

Editorial

Tasks after 100 days under Duterte

A hundred days into the Duterte regime, the situation now exists which allows the forging of a patriotic alliance between his anti-US regime and the revolutionary and patriotic forces.

Towards this, both sides must work hard in peace negotiations to forge a common program. At the same time, mass struggles must be carried forward to convince Duterte to address the democratic interests of the people.

The revolutionary forces are heartened by the heightened discourse of GRP President Duterte against US meddling and military presence. He has denounced these almost daily over the past several weeks. He has declared his intention of building economic and trade alliances with China and Russia.

Duterte is clearly stating his anti-US stand, a radical shift from seventy years of state subservience to the US. In words, he is determined to uphold an independent foreign policy. His frequent bellicose speeches fan the flames of Filipino patriotism.

Duterte's anti-US tirades have caused deep fissures within the ruling classes. He has set forth the line dividing the ruling classes into two camps. He has set out on a risky political drive, fully aware that the US imperialists continue to hold dominant influence and command over the vast majority of the ruling elite and military and police officials.

US officials fear that Duterte's anti-US declarations will soon become concrete policies. Even before Duterte's 100th day in office, US officials have issued thinly-veiled threats against him. Anti-Duterte politicians have joined the US lead. Pro-US zealots in his government have joined in to pull back his momentum.

The revolutionary forces are keenly aware of the nature of the Duterte regime as the current chief representative of the reactionary ruling classes in the Philippines. It was installed primarily on the strength and support of the big bourgeois comprador and landlord classes and is beholden mainly to them.

The emergence of the anti-US

Duterte regime became possible under the following circumstances: the grave crisis of the ruling semi-colonial and semifeudal system; the global discredit of the US-EU and IMF-WB neoliberal policies; the strategic weakening of US imperialism; and the emergence of China as a burgeoning imperialist power which aligns itself with Russia against the US.

With Duterte's promotion of an independent foreign policy, the CPP and the national democratic forces are encouraged to work with the Duterte regime in a patriotic alliance with the aim of upholding national sovereignty and opposing US imperialist domination in the country.

With such an alliance, the Duterte regime and the revolutionary forces can work side by side to fight US neocolonial rule, expose and fight its political, military and



cultural agents, reject economic policy impositions and defend the Philippines against all US political and military intervention.

The patriotic forces must heighten anti-imperialist propaganda and education in order to arouse and mobilize the Filipino people, especially the youth, in their millions. They must raise the people's anti-imperialist consciousness by showing how the US condemned the Philippines to a perpetual state of semicolonial and semifeudal backwardness, crisis and dependence. They must show how the Philippines was colonized in order to plunder the country's cheap resources and cheap labor and retain it as a military outpost to serve US aims of imposing its hegemony in the Asia-Pacific.

The Duterte regime has broken ground in challenging US sway and command of the armed forces by seeking an end to its dependence on US weapons sale. He must expose its officers and men to patriotic reeducation. He can start an anti-imperi-

alist military school and push for the reorientation of the armed forces from US counter-insurgency dogma to national defense.

While uniting with efforts of the Duterte regime to promote an independent foreign policy, the Filipino people must independently advance their mass struggles to confront the longstanding socio-economic problems. They must oppose the anti-people and anti-democratic measures carried over from the past regimes which presently remain effective.

Duterte can further strengthen the patriotic alliance if he will heed and decisively address the people's democratic demands.

The people must call for a reversal of the US-dictated neoliberal policies which have brought about widespread poverty and hardships. They must urge the Duterte regime to expand social services to provide the people with free or affordable public health, mass housing, education, telecommunications and mass transportation. Immediate meas-

ures to bring down the price of food, medicine, fuel and other basic commodities must be implemented.

The Filipino people must urge the Duterte regime to immediately address the pressing democratic demands of the broad masses of peasants and workers for genuine land reform as well as jobs, higher wages, a national minimum wage and ending contractualization and other forms of flexible labor. Duterte must address the demands of students, urban poor, government employees, minority peoples, small professionals, health workers and other democratic sectors. Duterte must also be convinced that this should be the principal means of solving the drug menace.

The Filipino people must also demand respect for human rights. They are urging the Duterte regime to complete the pull-out of paramilitary and military forces from communities which they claim to be supportive of the New People's Army. The Duterte regime must also be pushed to free around 520 political prisoners.

Through ongoing peace negotiations, the Duterte regime and the NDFP can forge agreements that will form a common program to formalize a patriotic alliance.

The Duterte regime must address the key question of land reform. The NDFP will push for genuine land reform both to attain social justice and as a key economic measure to unleash the rural productive forces.

