

LIBERATION

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FIVE GROUNDS THAT SHOW WHY
**CHINA IS NO LONGER SOCIALIST,
MUCH LESS COMMUNIST**

WHO STANDS TO BENEFIT MOST FROM
**THE DUTERTE REGIME'S SO-CALLED
ANTI-TERRORISM CAMPAIGN?**





ABOUT THE COVER

“*Sana dalawa ang puso ko,*” is a line in popular Filipino song for someone whose heart is pulled in two directions. Though Duterte may seem to be that someone as far as his relations with the US and China, he is not. He is both puppet to both—giving in to his imperialist masters for his own benefit.

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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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The first quarter storm spawned many heroes and martyrs—youth who went underground when martial law was declared. They went to the countryside, immersed with the masses and showed them the path to liberation. One of them was Kumander Tangkad, Romulo Jallos, whose revolutionary life is celebrated by naming after him the regional command of the NPA-Bicol.

THE ULTIMATE BENEFICIARIES

Who stands to benefit most from the Duterte regime's so-called anti-terrorism campaign?

No other post-Marcos administration could surpass the Duterte regime's viciousness in its red-tagging and terrorist-tagging campaign that has targetted both the underground revolutionary movement and the open mass movement.

Despite public condemnation and stiff opposition from progressive and civic-minded groups, giving rise to the unprecedented 37 petitions filed before the Supreme Court that seek to nullify the newly-enacted Anti-Terrorism Act of 2020, the Duterte regime has not shown any signs of letting go.

It snubbed the European Union's warning that favorable trade relations would be adversely affected if extrajudicial killings persisted under its helm. It maneuvered to defer the conduct of an independent international investigation of human rights violations in the country urged by the United Nations High Commissioner on Human Rights. In recent days, Duterte issued pronouncements vowing to faithfully adhere to human rights and the rule of law, while its military and police forces continue to launch operations reeking with violations of the same.

Where is the gall coming from?

Despite his feigned distancing from the United States, Duterte knows his imperialist masters are cheering on his regime's terror campaign; he also feels assured that his military top brass and most if not all field commanders are loyal US puppets. Also, Duterte is aware that, historically, the Philippine military is basically shaped by US military doctrine and remains largely dependent on US support in terms of weaponry and war equipage, training, funding, and intelligence operations.

Of course, US support stays premised on how far Duterte could foster and protect imperialist interests in the country. From that standpoint, the terror campaign serves as a smokescreen to better promote and protect such interests in the country.

At the same time, the terror campaign aims to stall, if not prevent, Duterte's being ousted by the Filipino people before his term ends in 2022. The seething masses want him out of power because of the following: his admitted failure to fulfill any of his election campaign promises; his incompetent approach to the Covid-19 pandemic and its destructive impacts on the national economy and people's livelihood; its bloody war on the poor in the guise of a "war on drugs"; and his arbitrary abandonment of peace negotiations, instead targeting to attain military victory in the more than 50-year-running internal armed conflict — a tack that has been proven futile under all previous administrations, starting with the Marcos dictatorship.

It is no secret that the progressive and revolutionary movements in the country, whether aboveground or underground, since time immemorial have resisted the attempts by reactionary regimes, including Duterte's, to impose their will on the people. From the countryside to the cities, through armed struggle and popular resistance/uprisings, the people united have stalled or frustrated imperialist plans and puppet regimes have come to their end, either by getting ousted or prevented from extending their term in office.

Certainly, US imperialism wouldn't want to lose the Philippines, not just for investments and trade, but more so because of its geographical importance to America's national security. That is why it cannot abide a growing anti-imperialist movement, erupting not just in the form

of popular protest but of insurgency and revolution. In the name of counter-terrorism the US helped Duterte pummel Marawi to the ground, directed the attacks against the Moro people in Mindanao for purportedly supporting the Abu Sayyaf, and brokered the neutralization of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) to give up armed struggle.

On the other hand, emerging imperialist China's investments in the country have been growing, particularly in mining and infrastructure (such as dams, roads, railways). It has become the second largest foreign investor (next to Singapore) in the Philippines as of 2019. However, many of these investments have been met with opposition from the local people, being deemed as threats to life and property. Some areas of investment in the countryside are also known to be strongholds of the CPP-NPA-NDF. No wonder that in the guise of combatting terrorism China has delivered a batch of light weapons to the Philippines, a \$7.3 million worth of rifles and ammunitions, a year after Duterte assumed the presidency.

Duterte's "drift" towards China, especially by sidelining the arbitral ruling which invalidated China's "nine-dash-line" claim in the South China Sea has made him more endearing to his Chinese masters, and secured for him more promised loans and investments, including risky and controversial projects such as the Kaliwa Dam and the Sangley Point International Airport. As a result, an anti-China sentiment has been spreading in the Philippines that could block, delay or cancel the projects. Opposition to China's imperialism has burst forth, invariably led by progressive and revolutionary movements.

Every once in a while Duterte would seem to play off one imperialist master against the other to make a show of his "independent foreign policy", but in truth aims to wangle more concessions.

His perfunctory announcement to abrogate the US-RP Visiting Forces Agreement on February 11, 2020 was hailed by China. But by June 2, 2020 Duterte walked back and suspended the abrogation twice for six months. In turn,

US President Trump sent \$552 million worth of war material to the Duterte regime, plus attack helicopters and related equipment valued at about \$2 billion. Conscious that the US is his main military provider, Duterte would not put himself out of the good graces of his American gods.

No matter, this inter-imperialist rivalry that Duterte uses to his own advantage puts under peril the safety and security of the Filipino people.

Let us briefly look into how the anti-terrorism campaign in the country started.

Soon after the September 11, 2001 devastating attack by the al Qaida on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, US President George W. Bush launched his "war on terror" in Afghanistan and Iraq. Then with the complicity of the Gloria Arroyo regime, Bush designated the Philippines as the "second front" of his war on terror.

That became a convenient excuse for the Arroyo regime to begin tagging the CPP-NPA as "communist-terrorist". But not yet in the legal context, even if it was during her presidency that the first anti-terrorism law, called the Human Security Act of 2007 (HSA), was enacted.

Now under the Duterte regime, through the Anti-Terrorism Act (which amended the HSA), the CPP-NPA has hastily been "designated" as a terrorist organization by sheer executive action of the Anti-Terrorism Council. Any other organization, group of persons, or individuals can be easily so designated. It was bad enough that for four years before the new law came into effect, the Duterte regime had already engaged in red/terrorist tagging. In several instances, red/terrorist tagging has led to extrajudicial killing of those falsely tagged.

In the end, however, retribution will come forth. The culprits will be called to answer to the people. Not just the Duterte regime but also its imperialist masters; they have been covert participants in the repression carried out to strengthen their foothold in the Philippines.

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Up until today, and probably for more decades to come, China will continue to harp on having a system of an “advanced socialism with Chinese characteristics”. But even to ordinary tourists in China, what appears to mesmerize them is China’s speedy turn towards capitalism.



Grounds that show why

CHINA

is no longer SOCIALIST, much less COMMUNIST

by Vida Gracias

This great country, founded as a people’s republic under Mao Tse Tung 70 years ago, was a blazing icon for many of the world’s revolutionaries and proletariat, including those in the Philippines. China inspired millions as it initially transformed itself from a backward semi-feudal, semi-colonial toward a progressive and socialist country.

But in no time at all after Mao’s passing, revisionism struck its ugly chord; systematically it demolished socialism and restored capitalism. Now China

is a fast-emerging imperialist power challenging the heretofore lone imperialist superpower, the United States, after the unravelling of the Soviet Union towards the end of the 1980s.

What has become of socialism then? It remained in China only in words, not in deeds. The Chinese “communist” leadership has become a master of duplicity, hiding behind socialist slogans, yet brazenly collaborating and colluding with capitalist powers while creating its own brand of monopoly capitalism.

The first thing the revisionists did a few years after Mao’s death was to thoroughly revile the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (GPCR), so much so that until now, few publications, especially in the culturally influential “West”, write about the GPCR without choice insults thrown in against it.

Were it not for the succeeding Chinese leadership’s duplicity and use of force against genuine communists, the peoples of the world would have seen how Mao’s theory of continuing revolution (as embodied in the GPCR) would have continued to make leaps and bounds in modernizing and developing not only China, but perhaps the rest of the world as well, along historically unprecedented socialist lines.

The GPCR was the Chinese communists’ endeavor to ensure that the proletariat and the people actually (not nominally) rule; that they actually own, manage, and equitably share in the nation’s production and wealth. The GPCR was designed as a national check against revisionism, against the return in various guises of parasitic exploitation by one social class of another class—be they called, in the “West” as capitalists or, in China as Party leaders and entrenched bureaucrats along with their relatives.

The continuing attack against the GPCR and the reign of duplicitous Chinese leadership represent, at once, the monumental possibility as well as the tragedy in the struggle of the world’s proletariat. Possibility because due to China’s socialist undertaking it was able to advance in so short a time. Tragedy because its advance was cut short much too soon even though Mao had emphasized early on that the revolution is a continuing one.

We all have seen, or are still reeling from, the parasitic and fatal course of imperialism. How much more hopeful and glorious our tomorrow would have been, if our revolutionary struggles continued while a truly communist party and a socialist China both remained standing tall. As things stand now, we owe it to ourselves and our future to correct the historical injustice to the GPCR, while we persevere in the revolutionary struggle to free ourselves from capitalist exploitation.

For many, capitalism or imperialism is so ubiquitous and easy to spot. But imperialism as “socialism with Chinese

characteristics”? The peoples of the world have heard, or read about, the garbage spoken or written against communism. Let us not add to it by calling today’s China “communist.”

For any reader who may have been lost in, or confused by, China’s transition to capitalism, here are a few basic communist traits. Compare these traits to the real world of China today, and we can see clearly that the Chinese leadership is lying through its teeth about being communist:

1. AT THE CORE OF SOCIALISM IS SOCIAL OWNERSHIP OF THE MEANS OF PRODUCTION.

Most of the land and strategic industries were declared public property, administered by the State or by people’s collectives. But the revisionists have effected major reversals. They have dismantled collective land ownership along with collective cultivation and administration. They have broken up and emasculated the communes and turned over their former dominion as piecemeal responsibilities of individual families. The revisionist State has closed down or sold off many State enterprises. Privatization, liberalization, deregulation—all neoliberal policies—have been let loose to gain foothold in Chinese agriculture and industry.

2. WORKING CLASS LEADERSHIP IS PARAMOUNT IN A SOCIALIST SOCIETY.

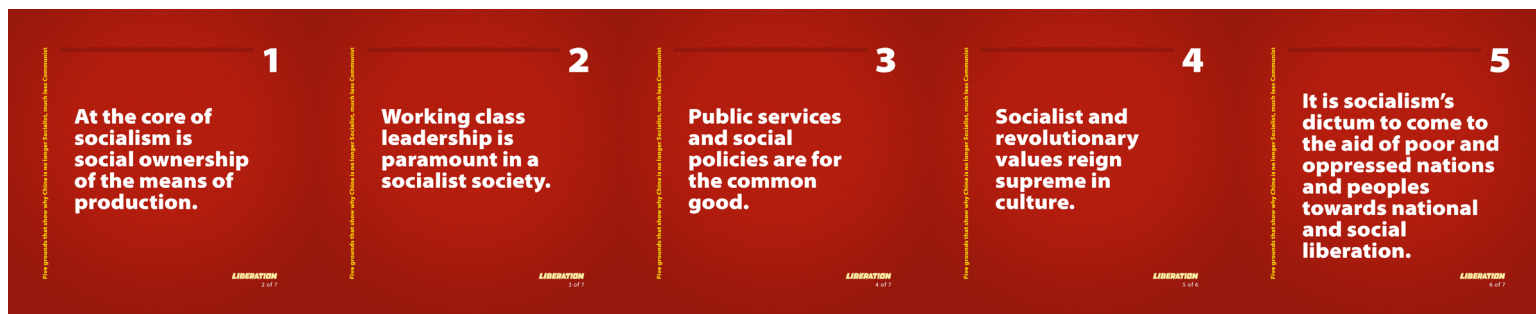
Yet the Communist Party of China, which leads the State, has turned into a bourgeois-led party. Long before it allowed capitalists – newly-minted billionaires at that – to become party members, the party cadres themselves had become bureaucrat capitalists. They dip their hands into public funds, enjoy and dispense privileges, engage in crime and corruption. Membership in the Party has become for sale, with huge payouts especially among bureaucrat princelings and billionaires. These bureaucrats thrive in a state of monopoly capitalism.

3. PUBLIC SERVICES AND SOCIAL POLICIES ARE FOR THE COMMON GOOD.

These are given priority in a socialist society. Yet under revisionist leadership severe cutbacks have been imposed on wages, food, education, health, housing, etc. Urban migration has ballooned as the landless, the dispossessed and the jobless migrants from China’s vast countryside converge in the cities in quest for jobs. Productivity has been prioritized over welfare and job security. Even the “right to strike” has been stricken out of the constitution.

4. SOCIALIST AND REVOLUTIONARY VALUES REIGN SUPREME IN CULTURE.

But the memories of China’s socialist revolution as well as those of other countries have been viciously obliterated. There are surmounting efforts to revise and distort Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. The spirit of revolutionary solidarity and cooperation that previously reigned high has been downgraded.



5. IT IS SOCIALISM'S DICTUM TO COME TO THE AID OF POOR AND OPPRESSED NATIONS AND PEOPLES TOWARDS NATIONAL AND SOCIAL LIBERATION.

But this is not the spirit by which China nowadays exports capital, grants aid, or lends to nations. Far from international solidarity, China has become one of the world's biggest creditors and uses its power to amass profit and to influence and intervene in other nations' internal affairs in furtherance of China's imperialistic aims. It is increasingly becoming a major military power as well to protect and advance its imperialistic interests. It is expanding its influence and dominion in many parts of the world, competing more and more aggressively with other major powers for markets and territories.

Though the proletariat in China and in the rest of the world have encountered this huge setback, the fact remains that, scientifically speaking, over the long haul "capitalism digs its own grave." The capitalist/imperialist system's inherent contradictions have been spurring recurrent crises that it cannot continue trying to avoid, to delay, or worse to downplay by mislabeling it.

These crises, which have been growing worse in each succeeding round, naturally breed resistance. Despite repression and censorship by China's capitalist roaders, for instance, the masses continue to resist in the countryside as well as in the cities. In due time, Mao's unflinching faith in the masses will ultimately prevail and turn the tide in favor of socialism. **LIB**

CRISES BUILD RESISTANCE

From the ubiquitous “Made in China” label on a broad range of consumer and industrial products, to the ambitious China-funded infrastructure projects, followed by waves of arrival of Chinese workers, experts, and tourists wherever its huge investment offers find traction with government leaders, there is no escaping the signs that capitalist China has established significant presence in the global arena.

But before it can get too comfortable in its drive to carve up its own hegemonic spheres, China is meeting resistance: not just from those in danger of getting edged out—once it had its way—but also from the masses of people whom its aggressive expansion worldwide further pushes into miserable disadvantage.



by Pinky Ang

IMPERIALIST CHINA, A TRAGIC NAME GAME

“The revisionists deny the differences between socialism and capitalism, between the dictatorship of the proletariat and the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. What they advocate is in fact not the socialist line but the capitalist line.” The quotation is from a speech delivered by Mao Tse Tung at the Chinese Communist Party’s National Conference on Propaganda Work on March 12, 1957.

