

LIBERATION

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CHINA- DUTERTE REGIME?
Not quite yet





ABOUT THE COVER

The dragon has not conquered the eagle.

While selling out the nation's sovereignty and patrimony to China, President Duterte also continuous to be subservient to US economic and military interests in the Philippines.

Serving two foreign masters will further isolate him from the Filipino people.

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

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E D I T O R I A L

OUSTING DUTERTE

The tyrant Duterte is feeling the heat, the fear, of his impending doom. He talks of a plot, a conspiracy, to oust him. The CPP-NPA, the Liberal Party and the Magdalo group have denied this. No plot is necessary for someone who is destroying himself, for destabilizing his own regime, and for causing the unstoppable loss of his DDS (from being Duterte's diehards, they're now known as “Disgusted Duterte Supporters”).

The problem is the devil himself. He came to power dangling the promise of change—of wiping out crime, corruption and poverty. Within two years the devil has unmasked and revealed himself. It turns out he is a drug protector, especially where his son and cronies are involved. He is a fascist and a criminal, dismissing human rights, stirring up his security forces to kill civilians, especially the poor and marginalized, and linking opposition groups to terrorism. He is also a misogynist, to say the least.

There are two currents against the political survival of Duterte aside from the determined effort of the people to oust him. These are his deteriorating physical and mental health manifested by his much darkened face and insane statements and his own abusive actions towards establishing a fascist dictatorship under the pretext of charter change to federalism. Such abusive actions (suppression of dissent and declaration of martial law nationwide) and can provoke the acceleration of efforts to oust Duterte.

Prof. Jose Maria Sison
NDFP Chief Political Consultant
RIPOSTE TO DUTERTE | September 11, 2018



Duterte has yet to convincingly defend himself against corruption. He has yet to sign a waiver on alleged billions of pesos he stashed in banks. His Davao group has profitted handsomely from contracts with big local or foreign investors. Also, he keeps company with the likes of the Marcoses and the Arroyos—the nation’s great plunderers.

Duterte has only himself to blame for the debacle of his economic managers. He backed them fully, even defending them, while the Filipino people suffered. He pushed for and signed the Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion (TRAIN) Law that resulted to prices rising sharply and unprecedentedly within ten months of implementation. His administration offers importation and smuggling in the face of the nation’s food crisis. They maintained contractualization, joblessness, land conversion, environmental devastation, theft and plunder of the nation’s resources.

The in-fighting within the Duterte regime and the ruling clique has become more evident. Members of the Cabinet have oftentimes publicly contradicted Duterte’s statements and policy pronouncements, including the shift to federalism. Discord within the military and police has emerged and could no longer be contained.

On top of these, they ended the chance to push for substantial and economic reforms that would address chronic poverty and the roots of the country’s 50 years of armed conflict in terminating the peace talks with the National Democratic Front of the Philippines.

Increasingly, and with all the signs pointing to the establishment of a fascist dictatorship, the Filipino people want to finish off Duterte and his regime in the same manner they ousted Marcos in 1986 and Estrada in 2001. There it was, millions of people, though unarmed, rising up against tyrants, egging and encouraging a rebellion from the military’s ranks or causing key officers and soldier to distance themselves from the regime. This combination of people’s uprising and military rebellion or withdrawal of support has become a cardinal rule in toppling regimes.

No tyrant has ever recognized or given credence to the power of the people in ousting a dictator. Even Duterte would lead us to believe that only plotters and conspirators, whether real or imagined, are out to get him. He continues to demean the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) by calling it as mere plotter. The truth is, the CPP leads and promotes the broad united front of democratic and progressive forces in ousting a regime because it believes in the power of the mass movement to carry out its demands.

So is it with the armed mass movement in the countryside. The overthrow of this regime is being supported by the tactical offensives of the New People’s Army, weakening Duterte’s military machine in suppressing the people. This gives the masses in the countryside time to strengthen and consolidate themselves not just to help out in the movement to oust the fascist regime, but to ultimately overthrow the semicolonial and semifeudal system in unity with the urban masses.

In the coming days, as the country reels further in crisis, Duterte is sure to slide down in the eyes of his supporters faster than he won in a landslide. His ouster is inevitable. No matter his physical or mental state, the gravity of his crimes is already causing his regime to crumble. In this regard, it will be so much easier for a growing, developing, and surging mass movement to see the end of Duterte. **LIB**



ENTER THE DRAGON: CHINA-DUTERTE REGIME? NOT QUITE YET

by Vida Gracias

There is a growing perception that President Rodrigo Duterte is already distancing his administration from the United States and increasingly cozying up to China. Is it now apt to assume that a China-Duterte rather than a US-Duterte regime is shaping up?

Consider the following:

1. Duterte has indefinitely set aside the Permanent Court of Arbitration’s August 2016 ruling that upholds the Philippines’ sovereign rights over its exclusive economic zone (EEZ) in the West Philippine Sea and negates China’s so-called nine-dash-line sovereignty assertion over almost the entire South China Sea.
2. The Duterte government has not protested China’s rapid construction, militarization, and occupation of artificial islands within the Philippine EEZ, largely seen as a “creeping Chinese invasion.”
3. Duterte is also practically conceding to China a large part of the country’s oil, gas and other natural resources in the West Philippine Sea through an offer of joint exploration with a 60(Philippines)-40(China) sharing arrangement.
4. While China has supposedly agreed to grant the Philippines billions of dollars in loans and aid, this entails us paying an interest rate 3,000% higher than what Japan has offered.
5. A large influx of Chinese nationals has been entering the country, many of whom have been caught engaged in the illicit drug trade, online gambling and other dubious activities.
6. Duterte has repeatedly been publicly quoted as declaring: “I will not go to war with China.” He has even joked about the Philippines “turning into a province of China”. He continues to regard China’s leader Xi Jinping as a “man of honor” even as the latter has reneged on his promise not to build military structures on the contested reefs in the West Philippine Sea.



Artwork by
Ka Jay-jay

Undoubtedly China is a rising imperialist power challenging the US military and geopolitical dominance in the Asia-Pacific region, with designs over the Philippines not just to exploit its natural resources, trade and investments but also its strategic geographic location in the region.

China is delighted that Duterte has opted to develop warm relations with it, in contrast to his predecessor, Benigno Simeon Aquino III, who took China to court over the maritime disputes in the West Philippine Sea. However, more than two years into the Duterte presidency, and despite China's increasing economic influence here, it is quite far from dislodging the US as the No.1 imperialist power in the country's internal and external affairs.

The fact remains that, for all his bluster about pursuing an "independent foreign policy" and "breaking relations with the US," Duterte, along with his pro-US cabal of economic and security advisers, remains the reliable chief puppet of US imperialism. His tirades and insults against the US sound no more than the cry of a spoiled brat, resenting the latter's criticisms of his bloody "war on drugs" and tying up measly military assistance with human-rights conditionalities, against which he is most sensitive.

Duterte's overtures to China and Russia – both welcomed with open-arms by the latter hitherto "enemy" powers -- are calculated and calibrated risks at the expense of Philippine sovereignty. He is currying favors from the two powers to gain more support in both his bid to build up his regime's military capability and to expand trade relations. It may appear that he is playing off one imperialist power against another, but shrewd Duterte knows where his bridges could be burned.

He cursed former US President Barack Obama, calling him "son of a whore," because the latter had criticized his brutal war on drugs. He reacts vehemently whenever his dismal human rights record is riled, then threatens to veer away from the US ("I will scrap the VFA and Edca!" "Out with the American Special Forces in Mindanao!" "Stop the Balikatan exercises!"). He would rake up old hurts, both personal ("I was abused as a child by an American Jesuit;" "I was not allowed entry by US immigration") and political ("Return the Balangiga bells!" "Remember the Bud Daju massacres!").

U.S. military assistance

Yet, when US President Donald Trump came into power and praised Duterte, the latter's verbal attacks started to wane. Trump promised Duterte increasing military assistance under the recycled "Operation Enduring Freedom" of George W. Bush, renamed as "Operation Pacific-Eagle Philippines."

This came at about the time US military planes and drones provided aerial-bombing "assistance" in the five-month Marawi war beginning in March 2017, far eclipsing the China aid of 2,000 AK47 rifles, and for which Duterte was fulsomely grateful. This gave the US further reason to intervene in Duterte's "anti-terrorist" campaign and revved-up counterinsurgency program. The succeeding days saw Duterte canceling the GRP-NDFP peace talks and the AFP carrying out an "all-out war" against the CPP-NPA.

Quite a number of times during Duterte's two-year rule, the US turned over loads of war materiel (carbines, pistols, machine guns, grenade launchers, etc.) to fight terrorism and insurgency. Its US Special Forces have remained in

Mindanao since 2009, disregarding Duterte's pronouncements in 2016 that they should leave. Obviously, while Duterte's foul mouth and downgrading of the US may have ruffled some feathers, US officials didn't take his outbursts seriously.

Because beneath his rants run long-held institutional ties and abject Philippine subservience to the US, Duterte cannot feign ignorance of US control over the Armed Forces of the Philippines. Since its inception, the AFP has been trained, armed, and aided by the US. US military presence dates back to 1898 and continued after the US "grant" of Philippine independence in 1946. The 1951 US-RP Mutual Defense Treaty remains in effect.

"From January 1, 2017 to the present, US grants funded the delivery of military equipment worth over Php 5 billion (US\$95 million) to the Armed Forces of the Philippines," the US Embassy was quoted in an Inquirer.net news report on August 16. The military equipment included unmanned aerial vehicles, armored vehicles and planes, surveillance platform for the military's C-130 cargo transport planes.

In the same news report, the US embassy claimed, "The Philippines is by far the largest recipient of US military assistance in the region (Asia-Pacific), supporting the AFP's modernization goals through a variety of programs and initiatives."

Before Duterte cuddled with China, his patriotism was suspect. While lambasting the US he took no action to scrap the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) and the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA), as he had vowed to do. By their own account, about 8,000 US troops and Filipino soldiers participate in the annual Balikatan exercises as part of these agreements.



