

# LIBERATION

VOLUME XXXV NO. 3 PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC FRONT OF THE PHILIPPINES NOVEMBER 2018

## WHAT PLOT?

*It is out there in public  
Never secret  
Never conspiratorial*





#### ABOUT THE COVER

No need for plot. The CPP has stated that, at this time, it is still far from winning total victory. But tactically a regime change, an ouster, is possible. And the CPP has never concealed the fact that it is calling for the ouster of Duterte. It is out there in public—never secret, never conspiratorial—hence, what plot?

*Layout, graphics, and cover design:*  
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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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OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE NDFP



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## EDITORIAL

# THE “WHOLE-OF-NATION APPROACH” CHIMERA

In mid-November last year, President Duterte expressed openness to meet with two leading NDFP negotiating panel members about resuming the formal peace talks that, for the nth time, he had arbitrarily cancelled in July. But his military/security advisers gruffly scuttled that meeting, impelling the NDFP peacemakers—Fidel Agcaoili and Luis Jalandoni—to cancel their trip. Reason: the security advisers threatened to arrest them should they come to Manila.

That incident demonstrated how easily the internal-security cabal in the Duterte cabinet could interdict and frustrate their president and commander-in-chief whenever he gets sober-minded as to consider returning to the negotiating table with the NDFP under The Hague Joint Declaration of 1992. They induced him to endorse their previously repudiated “localized” peace talks, which, not at all surprising, have been totally ignored by all local commands of the revolutionary movement.

On December 4, the internal-security cabal succeeded in inducing Duterte to put his imprimatur on their magnum opus, which spokespersons twice mentioned the AFP would recommend while drumbeating the ludicrous “Red October” Duterte-ouster canard: Executive Order No. 70.

Published in the Official Gazette on December 10 (its date of effectivity), EO 70 is pompously titled, “Institutionalizing the whole-of-nation approach in attaining inclusive and sustainable peace, creating a National Task Force to end

local communist armed conflict, and directing the adoption of a National Peace Framework.”

EO 70 claims that the whole-of-nation approach (WONA) “addresses the root causes of insurgencies, internal disturbances and tensions, and other armed conflicts and threats.” How? “(B)y prioritizing and harmonizing the delivery of basic social services and social development packages by the government, facilitating societal inclusivity, and ensuring active participation of all sectors of the society in the pursuit of the country's peace agenda.”

To serve as an “efficient mechanism and structure” for implementing the WONA, the National Task Force (NTF) was created, headed by President Duterte as chair, with his national security adviser (Hermogenes Esperon Jr.) as vice-chair. NTF members are ranking officials of the following departments: Internal and Local Government, Justice, National Defense, Public Works, Budget, Finance, Agrarian Reform, Social Welfare, Education,

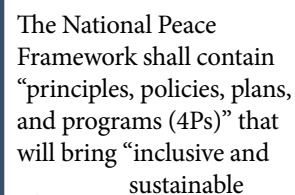
Economic Development, Intelligence, TESDA, Presidential Adviser for the Peace Process; plus the presidential assistant for indigenous peoples concerns, NCIP chair, AFP chief, PNP chief, PCOO secretary and two private sector representatives.

Within six months from the EO issuance, the NTF is mandated to formulate a WONA-driven National Peace Framework (NPF) and start to implement it, “in coordination with relevant national government agencies, LGUs, civil society, and other stakeholders.” It must ensure “inter-agency convergence” in implementing the NPF in “conflict-affected and vulnerable communities.”

It calls for enlisting the aid of any department, bureau, office, agency, or instrumentality of government, including LGUs, government-owned and controlled corporations (GOCCs), and state universities and colleges (SUCs), in accordance with their respective mandates.

In short, it calls for a whole-of-government orchestration.





peace, and address the root causes of insurgencies, internal disturbances and tensions as well as other armed conflicts and threats in identified areas.” It shall be consistent with constitutional integrity [in accord with the Constitution] and national sovereignty,” the EO stresses, and “responsive to local needs and sensitive to realities on the ground.”

Further, it shall include a “mechanism for localized peace engagements or negotiations and interventions that is nationally orchestrated, directed and supervised, while being locally implemented.”

The NTF-NPF concept is essentially derived from the 2009 US Counterinsurgency Guide, which was applied in the US wars on Afghanistan and Iraq but failed. The AFP initially adopted it in the Aquino III regime's Oplan Bayanihan (which the Duterte regime cursorily pursues through its Oplan Kapayapaan). Its "whole-of-nation approach" sought to bring together all public and private sectors to crush the revolutionary movement, first in 2013 then in 2016—and utterly failed.

Under the current regime, the AFP first set an over-ambitious, impossible timeline: to “end the insurgency” by mid-2019, which Duterte himself publicly announced. The fascist machinery—with almost 70 retired AFP and PNP generals/officers holding top positions in the government—is now set to

push the AFP's magnum opus, aimed to end the insurgency by 2022.

This appears to be a dream-come-true for the militarists/fascists. They can lord over the various inter-agency clusters and other formations lined up in EO 70. Indeed, they can weaponize all government functions and services, including judicial and political processes, to attack the revolutionary movement and all those they perceive as threats and “enemies of the state.”

And while doing that, the AFP wants the public to believe that the entire nation is up against “communist insurgency” and that the AFP—with its egregious record of human rights violations through a succession of governments, including the incumbent—enjoys the whole-hearted support of the people.

But what EO 70 truly shows is that—with President Duterte ever comformable with and protective of them—the state security forces can obligate all civilian agencies of the state, all local government units, non-government organizations and all other stakeholders such as business, church, schools and various professions to take part in this grand plot.

All told, the AFP has not learned its lessons throughout the years. Timelines for “ending the insurgency” have come and gone but the revolutionary resistance of the people has remained, outlasting each and every reactionary regime. The Duterte regime is no exception.

LIB

*by Vida Gracias*

"Communists do not conceal their aims," the Communist Manifesto has put it. Yet the Communists have always been demonized and malicious lies are woven about them. It is for this reason that Marx and Engels always made public their views, aims and tendencies, as stated in the Communist Manifesto.

And so it is with the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), which on December 26 marked its 50<sup>th</sup> year of leading the national democratic revolution in the Philippines. Called the longest-running revolution in Asia, if not in the entire world, the CPP-led revolutionary movement has been consistent in calling for the overthrow of the landlord-comprador state in the country and from its ruins set up a people's democratic state.

Since its founding, the CPP has stuck to its basic strategy of waging a protracted people's war, building up a people's army and revolutionary bases in the countryside, and seizing political power, wave upon wave, from the countryside to the cities. It is a strategy that every revolutionary adheres to in this semi-colonial and semifeudal country.

Armed uprisings in the cities, particularly in the national capital region, will occur in the final offensive, when the revolutionary forces shall have

already smashed reactionary power in the countryside and all that is needed is the capture of the capital.

The CPP has stated that, at this time, it is still far from winning total victory. But tactically a regime change, an ouster, is possible. And the CPP has never concealed the fact that it is calling for the ouster of Duterte. It is out there in public—never secret, never conspiratorial—hence, what plot?

The “Red October Plot” was supposedly to roll until December to become the “White December Plot”. Then another name, “Operation Talsik”, was added to it. This only shows that communist hysteria is an old trick and those who rely on it are lacking in ideas or out of touch with reality.



## NO NEED FOR PLOT

The CPP is a revolutionary group of long standing. It has no need for plots that distort its aims and sow confusion in its ranks. It does not dabble in conspiracies, much less belittle the movement of the masses as the primary movers of history.

The people decide the fate of a regime. This is no more true than the people power uprising that overthrew the hated dictatorship of Marcos in 1986 and the corrupt regime of Estrada in 2002. Even as the past regime of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo belittled people power as merely a “mob” or “political noise,” the mass movement had succeeded in thwarting Arroyo’s scheme towards charter change and stopped her from extending her term.

Meanwhile, all the economic and social conditions are ripe for the overthrow of the Duterte regime. The CPP’s role is to point out to the masses where to head in that direction, urging them to hone their tactics and expand their strength, and will not take credit for the regime’s overthrow because the victory belongs to the people. You can read and debate about the need for Duterte’s ouster even in the internet. That is hardly a plot.

That the Duterte regime keeps harping on a “plot” by the CPP bespeaks of either two things: one, on how low in intelligence his political and military advisers have

become, not excluding Duterte himself; or, two, the lies and distortions are intended to break up the broadening united front against the regime’s growing tyranny and dictatorship, where even noncommunists are calling for his ouster.

## CRITICAL MASS

All this red-tagging is meant to put the national democratic mass movement on the defensive, isolate and demobilize it, knowing that the national democrats are at the core of the critical mass that can oust the Duterte regime. The regime’s greatest fear is for this critical mass to resonate in the military, whose rank and file are not immune to the sufferings of the masses and can move them to withdraw support from the regime.

Throughout several regimes, the national democratic mass organizations have persevered, built, expanded and maintained their strength from among the workers, peasants, urban poor and students. They have forged alliances with the middle forces and various political groups. They have worked within Moro and indigenous communities. They are in the forefront of the mass struggles for better living and working conditions, human rights, and a host of other issues. They have flexed their muscles not just in the parliament of the streets but also inside Congress, in international fora, and, across the peace negotiating table for meaningful reforms.

Notwithstanding Duterte’s unilateral termination of the peace talks with the NDFP in November 2017, the latter has put forward its substantive agenda for social, economic and political reforms. The Duterte regime was readily exposed as a false pretender and not desirous of solving the decades-old armed conflict in the Philippines.

Also, instead of weakening their ranks and crumbling under fear of Duterte’s killing spree and red tagging, the mass organizations within Bayan (Bagong Alyansang Makabayan) in Mindanao launched on October 23 simultaneous rallies in the cities of Davao, Butuan, Cagayan de Oro and General Santos. Some 15,000 marched to call for an end to martial law in Mindanao and the ouster of the US-Duterte regime.

A barrage of protests against Duterte was also held in 14 regions last September 21, on the 46th anniversary of Marcos’s martial law declaration. In Manila, flags of various colors flew in Luneta as thousands warned of a creeping dictatorship—“another dictator to rise or an old one to return.”

Overseas, where there are Filipinos and solidarity allies, the protests have been brought to the courts of public opinion. In August the International People’s Tribunal (IPT) in Brussels judged President Duterte guilty of crimes against humanity. An indictment against Duterte (also including US President Donald Trump, the

International Monetary Fund [IMF], World Bank [WB], and World Trade Organization [WTO]) was led by Bayan and its allied organizations for violations of the Filipinos civil and political rights, social and economic rights, and right to self-determination. The IPT verdict was then submitted to the Parliament of the European Union and the International Criminal Court.

Granting that communists may have joined these organizations, why freak out? This is the age of the millennia. Anything and everything you wanted to know about communism is one google away. People are learning more about national democracy. People’s organizations are bound by their charter and whoever subscribes to it is free to join, whether communist or not.

The Cold War era is past. The Anti-Subversion Law has been repealed where membership in the Communist Party is no longer illegal. Even the government talks to communists of all stripes, whether local or foreign, whether in power or out of it, whether revolutionary, revisionist or collaborationist. No one can be arrested for just being a communist.