The Duterte regime can meet the peasant demand by allowing large areas of land (public, idle, haciendas owned by parasitic landlords) to be subjected to land distribution. It can neutralize landlord opposition by getting them onboard an industrialization program, providing them with funds and incentives to engage in productive investment.

In conjunction with pushing for land reform, the NDFP will push for a national industrialization pro-

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gram. This can serve as the broader framework for a plan to develop the local steel industry earlier promoted by Duterte. A comprehensive plan for industrialization will ensure the creation of jobs and of necessary commodities and goods for consumption and production.

The Duterte regime's plan to develop economic and commercial ties with China and Russia must be framed along efforts to develop the local productive forces and the ability of the domestic economy to stand on its own feet.

To promote the peace talks, units of the NPA have strictly abided by the ceasefire declared 40 days ago. The ceasefire can be extended as long peace talks are moving forward. But the GRP President must tame the AFP and order it to end or scale down Oplan Bayanihan counter-insurgency operations or risk the possibility of armed clashes.

While engaging in peace talks, it is the duty of the revolutionary forces to continue carrying forward the people's war by recruiting, arming and training and mobilizing the New People's Army to enforce the laws and policies of the people's government that protect the rights and welfare of the people. They must vigorously carry out anti-feudal campaigns and continue to build and broaden the mass organizations and build the people's government.

The Party must continue to expand and strengthen itself, engage in vigorous ideological work to take stock of the situation and setting forth tactical tasks with a strategic view of the situation.

The Party, the NPA and all revolutionary forces must strike deep and wide roots among the people. They must rouse the people in their millions to wage anti-imperialist, anti-feudal and democratic struggles and join the revolutionary armed resistance in the countryside. AB

On the second agenda of NDFP-GRP negotiations

Socio-economic reforms at the core of the talks



The negotiations on socio-economic reforms is the meat of the peace talks. Thus said Alan Jazmines, vice chairperson of the Reciprocal Working Committee for Socio-economic Reforms (RWC-SER), last October 5, on the eve of the resumption of the second round of peace talks which will end on October 10 in Oslo, Norway.

Last October 6, Jose Maria Sison, senior consultant of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP), expressed that it is premature to talk about laying down of arms on the second round of negotiations. Moreover, both panels have to discuss the outline of the negotiations first, especially CASER (Comprehensive Agreement on Socio-Economic Reforms), to see its benefits for the Filipino people.

After almost two decades and two major world economic crises, the two panels need to discuss a key crisis-protection agreement, said Jazmines.

The NDFP draft for this agenda has already been prepared since 1998. In light of the worsening crisis brought by neoliberal policies, the revolutionary movement updated the CASER draft. "However, land reform and national industrialization is still the main content of our proposal because of these twin economic development strategies' proven resilience to the crisis of globalization," Jazmines added.

"While we expect lively and contentious discussions on CASER, we also hope that both parties are strong-willed enough to overcome differences in order to solve the armed conflict at its roots," said Randall Echanis, member of RWC-SER.

In line with this, the NDFP clarified that laying down of arms will not be discussed in the second

round of peace negotiations.

Based on the agenda outline in the ongoing talks, democratic rights and welfare of the people come first while discussion on the disposition of armed forces will be on the final leg.

"If oppression and exploitation persist, why should the revolutionary government surrender?" asked Sison.

The NDFP also reminded GRP of its obligation to release political prisoners. This is the response to GRP panel chairperson Silvestre Bello's statement that amnesty will only be given after negotiations.

According to Comrade Luis Jalandoni, amnesty for more than 500 political prisoners who are listed by the NDFP had already been agreed upon by both parties in the first series of talks last August. It will also be in compliance with the previously signed agreements—Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law and Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees. Both parties agreed to submit the prepared draft to GRP President Duterte.

Also, last October 6, the NDFP national leadership announced the resignation of Jalandoni as chair of its panel. He will serve as senior adviser to the talks. Fidel V. Agcaoili will replace him as the new Chairperson. Benito Tiamzon was named as a new panel member. AB

The steel industry: A requisite to national industrialization

From October 6-10, NDFP-GRP negotiations will center on the agreement on socio-economic reforms. This includes talks on establishing industries and infrastructure for national industrialization. One of its requisites is the establishment of a steel industry oriented to the needs of the local industries and serving as the backbone of a self-reliant and prosperous economy.

Steel is a main material in laying down infrastructure, water and electricity services, industrial and agricultural machinery, tools and appliances. Steel can be found in almost all products and services—from transportation, communications to the distribution of social services.

