapawan massacre. They booed the "military" when it appeared onstage and rooted for the people's army. They cheered when they saw "Uncle Sam" impaled on a bamboo pole. They hailed when finally, a golden cloth was rolled out and bared the hammer and sickle emblem of the Party.

Like in any tactical offensive, the performers got their energy from the masses. The cultural presentations ceased to be performances and became the lives of the masses. The masses saw their hunger, oppression and poverty and how the Party and the NPA empowered them and showed their collective strength.

Like in any other tactical offensive, the Party and the people's army came out victorious and shared the triumph with the masses. It reached the masses, touched their emotions and sensibilities, and fired up their vim and vigor. **LIB**



Postscript

The crowd cheered and appreciated the performances—and the performers, specially—during the 48th anniversary celebration of the Party. With delight, the masses in Brgy. Lumiad mentioned that the cultural program was a "grand production *sa mga bayot* (gays)." To a large extent it was! The core staff and crew, director and choreographers—and more than half of the performers—were gays who have been welcomed into the ranks of the NPA.



Lenin making
a speech at the
unveiling of the
memorial to
Karl Marx and
Friedrich Engels
in Moscow

November 7, 1918

The Ever-Relevant OCTOBER REVOLUTION

by Victoria dela Gente

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the October Revolution in Russia, which was led by Vladimir Lenin and Joseph Stalin. And perhaps people are pondering on its significance on the world today, especially since the capitalist system is still reeling from the impact of the global economic-financial crisis, which imploded in 2008-2009, with no relief in sight. The crisis is clearly an indictment of capitalism even among mainstream capitalist economists and peoples, both in “developed” and “developing” countries are searching for an alternative.

It could be remembered that Russia, in the latter part of the 19th and early 20th century, was suffering from a debilitating crisis that had

been brought about by the crisis of the world capitalist system, called the Long Depression, and the fetters of being a backward capitalist country with vestiges of feudalism. The world subsequently imploded into World War I, with Tsarist Russia joining the fray in an effort to claim a portion of the spoils of the war for the Tsar and the bourgeoisie.

The convulsions of Tsarist Russia resulted in two revolutionary uprisings: first in 1905—when workers and peasants holding a peaceful march were fired upon by Tsarist soldiers, thereby spurring the uprising—and then in February 1917. While the 1905 uprising ended in a tactical defeat for the Russian Communist Party (RCP), the February 1917 uprising resulted in a victory for the Party and the Russian people. However, right after the victory, the Kerenski government, which was a coalition of the bourgeoisie and the defeated aristocracy, betrayed the peoples of Russia. This prompted the RCP under the leadership of Lenin to call for the immediate launching in August of the second stage of the Russian revolution, the socialist revolution. By October 1917, the Russian people, under the leadership of the RCP, achieved victory.

Immediately thereafter, the Russian Soviet Government was attacked from within by the forces aligned with Trotsky and from without, by the remnants of the Tsarist Army, which was supported by imperialist countries that also launched invasion expeditions. Of course, the Russian people,

under Lenin’s leadership of the RCP, defeated all these counter-revolutionary adventures.

And when the capitalist world imploded again in another crisis, which eventually gave rise to fascist forces and World War II, Russia, under the leadership of the RCP and Stalin, was in the process of socialist building and was developing rapidly into an economically powerful nation.



The Communist International, 1919

Under the leadership of the RCP, through the victorious October revolution, the Russian people demonstrated that the revolution against imperialism and domestic feudalism could succeed. It also proved that ushering in socialism would be beneficial to the people, most especially the poor majority.

The peoples of the USSR, through the leadership of Stalin, built socialism, making it one of the

most powerful and prosperous nations in the world. More important was that the USSR, in building socialism, showed how to address social injustices and inequities and achieve social emancipation.

However, the history of the Russian revolution also showed how the former and the nascent ruling classes could betray the socialist principles and reverse the gains of socialist construction. After the death of Stalin and the takeover by Nikita Krushchev, revisionism became well entrenched up to the time socialism was formally abandoned under Gorbachev.

The oppressed people and nations of the world could draw lessons from the experiences of the Russian people, much like what the Chinese people did, under the leadership of Mao Ze Dong, before they were likewise overpowered by revisionist forces in China.

From a strategic perspective, the revolutions of the Russian and Chinese people constituted but one stage in the world socialist revolution. The proletariat of the world, while suffering tactical defeats through the reversals of socialism, could emerge even stronger, especially in the light of the crisis and widespread popular repudiation of the capitalist system today.

Having spurned modern revisionism, the Filipino people are in a strategic position to complete the national democratic revolution in the near future to persevere towards pursuing socialist revolution. **LIB**



MARCOS'S BURIAL is HISTORY'S REVERSAL

by Bukang Liwayway

The overthrow of the Marcos regime by a people's uprising in 1986 was historic for the Philippines. The growing people's war in the countryside had steadily weakened the regime's military clout and political grip on power and gave the urban-based anti-dictatorship struggle the opportunity to oust the hated regime. President Ferdinand Marcos and his family, aided by the US imperialists, fled the country in fear. Corazon Aquino and a new administration rose to power.

