

LIBERATION



Volume XXXIV No. 4 Published by the National Democratic Front of the Philippines October-December 2017

CHALLENGE TO THE
OPEN DEMOCRATIC MASS MOVEMENT

**OPPOSE A NEW DICTATORSHIP
VIA CHARTER CHANGE!**

EDITORIAL

**"BACK" IN THE CLAWS OF THE
AMERICAN EAGLE**



ABOUT THE COVER

Tempered in the almost 50 years of struggle and supported by the masses in millions all over the archipelago, the national democratic mass movement and the red fighters led by the CPP are a steely potent force that no aspiring dictator can ever defeat. Holding on to the correct principles and iron discipline, they have successfully reached this stage and level of the people's war. And they will continue to resolutely advance the national democratic revolution to victory.

Cover Photo and Layout by: Miguel
Tableau by: Artista at Manunulat ng Sambayanan (ARMAS)
Graphics by: Markus del Pilar



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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LIBERATION

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EDITORIAL

“BACK” IN THE CLAWS OF THE AMERICAN EAGLE

Let's start with a bit of recent history.

In the last quarter of 2001, then US President George W. Bush launched his government's vindictive global “war on terror” directed at Al Qaeda, the jihadist group that planned and carried out the worldwide-shocking September 11 attacks on the Pentagon and the World Trade Center in New York. Bush called on other nation's leaders for support, with this foreboding line: “If you're not with me, you're against me!”

Bush gave his war this high-minded name: “Operation Enduring Freedom.”

The only Asian head of state to publicly respond was Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. She lustily welcomed Bush's designation of the Philippines as the “second front” of that war. “*Oplan Enduring Freedom-Philippines (OEF-P)*” opened up the country to the large-scale reentry of US troops (US Special

Operations Command Pacific deployed 1,500 soldiers to support the government in fighting the Abu Sayyaf and Jemaah Islamiyah).

Of course, US troops had been in the country since 1946 with two large bases: Clark Air Base and Subic Naval Base. But in 1991 the American troops were practically ousted, after the Philippine Senate decided to end the RP-US Bases Agreement. Their comeback was facilitated by the deceitfully-crafted RP-US Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) which, under new leadership, the Senate ratified in 1999.

Since January 2002, a new mode of annual joint RP-US military exercises was begun. Dubbed as *Balikatan*, it prescribed joint exercises in actual war zones, particularly in western Mindanao. Teams of fully-armed American soldiers, as “advisers” and “trainers,” accompanied Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) troops in combat operations mainly against the Abu Sayyaf.

A full-scale war to wipe out the Abu Sayyaf was subsequently planned. The US set up an all-American Joint Special Operations Task Force (JSOTF) inside a Philippine base in Zamboanga City. Batches of US

troops, 600 per, were deployed on rotating tours of duty such that, at any one time, there were that number of US soldiers in the country.

That arrangement ended in February 2015. The US removed its JSOTF in the wake of the botched anti-terrorist operation, involving US military assistance, which ended up in the Mamasapano massacre of 44 officials and men of the PNP Special Action Force. But the 14-year drive to wipe out the Abu Sayyaf failed.

Fast forward to 2017.

On September 1 last year, US Defense Secretary James Mattis designated—in total secrecy both in the US and the Philippines—“*Operation Pacific Eagle-Philippines*”(OPE-P) as the Trump administration's “overseas contingency operation” in Southeast Asia. Unlike in 2001, when Bush and Arroyo went high profile, this time Donald Trump was silent. So was Rodrigo Duterte.

As detailed in a quarterly report to the US Congress by the US Lead Inspector General, Glenn A. Fine, (dated Oct. 1-Dec. 31, 2017), what Mattis officially launched was a bilateral comprehensive campaign

“to assist the (AFP) in their effort to isolate, degrade, and defeat affiliates of the Islamic State (of Iraq and Syria) and **other terrorist organizations that do not profess a connection to ISIS** (emphasis ours).”

Clearly “*Operation Pacific Eagle-Philippines*” revives “*Oplan Enduring Freedom*” and correlates it with the latter's replica, “*Operation Inherent Resolve*”, encompassing US interventions in the continuing wars in Iraq and Syria.

Clear, too, is the reality that the Duterte fascist regime, much like the Arroyo regime before it, is now (from US imperialist perspective) securely in the claws of the predatory American Eagle.

(This editorial's title uses the word "back" to reflect Duterte's abandonment of his erstwhile public stance to "move away from the US." In his speech in Tokyo, Japan, in October 2016, he reiterated that he would abrogate executive agreements with the US, if necessary, to pursue an independent foreign policy. He said: "I want, in the next two years, my country free from the presence of foreign military troops. The Philippines can live without the assistance of the US...").

OPE-P is fully funded by the US. In 2017, the US Department of Defense (DoD) provided US\$16 million from its Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Fund. Its 2018 and 2019 budgets have not yet been determined, pending completion of the funding requirements being identified by the DoD, the Pacific Area Command (PACOM), and US military departments concerned.

It has no termination period. It will end, says the report, "when the AFP no longer requires US military assistance to address its internal terrorist threat." Given the persistence of the Abu Sayyaf, the Maute group, the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters—much more, of the New People's Army (in irrational anger in December, Duterte declared the NPA as a "terrorist organization" along with the Communist Party of the Philippines)—when can the AFP say it no longer need US aid?

The report points out that, "as with all US military operations in the Philipines, OPE-P is conducted at the request of the Philippine government." US and Philippine

military leaders, it adds, meet annually at 4-star level to discuss the scope of the coming year's bilateral defense cooperation and training programs.

Under OPE-P, the report notes, the US special operations forces continue to be "advising and assisting the AFP." All military operations are supposedly conducted "by, with, and through Filipino forces." This qualification, used since the first *Balikatan* exercises, is intended to shield the US "advisers" and "trainers" from being called to account for human rights violations in the conduct of military operations.

Obviously sanitized, the report to the US Congress has not dwelt on the political and geopolitical implications of the OPE-P's implementation. Let's therefore look at some of the reactions to its launching in September.

Prof. Roland Simbulan of the University of the Philippines, who has written several books and articles about US military intervention in the country and elsewhere, said:

"(OPE-P) marks a new era of US military intervention in the Philippines. Internally, it is directed against the Philippine Left and externally, (at using) the Philippines as springboard to reassert US military power in the Pacific. It is Trump's way of supporting the creeping authoritarianism in the country while using US military force and assets to make sure that Duterte does not change [his stand] on US military presence [in relation to China]."

Sociology Prof. William Robinson of the University of California

concurred with Simbulan's view. He backstopped it by citing historical precedents when the US used the Philippines as "principal rearguard and staging point" for its interventionist wars against North Korea (1950s) and against North Vietnam (1960s-70s). "The US military presence was also the hinge around which the counterinsurgency war was organized against the NPA in the 1970s and 1980s."

Prof. Jose Ma. Sison, chief political consultant of the NDFP peace negotiating panel, observed:

"It is very clear to Trump that the Duterte regime is securely a puppet of US imperialism. All the major treaties, agreements and arrangements that have tied the Philippines to the US economically, politically, culturally, and militarily remain intact. Trump's comment reflects the fact that the US dominates the Philippines as its 'most prime real estate' in Southeast Asia and is an important forward base of the US in the East Asia-Pacific region."

As to the NPA's response to OPE-P, national spokesperson Ka Oris undauntedly stated:

"Expanding the mass base, strengthening and expanding the NPA through trainings and massive recruitments, making sure the revolutionary work is done in a comprehensive manner—to ensure that the guerilla forces and bases can withstand and outlast the relentless attacks from enemy forces."

These, Ka Oris said, must be done "alongside the strengthening and adaptation of the NPA and the people to US sophisticated

weapons, such as surveillance and attack drones, that the (AFP) forces are already using against civilian communities." Last words from Prof. Sison:

"It would be politically and financially costly, at the expense of the people, if the Duterte regime relies solely on its 'all-out-war' policy, *Oplan Kapayapaan* and *Operation Pacific Eagle-Philippines* and tries to bribe the AFP, PNP and paramilitaries to go on a rampage of mass murder with P25,000 for the killing of every suspected or maliciously listed 'NPA member.' "

Let's follow through how this revived US imperialist "contingency operation" will proceed, and be militantly ready to expose and oppose every anti-people project it will launch. **LIB**

CHALLENGE TO THE OPEN DEMOCRATIC MASS MOVEMENT

OPPOSE A NEW DICTATORSHIP VIA CHARTER CHANGE!

By Angel Balen

On February 24, on the 32nd anniversary of the ouster through popular uprising of the 14-year US-Marcos dictatorship, coordinated protest actions nationwide centered on the call: Oppose the Duterte fascist regime's Charter change proposals, frustrate the scheme to install a dictatorship!

The proposed charter changes, now pending in the House of Representatives (dominated by a "supermajority" of mostly traditional political turncoats belonging to political dynasties), are correlated with





President Duterte’s drive to shift the form of government from the current unitary to a federal system. Such a shift has by itself raised doubts and concerns over the perils of the big rush to push it through. The latest target is before the end of 2019.

What perils? Three interrelated matters: The shift to federalism would enable all the incumbent elective officials (legislative and executive), so many of them corrupt and abusive, to remain in their posts throughout—and most probably even beyond—the transition period from unitary to federal. It would break up the Philippines into regional states that would add a new layer of bureaucracy, red tape, and political largesse and expand the powers of entrenched political dynasties and warlords; and it would enshrine in the prospective constitution the discredited pork barrel system, which would fatten these greedy politicians to no end.

From where does the threat of dictatorship emanate? It would be during that transition period—

suggested at nearly 12 years by the PDP-Laban ruling party proposal—that President Duterte (as the incumbent) would be granted oversight power over all branches of government (executive, legislative, and judiciary), constitutional bodies, independent bodies, departments, agencies and offices of the government. In effect, he could exercise absolute powers as the dictator Marcos did for 14 years.

All the above should not be allowed to happen.

Other pernicious proposals

Moreover, highly pernicious to the national interest and the people’s welfare are the many proposals to delete or water down provisions of the 1987 Constitution. These provisions largely embody the sovereign, libertarian, democratic, and humanitarian principles and aspirations of the Filipino people that impelled them to struggle hard to oust the US-Marcos dictatorship. Among the proposals are the following:

- o Delete or water down

progressive and protectionist provisions on the national economy and patrimony, including limits on foreign ownership of land, public utilities, media and educational institutions, and preference for Filipino enterprises and professionals;

- o Delete or water down provisions on social justice and human rights, particularly the right to security of tenure and living wage [for workers], agrarian reform [for peasants and farmworkers], and urban land reform and housing [for the urban poor];
- o Limit the exercise of the people’s sovereign will to mere suffrage [voting in elections], and the freedom of the press, free expression, assembly and redress of grievances to their “responsible” exercise; and
- o Delete or water down provisions prohibiting foreign military bases, troops, facilities as well as nuclear weapons in the country.

None of the above proposals should be allowed to pass. These are the most anti-people changes to the constitution ever put forward.

Three previous presidents—Fidel V. Ramos, Joseph Estrada, and Gloria M. Arroyo—attempted to change parts of the 1987 Constitution. The first two attempts sought mainly to enable the sitting president to remain in power, the third aimed to allow foreigners to own lands in the country and open foreign participation in fields reserved only to Filipinos. Each attempt was frustrated by a show of strong popular opposition.

Because the Duterte regime’s charter change is far worse than the previous three, all the more must the open democratic mass movement endeavor to harness all available means to stop it.

Movement Against Tyranny

The above proposed changes to the 1987 Constitution are among those cited in a unity statement of the No to Cha-cha Coalition, formed on February 13, 2018, through the initiative of the Movement

Against Tyranny (MAT). The unity statement bears a long title: “Uphold democracy, sovereignty, social justice and human rights! No to Charter change!” It has been circulated for signatures of endorsement for anyone interested to join the fight.

The MAT itself was formed only on August 28, 2017. Its aim: “To unite all freedom-loving Filipinos against tyranny and build a broad front to counter the increasing fascism and militarist rule of the Duterte government.” Its formation at the national level, with counterparts being organized at regional level around the country, was a timely response to the need for more unified and vigorous popular actions in confronting the Duterte fascist regime.

The formation of the MAT was coordinated by the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan, which has been the mobilizing center for the multisectoral progressive forces in the open/legal democratic mass movement since its founding on May 5, 1985 (in the waning days of the US-Marcos dictatorship).

As soon as it was formed, MAT’s convenors announced its initial mass protest action: a broad-based huge rally at the Luneta Park on September 21, coinciding with the 45th year of the declaration of martial law by Ferdinand E. Marcos.

The September 21 protest rally at the Luneta Park proved to be a magnet that attracted people from all walks of life to join. Over 21,000 organized progressive forces were mobilized, but the unorganized and those not within the loop of the progressive mass movement exceeded their number. At the height of the activity, and despite the rain, the crowd rose to 44,000.

Students from various schools, colleges and universities constituted the bulk of the crowd. The rally also served as a reunion for veteran anti-martial law/anti-Marcos dictatorship activists and former political prisoners, who exchanged recollections of their experiences and enthusiastically chanted: “Never again! Never again to martial law!”

A report on the gathering by the online *Bulatlat* news website said in part:

“The crowd was a friendly, cheerful mix of old and young. There were school kids, millennials, middle-aged and seniors. Their placards and printed-out tarpaulins were witty, yet angry and committed to fighting the return of, or tendencies toward, martial law, against extrajudicial killings, corruption and tyranny. They clapped, chanted and sang as a group and many stayed despite the rain towards the end of the program.”

Movie and stage actors, professional singers, musical bands, and a full contingent of theater artists of the Philippine Educational Theater Association (PETA) performed. They launched a Filipino version of the *Les Misérables* musical piece, “Do You Hear the People Sing?” and capped the rally with the signature protest song, “*Bayan Ko*,” of the 1986 “people power” uprising.