The country has enough mineral deposits to set up its own steel industry. In fact, iron is one of the Philippines' largest deposits. As per state estimates, the country contains 500 million to a billion tons of iron ore of various grades. It also has enough copper, nickel and other minerals needed for processing steel. Despite this, no local or foreign company is into mining the country's iron. Last August, officials shut down the sole iron ore mining operations located in Bulacan due to its noncompliance to environmental standards. It produced only 0.5% of the country's demand for iron.

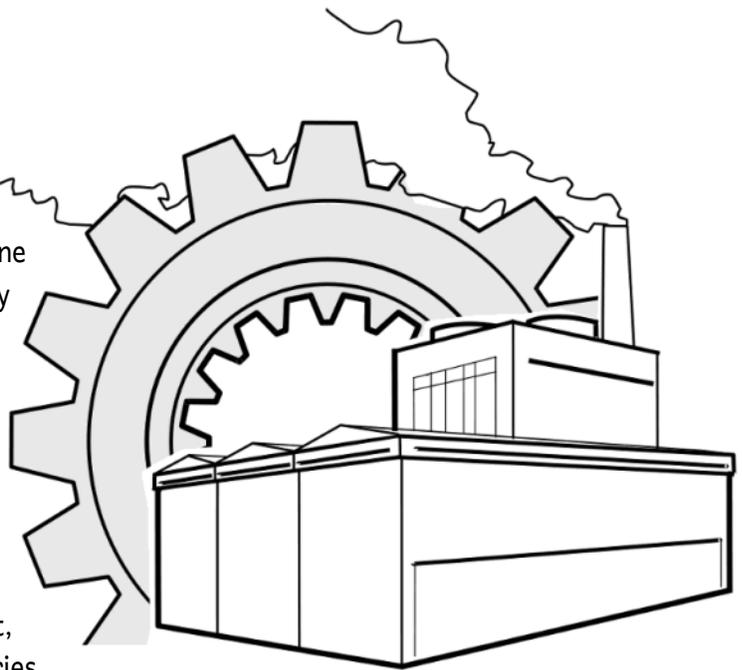
In addition, the local steel industry is insignificant or even non-existent. Local processing had barely taken off in the 1950s and 60s when the state abandoned the industry to favor foreign companies and push for importation. In line with the neoliberal dogma of free trade in the 1980s, the state did not enact any anti-dumping measures

to limit the entry of imported steel.

As a result, large factories processing raw steel folded up. These include big companies such as the National Steel, Marcelo Steel, Iligan Steel and Jacinto Steel. There was a renewed push to enliven the industry in the 1990s, this time under foreign capital, but even this effort folded up. In their stead rose mini steel mills that melt scrap metal using an electric arch furnace. These factories can only produce limited steel products.

Iron processing is currently done in about 50 companies only which produce mostly long products such as screws and bars. All flat products, such as sheets and plants, are imported, mostly from China. All raw steel are also imported. About 80% of local steel demand is in construction.

Importation, as well as smuggling, became widespread due to liberalization. Big compradors deliberately killed the local steel industry through importing steel products which are already locally produced. A stark example of this is the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industries' move this year to smuggle in 5,000 tons of



cheap steel from China. This, despite efforts from local businesses and banks to put up a large and modern plant which will produce sufficient steel supply. In 2014, smuggled steel from China was estimated to reach 250,000 tons.

Under these circumstances, the current regime faces great challenges in setting up a steel industry. Demand has been growing and will continue to grow if the Duterte regime pushes through with its plan to build roads, rails, ports and other infrastructure. To safeguard local steel businesses, they should be provided with enough funds and incentives to protect them against unequal foreign competition. Policies overly favoring foreign capital should be rejected and measures to stop dumping of foreign surplus steel, both legal and illegal, should be enacted.

The steel industry will not only serve as the backbone of national industrialization. It will also enliven the broader manufacturing sector and create new and high quality jobs.

AFP-PNP violates CARHRIHL and own ceasefire

DESPITE A ceasefire being in effect, Armed Forces of the Philippines troopers continue to launch combat and intelligence operations in various parts of the country. These violate the agreement on the respect for human rights, especially of civilians, in the war fronts, as well as their own ceasefire. This endangers the New People's Army's (NPA) ceasefire and the peace negotiations.

On October 5, the NPA-Abra (Agustin Begnalen Command) reported that the 24th IB conducted patrol operations in Sallapadan while the Red fighters were holding consultations with the people. When confronted by the village people of their presence, the soldiers lied that their ceasefire had already ended. Lt. Col. Thomas Baluga, 24th IB's commanding officer, also said that they will be staying in Barangay Bazar "as necessary."

