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INTERNATIONAL

JANUARY-MARCH 2026



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DEFEAT IMPERIALIST WARS THROUGH REVOLUTION

Defeat imperialist wars through revolution

Imperialism means war. Vladimir Lenin's analysis finds renewed relevance today as US imperialism launches a relentless pursuit to redivide the world and gain access to strategic oil resources in the Middle East by waging a war of aggression against Iran.

Barely a month since the US and Zionist Israel first attacked Tehran on February 28, at least 1,500 civilians have already been killed amid their escalating bombardments. In neighboring Lebanon, Israeli missile strikes have likewise resulted in mass casualties and widespread displacement. At least 1,000 civilians, including more than 100 children have been killed in Israel's attempt to invade and occupy Southern Lebanon.

In response to US-Israeli attacks, Iran has carried out calibrated missile and drone attacks on US military bases across the region such as Qatar, Oman, Kuwait, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. Despite being at a disadvantage, Iran continues to fiercely defend its independence. Contrary to Trump's desire to incite an uprising to overthrow the current anti-US government and install a puppet state, millions of Iranians and their allies are now even more united, pouring into the streets to denounce US military

aggression. Iran has every right to defend itself against US attacks and is justified in its measured military responses.

In contrast, madman Trump's warmongering posture and his brazen support for Israel has isolated him in the world stage. The supposedly "solid" NATO imperialist military alliance has shown signs of fracturing as multiple European states such as Spain, France, and Italy have distanced themselves from US demands to support the ongoing attacks against Iran. Even Trump's own counterterror chief Joe Kent resigned from his post decrying how "Iran posed no imminent threat" to the US. Trump used Iran's supposed nuclear threat as a pretext to attack the nation and assassinate its leader Ali Khamenei and other top security officials, mistakenly assuming that the death of its officials would lead to regime change.

Trump is increasingly isolated from the broad masses of the American people, whose daily concerns from the rising costs of living, lack of access to healthcare, to rampant ICE deportations and killings, stand in sharp contrast to the priorities reflected in the war he initiated. Far from enjoying unified support, large



sections of the population have expressed skepticism, frustration, and outright opposition to Trump.

Trump's insatiable drive to exert control over Iran reveals the fundamental contradiction of monopoly stage capitalism. In seeking control over oil resources and deliberately depleting the energy sources that flow to its imperialist rival China, the US has triggered a global economic crisis.

Prof. Jose Maria Sison correctly pointed out how "the US will continue to generate crisis in the world capitalist system" and how this worsening crisis will inevitably lead "to the escalation of state terrorism and wars of aggression." He further notes that "the imperialist powers continue to band together to shift the burden of the crisis to the working people and the underdeveloped countries."

Iran has closed the Strait of Hormuz, through which 20% of the world's energy resources pass, to the US. This move, in turn, has triggered higher oil prices, causing increased transportation and production costs. Supply chains which have already been strained by years of consecutive crisis, became even more fragile. Financial markets have reacted with instability, and governments scramble to manage the fallout.

The Philippine semicolonial and semifeudal economy, heavily dependent on imported fuel, has been particularly exposed. As oil prices spike due to the

conflict, transport workers are unable to eke out a living; farmers now face higher input costs; workers see real wages eroded while small businesses struggle to survive. The burden falls heavily on the working class and peasantry, who have the least capacity to absorb such economic shocks.

The bureaucrat capitalist Marcos Jr. regime remains deaf to the worsening conditions of the Filipino people and continues to impose heavier burdens on the masses. Instead of protecting the public from soaring fuel prices, Marcos Jr. colludes with the oil cartel to allow unregulated price hikes consistent with the Oil Deregulation Law. Instead, Marcos Jr. offers token measures such as limited subsidies, short-term aid, and occasional "free rides." Even the proposed four-day workweek is in reality a means for corporations to further squeeze daily wage earners who can least afford reduced incomes. Even as millions of Filipino migrants in the Middle East face heightened danger amid escalating war, Marcos Jr. has proven incapable of ensuring their safety. At home, the regime calls for "belt-tightening" from a population already struggling to survive, while it indulges in lavish expenditures abroad. Billions of public funds are squandered on joint military exercises like Balikatan that could otherwise address urgent social needs. Amid all these, fascist repression persists, targeting the revolutionary forces and the mass movement whose resistance continues to grow in the face of deepening crisis.