The next big rally under the auspices of the Movement Against Tyranny was the December 10 International Human Rights Day march-rally. The bulk of the marches first gathered at Liwasang Bonifacio, then marched to the Andres Bonifacio Shrine near the Manila City Hall, where fiery speeches were delivered, interspersed with songs and cultural presentations. Before dusk the animated protesters marched with lighted torches to Mendiola near Malacanang Palace. There Duterte’s effigy was burned amidst chantings and flag waving of the various participating organizations.

It was at the Bonifacio Shrine program where a group of artists, journalists and other media practitioners made a call: “Let us organize for democracy and integrity.” From that call was born an organization named LODI, which has vowed to challenge Duterte’s public

information machinery, fact-check his pronouncements and those by his aides and supporters who command an online following. LODI’s initial statement said:

“Duterte himself has led the assault on freedom of expression and disinformation campaigns, aided by a well-oiled machinery of disinformation peddlers and digital storm troopers. Duterte’s attacks on media companies whom he had accused of unfair reportage have been amplified by a well-funded social media army, in part underwritten by taxpayers.”

“It is not enough to call for a halt to government-led disinformation campaigns,” LODI emphasized. “We will expose these deceptions,” it vowed.

No more turnarounds for Duterte?

Since he unraveled himself as a fascist—a fascist compliant to US imperialism—early in his second year as president, Rodrigo R. Duterte appears to hold no thought of turning back or reconsidering the often rash actions he took on specific occasions. This is specifically so with regard to his curt statement, addressed to the revolutionary movement and the organized masses with whom he had earlier avowed a long-running friendship, even affinity: **“I am your enemy!”**

No more falterings and turnarounds that characterized his first year in office?

Duterte’s fascist regime has unrelentingly pushed its “all-out [counterinsurgency] war” against the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People’s Army (CPP-NPA) since February 2017. That month saw the abrupt ending of five months of tenuous reciprocal unilateral ceasefire declarations, during which period three rounds of formal negotiation in the



GRP-NDFP peace talks (that had begun in August 2016) were successfully held in Europe.

After a relatively successful fourth negotiation round in April (with the GRP failing to comply with an agreement, during the back-channel discussions in March, to restore the reciprocal unilateral ceasefires), Duterte began playing a go-stop-go-stop game on the peace talks.

He cancelled the fifth round as it was scheduled to start in May. He set back-channel discussions for the fifth round in August but cancelled these in July. With his go-signal, two productive back-channel discussions took place in October and early November, hammered out three documents prepared for initialing or signing. But on November 22, as the fifth round of formal negotiations was about to begin in Oslo to take up the three documents, Duterte ordered the cancellation of “all talks with the Left.” The following day he issued Proclamation 360 formally terminating the peace talks.

However, the GRP has not sent a formal notification to the NDFP Executive Council, as protocol requires, terminating the 1995 Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees (JASIG). Once acknowledged by the NDFP, the notice of termination of the JASIG and the peace talks will take effect 30 days after such acknowledgment. Absent that, the GRP-NDFP peace talks are deemed to be indefinitely suspended.

Tagging the CPP-NPA as “terrorist”

On December 5, 2017, Duterte issued Proclamation 374, formally declaring the CPP-NPA as a “designated/identified terrorist organization” in accordance with two anti-terrorism laws of the reactionary government, legislated at the instance of the US government.

That presidential act has upped the ante of state antagonism towards the Left revolutionary movement and the virulence of its “all-out war.”

However, the terrorist tagging or “proscription” cannot instantly take legal effect, no matter that it’s a presidential proclamation. According to the anti-terrorism law it invokes, the GRP justice department must first file a petition before a regional trial court seeking the latter’s approval. The process entails going through public hearings (purportedly to hear both sides, similar to public trials) before the court can issue a decision. (Such a process took five years to conclude, for instance, before a Mindanao RTC branch declared the Abu Sayyaf group as a terrorist organization.)

Up to this writing, the GRP justice department hasn’t filed a petition. Yet the state security forces have already exploited Proclamation 374 to intensify their villification attacks on the CPP-NPA and against legal progressive organizations that they obdurately tag as “fronts” or “supporters” of the CPP-NPA. During a successful jeepney drivers’ strike against the government’s costly motor vehicle modernization program, called by Piston and supported by the Kilusang Mayo and the human rights alliance Karapatan, Duterte himself accused the three organizations of being allied with the CPP-NPA. He erroneously threatened to charge them with rebellion—of rising up in arms against the government).

Pleased with himself

As matters stand, Duterte appears pleased with himself and with what he has been doing and saying (repeatedly before various audiences around the country) to harass, insult and threaten his perceived enemies. Among his frequent targets for vitriol are human rights defenders, within the country

and abroad. He brushes aside their call for a stop to the extrajudicial killings (both in carrying out his “war on illegal drugs” and the counterinsurgency campaign) and for justice to the victims of human rights violations.

When peasants from Mindanao, Visayas, and Luzon undertook a 10-day journey to Manila to demand fulfillment of his promises to them and to stop the killing of farmers (at the time the victims numbered 99, now 111), Duterte desisted from meeting with them. He didn’t make any statement at all. He also ignored the pleas of the Moros and indigenous peoples of Mindanao (Duterte’s home region), who had likewise journeyed for several days, encamped at the University of the Philippines Diliman campus for over a month, and rallied before the AFP headquarters and various government offices. They demanded positive actions on their problems, among others an end to the militarization of their communities, the shutdown of their schools, and the lifting of martial law in Mindanao.

Vis-à-vis organized labor, Duterte has hedged on signing an Executive Order abolishing contractualization (one of his electoral campaign promises), which he had asked the combined conservative and militant trade union formations to draft and which the secretary of labor has already approved.

Expressing irritation over media reports critical of his governance and pronouncements, Duterte routinely made veiled threats to certain journalists and media establishments, and caused the issuance of an order to close down a leading online news website, Rappler. (See also page 19)

Duterte has spoken most venomously and disparagingly against the New People’s Army, accusing the latter of continually killing “my soldiers and my policemen.” After dining in Malacanang with alleged “former leftist rebels,” he facetiously suggested that women revolutionary fighters shouldn’t be killed but should be shot in their genitals to render them “useless”. And speaking to representatives of indigenous people’s tribes assembled by the military in Davao, he instigated them to kill NPA Red fighters, instead of joining or supporting them. He even offered to pay P20,000 (later increasing it to P25,000) as reward for every NPA member they could kill—who could very well be a fellow tribesman. (Duterte had earlier claimed that 90 percent of the NPA members in one Mindanao area are indigenous people.)

Puppetry to US imperialism

Regarding the fascist Duterte being a compliant vassal or puppet of US imperialism, here’s a stark proof.

A US government report issued last month confirmed that, back in September 2017, the Trump administration had launched *Operation Pacific Eagle* as the US military’s “new” overseas contingency operations in the Asia-Pacific region. And it got the Duterte regime to complicitly agree to allow American special operations forces to accompany AFP troops in ALL their missions against violent “extremist” or “terrorist” armed groups, especially in Mindanao.

Actually, *Operation Pacific Eagle* is a revival of George W. Bush’s *Operation Enduring Freedom* in his notorious “war on terror” that began in the last quarter of 2001.

During the so-called siege of Marawi by alleged Islamic State affiliates, the Maute and Hapilon-led Abu Sayyaf groups, the US military played a key role in using sophisticated aircraft and drones to identify targets for the daily aerial bombings and artillery bombardment that flattened Marawi City. Duterte was fulsome in thanking them. The Americans has exploited as a convenient justification for launching *Operation Pacific Eagle-Philippines* the need for US troops to continue supporting the Duterte regime in suppressing the remnants of the alleged IS affiliates that it claims have regrouped and are aggressively recruiting new members in Mindanao.

In turn, having declared the CPP-NPA as a “terrorist organization,” the Duterte regime likewise has found it convenient to allow fully-armed American special operation troops to be directly involved in carrying out its counterinsurgency program, deviously misnamed *Oplan Kapayapaan*, against the CPP-NPA. It so happens that the bulk of the armed strength of the CPP-NPA is in Mindanao. Thus, it’s there where the AFP has been concentrating much of its counterinsurgency resources and operations. *Oplan Kapayapaan* will now be conflated with the “anti-terrorism” campaign against the alleged IS affiliates.

Taking advantage of martial law

Those who launched *Operation Pacific Eagle* in a low-key manner in September, without publicly announcing its nature and implications, took advantage of the extended implementation of martial law in Mindanao. Martial law has been in effect in the whole of Mindanao since Duterte imposed it in May 2017 in connection with the “siege of Marawi.” Despite the ending of the five-month devastating war in Marawi, military rule has been extended up to the end of 2018. Although the claimed regrouping and recruitment of the alleged IS affiliates was invoked as primary basis, the strong presence of the NPA in the region has been anomalously added as basis to justify the extension.

Duterte has even warned that if the CPP-NPA stepped up armed operations elsewhere in the country he wouldn’t hesitate to declare martial law nationwide.



With these developments, more American troop infusions and more military facilities construction inside Philippine military bases and camps (allowed under the EDCA) can be expected in the coming months or years. It’s not farfetched that such military facilities buildup will be utilized as platforms by the Trump administration for launching military interventionist actions in any country in Asia-Pacific. Such US aggression from US facilities here can implicate the Philippines. Extended US military basing in the country (without a formal bases agreement) can also boost America’s capability for military maneuvers vis-à-vis its rival China over military and geopolitical dominance in the South China Sea and further in the Asia-Pacific region.

Definitely, these developments pose a challenge to the open democratic mass movement to strengthen its anti-imperialist flank before *Operation Pacific Eagle* can put in place its military interventionist programs. A vigorous campaign against Trump’s reviving in Asia-Pacific Bush-era’s *Operation Enduring Freedom* can logically be fused with the No to Charter Change campaign, specifically as it connects with the existing constitutional ban on foreign military bases, troops and facilities in the Philippines.**LIB**

MINDLESSLY MISHANDLING THE GRP-NDFP PEACE NEGOTIATIONS

by Leon Castro

Like a poker game that he plays all by himself, whimsically rigging the rules, is how Rodrigo R. Duterte now apparently treats the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations. He has mindlessly cast aside all the hard work that both his government’s negotiating panel and that of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) have painstakingly undertaken.

Twice did Duterte arbitrarily cancel the fifth round of formal negotiations, in May and August 2017. But in both instances (as he had done earlier) he subsequently resorted to back-channel talks and agreed to continue the negotiations.

Then in late November, with characteristic abruptness, he cancelled the scheduled fifth formal negotiating round, then scuttled it altogether.

Up till the last minute, all looked rosy for the peace talks. In two discreet back-channel discussions in October and early November—to which Duterte had given explicit go-signal—the GRP and NDFP panels worked furiously to hammer out three draft documents. They had agreed, at the minimum, to refine and initial the documents at the fifth round and, at the maximum, to finalize and sign

them at the sixth round in early 2018. The heads and members of both panels were already in Oslo, Norway, when Duterte’s order to cancel the talks came.

The three draft documents were: a draft agreement on agrarian reform and rural development and on national industrialization and economic development (the prime aspects of a Comprehensive Agreement on Social and Economic Reforms or CASER); a draft Coordinated Unilateral Ceasefire Agreement; and a draft General Amnesty for political prisoners.

Had the fifth round of formal negotiations proceeded and achieved its set objectives, 2017 would have ended with high hopes for continuing peace negotiations. And the Duterte government would have looked good in the eyes of the Filipino people.

Hundreds of hours of meetings cum negotiations by the Reciprocal Working Committees for Social and Economic Reforms (RWCs-SER) went into the drafting of the first document, which could have accelerated the entire peace

process towards addressing the root causes of the nearly 50 years of armed conflict and attaining just and lasting peace in the country.

Common agrarian reform and national industrialization drafts

Over seven months of peace talks with four formal rounds of negotiations, the NDFP and the GRP panels were able to forge ahead in crafting common drafts for agrarian reform and rural development and for national industrialization and economic development. They held bilateral meetings during the second, third and fourth rounds—in Oslo, Norway (October 7-8, 2016); Rome, Italy (January 22-24, 2017); and Nordwijk an Zee, The Netherlands (April 4-5, 2017), respectively. In addition, there were no less than 10 bilateral meetings in the Philippines and abroad by the NDFP and GRP RWCs-SER between April 25 and November 17 last year.

On agrarian reform and national industrialization, there were nine sections in the common draft signed in Manila by the RWCs last November 20 and witnessed by

the Royal Norwegian Government third party facilitator. These are:

Free distribution of land to tillers, farmers, farmworkers and fisherfolks and writing off of the arrears in amortization payments by earlier land reform beneficiaries;

The agreement includes coverage of plantations and large-scale commercial farms with leasehold, joint venture, non-land transfer schemes (e.g. stock distribution option);

Immediate and expedited installation of farmer beneficiaries;

Implementation of agrarian support services on production, harvest, post-harvest, insurance, credit and free irrigation;

Elimination of exploitative lending and trading practices;

Fisheries and aquatic resources reforms;

National land and water use policy aligned with agrarian reform;

Develop rural industries and domestic science and technology; and

Building of rural infrastructure, such as irrigation, post-harvest, transport, communication, power facilities.

Signed on the same day, the NDFP and the GRP RWCs common draft on national industrialization listed 10 agreed-on sections, as follows:

1. Use of the term “national industrialization”;
2. Explicit mention of economic planning;
3. Development of specific industries, industrial sectors, and industrial projects;
4. Nationalization of public utilities and mining;

5. “Filipinization” of minerals processing and trade;
6. Regulation of foreign investment;
7. State intervention and regulation;
8. Creation of workers' councils;
9. Breaking foreign monopoly control of industrial technologies; and
10. Financing through higher taxes on the rich and lower on poor, as well as revenues from gambling, luxury goods, tobacco/alcohol, and tariffs. The parties also agreed to set up an industrial investment fund.