Twenty-three years after Mao made that statement, a “reinventing of ideology” in China proceeded much like he had warned. The “reinvent” began with the repudiation of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (GPCR), which also meant the repudiation of the socialist line.

It has been four decades since China took the capitalist road, abandoning the socialist line that had enabled it to rapidly develop its agriculture and industries. The government (which still defines itself as “socialist”) has done away with socialist principles, justice and democracy including the socialist ownership and sharing of the fruits of its peoples’ hard work. However, it has retained elements of the socialist construction phase, such as state-owned enterprises and state funding of projects serving China’s strategic objectives. In a socialist state, state funding and state-owned enterprises are worked to benefit the majority, and not a few bureaucrats and cronies.

As such, despite the success stories which purveyors of capitalist ideology love to parade as inspiring models, it can’t be denied that the inevitable negative outcome for the Chinese people—the gap between the rich and the poor—has continued to grow wider and wider.

And despite its official name—the People’s Republic of China—Mao’s country is not simply no longer a socialist but a capitalist state; worse, it’s now rearing to become a monopoly capitalist empire or imperialist superpower. *[Read article on Why China is no longer a socialist state, page 03].* Not surprisingly, the post-Mao repudiation of the socialist line gained plaudits from no less than the United States: the lone

imperialist superpower, after the unravelling of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s.

The US embraced China’s opening up to foreign investments because it needed a new expansion ground—the biggest market it could ever dream of gaining—to deter or at least delay its huge economy’s slide into recession or, worse, depression, due to the crisis of overproduction. Taking advantage of low-wage labor in China, giant US corporations moved over there significant parts of their information-technology and other production operations. Meantime, China gained tremendous expansion for its low-priced consumer products in the US market and elsewhere. In the expanding trade exchange, China gained the upper hand, complained the US. Under President Donald Trump, the US aggressively seeks to block avenues where they think China is gaining more than they do. In a TV interview early January of 2020, Trump was quoted as boasting that China has been predicted to become no. 1, yet it still hasn’t become no. 1.

After years of mutually beneficial relationship between US and China — where then capitalist China boomed and eventually as a monopoly capitalist China is expanding to prevent capitalist system’s periodic crisis — all is not well now between the investment and trading partners that are the US and China.

The US is allergic to capitalist China’s global expansion. Since 2010, the US has accused China of massively pursuing what it calls the latter’s “debt trap diplomacy.” China remains America’s major trading partner, but the two are getting locked in an intensifying rivalry—and not just in trade. The US would want China to remain its huge dumping ground of surplus capital and dirty fast-paced, cheap production, but monopoly capitalist China is also expanding its global reach to feed its growth, utilizing its trillions of dollars in foreign exchange reserves.



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CHINA ON A SLIPPERY LONG ROAD TO NO. 1

Reports by the international mainstream media claim the “American dream” is alive among the youths in China. The emerging superpower boasts of the ever-rising number of homeowners, internet users, college graduates, and, by some count, billionaires and millionaires. But, at the same time, poverty and joblessness are driving away its poor youths to migrate for work in economic zones where death by overwork or suicide cropped up even in repressed news.

In the Philippines, operations of online gambling outfits serving clients in China (where gambling is outlawed), run by Chinese and hire only all-Chinese personnel who don’t speak Filipino or any foreign language, have proliferated. The influx has given rise to prostitution rings, employing Chinese women, and increasing cases of Chinese criminal groups kidnapping fellow Chinese for ransom.

China is now the world’s second

biggest economy next to the US. It is also the latter’s biggest rival, after the disintegration of the Soviet Union. With its huge population and production capacity, China has provided the global monopoly capitalist system a vast breathing room from the latter’s recurrent downturns and crises.

China has become the world’s biggest factory, what with massive workforce and low wages. Of late, however, industrial production has suffered slowdown, due to slackened world trade and high levels of product inventories. No thanks to the rapacity of the world capitalist system, the world market is also not getting any bigger for the burgeoning surplus production and capital.

Also China has provided another locale for new monopoly capitalist bubbles to develop. In China’s case it’s the debt bubble: the nation’s total debt is three times its gross domestic product. State economic planners are endeavoring to avert an unmanageable financial crisis.

Moreover, China has been under sustained pressure from the US and the World Trade Organization (WTO) to further open up its economy, and to weaken if not completely demolish its two-tier economy. The latter features the maintenance of both a market economy and certain aspects of a socialist-planned economy. It’s manipulated by the state to prop up capitalist production and boost the nation’s consumer spending. The two-tier economy is China’s trump card against rival monopoly capitalists, chiefly the US.

With its two-tier economy, China can more readily afford to be “inefficient,” as capitalists would say when they reap lesser to no immediate profits in return

for huge investments. China’s two-tier economy lets it use for example its control of state companies and vital industries such as oil and gas, telecommunications, banking, insurance and power generation to continue production and undercut rivals even with falling profits in sight. It can readily tap funding surpluses otherwise used for public services to bolster instead the state-owned enterprises with subsidies. China can more readily pump-prime its economy, issue more bad loans after another to maintain or prevent further slips in growth. It has control of the banking sector which holds the Chinese people’s savings, reputed to be three times that of Americans.

Other imperialist countries don’t readily have the same centralized control over their cabal of monopoly capitalists, although they also run their governments to serve monopoly capitalism. They do cobble together bail-out funds to save themselves, but through lengthier wranglings and compromises to each monopoly capitalists’ greed. And even after bailing out abusive bankers and other capitalists who were deemed “too big to fail” with, say, people’s sovereign funds and taxes, their governments still lack the whip to dictate on their capitalists to keep their profits at home to spur domestic production. They may clamp down hard on mass protests, but they appear democratic and respectful of individual human rights with their capitalists.

China on the other hand appears to worry less about such concern. Both camps of imperialists clamp down hard on protests, both claim lofty pretensions (US claims it is democratic; China claims it is socialist). For this, a New York Times report describes China a “champion of alternative global order.”

FOR HOW LONG CAN CHINA MAINTAIN THIS DRAGON DANCE?

Until a recent interim trade agreement with the US was sealed, giving pause to concerns over a full-blown trade war, China skirmished with the US, with both sides hurting their capitalist interests. US companies which have benefited from China's cheap but skilled factories were constrained to look for ways to continue production cheaply. China increased its loan and bond issuance to \$1.4 billion in the first half of 2019, an amount said to be record high for Chinese banks. As 2020 began with a health crisis in Wuhan, China, it reportedly issued a \$22-billion kitty to forestall massive dumping of China shares in world market. As the health crisis turned into a global pandemic still wreaking havoc as of this writing, the imperialist global ambitions not only of China and US obviously still continue.

China has been pushing a more assertive agenda overseas, which the US has been trying to counter.

As the US has noted, China is currently engaged in a spending spree on infrastructure that comes with strings attached for the beneficiary countries. Short of staking neocolonies such as what the US and other capitalist powers did, China is pushing for "commercial expansion with diplomatic influence." While the US derides what it calls China's debt-trap diplomacy, it has formed a fund to counter China's debt-driven global expansion.

A study into Chinese loans released before the COVID pandemic says 5,000 loans and grants to 150 nations shows total China

advances to emerging nations have reached \$530 billion. This sum surpasses the lending of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, but not yet that of US private lending.

As of this writing, across Africa and Latin America, rail networks and highways funded by China are being built. So are power stations in Eastern Europe and South Asia.

Under its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), China has so far committed \$575 billion across 75 countries. Of these, the World Bank reviewed the status of 43 countries and warned that 12 of them are increasing their debt vulnerability due to the BRI.

Considering that the World Bank has also massively engaged in lending to the same countries accessing China loans—thus also ensnaring these same countries in its own form of debt trap—it must know what it was saying when it warned the BRI participant countries that they were in danger of being undone by unsustainable debts. It warned also that big-ticket infrastructure projects were "magnet[s] for corruption."

Sri Lanka's Hambantota port is often touted as one grim example of China debt trap. But it is just as well an example of a government making insensible investments to acquire fast loans. EXIM Bank of China financed its construction at commercial rates from 2007 to 2016. But the port was not making

enough revenue when the loan became due because trade had been slipping over the years and Sri Lanka's trade deficit is widening. In 2017, Sri Lanka leased it out to China not only to repay it (it's just 5-percent of their yearly debt payment) but to increase its foreign reserves. If a lesson is to be gained, it is that Filipinos should exert their utmost to stop their government from incurring loans for badly thought out infrastructure and investments.

In 2017 China joined the US, France and Japan, among others, in having permanent military bases in Djibouti, a former French colony with less than a million population. It is their official first military base outside of mainland China. Strategically located on the Horn of Africa, it offers strategic access to Bab el- Mandeb Strait which connects the Mediterranean Sea via the Suez Canal and the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean beyond. Millions of barrels of oil and petroleum products pass through this strait.



The US has stressed that Djibouti is “very, very important” to their strategic interests. The US has also been investing millions in their military base here. This is where they reportedly stage drone strikes to, say, Somalia and Yemen. China got a foothold in this area through investments in Africa. An estimated one million Chinese national are in Africa, employed in infrastructure projects backed by the Chinese government.

Along with flexing muscles in expanding its economic reach, China is also extending its military presence. It still lags far behind US in this department, but in Southeast Asia and in the so-called American Lake, China is more blatant at projecting its growing military might. It has grabbed contested islets in the Spratlys and constructed artificial island bastions with high-tech military installations and all but taking over an important trade route that is rich also in oil and marine resources.

China is competing with the US now even in areas known to be traditionally under US influence. And it is not just in terms of influence on neocolonies but also in business and technology. It has announced some competitor-beating state plans to build industries such as semiconductors, and cars. It has made advances in railways, generating solar energy, and even now is locked in a competition with US in internet and surveillance technology.

However way this pans out, the Philippines and our people have a tremendous stake and risk: no thanks to the successive puppet presidents and greedy bureaucrat capitalists, the country has remained as a US neocolony. Worse, the Duterte regime also practically behaves like a vassal to China. **LIB**

“This is the Chinese Coast guard. This is under the jurisdiction of the Chinese government,” blared a Chinese officer who tried to bar a cargo ship from sailing through Panatag/ Scarborough Shoal, a part of the Philippine territory off Zambales in the South China Sea. His action has sparked an outcry, but as of this writing, the Duterte administration continues to avoid offending China.

Its officials—from Malacañang spokesperson Salvador Panelo to Foreign Secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr. to Philippine Coast Guard commandant Joel Garcia— have all refused to call out China’s infraction on Philippine sovereignty and on freedom of navigation. Meanwhile, at a Senate hearing around the same period, Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana stirred patriotic outrage when he downplayed the Chinese ships’ firing of flares as Philippine ships navigated the West Philippine Sea.

These are just two incidents in a series of cases of Chinese incursions into Philippine territory, all unchallenged, being dismissed and at times even justified by the Duterte administration. Why would a tough-talking and cursing president, who advertises his stance as “charting an independent foreign policy,” court the people’s ire with blatant subservience? Perhaps, this question should begin with “How much...?”

USING THE CHINA CARD: AN IMPERIALIST PUPPET’S GAMBLE FOR BUREAUCRATIC LOOT

The first time President Rodrigo Duterte visited China three years ago, the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) already enumerated ways in which the Filipino people may benefit from ties with China. This would start only if Duterte strives to build diplomatic relations with China on the basis of equality, mutual respect, and mutual benefits, the CPP said at the time.



RIDING THE PROWLING CHINESE DRAGON

China's Economic Hold in the Philippines

But Duterte did not listen. Instead he has shown that he is not at all capable of building diplomatic relations with China on the basis of equality, mutual respect, and mutual benefits. He has persistently desisted from asserting the country's victory at the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague, claiming China would wage war against the Philippines if he did so (which has no basis in fact). Thus, he has let pass China's repeated incursions into our country's extended economic zones (under the United Nations' Convention on the Law of the Sea or UNCLOS) and bullying Filipino fishers at Panatag Shoal.

Probably believing that in the prevailing system, presidents like him couldn't be anything other than the worst imperialist puppets and bureaucrat capitalists of the day,

Duterte is angling for whatever gains he could get from deals with the imperialists. His administration calls China an "integral partner" in their P4.23-trillion infrastructure buildup.

By now it is clear the only change that has come with Duterte is that besides serving US imperialist interests (while feigning to be distancing from it), his administration is moonlighting with another imperialist power, letting it latch on to wherever it can partake of the country's riches and potentials.

The country's foremost bureaucrat capitalist finds in China a promising huge pot of bureaucratic loot as former sources have dried up due to the economic slowdown, or are compelled by their citizens to raise questions on and denounce continuing extrajudicial killings and other human rights violations under

his increasingly tyrannical rule. On this issue the Duterte administration is allergic to what he deems as foreign intervention.

"Duterte is in a hurry and desperate to secure his kickbacks from foreign loans and contracts from China," the CPP said in a statement when Duterte still had three years in power. Duterte's list of projects, flagship or otherwise, has since continued to evolve or get revised.

After three years in power, only nine of the 75 listed projects began construction. By November 2019, Duterte dropped the projects considered too long or unfeasible. It 'overhauled' the list such that only 30-plus of the original projects remained, and added another 68 to the "evolving" list. Then totaling 100, half or 50 of Duterte's flagship infrastructure projects will be funded by Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) or foreign loans, 23 are to be fully funded by the Philippine government, 24 by public-private funding, and only two will be privately financed.

Duterte's panic over delayed delivery of the loot is palpable. Past midway in his six-year term, the amount supplied so far by China in loans and grants is still far short of the US\$9 billion promised by President Xi Jinping during their first meeting in October 2016. Having already signed numerous deals with the Chinese government, his administration wants to

proceed with implementing the projects ASAP so the funds could start pouring in. That can happen, of course, only if his administration can overcome the public criticisms and protests over the lopsided provisions of the deals that have been made public, criticisms for the lack of transparency on deals that have yet to be disclosed, and delays in completing the technical and legal requirements that include feasibility studies, environmental clearances, and the freely given consent of communities that would be adversely affected.

A sample of what the Duterte administration can do to push its deals with China: in time for the visit of Chinese vice-premier Hu Chunhua in October 2019, it railroaded the release of environmental compliance certificate and threatened to use police power against public protests on the Kaliwa Dam project in Sierra Madre. Yet, the protests were such that as of February 2020, his economic manager confirmed they have barely started construction in Kaliwa.

Protests against the China-funded projects hinder its implementation. Past debacles with China-funded projects such as the ZTE and Northrail also cast its shadow, slowing down Duterte's hope-for inflows of ODA from China. Until December 2019, the Chinese government wanted meetings with the Duterte government "to thresh out issues involving the Duterte administration's big-ticket infrastructure and

development projects that are being implemented with funding support from China."

To push through with the projects Duterte needs to remove all constraints including protests. His government has busied itself imposing a de facto martial law since establishing the National Task Force to End Local Armed Conflict in December 2018, ordering to place civilian bureaucracies and local governments under the task force. In 2020 it seized the COVID 19 health crisis to force an intense militarized "response," complete with finally getting the Anti-Terror Law successfully passed against public protests.