Prof. Sison reminds us yet again that these conditions of multiple crises “cause political turmoil within the ruling system and incite the people to wage all forms of resistance.” The chronic crisis inherent in the semicolonial and semifeudal order and the simmering anger of the Filipino people creates the most fertile ground to organize and mobilize the masses in their millions.

The Filipino people must unite and collectively fight for their welfare amid war and deepening crisis, and strengthen calls to end US aggression in Iran while supporting the Iranian people’s defense of national sovereignty. They must resist the use of the Philippines as a springboard for imperialist wars by calling for the dismantling of EDCA bases and other foreign military facilities, and the abrogation of unequal treaties that bind the country to US imperialist interests. At the same time, urgent economic demands must be advanced: the rollback of oil prices, repeal of the Oil Deregulation Law, removal of Value Added Tax (VAT) and other burdensome taxes, and salary increases to address the soaring cost of living. The just demands of jeepney drivers and operators for fare increases must also be supported as part of the broader struggle to defend the livelihood and welfare of the working masses.

In the final analysis, the US-Israeli war on Iran and the crisis that it creates presents an objective basis for the upsurge of our revolutionary struggle against imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism. As the revolutionary movement celebrates the 57th anniversary of the New People’s Army, we are reminded of the historic mission to advance the people’s democratic revolution by carrying out protracted people’s war. Winning the national democratic revolution is the biggest contribution of the Filipino people to the world proletarian struggle against imperialism and all reaction. 🚩

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LIBERATION INTERNATIONAL

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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RAISE HIGH THE RED BANNER OF ARMED REVOLUTION, CELEBRATE 57 YEARS OF THE NPA

By Ricardo Lozano

For more than half a century, the people's war waged by the New People's Army under the absolute leadership of the Party has stood as a defining force in the just struggle of the Filipino people for national and social liberation. Now marking its 57th year, the NPA stands firmly rooted in the daily struggles of the masses who continue to bear the brunt of the ever-worsening crises of a semicolonial and semifeudal Philippine society.

At its heart, the NPA addresses the basic demands of the peasantry for free land distribution. By advancing the interrelated aspects of agrarian revolution, mass base building and developing the armed struggle, the NPA charts the correct path toward genuine national sovereignty and social justice for the Filipino people.

Central to these efforts is the worker-peasant alliance forged under the leadership of the Party. By relying mainly on poor peasants, winning over middle peasants, and neutralizing the influence of rich peasants, the revolutionary movement has been able to isolate and confront the landlord class. This class line has guided the steady advance of the anti-feudal united front in the countryside.

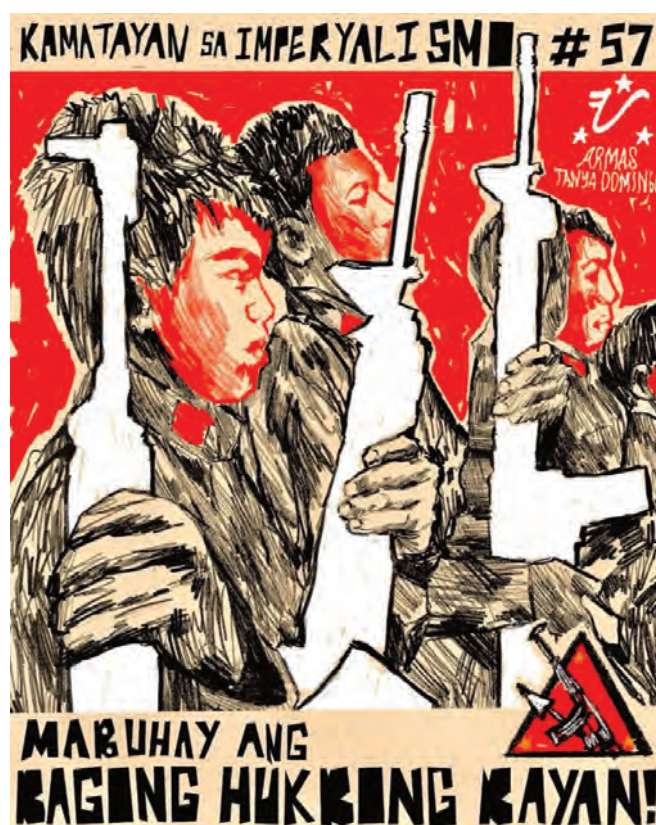
Agrarian revolution remains the main content of the national democratic revolution. Depending on what conditions allow, the NPA has carried out both minimum and maximum land reform programs. The minimum program includes rent reduction, the elimination of usury, fair pricing for agricultural produce, raising of wages of agricultural workers, and the promotion of production through cooperation and livelihood development. The maximum program pushes further by confiscating land from landlords and land grabbers and redistributing it free to the tillers, alongside the gradual and step-by-step development of agricultural cooperation.