That would have been the end of the Marcos family's political rule. Instead, the last 30 years have seen the steady rehabilitation of the Marcoses and their return to national politics through ruling class accommodation, compromise and opportunism. Six consecutive administrations played their part, culminating in the burial of the late dictator at the *Libingan ng mga Bayani* in November 2016 under the Duterte government.

The National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) sharply pointed out: *"The hero's burial accorded to Ferdinand Marcos virtually completes the political rehabilitation of the Marcoses and the revision of the historical judgment against the crimes of the Marcos family"*. The Filipino people's verdict in 1986 was clear: the Marcos regime was guilty of puppetry to US imperialism, gross bureaucrat capitalism, and ruthless fascism. What happened?

CORAZON AQUINO'S MAGNANIMITY IN VICTORY

Ironically, the refurbishing of the Marcos family's political fortunes started under the watch of Pres. Corazon Aquino whose family is supposedly the main political rival of the Marcoses.

Pres. Aquino set a compromising tone early on. "I can be magnanimous in victory," she declared. Evading the problem of dealing directly with the fate of

the deposed dictator, she allowed US imperialism to facilitate the "graceful" exit from the country of the late dictator and his family aboard a US air force plane on February 25, 1986.

More than that evasion of responsibility to exact justice for the people, the new administration and supposed return to democratic rule did not mean any real change in elite-driven and anti-people governance. Repressive and anti-people laws, programs and policies of the Marcos dictatorship quickly became manifest under the Aquino regime, especially after Pres. Aquino, in March 1987, "unsheathe(d) the sword of war" against the revolutionary forces and the people in general.

The Aquino regime used the vast powers of government to reapportion the economic spoils of political power with the previously excluded economic political elites. Compromise deals were sealed to recover the ill-gotten wealth of the Marcoses and their cronies. In the end, foreign corporations and local oligarchs close to the Aquinos took hold of erstwhile Marcos and crony resources for their own profitable ends. The US-Aquino regime ensured the consolidation of its ruling clique and of elite rule over the country.

Cronyism continued with, for instance, Aquino's brother Jose Cojuangco and her brother-in-law Ricardo Lopa. The Lopez family was handed back Manila Electric Company (Meralco) and ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corporation on a silver platter. The Presidential Commission for Good Governance (PCGG) itself, purportedly created

to fight corruption, was rife with gross irregularities.

Soon after assuming the presidency, Pres. Aquino also said: "I would like to show by example the sooner we can forget our hurts, the sooner we can start rebuilding our country." This notion of 'moving on' would be echoed 30 years later by the Marcoses themselves.

It was then left for the Filipino people to neither forgive nor forget the horrors of Martial Law (ML) and to seek and fight for justice. In April 1986, the *Samahan ng mga Ex-Detainees Laban sa Detensyon at Aresto (SELDA)* with the victims and their families filed a class action suit against the Marcoses at the Federal District Court of Honolulu in Hawaii. Almost 10,000 victims won this landmark *Hilao vs Marcos Estate* case six years later in 1992. The court, in 1994, awarded a minimum of US\$1.2 billion from the Marcos ill-gotten estate as indemnification.