The agrarian reform and rural development and the national industrialization and economic development accords, are parts of the prospective Comprehensive Agreement on Social and Economic Reforms (CASER) Part III, under the title Developing the National Economy. These are



mutually acknowledged by the NDFP and the GRP as the most important aspects of the peace negotiations. When finally approved by the principals and implemented, they are expected to alleviate poverty and inequality in the country—addressing the root causes of the armed conflict.

From both sub-agreements, the social and economic reform negotiations are expected to move on to the next issues, which are environmental protection, rehabilitation and compensation. The other parts of the CASER agenda include the following:

Part IV. Upholding people's rights

- a. Rights of the working people
- b. Promoting patriotic, progressive and pro-people culture
- c. Recognition of ancestral lands and territories of national minorities

Part V. Economic sovereignty for national development

- a. Foreign economic & trade relations
- b. Financial, monetary & fiscal policies
- c. Social & economic planning

Part VI. Overall implementing mechanism

Part VII. Final provisions

Negotiations on the above issues are expected to be easier and faster, compared with those on agrarian reform and national industrialization which are deemed to be the hardest part of the entire negotiations.

Volatile GRP president

Apparently, all it took for Duterte to mindlessly cast aside these great achievements of the negotiations was his seeing on television militant activists protesting US President Donald Trump's visit to the Philippines for the Asean summit last November. Were imagined personal slights arising from such protest action against one he probably considered a soul mate, more important to him than assiduously working to achieve peace?

Not long after seeing ASEAN protest videos on television, Duterte ordered his negotiators to cancel "all planned meetings with the CPP/NPA/NDFP." Subsequently, he issued Proclamation 360 (November 23) terminating the GRP-NDFP peace talks. This was followed by Proclamation 374 (December 5) declaring the Communist Party of the Philippines and the New People's Army (CPP-NPA) as "terrorist organizations" under both the Human Security Act of 2007 (RA 9373) and the Terrorism Financing Prevention and Suppression Act of 2012 (RA 10168).

Under the law, the proscription of the CPP and NPA as terrorist organizations doesn't instantly take effect. The government needs to first file a petition with a Regional Trial Court to proclaim the CPP and NPA as terrorist organizations, which petition will have to undergo hearings before the court can issue a ruling. Yet Duterte's proclamation and his military minions' relentless campaign to slander the revolutionary organizations have opened the gates to more human rights violations, as happened in his notorious Oplan Tokhang against suspected drug users and peddlers.

His ordering the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), the Philippine National Police (PNP) and the reactionary government's intelligence branches to arbitrarily list down suspected officers and members of underground revolutionary organizations and of their alleged aboveground "fronts" can only be interpreted as orders for increased intimidation, abduction, torture and murder of legal democratic activists and other civilians.

In the latter part of 2017, Duterte did these things that expose himself as a fraud and a liar disinterested in peace as well as a tyrant in the exact mold of his idol Ferdinand Marcos.

NDFP determined to fight for just peace

Duterte's lies and slander against revolutionary organizations, however, failed to gain traction among the Filipino people. The people have become aware of and disgusted over Duterte's mass murder of suspected drug users and peddlers. More and more have also wised up to his obvious subservience to capitalist and foreign interests, plunder of the environment, attacks against peasant and national minority communities, and his own family's connections with underworld groups. And his lies against the revolutionary forces are increasingly being dismissed as hot flashes of a drug-addled mind.

NDFP chief political consultant Jose Maria Sison has remarked that the US-directed Duterte regime is daydreaming that it can discredit and destroy the sovereign revolutionary will of the Filipino people by proscribing the revolutionary forces as terrorist organizations, by requiring them to submit themselves to the sham processes of the reactionary state, and by unleashing gross and systematic crimes of terrorism and human rights violations.

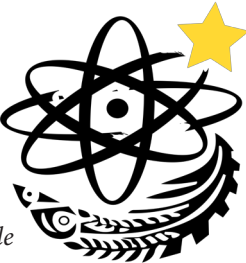
The Filipino people and the revolutionary forces, he said, are determined to fight for national and social liberation, people's democracy, economic development, cultural progress and just peace.

While the Duterte fascist regime may have terminated the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations, Sison pointed out, "it cannot be too sure that it will last long [in power] because the Filipino people and even those in the GRP detest the monstrous crimes of the regime, especially mass murder, corruption and puppetry to the US." The crisis of the ruling system continues to worsen and the resources of the regime for violence and deception are limited. **LIB**

DEVELOPING THE ECONOMY WHILE SAFEGUARDING THE ENVIRONMENT

by Marie Johnson

Liga ng Agham para sa Bayan-National Democratic Front of the Philippines is an organization of scientists, technologists and environmentalist for the people



Vinta, Yolanda, Pablo, Sendong, Quiel, Pepeng, Ondoy.

Every year, the list grows longer as the country marks another destructive typhoon that leaves widespread devastation in its wake. Every year also government authorities seem to fail to fully learn the lessons from previous disasters. They fall short of the needed preparations and respond late and inadequately to the new onslaughts. Thus, in many instances, our people in the gravely affected areas are left to face the devastations and endure the prolonged hazards and inconveniences largely on their own.

And almost always the poor and marginalized sectors—the peasants, fisherfolk, national minorities, and the urban poor and their respective communities bear the brunt of these nature-inflicted disasters.

The problem, however, is not merely government neglect or inadequate capability to cope with the disasters.



At bottom, our people's historical and increasing vulnerability to the devastations of natural disasters can be attributed to the country's chronic underdevelopment, aggravated by the plunderous pattern of economic activity, continuing in many areas, of neocolonial exchange of raw-material exports and imports of finished manufactures.

Plunder of resources = backward economy and ravaged environment

The decades-old export-oriented economic policy/program has opened the country's natural resources to exploitation by foreign monopoly capitalists, their big comprador bourgeoisie partners and bureaucrat capitalists.

Their plunder has resulted in a ravaged environment and a backward, underdeveloped economy. The denudation of mountains and destruction of watersheds, through large-scale open-pit mining and logging operations, are primarily accountable for the ferocious flash floods, massive landslides and the incalculable devastations they entail whenever strong typhoons visit our country.

Key tools of such plunder are the neoliberal policies on mining, logging, large-scale plantations, power/energy, and other extractive and destructive industries. Of late this problem, tagged as "development aggression", has been worsened by the militarization of vast areas of the countryside and upland communities as part of the state's continually recycled yet unsuccessful counterinsurgency program. Not only has this development aggression been destroying the environment; it also has been displacing peasants, indigenous peoples and national minorities from their lands.

Despite our vast rich agricultural lands, forestry, marine, mineral and energy resources, the nation's economy remains backward. It has stayed mainly agrarian and increasingly engaged in supplying cheap labor to both developed and developing economies all over the world, while exporting agricultural products and raw extractive minerals. Without a significant Filipino industrial sector, we continue to import needed industrial inputs, capital equipment, finished goods, and agricultural commodities.

National industrialization and agrarian reform keys to development and sound environment

To reduce our poor people's vulnerability to natural disasters, we need to develop a modern and diversified industrial economy that ensures rapid and sustained growth while securing livelihood and satisfying the basic needs of our people. We need to industrialize and develop our national economy within the constraints of our fragile environment—while scientifically and conscientiously protecting, safeguarding and managing the utilization of its mineral resources and rehabilitating its damaged watersheds and enhancing its flora and fauna bounties.

This entails implementing genuine agrarian reform, rural development, and national industrialization. National industrialization seeks maximum self-sufficiency in the industrial production of both capital and consumer goods. It seeks to mobilize Filipino capital to produce primarily for domestic consumption rather than for export.

The reference book **Philippine Society and Revolution** highlights the stunted growth of our economy despite our vast natural resources and huge labor force. On the other hand, it also shows the enormous potential of our country to

industrialize given that it is among the most mineral-rich countries in the world with many of the basic minerals needed for industrial development.

How would such industrialization look like? And what is the role of environmental protection in such a plan?

National industrialization is the development of key domestic industries to attain self-sufficiency in industrial production of capital goods needed by ancillary industries, aimed at bringing about economic growth and independence. It also aims to develop intermediate and consumer-goods production capacity for domestic needs based on national potentials and to ensure food security and for all.

This is in contrast to the current pattern of production, investments, and trade that exports agricultural and extractive raw materials, imports surplus finished goods, agricultural commodities and capital and re-exports low value-added reassembled or repackaged imported manufactures.

A new way to look at mining and mineral processing

Mining has been part of the historical development of national economies. In the experience of industrialized nations, a prosperous mining industry is needed to supply the minerals needed for production by industries that would, along with modernized agriculture, provide the basic needs of the people.

The Philippines is a mineral resource-rich country. Despite the abundance of such resources, the country lacks the necessary industries to process the minerals. Instead, the mining

sector has been liberalized further by inviting more large-scale and foreign mining corporations.

By judiciously utilizing mineral resources, we can develop a local mining industry for the production of raw materials such as base metals and basic chemicals needed by the basic heavy and medium industries producing steel for construction, engines for various uses, and agricultural tools.

Mining under a national industrialization framework departs from its current character of production, which is primarily dictated by the demands of the international market for raw minerals. Instead we shall base mineral extraction on our actual needs and the demands of industrialization. In this regard, all mining operations shall be strictly regulated to ensure the domestic processing of mineral ores up to the secondary and tertiary stages of industrial production.

We shall endeavor to build an integrated national minerals industry that would also provide employment not only on the extraction side but also in the downstream industries that should be built. These factories will process our own minerals for our own use and enable us independently to produce machinery, tools and consumers goods that we will need. It will also uncouple the mining industry from its dependence on world market prices and exports and directly integrate it to national development needs.

The country lacks intermediate processing capability for base metals since most operations directly export raw or semi-processed ores after

extraction. Intermediate processing includes smelting and refining which are pre-requisites to more downstream industries, which produce the end products that factories and consumers use.

We now have smelting and refining capabilities only in gold, silver and copper but lack the necessary intermediate processing capabilities for nickel, iron and chromite which are necessary for steelmaking. Among the potential downstream industries of nickel processing are stainless steel, special steel, tool steels and batteries.

Current domestic steel consumption is approximately 7 million metric tons, with around 5 million MT imported. South Korea, now the world's fourth largest producer of steel, started out production in 1972 by making special efforts to supply iron and steel to domestic companies at below export prices.

Mining, land reform and national industrialization

Industrial metal production should be tied with the needs of land reform and rural development. After free land distribution, agricultural modernization and mechanization would be crucial in the overall development of farm production. Agricultural mechanization pertains to the manufacture, distribution, and utilization of tools, implements, and machines for agricultural production and post-production operations.

Mechanization of farming will increase labor and land productivity. Agricultural machines and equipment help in soil preparation, better irrigation, crop

protection and reduce post-harvest losses increasing effective crop yield. Currently most agricultural machinery is imported.

With an integrated minerals industry producing not only raw materials but finished metals for tools and machinery, we can reduce in steps this dependence on imports until we are self-sufficient in the production of farm machineries, tools and infrastructure materials needed by the agriculture sector.

It is not only the metals and steel industry that we should develop but also the extraction of other minerals needed by agriculture, such as fertilizers and other inputs.

Sustainability

As a general rule, since the mining industry is being developed to support and enhance our industrial capacity and to achieve food security, prime agricultural lands and areas that are targeted for food production must not be classified as mineral lands. Mining activity on such lands must be banned. Due care should also be collectively ensured so that off-site effects of mining would not adversely affect adjoining land areas.

The state has a crucial role in overseeing the disposition of our resources and industries in line with the national interest. This involves the determination of available resources; establishing sustainable targets for exploration, mine development and production; procurement and allocation of capital and technology; and management of the domestic mineral market.

The level of extraction and the amount of mineral production

should be based on the desired level of industrialization and agricultural modernization. It should be done in consultation with and consent of those in mining-affected communities and should guarantee the right of indigenous peoples and national minorities to self determination and their ancestral domain.

In such mining operations, job security, living wages and safe working conditions must be ensured. Research and development for substitute and new materials, mine rehabilitation and the reduction of waste and pollution should be encouraged. At all stages of mining, environmental protection and development shall be guaranteed.

Note: *The above discussion on mining and national industrialization has been derived from the section on environmental protection, rehabilitation and compensation of the draft Comprehensive Agreement on Social and Economic Reforms (CASER), produced by the Reciprocal Working Committee of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines peace negotiating panel for the long-running GRP-NDFP peace talks.*

The draft was to have been exchanged with that of the GRP panel's counterpart RWC and hammered out into a unified document, which was expected to be signed by the two parties in the GRP-NDFP fifth round of formal negotiations scheduled in late November last year. But President Duterte abruptly and arbitrarily cancelled the peace talks altogether.

The NDFP CASER version contains these proposals in seven sections.

These are: 1) Principles of environmental protection and economic development; 2) Definition of terms; 3) Measures for managing the environment and ensuring resiliency; 4) End environmentally destructive practices; 5) Regulation of mining and marine wealth extraction; 6) Ban on alienation of natural resources and patent control; and 7) Implementing provisions.

The document recognizes that “environmental protection, conservation and wise use of natural resources are necessary components of socioeconomic development policies and that ecological balance is integral to national development”. Such economic development must make judicious use of the country's renewable and non-renewable resources, balancing ecological concerns with economic targets and involve rational planning and zoning to alleviate congestion and pollution. It reserves the country's lands, minerals, waters, flora and fauna, and other natural resources for utilization by the Filipino people.

The NDFP seeks to guarantee democratic consultation, consent, and participation of the affected communities in the use of our natural resources.

The proposal seeks to rehabilitate and protect watershed and other critical areas and to promote the use of renewable energy and the institution of programs to reduce waste. It also seeks compensation for people and communities affected by disasters, by massive pollution and contamination from logging, mining, energy, agro-chemical corporations, by military operations, and the like.