That is why the reactionary state plays foul. It has associated “terrorism” to communism because by ideology one cannot be faulted for being a communist. It has criminalized political

actions—whether led or not by communists—through trumped up charges of illegal possession of firearms and explosives.

Truth is, the anti-communist hysteria no longer sticks. It’s been 50 years of revolutionary war in the Philippines and the reactionary state is still up to its old tricks. It is the fear of fascism, not communism, that makes people rise up in anger.

## REGIME BACKTRACKS

Duterte’s military brass simply allowed itself to become the laughing stock of the nation. In no short time it backtracked from what founding CPP chair Jose Maria Sison called a “fairy tale” as Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenza admitted “there is no more Red October plot”.

But Chief Legal Counsel and Presidential Spokesperson Salvador Panelo would not let the issue die. While he nailed it when he said “the threat to oust Presid9ent Rodrigo Duterte is always possible”, one can expect more ridiculous tales to surface.

As always, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) cannot win the propaganda war because it sees monsters where there are none. The monsters come from within the state it serves. The AFP is blindsided by its loyalty to Duterte and to the counter-insurgency plan of the US, in fact just all self-serving.

An advice to the men and women of the military: get real. Look at the true conditions of the people that you are sworn to serve and you will know why Duterte must go. **LIB**

KASALANANG MORTAL ANG PAGMAMALIIT SA  
KAKAYAHAN NG MASA NA MAG-ISIP AT KUMILOS  
PARA PAWIN ANG NAKAPASAN SA KANYANG  
PAGSASAMANTALA AT KAHIRAPAN.

HINDI SABWATAN O PAKANA NG IILAN  
ANG MAGBABAGO NG LIPUNAN.

Ang Masa

ANG MAGPAPASYA;  
SILA ANG LILIKHA NG KASAYSAYAN.





# Unholy TRINITY

What is the common thread binding former President Ferdinand E. Marcos, former President and now House Speaker Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, and current President Rodrigo Roa Duterte?

Dictatorial and extraordinary powers. Forgive the pun: "Those whom the gods which to destroy they first make MAD."

**M**  
FERDINAND  
MARCOS

## On Martial Law

- Declared martial law nationwide in 1972 and stayed in power for 14 years
- Main target was to quell the growing armed revolutionary movement of the CPP-NPA, the Moro armed rebellion, and the legal opposition
- Ulterior motive was to remain in power and monopolize it indefinitely
- In ten years (1975-1985), gross human rights violations by the military were placed by Amnesty International at 3,240 killed, 34,000 tortured and 70,000 arrested
- Denied the existence of political prisoners, only "public order violators" (POV, which one witty detainee said it referred to those detained for their Point of View anathema to the dictatorship)
- Kleptocracy & plunder aided by cronies

## On Charter Change

- Marcos's two-year term was to end in December 1971 based on the 1935 Constitution
- The same constitution decreed for a Constitutional Convention (Con-Con) in 1971 to effect changes in the constitution. Delegates were popularly elected
- Marcos subverted the Con-Con by declaring martial law in 1971, introduced his own 1973 constitution with transitory provisions that would make him rule for life, and had it approved in manufactured "citizens assemblies"
- Both the judicial and legislative bodies were under his thumb
- A presidential-parliamentary form of government was introduced, with full powers retained by the presidency. All decrees became valid and legally binding under the Marcos constitution until he was ousted in 1986
- Charter change was self-serving, meant to lift term limits for the sitting president

**A**  
GLORIA  
MACAPAGAL  
ARROYO

- Declared martial law for 8 days in Maguindanao, Sultan Kudarat and Cotabato City in 2009. But 4,000 AFP troops remained in place after martial law was lifted
- Target was "lawless violence". Arroyo pounced on the murderous Ampatuans to skirt responsibility for rabidly supporting the feudal warlords for years
- Stayed in power for nine years through scheming and electoral cheating
- Used the Marcos-style fascist attacks (EJKs, enforced disappearances, trumped-up charges, criminalizing political offenses) without declaring martial law vs perceived enemies of the state, extolling even butchers like Gen. Jovito Palparan
- In 9 years, victims of human rights violations documented by Karapatan was placed at: 1,206 killed; 1,099 tortured; 2,059 illegally arrested; 874,000 forced evacuation and displacement
- Plunder including sellout to China

- Arroyo ran and won under the 1987 Constitution as vice president in 1998, with a term limit of six years just like President Estrada's
- But Estrada was ousted in 2001 and Arroyo took over to finish his term
- Amid charges of corruption, Arroyo promised not to run for president in the next elections. But she reneged on her promise and cheated to win over Fernando Poe Jr. in 2004
- Arroyo's term as president was to end in 2010. In 2008, she pushed for charter change, unashamedly copying Marcos's 1973 constitution. She wanted a parliamentary, unicameral form of government where she could become Prime Minister with full powers
- She took a short cut to amend the constitution through People's Initiative. People were enraged; subsequently the Supreme Court shot down cha-cha
- Again, charter change was self-serving, and meant to prolong Arroyo's rule

**D**  
RODRIGO  
DUTERTE

- Declared martial law three times in Mindanao: first against the "Marawi siege" on May 23, 2017, then extended to entire Mindanao until end 2017, then extended for another year until end 2018, again for another year until end 2019 — all with the concurrence of Duterte's pliant Congress
- Initial target was the Maute jihadists and later included as main target the CPP-NPA
- Massive bombings, looting, extrajudicial killings, and torture; Moro and lumad communities were razed to the ground. In Marawi alone over a thousand were left dead, mostly terror suspects, and hundreds of thousands were forced out of their homes
- Duterte's drug war has shown even more impunity. The state admits to only about 4,000 being killed but human rights groups said the figure is currently at 20,000. In two years, 169 activists were killed; 362 victims of frustrated killings; more than 400,000 victims of forced evacuation; 360,000 victims of bombing
- Duterte looks upon dictator Marcos as his idol, hails him as a hero, and is even willing to resign as President in favor of Marcos' son Bongbong (should the latter win his electoral protest against sitting Vice President Leni Robredo)
- Duterte so wanted federalism that he wants to revise the 1987 Constitution, purportedly to spread resources and strengthen the country's regions
- Duterte created a Consultative Committee to draft a new constitution that he endorsed to Congress
- Transitory Provisions in draft charters would allow Duterte to head the transition team, give him extraordinary powers akin to a dictator, and even allow him to run again
- Recently installed House speaker and close ally Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and 21 other cohorts in the House proposed a new draft charter that would lift term limits for all members of Congress, delete the ban on political dynasties and establish a federal-presidential form of government
- Duterte has repeatedly said he has no interest in extending his term and would rather resign earlier. But Duterte is not known to keep his word and changes his mind
- Once again, charter change is self-serving, dangling the prospect of term extension or a surefire guarantee that Duterte, should he leave office, would be absolved of his crimes

**As is being repeated in history, no amount of force or threats or promises could fool the people to believe that these tyrants—like MAD—have the best interests of the people at heart.**





Ferdinand E. Marcos

## On the Economy

- So-called economic development was debt driven. Marcos relied heavily on borrowings
- Foreign debt ballooned to \$26 billion in 1984 from \$2.66 billion in 1972
- International reserves were depleted to service debts. A lot of the debts went into luxury spending
- The peso fell down to P18.61 to the dollar in 1985 from P6.02 in the 70s
- Inflation shot up to a record of 50%
- Underemployment peaked at 33 % in 1984
- 73% decrease in the amount of goods and services that money can buy
- Important sectors were monopolized by Marcos and his cronies (81 families with close ties to the Marcos regime)

## On the People's Response

- A broad anti-fascist united front arose that ultimately led to the ouster of Marcos
- The final blow was People Power — a combined popular uprising and military rebellion — that forced Marcos out of Malacanang and saw him flown by the US to Hawaii.
- The national democratic forces laid the groundwork for the ouster of Marcos throughout the martial law period, with a series of workers' strikes, student boycotts, militant rallies and demonstrations, and civil disobedience.
- The revolutionary forces from the CPP-NPA-NDF and the MNLF/MILF dealt heavy blows to the dictatorship with their armed offensives in the countryside



Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo

- People remained in deep poverty since she took office in 2001
- Debt reached P4.46 trillion in 2010, more than double Estrada's P2.17 trillion debt
- Longest period (2001-2009) of high unemployment, averaging 11.2%
- Sold off or privatized government assets and corporations past the record of three administrations
- Cost of goods and commodities spiked because of taxes like EVAT (expanded value added tax), more for the benefit of the country's creditors
- Government spending increased and tax revenues fell

- An Oust Arroyo movement against corruption, cheating, and repression ended Arroyo's bid to extend her term
- The people called out for justice. After stepping out of office, Arroyo was arrested and charged with plunder and electoral fraud by the Aquino regime. She was detained for four years, though under hospital arrest. (However, under Duterte, she was acquitted by the Supreme Court for plunder. Duterte also offered her pardon)
- The people's resistance and anger against Arroyo ignited rebellion in the ranks of the military known as the Oakwood mutiny, plus another aborted putsch in the Manila Peninsula Hotel. The young officers and their men complained of corruption in the top military echelons and also called for Arroyo's resignation. Cabinet resignations also marred Arroyo's term
- Despite the likes of Palparan and Oplan Bantay Laya, the people's movements whether in the cities or countryside flourished. As street protests were escalating, more progressive partylists were also winning in the elections. The CPP-NPA-NDF gained more foothold in the countryside, especially in Mindanao



Rodrigo Duterte

- Relies heavily on his pro-neoliberalism economic managers
- Country is into its largest current account deficit in 18 years
- Peso has fallen to a 12-year low, now Asia's worst performing currency
- New Philippine debt of \$167 billion from China could be \$450 billion in ten years
- New investment pledges dropped 38% each year under Duterte reaching its lowest level since 2010
- Tax reform package called TRAIN spiked prices to a five-year high fanning inflation
- Country is living beyond its means, with current trade deficit at \$1.55 billion

- Duterte has thrown everything in the book against the progressive and revolutionary forces but he could not kill them all, literally and figuratively. This self-styled 'leftist' and 'socialist' has been unmasked for what he really is — criminal, murderer, misogynist — and blatantly anti-poor
- As the call for his ouster resonates, Duterte's tyranny has created a broad united front involving various sectors of society. Increasingly, the battle against Duterte is being waged in the streets, in Congress, in many institutions as well as in mainstream and social media
- At no time in the nation's history, apart from Marcos's, has the the international community joined its voice with the Filipino people against Duterte's dictatorship and human rights violations. By his own deeds and words, Duterte has gained notoriety and isolation abroad
- Way into his third year Duterte is coming closer to his doom especially if he imposes martial law nationwide in 2019. As founding CPP chair Jose Maria Sison said, "he (Duterte) will ultimately suffer the end and ignominy of the Marcos fascist dictatorship."

# DUTERTE'S "SURRENDER" PROGRAM IS A SCAM

by Iliya Makalipay

Alde "Butsoy" Salusad is a leader of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP)-backed paramilitary group New Indigenous People's Army for Reform (NIPAR). He is a murderer—the killer of anti-mining activist Datu Jimmy Liguyon—with two warrants of arrests on him that remain unserved by the Bukidnon Philippine National Police because he has been coddled by the AFP since 2012.