But Duterte cannot trample on the people's rights and welfare on the way to collecting his loot and still maintain his dubious popularity. To deceive supporters, he is passing off his "China pivot" as "independent foreign policy." He is also using it as leverage for demanding more support and funds from the Philippines' long-time neocolonial master, without really upsetting the established "special relationship" with US imperialist overlords.

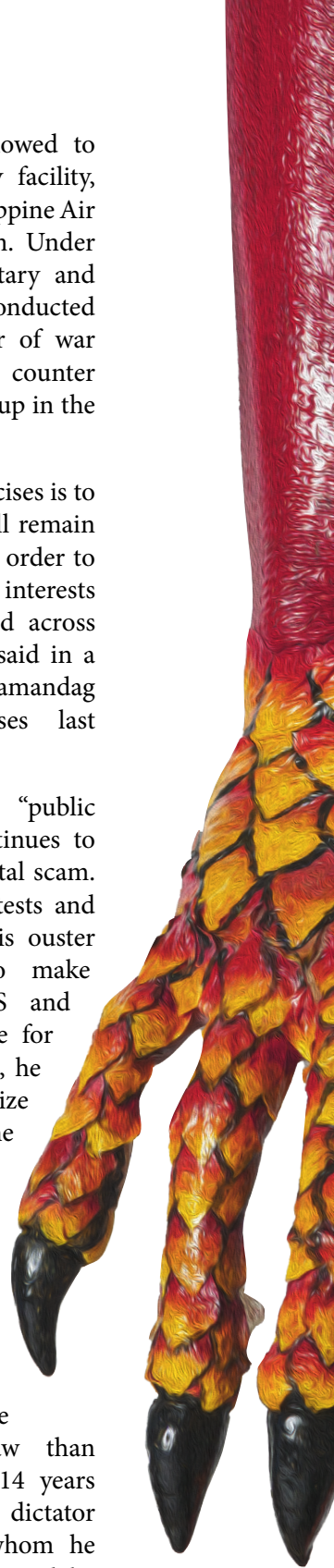
In fact, as a US puppet, Duterte is providing exemplary services to his master. He sets the stage for the Pentagon and the Department of National Defense-Armed Forces of the Philippines to use the China card to both increase and extend US military presence in the country.

The US has been allowed to have another military facility, this time within a Philippine Air Force base in Palawan. Under Duterte, the US military and the AFP have also conducted an increasing number of war exercises designed to counter China's military build-up in the South China Sea.

"The aim of these exercises is to ensure that the US will remain militarily dominant in order to protect its economic interests in the Philippines and across the region," the CPP said in a statement during the Kamandag US military exercises last October.

As president and "public servant," Duterte continues to expose himself as a total scam. And so, to block protests and increasing calls for his ouster while he strives to make his puppetry to US and China more profitable for himself and his clique, he continues to militarize the bureaucracy and the entire government.

In 2019 his government allowed a military rampage nationwide on the basis of their 'whole of nation approach,' a harsh and more insidious martial law than that carried out for 14 years by the ousted fascist dictator Ferdinand Marcos (whom he has politically rehabilitated by allowing his preserved corpse buried at the Libingan ng mga Bayani in 2017).





ENTER THE DRAGON: WORLD'S NO. 2 POWER DEVELOPS ITS OWN STRANGLEHOLD IN PH

The Duterte regime has looked the other way as China finished reclaiming and installing military installations over three reefs within Philippine territorial waters. Duterte has all but given the green light to China's staking claim and proceeding with plans to construct more installations at the Panatag Shoal. He is all but allowing also what amounts to China's military encirclement of the seas around Luzon, sans any written treaty.

Commercially, China is also gaining humongous ground with the lopsided "joint" deal it signed with Duterte to explore and drill for oil in the resource-rich West Philippine Sea. Officials from the Duterte regime and China are meeting regarding the "joint" oil exploration.

The increased Chinese presence in Philippine coastal areas, islands and waters has placed fisherfolk and urban communities at a grave disadvantage. China's aggressive grab of Filipinos' traditional commercial fishing grounds has worsened the

fisherfolk's lot. By start of 2020 the rice and vegetable farmers are beginning to reel from intensified neoliberalisation under Duterte, and the fisherfolk are among those whose livelihood first fell, according to Pamalakaya, an alliance of fisherfolk. Despite the increase in the population that must be amply fed, the Philippine fisheries sector posted a negligible growth of 0.92% in the volume of production last year to 4.35 million metric tons. The trend continues in 2019 as first and second quarter volumes posted 0.9% and 0.3% growth, respectively.

Not just in Philippine reefs and seas, China is also boldly entering vital Philippine industries and staking claim over rich natural resources in ancestral territories of indigenous peoples through opaque or lopsided deals with Duterte. As earlier stated, China's actual fund release in Duterte's big-ticket Build Build infrastructure projects is so far negligible. But the projects where it is bound to come in, per the deals already signed, and where other private and state-controlled Chinese firms are coming in are many times bigger and more dangerous than the NBN-ZTE deal for which Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo got burned late in her disputably prolonged (nine years) term.

Some of the strategic industries where China loans or

investments have come in or are in the pipeline include energy (China already owns as much as 40% stake in the National Grid of the Philippines), telecommunications (Dennis Uy's Mislattel/Dito Telecommunity), water, heavy railways, and various infrastructure projects such as bridges and highways, real estate development including economic zones and islands to be devoted more or less exclusively for Chinese business (and gambling) operations.

These businesses being opened to China may be par for the course for any imperialist puppet, but Duterte is adding more, "industries" and "trading" such as gambling and drugs. Given Duterte's red carpet for China, the Philippines has been putting up dens for gambling operations for mostly Chinese operators. Duterte, who has been publicly known as friendly to Chinese drug lords, has also repeatedly been implicated in the illegal drugs trade. The CPP describes him as the overlord of illegal drugs trade in the country.

For now, the following already show how Duterte has been selling out the country and committing high treason. While Duterte is not the first Philippine puppet president to have entered into lopsided deals with China, his regime surely leads in ramping it up. **LIB**

A SAMPLING

Below is a sampler list indicative of what (or how much) the US-Duterte regime has so far achieved as an imperialist puppet and bureaucrat capitalist (more will likely be revealed).

All the following demand thoroughgoing investigation, disclosures of what (and how much) rationalizations are behind his avidly welcoming China's potential stranglehold of the country.



1. With Duterte's tolerance of China incursions into Philippine maritime areas, the latter is getting bolder in claiming portions of Philippine patrimony. Reports now point to the possibility that in crafting a Code of Conduct for all Asian claimants in the South China Sea/ West Philippine Sea, China would likely insist on formalizing its claim and military basing in the Spratly islands and Panatag Shoal where it seems intent on setting up similar installations. Duterte has said they will not oppose China if they do that.
2. On top of earlier logging and mining concessions by US corporations that originally destroyed vast virgin forests and mountains in the Philippines, China is entering Sierra Madre via Kaliwa River dam project and Cordillera via Chico River Irrigation project. The projects include clearing parts of the forested mountains where the said rivers to be dammed are located. Deals with China include bringing their workers, steel, equipment and other construction requirements.



3. In July 2019, Duterte granted a China-funded local telecommunication startup, Mislattel now Dito, a license to operate as the country's third major telecommunications player. This, after Davao-based businessman Dennis Uy's Mislattel signed a \$5.4-billion investment deal with China Telecom to fund his company's expansion in the Philippines.

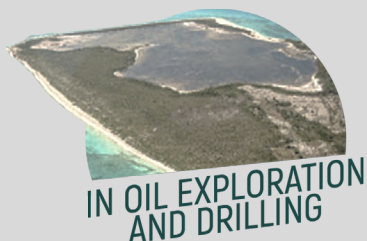
With Duterte's go-signal, the AFP changed its tune to signify openness to the deal for the said China-backed telecommunications, Dito Telecommunity Corp, to install its system, towers, and facilities within military bases in the country. Initially, Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana warned this will endanger the Filipinos' privacy, security and a vital industry that should have been firmly under Philippine control.



4. The State Grid Corporation of China, the second largest firm in the world in 2018, owns 40 percent of the National Grid Corporation of the Philippines (NGCP). The Chinese firm is majority owner as the other owners, Filipino taipans Henry Sy and Robert Coyuito, each owns 30 percent. The Duterte government says the Filipinos are in control of the corporation, but reports said the Chinese are the ones maintaining and exercising operational control.

Privately owned NGCP is in charge of operating, maintaining and developing the Philippines' state-owned power grid, an interconnected system that transmits gigawatts of power at thousand volts from power generators to consumers. NGCP holds the 50-year franchise and 25-year concession contract to operate and maintain the country's transmission system. Their franchise began in 2009.

The NGCP went to Chinese owners in 2008 under former president Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. Having a monopoly of this strategic utility, NGCP profits immensely from power transmission.



5. Other countries ruled also by tyrants try to strike a balance between getting more out of their oil first for themselves and second for their population. In the Philippines, the would-be gains would first be cornered by China. One of the 29 deals Duterte signed with China during Chinese President Xi Jinping's visit to Manila in November 2018 was the joint oil and gas exploration deal. Officials of the Duterte administration including National Security Adviser Hermogenes Esperon okayed the 60-40 sharing agreement. Before 2019 ended, China and Duterte governments have signed the terms of reference and formed as well as convened the joint committee comprised of representatives from China and PH.

Filipinos from various walks of life condemn the deal saying it has all the makings of a lopsided agreement. Even if 60-40 sounds in favor of the Philippines, Filipinos have little to no safeguard against probable 100% control by China of the entire operation, considering it will lead the exploration and drilling activities, using its manpower and equipment.

Fisherfolk groups such as Pamalakaya distrust China given its recent record. "Just like how China categorically violates an international law that recognizes the West Philippine Sea (WPS) is ours, it will not respect our rights on the joint oil and gas exploration deal in Recto Bank, or any deal for that matter that involves territories within their preposterous "nine-dash line claim," the group said in a statement.

"China will see to it that it will outwit the country in terms of resource-sharing because of its absolute control not only of the technical aspect, but moreover, the Duterte government itself," fisherfolk leader Fernando Hicap warned.

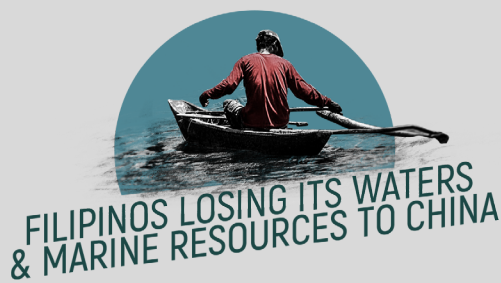


6. Duterte and Communications chief Sec. Martin Andanar boasted that with their friendly ties with China, it is now a major trading partner. But data show this trade partnership is lopsided and in favor of China. Philippine imports from China rose to US\$22 billion in 2018, while its exports to China were worth only US\$8.8 billion.

7. On its Spratlys military bases, China has installed surface-to-air missile systems in three artificial islands: the Kagitingan Reef (Fiery Cross), Zamora Reef (Subi Reef), and Panganiban Reef (Mischief Reef). These islands have become no-go zones for Filipinos because of Chinese military intimidation. Also, these installations have killed precious corals and the marine life around them.

China continues to bar Filipino fishers from Panatag Shoal and they are getting bolder at claiming ownership of it. Chinese Coastguard patrols the area, driving away passing ships including puny boats of Filipino fishers. The fishers have complained that for the longest time, they have been the “frontline casualties” of Chinese incursions. “We were never protected by Philippine maritime armed forces,” they said.

Reclamation projects for China-funded infrastructure have also started to deprive many Filipinos of their homes and livelihood. There is a long-standing plan to reclaim at least 2,700 hectares of south Manila Bay for the P550 billion (\$10 billion) Sangley Point International Airport (SPIA) in Cavite, 35 kilometers from Manila. Its proponent is the Cavite provincial government under a joint venture with China state-owned Chinese Communications Construction Co Ltd (CCCC) and local partner Lucio Tan-led MacroAsia Corp. Once awarded to the joint venture, the



Chinese partner will effectively control the SPIA, reports said.

Reclamation is already ongoing, according to Pamalakaya members. They warn that the environmental catastrophe the Sangley Point reclamation is causing would adversely affect at least 26,000 fishing and coastal families in seven towns in Cavite (Cavite City, Noveleta, Tanza, Naic, Rosario, Kawit, and Bacoor City).

In another development, local fishers reported as of October 2019 that heavy equipment were being used to dump debris on a fishpond connected to Manila Bay and adjacent to the public cemetery in Bacoor City. No information has been posted on whether it is a public works project or a private construction activity. A Senate hearing previously unearthed a proposed 420-hectare Bacoor Reclamation Project covering the area. Faced with fishers’ protests, Environment Department officials committed to cancel the project as it is also detrimental to the Supreme Court writ of mandamus to rehabilitate Manila Bay.

In still another development, massive fish kill occurred in the towns of Parañaque, Las Piñas, and Bacoor, Cavite, after iron stilts or pillars were installed in Manila Bay, at a construction site in Island Cove in Kawit, Cavite. The site also covered the former Island Cove Wildlife Sanctuary adjacent to the waters of Manila Bay.



8. Under Duterte government, the gambling industry enters a 'golden age.' Overall revenues quadrupled to \$4.1 billion during the first three years of his presidency and the key driver is the boom in POGOs (Philippine offshore gaming operations). After China banned these gaming centers the operators have flocked to the Philippines and set up shops with Mandarin-speaking workers. In August 2019 a furor broke out about POGOs particularly on issues of undocumented Chinese workers, China's request to curb the spread of Chinese-operated POGOs, and the US and the AFP warning against potential security threats with the gaming centers locating near Philippine (and US) military camps.

The Duterte administration has defended the POGOs, citing the revenues and tourism it brings in. Plans were then made to corral the gaming operators into "POGO islands," to be built in Fuga island in Cagayan province and in Grande and Chiquita islands in Subic Bay.

POGO employs up to a hundred thousand workers, mostly Chinese. Members of the ruling class take differing positions on the POGO issue, driven by "security" concerns, "patriotic" concerns, and most likely also division of spoils. But they act nearly the same in not minding the deleterious impact on the masses of the construction of POGOs, or the working conditions of both the Chinese and Filipino workers who need to look out and guard against being played off against each other.



9. Some US officials unblushingly criticize China's predatory loan deals used to expand influence globally. As if their banks and corporations aren't doing the same, they warn countries and former colonies against China's "debt-trap diplomacy," its use of "opaque contracts and corrupt deals that mire nations in debt and undercut their sovereignty."

They have a point, true, but it's not coming from the goodness of their hearts but from self-interest and insecurity. China has embraced capitalism even if they still call themselves 'communist'. Its President Xi Jinping is more assertive overseas and tightening controls at home – pretty much like what every other advanced capitalist country in the world is doing today. China no longer deals only with countries the US or the west have left out or considered "rogue states". Now it is the most significant rival to the US, with which western capitalist countries have to compete more forcefully to maintain their old spheres of influence.

What the US puppet Duterte has been misrepresenting as independent foreign policy is his tactic of selling out not just to

US but also to today's cash-rich China. His administration craves funders for Build Build Build and China obligingly wants to integrate this program into its Belt and Road Initiative. The latter is a China spending/lending spree of up to \$1 trillion in 17 countries in three continents. It traces the ancient path of Silk Road as it seeks to redirect the flow of trade and people traffic around China.