Moreover, the proposal prohibits ecologically destructive practices and the entry of hazardous waste and dangerous munitions.

With regard to mining, it ensures that mining shall only be undertaken when and where there are sufficient provisions for protecting and recovering the environment and that mineral production and development shall help develop local industry and modernize agriculture.

*As regards our people's vulnerability to nature-inflicted disasters, this is not only due to hydrometeorological hazards such as rainfall, typhoon winds or those from earthquakes and volcano eruptions. It is more so a function of the economic capacity of the communities exposed to these hazards. The reduction of this vulnerability will directly result from the availability of jobs that pay living wages— jobs that will result from industries that create domestic employment and serve the local market, and from agricultural modernization and land reform.***LIE**



DUTERTE AND THE PHILIPPINE MASS MEDIA

by Leon Castro

Since the dark days of the Marcos dictatorship, freedom of the press and freedom of expression in the Philippines have never been threatened as viciously as these are today.

As an important part of the struggle to oust the Marcos dictatorship, the 1987 Constitution of the reactionary Philippine Republic includes provisions to safeguard the mass media from attacks by succeeding regimes. Section 4 of the Bill of Rights eloquently states, “No law shall be passed abridging the freedom of speech, of expression, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble and petition the government for redress of grievances.”

Alas, such eloquence and grandness of purpose may prove no match to Rodrigo Duterte’s vindictiveness and viciousness against those he perceives to have an axe to grind against him.

Duterte’s attacks against the mass media apparently stemmed from a perceived slight. He has accused giant media conglomerate ABS-CBN of taking money but refused to run his campaign advertisements during the anomalous 2016 presidential polls. He also accused the *Philippine Daily Inquirer* of consistently running stories pointing out his bloody human rights record as Davao City mayor to ruin his candidacy. For these and other perceived slights, Duterte embarked on a vicious campaign and direct attacks against Philippine mass media.

A regime propped by trolls

Duterte started out by deploying his army of trolls and bloggers, led by a former broadcaster who himself had a checkered career before parlaying his political connections to land a job as presidential communication secretary. The regime hired and pays expensive social media influencers who have no qualms in putting out outright lies and disinformation to undermine the credibility of critical media outlets. The lies of the likes of Mocha Uson, RJ Nieto, Sass Sassot and other highly-paid bloggers have been consistently exposed, yet they blithely keep at it as they enjoy Duterte’s unwavering support and encouragement. They have replaced the likes of Jim Paredes, Leah Navarro, Cynthia Patag, among others, of the notorious Yellow Brigade of the past Benigno Aquino regime.

Paid online trolls under the direction of the regime’s black propaganda operators work round the clock to undermine reports of highly-regarded outfits such as Vera Files and Reuters and cyber-bash respected journalists like Ed Lingao, Raissa Robles, Inday Espina-Varona and many others with pre-formulated “comments” they did not even bother to change even as they were blasted on the same threads one after the other. Many other journalists have reported threats and harassment by either trolls or known Duterte supporters.

All too willingly Duterte does his part in undermining mass media and the journalists’ credibility in the eyes of the people. His arsenal of attacks was not limited to a steady stream of invectives but include outright false accusations as he did with *Inquirer*’s Karlos Manlupig. He also catcalled female journalist Mariz Umali of GMA 7 on live television. Woefully, his tirades are often met with laughter and approving applause by his blinded supporters. Duterte himself is his regime’s worst troll.

Attacks against media outfits

But Duterte’s growing tyranny has gone beyond verbal assaults. His regime is making good his threats against his perceived enemies in the mass media. Duterte’s threats to punish the owners of *Philippine Daily Inquirer* forced them to negotiate a sale with San Miguel Corporation tycoon Ramon Ang who is known to be friendly with the tyrant. There are rumors that notorious attack dog Rigoberto Tiglao would be appointed as the newspaper’s new editor in chief once the sale papers have been signed.



“Supermajority” minions in Congress are heroically aiding the tyrant in his attacks against the mass media. They have refused to table the bill granting a 25-year extension to Catholic Media Network’s broadcast franchise which operates 54 radio stations nationwide. In a statement, international media group Reporters Without Borders expressed concern that the “refusal” of lawmakers to renew the franchise appeared to be “politically motivated,” given the Church’s critical stance on President Duterte’s bloody campaign against illegal drugs. The Protestant group National Council of Churches of the Philippines, which consistently denounces human rights violations by the Duterte regime, is facing similar problems with its broadcast franchise extension. It too operates several radio stations nationwide.

Alas, such eloquence and grandness of purpose may prove no match to Rodrigo Duterte’s vindictiveness and viciousness against those he perceives to have an axe to grind against him.

On January 9, 2017, the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines (NUJP) suffered a denial of service on its website, www.nujp.org. Prior to the attack, the group released a statement against President Duterte’s declaration that he was “playing” with the media. Duterte said in a *CNN Philippines* interview on 29 December 2016, “*Nilalaro ko kayo. Mahilig talaga ako (sa) gan’un. Alam ng team ninyo mahilig ako magbitaw ng kalokohan.*” The NUJP statement was flooded with hate comments from Duterte supporters.

In January this year, the Securities and Exchange Commission, acting upon direct orders from Duterte, declared Rappler’s license as violative of the Constitutional provision on foreign ownership of mass media organizations. Despite the government’s legalese and vigorous denials by its mouthpieces, it could not be denied that Duterte wanted to punish the online news outfit for its reportage of human rights violations in the country.

LIST OF WEBSITES CARRYING FAKE OR UNVERIFIED CONTENTS

In February, alternative media outfit Kodao Productions’ website www.kodao.org was hacked with a code injection attack that prevents its webmasters from logging in and its growing number of readers from accessing the site. Kodao said online forensic investigations it conducted lead them to believe the attack could only be the handiwork of top-tier hackers, such as those employed by governments and intelligence agencies. As the media outfit that most comprehensively reports on the peace process between the National Democratic Front of the Philippines and the Government of the Republic of the Philippines as well as other social justice issues, the temporary loss of Kodao’s website denies the public of a chance to weigh in on the peace agenda

Media killings continue

Much like when he was Davao City mayor, Duterte’s presidency is littered with the dead and wounded bodies of working journalists. A joint statement by the NUJP, Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility (CMFR), and the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism (PCIJ) last November 23, 2017, on the 8th anniversary of the Ampatuan Massacre, said six journalists have been killed under the Duterte regime while eight have survived slay attempts and received death threats.

The situation can turn for the worse with the likes of blogger Nieto encouraging his fellow Duterte blogger to confront photojournalist Jes Aznar once he leaves Marawi City or trolls threatening Al Jazeera reporter Jamela Alindogan and Malacañang beat reporter Pia Rañada with rape. Just recently, Rañada was also banned from covering Malacañang simply because she is from Rappler.

Three libel cases have been filed against journalists under Duterte and four old cases have led to the arrest of the accused.

NUJP, CMFR and PCIJ have also complained that the Duterte regime puts journalists’ lives in danger by compelling them to participate in so-called raids that all too often end up in the killing of poor drug suspects. In addition, the police tries to influence how Duterte’s drug war is being reported. “Against their will, media personnel are sometimes compelled by police officers to sign on as witnesses in police anti-drug operations, supposedly as mandated by the law. Media team members are asked to sign on to the police’s inventory reports on the items that had been seized during police operations, in the form and manner that the police had prepared these,” the group said. This practice exposes media personnel to serious

legal implications and real conflict of interest, they added.

On Sept. 13, 2017, the Philippine National Police, through its spokesperson Supt. Dionardo Carlos, ordered that spot reports would not be released to reporters unless the “head of office, his duly [designated] representative, his PIO (public information officer) or his spokesperson” determined that such release would not affect an investigation. Carlos reportedly said that the directive restricting journalists from obtaining spot reports was issued as early as Feb. 18, 2014. This goes against the very grain of another of Duterte’s campaign promise, that of freedom of information.

NUJP, CMFR and PCIJ said that the Duterte regime’s flow of official information has been mired in apparent propaganda. “Although a Freedom of Information policy has directed all offices in the executive branch to respond to requests for information, far too many exceptions and denied requests have rendered the supposed policy of openness a farce,” the groups said. They also complained of a remarkable scarcity of substance of the information fed them in official press briefings during milestone events, such as the most recent ASEAN Summit or during the war in Marawi. They complain of Duterte’s communication team’s cavalier stance in throwing around facts out of context, and dishing out partial truths, and even fabricated stories and photographs.

Weaponizing fake news

As the regime attacks journalists who publish critical reports, it also unleashes fake news to supplant legitimate media outfits to mislead the people from Duterte’s human rights violations, corruption, foreign subservience and other inanities. As armies of trolls bombard websites and social media platforms with lies and threats, pro-Duterte websites abound, publishing fake news that twist facts in all incredible manners.

This compelled the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines to issue a list of fake news sites in January 2017, followed by a pastoral letter June of last year. After the list’s publication, some of these websites have been “killed” or their urls changed. Still, a good number of these remain.

The NUJP, in cooperation with an advertising agency, also launched in 2017 an advocacy website called Fakeblok that red-flags websites publishing

CBCP List of Websites “carrying fake or unverified contents,” based on the CBCP Pastoral Guidelines on the Use of Social Media issued on January 30

Classified Trends - <http://www.classifiedtrends.net/>

Definitely Filipino - <http://definitelyfilipino.com/>

Duterte News Info - <http://www.du30newsinfo.com/>

Extreme Readers - <http://www.extremereaders.com/>

FilipiNews PH - <http://www.filipinewsph.com/>

Get Real Philippines - <http://www.getrealphilippines.com/>

Guard1an - <https://theguard1an.com/>

Kalye Pinoy - <http://www.kalyepinoy.com/>

Leak News PH - <http://www.leaknewsph.com/>

Media ni Duterte - <http://www.dutertedefender.com/>

Minda Nation - <http://mindanation.com/>

Netizens PH - <http://www.netizensph.com/>

News Media PH - <http://www.newsmediaph.com/>

News Titans - <http://www.newstitans.com/>

OKD2 - <http://okd2.com/>

Pinoy Freedom Wall - <http://www.pinoyfreedomwall.com/>

Pinoy Trending - <http://pinoytrending.altervista.org/>

Pinoy Trending News - <http://pinoytrendingnews.net/>

Pinoy Viral Issues - <http://www.pinoyviralissues.net/>

Pinoy Viral News - <http://pinoyviralnews.com/>

PinoyWorld - <http://www.pinoyworld.net/>

Public Trending - <http://www.publictrending.net/>

SocialNewsPH - <http://www.socialnewsph.com/>

TahoNews - <http://www.tahonews.com/>

TheVolatilian - <http://www.thevolatilian.com/>

Thinking Pinoy - <http://www.thinkingpinoy.net/>

TrendingBalita - <http://www.trendingbalita.info/>

Trending News Portal - <http://www.trendingnewsportal.net.ph/>

TrendTitan - <http://trendtitan.com/>

fake news. This earned for the organization and the ad agency multiple national awards for confronting the fake news phenomenon that is being used with abandon by the Duterte regime.

But fake news is not confined to online platforms. Fake news is in fact wielded as a black propaganda weapon by the Duterte regime that not only victimizes netizens, it also abets the regime’s killing spree. The Philippine National Police (PNP) use these fake news sites to blame extrajudicial killings victims for being illegal drug peddlers and criminals.

But nothing beats the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) in its mastery of news fakery. It starts from consistently issuing news releases filled with lies and conducting press conferences that twists facts like no other. The mercenary forces of the reactionary state use fake news to cover up both its many battlefield losses and its atrocities against civilians and their communities. This is never been more blatant in its handling of Filipino journalists covering the Marawi siege for six long months. Never was a news coverage been so managed as Marawi that very few reports actually described why an entire city has to be totally destroyed and hundreds of civilians killed just to flush out a handful of gunmen.

Thankfully, these fake news sites and its entire machinery under the Duterte regime is being exposed and the people are already starting to dismiss them as nothing more than lies, albeit dangerous.

Militating the press

Duterte is making the same mistakes his idol Marcos did during his dictatorship. He is not only alienating the mass media, he is making them his enemies. His toxic mix of tyrannical power and violence and public censure against legitimate mass media, on one hand, and lies and misinformation peddled by his trolls and paid hacks, on the other, will likely revive the phenomenon called the “mosquito press” which contributed to Marcos’s downfall.

Responding to attacks against media outfits and reporters, journalists from all over the country are bonding together—organizing forums and rallies to condemn attacks against press freedom. More and more journalists are publishing articles reporting on the regime’s corruption, subservience to foreign powers, human rights violations and even the Duterte family’s incredible and tasteless sense of entitlement.

All these would only help bring the current Malacanang tyrant to his knees and help cause his eventual and inevitable downfall. **LIB**

REVOLUTIONARIES, NOT TERRORISTS

TERRORIST-TAGGING IS OLD HAT

by Vida Gracias

In early December, days after he terminated the peace talks with the National Democratic Front of the Philippines, President Rodrigo Duterte formally declared as “terrorists” the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and the New People’s Army (NPA).

But for those who have grown with the revolution in the country for almost 50 years, the demonization of the CPP-NPA started way back since Marcos’ martial-law dictatorship. In fact the reactionary military—then and now—never stopped using the tag “Communist Terrorists” against real, suspected or imagined revolutionaries.

The terrorist tagging has resulted in an all-out war waged against not only the CPP-NPA but against the entire Filipino people—a war that has combined all the worst features of past and present counter-insurgency programs.

People in the countryside have been inured to seeing slogans on billboards, streamers on walls of houses and trees pointing to the NPA, and even to legal organizations, as “terrorists”. The media, including social media, has been utilized extensively to malign the CPP-NPA. But no matter how zealous current and past regimes have been in such demonization campaign, they have failed to make the tag stick on the CPP-NPA.