Though the Supreme Court has upheld these agreements as constitutional, it is within his executive powers to initiate their termination. He can also coax his allies in the Senate to facilitate the process.

Duterte may appear like he is his own person but the US surely gets its way and sets the direction of his administration's policies. Oftentimes he would rely on his national defense chief, his national security adviser and his coterie of generals for decisions such as the bombing of Marawi, the declaration of martial law in Mindanao, and the termination of the peace talks with the NDFP. He has also publicly acknowledged that the security cluster in his cabinet, including his economic team, are "AmBoys" and that he does not interfere in their work.

The American presence is all over town, so to speak, and most potent in the military. The US holds the largest military complex in all of Southeast Asia. No other imperialist country, not even China, can match it for now. Even in the economic arena, China's strength in the Philippines has yet to be felt compared to other foreign trade and investment partners. What Duterte achieved in his trips to China and meetings with Xi Jinping are still mere pledges and agreements. Though worth billions of dollars, these have yet to come to fruition.

Neoliberal policies

While the US has become only next to Japan in terms of trade and investments in the Philippines, US interests are substantial enough to effect the further liberalization of the economy.

From 2007 to 2017, US investments in the Philippines amounted to US\$4.26 billion compared to China's US\$84.74 million. Direct trade with the US also reached US\$168.58 billion from 2006 to 2016. In May 2018, Forbes.com reported no major investments by China in the Philippines despite warm relations. The bulk of investments in 2017 came from traditional trading partners such as US, Japan and the Netherlands as well as Singapore and Hong Kong.

Trump's meeting with Duterte in Manila last year also kicked off negotiations for a bilateral free trade agreement between the two countries. This comes along well with the charter change proposals pending in Congress to lift economic restrictions for foreigners such as granting them 100 percent ownership of land and public utilities.

With the US holding a tight grip on the country, specifically on the military, Duterte can only remain subservient to US imperialism. The regime will remain US-Duterte whether or not it suits him. He can trash talk the US all he wants, but any false move risking relations with the imperialist power could cost his presidency, even his life – as he himself has been saying lately. He could go on playing his China card against the US, but this won't change his being a chief US puppet. Yet it can make him a China lackey, too.

If he pursues his double-dealing scheme, he would also double the whirlwind he would soon reap. Certainly, the Filipino people will not sit by idly as Duterte trades the country to his old and new foreign masters. **LIB**

"BBB": BUILDING THE ROAD TO PERDITION

by Tagumpay Felipe

The Duterte regime's much-touted "Build, Build, Build" (BBB) program is purported to be a "game changer" for the Philippines: they said it would accelerate growth towards a modern, industrialized economy. The program comes with a whopping price tag of Php 1.5 trillion, to be funded largely with foreign and local borrowing and increased taxation – both burdens ultimately to be borne by the masses.

Boldly, the regime claims that the BBB will lift 1.5 million Filipinos from poverty every year and reduce poverty incidence from today's 22% to only 14% by the end of Duterte's term in 2022.

It aims to achieve that by building as many as 75 infrastructure projects in various parts of the country. It avers that it will serve as the "solid backbone for growth." Per June 13 reports, the implementation of 30 of the 75 projects are targeted to begin this year.

It is the BBB the Duterte regime invokes as rationale for the new taxes it has imposed this year on goods and services under the Tax Reforms for Acceleration and Inclusion (TRAIN) law.

But there's a caveat to pursuing such an ambitious program.

Without addressing the country's fundamental social and economic problems—such as landlessness, social and economic inequity, and multi-dimensional (economic, social, cultural, institutional) injustices—any economic program driven by massive infrastructure-building will primarily serve the interests of big business and the ruling elite, with little, if any, deepgoing improvement in the life of the poor majority.

The BBB's monstrous tax-and-debt-driven budget easily conjures the image of hapless Filipino masses being crushed by the weight of trillions of pesos worth of concrete and steel.

Worse, instead of promoting self-reliant national development, the BBB program will lead the country on a

disastrous road of indebtedness to and dependence on a fast-emerging foreign power: China.

Government tries to placate public unrest stirred by the TRAIN law. It says that up to 70% of revenues to be collected will be spent on the BBB. This is on top of other fund sources such as the floating of Php 12 billion in government bonds and a projected \$167-billion loan package from China.

Already, the new taxes which took effect this year are being blamed for the highest inflation rates—3.8% in the first quarter of 2018, with a new high of 6.4% in August.



Debt and national sovereignty

But the loudest alarms are being raised about the serious repercussions on national sovereignty of getting heavily indebted to China.

Last March Zhuang Guotu, a Chinese academic from Xiamen University, said in an interview with the Global Times that “Chinese loans are usually accompanied by repayment agreements, which use certain natural resources as collateral.”

Duterte’s spokesperson refused to elaborate on that statement, dismissing it as “gossip.” China’s foreign ministry was likewise quick to shoot down Zhuang’s statement as his personal opinion and not reflective of the Chinese government’s policy or practice. But take note that Global Times is published by the People’s Daily, the mouthpiece of China’s revisionist ruling party.

China’s denial flies more in the face of what has befallen Sri Lanka. Last year Sri Lanka was forced to practically cede its strategic port of Hambantota to China, through a 99-year lease due to its inability to pay off more than \$8 billion in debts to Chinese state firms.

Causing further suspicion is the thick veil of secrecy over the Duterte regime’s loan negotiations with China. To date, Duterte’s economic managers have not been transparent on what the actual interest rates, the conditions and repayment terms are of these Chinese loans.

Perhaps part of the reason lies in the fact that the terms are downright indefensible. Only last February, NEDA director general Ernesto Pernia caused an uproar when he admitted that the Duterte government has chosen to secure loans from China despite the far lower interest rates of 0.25% to 0.75% by other lender countries like Japan, as opposed to China’s 2-3%. This means it is 3,000% more costly to borrow from China.

In May last year, an article published by the influential business magazine Forbes warned that “Dutertenomics, fueled by expensive loans from China, will put the Philippines into virtual debt bondage.” It predicted that with the estimated \$167-billion infrastructure loans from China added to the Philippines’ current foreign debt of \$123 billion, the high interest rates imposed by China could cause the entire debt to balloon to over a trillion US dollars in ten years.

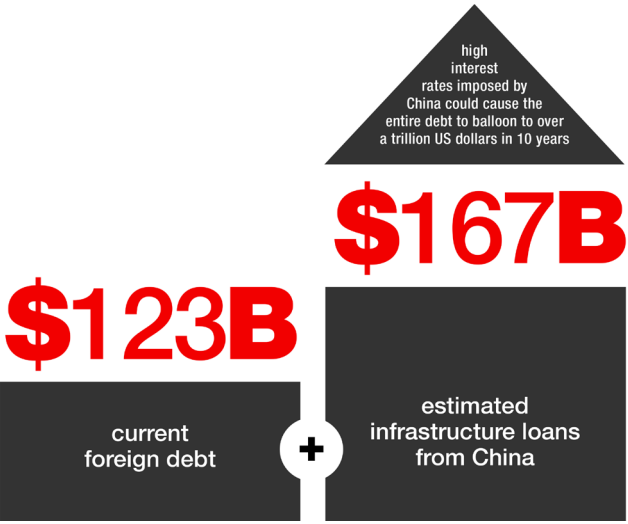
“Once the country has trouble repaying \$167 billion in debt, plus interest, to China,” wrote Forbes contributor

Anders Corr, “the Philippines will have to give political and economic concessions to China in order to repay annual interest, or renegotiate such a large quantity of debt.”

Corr added that this could include political concessions, such as giving up territory or oil rights in the South China Sea or Benham Rise. Or it could include economic concessions, for example, selling China its national companies, or agreeing to below-market rates on exports to China.

National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) chief political consultant Jose Ma. Sison has followed up Corrs’ article by lambasting the Duterte regime for accepting not just loans at high commercial rates but also defective and overpriced supplies and services from China.

Upon loan default, Sison pointed out, the Chinese corporations would convert the loans to equity, giving the Chinese further control over Philippine natural resources (including the Exclusive Economic Zone and the Extended Continental Shelf in the West Philippine Sea), the entire Philippine economy and government policies through puppets and dummies.



Lining the pockets

Duterte’s tack, Sison added, is a foolish repeat of the Arroyo regime’s preference for overpriced projects and high-interest loan agreements (such as the anomalous NBN-ZTE deal) that benefited most big compradors and corrupt bureaucrats in both China and the Philippines, including the Arroyo couple.

In a similar vein, Corr pointed out the possibility of Duterte and his influential friends and business associates benefiting from hundreds of millions of dollars in finders’ fees for facilitating the debt deals with China. What Corr has posited could well be the answer to the riddle of why the Duterte government has persistently been going for the Chinese loans even under terms patently detrimental to the national interest.

Draft CASER provisions on infra development and taxation

From the NDFP perspective, infrastructure-building should be part of a purposive, strategic economic plan for national development whose implementation shall be democratically decided, publicly transparent, and socially accountable.

In stark contrast to the BBB, this is the spirit of a people-centered economic development path under the NDFP’s draft Comprehensive Agreement on Social and Economic Reforms (CASER).

As the Duterte regime has abandoned the GRP-NDFP peace talks, it also scrapped any opportunity to forge the CASER—a would-be historic agreement which aims to “solve the fundamental problems of exploitation,

underdevelopment and poverty in order to establish the basis for a just and lasting peace.”

The Duterte government has shown that it is no different from past reactionary regimes that erroneously believed change could be effected merely through infrastructure building, without touching in any way the underdeveloped, agrarian and semi-feudal economic landscape through national industrialization and genuine land reform. Without these necessary changes, any new infrastructure will end up facilitating and reinforcing the classic exchange of Philippine raw materials, semi-manufactured goods and cheap labor for finished products from overseas that has characterized neo-colonial trade and perpetuated the country’s economic backwardness.

In the NDFP’s draft CASER, several provisions call for massive state spending on infrastructure in the push to attain rural development and national industrialization. But it stipulates the creation of mechanisms to ensure the role of people’s organizations in the planning and implementation of infrastructure projects, in both cities and countryside.

The CASER upholds both the necessity of responsible state intervention and making the welfare of the people the center of economic policies.