In the Philippines the China-funded infrastructure projects pose a double threat: 1) to the people hit by dislocation or forced landgrab of their communities and livelihood; and, 2) to all Filipinos who will bear the added debt burden, and will have to cough up higher user-pay fees to use the infrastructure. Compounding the second is the threat pointed out by Justice Antonio Carpio: "In case of default by the Philippines in repayment of the loan, China can seize, to satisfy any arbitral award in favor of China, 'patrimonial assets and assets dedicated to commercial use' of the Philippine Government... including the oil and gas in the Philippine exclusive economic zone (EEZ) in the West Philippine Sea, and the gas fields in the Reed Bank."

10. In the Senate hearings last September about the police and military generals' involvement in the drug trade, it was confirmed that Duterte's top police officers were involved in criminal activities. In a statement, the CPP said it shows the so-called war on drugs is a big hoax foisted on the people.

The Senate hearings resulted in the untimely resignation of Police Chief Oscar Albayalde. Implicated in the issue of "recycling" drugs that were press-released to have been impounded by authorities, Albayalde left his position with full perks and retirement benefits intact.



This is not the first revelation of police and military involvement in the drug trade. Time and again, the "narco-lists" and witch-hunts or 'cleanup' of rival drug trade syndicates including their protectors in government positions have led to killings and arrests, including the alleged involvement of opposition Senator Leila de Lima in drug syndicates. Aside from using the drug war to desensitize the people to killings and sideline the opposition, the police and military have lately tried to use the tokhang-style joint operations against unarmed activists.

On this, the CPP says: "Duterte, who is publicly known to be friends with big Chinese druglords, has made himself the overlord of the illegal drug trade in the country by using the police and his police-controlled vigilantes to make every syndicate kneel to his power. He has assigned loyal officers in the AFP to control large-scale smuggling through the Bureau of Customs. Under Duterte, the illegal trade in shabu, cocaine, ecstasy and fentanyl has reached new levels."

Crime and politics meld in the PNP, as well as in the AFP, adds the CPP, as it points to how the police and military have repeatedly proved to be "a battleground of rival political cliques and criminal syndicates in the illegal drug trade, jueteng and other forms of illegal gambling, prostitution, human trafficking and others." The police and military officers' loyalty to one or another rival criminal network, and at the same time, to one politician or another rival dynasty or party, is the thread that connects the spate of killings even of politicians already in jail or under police protection.

TREASONOUS DUTERTE

The Filipino people need to deliver an important message to the Duterte administration. His regime is the actual terrorist and persona non grata. His rule is giving rise to monstrous problems for Filipinos, endangering them now and in the future. What his regime is doing to the people, the country and environment, its supposed laws, its future, spurs the people's wrath and calls for justice.

Under Duterte, the Philippines continues to be in an economic stranglehold of foreign capital and US-sponsored neoliberal economic policies. The country remains a backward neocolony—with the vast poor in dire strait. Add to US and allied superpowers' established stakes in the country's economy, government and military, China is also establishing footholds via debts, investments and illegal occupation.

Duterte has turned to China to add to his bureaucrat loot, and paved the way to increased US presence to prop up the puppet government and secure investments. The U.S. military aid to the Philippines amounting to \$193.5 million in 2018 alone (9.77 trillion PHP) has helped fund state-orchestrated attacks on the Filipino people.

But Duterte's war against revolutionaries is only further exposing him and the AFP and police for cowardice. They conduct focused and synchronized armed operations against unarmed and legitimate progressive groups, shrinking the democratic space they claim to defend as they weaponize the civilian bureaucracy against critics. In the guise of anti-terrorism promoted by US' counter-insurgency guide and the US Operation Pacific Eagle, the renamed US military mission in the region, the Duterte administration is committing high treason and at war against the Filipino people.

Like any other puppet president, Duterte cannot brook ouster moves, public protests and opposition. An untimely exit from Malacañang will cut his loot, clip the wings of his clique and small dynasty of local politicians, and open him to prosecution for his crimes. So, he is turning more fascist as his term's end nears.

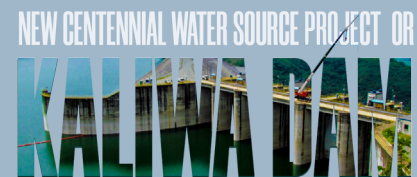
Duterte and his ilk seriously need to be taught lessons in history. They cry to get a taste of what the Filipino people do to tyrants. His rampage deserves the End US-Duterte Regime treatment. It is high time he gets booted out by the people. **LIB**

INITIAL LIST OF THE **CHINA-FUNDED** INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS IN PH

To see what kinds of projects the Duterte government is pushing with China funding, below are some of the already approved China-funded projects as of early 2020. Most are in various stages of implementation, and are not likely to be finished by 2022 at the end of Duterte's term.



Chico River Pump Irrigation Project: The Duterte administration signed the US\$62-million deal which provides that the loan will be governed by the laws of China and any disputes will be settled in a Chinese international arbitral court. The Duterte government waives its immunity as a sovereign power. Construction of the project, by the Chinese firm China CAMC Engineering Co., Ltd., has begun despite protests in Cordillera. This project requires the construction of huge dams and the diversion of rivers in Kalinga.



New Centennial Water Source Project or Kaliwa Dam: This is a repackaged project of Imelda Marcos, when she was governor of Metro Manila during martial law. It was rejected until successfully stopped by the communities affected by its construction and operation. Repackaged, it was pitched to private bidders in 2012.

In 2017, Duterte offered it to Chinese state-owned firms, and in November 2018 the Export-Import Bank of China signed a preferential buyer's credit loan agreement with the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System, the state water regulator for Metro Manila. Costing P12.2-billion, 85% funded by China ODA with 2% interest, many times higher compared to ODA from other countries.

PULANGI HYDROPOWER CORPORATION

Pulangi Hydro Power Corporation (PHCP): An \$800-million 250-megawatt dam project that will displace indigenous people in 20 communities along the Pulangi River. It flows through the Pantaron Range of Central Mindanao, where indigenous people live, depend on food, medicinal plants, and practice their religious beliefs. Included under Duterte's Build Build Build and Chinese leader Xi Jinping's Belt and Road Initiative, it plans to construct a 143-meter dam and a reservoir that will flood some 2,883 hectares of IP lands in four towns.

The deal to build this dam was signed in April 2019 on the sidelines of the 2nd Belt and Road Forum in Beijing which Duterte attended. As early as 2017 the locals had noted and opposed Chinese investors' survey and drilling in the areas. Opponents to the project get subjected to red-tagging, threats and murder.

70-KM SUBIC-CLARK RAILWAY (P50-BILLION) 630-KM MANILA-BICOL AND QUEZON RAIL LINE RAIL LINES 100-KM MINDANAO RAILWAY PLUS A DAVAO CITY EXPRESSWAY

Rail lines: [1] 70-km Subic-Clark railway (P50-billion), (2) 630-km Manila-Bicol and Quezon rail line, and (3) 100-km Mindanao railway plus a Davao City expressway. So far none has yet broken ground.

AMBAL-SIMUAY RIVER AND RIO GRANDE DE MINDANAO RIVER FLOOD CONTROL

Ambal-Simuay River and Rio Grande de Mindanao River Flood Control:

Approved by NEDA in 2018, China has committed to provide technical and financial support to the P39.2-billion project since 2016.

Project would involve construction of various flood management infra such as dikes and floodgates along the Ambal-Simuay and Rio Grande de Mindanao (parts of the Mindanao River Basin, the second largest river basin in the Philippines). It includes river widening and construction of parallel dikes along the river, establishment of a new channel 250-meters wide, dredging and excavation of an estimated 2.87 million cubic meters of materials along the river's 11.6-kilometer length.

Rio Grande project involves channel dredging and construction of dikes, retaining walls and flood gates, dredging works along a river length of 6.1-kilometer.

METRO MANILA BRIDGES

Metro Manila bridges: Two Chinese-funded bridges in Manila that include the Pasig-Marikina River Manggahan Bridges (P13.7 billion) have begun construction.

SPORTS COMPLEX & PUBLIC MARKET MARAWI CITY

Marawi sports complex and public market: The Philippine government has also signed documents with the China International Development Cooperation Agency to build a 6,504 square meter (70,000 square foot) sports complex with a seating capacity of 1,000, as well as a 7,148 square meter (77,000 square foot) public market in the city of Marawi. The unfinished project now lies in ruins after the 5-month daily bombardment in 2017, directed by a US aerial surveillance team, in the so-called siege of Marawi against the Maute group allegedly linked with the ISIS.

BULACAN "MEGA CITY" ECONOMIC ZONES

Bulacan "mega-city" economic zones: P50-billion "mega-city" economic zones in the Bulacan towns of Pandi, Bocaue, and Balagtas. Bulacan Gov. Daniel Fernando signed the deal with Hunan Gov. Xu Dazhe in China's Lodi City last September. Fernando told reporters it will provide 100,000 jobs as the Chinese builds techno hubs, outlet stores, shopping malls, factory outlets meeting firms, warehouses and call centers in Bulacan. As of this writing the signatories to the deal are finalizing the timetable. The Bulacan governor wants it to start ASAP.



New Clark City: Under Duterte the Bases Conversion and Development Authority (BCDA) wants China as major partner and investor in the \$14-billion (PhP607-billion) 9,450-hectare New Clark City project. Approved under former president Benigno Aquino III, with first phase finished in time for the Southeast Asian Games in 2019, the rest is being continued by the Duterte government.

In 2018 the BCDA signed a memorandum of understanding with China Development Bank (CD) to collaborate over a five-year period in finding financing for BCDA's projects in Clark and Metro Manila. One of the 29 deals signed during Chinese President Xi Jinping's visit in the Philippines in late 2018 was the construction of a 500-hectare Chinese industrial park in Clark, by Chinese construction and engineering company Gezhouba Group, for \$2-billion (PhP105.2-billion).

The Duterte government wants more Chinese-funded industrial parks for Chinese manufacturing companies to take advantage of the Philippines' numerous free trade deals with other countries.

Already Clark projects are dislocating the indigenous group Aeta whose farms and communities were being bulldozed, sources of water redirected, among others. New Clark City is being marketed as green but researchers from the University of the Philippines found the developers have been removing the green, replacing it with concrete. **LIB**

*“The masses are the makers of history.
Learn from the masses.
Trust and rely on them.”*

I first encountered these lines when I was a budding activist in the late 1960s. Further readings and study sessions with fellow activists, especially on victorious revolutions, reiterated and highlighted these and impressed it indelibly on my mind. Novel, agitating, and even romantic, it overturned and demolished traditional beliefs and long-held notions on the role of heroes. History, we were taught from grade school to college, is shaped by the ideas of brilliant thinkers and the exploits of extraordinary brave men and women—by heroes as well as by accidents of circumstances, fate, and (in Catholic textbooks) by acts of God.

When we read Prof. Jose Maria Sison's *Struggle for National Democracy* (1968) and *Philippine Society and Revolution* (1970-71) these revolutionary concepts came into sharper focus and assumed a more concrete and recognizable form in the context of Philippine history and the events unfolding around us. Philippine society was then widely described as a “social volcano about to erupt.” It was in deep crises and seething in ferment. The Philippine Revolution, I realized, was no longer “just around the corner.” It was here-and-now.

The revolutionary ‘mass line’ thereby struck closer to our hearts. Like many in my generation of activists, I readily embraced it. From a neat and attractive theoretical abstract, it became a concrete challenge, an urgent call and a fundamental guide to action.



by Alexander Dipasupil

Our first task was to arouse, organize and mobilize the students and other youth in the University and other schools for the national democratic revolution. The efficacy and correctness of the mass line was validated by and demonstrated in the rapid expansion of students', teachers' and other sectoral mass organizations, taking off from each one's specific interests and welfare concerns, linking these to other sectoral and class issues, especially the workers' and peasants', and raising these to national issues such as the worsening economic crisis, foreign intervention and the growing fascist repression.

Students and other youth made up the bulk of demonstrators in mass mobilizations and protest actions. We heeded the calls to integrate with workers in the picket lines and strikes, reinforce and join transport strikes against oil price hikes, and support peasants' and sectoral issues. To the extent we were able to integrate with and learn from the masses, we were able to articulate the people's aspirations, problems and demands and serve as propagandists for the national democratic revolution.

These culminated in massive protest actions such as the 1970 First Quarter Storm and the February 1971 Diliman Commune. Both advanced the national democratic agenda to the forefront of national attention and discourse as they banned the calls to overthrow imperialism, feudalism, and bureaucrat capitalism in a militant and dramatic manner.

More than being a protest action, the Diliman Commune turned out for me and many youth, professionals and workers, to be an unintended "dry run" or "dress rehearsal" of an organized defensive confrontation

with armed state security forces. We barricaded the main campus thoroughfares and buildings in response to an imminent assault by the Constabulary Metropolitan Command (MetroCom) at the height of the oil price hike strikes. We acted swiftly and in an organized manner in setting up a system of defenses (including "anti-aircraft" fireworks positions and self-igniting molotov "bombs") and logistics. Each "communard" displayed full initiative and remarkable creativity, ingenuity and calmness under real pressure and threat, while acting in coordination with others, as though everything was pre-planned and rehearsed. Engineering and science students promptly commandeered the university radio station (DZUP) increased its transmitting power tenfold and continuously broadcast the national democratic program, the PSR, and appeals for all kinds of support for the Commune.

Significantly, the entire Diliman community—students, faculty, administrative and non-academic personnel and residents—spontaneously and unequivocally rose up as one to resist and condemn the fascist attack and continuing threat. With a couple of hours, our ranks were reinforced by students from other schools, youth from other communities, workers from factories, and transport workers.

We failed and repelled the MetroCom's repeated attempts from various directions to penetrate and dismantle our barricades. For nine days, we were able to "hold the fort" so to speak, with massive moral, financial and other material support pouring in daily from the public, including from far-flung provinces.

The Diliman Commune experience provided us vivid lessons on the importance—nay, indispensability—of mass support and participation in confronting, frustrating and repelling armed fascist attacks.

The growth and advance of the urban mass movement despite, or especially because of fascist repression encouraged and primed us for waging bigger and higher forms of struggle. Meanwhile, reports of victorious NPA ambushes and raids in the countryside inspired and challenged us further. As the threat of full-blown dictatorship loomed larger, we chanted on the streets: **"What is our response to martial law?" "People's war! People's war! People's war!"** Internally, within our mass organizations, our paramount slogan was: **"All to the Front!"**

It was no big surprise then that when Marcos declared martial law in September 1972, thousands of activists, including myself went underground or fled to the countryside to join our workers comrades and peasant masses in waging resistance and people's war. We abandoned our studies and professional careers, gave up our safe and comfortable lives and future. For me, the heaviest sacrifice then was neither the fear of arrest and detention nor death. It was rather the pain of separating from one's family and the dreadful prospect of never seeing them again.

The day martial rule was announced, it was through the quick thinking and prompt action of friends and colleagues that I barely escaped arrest and detention. Without regard for their own and their families' safety, they secretly transported and gave me refuge, from one home or farm to another.

We were as much strangers to them as they were to us.

Resistance to fascist rule

was the minimum ground for establishing
mutual trust and cooperation.