The NPA-Abra likewise assailed the 24th IB's excuse of carrying out "peace and development" operations to justify their entry into and occupation of communities. These are violative of the CARHRIHL, the NPA-Abra said. In efforts to threaten the farmers, soldiers insisted on going with the farmers to their fields. The farmers were also accused of being NPA supporters. Aside from this, soldiers disrespected the indigenous people's regulations when they entered the communities without consent.

In Mindoro, the Lucio de Guzman Command reported the combat operations conducted by the 4th IB, CAFGU and Navy SWAG last August 19-24 in Bulalacao, Oriental Mindoro. The 76th IB likewise launched a combat operation on August 29 in Paluan, Abra de Ilog and Mamburao in Occidental Mindoro. Before this, the AFP forcibly recruited CAFGU members in the communities. They also set up camp in Apyas, Abra de Ilog for almost a month.

Aside from these, the 203rd IBde's 4th IB successively launched

operations from August 24 to September 11 under the guise of "civil-military operations."

In Barangay Manoot, Rizal, Occidental Mindoro, 4th IB troopers conducted clearing operations for their August 26 "medical mission." The said activity masqueraded the setting up of a military camp in the village.

The 4th IB likewise set up camp for more than one week in Barangay Sibalat's daycare center in Mag-saysay. Here, the soldiers gathered the male villagers for a "pulong-pulong" (village meeting).

Meanwhile, in Mountain Province, the PNP Public Safety Company launched counterinsurgency operations in different villages. Using barangay and school visitations as pretext, the PNP entered the villages of Bontoc and Bauko on October 3 and 5. On September 23, the PNP conducted a purported anti-drug seminar at the Mountain Province General Comprehensive High School only to vilify the NPA.

Also under the pretext of a tree-planting activity, the PNP on October 2 entered the tri-boundary of Mountain Province, Ifugao and Benguet. AB



Teachers demand salary hike

ON WORLD TEACHERS' Day last October 5, hundreds of teachers, employees and students held a protest action in Mendiola, Manila to demand a wage hike and remind President Rodrigo Duterte of his electoral promise.

According to Rep. Antonio Tinio, ACT Teachers Partylist representative, the wage hike set at P543 every month for newly-hired public school teachers is not too ambitious.

Like military and police officials, teachers also need additional salaries. "We are only asserting our rights for decent wages, to be paid more than loose change," Tinio added.

Meanwhile, Kabataan Partylist (KPL) condemned the impending budget cuts on state universities and colleges for 2017. According to Sarah Elago, KPL representative, Department of Budget and Management decreased funds for maintenance and operational expenses of 35 universities by P351.9 million and P1.64 billion for additional infrastructures in public schools. Elago added, this might result in higher tuition and other fees.

In line with this, KPL filed House Resolution No. 393 to urge the House Committee on Appropriations to restore P351.9 million budget for maintenance and operations slashed by the DBM for 2017 National Budget and called on Congress to study options on how it can once and for all make public education free at all levels.

Aside from education, budget for Department of Agriculture was also reduced by P3.4 billion and P31 billion for the Department of Health. AB

The People's agenda under Duterte

Under the Duterte regime, peasants continue to fight for genuine land reform and agricultural development, as workers and employees struggle for decent wages and against contractualization.

Struggle for land

On October 1, Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) secretary Rafael Mariano (Ka Paeng), declared that he will cancel the "tambolo" (raffle) scheme implemented at Hacienda Luisita under the US-Aquino regime. This scheme was used to deny the true beneficiaries of the lands that were supposed to be distributed. Ka Paeng said that land reform that will truly serve the farm workers will begin implementation in Luisita.

Ka Paeng also warned the cronies of the Cojuangco-Aquino family to stop the arriendo scheme or the practice of leasing parcels of distributed land through deception and threats. The Cojuangco-Aquino family uses the arriendo system to reconcentrate hacienda lands into their hands and turn the farmers back into tenant status. At the same time, there will be renewed drive to invalidate the stock distribution option (SDO) scheme in all haciendas in the country.

Meanwhile, the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) strongly blasted the National Economic Development Authority's (NEDA) manoeuvres to scrap the proposal for a two-year moratorium on land-use conversion (LUC). The KMP denounced the NEDA for using the urban poor housing shortage as justification to continue LUC.

According to the KMP, behind NEDA's opposition stand the big landlords and foreign capitalists involved in building subdivisions, "economic zones," ecotourism facilities and other commercial interests. Among those slated for DAR review are the permit to build the Clark Green City in Pampanga and MRT-7 in

Bulacan that will displace hundreds of farmers.

Against contractualization

The regime's response to workers' problems has been slow and ineffectual. Contractualization remains rampant. The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) claims that 10,000 contractuels have been regularized, most of them from SM and 7-11. This is only 1% of the total number of contractuels (416,000 according to the DOLE). Suspending the operations of six employment agencies does not suffice. This does not resolve gross contractualization and actually strengthens the big agencies.