Taxation is one of several sources mentioned in the CASER for financing the national industrialization drive, including the needed infrastructure support. But it clearly puts in place a progressive tax system that charges lower income taxes on the masses and small firms, and higher income taxes on the wealthy and large corporations.

The CASER provides for the abolition of the value-added tax (VAT) and excise taxes on basic goods and services consumed by the working people. Taxes on luxury goods and services, however, shall be increased, as will consumption taxes on alcoholic drinks, tobacco products, gambling and other socially or economically undesirable items.

The CASER also calls for regulations on public and private foreign borrowing to ensure that foreign loans support national development, and save domestic monetary and exchange rate, financial, and fiscal policy from being hostage to foreign interests due to debt bondage.

And while the CASER calls for breaking the country’s economic dependence on the US and Japan, it warns about developing new dependencies on other foreign powers.

Because Duterte’s ruinous road-building program is heading towards a debt-ridden future, it deserves to be rejected by the Filipino people. **LIB**



IN THE BOG OF FASCIST REACTION

by Angel Balen

Into his third year in office, Rodrigo R. Duterte increasingly finds himself and his government getting mired deeper and deeper in the bog of fascist reaction, stumbling into one misstep after another.

A year ago he discarded his publicly declared wish to be the first “Left” president of the Philippines (the truth may be that he never had the political will to fulfill that wish). With misplaced hubris, the self-proclaimed erstwhile “socialist” unraveled himself as a fascist, and plunged his administration into this bog—disdaining to entertain the thought it would turn out this way.

Now he is confronted with multiple problems he can’t effectively tackle and properly resolve, no matter the means he employs, before his term ends in 2022. To begin with, many of the problems have sprung from his impetuous, little-thought-out and crudely-crafted policies and decisions.

Among these problems are:

- » the continued implementation of martial law in Mindanao and his threat to impose it nationwide;
- » his unilateral cancellation/termination of the Government of the Republic of the Philippines –National Democratic Front of the Philippines (GRP-NDFP) peace talks. He stopped just when these were promising to produce substantive agreements on social and economic reforms of immediate benefits to the Filipino people. He shifted to “localized” peace talks and unable to find any party willing to participate because the framework is “negotiate to surrender”;
- » his proclamation of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and the New People’s Army (NPA) as “terrorist organizations” and filing before a regional trial court, through the justice department, a petition for proscription that listed names and “aliases” of over 600 individuals presuming them to be “terrorist suspects” sans any vetting, as admitted by his current justice secretary. (Four of such individuals—including Satur Ocampo and Rafael Baylosis, independent cooperator and NDFP consultant, respectively, in the GRP-NDFP peace talks—have succeeded, through written replies to the summons served to them, to get the court to exclude their names from the list);
- » the continually rising incidence of extrajudicial killings and other human rights violations, particularly among the peasants and
- » indigenous people, due to the implementation of the Armed Forces of the Philippines’s (AFP) counterinsurgency program, Oplan Kapayapan;
- » the unrelenting pursuit of the “war on drugs” (with 25,000 people so far estimated to have been killed) and the prospect—which Duterte dreads—that the International Criminal Court would decide to investigate and judicially proceed against him for committing crimes against humanity;
- » the campaign to eradicate graft and corruption, over which Duterte recently expressed having become tired and exasperated and threatened to step down from the presidency as he says his regime will rise or fall on the issue of corruption; and
- » Duterte’s shift-to-federalism project (aimed at giving him excessive powers during the interim or transition period), currently snagged in Congress. His own neoliberal economic team says its funding requirement threatens to upend state financing and disrupt the regime’s economic development program. His minions at the Department of Interior and Local Government attempt to push a flagging “RevGov” plan calling for an extra-constitutional “People’s Council” (a parody of “people power”) that would keep Duterte in power until a new form of government would have been installed.

Aside from these problems, pressing for more immediate and long-term solution are the current crisis of sharply rising inflation, the recurrent shortage of rice supply and soaring prices of food and other basic necessities; and the economy’s slowing growth rate. His regime performed poorly in 2017 towards achieving the 257 economic and social development targets for 14 sectors under the Duterte Philippine Development Plan. Here are the figures from the Philippine Statistics Authority: high likelihood of achieving only 111 targets; medium prospect of attaining 29 others; and low probability of fulfilling 117 targets. Also the tracking of various indicators, by research outfits and economists, show the Philippines ranking last (“kulelat,” says economist Cielito Habito) among developing nations of Southeast Asia.

Duterte’s martial law in Mindanao

The declared basis for Martial Law (which Duterte and his military and security advisers chose to take while on an official visit to Moscow) was to enable the state security forces to contain and crush a so-called attempt by the Islamic State (IS/ISIS)-inspired, represented by the Maute and Abu Sayyaf “extremist”. This groups had an initial estimated force of 300 fighters, to establish an IS “province” in Marawi by mounting a siege on the only Islamic city in the country.

Originally intended to last five months, the declaration was first extended to end of 2017 (even as its objective was supposedly already attained in October, with the seiging armed groups wiped out and Marawi City devastated). Yet Duterte further extended it till end of 2018, claiming martial law is still needed to complete the suppression/eradication of the violently extremist groups, now tagged as “terrorists”, and to safeguard the security of the civilian population.

In declaring and extending ML, he got the concurrence of a pliant Congress in joint session and the approval of a lenient Supreme Court.

But how is the situation in Mindanao today, almost a year after ending the so-called Marawi siege?

Thousands of displaced Marawi residents, with inadequate supply of their daily needs, remain in crowded evacuation centers in Iligan City and nearby areas or stay in the similarly crowded residences of relatives or friends. The rehabilitation of the devastated city lacks funding to get started. Much of the reconstruction work is to be given to Chinese contractors, which the Marawi residents disapprove

of, primarily because they have been excluded from the planning and rebuilding process that they say doesn't take into account their culture, religious belief and practices. The people of Marawi also resent and protest the construction of a new military camp in the city center and the refurbishing of the previously existing one. (See article on page 19).

As regards the suppression/eradication of the remaining "terrorist" groups and safeguarding the security of civilians, the martial law extension hasn't been effective. Just within a month, three bombing incidents occurred in public places (in Lamitan, Basilan on July 31; in Isulan, Sultan Kudarat on August 28 and September 1). All together the bombings killed 16 people and wounded 50 others. None of the perpetrators have been arrested.

State security officials have attributed the Lamitan bombing to the IS/Maute-Abu Sayyaf group, and alleged that six foreign IS members allegedly operating in Mindanao have yet to be accounted for.

On the other hand, the same officials blamed the Isulan bombings on elements of the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF), who are opposing the passage and prospective implementation of the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL, formerly the Bangsamoro Basic Law or BBL). They concede that the BOL will not bring about the long-sought peace among the Bangsamoro in the immediate future—a peace that Duterte has repeatedly promised to his Muslim kin (he says his mother has Maranao blood).

The knee-jerk reaction of Malacanang to the bombing incidents, suggesting further extension of martial law in Mindanao, only fueled the Mindanaoans' cynicism over the government's promise of a "mantle of security" under martial law.

An oblique rebuke to the martial law proponent-implementors came recently from a US State Department key official, who categorically answered a question of visiting Filipino journalists at the East-West Center in Hawaii: Was martial law effective in combating terrorism in Mindanao? "No. That is the short answer," replied Irfan Saeed, director of State Department's Office of Countering Violent Extremism.

"The response to terrorism and our efforts in countering violent extremism," Saeed added, "cannot be an excuse

for an overly aggressive law enforcement approach." (He referred to martial law as an "overly aggressive" step). He hit the nail on the head when he said that "suppression of basic human rights [a key element of martial law] is a potential driver of terrorism... (because) you're actually bringing a greater ability to recruit people to violent extremism."

Saeed apparently spoke out of American experience: the formation of the Islamic State began among the Iraqi political detainees, led by Bhagdadi, who had been held captive, tortured, humiliated and deprived of their rights by the US military in Abu Ghraib and other prisons in Iraq.

Duterte's abandonment of the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations

Duterte's chief peace negotiator, Labor Secretary Silvestre Bello III, and his peace adviser, Jesus Dureza, have repeatedly lamented—in the many instances when Duterte hemmed and hawed on the matter—that their principal (the President) was letting slip away the opportunity to leave a "lasting legacy of peace" to the Filipino people.

The failure of the two, who are both Duterte's bosom friends, to prevail on him to hold fast on his promise to pursue and complete the peace negotiations, would be casting away the precious time and efforts they had invested in the peace negotiations since the mid-1990s. As Duterte lets go the chance to leave a lasting legacy to the people, they too would miss the opportunity to earn popular approbation and prestige as peacemakers. Bello and Dureza would end up as "collateral damage" of Duterte's abandoning an honorable peace and falling back to wage a dishonorable and unwinnable war. (See article on page 16).

Duterte's war vs. the people's resistance

Recently Duterte threatened to no longer accept "surrenders" from the NPA and incited state soldiers to shoot upon sight NPA suspects and all those he considers as "enemies of the state." Now this is unconscionably brutal, far worse than the order to the police to shoot dead drug suspects who "fight back" ("nanlaban").

Jose Ma. Sison, NDFP peace panel chief political consultant, interpreted this to mean that Duterte's "line

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At this point in time,
**it is Duterte
and his regime
that needs the
peace negotiation.**



of localized surrender negotiations has utterly failed and he has turned his home region into a bigger cauldron of armed conflict."

On Duterte's taunt that the Left revolutionary forces cannot control even a single barangay, Sison riposted:

"The local organs of political power of the People's Democratic Government of workers and peasants are in thousands of barangays all over the country, attending to the needs and interest of the people neglected and abused by the reactionary government."

"Best proof of this fact," Sison added, "is that the counterrevolutionary and tyrant Duterte and his military have deployed all their 98 Army maneuver battalions as well as police brigades against so many guerrilla fronts in a futile attempt to suppress the revolutionary forces and communities with [the use of] terror and deception."