When I had reconnected to the fledgling underground, I was assigned tasks that required me to remain for a while in the urban areas, rather than be deployed immediately to the countryside. Though I knew the comrades I would be working with, I was dismayed to learn that most of them believed our security and capacity to perform our assigned task depended primarily on secrecy, compartmentalization, prudence and strict discipline. They were averse to building, broadening, and deepening a support network through mass work. Under martial law conditions, this would be risky and counterproductive, they argued, since we would be unduly exposed to people we could not properly evaluate and screen out and may prove unreliable and untrustworthy.

Concrete practice and reality would soon resolve the question decisively. Successive strings of raids and arrests forced us to repeatedly and hastily abandon our “safe houses” and shift to temporary refuge houses. We had no choice but to meet with and totally entrust our safety to comrades, allies, sympathizers, and various contacts who were hitherto total strangers. Their

only “credentials” were their being referred to us (and vice-versa) as part of the underground revolutionary machinery or network. They in turn unquestioningly and without hesitation brought us and welcomed us into their homes (mostly lower petty bourgeois and urban poor) and other facilities in their network. We were as much strangers to them as they were to us. Resistance to fascist rule was the minimum ground for establishing mutual trust and cooperation. While trust was reciprocal, the risks and consequences were not. We activists in the underground could move out or shift to a safe location at the first sign of imminent danger. Our trusting hosts could not and would have had to face and suffer the dire consequences.

Thus the question was settled. Martial law conditions in fact made move imperative the building, expansion, and deepening of an underground mass support network. As our forces and network grew and advanced steadily, so did our capacity to perform our tasks improve and with greater security.

My years in the urban underground impressed on me further the need to trust the masses, rely on them, and learn from them. Survival, and our capacity to perform our tasks, depended largely and primarily on them.

Stronger, the countryside beckoned. What lessons and truths are to be learned from and with the peasant masses, especially in waging the highest form of struggle? It was not without some romanticism that I yearned for and looked forward to life and struggle with the peasant masses in the countryside.

When at long last I stepped into a guerrilla zone in the mid 1970s, I was greeted by group of red fighters and peasants huddled together sitting on their haunches in a semi-circle. The peasants looked me over from head to foot with knowing smiles, some shaking their heads, some nodding slowly

“We can tell from your smooth complexion you are either a student or a young professional. You have the feet of a prince,” one of the peasants said after I had shaken their hands and introductions made.

I figured they were exaggerating or speaking metaphorically, and merely smiled and nodded back to acknowledge.

“You have a lot to learn about life here in the countryside,” chimed in another peasant.

Indeed, that was an understatement, and I had to learn the hard way for the most part. Thus the romanticism quickly wore off as I experienced the rigors

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“You have a lot to
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and hardships of a still small and poorly-armed NPA propaganda team. (I was issued a homemade or imitation .22 caliber revolver commonly called *paltik* with five bullets with dents on their primers, indicating these had misfired previously). We had to constantly avoid enemy patrols, be alert to enemy informers and bad elements, and occasionally had to seek temporary refuge in a “physical base” inside the forest. But for most part, we enjoyed the warm and enthusiastic support of the masses, who served as our “eyes and ears” and welcomed us in their homes while they sought our assistance and advice on practically all problems they had.

Throughout, our peasant comrades in the militia, the peasant organizations, and the red fighters were my constant mentors. Nearly every aspect—not the least survival— of guerrilla life depended on the support of the peasant masses and their direct practical know-how: from distinguishing between edible and toxic fruits, leaves and barks in the forest, building makeshift shelters, planting and growing rice and other crops, forecasting weather to gathering information on enemy movements and improving weapons.

But it would be a decade later when I would encounter first hand the political sharpness of a peasant revolutionary.

February 1986. I was with an NPA undersized company on its way to rendezvous with two other platoons at a staging area for a major tactical offensive. Our excitement, anticipation, and morale grew with each step toward the objective. It was amplified further with news over our transistor radios on the “People Power” uprising unfolding at EDSA.

Then came the announcement that Marcos had fled Malacanang with his family and all the loot they could carry. The hated fascist dictatorship had fallen! The people were victorious!

Euphoria soon died down with subsequent news reports and commentaries that with the Cory Aquino government taking over, democracy would be restored and peace will soon reign over the country. A ceasefire is in the works, leading to the disbandment of the NPA and other armed groups fighting the Marcos regime.

Not a few red fighter asked if these reports were true. Before reaching the next sitio and barrio center, Ka

Erning, the company CO (commanding officer) convened the entire company for a political meeting.

“News reports and commentaries that the revolution and civil war are over are false. The reactionary state is intact; the ruling class remains in power. There has only been a change in which faction of the ruling class holds the reins of power. The NPA, led by the Party, shall continue to wage people’s war until the victory of the national democratic revolution,” Ka Mando, the Political Officer, explained. “It is important that we also make this clear to the people in the next sitio and barrio center we are approaching,” he added.

True enough as we reached the outskirts of the sitio, we were met by the barrio people led by the local militia, waving at us with more than the usual eagerness and excitement. We greeted them back, shook their hands and unslung our rifles, signifying we would stop over a half hour or so. Before we could utter another word, Ka Elias, the head of the militia asked, “Comrade, is it true, what we heard over the radio, that the revolution is over and that you comrades will all be going down to the poblacion (town center) and then home to your families?”

“No, those reports are not true,” Ka Erning replied.

There was a collective sigh of relief from the militia and other peasants gathered around us.

“Absolutely not true,” Ka Mando added. “But why do you ask?”

“Because if it’s true,” Ka Elias replied, “our only request is that you leave your weapons with us so that we can continue to fight and carry on the revolution. Because we do not believe our lives will change and improve now that Marcos has been overthrown and Cory will be the new President. Does she not herself come from one of the biggest landlord families?”

At this, one of the red fighters shouted, “*Mabuhay ang Rebolusyon!* (Long live the revolution!)”

The peasants raised their clenched fists and we raised our rifles as we all responded, “*Mabuhay ang Rebolusyon!*”

There was no need for any further explanations.

The peasants raised their clenched fists
and we raised our rifles as we all responded.

“Mabuhay ang

Rebolusyon!”

There was no need for any further explanations.

Six years later, and in a different region, another incident impressed upon me how much we of petty bourgeois origin, especially intellectuals, tend to underestimate both the political wisdom and revolutionary tenacity of the peasant masses.

The Party leadership had launched the Second Great Rectification Movement (SGRM) to address serious ideological, political, organizational, and military errors that had resulted in the loss of up to 40% of the revolutionary mass base nationwide.

I was with an undersized NPA squad with a couple of Party cadres passing through what is called a “recovery area”—a cluster of barrios once part of a consolidated guerrilla zone. Intense enemy pressure, coupled with weaknesses in Party leadership and the People’s Army’s mass organizing work led to the dissolution of local Party committees and mass organizations. The Party leadership and the NPA unit were forced to shift their area of operation.

It was late afternoon in January 1993. As we approached a group of peasants, we could sense mixed feelings in their facial expressions and body language. It was the first time in two or three years they were seeing armed red fighters out in the open. There was pleasant surprise, a trace of eagerness, and a hint of apprehension. Certainly, no sign of hostility.

As we shook hands with them, Ka Caloy, our team leader explained, “The entire Party and People’s Army has been undertaking a rectification movement, more comprehensive and thoroughgoing than our usual criticism-self-criticism sessions you and I have been accustomed to.”

Ka Caloy gave a broad outline of the major errors summed up in the SGRM, and started to cite concrete examples that local Party, People’s Army, and mass organizations had experienced or were familiar with.

Before he could proceed to a lengthier discussion, Ka Ruel, one of the local peasant leaders interrupted, “You have nothing to worry in so far as our commitment to the revolution is concerned. The Party is like a blacksmith forging and shaping a plough blade or a bolo. We the peasants are the iron and steel—the raw materials for the revolution. If, sometimes, the blacksmith would lose his focus or aim, goes cross-eyed or has poor eyesight, he would hit the iron or steel improperly or miss it entirely. But if he realizes his error and corrects his aim and strike, then the iron and steel can still be forged properly into a sharp and sturdy tool or weapon. We the peasant masses will always be here with and for the revolution. It is only the in the revolution and through it that we and our succeeding generations shall have a bright future.”

Fifty years have passed since I first read the lines. *The masses are the makers of history. Learn from the masses. Trust and rely on them.* I look forward to learning more from the masses and making history with them. **LIB**

The
Masses
are the makers of history.

Learn from the masses.

Trust and rely on them.

A succession of FAILED “COUNTER- INSURGENCY” OPLANS

by Pinky Ang

Philippine presidents, from Ferdinand Marcos to Rodrigo Duterte, share one thing in common: each vowed to crush the communist-led revolutionary movement, and each has miserably failed.

But since Duterte has yet to get through the second half of his term, he is still furiously trying to hack it. So far though, he had to swallow his original boasting that he would defeat the revolutionary movement by the end of 2018.

He has pursued war programs that merely repackaged past administration's operational plans (OPlans). He has gathered around his presidency retired military chiefs such as Hermogenes Esperon Jr. and Eduardo Año, whose careers began under Marcos and peaked with notoriety as human rights violators under Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. Why, given their devious backgrounds, do these militarists insist they could maintain the rotten system that breeds crisis and resistance, at the same time fantasizing they could finish off the revolutionaries using the same deception and war of suppression?

THE US-MARCOS DICTATORSHIP

Marcos had his self-proclaimed “destiny” to be president when a new breed of young communist revolutionaries reestablished the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and the New People's Army (NPA). To combat the fledgling people's army and cut short the momentum of the resurgent nationwide mass protest movement, he resorted to martial law.

His favorite term for his flamboyantly declared goal as strongman was “extirpate.” Towards the end, however, he was the very one whom the aroused, angry, and united Filipino people extirpated in an ignominious way.

Marcos was the Philippines' first strongman to rule by decrees with fascist ferocity for 14 years. The sustained opposition by the Left revolutionary forces—both through painstaking armed struggle in the countryside and building up the discreet and open anti-dictatorship movement in the urban centers—progressively exposed the “conjugal dictatorship's” crimes, corruption, and human rights violations. Inevitably, the politically isolated regime was overthrown in early 1986 through unarmed popular uprising dubbed as “people power.”

To save him and his family from the peoples' wrath, Marcos' US imperialist master had to pluck them out of Malacanang by airlifting them, along with their loot, to Clark Air Base then flown to safety in Hawaii. There, he died from a lingering illness he had tried hard to hide from the people toward his final days in Malacanang.

Naïve humanitarian sentimentalism by the two succeeding presidents enabled the return to the Philippines, first of his widow and children, later his chemically-preserved body—which the family kept for public viewing for years in an airconditioned hall in Batac, Ilocos Norte, his hometown.

The family waited for more than three decades before they got to fulfill the dictator's wish to be buried at the Libingan ng mga Bayani, courtesy of President Rodrigo Duterte, an unabashed Marcos idolater. Nonetheless, due to strong public opposition to and denunciation of Duterte's perfidious act, the family had to employ stealth in staging a burial ceremony designated only for those deemed as heroes or distinguished public servants—which, by the resounding people's verdict in 1986, Marcos was definitely not in either category.

Under the Marcos dictatorship, thousands perished under intensive and extensive militarization, tens of thousands were arbitrarily arrested and detained without charges. But the revolutionary movement he excoriated and vowed initially to “nip in the bud” and later, to end by pulling from its roots, grew instead by leaps and bounds. Over the decades, it took deep roots among the people. Guerrilla zone after guerrilla zone has continued to grow in strength ideologically, politically, militarily.

F. MARCOS
OPLAN
KATATAGAN

C. AQUINO
OPLAN
LAMBAT-BITAG 1 & 2
MAMAMAYAN

F. RAMOS
OPLAN
LAMBAT-BITAG 3
KAISAGANAAN

J. ESTRADA
OPLAN
MAKABAYAN
BALANGAI

G. ARROYO
OPLAN
BANTAY-LAYA 1 & 2

B. AQUINO
OPLAN
BAYANIHAN

R. DUTERTE
OPLAN
KAPAYAPAAAN

THEY VOWED TO CRUSH THE COMMUNIST REVOLUTION.

any other politicians wanting to seek a positive corner in people's history, they could only do so now by taking part in solving the roots of armed conflict

BUT EACH ONE OF THEM MISERABLY FAILED.

“RESTORED DEMOCRACY”

After Marcos, all succeeding presidents have, in varying degrees, sought to assure the people they wouldn't impose martial law, even as they all did nothing about the fascist and militarist predilections ingrained by the dictatorship in the military and police. Ironically, the successor president credited much for Marcos' ouster, Corazon C. Aquino, adopted entirely the joint military-police forces that implemented martial law—without identifying, weeding out and penalizing those found to have violated human rights and committed heinous crimes. That grave mistake accounts for the unresolved climate of impunity through succeeding administrations, each one leaving a legacy of unhampered and unpunished abuses and human rights violations by state security forces.

The Aquino and Ramos regimes' Oplan Lambat-Bitag 1, 2, 3 & 4 aimed to “reduce and decapitate” the revolutionary movement. They tried to capitalize on its growing pains and early errors. While deceiving the masses with bogus land reform and “regional industrialization” programs, they massively reinforced the regular state forces with undisciplined paramilitary and vigilante groups. They sowed the worst kind of intrigues against the revolutionaries with CIA-trained “experts” in psy-war.

The revolutionaries frustrated these post-Marcos US puppets' schemes by successfully carrying out, since 1992, the Second Great Rectification Campaign. They reaffirmed the basic principles and rectified errors in pursuing the national democratic revolution with socialist perspective.

Consistently exerting efforts to expand its forces and strengthen the mass base, the revolutionaries have taken deep roots among the peasant masses, helping the latter achieve minimum land reform program, stepping up recruitment of red fighters from among the youth, peasantry, working class, and students.

Whether the people's army is present or not, the reactionary government has implemented brutal military campaigns to grab the lands from peasants and ethnic communities. It has ensured that favored landlords can keep their lands, even convert land use for more profitable purposes, and exempt them from land reform.

To counter such pro-landlord acts, the NPA launched successful offensives against the die-hard, regular state troops and their paramilitary adjuncts, despotic landlords and criminal elements. They launched various campaigns, supported and enhanced by the masses: from bans on logging and drugs, to improving health and sanitation, basic education, and of course, land reform.

Instead of running down a "reduced and decapitated" revolutionary force, a series of four Oplan Lumbat-Bitag from Aquino to Ramos failed to stop a revitalized NPA and revolutionary movement. A US-trained military officer, Ramos started what each succeeding puppet president would try to build on to prop up the exploitative system and push back the revolutionaries.

To sharpen the counterrevolutionary war machine, Ramos sought to institutionalize "national security" or social control measures. These included a national ID system (which he was foiled from implementing by a Supreme Court ruling), an intelligence unit in every government office, increased powers for the National Security Council and law enforcers (to conduct wiretapping, make arrests without warrants), use of more emergency powers, and promoting active and retired military officers in sensitive civilian posts.

To his credit, however, Ramos pursued throughout his term (with several suspensions) the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations—which he had opposed during the entire term of Corazon Aquino. The peace talks produced 10 significant signed agreements, capped by the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL), and began discussions on social and economic reforms.