In a meeting with DOLE secretary Silvestre Bello last October 3, the Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU) lambasted the "win-win solution" proposed by the Employers' Confederation of the Philippines and the Department of Trade and Industry. According to the KMU, this "solution" is no different from the earlier method of capitalist practices, aside from calling the labor agencies "service providers." The DTI defended contractualization saying hiring seasonal workers is "legitimate" and that stopping this will increase unemployment.

KMU further opposed the continued effectivity of DOLE Order 18-A. The agency's last order did not dismantle but

instead strengthened this. The DOLE did not respond to the appeals of striking workers at the Manila Cordage Company and Manco Synthetics Inc. in Laguna and Sorosoro Ibaba in Batangas. It also has not responded to Lucio Tan's dismissal of striking workers at Tanduay Distillers, despite the local DOLE office's orders. It has neglected the case of Nakashin International workers in Davao City which the local government has maneuvered to be declared illegal.

Likewise, Bello has distanced himself from the workers' central call for increased wages. This was despite the previous DOLE order to the regional wage boards to "study" the P125 across the board increase.

Meanwhile, contractual employees of the National Housing Authority (NHA) launched a symbolic protest in front of the NHA office in Quezon City on September 28. Led by the NHA Consolidated Union of Employees (CUE), they demanded job security and benefits as regular workers.

More than 50 percent of the 2,400 NHA employees are non-regular, mostly working on short-term but continuous project-based contracts. Many have already done work for three projects.

According to Santillan Dasmariñas of COURAGE, more than half a million government employees are non-regulars. They go by different names: emergency hired, memorandum of agreement workers, job order employees, among others.

The government should add plantilla positions to absorb contractual employees, COURAGE asserted.

The employees of the Department of Social Work and Development and the National Anti-poverty Commission have earlier pushed for the regularization of their contractual workers.



Recent mining suspensions are not enough

THE DEPARTMENT of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has suspended and called to account some 20 mining companies last September 27. This was after they were found guilty of noncompliance to environmental standards. Fifteen of these are in the CARAGA region, with eight located in the Dinagat islands.

Common among the suspended and soon-to-be suspended companies are violations in relation to siltation, dust, cutting down trees and unsystematic mining practices.

Among those immediately suspended are: SR Metals Inc., Hinatuan Mining Corp., Oriental Synergy Mining Corp. and five more. Lepanto Consolidated Mining, Marc-Ventures Mining and Development Corp., Oceana Gold Philippines, Filminera Resources Corp. and Strongbuilt Mining Development are on the verge of being suspended. Six companies were called in to answer to the DENR investigations. Half of these companies are into nickel mining.

On the other hand, the DENR cleared and authorized the continued operations of Philex Mining, Apex Mining

and Nickel Asia's three companies—the Tuba Nickel Corp., Cagdianao Mining Corp. and Taganito Mining Corp. These companies have long been subjected to the people's complaints. They have also been guilty of violating revolutionary laws. There is strong opposition to Philex's operations in Pacdal, Benguet after its dumping of mine tailings on nearby rivers became public. The Lumads also strongly oppose Apex Mining in Compostela Valley after its operations destroyed two of their main rivers. The company even has plans to start open-pit mining operations in the area. Meanwhile, the New People's Army has targeted the Taganito mines in 2011 for its rampant destruction of CARAGA's mountains and seas.

After the suspensions were made public, Bayan Muna-CARAGA and CARAGA Watch criticized the continuing operations of Claver Mineral Development Corp. (CDMC) despite DENR orders to shut it down. The CDMC has been suspended several times but the local DENR office has always permitted it to continue with its ore exports. The CDMC is owned by Cong. Prospero Pichay.

Peasant leader in Palawan killed

THE KILUSANG MAGBUBUKID ng Pilipinas (KMP or Peasant Movement of the Philippines) condemned the killing of a peasant leader in Coron, Palawan on September 20 in an effort to stop them from farming inside the 39,000-hectare Yulo King Ranch (YKR).

Ariel Figueroa was shot when he confronted Bureau of Animal Industry guards and Marine troopers who were destroying the farmers' crops.

According to the KMP, big landlords and landgrabbers capitalize on the absence of a genuine agrarian reform program in order to strengthen their control over YKR. They utilize paid goons, security guards and state forces in attacking the peasants.

Various peasant organizations have been demanding for the inclusion of 8,000 hectares from YKR under land reform. According to the KMP, only around 1,000 cattle benefit from the ranch for pasture. On

the other hand, thousands of farmers are impoverished, hungry and have no access to economic activities and for self-sufficiency.