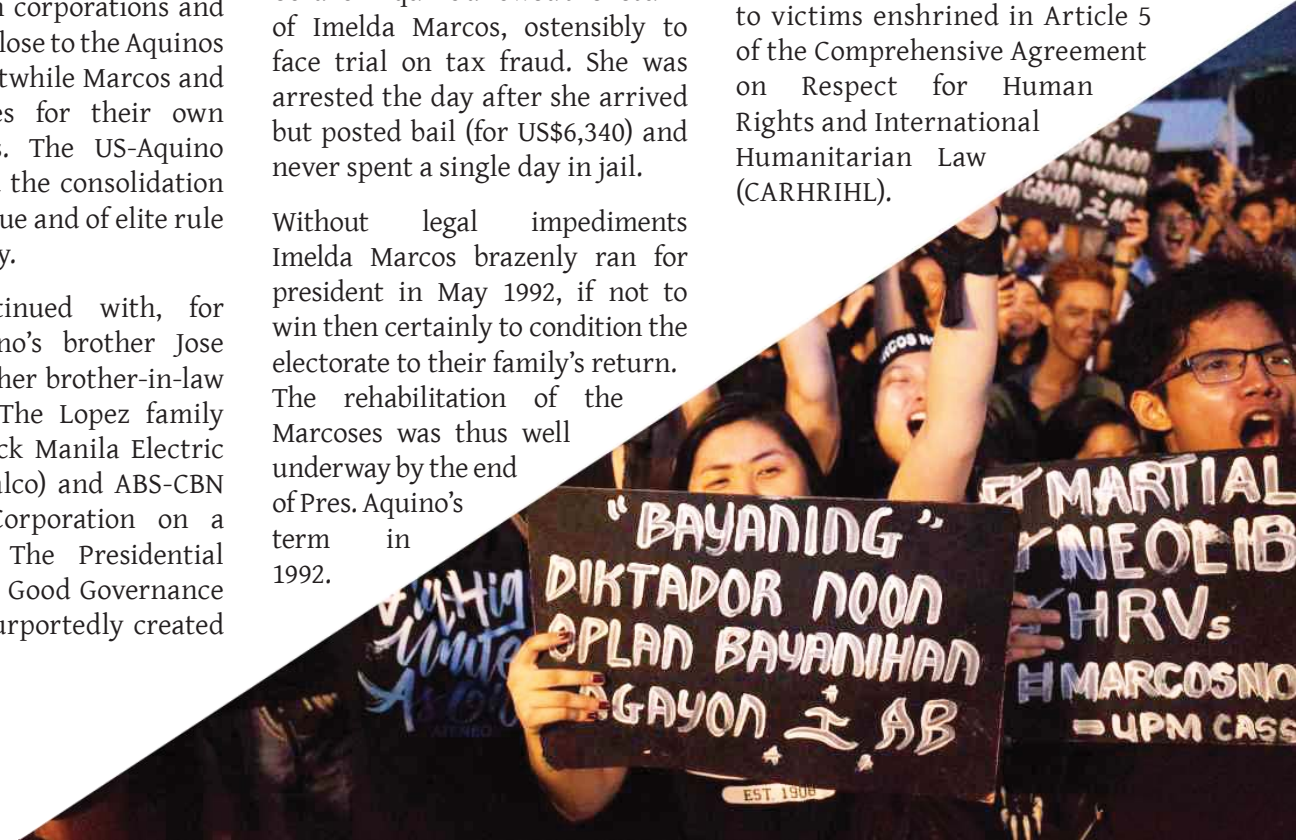
On November 4, 1991, President Corazon Aquino allowed the return of Imelda Marcos, ostensibly to face trial on tax fraud. She was arrested the day after she arrived but posted bail (for US\$6,340) and never spent a single day in jail.

Without legal impediments Imelda Marcos brazenly ran for president in May 1992, if not to win then certainly to condition the electorate to their family's return. The rehabilitation of the Marcoses was thus well underway by the end of Pres. Aquino's term in 1992.

RAMOS-MARCOS RECONCILIATION: MARCOS (BODY) RETURNS

Pres. Fidel V. Ramos followed suit. On September 7, 1993, he allowed the return of the dictator's body to the Philippines. Pres. Ramos proceeded to negotiate compromise deals with the Marcoses themselves. The first attempt was a 75/25 sharing of US\$400 million of the Marcos' wealth, brokered in 1993. The second was a 50/50 split of US\$100 million negotiated by the PCGG with Robert Swift—lawyer of the victims who filed the class action suit—in exchange for dropping the suit against the Marcoses. But the victims protested so Pres. Ramos was unable to finalize these deals.

No help was given to ML victims during the Ramos administration, despite the NDFP's demand continuously in the peace negotiations with the Ramos regime for the indemnification and compensation of the victims. It succeeded to have this support to victims enshrined in Article 5 of the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL).



But justice continued to evade the Filipino people. On September 23, 1993, Imelda Marcos was finally sentenced 18-24 years in jail for graft, with permanent disqualification from public office. But Mrs. Marcos was allowed bail by the court and was set free while the decision is on appeal. She again ran for public office in 1995.

The Ramos administration saw the Marcos family quickly regaining their political ground with the dictator's son, daughter, and wife taking political office. Bongbong Marcos was elected Representative of the 2nd District of Ilocos Norte from 1992-1995. He failed in his first bid for the Senate in 1995 but became

governor of Ilocos Norte in 1998 until 2007. Imee Marcos meanwhile took over as Representative of the 2nd District of Ilocos Norte in 1998 and similarly held this position until 2007. Imelda Marcos became representative of the 1st district of Leyte from 1995-1998.

ESTRADA'S LOYALTY IS TO THE MARCOSES

The country's next president, Joseph Estrada, was an unabashed Marcos loyalist. Imelda Marcos again ran for president in 1998, hoping still that a Marcos can reclaim the presidency, although she later withdrew to support Estrada.

Pres. Estrada showed his loyalty and gratefulness by also initiating compromise deals with the Marcoses. He did a 75/25 sharing similar to the one by former Pres. Ramos. Another one was worth US\$150 million involving Atty. Robert Swift, legal counsel of the latterly-formed group Claimants 1081. It took protests by SELDA, the victims and their families to again prevent these compromise attempts from succeeding.

In October 1998, barely six months from office, the Supreme Court (SC) under Estrada reversed its earlier decision and acquitted Imelda Marcos of corruption. (Under Ramos, the SC, upon Imelda Marcos's appeal, upheld the 1993 guilty verdict of the

former first lady by a lower court. In its decision the court downgraded to 12 years Imelda's prison sentence and asked for a fine of \$4.3 million).

It was Pres. Estrada who first proposed, in 1998, to transfer the late dictator Marcos' body from Ilocos Norte to the *Libingan ng mga Bayani*. This plan was thwarted by the instant vigorous and widespread protest by the people.