For its part, the NDFP Public Information Office has criticized the Duterte regime's move to proscribe as "terrorist organizations" the CPP and the NPA. It stated:

"The proscription petition... forms part of the regime's attempt to strip the Philippine revolutionary movement of legitimacy and recognition as a national liberation movement, thereby denying it and every suspected revolutionary of their rights and protection under International Humanitarian Law and other instruments governing armed conflicts."

Furthermore, it emphasized, the petition vainly aims "to eliminate the strongest and most consistent opposition against Duterte's scheme to establish an open fascist rule." Duterte's desperation, it added, "grows as the people's resistance mounts, not only against his tyranny but also against spiralling inflation, low wages, deteriorating social services, onerous taxes, widespread contractualization, trade union repression, landgrabbing and expansion of land monopolies, and other burdens."

At the same time, the NDFP-PIO noted, the proscription bid is a desperate attempt by the Duterte regime to divert attention from its own human rights record. It elaborated:

"The regime wants to cloak its escalating counterrevolutionary war with the mantle of legality, to imbue with legitimacy the widespread political killings, illegal arrests and detention and the attacks against civilians and other unarmed adversaries and strip the victims of all possible means of redress.

"If to be a terrorist is to systematically use armed violence against civilians and other noncombatants," it concluded, "then it is Duterte and his fascist forces who answer to this name." **LIB**

THE TYRANT DENIES THE PEOPLE’S RIGHT TO JUST AND LASTING PEACE

by Leon Castro

Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) President Rodrigo Duterte announced last August 14 that he has terminated the peace process with the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP). It came weeks after he, his spokesperson, and his peace adviser separately declared again suspending the peace negotiations. There was a need, the GRP said, to review the achievements of the GRP-NDFP peace talks, including all agreements between both parties since 1992 when The Hague Joint Declaration was signed.

“I have terminated the talks with the Reds—with the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), with Sison—because in the series of agreements before, even [during] the time of [GRP President Benigno] Aquino, they entered into so many things that they scattered the privileges and power which they wanted,” Duterte said in his usual rambling way. We summed it all and it would really appear that it was a coalition government [they wanted] and I said, “I cannot give you an inch of that even. I cannot give you what is not mine,” Duterte added.

Duterte went on to declare yet again that his government would instead resume the fight against the revolutionary movement. “We have suffered and—in numbers. And I think it would not be good [to continue with the peace process]. We will just have to continue fighting,” he added.

Duterte’s latest announcement of the termination of the peace process is actually nonnews, NDFP Chief Political Consultant Prof. Jose Maria Sison said. Sison explained it was not the first time Duterte terminated the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations. The first time was actually in February 2017, as he again did on November 2017 with his Proclamation 360 that he followed with Proclamation 374 accusing the CPP and the New People’s Army (NPA) as “terrorist” organizations. Sison said Duterte’s proclamations had the malicious intent of making doubly sure that he had killed the peace negotiations.

Either Duterte was lying or ignorant of what he was saying. There had only been one formal round of talks throughout the Aquino regime and the agreements signed in The Oslo Joint Statement of February 2011 the reactionary government tried to abrogate with full malevolent intent. In addition, Prof. Sison had repeatedly denied the NDFP asked or wanted a coalition government with Duterte’s own murderous regime.


But beyond Duterte’s unfounded accusations that the NPA—and not his bloodthirsty military and police—is on a rampage in both rural and urban areas, the question of why is he bent on throwing away the substantial gains achieved by the peace negotiations with the NDFP begs to be asked. If he claims his regime is suffering from the attacks by the NPA, why would he think that to continue fighting with the revolutionary army is the best and only solution? If he still claims he is for peace and development, why can he not admit that agrarian reform and national industrialization—prospective agreements of which are already submitted to him by his own peace negotiators for approval—are tangible efforts to addressing the roots of the armed conflict?

Tyrant and dictator


GRP President Duterte has completely unmasked himself and his regime as a tyrant and dictator in the mold of Ferdinand Marcos and Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. Duterte made a complete turnaround from proclaiming himself as the country’s first “leftist” president to being the chief executive of a cabal that rules through terror, tyranny, and corruption. His Senate is

presided by, like him, a misogynist. His Speaker of the House of Representatives—manouvered into place by his daughter and Davao City Mayor Sara Duterte—is herself a tyrant, cheat, plunderer and human rights violator of the worst kind. He has replaced the Supreme Court Chief Justice with one who has voted to bury Marcos at the Libingan ng mga Bayani. Members of his own personal and official families are involved in smuggling, graft and corruption, and influence-peddling. They have lifestyles that could rival Imelda Marcos’s. Recently, investigative reports have shown that Christopher “Bong” Go has profited billions in government contracts as his most trusted assistant and operator.


The number of extrajudicial killing victims of Duterte’s drug war, mostly poor, has breached 20,000. The reign of terror remains unabated despite increasing opposition and condemnation in the Philippines and abroad. Despite all these deaths, Duterte’s so-called war has only succeeded in allowing tons of illegal drugs into the country while bigtime drug lords, including presidential son and Davao City Vice Mayor Paolo Duterte, remain at large or are being exonerated publicly by no less that Duterte himself.



Resumption of the formal talks in the peace negotiations in Oslo, Norway
and to work for the removal of obstacles and hindrances to prepare for the resumption of peace negotiations.



Participation of the Panels and their consultants in consultations, preparatory meetings & in the formal talks.
The GRP as may be necessary shall work for the recall or suspension of warrants of arrests, reinstate or grant bail, and provide necessary guarantees to facilitate the participation of NDFP consultants.



Meetings of the GRP-NDFP Reciprocal Working Committees on Social and Economic Reforms (RWCs-SER) to finalize the common draft.
The full draft of CASER: Agrarian Reform and Rural Development & National Industrialization and Economic Development shall be submitted by both RWCs to their respective Panels before the 5th round of formal talks resumes.



A Stand-Down of the respective armed units and personnel of the GRP and NDFP and CPP-NPA one week before the resumption of the formal talks in the peace negotiations shall be declared.
It shall remain effective until replaced by a Coordinated Unilateral Ceasefire (CUC).



Finalization of the Coordinated Unilateral Ceasefire Agreement by the GRP and NDFP Ceasefire Ad Hoc Committees
for review and signature by the Negotiating Panels.



The GRP commits to submit to the Office of the President the NDFP proposed amnesty proclamation that shall be certified as urgent to Congress.
The GRP reiterates its commitment to release political prisoners in expeditious and acceptable modes on humanitarian grounds and based on CARHRIHL pending the effectivity of the Amnesty Proclamation.



Finalization of the Interim Peace Agreement
containing the three component documents-ARRD and NIED sections of CASER, the Amnesty Proclamation, and the Coordinated Unilateral Ceasefire based on a Roadmap and General Work Schedule to be agreed upon.



Issuance of regular joint communiques and public statements
on matters pertaining to the formal negotiations to prevent escalating tensions and pressures on both Parties.



Formation of a Bilateral Preparatory Committee to lay the ground for the visit of Prof. Jose Maria Sison to the Philippines, subject to the necessary political, legal, security and technical requirements.

GRP-NDFP BACKCHANNEL HIGHLIGHTS

2ND OF 4 DOCUMENTS

Signed before Pres. Duterte unilaterally cancelled the 5TH round of formal talks

The following guidelines and procedures shall lead to the signing of the GRP-NDFP Interim Peace Agreement and the resumption of the 5th round of formal talks:

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Like his idols Marcos and Arroyo, Duterte is succeeding in running the country's economy to the ground. From the get-go, Duterte's anti-people Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion (TRAIN) measure caused inflation rates that overtook so-called growth rates and hit 6.4 percent last August. While the Philippine Peso lingers at around P53 to P54 to the US dollar, hot money from the speculative market is leaving the country, making the Philippines one of the worst performing economies in the world. The country's foreign debt has also increased dramatically under Duterte and has gone beyond P7 trillion. As a result of all these, oil prices and prices of basic commodities have drastically gone up and continued to do so, angering more and more Filipinos. Duterte's approval rating has also consistently taken a dive since the start of the year, one that could no longer be fixed by his totally discredited propaganda machine.

Meanwhile, poverty alleviation measures promised by Duterte the presidential candidate and Duterte the newly-installed president were exposed to be nothing but hot air and lies. Labor contractualization remains the main mode of employment for workers while genuine agrarian reform is still a dream under his regime.

But are these developments really surprising, more so that no one among the NDFP-nominated progressives remained in Duterte's Cabinet while the most reactionary disciples of neo-liberalization are still well-entrenched? Barely a year after progressives were rejected by the Commission on Appointments, corrupt practices have returned with a vengeance at the Department of Social Work and Development at the behest of corrupt politicians across the street at the House of

Representatives. At the Department of Agrarian Reform, more and more agricultural lands are being handed to landlords and land grabbers. And more than a year after the National Anti-Poverty Commission has published a progressive anti-poverty roadmap, not a single recommendation is being implemented.

In the absence of honest to goodness pro-people policies and programs by the Duterte government, the NDFP-GRP peace process was among the very few avenues for genuine social change. Alas, Duterte is determined to deny the people their right to just and lasting peace.

National industrialization and agrarian reform

Last June 16, the NDFP released backchannel documents it crafted with the GRP Negotiating Panel. The documents represented weeks of hard work not just by the NDFP and its consultants and resource persons but the GRP Negotiating Panel, advisers and staff, not to mention the Third Party Facilitator, The Royal Norwegian Government. These consisted of The Stand-Down Agreement; Guidelines and Procedures towards an Interim Peace Agreement, and the Resumption of Talks, with an attached timetable; The Initialled Interim Peace Agreement; and, The NDFP Proposed Draft of the Amnesty Proclamation, which was given to the GRP and the Third Party Facilitator. These documents were all ready for approval by both panels on the fifth round of formal talks last June 28. Four rounds of informal talks throughout April to June 2018 preceded the scheduled formal in June.

The "Stand Down Agreement"—a temporary cessation of hostilities—between the NDFP and the GRP, was in fact signed and approved by

the chairpersons of the negotiating panels and witnessed by the Third Party Facilitator. It was due for announcement and implementation on June 21, a week before the formal talks.