The NPA plays a significant role in ensuring that these gains are defended. The NPA prevents landlords and the reactionary state from reversing the victories of agrarian evolution, dismantles large

landholdings seized by corporations and bureaucrat capitalists, and supports the redistribution of ancestral lands to national minorities. It also enforces policies of the people's democratic government, particularly against projects that displace farmers, reduce arable land, or harm the environment.

Through the advance of the people's war, organs of political power have been established across the countryside. Beginning at the barangay level, organizing committees are transformed into elected revolutionary bodies that form the backbone of the people's democratic government. These organs represent workers, peasants, and Party cadres, and they oversee governance in areas such as education, production, health, environmental protection, dispute resolution, and community defense.

In this process of building revolutionary power, participation has drawn broadly from the masses



across sectors, including women who take on important roles in organizing, production, and in the armed struggle itself. Their involvement reflects the wider effort to transform social relations shaped by feudal and patriarchal conditions especially in the countryside. At the same time, programs and policies within the revolutionary movement consciously address all forms of inequality and social injustice that affect different sectors of the people, including those rooted in gender.

In this context, two governments exist in the Philippines – the reactionary state of the ruling classes represented by the US-Marcos regime on the one hand, and the people's democratic government on the other. Contrary to claims that the revolutionary movement has achieved little in more than five decades of struggle, these organs of political power continue to expand, exercising Red political power over millions and in many areas, compelling even local officials of the reactionary state to cooperate in the programs of the people's democratic government.

The strength of the revolutionary movement has been forged through struggle. It has withstood the US-Marcos fascist dictatorship, and repeated attempts of post-Marcos regimes to dismantle it through various counterrevolutionary campaigns directed and supported by US imperialism.