The NDFP continued to press for justice for the victims of martial law especially when the CARHRIHL was signed. But nothing came of it as the Estrada regime eventually suspended the peace negotiations with the NDFP as he declared an "all-out-war" against the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

Even after Estrada was ousted in 2001 on charges of bribery, graft and corruption, betrayal of public trust and culpable violation of the reactionary Constitution, the Marcoses remained in solid control of the 2nd Congressional District of Ilocos Norte and of the province's governorship.

REMAINING 15 YEARS AND NEXT

By the abrupt end of Pres. Estrada's term, just 15 years after the Marcos dictatorship was overthrown, the Marcos family had not only preserved huge amounts of their ill-gotten wealth but had also used this to rebuild their political alliances with traditional politicians especially, but not only, in the northern part of Luzon. Their re-entry into Philippine politics was complete, moving from local politics to national positions.



The two consecutive regimes of Gloria Arroyo (2001-2010) and even that of Corazon Aquino's son, Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino (2010-2016) did nothing to push back the restoration of the Marcos' political fortunes.

In 2004, the Arroyo government sought "closure of the Marcos issue" and started negotiating yet another compromise agreement. This was stopped by the militant protests of ML victims and people's organizations. The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) sharply pointed out: "*Successive reactionary regimes from [Corazon] Aquino to Arroyo have failed to mete out swift and appropriate justice on Imelda Marcos and the Marcos cronies because of their interest in the Marcos' ill-gotten wealth.*" It went on further to remind that: "*The people's history has adjudged Ferdinand Marcos as the Philippine Hitler.*"

Pres. Noynoy Aquino meanwhile delayed the passage and implementation of the Marcos Victims Compensation Bill or the Human Rights Victims Reparation and Recognition Act of 2013. By the end of his term, only 23% of the 75,000 applicants/registered victims were processed. He could have expedited the process—especially because most of the claimants have become old and sick—aside from more aggressively going after the Marcos ill-gotten wealth.

Even as this was happening Imee Marcos remained as governor of Ilocos Norte and Imelda Marcos the Representative of the 2nd District of Ilocos Norte since 2010, with both on their third terms.

But it is Bongbong Marcos who has been groomed to be his dictator father's heir apparent. He was Representative of the 2nd District of Ilocos Norte until 2010 when he passed this to his sister, Imee, and took a Senate seat from 2010-2016. In 2016 he ran for the vice-presidency in a virtual ticket with Davao City Mayor Rodrigo Duterte. While Duterte took the presidency, Bongbong Marcos closely lost to Leni Robredo but is currently contesting this. He is generally believed to be gunning for the presidency in 2022.

That the son of the reviled dictator is so close to the country's highest office says much about the rottenness of Philippine politics. Reactionary politicians from the ruling classes have allowed and even supported the Marcos's return to power—as much for their own narrow, opportunistic and self-serving interests as to deny the Filipino people of their victory of thrashing the Marcoses after 14 years of dictatorship.

As matters stand, the rehabilitation of the Marcoses rapidly picked up under the Duterte administration. At his proclamation rally in February 2016, then candidate

Duterte outright declared Marcos as "the best president ever" with the qualification "if not for the dictatorship," as if this was not at the core of his tyrannical rule. He even went on to cite economic programs that he said were worth emulating.

Pres. Duterte downgraded the annual commemoration of the EDSA "People Power Revolution" in February 2017 and did not even bother to attend it. And there was of course his orally ordering the burial at the *Libingan ng mga Bayani* of the dictator's remains including a vigorous defense and justification, as if this was the most natural thing to do.

The CPP denounced this act of burying Marcos at the *Libingan ng mga Bayani*. In a statement it said the heroes' burial "was an act of great reversal of the historical judgment of the Filipino people against the US-Marcos dictatorship and a completion of the political resurrection of the Marcoses." It called on the Filipino people to demand from the Duterte regime to reverse the historical wrong it committed against the people and end all the legacies of martial law.

But the Duterte regime seemed far from heading towards this direction. It would still be up to the Filipino people to put an end to the Marcos rehabilitation as they once did to the Marcos dictatorship. History will be the final judge. **LIB**



PKM: *wellspring* of the NPA

by Leon Castro

The new Rodrigo Duterte government has declared it will uplift the lives of peasants with policies and programs aimed at eliminating injustices that have bedeviled the biggest sector of the country. It has promised to provide free irrigation, return the stolen coconut levy funds to the millions of farmer-victims, and offer support services to farmers to improve their harvests.

To demonstrate and give substance to this commitment, President Duterte appointed veteran progressive peasant leader Rafael 'Ka Paeng' Mariano, former chairperson of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas, as Department of Agrarian Reform secretary. In turn, Mariano pledged to work for the free distribution of tillable lands to the farmers, stop the widespread ejection of poor farmers who cannot afford to pay land amortization, and push for the legislation of a genuine agrarian reform law.