Why so? Because the CPP-NPA as a revolutionary force is a far cry from terrorists, who employ armed violence and brutality in wantonly killing people and destroying public facilities and private property to foment widespread fear among the populace. The CPP-NPA uses armed force in a revolutionary war against the reactionary state to seize political power and bring about fundamental social, economic and political changes beneficial to the people that would lead to attaining just and lasting peace.



REVOLUTIONARIES

BELIEVE IN
REVOLUTIONARY
CHANGE TO
SOLVE POVERTY
& JOBLESSNESS
THROUGH GENUINE
LAND REFORM
& NATIONAL
INDUSTRIALIZATION

**TARGET ONLY THE
STATE'S SECURITY
FORCES, INCLUDING
PARAMILITARIES AND
OTHER ATTACHED
ARMED GROUPS**

**TARGET
CIVILIAN
POPULATION
& NON-ARMED
ADVERSARIES**

**DRAW WIDE AND BROAD SUPPORT
OF THE PEOPLE IN THE CITIES AND
COUNTRYSIDE AND DEEPLY IMMERSE
WITH THE PEOPLE THEY SERVE**

**HAVE ITS OWN CODE OF DISCIPLINE,
& ABIDE BY THE GENEVA
CONVENTIONS & INTERNATIONAL
HUMANITARIAN LAW**

TERRORISTS

FURTHER THEIR
CRIMINAL,
RELIGIOUS OR
POLITICAL ENDS FOR
NARROW, SECTORAL
OR SELF-SERVING
INTERESTS

Duterte's revolutionary government or charter change would lead to plain dictatorship, meant to monopolize political and economic power.

Rights group Karapatan
said much about Duterte's
human rights record:

About 10,000 drug-related killings
364,617 victims of indiscriminate firing & bombings
421,000 victims of forced evacuation
some 1,000 civilians killed in Marawi siege
124 extrajudicial killings
924 illegally arrested
256 with trumped-up charges

**CAN NOT RULE
WITHOUT
TERROR**

**CREATE PANIC,
FEAR, DEATH
& DESTRUCTION**

**"I will admit it,
PASISTA AKO!
I will categorize
you already as
TERRORISTS!"**

This fascist terror is not
without US support.



THE NPA PLANS ITS OPERATIONS WITH ZERO CIVILIAN CASUALTIES, BUT WHEN MISTAKES HAPPEN, THE RED COMMANDERS AND FIGHTERS ARE MADE ACCOUNTABLE BY THEIR OWN ORGANIZATION AND PROVIDES COMPENSATION TO VICTIMS FOR WRONGDOINGS

CALL THEIR ENEMIES "TERRORISTS" AS A CONVENIENT EXCUSE TO TRAMPLE ON PEOPLE'S POLITICAL AND CIVIL RIGHTS AND KILL THE OPPOSITION

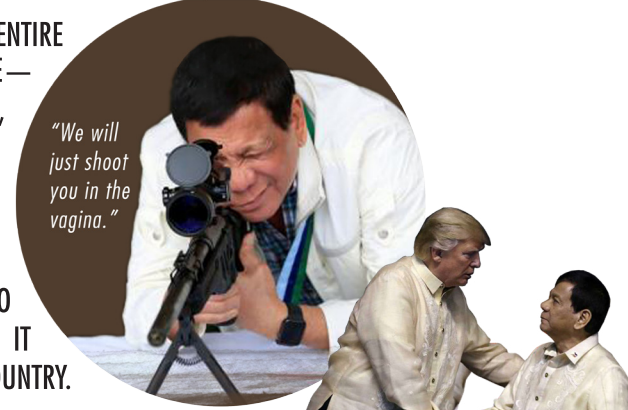


REVOLUTIONARIES TERRORISTS



APART FROM BEING A MILITARY FORCE, THE NPA IS ALSO INTO AGRARIAN REVOLUTION, DISTRIBUTION OF LAND, CROP PRODUCTION, EDUCATION, HEALTH, CULTURE AND THE ARTS

DUTERTE USES THE ENTIRE MACHINERY OF THE STATE — ARMED FORCES, COURTS, PRISONS — AND PUBLIC FUNDS TO SPREAD AND CREATE TERROR. HE HAS EXTENDED MARTIAL LAW FOR ANOTHER YEAR IN MINDANAO AND HINTS AT DECLARING IT ALL OVER THE COUNTRY.



"We will just shoot you in the vagina."



AIM TO AROUSE, ORGANIZE AND MOBILIZE THE MASSES FOR NATIONAL DEMOCRACY AND BUILD ORGANS OF POLITICAL POWER

SO FAR, THERE ARE MORE THAN 60 FORMER MILITARY AND POLICE OFFICIALS IN THE CIVILIAN BUREAUCRACY



TERRORISM DESTROYS PEOPLE'S LIVES BUT ENABLES THE RULING ELITE TO FURTHER PRESERVE AND MAINTAIN THE STATUS QUO, WITH ALL ITS WEALTH AND POWER INTACT OR EXPANDING



THE NPA TREATS THEIR PRISONERS HUMANELY AND REEDUCATE THEM, MOST OF THE TIME EVEN RELEASING THEM TO THEIR LOVED ONES OR FAMILIES



"If there is an armed NPA there or terrorist who is holding firearms, shoot and tell any - ako na ang magsagot (I will answer)."

STATE TERRORISM is the worst type of terrorism.

BREAKING AWAY FROM THE USURIOUS FARM TRADERS

by Priscilla de Guzman

The road leading to the village was mostly rough and muddy, with a few meters of cemented portion after every few kilometers. Where there was a cemented road, harvested corn crops were spread over it on plastic sheets to dry under the sun.

"You were lucky, *kadua* (comrade in the Ilokano language)," Ka Efren told me as he expertly maneuvered his motorcycle through the muddy parts of the road. "It has been raining for weeks. The rain stopped only two days ago, he said.

Ka Efren's community occupies a public land, a forested area, where titling is not allowed by the government. However, some enterprising local government officials and trader-usurers have been able to acquire land titles through

sheer bribery. The public lands have been home to most of the farmers, such as Ka Efren, since birth.

As we passed through another batch of harvested corn being dried, Ka Efren muttered how low the prices that the traders pay for their produce. "I don't know how much I'll earn this harvest season, our corn harvest was not properly dried because of the rains," he lamented.

Embracing victory

Ka Jong, the other motorcycle driver, quickly reminded Ka Efren that, just two days ago after the rains had stopped, a farmers' organization in a Cagayan Valley municipality won its battle against the usurious traders. The good news, he said, had spread like fire in the neighboring communities, towns, and even in other provinces in the region. Ka Efren's face immediately lit up. Yes, he suddenly remembered.

We arrived at the community where the farmers had gathered as members of a local chapter of the Pambansang Katipunan ng mga Magsasaka or PKM (National Peasants Association), one of the founding member-organizations of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines [NDFP]). They were exultant over the victory of the mass action-cum-dialogue with the traders—a victory won through a militant show of unity in demanding that the traders pay justly for the farmers' produce and do away with their usurious practices.

The peasant leaders who joined them can understandably claim much of the credit for the triumph. They were fired up in narrating their collective action, what they had gone through before they achieved victory. They took turns in pointing out how they

had been exploited by the trader-usurers. The latter had monopoly and control of everything the farmers needed from planting to harvesting. They also dictated the prices of their corn and cassava produce. It had been a full cycle of exploitation.

The peasant organization's victory of getting a fair shake from the traders meant the following: reduced interest rates on their loans, higher selling prices for corn and cassava crops, reduced prices of the sacks used in packing their produce, and a reprieve from interest payments they had incurred during the super typhoon Lawin that hit the region in 2016.

"It means a lot to us to skip interest payments on our loans. That means more food for our families," said Ka Ludy, one of the PKM leaders.

Monopoly of the traders

For a long time, loans and interest payments had chained the farmers to the trader-usurers. Without capital to buy seedlings of their choice, the farmers were compelled to plant BT-corn and cassava for cash crops used as animal feeds.

The seedlings were sourced as loans from the traders, who also provided them with fertilizers and herbicides as loans. During harvest, these same traders bought the farmers' produce at a price they practically dictated, based on their own grading and weighing systems—

wherein trickery was usually employed. After the harvest, the farmers ended up practically with nothing in their pockets, or worse, with another sheet of paper where their additional loans and interest payments were listed down.

Most atrocious was the trading of sacks used to pack the harvests. The farmers buy the sacks at Php10.00 each from the local traders who bought these for Php5.00. Per harvest, they have to buy 300 sacks costing Php3,000. The farmers use the sacks to bring their produce to the local traders who, in turn, use these when they sell to the buying stations. These sacks were never returned to the farmers. Thus, when another planting-harvest season starts, the farmers would again spend for the sacks.

Cagayan Valley is the country's top producer of BT-corn, with genetically modified organisms (GMO), and farmers like Ka Ludy and many others in his community had contributed much to its propagation, at their expense.

The Department of Agriculture introduced the BT-corn in the early 2000 but the people widely rejected it. Not long after the trader-usurers were acting as aggressive conduits for its propagation, leaving no choice for the penniless peasants but to accept, as BT-corn was the only available seedling the traders would loan to them.

"It's as if the traders got to hire planters and laborers without salaries," said Ka Ludy. There was a time, when there was no available food for them, some farmers tried to eat BT-corn to find out if it was fit for human consumption. Result: they developed allergies.

Breaking away from the traders

Energized by the recent victory of the farmers, the PKM members are more determined to go on with the plans they had laid out during the AgRev (Agrarian Revolution) conference

held in the last quarter of 2017. The conference was a joint project by local members of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), the New People's Army (NPA), and the various revolutionary mass organizations in the guerrilla front.

During the conference, the peasants resolved to vigorously push for the *palit tanim* (literally, changing plants) campaign. As an initial step, the PKM collectives in the different villages would start planting food crops to ensure food on their tables as they moved to break away from the trader-usurers' dictates.

"The seedlings were donated to us by friends and we will divide these among the collectives in the different villages," Ka Ludy explained. With a steady supply of food on their tables, the farmers can then start planting cash crops of their choice, sell directly in the market individually or collectively, and earn what they have worked for.

"In the long run, this will allow us to do away with the seedlings supplied by the traders and gain freedom from their monopoly and exploitation," he said.

Land distribution and communal farms

The 2017 AgRev conference was the first held in this guerrilla front after more than a decade. In the conference, the revolutionary organizations also lined up plans on maximizing the utilization of idle lands in their communities and those nearby. The local Party and NPA units and the PKM plan to distribute some 50 hectares of land among the 30 poorest peasant families.

"The comrades in the NPA are helping us come up with policies and guidelines in the land distribution, especially on who should be prioritized—those landless and those who lack lands to till," said Ka Iling, a participant in the AgRev conference.

Aside from the individual effort to plant food crops in their *palit tanim* campaign, a substantial portion of the land for distribution will be allotted for communal farming and food production for the needs of the revolutionary mass organizations and the NPA units.

"There have been already existing communal lands in different villages, probably for more than 10 years now. But the lands are too small for our needs," Ka Iling pointed out. "So, aside from these existing communal farms, we could work on a bigger piece of land to augment our needs," he continued. The members of the Party branches and revolutionary mass organizations, he said, could work together and produce more crops.

Minimum and maximum program of agrarian revolution

The efforts of Ka Ludy, Ka Iling, Ka Efren, Ka Jong and other members of the PKM in this community exemplify the unity of the peasants nationwide to carry out the agrarian revolution led by the Party, the people's army, and the NDFP.

Already, almost a million PKM members have benefited from the Party and the NPA's maximum agrarian reform program where more than 44,000 hectares of land were confiscated and redistributed all over the country. Millions of others have benefited from the campaigns for lower land rent, end to usury, just harvest proceeds, increased farm gate prices, and elimination of trickery when produce are weighed and priced.

Only the revolutionary movement led by the CPP-NPA-NDFP can proudly lay claim that, in its almost 50 years of existence, it has slowly but steadily freed the peasants from the hundreds of years of feudal bondage.**LIB**

CORN CASE STUDY IN PESO

Average harvest: 1 hectare / 1 planting season 90 DRIED x KG 50 x ₱ 11 = 49.5 THOUSAND gross income (100-150 SACKS WET PRODUCE)

PAYMENT FOR FARM WORKERS

2	SPRAYING OF HERBICIDES & FERTILIZERS	X 250.00 = 500.00	2	PLOWING	X 300.00 = 600.00
3	CLEANING OF LAND BEFORE PLANTING	X 250.00 = 750.00	9	PLANTING	X 150.00 = 1,350.00
3	BASAL APPLICATION	X 150.00 = 450.00	2	SPRAYING OF HERBICIDES & FERTILIZERS	X 250.00 = 500.00
2	SIDEDRESS	X 150.00 = 300.00	15	HARVESTING	X 150.00 = 2,250.00
	LOADING	X 10.00 /SACK = 1,500.00	3	DRYING	X 150.00 X 3 DAYS = 1,350.00

FARM INPUT	SEEDLINGS 2 Packs 8,000.00	FERTILIZERS * 8 Bags 8,000.00 <small>* Basal & Sidedress, 4 each</small>	HERBICIDES 2 Gals. 1,600.00	OTHERS	SACKS 300 Pcs. 3,000.00	ROPES 4 Rolls 60.00	CANVAS 2 Rolls 2,500.00
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MACHINE RENTALS	THRESHER 17.00 /SACK = 1,700.00	FREIGHT 0.70 /KILO = 3,150.00	LOAN +20% Interest from the Traders & Usurers
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SUMMARY	49.5 THOUSAND Gross Income	WORKERS 9,550	INPUTS 21,120	MACHINES 4,850	OTHERS 5,560	20% INTEREST 8,272	= Php -132.00 Net Income
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*Not included are the costs of wage and food for haulers and truck drivers which the traders charge to the farmers.