The GRP-NDFP peace negotiation has been postponed, canceled, and terminated by Duterte several times. Duterte thinks nothing of the hard work by everyone involved in crafting agreements already hailed as real solutions to the worst evils of Philippine society: poverty, corruption, and subservience to foreign interests. Instead of signing the initialed drafts of agrarian reform and rural development, as well as national industrialization and economic development agreements, he listened to militarists in his regime—especially defense secretary Delfin Lorenzana, national security adviser Hermogenes Esperon, and interior and local government and interior secretary Eduardo Año—who were all bred during the last years of Ferdinand Marcos' martial law and wantonly let loose upon the people during Gloria Arroyo's own reign of terror. With bloodthirsty officials like these three as his most trusted hatchet men, is it surprising that Duterte's way of addressing the roots of the armed conflict in this country is heightened fascism and terrorism?

The NDFP and all its allied revolutionary organizations, led by the CPP and the NPA, on the other hand, said they condemn how Duterte waylaid the peace process. While they are not intimidated by Duterte's bluster and threats and are ready to continue defending the Filipino people, they have expressed willingness to resume peace negotiations with any reactionary government serious in negotiating basic reforms that address the roots of the armed conflict. The NDFP said it is hopeful that a genuine peace

negotiation shall contribute to the liberation of the Filipino people from the bondage of poverty, neglect and plunder by foreign and local ruling elite.

Perhaps Duterte is not ready to admit the NDFP's seriousness and sincerity in negotiating peace. Perhaps he was surprised when he was shown by his own negotiating panel that the NDFP has initialed national

industrialization and economic development as well as agrarian reform and rural development draft agreements. Perhaps he himself was not ready to implement peace even when the NDFP publicly announced it is ready to sign a stand down agreement between the NPA and the AFP and PNP, even an interim peace agreement deal. Perhaps Duterte was not really sincere when he promised he would release all political

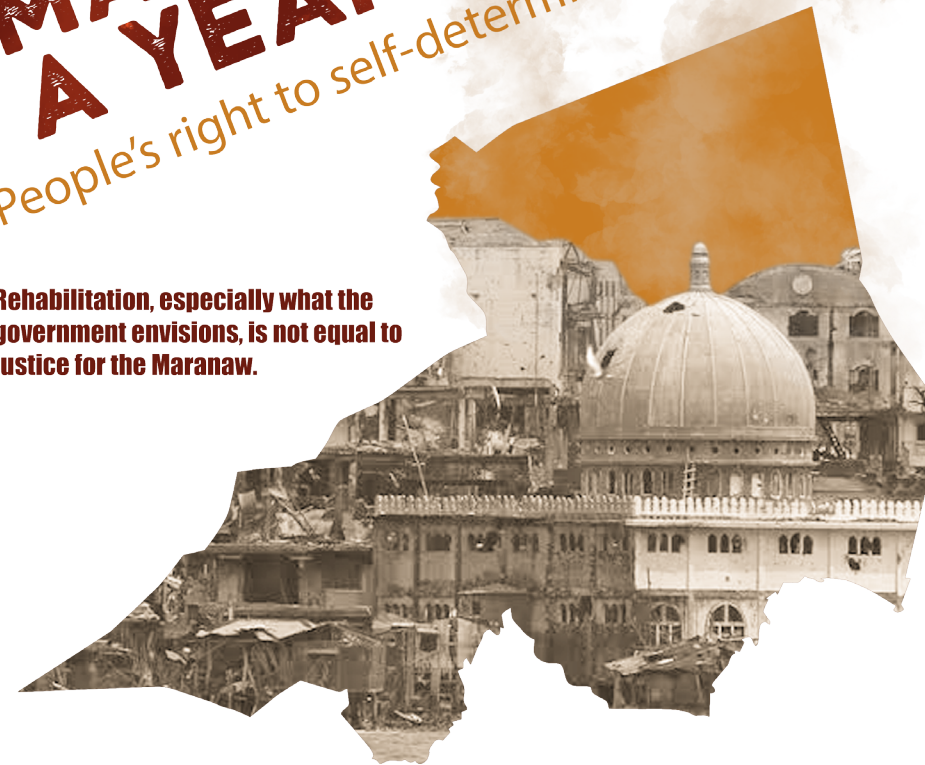
prisoners. Whatever the case may be, his repeated pronouncements to terminate the negotiations defy logic if he really wanted peace.

The question begs to be asked and asked loudly, "Why is Duterte afraid of peace?"

But, then again, is peace possible with a tyrant? **LIB**

MARAWI, AFTER: A YEAR AFTER: People's right to self-determination violated

Rehabilitation, especially what the government envisions, is not equal to justice for the Maranaw.



More than a year after the siege, the Maranaos attempted to go back home—to see what remain of their abodes and properties, and their places of worship. It was painful and surreal to see how they bellowed and begged to be allowed to go back home.

Two years in a row, they had to observe the Ramadhan in evacuation centers or in the homes of relatives and friends, away from their Mosques and the Lanao Lake, both integral to their worship. Despite government press releases saying that Marawi has been cleared of terrorists and is ready to be rebuilt, what we see are still the

by Iliya Makalipay

It was heartbreaking and enraging to witness how the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police, wielding their shields, pushed back and shoved the Maranao people to prevent them from going back to Marawi City. It was as if they were the invaders in their own ancestral land and territory.

displaced Maranaos and the rubble that is the Islamic City of Marawi.

"We were displaced because of the siege and the airstrikes; we continue to be displaced because of the rehabilitation project," one of the evacuees lamented in a broadcast interview.

Traditional systems, processes, culture, and religious belief all disrespected

Less than a month after the May 23, 2017 siege, about 50 traditional and religious leaders in Marawi City requested the AFP Brigade commander to allow them to negotiate with the members of the Daulah Islamiyah (DI). It was an attempt to end the hostilities and avoid further loss of lives and destruction of properties. But the commanding officer refused, saying Malacanang had already opted for a military solution.

“We were not given the opportunity to exercise our traditional means of settling disputes and our right to self-governance,” commented Marawi Sultan Abdul Hamidullah T. Atar, in an emailed interview with Liberation. Marawi, he pointed out, is the only place in the country with a homogenous Muslim population of mostly Maranao, the “people of the lake”.

“We have relatives and clan members in the Daulah Islamiyah. In a way, we are all related, by blood or by affinity, and our leaders could have talked to them,” he explained, adding: “It could have been less disastrous and damaging had these traditional processes were allowed to function.” The Duterte regime, however, had closed all avenues for negotiations.

The consequences of the government’s option: the daily airstrikes, bombings and mortar shellings along with ground assaults wiped out the only Islamic city in the country; it also economically and physically dislocated the Maranao people. The exact number of evacuees, which remains undetermined up to now, ranged from 200,000 to 300,000.

Of the more than 11,000 houses destroyed, at least 37

prayer Mosques were ruined along with several treasured traditional houses. To the non-Muslims, these are equivalent to the destruction of churches, cathedrals, and heritage houses. These were not mere structures; they had been the expressions of the faith, religion, politics, and culture of the Maranao people—their very identity.

“The government said the airstrikes were resorted to out of necessity. But the same government now says it cannot support the rebuilding of our Mosques because of the separation of Church and State,” lamented Sultan Atar.

Violations of human rights and international humanitarian law

“Kung sinira ng Maute ang kusina namin, winasak naman ng AFP ang buong bahay namin” (The Maute group may have destroyed our kitchen but the AFP destroyed our whole house),” deplored Sultan Atar.

Sultan Atar decried the excessive use of firepower against the 300 members of the DI, with 8,000-10,000 foot soldiers deployed against them in 24 of the 96 barangays in Marawi City. Various testimonies from the residents attested to this fact.

Despite the AFP’s limiting their access to the battle areas, journalists and photojournalists have amply documented for the public how Marawi City was reduced to rubble because of the aerial bombings and artillery strikes. An estimated 12,000 families or 60,000 individuals used to occupy the “main battleground,” later referred to as “ground zero”.

Much like the number of evacuees, the number of deaths during the five-month siege is inconclusive, especially on the side of the “militant” fighters and civilians. Like many of the residents’ testimonies, Sultan Atar is unconvinced that 918 “militants” were killed. “How many of them were children and elderly?” he asked.

News reports teemed with accounts detailing how, after the aerial bombings and howitzer strikes began, the evacuees left the elderly members of their families because they could not walk for long hours. “We didn’t think it would last this long,” explained the Sultan.

Thus, when Marawi was “cleared of terrorists,” those outside of “ground zero” who were able to return home were appalled, but not surprised, to find the skeletons of their dead relatives. Up to now, no one knows the exact number of skeletons found. The situation has become more deplorable as it broke the Muslim practice of burying their dead within 24 hours.

Where skeletons were found, valuables were missing or destroyed.

Sultan Atar himself lost the engines of his vehicles but he refused to believe the claim of the military that it was the “extremists” who did these. Another Sultan, Saramay, saw his house only partially burned in October, the first time he was allowed inside Marawi. But when he went back in November, he found his whole house already razed to the ground.

The AFP asked the residents who had complained to present evidence to prove that soldiers were responsible for looting their destroyed houses. “That’s crazy. Were we in the area? Hinahanapan kami ng evidence ng violations, ng looting, ayaw nga kaming papasukin (They want us to provide evidence of the violations, of the looting when they won’t even allow us [in Marawi],” remarked Sultan Adat.

There are about 2,000 documented cases of violations of human rights and international law. “Pero ayaw muna i-public ng mga evacuees (The evacuees are hesitant to make these documents public) because they may be subjected to further harassments or

for fear that they might be kicked out from the shelter,” he added.

Evacuation, discrimination

Wanting to set the record straight, Sultan Atar claimed the evacuees in government centers in Iligan City comprise only 20 percent of the total number of displaced Maranao. About 80 percent are home-based—those living in their relatives’ houses. “Our families and clans have been supporting us more than the government does,” he said.

The CNN-Philippines recently reported that the Commission on Audit (COA) has already flagged the Marawi City local government for its failure to disburse 74 percent or almost Php 30 Million (of the Php39M local donation) for aid, relief and services for the evacuees in 2017.