After Ramos, Joseph Estrada ordered an "all-out war" mainly against the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) before he was chased out of Malacanang. Then followed a succession of scions and/or tag-teams of past US-puppet presidents: Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino, and Rodrigo Duterte (in alliance with the Marcoses and Macapagal-Arroyo).

If their policies look all the same, that's because they've all hewed to the same neoliberal policies of opening up businesses, public services, human and natural resources including land and seas, to big businesses and foreign monopoly capitalists. And if their counterrevolutionary wars have brutalized the people in the same way, that's because they all have followed the same US counterinsurgency guide.

The Duterte regime's "whole-of-nation approach" is a rehashed US-devised counterinsurgency scheme, which its immediate predecessor tried to implement in vain. Its "all-out war," red-tagging, use of the courts to facilitate a devious "legal offensive" against perceived "enemies of the state" and political opponents, threats against free speech and freedom of association, its corruption and blithe use of public funds to further enrich the already rich—all these only work to drive the Filipinos into embracing the national democratic revolution with a socialist perspective. **LIB**

Marcoses' political rehabilitation bodes more tragedy for the nation

by Ava Sumera

Three decades have gone by since February 1986, when the Filipino people's unified will and action ousted the Marcos dictatorship. Ignominiously, the US imperialists plucked the tyrant and his family — along with their loot — out of Malacanang by helicopters, subsequently flying them to safe exile in Hawaii.

Yet today the Marcos heirs are back in the high circles of power. And the dictator's embalmed remains — publicly displayed in Batac, Ilocos Norte for over two decades — was deceitfully ensconced in the Libingan ng mga Bayani in November 2016, courtesy of President Rodrigo R. Duterte.

Yet they haven't returned much of the estimated \$10-billion they had stolen during their corrupt, abusive and repressive reign. With such a huge war chest that can only grow bigger over time (even at conservative interest rates in what Imelda Marcos flaunts as over 100 secret bank accounts), they are being served/protected by a platoon of lawyers. They have allies and toadies at various levels of the reactionary government, besides a fleet of PR people, false historians, and keyboard warriors.

They thus feel secure moving freely within the same bureaucrat capitalist system that nurtured them in power.

The rotten system enabled them to amass wealth at the cost of thousands of Filipino lives and the stunting of Philippines' agricultural and industrial development. It allowed them to spend five years of lavish and vulgar exile in Hawaii. Upon their return, towing the embalmed body of their dictator patriarch, this system welcomed them back into the fold as they gradually carved anew their fiefdom.

Twice did Imelda Marcos attempt to run for President: in 1992 when she lost and in 1998, when she withdrew her candidacy. In between her two presidential bids, Imelda won a seat in Congress where she served as Leyte representative for three years (1995-1998). In 2010, she again won a seat in Congress, this time representing Ilocos Norte, the late dictator's home province and political base.

Starting from their Ilocos Norte base, the two elder Marcos siblings took turns being the province's governor and congressional representative from 1992 to 1998. It was 24 years since dictator Marcos was ousted when Bongbong Marcos entered the Senate in 2010. Imee Marcos took longer entering the national scene. She came into the Senate in 2019.

It was in Bongbong Marcos's first stab at the vice-presidency in 2016 that the family tasted their first defeat in what some accounts call their "spectacular comeback." Unaccustomed to setback, Bongbong lodged an electoral protest he wouldn't let go even after three years.

The family has now repositioned itself back as close as possible to Malacañang. But if not for Bongbong's defeat at the 2016 national polls, he would have been just a heartbeat away from the presidency, a very real threat to the Filipino people considering Duterte's multiple acknowledged illnesses. Had Marcos Jr "won" the vice-presidency, Duterte would have — as he has publicly expressed a number of times — opted to yield the presidency and thus pave the way to the Marcoses' total political rehabilitation.

Undoubtedly, the Marcoses are a veritable example of bureaucrat capitalism. To this day articles are being written about how the dictator Marcos and his wife "smartly" looted the national coffers, put up opaque companies and seized stakes in strategic businesses,

The system that breeds such ilk needs to be
SMASHED!



WHY THE **MARCOSES'** COMEBACK IS MORE TRAGIC THAN
'SHAME ON YOU'

and how he "transformed" the military and the police into a unified armed forces to back up his fascist rule, rendering the armed services deeply partisan (for him) and more corruptible than ever.

Throughout that process, the imperialist US propped up his dictatorship. They armed, trained and guided the establishment of the armed forces for their own imperialist ends and those of their puppet tyrant. Marcos, "our 'son-of-a-bitch'" (as then President George Bush referred to him) only became a "problem" to them when the people began protesting against the dictatorship in evergrowing number and frequency. The armed communist-led revolution was growing by leaps and bounds and had led the fight against the dictatorship and its imperialist master.

Marcos' ouster will always be a historical triumph of the Filipino people's collective power— both armed and unarmed, in the underground and in the open democratic arena of struggles. The ongoing turbo-charged rehabilitation of the Marcoses under Duterte, however, is as loud a reminder as we all can get that, no, the people cannot stop at merely ousting the current, abusive tyrant. The system that breeds such ilk needs also to be smashed. This system has proven to have merely continued the puppet presidency and imperialist domination of the country.

A CORRUPT SYSTEM IS BOUND TO REHABILITATE THE MARCOSES

The Communist Party of the Philippines, in a 2018 statement, sharply pointed out that the “successive reactionary regimes failed miserably to address the clamor of the Filipino people for swift justice.” “Every ruling regime allowed the Marcoses to return stage by stage,” it said. “None carried out a decisive act of justice, fearing this will rouse demands for the same measures to be meted against them over the same crimes they themselves commit while in power.”

At the outset, Cory Aquino, responding to insistent public demand, established the PCGG (Presidential Commission on Good Government) to go after the Marcoses' ill-gotten wealth. But her administration emasculated the PCGG by ordering it to seize nothing directly and work instead through the courts. What the agency recovered, of course, was peanuts for the dirty-moneyed Marcoses.

The US imperialist's rescue of their once serviceable puppet continued even after the Marcoses returned to the Philippines. The US government redacted transactions involving US organizations in their records. The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) refused to disclose what they knew, reportedly prompting a veteran of PCGG to call the US and Marcoses “partners in theft.”

Most probably, the US possesses loads of damning information on the kleptocracy and rights abuses of the Marcoses. Not only does it exercise control of the Philippine state forces, it's also been known to keep tabs on even its “allies,” according to a declassified report on the CIA's eavesdropping on conversations of government leaders such as those of the Philippines.

Marcos died in Hawaii without being punished by the Filipino people, through their supposed government's justice system. His widow, Imelda, returned to the Philippines with her three adult children in 1992. She was greeted by an avalanche of graft cases. But with their

political allies regaining government posts, she never had to worry about jail time or threats of warrants of arrest.

Imelda was convicted at least twice for graft, once in 1993 for a fraudulent land deal and in 2018 for illicit financial dealings with Switzerland-based NGOs. But she remains free to this day. In her 2018 conviction, under Duterte's watch, she was asked to put up bail of only P300,000, despite the gravity of the case and the amount of what's been stolen. The conviction is turning out into a ploy to fast track the movement of the case.

After more than five administrations (including two Aquinos), more than 90 lawyers and personnel of PCGG placed at the increasingly frustrating trail of seeing signs of billions of hidden wealth — only for these to be whisked away before their eyes — and the precious length of time that's gone by, the Marcoses still harbor much of the ill-gotten wealth. Some of it was divulged in the upheaval of disclosures regarding what are called the Panama papers, where the ultra rich keep their money away from taxes and prying eyes.

By now it's clear the graft cases against the Marcoses have been filed only to placate the angry masses.

DICTATOR'S FINAL REHAB UNDER A MARCOS CLONE

The impact of the people's victory in ousting Marcos and the underlying desire for genuine democracy was such that it took the Marcoses more than three decades before bureaucrat capitalism could ease them back into Malacañang as “honored” guests. The Marcoses managed to do it under another imperialist puppet president they financially supported as candidate, who publicly claims he idolizes Marcos and looks back at his father's political career as one that had benefited from the Marcoses.

And, yes, before we forget, a president who evidently wants to be another dictator and tyrant. He himself has already reprised many Marcosian tactics.

Despite his anti-corruption posturing, Duterte early into his term stunned the nation by allowing Marcos' embalmed remains to be buried, after at least two postponements due to public protests, at the Libingan ng mga Bayani in November 2016. The most brazen of post-Edsa puppet presidents at helping the Marcoses, he nevertheless balked at personally witnessing the undeserved public pomp reserved only for a hero's and former president's burial. It took him a year before he set out again to glorify Marcos: commemorated him in postage stamps. The Duterte regime has timed its actions idolizing Marcos on the last quarter of the year.

Under Duterte the corruption cases against the Marcoses that dragged on for more than three decades are being thrown out one by one.

In August and October 2019 several ill-gotten wealth cases against the Marcoses, 27 to 31 years in court, were dismissed allegedly for lack of probative evidence (government lawyers only submitted photocopies of documents, whose originals are supposedly kept in the Bangko Sentral vaults), or for the lawyers' failure to attend court hearings.

The bulk of their massive loot remains beyond reach of the government and the people from whom they stole it. Estimates of what the PCGG managed to recover ran from just

one to two billion dollars. The precious works of arts bought with stolen money inadvertently would show in Imeldific photographs in her posh digs, but they always disappear whenever the investigators come knocking.

The billions they extorted from coconut farmers were partially recovered but each succeeding administration has made it difficult for the coconut farmers and real owners of the fund to fully recover it.

PEOPLE MUST CLIP THE MARCOSES' GREED

Thus, looking at the Marcoses' rehabilitation into power, it is not true that horror repeats itself. It gets more horrendous in Part 2.

Unapologetic, flushed with their success, the Marcoses are greedy for more. They're spoiled believing they can get away with it, again and again. They're coming back to do more of the same on a vehicle much bigger and ratcheted up by their original loot; oiled by the blood, sweat and tears of injustices of those they had oppressed; and covered by the same imperialist power that continues to lord over the country as long as their puppets dutifully run it to the ground for the benefit of their businesses and military interests.

More than three decades since the world applauded the Filipino people's uprising that booted them out, the

Marcoses have not been made to account for the thousands of human rights violations and humanitarian crimes they committed to maintain the dictatorship.

Now the maturing children, beneficiaries of the Marcos loot and their network of allies and cronies, are hovering about for another chance to take over Malacañang. They are intent as well in whitewashing their family's crimes; Imee Marcos chose to head the Senate committee on culture. Like father like daughter, as he had faked his wartime medals, she faked her academic achievements (so did Bongbong, too). Whenever confronted about their family's crimes, Imee perfunctorily tells the Filipinos: "Move on."

Against the Marcoses' rehabilitation and whitewashing, against the current president's desiring to be another Marcos, the CPP 2018 statement declares that the Filipino people "have no other recourse but to take revolutionary action and overthrow the ruling system and class rule of big bourgeois compradors, big landlords and bureaucrat capitalists."

"Only by wielding revolutionary power—democratic people's power—can they subject the biggest criminal and fascist oppressors to just punishment with full decisiveness and dispatch," the CPP statement concludes. **LIB**

Over the years, the militarists and peace spoilers have persistently attempted to stall, disrupt, or totally stop the GRP-NDFP peace talks. They kept on insinuating the primacy of first tying down the NDFP to a long-term ceasefire over holding rigorous negotiations — as a repeatedly reaffirmed commitment by the two parties — towards forging comprehensive agreements on social, economic and political reforms that address the root causes of the armed conflict and pave the way for a just and lasting peace.

Stymied peace talks, attack on CASER prolong misery

by Ava Sumera

After President Duterte formally terminated the peace talks through a presidential proclamation in November 2017 (deviating from the formally agreed on procedure), he and the militarists-peace spoilers announced their scheme for “localized peace engagements” through Executive Order No. 70.

A year later, following their assessment of the “accomplishments” of EO 70, through its National Task Force to End the Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC), the militarists-peace spoilers were stunned when Duterte announced he wanted to resume the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations that he presumably ended over two years ago.

In early January, as the public awaited Duterte’s official announcement on the resumption of formal peace negotiations – which could lead to the signing of two common-draft agreements on agrarian reforms and rural development (ARRD) and national industrialization and economic development (NIED), among other draft accords, the militarists once again tried to jettison the talks.

Two former Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) chiefs of staff -- National Security Adviser Hermogenes Esperon Jr. and Presidential Peace Adviser Carlito Galvez Jr. -- warned against resuming the peace talks and disparaged the Filipino people’s aspirations for real social and economic reforms.

Taking swipes at the Comprehensive Agreement on Social and Economic Reforms (CASER)—the meat of the peace talks on the table when Duterte shelved the negotiations first in November 2017, again in July 2018—the Esperon-Galvez tandem gave out gross misinformation, chief of which is that, according to them, the nation doesn’t need those social and economic reforms.

Having spent decades of military careers bloodily but fruitlessly trying to force on the people their illusionary views, these hawks lividly protested that the civilian part of the government they serve has been kept in the dark in the drafting of the CASER by “secret backchannel maneuver of the communist insurgents [Galvez’s words].”

In a rebuttal statement, Julieta de Lima, head of the NDFP Reciprocal Working Committee on Social and Economic Reforms (NDFP RWC-SER), said the duo's swipes against the peace talks "maliciously distort(ed) the considerable progress the GRP and the NDFP made on the CASER between August 2016 to November 2017." De Lima, in fact, praised the open-mindedness and commitment of the negotiating parties to "set aside ideological differences and unite on concrete steps for the common cause of real economic progress for the nation."

As for Galvez's charge of "secret backchannel maneuver," De Lima pointed out that "the substantive content of these common drafts were widely taken up by the NDFP not just in guerilla zones but in sectoral consultations nationwide." The GRP panel, she added, can also confirm "its numerous multi-agency meetings on the CASER and the wide participation of various line agencies... local government officials, Congress and the academe in the formal rounds abroad as well as the bilateral team meetings in the Philippines."

De Lima said it's understandable the two retired generals would prevent the talks or the CASER from being more widely known. "The NDFP's draft CASER clearly and emphatically shows what the revolutionary forces are fighting for—an economy that genuinely serves the people instead of just foreign and domestic elites."

From the statements of the militarists, they endorse and find nothing wrong with a few domestic and foreign elites plundering the nation's human and natural resources.

Truth is, the AFP which each of them once headed has functioned as "investment defense forces" by enabling a few domestic elites and foreign interests to grab vast tracts of land and plunder the resources of Philippine seas, mountains, and forests to the detriment of the Filipino people. The same troops enable the sustained pursuit by successive governments of the neoliberal economic programs which Esperon and Galvez championed in their diatribes to block the resumption of negotiations on CASER.

In attacking the draft CASER, Esperon and Galvez are again trying to sabotage the peace process and the unprecedented progress toward drafting an Interim Peace Agreement (IPA).

PEACE SPOILERS WANT TO HIDE CASER'S EMBODIED LONGED-FOR-CHANGE

CASER is critically important to the Filipino people because it addresses the social and economic roots of the armed conflict. "It fearlessly confronts the self-serving economic interests that keep Filipinos poor and the economy backward," the NDFP RWC-SER said.

The peace spoilers led by Esperon and Galvez do not want these interests confronted. And to justify their opposition they are airing obsolete, ill-informed assumptions.