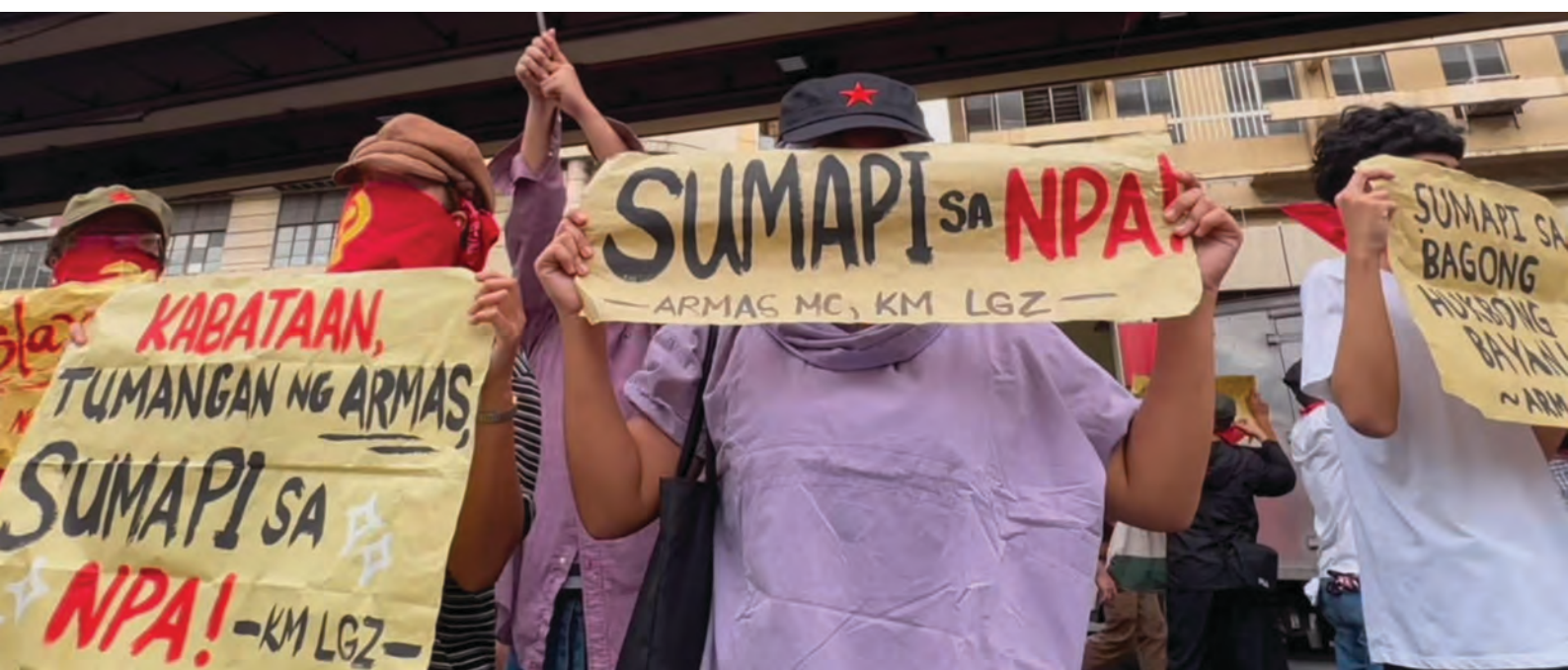
The Philippine revolution has gained widespread recognition and solidarity. The people's army in particular enjoys the support of other movements and support networks abroad. Overseas Filipinos, in particular, play an important role in amplifying the struggle, contributing to mass work and strengthening international ties with progressive organizations and movements.

In the broader global context of intensifying imperialist rivalries, wars, and systemic crises, the Philippine revolution positions itself as part of the wider struggle for national liberation, democracy, and socialism. Its persistence reflects not only its internal strength but also the continuing relevance of its analysis in a world marked by deepening inequality and exploitation.

Celebrating the 57th anniversary of the NPA takes stock of the great achievements of the national democratic revolution through protracted people's war, to honor the Red fighters and commanders, the revolutionary heroes and martyrs, and especially the toiling masses of workers and peasants. Most importantly, it inspires the entire revolutionary movement, the people's army and all other revolutionary forces and the people to continuously frustrate and eventually defeat the enemy towards the total victory of the people's democratic revolution.

The crisis of the ruling system, both domestically and globally, continues to worsen, intensifying the conditions that give rise to people's armed resistance. As long as imperialism, feudalism, and bureaucrat capitalism persist, the grounds for revolutionary struggle remain fertile. These same conditions of poverty, landlessness, unemployment, and foreign domination underscore the continuing necessity of the people's war.

After 57 years, the New People's Army endures and advances because it responds directly to the needs and aspirations of the Filipino people. Firmly rooted in the masses, the NPA continues to raise high the banner of revolutionary armed struggle aiming toward the realization of a Philippines that is truly independent, democratic, prosperous, socially just and progressive. 🇵🇭



ICC trial of Duterte lays bare the fascist crimes of the Philippine reactionary state

By Ricardo Lozano



After months of delays and nearly a decade of waiting for justice, the confirmation of charges hearing against Duterte on crimes against humanity at the International Criminal Court (ICC) finally pushed through from February 23 to 27, 2026. The trial exposed before the world the fascist crimes of the Philippine reactionary state.