In August 11, 2017, five years after he killed Liguyon, Salusad was presented by the AFP as "NPA surrenderee" and was awarded Php100,000 in cash. Then in March 2018, the military included Salusad in the list of more than 600 names and aliases of alleged members of the CPP and the NPA in a petition for proscription filed at a Manila regional trial court.

Filed by the Department of Justice (DoJ) in compliance with the Human Security Act of 2007 (the Philippine anti-terrorism law), the petition seeks to declare the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and the New People's Army (NPA) as terrorist organizations. The court initially ordered the names of four individuals, who had challenged their inclusion in the petition, excluded for lack of evidence that they were officers or members of the CPP and the NPA. After others similarly questioned their inclusion, the DoJ revised the petition by dropping the long list.

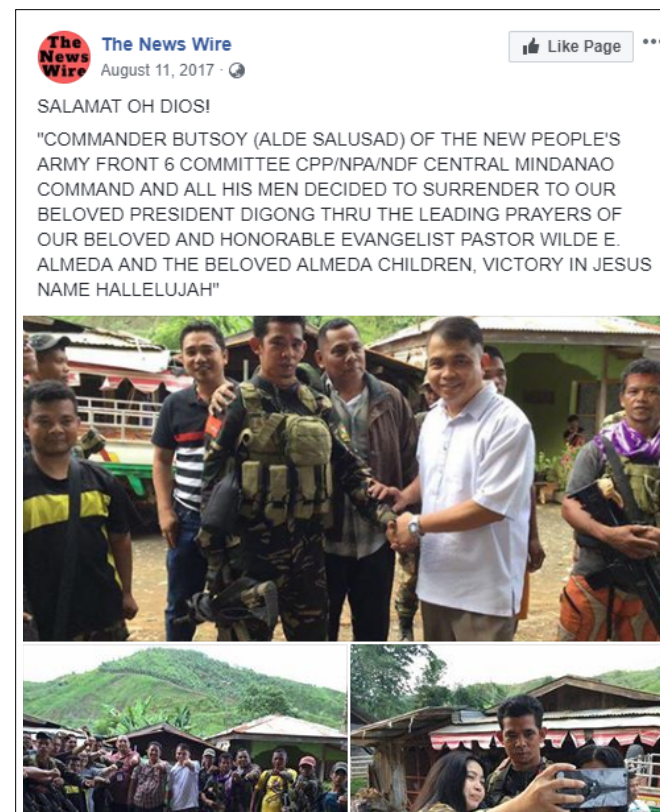
The charade about Alde Salusad is among the many ways the Duterte regime tries to cover up its failure to defeat the revolutionary movement led by the CPP-NPA and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP), through vicious military operations launched in areas they consider as NPA guerrilla fronts.

Elsewhere in Mindanao, where martial law has been imposed for two years now, farmers and indigenous people—individually or collectively—have become targets of the fake/forced surrender campaign of the AFP. The trend is also noticeable in other parts of the country as the AFP keeps resetting its target date for "neutralizing" the armed revolutionary forces.

## WILL THE REAL NPA SURRENDEREES STAND UP?

Interviewed by *Liberation*, Julieta, a woman community leader from Bukidnon, revealed that one AFP battalion commander had summoned community leaders listed as "NPA terrorist supporters" from 31 barangays for a three-day "peace building seminar". Each barangay had 10 names on the list. Julieta and her husband were among those listed from their village.

While her husband attended the event, she refused to go, declaring: "I am not a terrorist. I am a leader who defends our ancestral territory. We organize to protect our lands, we attend rallies so our voice could be heard, and to seek justice for those who were killed by the military and paramilitary groups."







She quoted those who attended the seminar as complaining that “the military refused to answer our questions on how to protect our ancestral lands from the land grabbers.” Instead, they said, the military offered the more than 1,000 suspected “NPA terrorist sympathizers” seed money to grow mushrooms, ginger, coconut, and coffee trees. The seminar was in May 2018. As of October, not one of those who attended was given any seed money.

What alarmed the participants during those three days were the individual “interviews” conducted among them, which largely dealt with why they supported the NPA. At the end of the seminar, the participants were made to sign a document stating they would no longer participate in rallies. Ironically, they were herded to a rally immediately after the signing, and ordered to carry anti-NPA placards.

In the community, the soldiers have continued to convince the youth to join the military service, “so you will earn money.” They also egged on the community members, especially the

youth, to search for firearms and turn them over to the military in exchange for money. Julieta said pictures of guns were distributed among them with corresponding price tags: AK-47 for Php 75,000 and handguns, Php 35,000. There were other guns priced at Php 65,000 and Php 45,000, but Julieta could not remember what sort of firearms they were. “They are teaching us to lie,” said Julieta, obviously irked by the military’s modus operandi.

There was a time when goons of the plantation owner who occupy their ancestral lands harassed them. Julieta said these belonged to the group of goons that killed a tribe member. The community reported the incident to the soldiers deployed in the area. Six goons were “arrested” but were brought to the military headquarters instead of the police station. Later, the six men were presented as “NPA surrenderees”.

For a few months after the “seminar”, fear and apprehension reigned among the community members. The specter of the Lianga massacre, where two indigenous leaders and one school executive were killed, always came back

into their minds. After four months, however, they were again joining rallies.

“We are insulted by how the military treats us,” declared Julieta. “The military arbitrarily stops children to ask them if there are armed men in the community. When children pointed to the goons and security guards of the plantation, the soldiers would tell them ‘*gahi na kaayo ka*’ (you have been toughened).”

Similar stories have been recorded and made public by an international fact-finding mission held in Mindanao early last year. Likewise, the human rights alliance Karapatan reported more than 600 cases of forced/fake surrender since the start of the Duterte administration in July 2016 to March 2018.

A victim of forced surrender in Northern Mindanao recounted, “From morning, noon, until night, the 29th Infantry Division [went] around the community forcing us to surrender. I did not go with them because I am not an NPA. That night they strafed our house.” Other communities were threatened with bombing or were actually bombed.

# AFP SINGS AN OLD TUNE

For five decades now, the reactionary state and its armed forces have been singing the song, “It’s Now or Never,” popularized by The Platters band in the 1950’s. They belt it out in an attempt, at first, to nip in the bud the CPP-NPA-NDF, later to “decapitate” the revolutionary organizations and push the rebels to surrender through various counterinsurgency oplans.

Marcos used this tactic. And so did all the succeeding regimes that took their turns with the “restoration” of elite democracy in the country.

Through the years the pattern has been the same: Employ force and deception, carrot and stick; guns and bullets, artillery and bombs; and the lure of financial and material rewards. Fifty years have passed and yet the tactic has repeatedly failed.

What makes Duterte think he can make it work this time around? He blew his chance when he recklessly abandoned the GRP-NDFP peace talks and instead issued the order: Kill, kill, kill.

**LIB**

**The Washington Post**  
*Democracy Dies in Darkness*

## Insurgents Surrender In Philippines

By **Ab Tan**  
October 31, 1985

Forty-five alleged Communist guerrillas and 3,000 alleged sympathizers surrendered to the government today in a public ceremony organized by the government.

The Philippine Air Force flew foreign correspondents from Manila, 450 miles north of this capital of Zamboanga del Norte Province, to witness the event.

Analysts and diplomatic observers said they do not take these types of events as a measure of the strength of the Communist insurgency or of the Philippine armed forces. More likely, they said, the event was organized to buttress recent assertions by President Ferdinand Marcos that the rebels were "surrendering in droves" and to convince the United States that he is able to contain the insurgency.

The rebels, including 10 women, turned over weapons that included Browning automatics, carbines, shotguns and rusty pistols. Other paraphernalia associated with the Communist New People's Army that was put on public display included notebooks on fighting strategy, knapsacks, binoculars and two ballot boxes said to have been taken from previous elections.

The rebels officially surrendered to the government while the sympathizers, who came from seven nearby municipalities and who allegedly gave food, money and comfort to the guerrillas, raised their hands to pledge their allegiance to the Marcos government in front of the town hall in Polanco, a few minutes' drive from Dipolog.

Polanco is in the center of the province, where the rebels have a large presence. The ceremony was preceded by a band playing Elvis Presley's song, "It's Now or Never." The sympathizers carried placards reading "Let's Fight the NPA." Others urged the military to stay on to eradicate the Communists.

Zamboanga del Norte Province is one of the trouble spots on the island of Mindanao in the southern Philippines. The guerrillas are engaging more than 35 battalions of the Philippine armed forces in Mindanao alone.

According to provincial leaders in Dipolog, the armed forces are having more success against the rebels in recent weeks because of reinforcements from a fighting unit known as Task Force Cobra that has been brought in to counter the insurgency.

Two previous allegiance ceremonies in October involved 1,200 guerrilla supporters, they said. Task Force Cobra's strength has been boosted to four battalions since an Oct. 3 rebel ambush killed 21 soldiers, one of the highest single tolls suffered by the Philippine military in its war in the countryside.

Gen. Fidel Ramos, acting chief of staff of the Philippine armed forces, recently gave a higher estimate of the strength of the insurgency, putting the number of guerrillas at 12,500 instead of earlier estimates of about 10,000.

The governor of Zamboanga del Norte, Alberto Ubay, credited the presence of the military for the success in winning over the guerrillas and sympathizers.

Local officials said repressive taxes imposed on the peasants by the guerrillas led to the switch in allegiance.



## WORN-OUT TACTICS OF DECEPTION AND COERCION

In early 2018, the AFP claimed about 4,000 people to be “NPA surrenderees.” By the end of the year, the number “surrenderees” varied, from a total of almost 8,000 to 11,000. The AFP cited those numbers, whereas it had previously claimed that the NPA had already been reduced to 3,000. Embarrassed, the AFP has interchangeably called the “surrenderees” as NPA members, sympathizers, mass base or militia members.

It matters not for the military whether the line between unarmed civilians and NPA red fighters is blurred. In fact, they have arbitrarily removed the distinction. The point, for them, is to picture to the public a weakening revolutionary movement. But, one thing is certain—almost all of the so-called surrenderees who were herded in public venues and presented to the media were victims of threat, coercion, and deception. Most often, the “surrenderees” are later forced into joining paramilitary groups such as the Civilian Armed Force Geographical Unit (CAFGU) and other similar armed auxiliary groups.

As practiced in the past regimes, the military conduct “house-to-house visits” and “surveys.” They circulate a “wanted list” of people in the community and summon them to military headquarters to “clear their names.” During interrogation, the military try to sow disunity among the community members by telling the “accused” person that his neighbor had ratted on him. But many times, people were simply rounded-up and forced to attend “surrender ceremonies”. At the end of each ceremony or event, all those who attended were tricked to sign blank documents that would later be presented as “proofs of surrender”.

Government agencies are also used to deceive other victims. In Binalbagan, Negros Occidental, some 60 farmers were supposed to attend a gathering called by the Department of Agrarian Reform to discuss land distribution but were later presented as NPA surrenderees. Others were compelled to “cooperate” because of threats of arrests, detention, or cancellation of their benefits from the Pantawid Pamilya Pilipino Program or 4Ps.