But, despotic landlords are expected to resist and sabotage these promised reforms. Mariano is their avowed enemy after all. Ergo, meaningful reforms—such as land redistribution, wage increases for farm workers, and utilization of agricultural lands for sustainable food production—will still largely depend on the revolutionary struggle of the peasants to effect genuine changes.

HOW THE PKM DEVELOPED

The Pambansang Katipunan ng mga Magsasaka (PKM or the National Assembly of Farmers) is the revolutionary organization of peasants and a founding allied organization of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines. It has been fighting for much more than what is now being promised by the Duterte government. PKM is the main organization, and along with the

New People's Army (NPA), forms the revolutionary mass bases in the countryside for the 48-year old national democratic revolution. It unites peasants, mostly poor and middle class farmers and farm workers, and guides them in their fight for agrarian revolution and related reforms. From its ranks have come the most number of Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and NPA members.

The PKM started out in Central Luzon and Isabela by helping peasants combat bandits and cattle rustlers, said its spokesperson Andres Agtalon. The peasants early on realized that only by uniting could they fight perennial problems such as unjust division of harvest proceeds, farm wages, land grabbing, usury, and other injustices. They attended assemblies where they listened to discussions of the

national situation and the specific situation of the peasantry in which they shared information and experiences. Then they were inspired to form peasant associations. From among the politically advanced members sprung the initial formations that constituted the PKM.

"The NPA pioneered this effort among the peasants and, to this day, it still conducts this vital work in areas where the national democratic revolution is expanding its work," Agtalon pointed out. In the past five decades, PKM formations have advanced from barangay-level to municipal-level structures. "We now have inter-municipality dialogues among bigger PKM formations in select regions of the country," he said.

MAXIMUM GAINS IN AGRICULTURAL REVOLUTION

The PKM has benefited from the NPA's maximum agrarian reform programs, which in turn, have resulted in PKM's ever-deepening strength and widening reach. About 44,146 hectares of both productive and abandoned farm and pasture lands nationwide have been confiscated by the NPA. These were redistributed to members of the PKM. In Masbate alone, 16,605 hectares of mostly pasture land in 73 barangays were distributed to 5,000 poor peasant families; 12,000 hectares in the

Eastern Visayas region; 2,000 hectares in Central Visayas and Negros that are now tilled by 1,000 families. In Mindoro, 7,000 families have acquired 2,541 hectares mostly through land occupation.

"These are just partial reports that the PKM leadership has received from the ground. As the national democratic revolution advances, the PKM shall be able to give more lands to poor peasants nationwide," Agtalon explained.

"Lands confiscated from landlords and local and foreign agri-businesses are given to beneficiaries free of amortization," Agtalon added. But the reactionary government, particularly the past administrations, imposed amortization schemes to enable landlords to collect so-called compensation under the failed agrarian reform laws. The PKM campaigns among its members to resist this scheme.

"The most despotic of landlords who employ violence against the farmers' just demands and actions are punished by the CPP-NPA through their judicial processes," he said.