The Filipino people, especially the families of victims of Duterte's so-called "war on drugs" closely followed the hearings, marking a long-awaited step toward justice for thousands who lost their loved ones under Duterte's bloody campaign.

"The Duterte ICC trial lays bare the fascist character of the Philippine reactionary state, its systematic repression of the poor and revolutionary forces, and the continuity of terror under Marcos Jr.," said Compatriots-NDF-Netherlands in a statement.

Led by the Duterte Panagutin Network, a protest was held outside the ICC in The Hague on the first day of the hearings. Participants included progressive groups based in the Netherlands, victims of the drug war, their supporters, and lawyers. In the Philippines, pre-hearing acts of remembrance and resistance took place: candle-lighting and a mass at Malate Church, forums and

protests at UP Diliman, and live-stream viewings across Cebu City.

The hearings confirmed the deadly consequences of Duterte's words and policies. Every time he called for killings, bodies followed. His promises of immunity to police and vigilantes were enforced through the state machinery: the courts, state-media, top to bottom government units and agencies, the political bureaucracy, etc.

Llore Pasco, whose two sons were killed in 2017, attended the hearings in The Hague. According to Pasco, *"Ang mga salita niya ang pumatay sa aming mga mahal sa buhay. Paulit-ulit niyang ipinag-utos na ubusin ang mga adik, at pinangakuan ng proteksyon ang mga pulis na sangkot sa mga pagpaslang."*

(His words killed our loved ones. He repeatedly ordered the wiping out of drug addicts, and he promised protection to the police involved in the killings.)

Sheerah Escudero, whose brother Ephraim was killed, showed reporters a photo of him: his body discovered on the street, his head wrapped in packing tape. Leading up to the hearings, she and other victims of Duterte's drug war endured online harassment and threats.

The hearings also exposed the continuity of fascist repression under Ferdinand Marcos Jr. Human rights groups warn that killings, red-tagging, harassment of activists, and the trampling of IHL in the suppression of the revolutionary movement continue today as it did during Duterte's time.

Under Duterte, several peace consultants of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines were targeted and killed by the reactionary regime. Among them were Randall "Ka Randy" Echanis who was murdered in his apartment in August 2020, Randy Malayao who was gunned down while asleep on a bus in 2019, as well as Eugenia Magpantay and Agaton Topacio, elderly NDFP negotiators who were killed on November 2020 in a police operation at their house in Angono, Rizal.

Human rights organizations and lawyers urged the ICC to confirm the charges so that the trial could proceed. They condemned Duterte's repeated but failed attempts to delay and derail through motions and petitions both the confirmation hearing and the trial itself.

Compatriots-NDF Netherlands asserted that "the ICC trial of Rodrigo Duterte is a significant victory for the Filipino people. It stands as a testament to the relentless struggle of the Filipino masses and the broad democratic forces who refused to allow the thousands killed under the so-called 'war on drugs' to be forgotten. The proceedings have also exposed before the world the systematic nature of the killings carried out during Duterte's rule. The evidence showed that the killings were part of a broader policy that targeted the poor and were used to suppress all forms of dissent."

Compatriots-NDF also emphasized that "the hearings at the ICC also demonstrated that a significant section of the Filipino diaspora stands firmly against the tyrannical rule of despots like Duterte, and of fascist leaders like Marcos Jr."

The Pre-Trial Chamber 1 judges are expected to issue their decision on whether to proceed to trial within 60 days, or by the end of April 2026. If confirmed, the trial could begin towards the end of the year. 🇵🇭



PEOPLE'S STRIKES AGAINST OIL PRICE HIKES

By Raya Andres - Montañosa



The US-Israel's war of aggression against Iran has driven a surge in oil prices in the world, gravely affecting import-dependent countries such as the Philippines. To date, the price of crude oil has hit \$116 a barrel.

On March 19, 2026, the Philippine transport group PISTON organized a transport strike against oil price hikes demanding the following: rollback of oil prices, removal of the Value Added Tax and excise taxes, junking of the Oil Deregulation Law, state control over the oil industry, fare increases, higher wages across the board, and an end to the US-Israel wars of aggression against Iran and Lebanon.