Groups involved in relief operations noted how women and children suffer most in evacuation centers as the centers are not gender and culture-sensitive. Women complained about the lack of privacy for bathing and changing clothes. It was also most difficult for pregnant women, who gave birth during the evacuation, to care for the newly born in over-crowded centers.

The daily worship and the observance of Ramadhan, for two years now, were disrupted. Muslims pray five times a day and follow the ritual of ablution before handling the Qur’an. That partly explains why most of the Mosques in Marawi were built around Lanao Lake. But they have been away from the lake for too long and there’s scarce supply of water in the evacuation centers.

One other thing appalled Sultan Atar: those among the displaced who sought to rent apartments in Iligan City were turned down by

renters allegedly because “we came from Marawi and there’s the stigma of everyone being a terrorist.” The Marawi siege has definitely raised the level of discrimination against the Moro people by attaching to them the “ISIS” tag.

The question, however, is where will the evacuees go? The residents want to go back to Marawi now and reclaim their lands and their lives. All they ask from the government is to restore the supply of water and electricity and to rehabilitate the roads and drainage system. Sadly, there are no concrete plans for them. Based on the government’s rehabilitation plan, the evacuees will not be allowed back into their own homes, at least, until 2020.

Rehabilitation without the people

The government’s grandiose plan to “rehabilitate” Marawi is focused primarily on raising the necessary funds. This is no different from its “concern” on how to get more support for arms and ammunition to pulverize the members of the Daulah Islamiya,” wryly commented Sultan Adat.

Indeed, President Duterte has issued Administrative Order No. 3 creating the Task Force Bangon Marawi (TFBM), composed of various state line agencies, to manage the rehabilitation and rebuilding of Marawi City. Yet until now, neither the amount of the rehabilitation budget nor the source of funds has been settled.

From the initial Php 17-20 billion for two-three years, the proposed funding has now gone up to Php 62-72 billion, based on the recent budget submitted to Malacanang by Eduardo del Rosario, head of the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council, who chairs the Task Force.



The Php 55B increase is supposed to cover the 76 other barangays outside “ground zero”.

In 2018, Php 10B has been allocated from the General Appropriations Act (GAA). Locally, some Php 3.5B will be drawn from the 2019 proposed budget of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Fund (NDRRMF).

The Department of Finance (DoF) is now considering to float Php 40 billion worth of “Marawi bonds” for the period of five years, the target completion of the rehabilitation program. Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez III has also talked about a pledging session among interested countries, with a special invitation to China.

Companies from China comprise the majority, along with four Filipino companies, in the Bangon Marawi Consortium, which is supposed to build the infrastructure. However, the start of construction has been delayed several times because none of the Chinese companies was able to raise the required capitalization.

Already, there is widespread fear among the Maranao people that they will never be able to set foot on their ancestral territory given the government’s unresolved scheme of acquiring funds for the rehabilitation.

While fundraising has been going on, the residents complained that there are no concrete plans for land use in the city, only proposals “to flatten the debris,” remarked Sultan Atar.

The construction of another military camp in the city likewise threatens the Maranao as well as the idea of building an export processing zone.

Residents through groups like Tindeg Ranao and the Ranao multi-sectoral groups have raised their opposition to the construction of the 10-hectare military camp. The construction is worth Php 400 million and is expected to be finished by 2020. Also Php 1.3B in the 2019 GAA will be allocated to the 55th Engineering Brigade of the Philippine Army, for rehabilitation and rebuilding its facilities in the city.

The Maranao people resent the Duterte government’s priority of building military camps and mass housing for policemen and soldiers. They also resent that during Duterte’s visits in Marawi he has never sought out the evacuees and has not even talked about their displacement, about the families who suffered casualties and deaths.

“The government failed to heed the people’s grievances. It failed to realize that Marawi is beyond the issue of rehabilitation, it is about healing and social justice,” emphasized Sultan Adat. His sentiments echo those of the majority of the Maranao who criticize the government for not considering their needs, not only in terms of housing, but their overall needs as a people, as Maranao.

“The major flaw in the plan to rehabilitate and rebuild Marawi is not simply because there is no people’s participation but more importantly because it is pursued without the people in the picture,” said Sultan Adat. “We grew old thinking that we can pass on our lands to our children. I didn’t know that one day, I’ll wake up and it is no longer ours,” he bemoaned.

Historical injustice

Resentment is widespread among the Maranao people as days, months, and years pass by without any clear indication of when and how they could regain and restart their lives.

With martial law in place and as “terrorist” tagging has become the norm, victims are generally silenced. The politicians, fearing reprisal and political backlash, have become passive. It didn’t help either that in all these, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) chose not to say a word about Marawi and the Maranao, their fate could have been logically become part of the negotiation with the government.

“We have to break the silence so that those silenced by the martial law could speak up,” said Sultan Adat. And it would help if the majority of the Filipinos echo the sentiments of the Maranaw people. “*Habang walang kumikibo sa karamihan sa atin, di magkakalakas loob na magsalita ang mga* victims (Our voice would encourage the rest of the victims to speak up).”

But, Duterte’s derisive statements have ignited the sentiments of the Moro youth. Most of them feel hatred for the government. Maratabat, the Maranao pride, honor has been offended. It pains them that they—who have become victims, have been displaced and discriminated against—are now accused by the government of being terrorist coddlers, if not being terrorists themselves. It is a known fact that when maratabat is offended, revenge could not be far away.

When the airstrikes started, Moro leaders, including those in the local government, warned that the daily bombing was not the solution and it could only push the Maranao, especially the youth, to Islamist

extremism. The same stands true to this day.

“Pag di ito na-address (when this is not addressed) and there is no accountability, no hope and no chance for justice, we will see a worsening of the situation,” warned Sultan Adat. But he would not also be surprised, he said, if a new group arises, one that is more legitimate than the MILF or the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF).

For now, Sultan Adat could only hope for an end to martial law and for the government to allow an independent investigation on the real motives behind the siege, the extent of the human rights violations, the deaths, the damage, and destruction.

By now, it is clear that the Duterte regime’s solutions—from the siege to the evacuation on to the rehabilitation—is bereft of respect

for the Maranao people’s religion and culture and of the recognition of their rights to self-determination and to their territories. It is a response that is far from Duterte’s vow to correct historical injustice. It is a case when solutions actually led to destruction and violations of the Maranao people’s rights. **LJB**

The Duterte-Arroyo-Marcos Alliance

rouses greater people's resistance

Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo

Bong-bong Marcos

REHABILITATING THE ENEMIES OF THE PEOPLE

by Vida Gracias

Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo’s power grab on the Speakership of the House of Representatives that stalled Duterte’s delivery of his third state-of-the-nation address on July 23 has highlighted the collusion between the Duterte regime, on one hand, and the Marcos and Arroyo political cliques, on the other. While this turn of event may seem to strengthen and consolidate Duterte’s political clout, in the long term it could loosen his grip on power and hasten his doom.



Ferdinand E. Marcos' fascist and plunderous dictatorship and Arroyo's corruption-and-brutality ridden regime that attempted to replicate Marcos' type of rule were, in their respective times, the nation's most-hated governments – and Ferdinand and Gloria, deemed as enemies of the people. But President Rodrigo Duterte has taken it upon himself to resurrect and rehabilitate these enemies of the people and restore them (in Marcos' case, his heirs) to power. This is not at all surprising, given that Duterte has one thing in common with them: an obsession for dictatorship.

Arroyo is a professed ally and confidant of Duterte, and vice-versa. The relationship goes a long way back when Duterte was still

mayor of Davao City. A number of Arroyo's trusted men played important roles in Duterte's presidential campaign. Duterte was so in awe of Arroyo as an economist and hard-driving chief executive that he put in his cabinet her key people to head his economic and security clusters.

Charged with plunder and other cases after she ended her nine-year presidency, Arroyo parlayed her allegedly serious medical condition and her network of appointees in the judiciary to have herself placed in hospital arrest, then get the case against her dropped. She ran and won the congressional seat previously held by her son, and plotted her rise to power.

But the brazen way in which she became Speaker of the House, which startled even Duterte and almost had him walking out of his SONA, should be fair warning. Arroyo is notorious for her betrayals—talking to the military generals against President Joseph Estrada even before his ouster, lying to the nation that she wouldn't run for president, and stealing the elections from Fernando Poe, Jr. (via the "Hello Garci" scandal). Thus, staging a coup against former speaker and PDP-Laban partymate Pantaleon Alvarez was, to her, peanuts.

Even before he launched his belated presidential bid, Duterte had been vocal about his love for and idolization of Marcos and his dictatorial ways (hailing Marcos as the country's "best president"). Amid the nation's protests, and publicly flaunting that he was merely fulfilling a promise he had made to the Marcoses, Duterte authorized the burial of the late dictator's preserved body in the Libingan ng mga Bayani, with pomp and rites as a "hero". He also allegedly made a deal with the Marcoses, though he denied it, to have their purloined wealth brought back to the country.

This was "*utang na loob*" in full display: during martial law, the dictator Marcos

rewarded Duterte's father Vicente with a cabinet post and the governorship of the then sprawling single province of Davao. Marcos's elder daughter Imee was one of only three provincial governors who openly supported Duterte, shelling out considerable sums for his campaign. More importantly, she delivered the votes of the Solid North to help Duterte win.

Duterte has also been doing everything he can to help Ferdinand Jr. (Bongbong) to wrestle the vice-presidency from Leni Robredo, through a protest filed before the Presidential Electoral Tribunal (constituting of all the Supreme Court justices). From day one, Duterte has sought to humiliate, belittle and demean Vice President Robredo, whom BongBong claimed narrowly won over him by cheating.

True, the Marcoses, particularly Imee, supported Arroyo's power grab. But only in so far as this would also cause the downfall of her arch-enemy in the House of Representatives, former majority leader Rodolfo Fariñas of Ilocos Norte, who hounded Imee with investigations regarding the misuse of the tobacco excise tax in their province.