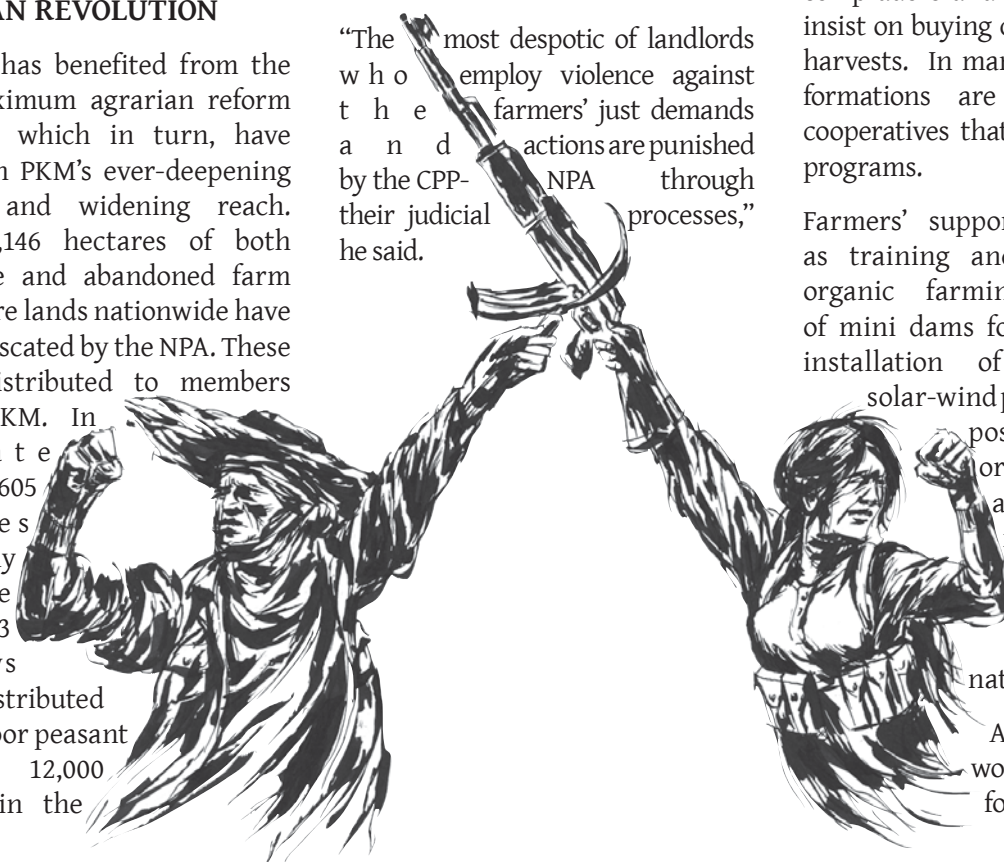
MINIMUM DEMANDS PROGRAM

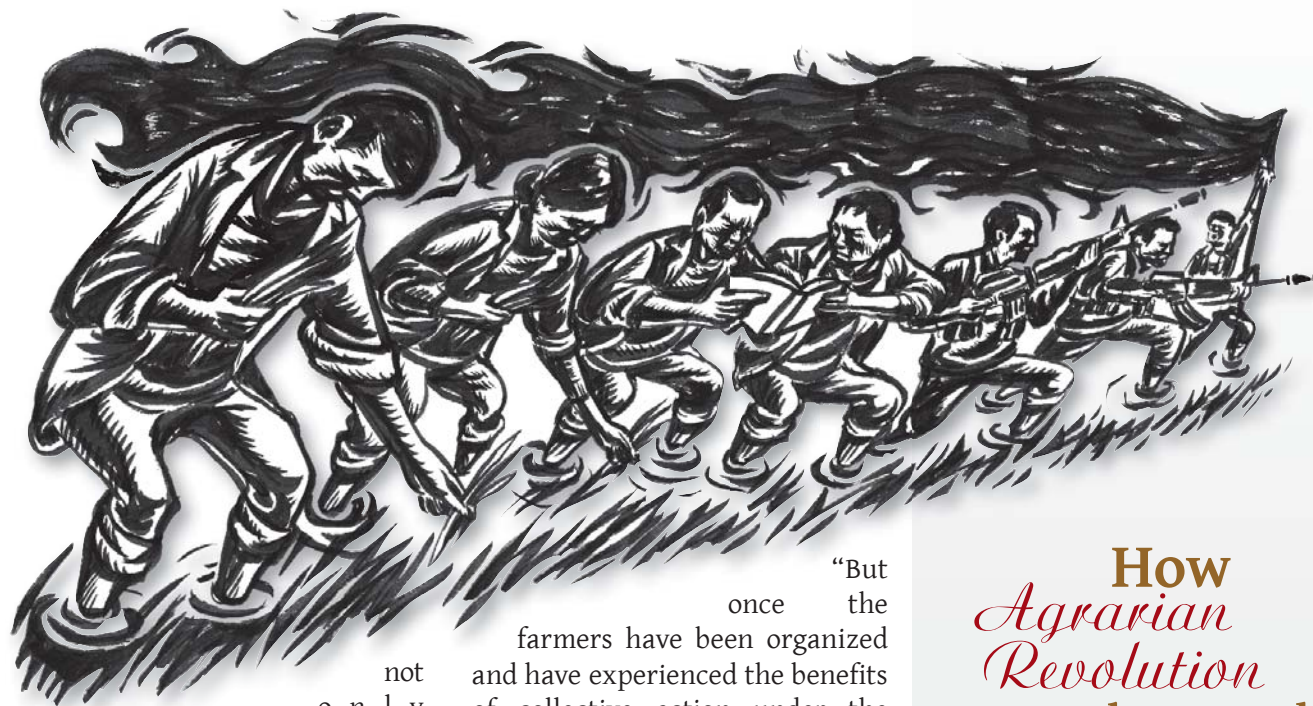
With the assistance of the NPA, the PKM also implements what it calls "minimum demand" programs. These include wage-increase campaigns for farm workers, reduction or elimination of land rent, just division of harvest proceeds between tenants and landlords, eradication of fraud when their produce are being weighed and priced, increase of farm gate prices, and many others.

The PKM encourages members and beneficiaries to practice cooperative and collective farming to reduce capitalization requirements and maximize yield. When favorable, it forms associations among monocrop farmers, such as banana and pineapple farmers. These efforts increase the farmers' incomes by eliminating heavy individual borrowing from usurious compradors and farm traders who insist on buying cheap the farmers' harvests. In many instances, PKM formations are themselves the cooperatives that implement these programs.

Farmers' support services such as training and workshops on organic farming, construction of mini dams for free irrigation, installation of hydro-electric-solar-wind power turbines for post-harvest drying or processing, and basic farm machineries are also offered by PKM to poor peasants nationwide.