Bogus land reform programs have exempted the YKR as these are supposedly unfit for farming, when in fact, farmers have been tilling the land for decades even before being declared as pasture by the government in 1975. Control of the YKR has merely transferred from Marcos' cronies to the different government agencies of succeeding regimes.

The KMP said further that government's control of YKR has led to the displacement of the indigenous Tagbanua, Calamianes and Cuyonin in order to pave the way for the establishment of pasture businesses, agro-forestry, tourism and others. Likewise, the Marine Battalion Landing Team-4 was stationed in the disputed lands to harass farmers and settlers fighting for their rights over the lands.

Groups commemorate 44th year of Martial Law

MORE THAN 2,000 rallyists gathered at Mendiola, Manila last September 22 to commemorate the 44th year of the imposition of Martial Law by the Marcos dictatorship. Newly-released consultants of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines joined the activity. The rallyists called for the immediate release of political prisoners detained on trumped-up criminal charges.

According to SELDA, a group of ex-detainees, the existence of political prisoners is a remnant of Martial Law. The state should stop denying that there are political prisoners or individuals in detention due to their political beliefs. During Martial law, there were 120,000 political prisoners. Now, some 525 are in jails in different parts of the country. Majority of these prisoners are peasants accused of being supporters of the New People's Army.

US interests in colonizing the Philippines

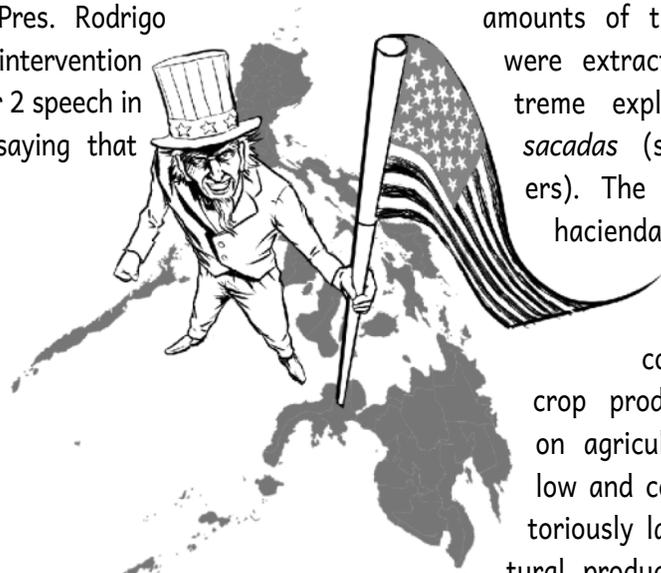
Almost everyday this past week, GRP Pres. Rodrigo Duterte has assailed the domination and intervention of US imperialism in the country. In his October 2 speech in Bacolod City, he condemned the latter in saying that "...They lived off... took the fat of the land."

Prior to this, he criticized the US for manipulating the peso in an effort to weaken the local economy. Duterte said that the Filipinos will not go hungry if the US pulls out its "aid". On October 6, he dared the US and the European Union to withdraw their aid because he will never kneel down to them.

In light of these, it is essential to have a deep understanding of the US' different aspects of domination which patriotic and national democratic forces have long been opposing. Among these is the economic aspect, which was the US's original *raison d'etre* for colonizing the country.

THE US conquered the Philippines in the later years of the 19th century as a rising capitalist power. An American senator, John F. Miller, encapsulated the basis for the US conquest of the Philippines. He said that "The time has come now... when new markets are necessary... in order to keep our factories running."

During this period, the US had successively taken control of Cuba, Puerto Rico, Hawaii, Guam and the Philippines. At the onset of the new century in 1900, various US officials in Asia, as well as businessmen, were pushing for the colonization of the Philippines in favor of their business interests. Within a few days after the 1898 Battle of Manila Bay between the US and Spain, the American Treasury Department sent one of its people to work on a "Report on the Financial and Industrial Conditions of the Philippines." After a few days, the US sent out



geologists to survey the country's metal and mineral resources, oil and other natural wealth.

Aside from being a source of cheap raw materials and more than seven million population to take in surplus capital and goods, the US businessmen saw the Philippines' role as a launching pad to the Chinese market and other parts of Asia.

American big business heavily influenced the conquest of the Philippines. One of these is the American Sugar Refining Company (Sugar Trust), at the time a sugar monopoly in the US. With the help of the state, the company managed to exempt imported Philippine sugar from high taxes. This was because as a US territory, sugar acquired from the Philippines was not considered imported. Through the imperialist state, the Sugar Trust seized more than 22,000 hectares of sugarcane plantation in Mindoro by declaring that these were not public lands.