Aside from the unarmed civilians, the AFP also hunts down former commanders and members of the NPA who had returned to civilian life. They too were coerced to “surrender”.

And there are the posers. Alde Salusad is a poser. And so were the 16 members of the Magahat-Bagani paramilitary group of Calpit Egua that was responsible for the massacre of school principal Emerito Samarca and Lumad leaders Dionel Campos and Juvello Sinzo in Lianga, Surigao del Sur in 2015. Like Salusad’s NIPAR, the Magahat-Bagani group is backed by the AFP, in this case the 4th Infantry Division.

The AFP used these posers for propaganda against the revolutionary movement and also in the AFP’s psywar cum money-making venture called E-CLIP or the Enhanced Comprehensive Local Integration Program.

## THERE’S MONEY IN (PSY)WAR

The E-CLIP now embodies the Duterte regime’s campaign to induce the members of the NPA to surrender—and one of the identified core projects in the “12 pillars of the whole-of-nation” approach to end the “communist insurgency”. (*See Editorial*). Along with the “localized peace talks”, the government pushes E-CLIP as part of the psywar operations to deodorize the government’s bloody

“counterinsurgency” program which, since the time of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo has been patterned after the 2009 United State’s Counterinsurgency (COIN). The COIN follows the the triad operations combining psywar and intelligence gathering with combat operations.

As the AFP launches sustained brutal military operations, the E-CLIP, supposedly one of the civilian components of the operation, complements the campaign against the NPA. It aims to coopt NPA members into surrender. Thus, the offer of livelihood programs, medical insurance coverage for one year through the PhilHealth, housing, safety and security, and other “amenities”. A portion of the budget is used to give gifts and bribes to the families of NPA members so they may, in turn, convince the NPA member in their family to surrender. Each “NPA surrenderee” supposedly gets Php 65,000 cash for assistance (*See briefer on E-CLIP, page 15*).

Granting there had been 8,000 to 11,000 “surrenderees” by the end of 2018, the government would have spent a total of Php 520 million to Php 715 million. Since there has never been many real surrenderees as the military would want the public to believe, the budget allocation for the program logically ends up in the pockets of military officers and their cohorts.

## GETTING NOWHERE

Assuming the E-CLIP and other psywar tactics succeed in attracting members of the revolutionary movement to surrender, this, in all certainty, is but temporary. Why? Because it does not get into the root causes of the armed conflict.

Oppression, exploitation, and social injustices breed revolutionaries who will pursue a free and democratic society. Thus, there will always be one, or two, a hundred, and then thousands and hundreds of thousands who

will surely take up arms for their national and democratic interests. Until then, the reactionary government and its killing machine will just have to content themselves with unsustainable cheap gimmicks that are only meant to please their egos—their fascist egos.

On the ground, for every defeat of an AFP unit inflicted by the NPA, the AFP gets back at the civilians. Every time they can’t find the NPA members, they vent their ire on the civilians. An eight-year old Lumad child who was witness to military abuses and atrocities in their community described

the soldiers as “*pula ang nawong sa kasuko kung mga Lumad ang kaatubang pero luspap na kung makakita na ug NPA* (their faces turn red in anger when in front of the Lumad but become ashen pale when they face the NPA).”

The regime continues to be on the losing end as it opts to engage in its useless war against the revolutionary movement and the masses, resorts to dirty tactics, and evades peace negotiations that would tackle the issues of why, in the first place, there is an ongoing war in the Philippines. **LIB**

## E-CLIP Briefer: IT'S ALL ABOUT MONEY, MONEY

The Enhanced Comprehensive Local Integration Program (E-CLIP) took off from the Comprehensive Local and Integration Program (CLIP) of the Department of Interior and Local Governments (DILG) and the PAMANA (Payapa at Masaganang Pamayanan-Peaceful and Resilient communities) program of the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP). The two programs were centralized under the Task Force Balik Loob, through Administrative Order 10 issued on April 3, 2018 by President Duterte. The consolidated program was renamed (how else?) E-CLIP.

On May 31, 2018, the Defense Department released a seven-paged Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR). It was jointly signed by DND chief Delfin Lorenzana, National Housing Authority (NHA) General Manager Marcelino Escalada Jr., then OPAPP head Jesus Dureza, and retired police general Nelson Estarez of Office of the President (OP).

Heading the Task Force Balik Loob is DND Undersecretary Reynaldo Mapagu. Aside from the DND, among the lead agencies are the DILG, OPAPP, OP, and the NHA, with the rest of the Executive departments as members.

The Task Force claims it shall pursue a “comprehensive, integrated, community-based national program” that will be implemented in the local areas to address twin objectives: secure the legal status and security of former rebels; and take care of the former rebels’ economic and social needs and psychological rehabilitation.

These objectives, according to the IRR, shall be carried out through the CLIP and PAMANA programs. E-CLIP committees shall be organized in the provinces and highly urbanized cities.

Before the two programs were integrated, the CLIP under the DILG claimed to have spent Php 101.67 million as of January 2017 to assist 1,573 “former rebels” (or Php 65,000 per “rebel returnee”). The Php 65,000 is broken down into: Php 15,000 for immediate assistance while the “former rebel’s” enrollment to CLIP is processed, and Php 50,000 livelihood assistance once enrolled.

This does not include, the DILG said, rewards for surrendered guns, if there are any. In Davao City the president’s daughter, Mayor Sara Duterte, gave away an initial Php 20,000 and Php 50,000 for every low-powered firearm and high-powered firearm, respectively.

The Philippine National Police (PNP) unit or the local government unit that processes said enrollment receives Php 7,000 assistance, supposedly for the “board and lodging” of the “surrenderees”. Based on the 1,573 “former rebels” processed as of January 2017, at least some Php11 million of the budget went to the PNP and/or the local government unit.



## NUMBERS DON'T ADD UP

Noticeably, under the Enhanced CLIP, the increase in the budget allocation went to the PNP and/or the local government unit handling the “rebel returnees’s” board and lodging. From Php 7,000, it was raised to Php 21,000 per police unit or LGU. The Php 65,000 budget per “surrenderer” remains the same.

In several news reports, DILG chief Gen. Eduardo Año boasted that in 2018 some Php 488 million have been downloaded nationwide to build halfway houses for the “rebel returnees”, to build the capacity of agencies involved in the program, and to support military and police units handling the “returnees”. The NHA was also said to have spent Php 450,000 for the construction of settlement houses of the “returnees”.

For 2019, Año said he would allocate another Php 250 million for the E-CLIP, “in anticipation of the “influx” of NPA members who presumably would want to surrender.

If approved in the bicameral conference committee deliberating the 2019 budget, the DND would get a separate allocation of Php 48.766 billion also for E-CLIP and the Task Force Balik Loob.

For its part, the OPAPP has been seeking an increased budget for the PAMANA program since 2016: from Php 700 million in 2016 to Php 8 billion for 2017. And the Php 5.8-billion actual allocation in 2018 is planned to zoom to Php 30.216 billion for 2019.

The PAMANA project, according to the OPAPP website, “aims to

extend development interventions to isolated, hard-to-reach, conflict-affected communities.” This would be done through road projects and delivery of social services that would be carried out by various government line agencies.

That the OPAPP had been involved in various corruption issues even during the time of Pres. Noynoy Aquino has recently been exposed. At that time, OPAPP got more than Php 2 billion from the corruption-reeking Disbursement Acceleration Program.

Presidential peace adviser Jesus Dureza resigned in November 2018 after President Duterte fired the OPPAP undersecretary for support services and PAMANA national program manager, Ronald Flores, and his assistant secretary for support services and PAMANA concerns, Yeshtern Baccay. Both officials were accused of corruption, and Dureza assumed command responsibility for their misdeeds.

Meanwhile, the Department of Education has raised concern that the Php 36-billion cut in its 2019 budget, initiated by the House of Representatives, would affect its scholarship programs, including those offered to the children of “rebel returnees”. While the government kept drumbeating state support and services for the “surrenderers” in 2018, the scholarship program was not implemented simply because there was no budgetary allocation.

Indeed, the campaign to lure rebels “into the fold of the law” and the mock “influx” of alleged surrenderers are designed to fatten the bureaucrats’ pocket. What gives away the money-making scheme is this: the government’s actual spending and the reported number of “surrenderers” don’t add up. **LIB**



# ON CULTURE AND FASCISM UNDER THE DUTERTE REGIME

by Alejo Nicolas

President Rodrigo Duterte's regime can now appropriately be described as a looming fascist dictatorship: one wherein mechanisms, operations, and systems are being put in place towards a full-blown resurrection of the Marcos authoritarian rule, which in 1986 was ousted by the people's collective action.

The term “fascism”, first used to denote ultranationalist and right-wing governments in Europe, is understood in the Philippine context as rooted in bureaucrat capitalism. In *Philippine Society and Revolution*, Amado Guerrero discusses how the country's political landscape changed from direct colonial occupation under Spain, Japan, and the United States to a neocolonial republic ruled by a succession of Filipino puppet regimes since 1946.

Led by bureaucrat capitalists, these regimes continue to protect imperialist and feudal interests by maintaining a deceptive bourgeois democracy supported by the entire state machinery of the military, police, courts, penal system and cultural institutions. However, such a regime can revert to outright authoritarian rule when the people's resistance threatens the existing order, as shown by Ferdinand Marcos's imposition of Martial Law in 1972.

## FASCISM AND PHILIPPINE CULTURE

The past two-and-a-half years under President Duterte were marked by the regime's increasing use of deception, threat/intimidation, coercion, and armed violence against the people.

Its campaign, through police brutality and reckless killings, against the proliferation of illegal drugs and its counterinsurgency plan of deception and “all-out war” against the advance of revolutionary and progressive forces have left tens of thousands dead or displaced. The breakdown in the peace negotiations with the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) was followed by crackdowns: illegal arrests, enforced disappearances, and false charges against hundreds of civilians. Martial Law in Mindanao was declared in May 2017 during the armed conflict in Marawi. It has been extended three times until the end of December 2019.

In October 2018, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) fanned the false alarm of a “Red October” destabilization plot as a





pretext for expanding such repression to the rest of the country. Although the faked destabilization plot has been thoroughly exposed, the security forces have continued to sustain it as a reference point for its expanded counterinsurgency operations.

The Philippines is witnessing the turn towards fascism across different fronts. It is crucial to consider this rising state of tyranny not only in the military and political spheres, but also in the field of culture which is part of the arena of class struggle. Culture encompasses all spheres of social behavior while art distills, reflects, and refracts human and social experience. How is state violence reinforced, reflected, diffused or deployed by cultural institutions?

How does it appear across everyday discourse, popular culture, mass and social media, the visual arts, film, literature, architecture, and more? And lastly, how is the people's anti-fascist struggle conveyed across culture and the arts?

## SIGNS OF TYRANNY

Fascist rule in the Philippines is reinforced in the way the state wields culture and art to, first, openly suppress and demonize the people's struggle through censorship and harassment. On the other hand, it also selectively patronizes and supports initiatives that whitewash and sanitize the repression

of the regime. Over the past two and a half years, the following developments can be noted:

**2015: The President as populist but anti-people personality.** Since the start of the presidential electoral campaign in 2016, Duterte's outrageous conduct, language, and gestures have generated controversy and aghast. His years in power, however, have been marked by more vile, sexist, misogynistic, anti-religious, and anti-people statements.