Among farm workers, the PKM forms unions that





“But once the farmers have been organized and have experienced the benefits of collective action under the PKM, their revolutionary fervor cannot be extinguished,” Agtalon noted. Once they have weathered the periodic attacks, the farmers rebuild and strive to become even stronger.

not only struggle for wage increases but defend their job security as well. Many Nueva Ecija farm workers, for example, recently waged a successful campaign against harvester-combines they call *halimaw* (monster) that threatened to make their employment redundant.

“Based on collated reports, no less than a million peasant families have benefited from all these campaigns and programs,” Agtalon said.

COURAGE IN FACE OF ADVERSITY

Agtalon acknowledged that PKM formations have temporarily suffered setbacks due to vicious state counterinsurgency operations. PKM leaders and members have been assassinated or abducted, tortured and detained while communities underwent forced evacuations or harassments. He cited retired Major General Jovito Palparan’s bloody campaigns in Mindoro, Nueva Ecija and Eastern Visayas as examples. It was during these times that the landlords and compradors tried to reclaim what the farmers had already won, he said.

How Agrarian Revolution is Implemented in Guerilla Fronts

PKM’s endurance mirrors the NPA’s ever deepening and widening strength nationwide, as the two are strongly intertwined, Agtalon emphasized. Where there are NPA outfits, there will surely be PKM formations. Where the NPA is strong, the PKM gains strength as well. And vice-versa. Whenever and wherever the NPA declares that it is at its strongest, the same can be said of the PKM, Agtalon added.

“Aside from being the main wellspring of members for the NPA, the PKM also functions as the people’s militia,” Agtalon proudly declared, elaborating: “It assists the NPA in intelligence gathering. It also helps in the educational, cultural and organizational work of the national democratic revolution in a comprehensive manner.” Thus, he concluded: “The PKM is a significant part of the people’s war.” **LIB**

MASBATE
16,605 hectares
confiscated and distributed
to 5,000 peasant families

EASTERN VISAYAS
12,000 hectares
confiscated

MINDORO
2,541 hectares occupied
7,000 families

**CENTRAL VISAYAS
& NEGROS**
2,000 hectares confiscated,
now tilled by 1,000 families

Gilbert Torres:

THE ARTIST

is a

Revolutionary

by Pat Gambao

Art transcends beauty when it serves the struggling masses and fires the revolution. Art becomes a weapon of war, and as such it becomes a weapon of peace.

Gilbert Torres’s artworks, which effused the sense of commitment and principle, passion and dedication, were spread in the pages of revolutionary publications, such as the *Liberation* of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP), the *Ulos* of ARMAS (Artista at Manunulat para sa Sambayanan), an organization of artists and writers allied to the NDFP, the education materials of the Commission on Education of the Communists Party of the Philippines (CPP), and the protest paper, *Sick of the Times*, a lampoon of the evils of the Marcos dictatorship.

Gibet, as he was fondly called, started his activism during his senior year at Don Bosco

Technical College. It had not been difficult to kindle in him a sense of nationalism, and even the revolutionary spirit. His grandfather was an Irish-American who had been in the Philippines since the early nineteen hundreds. Gibet had always been proud of his Irish descent having known the valiant struggle of the Irish people for independence.

from British rule. He had idolized the Irish Republican Army. Of course, he was also aware that in his veins likewise flowed the heroic blood of his Filipino forefathers who for centuries had fought against foreign invaders. Thus, in his fondness for books, what created great impact on him were stories of people’s struggles for liberation and love for freedom.

It was never difficult for him to associate with the masses. He studied in a school the orientation of which, as founded by its namesake (St. John Bosco, an Italian priest), is a school for the poor. But as a private sectarian school owned and operated by the Salesian Congregation that St. John Bosco also founded, it had become also a school for the affluent. As he loathed the hypocrisy of the elite Gibet was more comfortable in the company of his schoolmates who were in relatively lower

The artwork for this cover was by Gibet and Jess Red



social strata or in the same petty-bourgeois class where he belonged. As a member of the Nationalist Corps, an organization of the youth in Don Bosco, he immersed with the peasants and workers.

As a fine arts student at the University of the Philippines (UP) in the 70s, he provided art works to the “rebel” Philippine Collegian, a parallel publication handled by student activists at the time when the official campus paper was in the hands of the “reactionaries”. In those days, before the advent of electric typewriter, photo stencil and IBM typesetting machine, computer and Risograph printers, underground papers used manual thin stencils to type in articles. Mimeograph machine was used for printing. Art works were done

RALING IGLAP



from him. He was released after six months.

Upon release, Gibet had the time to bake his favorite Irish bread that his friends relished upon. He also spent time in Philippine solidarity groups for Latinos in El Salvador, Guatemala and Peru. He was also involved in the peasant campaigns in Hacienda San Antonio and in the Sta. Isabel Tabacalera land issue in Cagayan Valley.