Their key pitch is the embrace of the so-called free market and the supposed growth and development happening in the Philippines. They ignore the fact that majority of Filipinos remain poor, that industries are stunted and the backward agriculture reels from years of neglect and is further being pushed down by neoliberal reforms.

The militarists and peace spoilers "still mistakenly think that economies have overcome underdevelopment because of free market policies," when the world economy today contends with globalization-induced stagnation, growing protectionism, and trade wars, the NDFP RWC-SER said.

Esperon and Galvez dueted in defending the interests of foreign monopoly capitalists, big compradors and bureaucrat capitalists, claiming that CASER confiscates and expropriates their assets.

While acknowledging that the NDFP is indeed determined to dismantle the structures of economic power that keep the economy back, "there is no such provision in any of the common CASER drafts reached by the NDFP and GRP that are up for approval by the negotiation panels," the NDFP RWC-SER said.

That Esperon and Galvez vilify the CASER only displays their ignorance of the situation in the peace negotiations. That they have to vilify this provision, whether or not it is in the common draft, displays where their loyalties lie. They are living off the taxes paid by Filipinos, but they are masterminding dirty campaigns and wars in aid of what are actually the real enemies hindering development for the Filipino people.

Even a supposed provision on the “demobilization and standing down of AFP”, against which Esperon and Galvez fumed, is nowhere to be found in the common CASER drafts.

The two ex-military chiefs spent all of 2019 implementing their “whole-of-nation” approach aimed at crushing the revolutionaries and democratic opposition. This is their euphemism for what amounts to a civil-military junta. They launched bloody “Tokhang”-style (drug war) witchhunts victimizing peasants, lawyers, activists, students and mostly civilians opposed to various forms of imperialist plunder in the country. They launched artillery shelling and air bombing raids on civilian communities they believed to be benefiting from the CPP-NPA-NDF-led land reform program. They paraded faked or forced surrenderers.

Yet, Esperon and Galvez try hard to make it appear that the AFP is the people’s army, and not the NPA.

Before Duterte scuttled the peace negotiations in 2018, a draft Interim Peace Agreement (IPA) had been crafted and initialed by both negotiating panels. Signing of the IPA would have been a breakthrough deal guaranteed to improve Filipino lives. Consequently it would also have given credit to President Duterte. Yet Esperon and Galvez are spreading lies and baseless paranoia about the IPA and the

CASER in hopes they could scuttle the talks for the nth time.

Esperon, Galvez and their militarist ilk have served in the AFP until their retirement trying but failing to subdue the Filipino revolutionaries. Absence of thoroughgoing social and economic reforms gives rise to more fighting revolutionaries. And the AFP’s militarist solution — from one “oplan” to another recycled or “enhanced oplan” — continues to shed Filipino blood and fails to bring about peace.

From December 2018 till now, the militarists/hawks have rampaged in the country more aggressively through the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC). They tried to ram martial law down the civilian government’s throat. They tried to gag the media and vilify the revolutionaries and activists as “terrorists.”

Failing to stop the revolutionaries and activists, there were times they simply faked their

reports on their “accomplishments”. Their endgame is to clamp down on protests against Malacañang’s allowing foreign military basing (by China in the West Philippine Sea and the US inside Philippine bases); destructive expansion of mining and plantations; “build build build” projects dislocating the people and taking away their livelihood; neoliberal globalization policies destroying our fishery, agriculture and prospects for industrialization; and massive corruption, among other ills that make life difficult for ordinary Filipinos.

Given the military and Duterte’s repeated failure to achieve their target of crushing the communist “insurgency,” it could not have escaped their attention that their “whole-of-nation” approach has failed both under Duterte’s predecessors and under his watch.

On the contrary, they have infuriated more and more people, prompting the latter to
Becoming rebels, critics, or activists, **is a result, and not the cause,** of poverty and injustice.



At stake on the **peace negotiating table is not about the CPP-NPA-NDF winning or the GPH-AFP losing,** but about the Filipino people finally starting to get meaningful and substantial reforms.

hike their support for the national democratic revolution.

In just a year of faking victories in their dirty war and lying left and right, the militarists-peace spoilers' credibility is now shot. What's left of it in 2019 is shattered further by the photoshopped picture of fake surrenderers supposedly "in droves" among members of the NPA.

In 2019 the militarists have also been exposed time and again for faking or forcing the cooperation of local governments and civilian bureaucracies in their bloody war against the people. They have faked encounters with the NPA to cover up the fact that the revolutionaries are gaining in strength. They have faked the surrender of supposed rebels, faked a supposed success in 'counterinsurgency'. Their vaunted "victories" included a shameful rub-out of sleeping rebels; an abduction, torture and killing of an hors d' combat; manipulation of funds and services meant for victims of typhoons.

PEOPLE'S RESISTANCE, CASER KEY TO SOLVING POVERTY

It is precisely the Philippine government's policies for plunder that have been driving the dispossessed, marginalized, and threatened people to question and resist such policies, to rebel and ultimately, to build their own government. In pursuit and defense of their economic and social rights the people have every right to rebel.

History shows that one becoming a rebel, critic, or activist, is the result — not the cause — of poverty and injustice. Since the militarists thus far

have succeeded in halting the peace talks and the crafting of solutions to address its causes, the Philippine government has intensified its all-out war not only against the armed revolutionary forces. They now seek to deceive, threaten and subdue entire civilian communities and to demolish all legal, democratic people's organizations working for substantive social reforms and defending human rights, simply on the presumption or suspicion these are supporting the armed revolutionary movement.

"Unprecedented levels of joblessness, landlessness, homelessness, low productivity, and poverty are disguised by misleading official statistics. Oligarch wealth and a narrow upper middle class divert from how the overwhelming majority of Filipinos struggle with low incomes, irregular work and decrepit social services. The CASER that the NDFP and GRP are negotiating seeks to resolve all these and more," NDFP RWC-SER explained.

CASER is an agreement for development which, beyond merely contributing to ending the armed conflict, will deliver immediate and concrete benefits and lay the basis for the country's long-term development under conditions of national independence, democracy and just peace. Hardly any part the common CASER drafts already initialed by the NDFP and GRP negotiators and up for approval — should the peace talks resume — warranted the complaints aired against it by peace spoilers Esperon or Galvez.

Among others already expounded on here, these peace spoilers wrongly claimed the draft CASER supposedly

takes away the Indigenous People's (IP) participation. Far from that, the NDFP in fact has proposed a new law upholding stronger IP rights.

Resuming the peace talks could help in halting the tragic bleeding dry of Philippine coffers and of the people. It is not for the revolutionaries but for the Duterte government, especially its militarists and hawks, to prove their sincerity. They were the party who terminated the talks just when it was on the verge of formalizing the most substantive agreements that would give vast benefits to tens of millions of Filipinos and the cause of national development.

Had the CPP and GRP panels succeeded, in 2018, in signing the IPA it would have included an agreement on a coordinated unilateral ceasefire, an amnesty proclamation for freeing political prisoners, and, most of all, agreements on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ARRD) and National Industrialization and Economic Development (NIED). These are the two most crucial sections of the CASER.

At stake on the peace negotiating table is not whether the CPP-NPA-NDF wins or the GRP-AFP loses, but whether the Filipino people can finally begin to benefit from mutually-agreed on meaningful and substantial socio-economic and political/constitutional reforms.

The CASER's final content will still depend on the result of the peace negotiations, whenever they will be resumed and assiduously pursued to completion.

The NDFP is certain the eventual CASER will prioritize the Filipino people, national development, social justice, and just peace. **LIB**

Duterte Wants to Grab LAND REFORM from the NPA

by Pinky Ang

On the 31st anniversary of the failed Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) last August, President Rodrigo Duterte spewed lies against the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and the New Peoples' Army (NPA). Preening before the media while giving out Certificates of Land Ownership Award (CLOA), he boasted he would finish the CPP-NPA-led revolution.

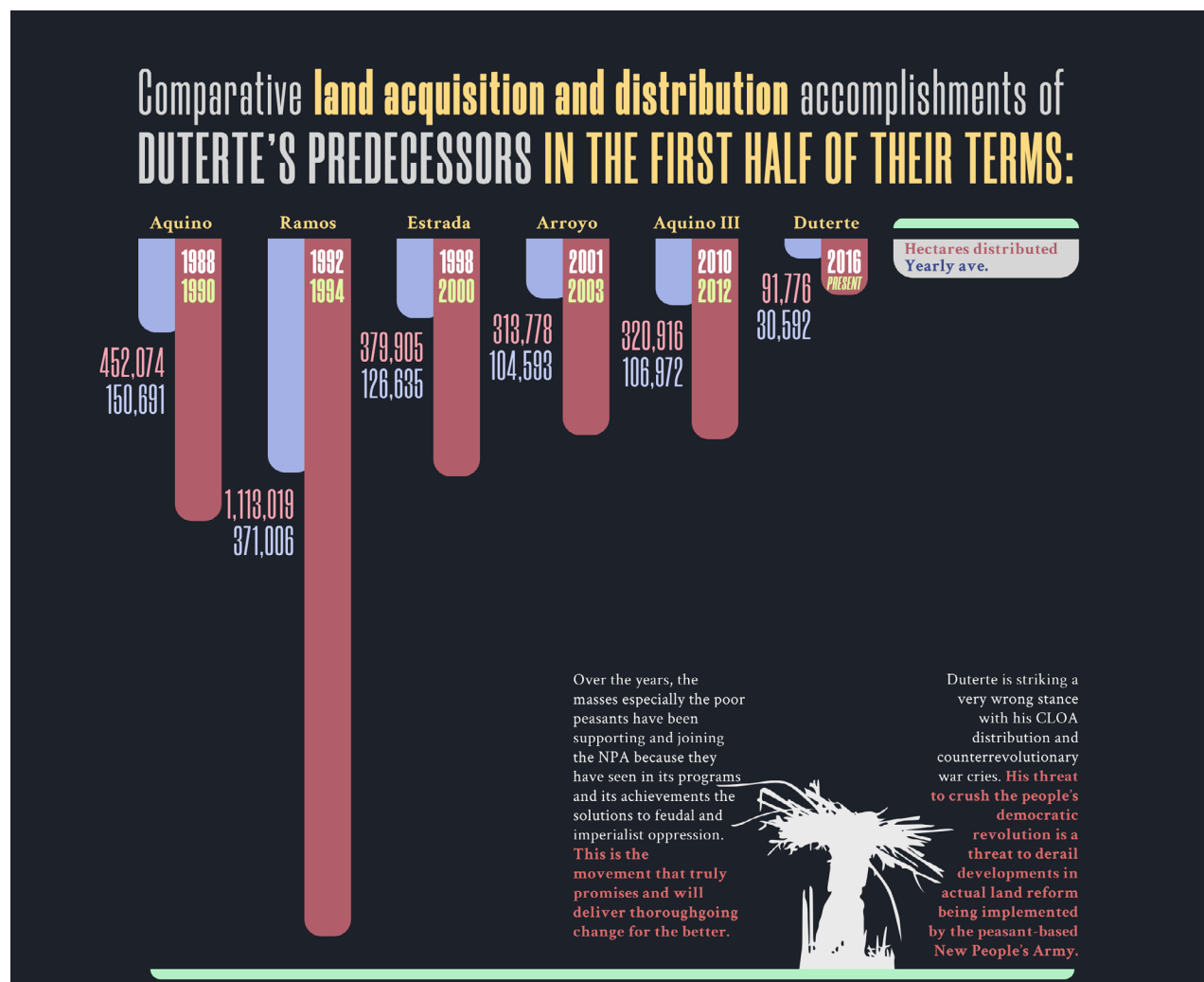
But this put-on picture—Duterte distributing CLOA, Duterte tough-talking on Hacienda Luisita, Duterte feigning concern for the future generation caught in the armed conflict, Duterte promising land reform alongside crushing the 50-year people's war—is phony and old (he isn't the first president to pose for it). It also defies logic and history.

Save for a fleeting period when he was talking peace with the communists, Duterte has done nothing but the opposite of land reform and national industrialization.

On the verge of signing with the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) what would have been a landmark agreement to redistribute land for free all over the country, he scuttled the talks in 2017. Since then, he has made no bones in taking the well-worn path of his most despotic predecessors in Malacañang.

No Philippine president in history has truly implemented land reform nor attempted to jumpstart national industrialization spurred by a genuine land reform program. On the contrary, their so-called land reform programs sought only to placate the masses even as land remained in the hands of a few. From the bitter experiences of peasants, every land reform program by the Government of the Philippines had more loopholes than grounds to actually distribute land. And even when some eventually got distributed, it somehow got back soon enough to landlords.

Here are the comparative LAD accomplishments of Duterte's predecessors in the first half of their terms:



The Dept. of Agrarian Reform land distribution accomplishment in 2016 to June 2019 is 2,920 hectares on average per month under Duterte, less than the July 2010 to 2015 monthly average of 8,254 has. reported by DAR under Noynoy Aquino; 9,407 has. under Arroyo in January 2001 to June 2010, and 11,113 has. monthly average under Estrada.

There is a raging armed revolution in the Philippines because peasants and the basic masses, including sections of the middle class and local small capitalists, thirst for land reform. They yearn for the greater prosperity of industrialization that genuine land reform will naturally stimulate, and for the assured just distribution

and sustainability of this prosperity because of the socialist perspective of the national democratic revolution being waged by the CPP-NPA-NDFP.

Over the years, the masses especially the poor peasants have been supporting and joining the NPA because they have seen in its programs and its achievements the solutions to feudal and imperialist oppression. This is the movement that truly promises and will deliver thoroughgoing change for the better.

Duterte is striking a very wrong stance with his CLOA distribution and counterrevolutionary war cries. His threat to crush the people's democratic revolution is a threat to

derail developments in actual land reform being implemented by the peasant-based NPA. It's a threat as well to delay the country's national industrialization. This is not acceptable to the Filipino masses who continue to suffer a life of misery under the landlord-comprador and imperialist puppet presidents including Duterte.

Another president who posed with CLOAs amid counterrevolutionary war cries was Joseph Estrada. In Bondoc Peninsula, after a series of successful NPA tactical offensives there 20 years ago, he vowed to crush the revolution movement. He became the second president to be ousted through the people's peaceful direct action.

“WHOLE-OF-NATION” AS MARTIAL LAW UNDERCOVER?

By this time, as commander-in-chief, Duterte has already issued one too many orders— declaring and thrice extending martial law in the whole of Mindanao; declaring a state of emergency to quell “lawless violence” and issuing Memo 32 to deploy more troops in Samar, Negros island and Bicol; utilizing the so-called “whole-of-nation” approach that harnesses the entire government (national and local) plus civil society organizations in a bid to end the 50-year armed conflict. Clearly though, his actions contradict his boasts against the CPP, which his government shrilly tries to demonize and misrepresent as a puny force being deserted by droves of supposed surrenderers.

But, like the failed land reform program, Duterte’s “whole-of-nation” approach is just another war plan his predecessors have long applied and failed on. It is like the wolf appropriating the voice of the innocent so it can freely enter homes to devour and kill.

Duterte is turning the entire government bureaucracy including civilian sectors into a counter-revolutionary surveillance and black propaganda factory. Its services are being deployed to feed into the coercive military and police troops cracking down on legal democratic mass organizations, and their allies here and abroad. While this government is raining bombs and lies, it is restraining flow of information about the revolutionary movement. It is banning media interviews and coverage of revolutionary groups.