Since assuming office, he has threatened and began to slaughter suspected drug addicts, to bomb Lumad schools. He told a United Nations rapporteur on human rights to go to hell, denigrated

the International Criminal Court prosecutor for being black, and ordered troops to shoot woman rebels in the vagina. Recently, he urged street idlers to rob and even to kill bishops critical of his war on drugs and EJKs, and described rape against overseas Filipino workers—whom he referred to as those “working as slaves [overseas]”—as “com(ing) with the territory, ‘*kasali sa kultura* (it’s part of the culture).”

These can not be dismissed as simple rhetoric, as they reflect and symbolically justify actual states of violence happening everyday. As a key political figure—the head of state no less—Duterte's every word and action is covered and amplified by mass and social media, reaching and influencing millions of people inside and outside the Philippines and enabling public acceptance of fascist rule.

A succession of spokespersons for the regime's propaganda machinery, each worse than the previous one, adds to the circus of disinformation and lies. These messages, many of which express the disregard for human rights, feed a populist

cult of personality which breeds blind obedience to the President, fueled by a paid social media army of trolls.

**2016: Memorializing a tyrant and reinstating fascist figures.** Among the first nationally-condemned acts of Duterte as President was to enable the family of the fascist dictator Ferdinand Marcos to bury his remains with military honors at the *Libingan ng mga Bayani* in September 2016, with the backing of the Supreme Court. The occasion also gave the Marcoses air time to sanitize and whitewash their family's history of bloody fascist rule.

Allowing the dictator's remains to rest in the country's supposed memorial cemetery for heroes sends a strong symbolic message to the Filipino people: that a deposed and dead dictator can be valorized, honored, and restored to state power. It is an insult and assault to past and present generations who resisted Martial Rule.

This enabling and restoring of proven fascist figures was again unabashedly shown in July 2018, when former President





Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, questionably acquitted of plunder by the state courts in 2016, crawled back into the halls of power and installed herself as the Speaker of the House of Representatives. She has since engineered the passage by the House of a joint resolution of both legislative chambers calling for changes in the 1987 constitution that, among others, removes the ban on political dynasties and term limits to all elective officials, and insidiously aims to cancel the May mid-term elections to prolong her and other incumbent officials' terms until 2022.

**2017: Rising state impunity and EJKs.** The “war” on illegal drugs was a campaign platform of Duterte. Tokhang operations, surveillance, and extrajudicial killings (EJKs) of suspected drug addicts started in mid-2016 and he has vowed to continue the drive till the end of his term—without assurance of winning the “war”. The number of estimated drug suspects killed since July 2016 ranges from 4,251 to over 20,000 people.

The government continues to deny that a culture of impunity exists and to downplay the gravity of the deaths. Outside of official reports, however, the frequency, undeniability and brutality of the EJKs in the drug war is documented by media workers and reflected in the many artistic works or initiatives that represent the drug war as a theme, setting, or reference.

Examples from Philippine films of 2017, for instance, include *Bubog*, EJK, *Neomanila*, *Respeto*, *The Right to Kill*, *Madilim Ang Gabi*, *Adik*, *Double Barrel*, *Durugin Ang Droga*, *Kamandag Ng Droga* and *Si Tokhang At Ang Tropang Buang*. Some films support an anti-drug stance that does not deviate from the government's own discourse, while others more critically reflect how the drug war has affected lives, for worse, across urban to rural communities.

Government propaganda campaigns aiming to justify this state of impunity have intensified. The Philippine National Police (PNP), for instance, stepped up initiatives such as

the 1st PNP Anti-Illegal Drugs Festival in July 2017. And resigned PCOO Undersecretary Mocha Uson attempted to parade fake Lumad leaders in hopes of discrediting genuine community leaders.

**2018: Heightened attacks and counter-insurgency.** The ever-increasing influence of the AFP is reflected in the militarization of the Duterte Cabinet and the sabotage of the peace process towards an all out war against Philippine revolutionary forces led by the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), the New People's Army (NPA) and the NDFP. By December 2017, issuances such as Proclamation 374 declaring the CPP-NPA as a terrorist group set the stage for heightened assaults against both revolutionary forces and civilians critical of the regime. Since entering the second half 2018, the AFP has been fanning the flame of imagined destabilization plots and has been similarly extending the timeline of these to the end of the year.

This counter-revolutionary war against “terror” led by the AFP in the countryside continues to target and displace the broad masses from countless communities. There is nothing more fascist than the current killing spree of activists, civilians and progressives across the country. The EJKs, massacres, harassments, and arrests of activists and members of progressive organizations have risen sharply since 2017, mostly targetting farmers, lawyers, indigenous peoples, health and Church workers, media workers, union leaders, and environmentalists.

The counter-insurgency drive is also expressed in forms of harassment, such as the circulation of black propaganda and red-tagging of civilians and attacks against institutions of mass media, which attempt to paint all dissenters to the regime as “destabilizers” who must be neutralized. Individuals, schools, universities and institutions or organizations holding cultural, media or educational activities critical of the regime are now being openly red-tagged.

## ART AND CULTURE FOR THE ANTI-FASCIST STRUGGLE

The culture of impunity and fascism unleashed during the past two and a half years under Duterte underscores the looming danger to all revolutionary and progressive forces. On the other hand, it also points to the regime's increasing desperation over the rising popular unrest fuelled by worsening socio-economic crisis in semi-feudal and semi-colonial Philippines. The lingering discontent over high inflation rates, rising prices, dislocation of communities due to neoliberalization, and lack of employment and substantive development in urban and rural areas only gives rise to more expressions of collective dissent.

“This rise of fascism is not a sign of strength but in essence is show of despair and weakness,” Guerrero noted in Philippine Society and Revolution during the pre-Martial law era, adding:

**“Fascism is on the rise precisely because the revolutionary mass movement is surging forward and the split among reactionaries is becoming more violent... the exposé of the violent character of the reactionaries will only teach the masses to defend themselves and assert their own power.”**

These words ring as true then as in the present time. When words and gestures fail to deceive the Filipino people into submission, the state apparatus of force and repression kicks into high gear. The worsening culture of impunity, terror and

fascism that has defined the Duterte regime so far reflects how the reactionary state now resorts to desperate measures. The proliferation of trolls, paid hacks, fake news, disinformation and black propaganda only emphasize how the reactionary regime is quickly mobilizing resources to discredit the recent gains of revolutionary and militant struggle by the people.

On the other hand, the threats under a fascist dictatorship have done little to deter and prevent Filipino artists, cultural and media workers, organizations and communities from expressing the anti-fascist struggle through creative and collective means. If there is anything that history and the past years under Pres. Duterte have emphasized in the field of culture, it is how art that has resisted fascism possesses great potential to mobilize and agitate diverse sectors of Philippine society to collectively act against the threat of tyranny and dictatorship.

The Filipino people's cultural resistance against fascist rule has, across time, yielded compelling forms and practices that exposed the depravity of the state's counter-revolutionary campaigns and the extent of human rights violations against the people.

Through such efforts, the Duterte regime, for instance, has been mocked and unmasked early on as another iron-fisted and essentially anti-people fascist puppet regime. It has been exposed as a railroader of socio-economic policies that reinforce neoliberal and feudal class interests and drag the Filipino toiling masses into more poverty and hardship.

Lastly, the people's cultural resistance has also documented, made vivid and advanced the growth of the mass movement and the revolutionary armed struggle in the countryside. As the Party observed its fifth decade of advancing the Philippine revolution, these efforts help show and testify to how struggle and optimism continues to grow amid heightened counter-insurgency by another puppet regime. **LIB**



He is gaunt and awkward in physical bearing, lisping in speech, unimpressive for a military officer.

Yet, on his 56th birthday on September 14, 2006, Jovito Palparan Jr. ended 34 years of service in the Philippine Army with the rank of Major General and a hoard of military medals (ranging from bronze to gold).

His shining moment came in July 2006, during President Gloria Arroyo's state-of-the-nation address before the joint session of Congress: she called on him to stand up in the gallery and gushingly hailed him as her favorite general.

But in the hearts and minds of the informed public, Palparan has been a truly detestable public figure.

When Gloria Arroyo lavishly praised him, the human rights community—national and international—was outraged. Long before that inglorious day, human rights defenders had been roundly condemning him. They excoriated him for his brutal counterinsurgency methods: killing, abducting and torturing mass leaders and activists—noncombatants all—from 2001 to 2006.

A presidential investigating commission on the killings, created in 2006, noted in its report that “there was a rise in the extrajudicial killings of activists and militants between 2001 and 2006, as compared to a similar period prior thereto.” The killings followed a pattern, wherein “victims were generally unarmed, alone, or in small groups and were gunned down by two or more masked or hooded assailants oftentimes riding motorcycles.”

The commission's head emphasized: “It is undisputed that the killings subject of the investigation of our Commission did not occur during military engagement or firefights. These were assassinations or ambush-type killings, professional hits carrying one out quickly and in the silence escaping with impunity.”

The killings were verified to have risen fast in the three regions of the country to which Palparan had been assigned (Southern Tagalog, Eastern Visayas, and Central Luzon).

The gory operations he started in the Southern Tagalog region, particularly in Mindoro, were topped by the brutal abduction and murder of human rights defender Eden Marcellana and peasant leader Eddie Gumanoy in April 2003. Investigations by the House of Representatives human rights committee resulted in the identification by witnesses of Palparan's long-trusted executioner, MSgt. Donald Caigas, as the one who led the perpetrators.

It was in Southern Tagalog that Palparan earned the derisive monicker, “The Butcher.” And he seemed to have derived supreme pride for being called that, as the star performer in human rights violations under the Arroyo regime's two-phased counterinsurgency program, *Oplans Bantay Laya I and II*.

# JOVITO S PALPARAN JR., “THE BUTCHER”: CONTEMPTUOUS OF RIGHT TO LIFE AND JUSTICE

by Angel Balen

## ANTI-COMMUNIST VICIOUSNESS

But inevitably the time of reckoning for Palparan's crimes had to come. And it came on September 17, 2018—12 years after he retired from military service.

On that date, the Malolos Regional Trial Court Branch 15, presided over by Judge Alexander Tamayo, convicted Palparan for just one of the numerous crimes attributed to him: kidnapping with serious illegal detention (with torture) and disappearance in June 2006 of former University of the Philippines students, Sherlyn Cadapan and Karen Empeño. He was sentenced (along with two other Philippine Army officers) to a prison term of 20 to 40 years.

Palparan's behavior, before and after the reading of the verdict, starkly provided a peak into what sort of a person he is.

Apparently, he is basically a coward. But he covers up such weakness with arrogance and belligerence.

Take, for instance, how he was brought in and out of the courtroom on that day he was convicted, as he was in every hearing of the case over four years. From the Philippine Army headquarter's detention area (where he presumably enjoyed a sense of security), he would put on a military helmet, surrounded by a phalanx of soldiers bodily shielding him upon arrival at the courthouse.