Following this, land grabbing took off with the enactment of successive laws in 1902 such as the Land Law and Philippine Bill of 1902, and the Torrens system of land registration. In the vast sugarcane plantations, increasing

amounts of the land's riches were extracted through extreme exploitation of the *sacadas* (sugarcane workers). The US favored the hacienda owners and disregarded land reform. To encourage export-crop production, taxation on agricultural lands was low and collection was notoriously lax, while agricultural products were exempted.

With the Payne-Aldrich Act of 1909, the quota for sugar production for the US increased to 300,000 tons. Each year, the colonial government increased the production of raw materials, thereby intensifying exploitation. From P7 million in 1900, the amount of raw materials exported to the US increased to around P170 million, which by then had become the leading destination of the country's exports. (In 1933, 83% of Philippine exports went to the US.) Meanwhile, in only three years (1910-1913), imports from the US increased by 473%. By this time, the US had become the Philippines' main importer.

Colonial trade prevented industrialization and instead strengthened the power of landlords. The colonizers benefited from the hacienda system which yielded the raw materials for capitalist production. Shortage of land for the tillers became widespread while hacienda owners expanded their control over lands and intensified exploitation in order to profit from trading with the US. In politics, the hacienda owners became the strongest allies of the American colonizers and held key positions in government. AB

Remembering the Balangiga Uprising

On September 28, the country commemorated the 115th anniversary of the successful mass uprising against US occupation troops in Balangiga, Eastern Samar. In this occasion, the National Democratic Front-Eastern Visayas (NDF-EV) welcomed GRP President Rodrigo Duterte's stand against US intervention in the Philippines.

According to Fr. Santiago "Ka Sanny" Salas, spokesperson of the NDF-EV, they are ready to enter into a tactical alliance with the Duterte government within the framework of the on-going peace negotiations. They look forward to fruitful peace negotiations with the Duterte government to achieve socio-economic reforms that will include ending US neoliberal control of the Philippines.

Townfolk commemorate the Balangiga Uprising at the town's annual fiesta where the youth reenact the events on the encounter site. This refreshes the people's consciousness of the victory they achieved through their unity and struggle.

"The Balangiga uprising was a victory for patriotic Filipinos, and the so-called 'Balangiga massacre' wasn't committed by Filipinos but by US troops who in revenge killed up to 50,000 people in the town and the rest of Samar," said Fr. Salas. "In that light, we cite the Balangiga uprising as additional historical support for GRP President Duterte's calling attention to US atrocities in Mindanao during the Filipino-American War and afterwards," he added.

Struggle of the Balangiganon

It was on August 11, 1901, when troops of Company C, 9th U.S. Infantry occupied Balangiga. They encamped at the plaza, used public buildings and the church, molested women, forced the people to work for them, and prevented them from performing their own livelihood. They imprisoned 143 Balangiganon men in wooden pens and forced them to sleep standing in the rain, and the women allowed to bring in only drinking water. The few who got sick were replaced with new prisoners.

By early morning on September 28, 1901, two groups of men in women's clothing had positioned themselves in the church and near the soldiers' mess hall, with bolos and daggers hidden in the folds of their skirts, inside a coffin, and within bamboo tubes used for carrying water.

They launched the attack when church bells began pealing at five o'clock in the morning, joined by the other residents who used bolos, knives, pickaxes, clubs and other tools against the American soldiers' Krag rifles. They slashed the ropes of the kitchen tent where the soldiers were eating breakfast and hacked those who were caught inside the collapsed roof. Forty-four to 48 American soldiers were killed and the remaining more or less 20 wounded fled aboard a boat. The Filipinos seized 100 rifles and 28,000 rounds of ammunition from the Americans.

Although some soldiers were able to fight back, killing 28 Filipinos, the Balangiga Uprising is recorded in history as one of the US' worst defeats in a single battle in the Philippines. Until now, official documents of the US government remain silent on the actual number of casualties in this battle.

The Company G of the 9th Infantry sent reinforcements with machine guns and cannons, but the organized townspeople had already deserted the town. Twenty barrio folk who were caught in the town's periphery were brought to the plaza, doused with petroleum and set on fire. All houses were also burned.

The American troops took the church bells as war booty. Two of these are presently on display at the Warren Air Force Base in Cheyenne, Wyoming, while one is in South Korea. The US government refuses to let the bells go despite many appeals to return the bells to the people of Balangiga.

US troops' policy of atrocity

Atrocity is an official US government policy against the Filipino people. US Pres. Theodore Roosevelt himself ordered the "pacification" of the Philippines which was implemented by Gen. Jacob Smith in Samar. In retaliation for their severe defeat, the general ordered his men to kill and burn, to turn Samar into a "howling wilderness" so that "even birds could not live there." Males above ten years old were ordered massacred and whole towns were burned down.