Even when Gibet joined the mainstream arena of digital arts and advertising, he continued to do art works for the mass movement. For IBON Foundation, he had designed covers for calendars and did illustrations in its book *TNCs Por Biginers*. His standpoint never dwindled. It is immortalized in the verse by Jonas Leopoldo of ARMAS which was quoted in the NDFP greeting card where Gibet did an artwork under the nom de guerre Andres Magbanua: “*Real and lasting peace is born out of struggle for freedom and justice.*” To these days, Gilbert Torres’s life and works continue to inspire young revolutionary artists. **LIB**

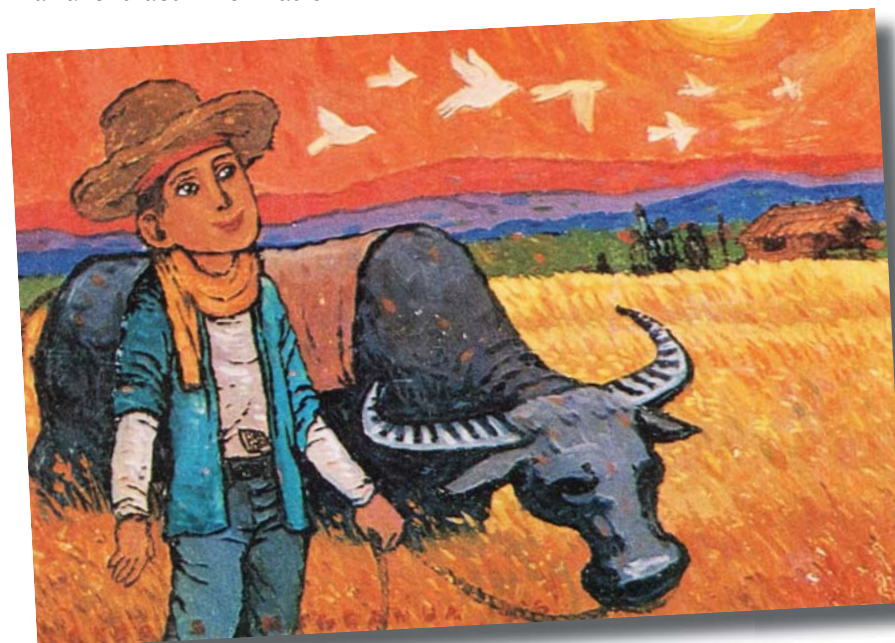
more exhaustively using a pointed steel, called stylus pen, on the delicate stencil paper. Extreme care was required. Gibet did his art works, meticulously, superbly.

With the abolition of student councils in 1973, following the declaration of martial law, student activists in UP worked hard to put up the Student Conference Committee on Student Affairs or CONCOMSA. Gibet was its representative from the UP College of Fine Arts. In other campuses, students also moved to form progressive student organizations. These bodies pushed for the restoration of student councils. The students’ struggle for their democratic rights in the campuses became a part of the broader anti-fascist struggle of that time.

With his exposure, as a member of the Nationalist Youth or Kabataang Makabayan (KM), to peasants and farm workers and to the underground movement, Gibet’s art work assumed a new dimension. The influence of his favorite Italian painter Fra Filippo Lippi and German painter and printmaker Albrecht Durer was

probably still there but infused in the flesh and actions of the revolting peasants, the striking workers, the restive students.

In April 1982, Gibet was arrested by military men as he was about to enter the *Liberation* underground staff house in Quezon City. He was carted off to the Bagong Bantay military camp in Quezon City and tortured. But despite the blows to his body and the gun pointed to his head, Russian-roulette style, he staunchly stood his ground. The military failed to break him down and extract information



Enero, sa panulukan ng EDSA-Aurora Ipinarada ang mga pulang bandila Suporta sa usapang kapayapaan, ugatin ang kahirapan Digmang bayan para sa makatarungang kapayapaan
- Enero 23, 2017 | Cubao, Quezon City

Sa may simbahan ng Quiapo, mga Bagong Kababaihan Hawak ay hindi kandila, rosaryo, o dasal Litanya ng pakikidigma ang binibigkas, inuusal Hangad ay paglaya ng uring pinagsasamantalahan
- Marso 17, 2017 | Quiapo, Manila



Sa Sta. Cruz-Avenida sa Maynila Makabayang guro ang nagmartsa Itinuturo ang landas ng pakikibaka Sa hukbong bayan sumapi, sumampa
- Marso 24, 2017 | Sta. Cruz, Manila

Nagkaroon din ng lightning rally o raling iglap sa Sorsogon, Calamba, at Davao noong Marso 29 bilang pagdiriwang sa ika-48 anibersaryo ng Bagong Hukbong Bayan.



Itinanghal apatnapu't walong taon ng pakikidigma
ng Bagong Hukbong Bayan sa kanto ng EDSA-Aurora
Armas ng mamamayang sinasamantala
Tagumpay ng rebolusyon ang panata

- Marso 27, 2017 | Cubao, Quezon City



Ipinagbunyi sa paanan ng Mendiola
Ikalawang Kongreso ng Partido Komunista
Marxismo-Leninismo-Maoismo ang gabay
Ibayong pagkakaisa, ibayong tagumpay

- Marso 31, 2017 | Mendiola, Manila

National
democratic forces
salute the



and its
mass organizations on its

44th Anniversary

April 24, 2017