Inside the court, while waiting for the judge to come out, he feigned self-confidence as he told a news reporter who queried him, “After this, we walk as free men. We are not guilty.”

After the court verdict was read, however, Palparan instantly transformed himself into a boor. He yelled at the judge, “*Duwag ka, judge! Duwag ka, tarantado!* (You're a coward, judge! You're a coward, jerk!).” And when the judge warned he might be cited for contempt, he shot back, “It doesn't matter anymore. We're going to prison anyway.”

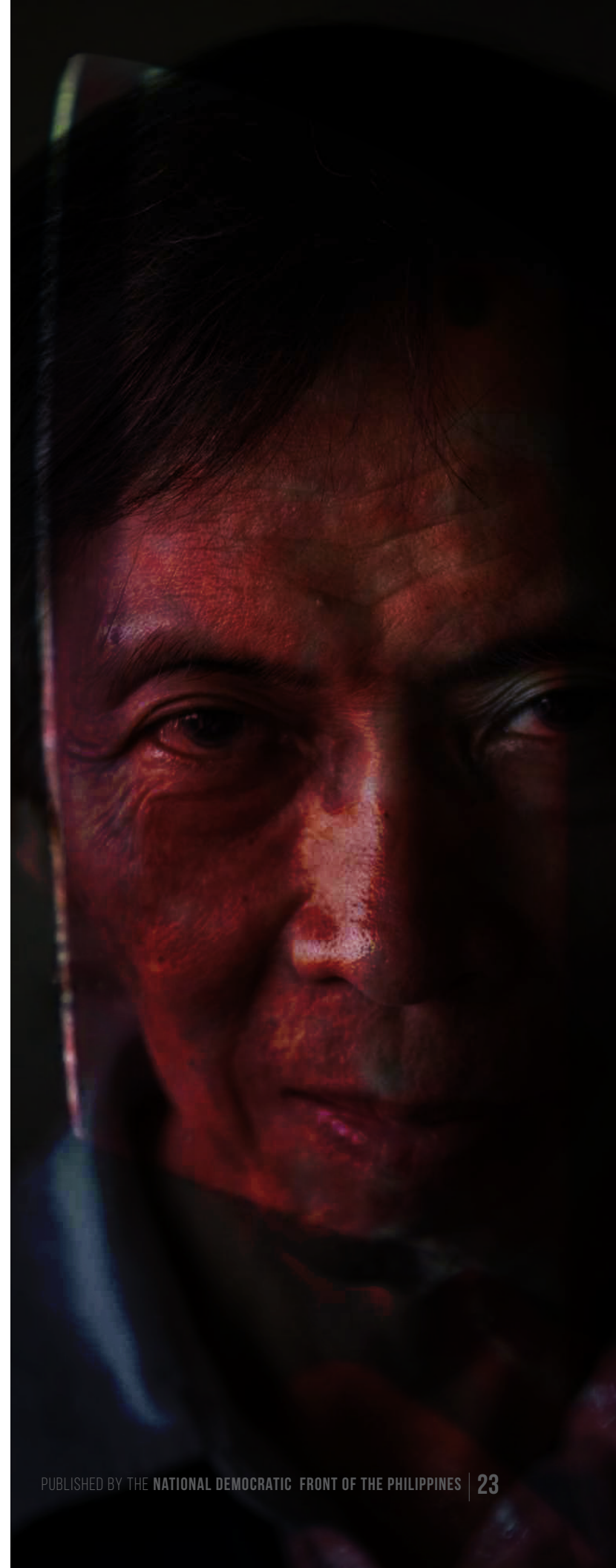
It took quite a time before “The Butcher” was finally charged in court and put on trial.

In 2007, under strong public pressure, President Arroyo formed a commission to investigate the more than 100 cases of extrajudicial killings that occurred under her watch. Retired Supreme Court Justice Jose A.R. Melo headed the body (thus, it was called the Melo Commission). In its 89-page report, the commission pointedly recommended Palparan's prosecution. But nothing happened.

Meantime, the mothers of Sherlyn and Karen painstakingly sought recourse through petitions of habeas corpus filed with the Court of Appeals and the Supreme Court. Their efforts paid off. Aided by human rights lawyers, the mothers—Erlinda T. Cadapan and Concepcion E. Empeño—filed a complaint against Palparan and his military cohorts in May 2011.

When the preliminary hearings on the case began, Palparan tried to slip out of the country but he was stopped at the airport. After he was indicted in December 2011 he went into hiding to evade arrest. Only after he was arrested in August 2014 did the trial proceed, with many interruptions at the instance of Palparan's lawyers.

The Butcher is now confined at the National Penitentiary (Bilibid Prison) in Muntinlupa City, among other maximum-security convicted criminal inmates. His lawyers have filed an appeal for reconsideration of the court's verdict.







The basis of the appeal is quintessentially Palparan's vicious anti-communist line. It asks the court to review its "erroneous appreciation of the written statement and testimonies of the [key] witness, Raymond Manalo, who is under the protection and support of the Communist Party of the Philippines."

It was during his deployment as Army unit commander against the New People's Army (NPA), after an eight-year assignment in Sulu to fight against the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), that Palparan consistently built up and demonstrated his utter ideological, anti-communist viciousness.

As he was promoted to higher ranks, Palparan turned more arrogant, self-righteous, bigoted, and fascistic.

His viciousness was manifested in a stream of extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, and massacres mostly victimizing noncombatant activists and civilians—as affirmed in the report of the Melo Commission. Its investigation focused on 136 incidences of extrajudicial killings (EJKs) previously verified as true by the Philippine National Police's Task Force Usig, another probe body created by Arroyo.

At the National Consultative Summit on Extrajudicial Killings and Enforced Disappearances, initiated by then Chief Justice Reynato S. Puno in July 2007, Justice Melo made a brief oral presentation of the commission's report. He quoted some of Palparan's statements to the media that more than tended to acknowledge or confirm his role in the spate of EJKs.

Among those statements are the following:

- "I want communism totally erased—to wage the ongoing counterinsurgency by neutralizing not just the armed rebels but also a wealth of front organizations that include leftist political parties, human rights and women's organizations, even lawyers, and members of the clergy."
- "My order to my soldiers is that if they are certain that there are armed rebels in the house or yard, 'Shoot them!' It will just be too bad if plain civilians are killed in the process. We are sorry if you are killed in the crossfire."

- "Would there be some collateral damage [once the soldiers shoot]... But it will be short and tolerable. They [referring to critics of his methods] blow it up as massive violations of human rights, but to me it would just be necessary incidents. *Sori na lang kung may mapatay na sibilyan* (it's just too bad if civilians are killed). The death of civilians and local officials were small sacrifices brought about by the military anti-insurgency [campaign operations]."

On the extrajudicial killings in the areas he was assigned as field commander, Palparan was more voluble and cocky. Here are some of his statements that Melo cited:

- "They [EJKs] cannot be completely stopped. I would say they are necessary incidents in a conflict because they [the targeted victims] are violent. It's not necessary that the military alone should be blamed. We are armed, of course, and are trained to confront and control violence. But other people whose lives are affected in these areas are participating [in the armed conflict]."
- "The killings are being attributed to me. But I did not kill them. I just inspired the triggerman."
- "I am responsible, relatively perhaps... But in the course of our campaign, I could have encouraged people to do that—*so maaaring may responsibility ako doon* (so maybe I am responsible). I don't want that aspect, but how could I prevent it? We are engaged in this conflict. All of my actuations have

been designed to defeat the enemy. And in doing so, others might have been encouraged by my actions.

- "Whoever it is, who could have been encouraged by my actions and actuations in the course of my campaign [against] whoever they are. That is why I say relatively. If these are soldiers, maybe then I could have been remiss in that aspect. But we are doing our best to keep our soldiers within our mandate."

As regards the progressive party-list organizations that had won seats in the House of Representatives, whose members had become EJK victims since 2001, Melo quoted Palparan as having said the following:

- "A lot of the members are actually involved in atrocities and crimes... Even though they are in government as party-list representatives, no matter what appearance they take, they still are enemies of the state."
- "The party-list members of Congress are doing peace to further the revolution of the communist movement. I wish they are not here."

"We can draw our own conclusions from these statements," Melo told the participants in the Supreme Court-initiated consultative summit.

He pointed out that all of the victims of the 136 EJK incidents were activists, were "generally

unarmed, alone, or in small groups and were gunned down by two or more masked or hooded assailants oftentimes riding motorcycles." The assailants, he added, "surprise the victims in public places or their homes and make quick getaways."

Also, "it is of note that the military in general called the victims as enemies of the state who deserved to be neutralized, according to the testimony given to us," Melo added.

(Significantly, the Malolos RTC Branch 15 decision convicting Palparan also states: "Clearly, General Palparan was one [with others] in the desire to stamp out the enemies of the state, like Karen and Sherlyn, who they believed deserved to be erased from the face of the earth at any cost.")

The investigation also established that "the PNP had not made much headway in solving the killings," Melo said. Only 37 cases had been forwarded to the proper prosecutor's office.

Also speaking for the House of Representatives at the National Consultative Summit in July 2007, then Makati Rep. Teodoro Locsin Jr. commended the Melo Commission Report as "complete, comprehensive and fair... and forthright in its conclusions and recommendations."

He noted that the Melo Report says, "the signs are abundant and cannot be ignored that General Palparan had actively encouraged the men under him, in at least three areas he was assigned as field







commander, to ‘neutralize’ activists tagged as ‘enemies of the state.’ ” This is a category [“enemies of the state”] that “does not exist in law, conventions of warfare or articles of war,” said Locsin, who is a lawyer-journalist.

On this point, the Melo Report concluded: “By declaring persons enemies of the state, and in effect, adjudging them guilty of crimes, these persons have arrogated unto themselves the powers of the courts and of the Executive branch of government.”

“To be sure,” Locsin pointed out, (Palparan) denied ordering any killings but granted that he may have inspired the triggerman. Congress [through its Commission on Appointments] reacted swiftly confirming his promotion in time for his long-awaited retirement,” he added wryly.

“The Melo Commission pointedly recommends General Palparan’s prosecution on command responsibility: either for not stopping his men from carrying out the killings or for encouraging a climate conducive to the commission of these crimes by security agents,” the congressman noted, and he agreed with it.

And for good measure, Locsin shared that, through his questioning during a House of Representatives public hearing on the EJKs, “Palparan would not categorically deny that under his command there are special teams operating at night, wearing bonnets, or masks, with the apparent mission of extrajudicial elimination of so-called enemies of the state.”

By these accounts of Palparan’s offhand statements or replies to questions, both from the media or congressional investigations, he is totally capable of incriminating himself, whether unwittingly or wittingly—and braggingly at that! On the The Butcher’s “would-not-categorically-deny” stance, Locsin mischievously remarked, “Apparently, he feared the prospect of being charged with perjury rather than murder.”

In Duterte’s rein as the commander in chief of the AFP, Palparan would have been his perfect collaborator, joining the other Gloria Arroyo generals Hermogenes Esperon of the National Security Council and Eduardo Año of the Interior and Local Government.

Duterte is president and commander-in-chief and Palparan a mere pawn in the chain of command but, both feel they are gods in their own right, gods spawned by a debased system of class divisions.