The escaped priest who rang the bells was hunted down till he was captured in Tanawan, at the adjoining province of Leyte. He was brought to Calbiga, Samar, where he was tortured together with other arrested priests of Catubig and Basesey towns, where similar uprisings had been staged.

This policy of atrocity was echoed in other parts of the country. Brig. Gen. James Franklin Bell ordered to turn Luzon into a "desert waste" where tens of thousands of people were massacred, numerous towns were razed and hamletted, especially the whole



Batangas and Laguna provinces. This was reflected in turn by Gen. Hughes' campaign of massacre and burning in Iloilo and Capiz in Panay where women, children, and elderly people were wantonly killed.

Continuing atrocities and resistance

US imperialism's policy of aggression and atrocity continue today not only in Balangiga or the Philippines but all over the world, including Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan and others.

The NDF-EV called upon the people, especially the youth, to take a patriotic stand against US imperialism and fight for national freedom and democracy. "Let us continue the unfinished revolution of our revolutionary ancestors who rose up against US troops in Balangiga. Join the New People's Army to defend the motherland against US imperialism, fascism and all reaction." Salas declared. AB

Duterte declares end to joint military exercises

ON SEPTEMBER 28, GRP Pres. Rodrigo Duterte declared an end to joint military exercises between the US and the Philippines. In line with this, the Phiblex, held from October 4-12, will be the last exercise the US will hold during his term. The Phiblex is the third biggest joint exercise held in the country this year.

Using the Visiting Forces Agreement, the US has continuously conducted military exercises in the country since the 2000s. These have come under different forms and names (PALAH, EODX or Explosive Ordnance Disposal, SALVEX or Salvage Exercises, MAR-SURVEX or Maritime Surveillance Exercises, Balance Piston, Teak Piston, Handa Series and Flash Piston) before being integrated into extensive and large-scale exercises such as the Balikatan, CARAT (Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training) and Phiblex (Amphibious

Landing Exercises). In addition, smaller exercises are conducted, such as platoon-to-platoon combat trainings and other exercises between the Philippines and other Asian armies under US direction.

Each year, the US holds more than 125 multilateral and bilateral exercises between the Armed Forces of the Philippines, American troops and other US puppet armies and allies in different parts of Asia. These exercises are at the core of the US strategy to maintain permanent presence in Asia, gain entry into sovereign territories and maintain power projection against China. These also reinforce the chain-of-command between US military units and other puppet armies in Asia under the guise of "interoperability." In concurrence, the US also undertakes 700 port visits in different parts of Asia per year. AB

Colombia peace accord rejected

PEACE EFFORTS between the Santos government of Colombia and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) were frustrated after the final peace accord was rejected in a referendum last October 2 with a vote of 50.2% against 49.7%.

The said accord was signed last September 26 in Cuba before being subjected to a plebiscite. It was negotiated for four years in Cuba with the help of Norway. It sought to end 52 years of armed resistance by FARC.

The final accord, in essence, is a document of capitulation or surrender of the FARC. It provided for the process of disarming and demobilization of FARC and its transformation into a legal party. It makes the entire FARC undertake a process that is to be directed by the reactionary government of Colombia.

Under the agreement, all FARC armed fighters will be made to converge in 23 temporary hamlets or zones for "normalization" under the supervision of the United Nations. It also specified how guns and other

weapons will be registered and collected by the United Nations within six months. All collected weapons will be destroyed and made into a monument.

Fighters who register will be subjected to investigation to determine whether they have any criminal culpability over human rights violations.

Meanwhile, FARC itself will be transformed into a legal political party. It will be allotted three non-voting seats each in the upper and lower chambers of the Colombian parliament. They will be given five seats in 2018 and 2022 but will be obliged to run for elections in the next terms.

The accord signed by FARC leaders is being criticized because it does not contain substantial

changes in the social system. The question of land reform or breaking up monopolies, which sparked the 1964 uprisings which gave birth to the FARC, was not resolved in the accord. The accord only contained promises of rural infrastructure projects to be administered by FARC leaders.

The FARC entered the agreement after several years of relentless offensives by the Colombian government aided by US military assistance using the war against drugs as pretext. It is reported that there are currently around 8,000 FARC fighters.

Despite being gravely disadvantageous to the FARC, the accord was rejected by the reactionaries opposed to the Santos government. The past president of Colombia, Alvaro Uribe, was the main campaigner against the accord.

There are at least two other armed guerrilla groups in Colombia. This shows the grave crisis and class struggle in the country. AB