In retrospect, the Marcoses and the Arroyos have an ax to grind against each other. Former President Diosdado Macapagal, Arroyo's father, reneged on his promise to make Ferdinand Marcos the presidential standard bearer of the Liberal Party in the early sixties (Marcos switched

party, became the Nacionalista Party presidential candidate and defeated the reelectionist Macapagal). Later, after he declared martial law in 1972, Marcos harassed and threatened to arrest Macapagal.

It was Sara Duterte, the President's daughter, who markedly brought the Arroyos and Marcoses together, via her regional party Hugpong, in a common bid to demolish the ruling PDP-Laban party (which put up Duterte as presidential candidate) and strengthen their respective political turfs. Their collusion is highlighted at the moment. However, the emerging realignment of largely traditional and dynastic political forces, could give the Marcoses and the Arroyos more elbow room to undercut the power of President Duterte while consolidating their own in the coming days.

Already, Duterte's draft charter change proposal for a shift to a federal system of government has come under fire from Arroyo's minions in the Cabinet such as Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez, Budget Secretary Benjamin Diokno, National Security Adviser Hermogenes Esperon, and Secretary of National Defense Delfin Lorenzana. It is going to be a fiscal nightmare, they chorused. Government is not prepared for it, they said. While Arroyo did push for charter change during her extended term, she batted for a parliamentary system, not a federal one. She wanted to sit as Prime Minister with full powers to again rule the entire nation.

As for the Marcoses, they are not as eager as Duterte's DDS to promote federalism, as they dream of getting back in Malacañang under the present unitary system. Imee is aiming to be senator while her brother Bongbong is intent on winning the electoral protest for vice president. Federalism will shoot down their ambitions. And should Duterte renege on any of his promises or deals, they can still wield the power of their stolen wealth and political bailiwick to make things difficult for him.

In a recent statement, the Communist Party of the Philippines hit the nail on its head by saying that "the Duterte-Arroyo-Marcos alliance is an uneasy one." The CPP sees this alliance as a clear indication of the worsening state of the ruling system. "The ruling regime," the party said, "now represents the starkest icons of fascism, corruption and puppetry," adding, "it further boosts the anti-Duterte united front."

Apart from his own sins against the people, Duterte's maintaining such alliance shall make him jointly accountable for the plague of abuses and crimes that the resurrected Marcoses and Arroyo could inflict anew upon this nation. That said, the people's progressive and revolutionary movements will have to make sure that when they drive Duterte out of power, the Marcoses and Arroyo shall be dumped along with him. They all must face the wrath of the people. **LIB**

The CPP sees this alliance as a clear indication of the worsening state of the ruling system.

GAY WARRIORS IN THE REVOLUTION

by Markus del Pilar and Pat Gambao

“If we were to be grouped together in this guerrilla front, we would constitute a company. But that will not happen. Did you see how rowdy we were during the volleyball game? We could be extremely noisy.”

They all guffawed at the idea.

Few are the times that they come together. In fact some of them have just met for the first time. They belong to different guerrilla zones and, as they said, they cannot be grouped together. Not because they are boisterous, but because there is a particular need for them in the areas where they have been assigned.

They are members of the Pulang Bagani Battalion (PBB) of the New People’s Army (NPA). Revolutionaries all. And also *bayot* — gays.

The battle against discrimination

Ka Riko, a choreographer, related that their ‘ninunong bakla’ and ‘anitong bading’ (literally gay “ancestors” and gay “icons”) in the urban centers had experienced discrimination from some members of the movement who considered homosexuality a weakness. The gays were criticized for their flipping fingers and swaying hips, especially during rallies. There was even a time when being gay was considered a security risk.

The growing number of gays and lesbians in the Party necessitated thorough studies, ideological remolding and a policy guide for the proper attitude towards members who have expressed their sexual preference. Said efforts are aimed at mitigating if not all together effacing gender discrimination.

Among these was the circulation of the pamphlet, “On Proletarian Relationship of the Sexes (OPRS),” a Party document to guide relationships and marriages. During the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) 10th Plenum, discussions included the gays and lesbians’ equal rights as others and the recognition of their sexual preferences, as well as the relationships and marriages they opt to enter into.

In due time, the gays have proven their worth as revolutionaries. Flipping their fingers and swaying their hips do not negate their ability to lead and carry out tasks, including military tasks.

However, the process of acceptance and recognition of the rights of the LGBTQ members has not been easy. Aside from the unequal development of members in the movement, the influence of the bourgeois culture

and society that looks down and discriminates against lesbians, gays, bi-sexual and transgender (LGBTQ) remains strong. Persistently combating this depraved influence is imperative.

Ka Duday, a member of the PBB’s medical staff, disclosed how uneasy he felt at the start. He did not know how he would situate himself within the collective. “I can’t take a bath with the men because it will violate the rules. I can’t join the women because they might think I am taking advantage of them. Then somebody remarked that gays have no place in the revolution. Severely offended, I got demoralized. I left the movement. But at home there was nothing I could do but cry. After a few months, I sent word I will return and assess my situation with them.”

Ka Duday believed that combating the debased culture of the bourgeois

society we were born into and initiating change would fruition from the collective struggle of the gays, lesbians and heterosexuals in the national democratic revolution. Party documents are available to enlighten gays and lesbians that they are not excluded from the oppression and exploitation suffered by other genders. Thus, it is important that they take an active role in the people’s revolution.

“But we cannot send the message and convince them of the exigency for revolution if we ourselves are undisciplined,” Ka Duday said.

Ka Riko shared an experience during an encounter with AFP soldiers in 2000 where his unit was put in the defensive. They had a difficult time withdrawing from the enemy troops, who were fast advancing towards them. Out of the blue, one of the comrades, a gay, went out and casually approached the advancing troops and talked to them. This diversionary tactic enabled the NPA unit to maneuver and withdraw. “Proud!” Ka Riko exclaimed.

THE REVOLUTION *has no gender*

“The revolution does not discriminate on gender. The gun has no gender.

The aspiration to serve the masses and win the revolution to institute real societal change binds us all—men, women, gays, lesbians.”

Ka Princess

That incident served as a turning point for how the gays in the people's army were treated. Some comrades still make fun of gays but this time they do it with fondness unlike before when the gays felt people were avoiding them. With pride Ka Riko remarked, "Gays in the movement are awesome—brave and real fighters."

They fondly remember Wendel Gumban—Weng to his family, Wanda to his friends and comrades in the city, and Ka Waquin to Red fighters of the PBB and the Lumad. He was martyred. A graduate of Tourism from the University of the Philippines, Wendel set aside personal ambitions to serve the masses and the revolution.

"Apart from his being a gay warrior, Ka Waquin's dedication to the service of the people is an undying inspiration, not only to us, gays, but also to many comrades and the masses. He has proven that being gay is no hindrance to firing a gun, especially when it is done for the sake of national liberation," Ka Duday professed.



APART FROM HIS BEING A GAY WARRIOR, KA WAQUIN'S DEDICATION TO THE SERVICE OF THE PEOPLE IS AN UNDYING INSPIRATION... HE HAS PROVEN THAT BEING GAY IS NO HINDRANCE TO FIRING A GUN, ESPECIALLY WHEN IT IS DONE FOR THE SAKE OF NATIONAL LIBERATION.

Getting out of the closet

Aside from confronting the enemy, gay comrades know there is also a need to courageously confront internal contradictions. Getting out of the closet would invite being belittled, ridiculed and loathed.

Ka Princess related his experience, thus:

"Since high school I already knew I was gay but I hid the fact from my family. I mingled with the NPA but I had no plan to join them. I merely assisted them when able. If you came from a family of peasants you would always yearn to uplift your family from deprivation. Thus, I worked as a security guard in the city. However, I could not stand the exploitative situation that security guards are subjected to. It is a worthless sacrifice. I left my job and contacted my friend in the NPA to express my desire to join them."

"For more than a year, I concealed my real self from our group. But it bothered me no end so I opened up to Ka Bob, a member of the higher committee. I requested him to discuss it with the committee. I did not know how the concerned comrades would react but it was the least of my worry. The important thing was I got 'out' and felt relieved."

Ka Princess expected derision from his comrades and the masses after they learned the truth about him. But that did not happen. In fact, some of them were in disbelief. They said he looked like a burly man with his physique and the way he talked and acted.

"If you really want to hide your true identity you will do everything to avoid suspicion," Ka Princess explained.

In one CPP anniversary celebration, Ka Princess invited his family. It was there when he admitted to them his gender preference. At first his parents and siblings were shocked, but after explaining himself to them they heartily accepted him as he was.

Ka Princess felt liberated after that confession, as if a big thorn had been plucked out of his throat. He joined the NPA as Ka Marco and has now become Ka Princess, his platoon's political guide.

For Ka Awra, being Moro and gay is a double burden. She explained:

"I used to envy my friends in the city because many of them, both men and women, were proficient with the gay lingo. I got the impression they very much welcomed gays. Later I learned that they already suspected me to be one, because I was demure and gentle.

But they never asked me about it nor made me admit I'm gay. In 2005, I was invited to a launch of the organization of gays and lesbians. I was wondering why I was invited. During the self-introduction, one has to state his/her name and his/her gender—gay, lesbian or bi-sexual. When it was my turn to speak—there, I came out and my 'career' as Awra Alindogan was unexpectedly launched. Bongga! (great!)," Ka Awra, an education officer, marveled at the reminiscence.

After that revelation, Ka Awra discovered there are much more he can do and contribute to the revolution: he

can write, he can dance, he can strut his cultural prowess to spice up his organizing and instruction work. He had opened up to his comrades and the masses. He realized that the masses will accept and love you whatever your gender is, for as long as you could help them with their problems; they see you at the people's court resolving issues; they are enlightened and they learn from your instruction, be it about the Party courses or simply to read and write. For as long as you are with them in charting plans and programs that will serve their interests, they will wholeheartedly accept you.



Ingenious Gay

"There was that time when our camp was raided and all our belongings were taken away. The masses, learning of the incident, sent me a bagful of things to replace what I lost. The gesture so touched me that I was teary-eyed with joy. I wrote back to thank them. The masses so loved the people's army. They are always excited to meet and exchange pleasantries with us whenever we are around," Ka Awra narrated.