Both Duterte and Palparan have intense abhorrence of communists and desperately dream of crushing the national democratic revolution. Both would dismiss the call for peace as a way to further the revolution. Palparan would readily smell blood (and be nourished by it) from Duterte’s order to neutralize not only armed rebels, but also activists, supporters, and “would-be rebels”. Both would arrogantly ramble of claiming full responsibility which inspire and spur killings and violence unmindful of innocent victims they dismiss as collateral damage.

Duterte may have outshone Palparan with his boorish, misogynistic remarks and acts against women as well as with his blasphemous tirades of God. But like Palparan, Duterte will suffer the same ignominious fate when the people’s wrath and justice catch up with him. **LIB**



## NDFP RWC-SER: Sagay 9 Massacre Underscores Evils of Hacienda System and the Need for Genuine Agrarian Reform

The break-up of land monopolies and free land distribution are the just, necessary and urgent corrective measures to the centuries-old social injustices suffered by the peasantry.

Juliet de Lima  
Chairperson, NDFP RWC-SER  
22 October 2018

JUSTICE  
NOW!  
END  
IMPUNITY!

# THE SAGAY MASSACRE

## IN THE CONTEXT OF AGRARIAN REFORM

by Tagumpay Felipe

**(Editor’s Note:** In one of his recent rambling speeches, President Duterte vowed to carry out agrarian reform, minus the participation of the Left revolutionary movement represented by the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP). How he would do that is not clear, considering that the futile amendatory Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program with Reform (CARPer) has long lapsed without being completed.

What is clear is that Duterte let pass the opportunity to carry out a genuine agrarian reform program, mutually agreed on in a three-month back-channel talks (which he had authorized) and set for signing by the GRP and NDFP peace panels in June 2018. But he unilaterally cancelled the formal talks. Earlier in November 2017, he issued Presidential Proclamation 360 “terminating” the GRP-NDFP peace talks, sans the required notice to the NDFP.

Had he not done that, the infamous Sagay Massacre, the subject of this article, could have been averted.)

On October 20, 2018 nine peasants, including three women and two minors, were brutally massacred in Sagay City, Negros Occidental. They were part of a bigger group of sugar farm workers working on a land cultivation area (LCA) within Hacienda Nene, a 75-hectare plantation.

The LCA is a project of the National Federation of Sugar Workers (NFSW) to help peasants during the *tiempo muerto* or dead season, a 4-month period between the sugar cane harvest and the next planting cycle when sugar farm workers have no income. Rather than watch their families starve, the farm workers plant food crops on idle hacienda lands (“bungkalan”) to tide them over this dreaded season.

However, many hacienda owners would have none of this. They violently harass peasants engaged in “bungkalan.”



The National Democratic Front in Negros has since identified the four perpetrators of the Sagay 9 massacre. They are former elements of the renegade Revolutionary Proletarian Army (RPA) who had joined the AFP-directed Special Civilian Armed Auxiliary (SCAA) and were in the employ of Negros Occidental governor Alfredo Marañon Jr. and his son, Sagay City mayor Alfredo Marañon III.

The Sagay 9 massacre brought to 197 the total number of peasants killed in agrarian-related struggles under the Duterte regime.

With Duterte's orders to the police and military to shoot peasants engaged in "bungkalan," the death toll is sure to rise further.

## EVILS OF THE HACIENDA SYSTEM

The gruesome massacre at Hacienda Nene has once more brought to the fore the utter failure of the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) to effect social justice through genuine agrarian reform.

For too long, peasants have had to bear the brunt of the evils of the hacienda system. Continuing land monopoly by a handful of landlord families have left peasants severely impoverished, heavily indebted, chronically hungry and poorly nourished.

The fight for land at Hacienda Nene began 30 years ago, when the peasants first petitioned the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) to put the estate under land reform coverage in 1988. It took another 26 years for the hacienda to be covered by the program. On June 27, 2014, the DAR issued the Notice of Coverage for the 76 hectares of the 90 hectares of Hacienda Nene. Thanks to landlord-bureaucrats like the Marañons, estates like Hacienda Nene have remained intact, their centuries-old evils kept alive.

The graver responsibility, however, lies with the Duterte regime for having scuttled the peace negotiations and preventing the adoption of the Comprehensive Agreement on Social and Economic Reforms (CASER)'s section on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ARRD).

The draft ARRD was scheduled for signing by the two peace panels as early as November 2017, when Duterte abruptly, unilaterally cancelled the peace talks.

## ARRD AS KEY TO SOCIAL JUSTICE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Putting premium on uplifting the countryside is both socially just and economically sensible. Neglecting agricultural development and the welfare of the peasantry means neglecting the largest number of Filipino producers and the single largest sector of the



domestic economy. ARRD is thus the key to ending rural poverty and the starting point for rapidly developing the Philippine countryside.

Agrarian reform under the CASER's section on ARRD calls for breaking land monopolies through expropriation with selective compensation. It covers not only private and

public agricultural land but also fishing grounds, fisheries, and aquaculture while recognizing ancestral domain.

The policy of expropriation with compensation was adopted to encourage landlords to invest in industrial and other productive enterprises. It shall also apply to landlords who

have a proven record of actively supporting progressive land reform.

The applicability, amount and methods of compensation shall be determined in close consultation with peasant associations and according to the criteria and general guidelines outlined in the CASER.

However, landholdings proven to have been acquired through illegal and fraudulent means—such as land-grabbing, misrepresentation, circumvention of agrarian reform laws, distortion of the history of tenancy, and the use of violence—shall be subject to confiscation without compensation.

Abandoned and idle agricultural lands over the retention limit specified in the CASER shall also be subject to expropriation without compensation.

Surplus landholdings and other means of production of rich peasants and middle peasants shall not be subject to expropriation. Rich and middle peasants shall be required, however, to raise the wages of the farm workers they hire in accordance with the standards set by the peasant associations.

There will be measures to prevent reconcentration of land, such as a prohibition on the sale or mortgaging of distributed land to former owners, money lenders and local officials.

In distributing the land, preference shall be given to immediate family members and relatives of tenants who are willing to cultivate the land and able to make the land as productive as possible, provided their landholdings do not exceed the land retention limit.

In the absence of a member of the immediate family, the peasant association or peasant cooperative of the farmer beneficiary shall be encouraged to purchase the land for cooperativization.

The ARRD moreover prohibits the conversion of land producing food into other use in order to ensure that the country achieves food self-sufficiency.

Notably, the ARRD section of the CASER goes beyond land distribution. Agricultural production shall be developed with ample budgets for developing agricultural science and technology, agricultural credit, irrigation, post-harvest facilities, farm-to-market roads, and marketing support.

The section likewise upholds and promotes the rights of the peasantry, including farm workers and fisherfolk, to living wages, humane work conditions, benefits, and to be free from usury.

The ARRD section identifies 16 rural industries to be targeted for development: coconut, sugar, cacao and coffee, meat processing, fish processing, fruit, spices and vegetable processing, salt and seaweeds processing, dairy products, leather processing, abaca products, bamboo and rattan, clothing and textiles, pottery, furniture, and agricultural by-products processing.

The ARRD would have provided for the free distribution of big landholdings and landed estates, including lands targeted by the GRP for distribution; haciendas controlled by private individuals or entities; disputed lands with local agrarian reform and peasant struggles; and lands already occupied by peasants through various forms of land cultivation and collective farming programs.

In a statement condemning the Sagay 9 massacre, the NDFP's Reciprocal Working Committee on Social and Economic Reforms (RWC-SER), which helped draft the ARRD, stressed that the break-up of land monopolies and free land distribution are the "just, necessary and urgent corrective measures to the centuries-old social injustices suffered by the peasantry." **L/3**



# DUTERTENOMICS

## THE PROBLEM IS FUNDAMENTAL

by Vida Gracias and Pat Gambao

The dream was high on words.

On April 18, 2017 President Rodrigo Duterte's economic team went on a hype to sell to the public "DuterteNomics" in a forum at Conrad Hotel in Pasay City.

All the President's men were in attendance: Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea, Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez, Executive Director Ernesto Pernia of NEDA (National Economic and Development Agency), Budget Secretary Benjamin Diokno, Secretary Mark Villar of the Department of Public Works and Highways, Secretary Arthur Tugade of the Department of Transportation, Secretary Martin Andanar of the PCCO (Presidential Communications Operations Office), President/CEO Vince Dizon of the Bases Conversion and Development Authority, and Board Chair John Gaisano of the Davao City Chamber of Commerce.

They took turns in explaining the President's economic and development blueprint for the Philippines.

According to the website *duterte.today* the coined word includes the regime's "main governance and fiscal policies, comprehensive big-ticket infrastructure programs and upgraded social services targeted to accelerate growth, and by 2022, transform the Philippines into a high-middle income economy."

A year after that forum and way into its third year "Dutertenomics" remains, at best, a fantasy and, at worst, a catastrophe.

### DIFFICULT TIMES

If government statistics were to be believed Dutertenomics is on its way to making the Philippines the fastest growing economy in Southeast Asia. But the picture on the ground says differently.

Inflation (the rise in the prices of goods and services) is running high—5.2% in June, 5.7% in July, 6.4% in August, 6.8% in September. Damaging as it is, the onslaught of typhoons such as 'Ompong' and 'Rosita' is shooting up inflation. Rising inflation almost always hits the poor the hardest. But even corporate firms complain it cuts into their profit.

On the current rice crisis, the regime has resorted to removing the import quota, importing 750,000 metric tons for 2018. Despite this, rice prices increased 24 times from January to June 2018, according to the Philippine Statistics Authority. At the height of the rice crisis in August, the price of rice in Zamboanga went up to Php 70 per kilo.

To further arrest price hikes, the regime imposed a suggested retail price (SRP) in four varieties of

rice—namely, imported rice, regular local rice, well-milled rice, and whole-grain rice—but with penalties and fines for retailers. Duterte has also certified as urgent the Rice Tariffication Bill, which will remove all quantitative restrictions (QR) on rice importation. Once imports swarm the market the Filipino farmers cannot be competitive.

More severe is the job crisis, according to research group IBON. There are less jobs available in 2018 compared to the start of the Duterte administration. Jobs fell by 295,000 from 40.95 million in July 2016 to 40.67 million in July 2018. IBON conservatively estimates at least 11.3 million unemployed (4.3 million) and underemployed (7.0 million) Filipinos as of July 2018, which is one in four (25%) of the labor force.

A paltry wage hike of Php 25 plus Php 10 cost of living allowance was given to workers in the national capital region recently (it's even lower outside the region). But the Php 537 minimum wage in NCR alone is way below (or 46.3% short) of the Php 1,000 family living wage (FLW), or the amount that a family of five needs for decent living as of October 2018.

The brainchild to increase revenues through taxation has been a disaster. Intended to fund the regime's ambitious "Build, Build, Build" (BBB) program through TRAIN 1 (Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion), the

law, which took effect in January 2018, fueled inflation even more.

The excise tax on petroleum, tobacco and sweetened beverages created a domino effect on prices. Government monthly subsidy of Php 200 per family was meant to cushion the effects of TRAIN on the poor specially for 100 million families under the Php 24-billion unconditional cash transfer program. But this was not fully implemented. Also, whatever tax exemption that is given to minimum wage earners is cancelled out by inflation.