HEALTH SERVICES BENEFIT PEASANTS, INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN GUERRILLA FRONTS

by Pat Gambao and Iliya Makalipay

It is not uncommon for people in the remote areas in the Philippines to die without seeing a doctor in their lifetime. A child who is seriously ill, for example, has to be brought on foot to the nearest hospital, usually more than 20 kilometers away from the community. There are no clinics in the villages, and if there are, they stand as empty structures because there are no medical personnel and supplies from the reactionary government, not even a paramedic.

But the scenario has slowly changed after members of the New People's Army (NPA) started functioning as people's medics—holding medical missions and treating the sick as they move from one barrio to the next.

The NPA medics are trained mostly by members of Masapa (Makabayang Samahang Pangkalusugan) or the Patriotic Association of Health practitioners, an allied organization of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP). The NPA, in turn, sets-up barrio health committees as part of their organizing work and in establishing and consolidating revolutionary mass organizations.

Together, the NPA and Masapa members fill in the vacuum left by the reactionary Philippine government, which has historically neglected the delivery of social services to the marginalized segments of the society.

Revolutionary medical practitioners

Founded in 1980's, Masapa is one of the pillars of the NDFP. Since its inception, it has been organizing doctors, nurses, medical students, and others in the health sector who are based in urban centers.

In an interview, Masapa spokesperson Blanca Luna explained that Masapa teams train members of the NPA on health and medical work and provide direct health services to Party members, the red fighters, and masses in the guerrilla fronts. The organization

maintains a network of allies in the medical field who are tapped whenever needed for the same activities. It has also organized the traditional healers/health workers, such as the *hilot* and *komadrona*, as they are in the frontline of health services in the communities.

In the urban centers, "Masapa members organize and mobilize the health sector to fight for their rights to better wages, form unions in their work places and

push for the people's right to health as an integral part of the struggle for national democracy. Masapa takes an active part in the urban mass movement and draws in the middle forces to support, directly or indirectly, the armed struggle," Luna elaborated.

Three-tiered health training

The overall development of the revolutionary health work parallels that of the development and the requirements of the people's war. To this, Luna explained, "the members of Masapa should endeavor to synchronize their efforts with the developments in the guerrilla fronts by reaching out to more health workers and practitioners."

Tapping the expertise of its members and allies in the medical field and in consultation with the cadres involved in the military and mass work in the countryside, Masapa has designed a three-tiered health training program for the NPA—which the latter also uses to train the revolutionary masses: Basic Orientation Course, Intermediate, and Advance.

The courses are all premised on preventive health care. However, the advance course is geared towards developing the capabilities of the medics in the people's army in lifesaving support system. "As the people's war advances, so does the need to advance the capacity of the medics of the people's army," Luna pointed out.

The Basic Orientation Course includes first aid, sanitation, family planning, and the use of alternative medicine such as acupuncture and herbal medicine. On the ground,

these translate to people's health campaigns that include backyard gardening, herbal garden, anti-dengue drive, and construction of safe water and drainage systems. For some medics, their interaction with the indigenous peoples has introduced them to more plant-based cures for common ailments.

The Intermediate Course is geared towards the study of anatomy, child birthing, herbal medicine production, and special procedures that include tooth extraction, simple surgery, trauma and mental health care. A number of communities now produce their own capsules and ointments from plants and herbs.

Medics in the NPA take up the Advance Course where they are taught more elaborately about anatomy and anesthesia and to perform more complicated surgical procedures. In some regions, select health units in the NPA are now able to perform abdominal surgery, the most complicated even among those who went through medical school.

These trainings take about two weeks to one month, depending on the level. Trainees have at least reached the elementary level and are around 20 to 30 years old.

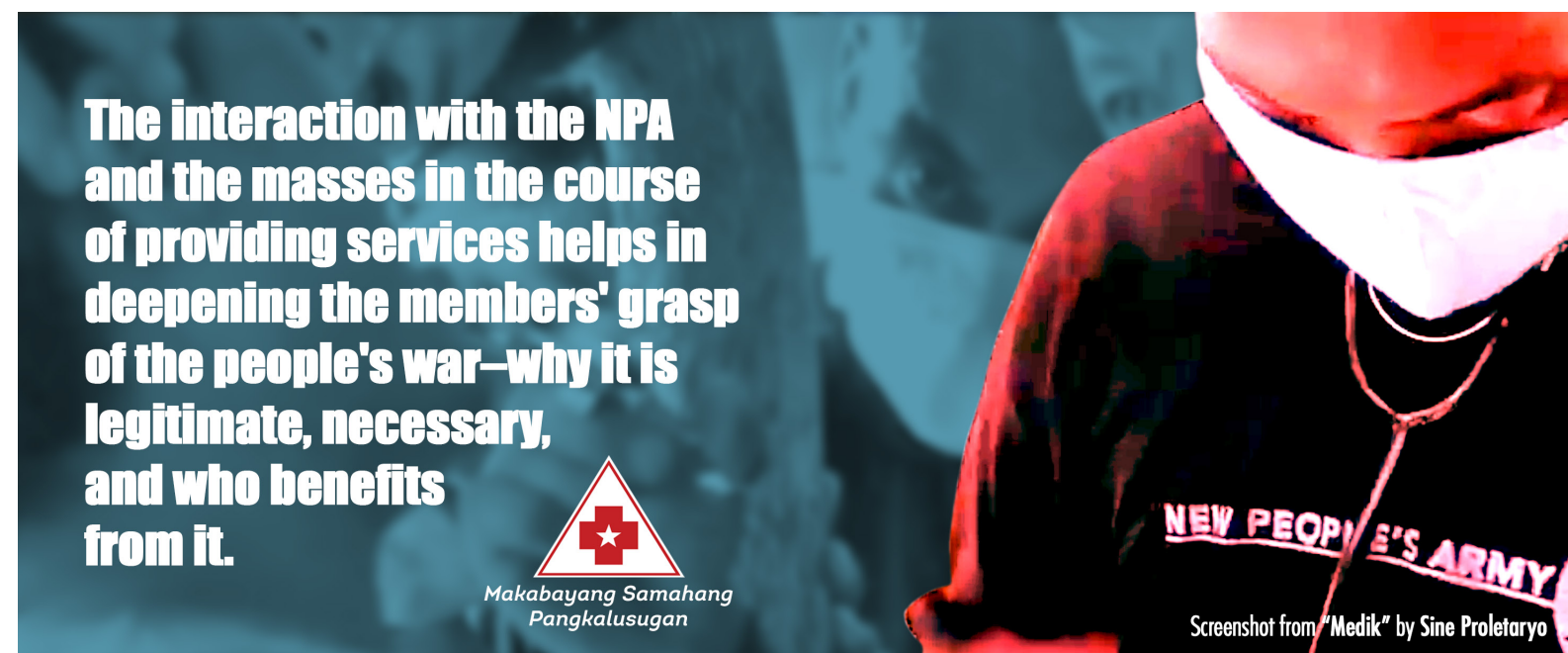
Urban doctors meet their counterparts

The interest and enthusiasm of the masses and the NPA in the guerrilla fronts to learn are inspiring enough for the allies and members of Masapa who come to the front to give their best to impart lessons not only on health care, preventive medicine and first aid but also on other nuances of medical practice.

Said interest and enthusiasm enable even the ordinary peasants to acquire the skills of simple applications of medical care and practice. Some who had reached a relatively higher educational level than most of the masses were able to finish the three levels of medical training given by the doctors.

Ka Alex, an urban-based doctor who is one of the regular instructors in these trainings, is amazed at how they are able to pack their years of medical school into a one to two month training modules and teach these modules to those who barely finished elementary schooling.

He is equally impressed by how the mostly peasant members of the NPA learn these medical procedures; at the start of the training, the trainees eagerly manifest their willingness to listen and learn and their compassion for the sick or wounded comrades, red fighters, and masses.



When the training is over, both urban doctors and NPA medics end up fulfilled.

A medic of the NPA in Mindanao, Ka Tonyo, recalled that his team once performed abdominal surgery on a monkey they found in the forest. But when the monkey regained consciousness after the operation, it panicked and quickly removed the stitches on its belly, causing its death. Since then, they stopped using monkeys and opted for animals that are more placid.

Aside from their rendering expertise to develop health cadres among the NPA and among the masses, the experiences of Masapa members in the various guerrilla fronts temper them and strengthen their commitment to the revolution and the masses. “Masapa members do not only impart their knowledge to the red fighters but also learn from their experiences and from the lives of the masses,” Ka Alex observed.

“The interaction with the NPA and the masses in the course of providing services helps in deepening the members’ grasp of the people’s war—why it is legitimate, necessary and who benefits from it,” Luna concurred.

It is not surprising, thus, that a number of Masapa members opted to remain in the countryside and practice their knowledge and skills in the guerrilla fronts and among the masses. Imbibing the enthusiasm of the NPA members to learn medical procedures and their devotion to treating and healing their comrades and the masses impel the professional medical practitioners to stay in the fronts.

In the guerrilla zones, Masapa and the NPA work hand in hand in the delivery of the much-needed health services in remote villages.

Defining and developing the alternative health care system

Over some time now, Masapa and NPA members have successfully provided free health and medical services to the people. The infrastructure for health services is now in place at all levels of the Party and NPA structure and in the organs of political power. That is, from the national to the barrio levels, from squads to battalions of the NPA.

Aside from being part of the revolutionary movement’s machinery for health services, Masapa is one of the prime movers in the development of the alternative health care program of the national democratic revolutionary movement. Along with the NPA, they are sowing the seeds of the alternative health care system of the nation, starting in the guerrilla fronts in the countryside.**LJB**



SOLVING THE DRUG PROBLEM

DUTERTE’S DRUG WAR: VIA BODY COUNT OR THE PEOPLE’S MOVEMENT

by Pat Gambao

The death toll on President Duterte’s “war on drugs” has risen to astronomic proportions that it has astounded and shaken the nation. Even the capitalist world, cloaking its hypocrisy on human rights, has raised alarm over the extrajudicial killings.

More than 12,000 have been killed both in police operations and vigilante handiwork—only 3,811 cases were grudgingly attributed to the police. Photos of cadavers have been shown, strewn beside each a gun, sachets of shabu (crystal methamphetamine hydrochloride, the poor man’s cocaine) and in some cases paper bills to portray a

buy-bust operation. In vigilante killings, the victims’ bodies were invariably hogtied, heads covered with packaging tapes with warnings that read “*Pusher ako, huwag tularan*” (I am a pusher, don’t emulate me).

The horrendous killings, occurring mostly in urban poor communities, have raised alarm and outrage, nationally and internationally. Most infuriating is the way the government and police authorities have been dismissing the deaths of apparently innocent poor civilians as mere “collateral damage”.

Most sickening is the story about a mother suspected of being a pusher-user. She was breastfeeding her baby in their humble abode when the executioners came. After taking the baby away from her and handing it to her 11-year child, they mercilessly shot the mother to death.

Many such ruthless extrajudicial killings of merely suspected addicts or pushers among the poor have piled up. Duterte’s war on drugs has been shown up as a war against the poor, whereas so many identified drug lords have been given a chance to defend themselves or to flee.

Due to public sympathy and the clear evidence, the killing of a 17-year old student, Kian de los Santos, created uproar that the authorities were hard put to dismiss. Son of an overseas Filipino worker (OFW) employed as a domestic helper in Saudi Arabia, the boy had not seen his mother for three years. The police’s claim that he had a gun and fired at them was belied by the closed-circuit television (CCTV) footage and neighborhood witnesses.

Kian’s case substantiated, if not reinforced, the long-held public belief that “planting of evidence” is a standard operating procedure (SOP) among state security forces to pin down and physically exterminate their victims with impunity.

Eradicating drug trafficking and addiction was Duterte’s campaign promise when he ran for the presidency in May 2016. He set a six-month timetable. But he reneged on his promise after seeing the four million people in a supposedly narco-list handed to him by his cohorts. He admitted that six months wouldn’t be enough to end the drug plague, not even his full six-year term as president. After the police force in Bulacan killed 32 drug suspects in a day, however, Duterte nonchalantly mused that if 32 would be the daily death toll for drug offenders, then maybe the war on drugs could rid the country of “what ails it.”

Duterte should stop dreaming and open his eyes to what really ails this country. The drug menace is systemic. It is a natural consequence of a debased system where the accumulation of wealth is the greatest motivation and that “jungle law” is the rule; wherein the struggle between the powerful forces and the weak and disadvantaged, between the exploiter and the exploited thrives. It is the greed of the exploiter versus the impoverishment of the exploited. In this sense, the fight against drugs can be deemed a class struggle.

Weapon for colonization and imperialist hegemony

The drug menace is a global social illness dating from the era of colonialism and capitalist trade. The Opium

War of 1839 broke out due to the British trading of opium into China to earn more silver for its colonization of islands in Asia. The drug had doped a large number of the populace and corrupted Chinese officials who were bribed to give way to the smuggling of the drug. China lost in that war and Hong Kong was annexed to Britain.

Since that victorious war of Britain, narcotic drugs have been conveniently used to dope people and subjugate them. Capitalism up to its highest stage of imperialism has immensely profited from plying the trade. It has facilitated the creation of puppet officials, promoted bureaucratic capitalism through bribery, patronage or intimidation. It was used to quell resistance, conquer nations and control and enslave peoples using narcotic drugs as one of their subtle, secret weapons.

The production and trafficking of addictive drugs is a multi-million-dollar business of big-time capitalists who have ties throughout the US government, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and state security forces. Huge amount of foreign aid, purportedly to fight drugs, actually goes to quashing people's rebellion and has been provided to groups, usually state security forces which themselves are involved in large-scale drug trafficking.

In exchange for Panama president General Manuel Noriega's covert anti-insurgency work in Nicaragua and Latin America, the US imperialists provided him with hundreds of thousands of dollars while tolerating his drug trafficking activities. When this leaked out and Noriega became

a liability to the US, the Drug Enforcement Administration finally indicted him. He was sentenced to 45 years in prison and his government was overthrown.