Ka Awra realized that respect is not earned by hiding one's true self. In the first place, there is no need to hide or deny one's preferred gender. If one does his/her job well, has good rapport with everyone, abides by the policies and programs of the revolutionary movement, there would be no complication. This does not apply to gays alone. All the men and women need to carry out their tasks well for the revolution. In this way, they will surely gain the trust and respect of their comrades, as well as the masses.

Ka Awra was once assigned to lead a team in a special military operation. He vehemently refused, especially because his long hair would have to be cut. He was crying throughout the time his hair was being cut. "*Ayoko nang mag-struggle* (I no longer want to be part of the struggle)" was what he had uttered then, he recalled laughing.

But at the end he realized he should not prioritize personal desires over his revolutionary tasks. He finally accepted the task and they rehearsed



how to carry out the operation. During the actual tactical operation, there were “directors” who coached him. They called his attention whenever his voice and action started to soften up. But they let him be himself when there were no other people around. He could sit down with legs crossed. He could fan himself with gusto. But when there were other people around he had to return to his “character”.

“After the operation, we all felt the fangs of hunger as we packed our things. Seeing a fruit delivery truck approaching, they requested me to ask for something to eat. Although vexed, compassion took the better of me and I stopped the truck to ask for food. I was already in civilian clothes. I used my charm. However, the men in the truck still identified me as an NPA because they said there are no gays in the AFP. We learned later that they came from one of the barangays where we had mass work before,” Ka Awra said.

Liberation Movement

The recognition and respect accorded by the CPP for the rights of gays and lesbians is a big stride forward for them. They feel confident that the movement will continue to gain more insights and lessons as it advances the national democratic revolution. The movement may encounter enormous obstacles on the way but, guided by the Marxist Leninist Maoist principles, they will be able to clear the path to victory. The comrades, cadres and masses are there to substantiate, live by and further enrich the lessons learned.

According to Ka Riko, it could not be helped that gays may still encounter problems, especially with comrades who have not fully shaken off the bourgeois culture they grew up in. But this is where the CPP differs from all the other political parties. The Party and its members acknowledge weaknesses, learn from and rectify them.

“The revolution does not discriminate on gender. The gun has no gender. The aspiration to serve the masses and win the revolution to institute real societal change binds us all—men, women, gays, lesbians,” remarked Ka Princess.

“It is only proper for all gays and lesbians to join the revolutionary movement. It is only through armed revolution that we can promote and build a society which beauty is not only at the surface but also emanates from the core of complete freedom,” Ka Duday concluded.

More than the recognition of their rights, the Party has equipped the gays and lesbians with Marxism-Leninism-Maoism (MLM) theory and practice to enable them to liberate not only their sector, but also all the oppressed classes. They are so equipped as to enable them to smash the conventional belief that the gender they have chosen is only for beauty salons and that their talents are only for entertainment.

And they are equipped to join the revolution and help the revolutionary masses lay down the foundation of a society that is free from the fetters of discrimination, exploitation and oppression. **LIB**

CHERISHED BY THE PEOPLE: KA ROGER AND KA PARAGO

by Pat Gambao

The month of June has been marked down by the martyrdom of two great Filipino revolutionary leaders: Gregorio “Ka Roger” Rosal, who died of illness in Luzon on June 22, 2011, and Leoncio “Commander Parago” Pitao, who was traitorously killed by fascist enemies in Mindanao on June 28, 2015.

In life and in death, Ka Roger and Commander Parago both served as unfading inspirations to the revolutionary forces and the masses. Their selfless commitment to serve the exploited and oppressed, their sacrifices, perseverance and valor bespeak of the communist spirit.

To ordinary folk, they are the faces of modern-day Filipino revolutionaries.

In their passing, their memories are not diminished. Like the undying revolutionary fire perseveringly tended to by the masses, they rage on, they live on.

Gregorio “Ka Roger” Rosal was born to a peasant family in Ibaan, Batangas. He worked his way to school by peddling mosquito nets and as a landowner’s help. He became a member of Kabataang Makabayan and later an organizer of farm workers at Batangas



Sugar Central in Balayan, Batangas. He was arrested and jailed in Camp Vicente Lim in Canlubang, Laguna during the martial law years but was able to escape from prison. He then joined the armed struggle in the countryside, building, consolidating and expanding guerrilla bases in Southern Tagalog Region and Quezon-Bicol Zone.

But the task he loved most was propaganda work in which he truly excelled.

As spokesperson of the CPP and NDFP, Ka Roger Rosal's voice reverberated throughout the archipelago to awaken the masses with his sharp analysis of the

current situation and outstanding issues as he exposed the latter's causes and refuted the lies peddled by the reactionaries. His language was plain, but clearly expressed the truth and experiences of the masses. His honest concern for the interest of the oppressed pierced through their hearts and bolstered their courage to take the revolutionary path. On the other hand, his acerbic attacks against the puppet government, against imperialism, against the landlords and compradors not only intimidated and enraged them, but dealt strong blows to their repugnant reputations.

Leoncio "Commander Parago" Pitao joined the New People's Army in 1978. He assiduously applied the theory and practice of MLM as he helped build organs of political power and mass organizations. He pursued land reform while advancing the armed struggle. He developed close ties with the masses – the peasants, workers and indigenous people, as well as built enduring relations with allies.

A brilliant strategist and tactician in guerrilla warfare, he led the First Pulang Bagani Company in the Southern Mindanao Region to many victorious offensives against the government troops. Commander Parago was a recognized NPA commander throughout the country and internationally. The local reactionary forces dreaded and hated him.

Commander Parago was captured by enemy forces in 1999. He was released on recognizance in 2001, a confidence and goodwill measure towards the resumption of the peace talks between the GRP and the NDFP. Upon his release, he went back to the countryside to continue the struggle.

Both Ka Roger and Commander Parago lived with the masses for decades, zealously serving them, protecting them and helping them with their problems. They loved the masses so much and they in turn were dearly loved by them. The huge funeral marches during their respective funerals showed the outpouring of the masses' genuine support and love for the revolutionary leaders.

Ka Roger suffered his first major heart attack in 1997 but he chose to stay in the countryside, climbing mountains, crossing rivers and seas and facing the dangers of enemy assaults. He died at 64 on June 22, 2011. His remains were buried in a secret grave among the masses to hide it from the enemy. It was only in March 2016, upon the request of his family, that the urn containing his ashes was interred in his hometown in Ibaan, Batangas.

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

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

On June 28, 2015, an enemy team raided Purok 9 of Barangay Panalum in the Paquibato District of Davao City where Parago was undergoing medical treatment by medic Vanessa Limpag, alias Ka Kyle. Upon sighting him, the enemy immediately riddled Commander Parago with bullets. Vanessa, who had raised her hand and shouted that she was a medic, was also mercilessly gunned down. Leoncio Pitao passed away at 57.

In contrast to the lenient and humane treatment that Commander Parago had consistently rendered to captured enemies and prisoners of war, he was summarily killed in stark violation of the International Humanitarian Law.

Ka Roger and Commander Parago might have fallen but their legacy, their exemplary lives as paragons of communist virtues will live on. So too will live on the education and training they had given to so many revolutionaries, who will carry and pass on the torch until the victory of the Philippine revolution. Similarly, the burning desire they sowed in the hearts of the masses -- to be freed from the bondage of exploitation and oppression -- will carry them throughout the struggle and into the building of their new life after victory.

The reactionary army of the Philippine government claims that the deaths of Ka Roger and Commander Parago would weaken the revolutionary struggle. On the contrary, it has grown stronger, delivering sustained debilitating blows to the enemy. The First Pulang Bagani Company has since become a battalion. The successors to Ka Roger and Commander Parago have become more determined to advance the revolution to victory.

The grief of both the Red fighters and the organized masses over the loss of our beloved comrades and valiant heroes has turned into revolutionary courage. This is truly the lasting tribute to their living memory. **LIB**

TRIBUTE TO KA ROGER AND KA PARAGO: Unfading Inspirations to Revolutionaries and the Masses



Their mastery of the
Marxist-Leninist-Maoist
(MLM) principles was
manifested in the
excellence of their
practice.

Artwork by Juan Obrero

“My god is the broad mass of people who are oppressed. To be a god is to create miracles. Once these great mass of people who are oppressed are awakened, they can create miracles. That is why they are my god.”



Jose “Ka Pepe” Luneta
December 12, 1944 - May 1, 2018

Artwork by
Ka Bam

AWIT SA KARELASYON

Pepe Luneta

Palad nati’y nagdaop
nang minsang dumalaw ka
May hatid kang pag-asa
Init kang dumampi sa lamig at dusa
Ng puso kong sa laya’y ulila

Puso ko’y nabihag mo sinta
Tanggapin mo sana
Tayo’y magsama
Sa pakikibaka

Sa pagsubok na itong dumating
Nakihatid ka sa hilahil
Puso ko’y nagising
buhay kong ito giliw
Sapat ma’y kulang pa rin

Palad nati’y nagbigkis
Sa isang pag-aalay
Sa kapwa at sa bayan
Damhin mo ang sampintig
Ng pagmamahalan
Ang sigaw ay kalayaan.

Puso ko’y bahagi mo sinta
tanggapin mo sana
Sa kalayaan
Tayo’y magsama

To Ka Pepe, we say
Long live!



Sell-out of Sovereignty & Patrimony

West Philippine Sea
US Troops in Marawi
Balikatan Exercises
Philippine Rise
Jet ski Diplomacy



No Economic & Social Relief



Peso Devaluation
Contractualization
Homelessness
TRAIN Law
5.2% Inflation
Fare Hike
MRT Bulok
No CASER

**Billed!
Billed!
Billed!**

Tokhang
Tambay Arrests
Fake Surrenderees



Military operations
Bombing of communities
Occupation of Lumad Schools

Oplan Kapayapaan Implementation
Proscription & Terrorist-tagging
Disinformation (Fake News)
Recycled Corrupt Officials
Attack on Religion/God
Peace Talks Cancellation



**Authoritarianism
& Tyranny**

Federalism/ChaCha
Human Security Act
Media Repression
Misogyny
CJ Sereno
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