TRAIN 2 (renamed or rebranded as Tax Reform for Attracting Better and High-quality Opportunities or TRABAHO) which takes effect in January 2019 is meant to reduce corporate tax of 30% to 20% and increase incentives for business. Opposing it, the Bayan Muna Partylist said that the loss in government revenues will only benefit big corporations while more taxes will be levelled on the poor.

BBB will drive this country further into debts. Japan is putting in Php 20.6 billion, Asian Development Bank (ADB) will extend \$7.1 billion in loan assistance, and the China-led Asian Infrastructure and Investment Bank (AIIB) is expected to fund the

construction of health facilities, school buildings and roads.

Already, as of December 2017, the country's total outstanding debt stood at Php 6.65 trillion. In the four months from January to April 2018, government borrowing has already reached Php 244.6 billion. As of end-2018, the outstanding debt has reached beyond Php 7 trillion.

Meanwhile, the peso has depreciated against the US dollar, its weakest in 11 years. Currently standing at Php 54 to a

dollar, it has also become the third weakest currency in the world. This means imports are getting more expensive while exports earn less, leading to greater trade deficits. Export earnings further declined with less shipment of coconut products, fruits and vegetables.

But, interestingly enough, the *Bangko Sentral ng Philipinas* (BSP) said that the massive trade gap is due in part to the import requirements of the Php 9 trillion (or \$180 billion) infrastructure buildup plan of the Duterte government.





UNCERTAINTIES

All told, uncertainties surround “Dutertenomics” with Duterte himself fanning it. Many foreign partners, particularly the European Union (EU) and Canada, are put off by Duterte’s crass behavior and attacks. The Asian Review noted that hardly any major European business delegation has visited Manila, due to concerns over rule of law as well as bilateral diplomatic spats, such as the barring of a high-level EU party official, Giacomo Filibeck, a vocal critic of Duterte’s drug war, from entering the Philippines. The EU is the Philippines largest export market, worth \$10 billion in 2017.

Whether it be “Dutertenomics”, Benigno (Noyon) Aquino’s “inclusive growth”, or Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo’s “Strong Republic”, not one regime can claim

that it is resolving the nation’s chronic crisis and leading the country to growth.

The situation has just gone from bad to worse. Current and past regimes simply took the road of neoliberalism (liberalization, privatization, deregulation) on the economy as dictated by the imperialist-controlled International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization. The result is disastrous as it aggravates the fundamental problem—of a country remaining semicolonial and semifeudal.

That is why “Dutertenomics” cannot bust poverty, unemployment, inflation, low wages, lack of social services that have bedevilled millions of Filipinos today and in the past. Even more so is the illusion that “Dutertenomics” can raise the status of the majority of Filipinos from being poor farmers and workers to middle class.

NATURE OF ECONOMY

The Philippine economy is basically agrarian. It lacks industries that can produce basic metals, basic chemicals and capital goods. Even light industries depend mainly on imported capital goods. Manufacturing involves slight processing or mere assembly of imported components.

Because of its backward, agrarian nature, the country has always suffered from trade gaps or deficits in the balance of trade. Its exports have consisted mainly of low-value agricultural products (sugar, copra, coconut oil), logs, raw extractive minerals, manufactured consumer goods and reassembled components compared to its imports.

To fill in the gap, the government always resorts to borrowing, which is why the country is perpetually in debt, making it more vulnerable to impositions by international creditors.

Over the years, the Philippines has not gone beyond being a supplier of raw materials to the capitalist world, a dumping ground for imported goods, and a source of cheap labor. This is so because the economy remains under the tight grip of foreign monopolists and big local landlords and compradors. And there is no way “Dutertenomics” is ever changing this landscape.

Just look at the 10 Filipino billionaires (Henry Sy, Manuel Villar, John Gokongwei, Enrique Razon, Jaime Zobel de Ayala, Ramon Ang, Tony Tan Caktiong, Lucio Tan, George Sy and Andrew Tan) who made it to the Forbes list. Their investments are tied up into an export-oriented and import-dependent economy. This has uplifted the fortunes of the country’s richest. Under the Duterte regime, at least 19 tycoons were reported to have their networth shift 20% or more over the past year.

The country is rich in land, human and natural resources (mineral, waters, marine, flora and fauna) and could very well develop into a prosperous, self-reliant economy. But “Dutertenomics” will only further worsen the country’s dependence on US and other imperialist powers, notably through TRAIN and cha-cha (charter change).

KEY TO DEVELOPMENT

The Filipino people have cried for true agrarian reform and national industrialization as the key to development. But this has been totally ignored and mocked by “Dutertenomics”, which does not only retain and expand private monopolies but would even allow 100 percent foreign ownership of agricultural land.

As “Dutertenomics” creates more havoc to the economy, the more people look up to the National Democratic Front of the Philippines in laying down the fundamentals for a sound economy. The NDFP’s proposed Comprehensive Agreement on Social and Economic Reforms (CASER) which was presented and discussed in the scuttled NDFP-GRP peace talks is an economic blueprint that has come out of the insights and practices of several decades of revolutionary struggle.

In the countryside it is common knowledge that the the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and its armed wing, the New People’s Army (NPA), are carrying out agrarian reform as the main content of the democratic revolution. This consists of a minimum and a maximum program. Minimum includes rent reduction, elimination of usury, setting of fair farm-gate prices and promotion of agricultural production and sideline occupation through independent households and rudimentary cooperation. Maximum involves the confiscation of land from the landlords and land grabbers and free land distribution and agricultural cooperation in stages.

Freeing the economic forces in the countryside will serve as basis for the advent and growth of more industries that, under the supervision of the people’s democratic state, would lead to the fulfillment of the people’s basic needs and bring this country to peace and prosperity. **LIB**

It will dawn through the resolute advance of the people’s struggle for national sovereignty and democracy, for a societal change that will usher in a just and lasting peace.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IS NO MYTH.



It is attainable.

# ECONOMIC Woes

After **Marcos**, his successors — **Aquino, Ramos, Estrada, Macapagal — Arroyo, Aquino III and Duterte** - zealously embraced, to their advantage, the same path and toed the same neoliberal policies dictated by foreign monopoly capitalism.

No national industrialization or genuine land reform would happen.

The agrarian and semi-feudal economy remains and even aggravated with the financial crisis confronting the capitalist world.



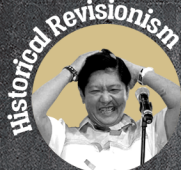
# ECONOMIC DECLINE

Low wages  
TRAIN I and 2  
BoP deficit soars to \$5.59B  
Inflation rate highest in 10 years  
Oil excise tax to continue in 2019  
Gov't debt (foreign & domestic) rises to 7.17 T  
Influx of illegal foreign workers; mostly Chinese  
Economic growth slowed down to 6.2% in 2018 Q3  
Foreign debt exceeds foreign reserves in 2018 Q3  
PhP55 Projected Peso-Dollar exchange hike by 2019  
PH foreign reserves dropped to US\$77B from US\$80B  
E065 allows entry of more foreign investments in infrastructure projects  
and permits foreigners to practice some professions in the country



- Bukbok Rice**
- NFA rice shortage
- Price increase for 8 mos. straight
- NFA rice price eyed from PhP27/kg to PhP32-35/kg
- Imported

Jesus Dureza  
resigns from  
OPAPP for AFP  
Chief Carlito Galvez



**Historical Revisionism**  
Cayetano  
hits  
Marcos  
on US\$10B  
stolen  
wealth

**Rumblings  
within the  
military**  
Philippine Navy Ronald  
Merado ousted for  
"insubordination"  
over the Frigate  
scandal  
Air Force Chief Gerard  
Kintanar removed  
from duty earlier  
than 2020 over  
stalled helicopter  
deal  
Senate to probe  
PhP20B CCTV deal  
between DILG and  
Chinese firm; DITC  
denies involvement  
Albayalde doubts CIA  
assassination plot vs  
Duterte



**Release of  
Plunderers**

GMA coup in  
Congress



Arroyo vs Alva-  
rez fights over  
PhP55B con-  
gressional pork  
in 2019 budget



Alvarez  
charged with  
PhP15M libel

**ECONOMIC  
MANAGERS  
VS  
FEDERALISM**



DBM Diokno  
accuses  
Cayetano of  
PhP7.5B budget  
insertion for SEA  
Games

Cong. Andaya  
says DBM chief  
Diokno's in-laws  
are involved in  
PhP500M infra  
projects

Finance Chief  
Dominguez hits  
GMA over China  
deals

# CRACKS ON THE WALL

Proscription List

Political Persecution

Illegal Arrests & Killing  
of NDFP Peace Consultants

Martial  
Law  
extended  
until  
2019

Proposed shut down of  
"terrorists" SoMeId accounts

M032 deploys more troops to  
Negros, Samar and Bicol regions  
vs. "lawless violence"

Human Security Act

Terrorist-  
tagging

Fake Surrender

Gov't expropriating  
Marawi land  
for another  
army camp

Duterte Death Squad to "assassinate  
communist rebels and sympathizers"

Red October

Duterte backing Imee Marcos on Ilocos Norte PhP  
21M fabricated bid documents and PhP154M  
doubtful purchase  
Davao LGU 11,246 'ghost employees' cost PhP 708M  
Bong Go's PhP 1.85B family contract  
At least 50 gov't officials being probed for  
corruption  
Calida and government contracts  
Recycling of corrupt officials  
P66M tobacco fund misuse  
Another Bedan to chair the  
Security and Exchange  
Commission (SEC)  
GMA gave PhP60M  
"goodwill" to 297  
House members



CoA flagged down almost  
all agencies for corruption



PhP5.8M unliqui-  
dated cash ad-  
vance



PhP5.9B  
charity fund  
not spent for  
charity



PhP10M  
used for  
fake  
scholars,  
trainers,  
training  
centers

# FULL-SWING CORRUPTION

Government resources used  
for election campaigns

Imelda Marcos exempted from  
arrest despite conviction on 7  
counts of graft  
Pork barrel insertions in the 2019  
budget approved by the HOR  
PhP2.4B "pork barrel" for GMA  
dist.  
Waldo Carpio, brother of Duterte's  
son-in-law, promoted as DA  
undersecretary  
Duterte campaign contributor,  
Dennis Uy, wins 3rd TelCo bid  
COA flags NFA's diversion  
of PhP5.1B food fund; linked  
to rice supply shortage  
Sieved firearms and  
ammunitions for Maute group  
and ASG worth PhP1.2M came  
from the AFP  
DSWD and Pork Barrel

# ANTI-DRUGS CAMPAIGN

6.4 Shabu case dismissed  
Shabu found in Cavite ignored  
Thousands of tambays arrested  
Thousands of Tokhang and EJK victims



PDEA exec and ex-cop in PhP11B shabu controversy missing  
Former PDEA chief involved in 2 giant shabu shipments  
BuCor Chief's son, Faeldon Jr., arrested in drug raid  
2017 missing shabu in magnetic lifters in Cavite  
worth PhP11B not PhP6.8B