In the 1960s, the CIA bribed oppressed communities with heroine to pay for the US secret war in Laos.

The \$3-Billion Merida Initiative Aid to Mexican security forces, with the pretext of fighting drug cartels, is used to suppress the Mexican people's resistance against the plunder of their lands and resources by US business interests.

The Planned Colombia Program of the US government provided hundreds of millions of dollars a year for the war on drugs that actually went into fighting the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). Corrupt members of the Colombian army themselves have been accused of engaging in drug trafficking. The Colombian President Cesar Gaviria's unsolicited advice to Duterte that the drug war is "unwinnable" and "disastrous" stems from his own failed war on drugs. For after the drug lord Pablo Escobar was killed by the police and the Medellin Cartel's activities were ended, the cocaine industry in Colombia and the world persisted and prospered as a new drug cartel that has "more money, power and wider reach" took over.

The 2011 report of the Global Commission on Drug Policy gave this attestation: "The global war on drugs failed with devastating consequences for individuals and societies around the world."

Bureaucrat capitalism in the Philippines

People in government take advantage of their positions to enrich themselves. The rotten system breeds greed. Thus it is not surprising that there are governors, mayors, legislators down to barangay officials who are either engaged in drug trafficking or stand as protectors. Generals, policemen, drug law enforcers, soldiers likewise instigate and protect the widespread proliferation of the drugs. No wonder the drug problem isn't being solved.

Supply also seems to be inexhaustible. It is common knowledge that seized drugs get back into circulation as fast as, or even faster than the dying of the embers of the supposedly alum-substituted shabu crystals being incinerated for photo opportunities. According to reports, nine shabu laboratories have been raided and disabled to cut on the supply.

But, at the customs bureau, 650 kilos of shabu shipment worth Php 6.4 billion have passed scrutiny, landed in the agency's "green" lane. Had there not been a tip from China, the source itself, the shipment could not have been apprehended. The actual volume that has slipped in to the "green" lane eluding inspection and reached the dope market is still undetermined.

The scandal opened the Pandora's box, bringing to public scrutiny the corruption in the customs bureau that has long been kept under wraps, implicating even the president's son, Davao City Vice Mayor Paolo Duterte, and son-in-law Manases Carpio, with the

"Davao group". A customs player under investigation for the drug smuggling spilled the beans on the nagging corruption in the bureau.

Worst, Duterte's "war on drugs" has been used by unscrupulous policemen to further their criminal activities. Extortion, kidnapping for ransom, robbery, elimination of rival drug syndicates and assets, who may rat on them, are shrouded by the government's anti-drug operations *Tokhang* (contracted term from the Visayan words *toktok* and *hangyo* meaning knock and plead) and 'Double Barrel Reloaded'. Others, especially neophytes in the police force, do it to impress and bag promotions or awards. The ferocity of police operations springs from the orientation of the police as chief instrument for repression of an oppressive and exploitative state to preserve its power. For a corrupt law enforcement to handle the fight on drugs is indeed a travesty of options.

Drug trade and corruption at the New Bilibid Prison (NBP)

Sources at the NBP (names withheld) have stories to tell.

Confined at the NBP, the main penal facility of the national government, are big-time Chinese drug lords and their Filipino recruits to the drug trade. Recruitment is easy among inmates as the prospective returns are enticing. Incarcerated for criminal offenses other than drugs, the recruits rose to a new level that offered more money and privileges, just like what their Chinese co-inmates enjoy in prison.

From their cells, the drug lords continue to ply their lucrative business in the outside world

using electronic devices such as cellphones, which they smuggled in or freely brought in for a fee. Seventy-five percent of the trade is done outside prison through accessories and henchmen who resolutely carry on the tasks of procurement, manufacture, trafficking and even eliminating rival syndicates or any other hindrance to the trade.

The inordinate corruption in the penitentiary enables the illicit trade to prosper. Some prison guards, gaters, custodial officers, escorts, sentry goals to the highest jail officials are, directly or indirectly, embroiled in the trade. The scandal in the NBP that exploded before the public's eyes had implicated its directors and even the justice secretary.

Corruption in prison starts from pilferage of the prisoners' food budget, supply provisions, electricity charges and graduates to the constant acceptance of enormous bribes for allowing undue privileges to inmates. Selective inspection on visitors becomes a norm. Thus, the proliferation of cell phones, *kubol* (literally, huts but these are spaces rented out to privileged inmates), drugs and other contrabands, including deadly weapons, is relentless. Drug dealers can operate freely in the confines of their cells.

Even when the NBP changed guards after the scandal broke out, the Special Action Forces (SAF) of the Philippine National Police got involved in the entry of cigarettes, a premium commodity in jail as this cost a fortune, P15.00-P50.00 per stick.

The illicit drug trade in the NBP did not stop at all as corruption

persisted. It just lied low for a while then it slithered back with small-time Chinese drug lords in jail at the helm this time around while the big drug dealers waited for the opportunity to spring back to the trade.

Duterte's anointed grand master of his war on drugs, General Ronald "Bato" de la Rosa will take over the reins at the NBP after his retirement from the Philippine National Police (PNP).

The penitentiary under the existing debased system can never be a haven to rehabilitate offenders. It has only turned them worse.

Bureaucratic corruption extends to the courts where impunity is upheld. In many instances, drug offenders get away unpunished and manage to continue with their trade—for a fee. This is aside from the given flaws in the prevailing justice system. One of which is the way cases drag till kingdom come.

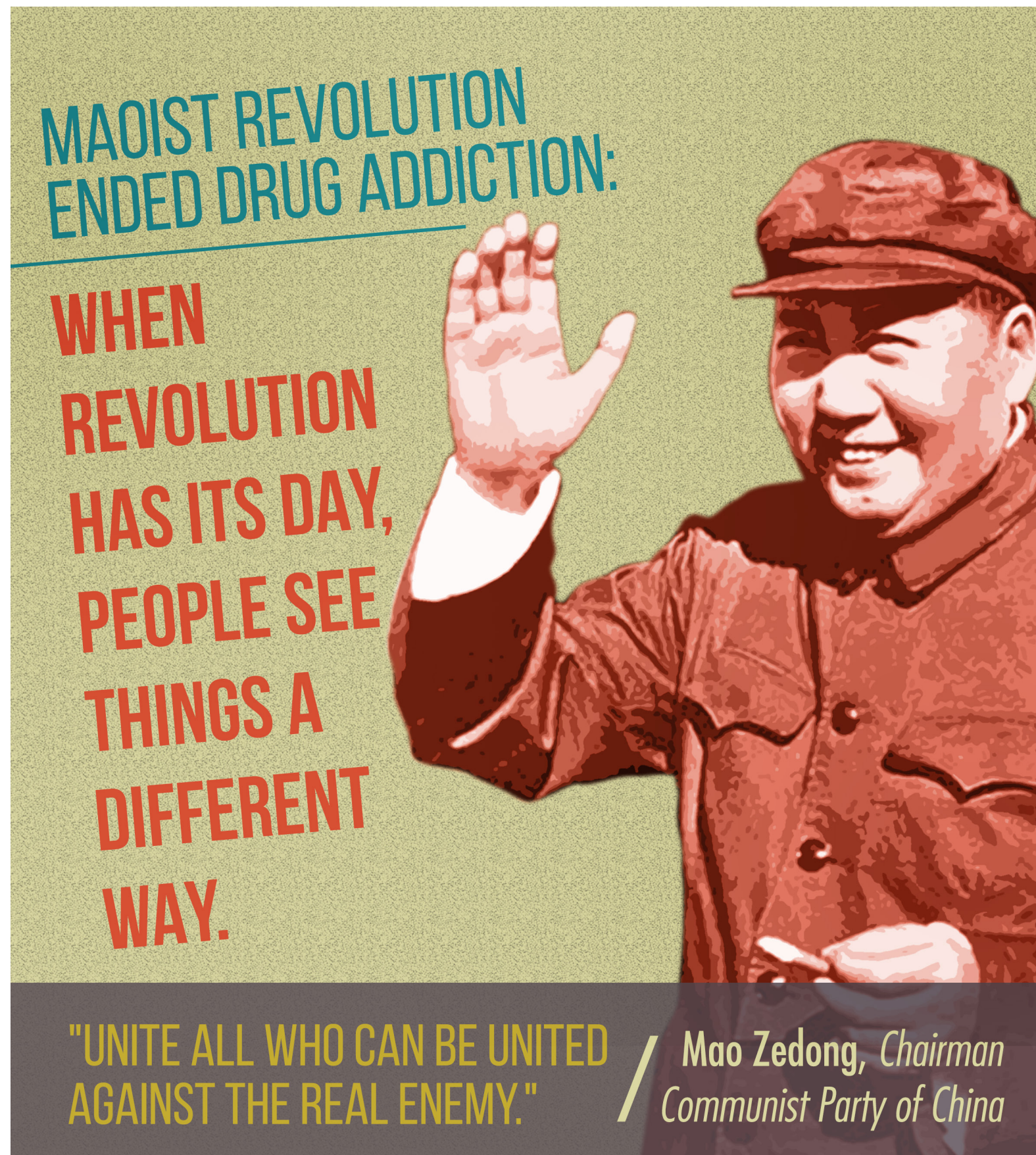
In sum, Duterte may succeed in killing all those drug lords, traffickers, peddlers, pushers, runners and users but that will not wipe out the plague and solve the problem. The drug menace will continue to rear its ugly head and spit out its venom to destroy human lives and society. Unless and until the roots of the problem is addressed—the abject poverty stemming from landlessness and absence of meaningful job opportunities for the toiling masses, the foreign domination and control of the economy, politics and culture of the Philippine society, the petrified corruption in the bureaucracy—President Duterte's war on drugs will come to naught. It will fail, desperately.***LJB***

CHINA'S EXPERIENCE UNDER MAO

In the years prior to the victory of the Chinese revolution led by Chairman Mao Zedong, China was in the quagmire of addictive drugs. Profiting immensely from the drug trade, foreign capitalists in cohort with the local ruling class dope the populace. Some 70 million Chinese, including children were hooked on drugs. Despondent about their miserable conditions, the poor found escape in the fleeting comfort of the illicit substance. The consequences were dismal and despicable. To finance their addiction, women resorted to prostitution, parents sold their children, money for food went to drugs.

Upon victory of the revolution, the new people's republic launched a mass campaign against addictive drugs not by the power of the gun but through the people's movement. Since the addicts among the poor were mere victims of a depraved system, they were not treated like common criminals nor human thrash but were helped to lick their addiction. The revolutionaries organized the masses in the communities to help educate and convince their neighbors and kin who were hooked into drugs to kick the bad habit. Community members burned drugs to emphasize their abhorrence of these. They also stopped the supplies of addictive drugs by busting drug trade networks. In support of the drug campaign, radios and newspapers carried news and stories on the ill effects of drugs and its detrimental impact to the development of the new socialist society. The revolutionaries relied on the organized masses from the cities to the countryside to end the manufacture, trafficking and their use.

Class distinction was made between the poor junkies, who were victims of the system, and the filthy rich drug dealers, who nurtured the system to their advantage. The poor victims needed help while the big drug dealers were considered enemies of the people. The victims trusted the



new people's republic that they had no fear in seeking help. They were rehabilitated and assisted in the withdrawal process. They were praised for their efforts to get clean from drug addiction. They were organized, re-educated and trained for meaningful jobs that the new socialist society provided. They police themselves through criticism and self-criticism. They were helped to restore their self-dignity. The new socialist society ensured the eradication of poverty that drove people into addiction and drug trade.

Small-time drug dealers who pledged to get out of and helped wipe out the drug trade were not considered enemies. The Mao government offered a one-time-only deal to buy out all the products of the small dealers and opium growers to be destroyed. Opium growers were requested to plant rice or wheat instead. Those who refused were arrested and put under surveillance or jailed for re-education.

Liberated from the drug scourge, they were encouraged to join the struggle against drugs and the building of the new socialist society.

Unrepentant big-time drug dealers who enriched themselves off the suffering of the people were classified as enemies of the people. They were sentenced to life imprisonment or execution depending on the gravity of the offense.

According to the New China News Agency (Xinhua) the drug problem in Northern China which had been liberated first was "fundamentally wiped out" by end of 1951. That of Southern China, where opium grew profusely, followed suit after about a year. For over 20 years thereafter, China had almost no drug addiction.

However, after the death of Mao in 1976, the restoration of capitalism in China ushered in the resurgence of drug trade and addiction. In 2015, over 14 million Chinese were addicted to drugs, as related to Xinhua by the vice president of China's National Narcotics Control Commission.^{LJB}

THE NEW PEOPLE'S ARMY FIGHT VS DRUGS

Aware of the disastrous consequences on people, the society and the revolution, the revolutionary movement from its inception has been fighting the drug menace—long before Duterte started his own “drug war”.

The organs of political power in the guerrilla zones have impressed on the masses the dangers of addictive drugs. In conjunction with this, they helped the masses cope with the prevailing conditions that forced them to turn to drugs either for the money to beat the debilitating poverty or to escape from its reality. People were organized and they joined hands to increase production and income. They were initiated to meaningful activities. They were trained for tasks on health care and education to fill in the vacuum left in the far-flung barrios by the reactionary government. The youth were drawn to sports and cultural activities that challenge their vibrant energy and creativity.

Through political education the masses have been enlightened and have fully understood the root cause of their problems and the solution that is in their very hands. Their awakening has instilled in them a sense of purpose for being. With these the scourge of addictive drugs was eventually licked as they imbibed the revolutionary discipline.