Duterte is trying to revive the monsters of Marcos’s martial law, but not quite succeeding at muzzling the freedom of association and freedom of the press. He goes all-out with K-12 miseducation that’s washing off traces of patriotism and prompts for critical thinking among the youth. All the while he is pushing for military partnership with schools to abet surveillance and intimidation of critical students and teachers.

PR-labeling all these as “whole-of-nation approach,” Duterte dreams about finishing off the CPP-led revolution but only through a one-sided, reality-defying, blood-drenched misrepresentation of life on the ground.

For this brutal fantasy, his office wants to double its intelligence budget to P4.5 billion in 2020, or bloat it to half as big as the total budget of the Office of the President. His minions in Congress seek to add more teeth to the anti-terror law they euphemistically call as Human Security Act. His regime and the US government have agreed to locate a regional training center for combating insurgency and “terrorism” in Cavite. The military consistently receives from the US technical and intelligence support, training and equipment for countering the revolutionary groups.



Yet, amid the Duterte regime’s one-sided diatribes against the CPP-NPA, some truths still inadvertently emerge. Some from his own big mouth. Duterte himself can’t deny the public support for the communist revolutionaries.

After all, he wooed the Filipino voters into electing him president by cultivating appearances of being friendly to the CPP-NPA. His campaign ploy has confirmed that candidates gain popularity by calling themselves “leftist” or “socialist”; by promising peace talks with the communists; and by taking up issues articulated by or identified with the Left. For example, the call to assert Philippine sovereignty in the West Philippine Sea vis-à-vis China’s aggressive intrusion into and grabbing of maritime areas within the Philippines’ exclusive economic zones.

Past presidents and presidential candidates publicly pretended to ignore the existence of revolutionary mass bases in the countryside, even when they were impelled to engage in peace talks. They fumed

whenever “security concerns” delayed their visits to some locales, when candidates can’t simply enter guerrilla zones. They evaded disclosing the fears expressed by multinational corporations over another government operating clandestinely in the Philippines, which, unlike the reactionary government, calls them to task for their plunder and rights violations.

Perhaps Duterte, who claims to know a lot about the revolutionaries, panicked after he realized that the neocolonial institution he leads wouldn’t tolerate his slight deviation from the usual conduct of puppet presidents. Or perhaps as a true neocolonial leader of landlord and comprador class (albeit with lesser money in his hands?) he panicked at his first-hand confirmation of the depth and breadth of the Left’s mass support.

Whatever, even when he was firmly following the tradition of imperialist puppetry of those who got to become temporary residents of Malacañang, he still inadvertently slips up, revealing in his ramblings the good things the CPP-NPA have been doing. For example, land reform.

But it would be political suicide for Duterte, or for any local government executive and for the AFP, to say outright that he is against land reform. To “win hearts and minds” and bar more people from supporting the revolutionaries, Duterte and his cohorts have to put deceiving masks to their war plans.

Ever since the CPP-NPA-NDFP began waging an armed revolutionary war, it has been pushing for genuine land reform. It is deriving greater strength the more it works to organize and help peasant communities undertake land reform.

The NPA is not just a military force. It is arousing, organizing, and mobilizing the masses. It is starting and helping the peasants into organizing and running the Pambansang Katipunan ng mga Magsasaka or PKM (National Peasants Association), and other revolutionary mass organizations based in rural communities.

These organizations conduct campaigns for land reform suited to their capacities. The more masses organized into revolutionary groups the more they could undertake land reform and enjoy its fruits. The more they cherish and bolster the NPA underpinning their successes.

A PKM leader correctly said recently, as the national democratic revolution advances, the PKM shall be able to give more lands to poor peasants. Lands confiscated from landlords and agri-business corporations are given to beneficiaries free of amortization. The CPP-NPA also punishes the most despotic landlords.

Contrast this to the misery of intensifying feudal and semi-feudal exploitation, and one sees the futility of discouraging the masses from supporting the NPA. In time, their level of organization and experience approaches the building of bigger and bolder organs of political power in communities. This may start small with humble benefits, but as a PKM leader said, it is enough for PKM chapters to withstand the hardships and tragedies of counterrevolutionary wars.

In revolution they have hope. And having tasted its benefits even from the early stage of strategic defensive of the protracted people’s war, they would not easily be swayed by phony pictures and declarations.

Thanks to the NPA, the country’s peasants have had a taste of what it’s like to be in a truly democratic government—at least, the local underground government. They are building up every day, campaigns after campaigns for land reform. What it’s like to govern themselves, to elect tried-and-tested leaders among themselves, to work the farm sustainably, to share and enjoy its fruits among themselves and not let it become the sole entitlement of landlords, to help plan and execute appropriate farming techniques and technology.

The organized peasants are also doing their share in thwarting the imposition of imperialist-led “reforms” and programs.

The NPA has functioned to truly harness the power of the people in working collectively for each other’s economic and political gains.

“The comrades in the NPA are helping us come up with policies and guidelines in the land distribution, especially on who should be prioritized—those landless and those who lack lands to till,” said Ka Iling, a peasant leader who participated in a local agrarian revolution conference in 2017 held at a guerilla front in the north. It was a joint project of local members of the CPP, the NPA, and the various revolutionary mass organizations in the area.

All over the country, PKM and other collectives of revolutionary groups, without fanfare, have tackled problems of landlessness, conducted land occupation, palit-tanim (changing crops) to have something to eat even as they are forced to plant cash crops. They have struggled to reduce land rent and usurious rates. They have

formed cooperatives to work the land more efficiently, buy their needs, and sell their produce lessening the dominance of traders-landlords-usurers.

Almost a million PKM members have benefited from the CPP and the NPA's maximum agrarian reform program: more than 44,000 hectares of land have been confiscated and redistributed all over the country. Millions of others have benefitted from the campaigns for lower land rent, lower borrowing interest rates, just share in proceeds of harvest, increased farm gate prices, and eliminating traders' trickery when farmers' produce are weighed and priced.

Their support services include training and workshops on organic farming, construction of mini dams for free irrigation, installation of hydroelectric and solar or wind-powered turbines for post-harvest drying or processing, among others.

All these and its further development are what are at stake in the counter-revolutionary war waged by the Duterte administration.

THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION ON A WINNING PATH

Farmers call Duterte a hypocrite for pretending to care about the future generation while doing his best to kill their best prospects today.

He was quoted as telling the CPP-NPA, "We cannot go on this way. We have been fighting for 53 years. *Maawa kayo sa susunod* (Have mercy on the next generation)."

If he was indeed a man of mercy, he could have helped signal the end of armed fighting early into his term. When he terminated the peace negotiations in 2017, the two sides were on the cusp of signing an agreement prompting the Philippine government to implement genuine land reform.

A CLEARLY-DEFINED MUTUALLY COORDINATED CEASEFIRE WOULD HAVE FOLLOWED.

As such, even before the massacres occurred in the hacienda land of Negros, or before the killings of peasants all over the country have reached a staggering number of victims (more than 200 as of August 2019 since he became president), the Duterte government could have halted the fighting. For the first time in history, it could have led to the neocolonial government helping resolve the peasant demands which are at the root of the prolonged armed conflict.

Instead, Duterte only confirmed the correctness of the people's war as means to dismantle the neocolonial government by armed force. His regime has acted true to form in deploying more troops against the peasant-based NPA fighters. Duterte himself acted true to form like the other neocolonial leaders before him. He vowed to sell to highest bidders the fertile lands being defended by the peasants with their very lives.

NPA:

the true army of the
people pushing for
genuine land reform

The NPA is largely a peasant army.

Its support and troops mainly come from the poor peasants who comprise about 70 percent of the Philippine society.



THE COMMUNIST REVOLUTION

O N A W I N N I N G P A T H



"Kunin mo na ang

initiative sa komunista

What they're parlaying

is land. Eh di unahan na

natin. Bigay na natin

[ang lupa]."

From the puppet leader who has repeatedly uttered lies and shamelessly admitted to uttering lies,

the only true thing he revealed here is that the initiative on land reform is with the communists.

His agricultural secretary accused the farmers doing bungkalan for survival that they have no rights to the land they should have owned already. He has also been approving with alacrity the appeals of landlords to defeat the farmers' demands for land distribution. This includes the lands in Hacienda Luisita already ordered for distribution by the Supreme Court.

Duterte admits that "it's not only about gaining a foothold in those areas," referring to hotbeds of revolution like Negros, for example. In Sagay City where peasants awaiting CLOAs were massacred by paramilitary troops in October 2018, farmers have been forced to leave and go hungry as troops continue arriving to secure the landlords' "lawful" ownership. How could the Duterte administration think they could win over these farmers?

Duterte himself admits it is not enough to just bring soldiers to guard the land. "Kunin mo na ang initiative sa komunista (Take the initiative from the communists). What they're parlaying is land. Eh di unahan na natin. Bigay na natin [ang lupa] (Then let's move ahead of them. Let's distribute the land already)."

From the puppet leader who has repeatedly uttered lies and shamelessly admitted to uttering lies, the only true thing he revealed here is that the initiative on land reform is with the communists.

Ever since, the puppet government bowing to imperialist masters has only been reacting to the peasants' demands for land with bogus land reform programs. The imperialists profit so much from dumping their surplus agricultural products here, while pushing their manufactured products, too. As long as the domestic industries are pushed back and stunted, they have a captive market. The landlord and comprador classes, meanwhile, win big in corruption, buy-and-sell profits, fat contracts and commissions. But the masses grow poorer and hungrier by the day.

Four years ago before Duterte, the poorest 50 percent or 11.4 million Filipino families subsisted on just P15,000 or less per month (P500 or less per day for a family of six). After tax and price hikes amid the lowest wage grants and the worst job generation in the post-Marcos period, the people are definitely worse off today under Duterte. Meanwhile, thanks to his economic policies, the net worth of the country's richest and the profits of the largest corporations have ballooned.

"Crisis generates resistance," as CPP founding chairman Jose Maria Sison titled one of his recent books. The peasantry had launched uprisings and died in bigger numbers before, without the communists to guide them. Now that they have tasted agrarian victories and glimpsed the best future in advancing the national democratic revolution, with socialist perspective, they have hope and will not likely give up on that.

Duterte's "whole-of-nation" mantra for what he strains to approximate as martial law stands no chance. His human rights record already stinks with blood and many have recoiled from it, even the ordinary people in other countries.

His publicly paid troops who perform services for the landlords, oppress the peasants and the indigenous peoples, will continue to earn the people's ire and mistrust. Duterte's minions can conveniently dismiss their war crimes as "shit happens" and "collateral damage". Before the media, Duterte can shed tears when his troops suffer defeat in legitimate combats with the New People's Army.

They will keep on getting what they deserve from the people's army, if they don't stop standing in the way of genuine land reform, democracy and real prosperity for the majority of the people. **LIB**



Remembering Kumander Tangkad

by Pat Gambao

The first quarter storm spawned many heroes and martyrs—youth who went underground when the Dictator Ferdinand Marcos declared martial law. They went to the countryside, immersed with the masses and showed them the path to liberation.

One of them was Kumander Tangkad, Romulo Jallores—whose revolutionary life is celebrated by naming after him the regional command of the New People's Army in Bicol.

Jallores once stood tall atop the fire truck the students commandeered to ram the gates of the palace, the symbol of power of the presidency, and at the time the fascist rule of Marcos.

The date was January 30, 1970. One thousand five hundred youth from colleges, universities, and communities came in full force. The storm of protests surged, the acme of the youth's rage against the reactionary establishment, kindled by the police brutality during the January 26 demonstration in Congress to the President's State of the Nation Address. It ushered the First Quarter Storm of 1970, a high point in the legal democratic mass movement that called for national liberation and democracy.

The following day carried the photo showing him on top of the truck wearing the signature beret of Ernesto Che Guevara, the legendary revolutionary hero of Latin America who aided Fidel Castro in the victorious Cuban revolution. From then on, he was Che among the circle of activists.

In the university belt that Jallores frequented while doing some odd jobs in the vicinity, he was known as Edong. Befriending some students from the University of the East (UE), he soon joined them in discussion group in the reading rooms of the university. Here he began to understand the basic problems of the Philippine society—US imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism. He began to relate them to the impoverished conditions in his town of birth in Tigaon, Camarines Sur, to the plight of the farmers and the parahagots (abaca workers). He began to understand why the students walked out of their classes, poured into the streets to collectively demand for better conditions for themselves and the people, to decry the inaction of the reactionary government.



Edong joined the Samahan ng Demokratikong Kabataan (SDK) in UE. He marched in rallies and protest actions with them, together with other students and youth who are dreaming to change the world. He wore an oversized jacket with a huge pocket that carried some soda to quench their thirst. He towered over the throng with his more than six-feet-tall frame in his early twenties, the height that earned him the nom de guerre Kumander Tangkad when he finally opted to put down the placards and wield the gun instead.

In his stint in the SDK headquarters in Taytay, Rizal, Edong was introduced to Marx, Lenin, Mao—the great thinkers and revolutionaries. He got enlightened about contradictions and class struggles. He learned about the Russian and Chinese proletarian revolutions and the triumph of socialism over the viciousness and greed of imperialism. He came to understand and imbibe the youth's aspirations to topple the savage system and bring about a humane and just society.

Once he took interest on a lovely student from the University of the Philippines (UP) who used to come to the headquarters with the other SDK members from UP. But he was not able to pursue his love as he was so preoccupied with his aspiration for change.

ROMULO Jallares

In an encounter on December 18, 1971, *Kumander Tangkad* sustained eight gunshot wounds. While recuperating in a rented apartment of a relative in Ateneo Avenue in Naga City on December 30, 1971, the PC came to get him following a tip of his whereabouts received by the Provincial Commander Antonio Habulan. The troops summoned him to surrender. But brave and tenacious as he was, **surrendering to the enemy would be the least he would do.**

He invited his buddies in the SDK to come with him to his hometown and immerse with farmers and farm workers. They found the experience heart-rending and definitely crying for action. They returned to Manila only to prepare for a longer stint in CamSur (Camarines Sur). Awakening, organizing and

mobilizing the masses had been their task. But they knew this was wanting. They learned it was only through an armed struggle that the people will be liberated from the tentacles of the semifeudal structure fostered by the landlords/compradors and bureaucrat capitalists and sanctioned and bolstered by US imperialism.

Soon the Red Army was formed with Kumander Tangkad at the helm. The New People's Army that the masses cherished grew by leaps and bounds, spreading throughout the region, building guerrilla fronts and organs of political power.

Valiant and heroic to his last breath, Kumander Tangkad died in the hands of the fascist army. Though wounded and incapacitated, trapped in the apartment where he sought refuge after an encounter, he refused

to surrender and fought to the end.

Martyrs like Kumander Tangkad have not died in vain for they continue to inspire the youth, the masses to this day. The 52 years advance of the people's democratic revolution for national and social liberation is the proof. **LIB**



“Yong simple pong
pagtawag ng masa
sa amin na

Kasama

○ **Kas,**

○ **anak,**

ganyan po ang
tawag nila sa amin.
Samantalang do'n sa
kabila ay kaaway.
Ang sarap sa pakiramdam.

Talagang tama 'tong
ipinaglalaman natin..”

Nina
Kasapi ng NPA sa Bicol



LIBERATION

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