In 2015 for example, the revolutionary youth movement, Kabataang Makabayan (KM, Patriotic Youth) in Central Luzon launched various activities in their respective barrios to draw the youth, as well as adults, away from marijuana and shabu. The KM conducted forums on the youth situation and how the decadent system has engendered the problems of drugs and criminality. It led meetings with the barrio youth to plan on productive activities with them. They formed a basketball league and held tournaments lasting for one and a half months. Some 50 youth participated in the tournaments initially. The number swelled later.

Simultaneous with these activities, the New People's Army (NPA) in coordination with the Party branches issued series of warnings to pushers and users in the barrios of Central Luzon. The NPA, in coordination with the KM, widely disseminated the policy of the revolutionary movement and the people's democratic government on the trafficking and use of drugs, be it in small or huge volume.

Meantime, drug traffickers, their activities, networks and laboratories in the guerrilla fronts of Panay were banned. The Coronacion Chiva “Waling-waling” Command of the NPA uprooted the marijuana plantations in Barangay Buloc, Tubungan town a few years back. Two years ago, a known drug dealer was arrested, disarmed and driven out of the NPA front after bringing in drugs in a town in Capiz. In April 2016, the Napoleon Tumagtang Command, also based in Panay Island, launched a campaign against illegal drugs in barangays surrounding the town of Tubungan. The drug production facilities of drug lord Edwin Odicta in the NPA area and the entry of the Richard Provendido's drug syndicate in San Joaquin, Iloilo has been subject of NPA's surveillance. Odicta was

shot by an unidentified man on his way back home from Manila while Provendido was killed in a police operation.

In 2016, the revolutionary movement in Northern Samar investigated illegal drug trafficking that implicated high officials of the province.


In the Southern Mindanao Region, the NPA has launched tactical offensives to dismantle the network of operation of drug syndicates. A police chief here once said that criminality and drug addiction is practically absent in areas where the NPA is strong. In the Central Mindanao Region, the NPA burned marijuana plantations run by the killer paramilitary group Alamara.

Aware of the NPA's fight against drugs, Duterte has once called on them to run after drug lords. However, seeing that the Duterte regime's war on drugs is clearly anti-democratic and anti-people, having become a frenzied campaign of extrajudicial killings and vigilante murders perpetrated by the police and police-linked criminal syndicates, the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) withdrew its support to the regime's drug campaign.

The revolutionary movement recognizes that the drug plague is rooted in the basic problems confronting the Filipino people—the historic imperialist dominance perpetuating the feudal and bureaucrat capitalist conditions in the country. The NPA will continue its anti-drug campaign but will adhere to its policy of differentiating poor drug users and victims of drug abuse from the rabid perpetrators of the drug trade. The NPA will continue to intensify its campaign to arrest and disarm drug trade operators and protectors in its territory.

The revolutionary movement has its own criminal justice system and offenders are given due process as well as due punishment. Meanwhile poor drug victims will be rescued and rehabilitated through political education and meaningful activities. **LIB**





The organization not only raised their social consciousness, it gave them a sense of purpose and direction.

REBIRTH OF DRUG VICTIMS

A Runner for a Noble Purpose

At the age of 14, Ato (not his real name) had been drawn into drug addiction and for years he was a runner cum user of narcotic drugs in a town in Central Luzon. Now, at 21, he is still a runner but for an entirely different purpose: he runs errands for the New People's Army (NPA). Moreover, he has become a youth organizer for the revolutionary movement.

His transformation began in that night he was "hostaged" by a group of armed men whom he thought were policemen on anti-drug mission. But they had no mobile car. Instead of taking him for a ride, as he had heard usually happened to drug-user suspects, the armed men led him to the green fields. They ended up in a mango orchard. As more armed men joined them, he began to tremble in fear.

Eventually the armed group introduced themselves as members of the NPA. A man and a woman started talking to him. Apprising him that they knew about his felonious activities, they said what he was doing was a grave crime to the people and the revolutionary movement. They urged him to explain why he got into that mess. After hearing his narrative, his interrogators sternly admonished him to change his ways.

Ato thought the NPA unit would detain and punish him. To his surprise they escorted him back home where he found his wife, parents and siblings waiting. He realized his family was onto the plan of the NPA unit to convince him, for his own and his family's sake, to abandon narcotic drug use and trade. He felt ashamed of himself.

Though it wasn't easy, Ato persevered to shake off drugs. There were times he won, there were times he lost. But he struggled.

Seeing he was succeeding, the NPA fighters met with him again. This time they discussed with him the situation in the barrio and the various concerns of the people, explaining their root causes and what needs to be done to resolve them.

Later, the NPA began inviting him to meetings and study sessions. They discussed the formation of youth organizations in the barrio, and asked Ato to assist them. He showed enthusiasm in his new

task and produced positive results. He was able to organize even those he used to sell drugs to. As he himself struggled, Ato coaxed the youth to undertake worthwhile activities that would keep them away from drugs. He even helped some of them to secure jobs in construction projects where he had been hired to work.

That began Ato's deeper involvement with the NPA. That also fired his interest in helping address the concerns of his barriomates. He vowed to himself to serve them, especially the youth.

Ato volunteered to help the NPA catch the big-time dealer who used to supply him with addictive drugs. The NPA had actually received many complaints against the drug dealer, so they set up a plan to arrest him once he showed up in the area. And Ato had been oriented about how revolutionary justice is meted on bad elements like the drug dealer through the procedures of the people's court. After they had arrested the drug dealer he would be brought before the people's court for trial.

When the big-time drug dealer was spotted in the area, the NPA arresting team moved to nab him. The latter, however, saw them coming, drew his gun and fought back. The arresting team was forced to fire back, hitting the man fatally.

The people in the area who had been his victims would have wanted to confront the drug dealer before the people's court. Nonetheless, they considered the drug dealer's death, in the manner it happened, no less justice meted had he been brought before the people's court, found guilty of a heinous crime and appropriately punished.

Fulfilled dreams in the womb of the revolutionary movement

The scarce prospects of jobs and income-generating opportunities in the rural areas have been driving many of the youth to the cities.

Bay and Dong (not their real names) were among those lured by the mythical marvels of city life. They left home and ventured to seek their version of "greener pasture" in the cities of their dreams.

Both came from peasant families in the Visayas. Their families own small farms planted to rice and corn, as well as some farm animals. But due to the expensive farm inputs and usurious rates on borrowed working capital, the families were hard-pressed to produce enough crops to sufficiently meet even their basic needs.

Bay is the ninth of 10 siblings. His assigned task was tending to the farm animals, which he enjoyed doing. Aware of the big expenses incurred in the schooling of his siblings, he gladly opted to give way for them by dropping out after finishing grade two in primary school and help fulltime in the farm.

As economic life turned for the worse, the family was compelled to sell the farm animals, one after the other. That dismayed Bay. He had developed a special fondness for the animals he had looked after, now they were gone. And there was little else for him to do in the farm. He decided to leave their town with a cousin and hied off for Cebu City.

In Cebu, Bay bumped into rogues who pushed addictive drugs. At aged 12, he was tall and robust and his bucolic innocence made him a perfect catch for the rogues to collaborate with in their illegal activities.

They tapped Bay as a drug-runner for a fee. Their modus operandi: sachets of the addictive drugs are taped on his body, concealed beneath his clothes; then he would be sent to a designated place where men came to him and frisked his body for the drugs. He was paid well (P500 per delivery, which was usually twice) plus a sniff into the illicit substance. For a pastoral boy, that was prized yield.

Hoping to find Bay a better job elsewhere, his brother fetched him from Cebu and took him to Manila. They stayed in an urban poor community in Tondo. Having grown taller and bigger at 14, Bay could easily be mistaken for an adult. Yet jobs were elusive for him and he again became a willing prey to drug traffickers. This time around, however, transactions were bigger and clients were more numerous.

Like Bay, Dong left for the big city to hunt for better opportunities. While Bay was into drug running, Dong got hooked as user of addictive drugs while he performed odd jobs for a living—street-selling newspapers, candies, and cigarettes; acting as porter in the pier of Manila near his home; driving a "padyak" (passenger tricycle).

Under such existential conditions, where each day was a struggle to survive, thoughts of finding higher purpose and direction in life evanesced, and drug addiction became a handy escape from reality. This drove Dong to a debauched, wretched life. He went into senseless vices and activities—drugs, gambling, drinking, womanizing, rumbles.

Meanwhile, Bay’s drug trade prospered after meeting a big-time drug dealer in his new abode in Sampaloc. While he used to peddle only a few kilos of shabu, it was bagfuls of drugs that he would bring to a “*palit-bag*” (bag-exchange) scheme in the malls. He would deposit the bag of drugs in the customer counter, take the identification tag and later would exchange it for money handed by the buyer, who thereafter retrieves the bag from the customer counter.

Drug trafficking could be a lucrative business and the high feeling from the illicit substance may give artificial relief and comfort, but it entailed disastrous consequences. Aside from the ill effects to one’s health, the illicit substance could embolden the user to commit crimes. That happened to Bay.

With his similarly drug-intoxicated cohorts, Bay would rob people who were too drunk to go home and had fallen asleep in Rizal Park. He had heard of worse crimes resulting from drug addiction, such as killing and rape. However, the worst crime he ever committed was dragging his wife and mother-in-law into the trade, turning them into his couriers.

Arrested twice for his illegal activities—one in Malabon and the other in Tayuman, Bay had experienced detention at the Malabon jail before his handler bailed him out. The next time he was caught, he was merely admonished by the same police officer who had accosted him before.

Eventually Bay and Dong crossed paths in Sampaloc, where both were pedicab drivers. Bay was still peddling drugs and Dong was a user. Their camaraderie developed when they both joined the protest action against the Manila City Hall planned phase-out of pedicabs in city streets. That struggle forged a bond between the pedicab drivers and the community that supported the protest. For a while the plan was not carried out. However, the protest organizers from the legal democratic mass movement advised the pedicab drivers to be vigilant as the government might strike again to drive them out of the streets.

Heeding the advice, the pedicab drivers agreed to organize themselves and planned their courses of action. First they held a meeting to assess their initial victory and learn lessons from both its strengths and weaknesses. Then they held series of meetings,

forums and study sessions wherein they discussed the situation in their area.

Among others, they discussed the evils of drugs and such other vicious habits prevalent in urban poor communities. They began to understand that the drug problem was precipitated by the decadent social and political system that profit from it. Drug addiction deliberately diverted their attention from the economic and related woes dogging them so that they would not understand the causes and dare to find solutions that would, inevitably, boomerang on the ruling system.

To expand their knowledge, relevant books and documents were made available for them to read. Dong could cope with the reading but Bay, having reached only Grade two, faced some difficulty. He cringed in his seat to avoid being asked to read. However, he comprehended parts of the discussions and really got so interested that he strove to summon whatever stock knowledge he had and endeavored to learn how to read by himself.

The organization not only raised the duo’s social consciousness. It also gave them a sense of purpose and direction. They began organizing in the community and shared with the latter the lessons they had learned from the movement. Raising people’s consciousness, they have realized, will spare them from being deceived again. Sharing this is a modest service they could give to the community. They also shared the revolutionary discipline that they had imbibed from the movement.

Bay has realized the inanity of all his escapades in the drug mess. With the birth of his second child, he junked his dubious past. He now feels reborn, a new and changed man ready to confront the challenges of life and to impart meaning to the lives of others in the community where he belongs.

Enlightened like Bay, Dong opted to join the revolutionary movement in the countryside. Yet he is very much aware that distance alone from drugs would not rid one of addiction. It takes more time and conscious effort to wipe out the bad influences of a decadent society. Above all, it takes revolutionary discipline and a noble mission, the commitment to fight for the people’s national liberation. **LIB**



MUOG NA BUO

Itinanghal ng: Agaw Armas
Titik ni: Sylvia Madiaga

Bakit ako naririto
Tila dulo na ng mundo
Ng bayan kong pulo-pulo
Parang sumabog na bato

Bakit ba ako naglakbay
Dala itong mga aral
Mga teoryang gumagabay
Karanasang binabaybay

Narito ako
Para sa pagkakaisa, pagsulong
Narito ako
Para sa pagwawasto, pagdaluyong
Narito ako
Para ang kalat-kalat na pulo
Magiging muog na buo

Bakit ating hinahanap
Ang wastong paglalapat
Ng pamumuno at pagtupad
Sa masang bumabalikwas

Narito tayo
Para sa pagkakaisa, pagsulong
Narito tayo
Para sa pagwawasto, pagdaluyong
Narito tayo
Para ang kalat-kalat na pulo
Magiging muog na buo

Pagkakaisa, paglaban
Tagumpay sa ating bayan
Ay ambag sa daigdigan
Paglaya ng sangkatauhan

Narito tayo
Para sa pagkakaisa, pagsulong
Narito tayo
Para sa masang aping Pilipino
Narito tayo
Para ang kalat-kalat na pulo
Magiging muog na buo (Ulitin)

Ito ang dakilang misyon
Ng Pilipinong proletaryo!

ANG PARTIDO

ni Ka Charlene Abel, Armando Catapia Command

Kami ang mga taong sadyang ginawang mangmang
Humilagpos, tumuklas, nangahas, nag-aral
Natagpuan Marxismo-Leninismo-Maoismo
Di nagtagal naging siyentista ng lipunan.

Kami ang natutong bumalik, sumuong, sakripisyo'y hinarap
Lipunang malakolonyal-malapyudal wawakasan,
Demokratikong Rebolusyong Bayan, isusulong!

Kami ang natuto, nagbuklod,
nagpanibagong-hubog, nagsikhay sa disiplina
nangahas pamunuan ang mamamayang api.

Kami ang proletaryado ng buong daigdig!

*Unang inilathala sa Tilamsik ng Dakilang Apoy Isyu 1,
rebolusyonaryong pangkulturang dyornal ng Camarines Norte, Bicol*

*Unang inilabas bilang pagpupugay sa Ikalawang Pambansang Kongreso ng
Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas*





LIBERATION

Published by the National Democratic Front of the Philippines