The protest forced the Marcos Jr.'s regime to provide Php 5,000 subsidies for public transport drivers and to order the suspension of excise taxes. However, the distribution of subsidies proved chaotic and a nightmare for many drivers. They lined up the whole day only to receive nothing, as their names were missing or removed from the list of beneficiaries.

A 72-year old driver collapsed and suffered from seizure while waiting in line. First-aid responders attributed this to prolonged hunger.

While the subsidy provided temporary relief for many drivers, who had stopped plying their routes as they barely keep a living, transport groups continue to call for long-term solutions, including lowering the prices of fuel and basic commodities. According to PISTON, the 5,000-peso aid only goes to fuel costs which means it is the oil cartels that the state is actually subsidizing.

Public transport drivers suffer from the rising fuel prices

A jeepney driver plying the Manila – Makati route works more than 12 hours but earns only Php 300, as diesel prices have soared to over Php 100 per liter. Even after negotiating a reduction in his boundary from Php 1,000 to Php 800, he is left with barely enough, setting this amount aside for the next day's grind.

Marissa, the wife a PISTON driver, shares that before the oil price hikes, her husband earned between Php 700 and Php 800 a day for 12 hours of work. Due to oil price hikes, he now earns only Php 200 to Php 300 a day. With this income simply not enough, Marissa and her family survive only on rice with bagoong (fermented fish paste), and at times, go to bed hungry.

Another jeepney driver laments that after working for the whole day, his earnings go to diesel amounting to Php 1,200 and to his boundary¹ payment to the operator, leaving him with only Php56 pesos—not even enough to buy a kilo of rice priced at Php 60.

A Grab driver from General Santos City breaks down his Php 1,953 earnings after 12 hours of work: Php 1,000 for fuel, Php 900 for car lease (boundary) and Php 50 for phone load, leaving him with only Php 3.00 for his family.

¹ boundary is a system in the Philippines in which a driver pays a fixed amount to the owner-operator of a public utility vehicle for the right to operate it, typically for 12 hours. The driver keeps any remaining earnings after paying the boundary and covering fuel and maintenance costs.

The groups also argued that removing excise taxes on fuel would benefit the drivers, their families, and the public consumer. However, the suspension will only take effect 15 days after Malacañang's announcement.

Marcos Jr. likewise declared a state of National Energy Emergency on March 25, 2026 despite insisting a day earlier that there was sufficient energy supply. His regime promised fuel supply stability and financial subsidies for the transport sector. For transport groups, however, this response is nothing more than a band-aid solution.

To further reiterate the strikers' demands, a two-day nationwide people's strike was held from March 26 to 27, 2026 by a newly formed group, the No to Oil Price Hike Coalition. It is an alliance of drivers and operators of public utility jeepneys (PUJ), UV Express, MC Taxi, transport network vehicle services (TNVS), buses, and tricycles, as well as of motorists, commuters and other sectors.

The strike was widely supported, demonstrating the collective strength and unity of the transport workers, various communities and the broader masses. The coalition is planning to stage larger people's strikes in the coming days. 🚩





Two women of peace

By Jose Emilio Jacinto III

Julie de Lima and Coni Ledesma are two women among countless other revolutionaries at the forefront of the Filipino people's quest for a just and lasting peace. Julie and Coni have, for the longest time stood out as representatives of the NDFP in the peace negotiations with the GRP to address landlessness, agrarian underdevelopment and industrial backwardness that are the roots of the armed conflict and civil war.

Since the peace talks with the GRP started in the 1990s abroad, Julie and Coni have played significant and enduring roles as members of the NDFP peace negotiating panel. They were part of the NDFP panel that forged important agreements such as the Hague Joint Declaration, the Joint Agreement on Security and Immunity Guarantees (JASIG) and the Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CAHRIHL) – the same agreements that are blatantly being undermined by the current US-Marcos regime.

The Hague Joint Declaration laid down the fundamental framework for negotiations, affirming that substantive issues such as social, economic, and political reforms should be addressed as the basis for resolving the armed conflict. JASIG provided essential guarantees for the safety and immunity of negotiators, enabling both parties to participate in talks without fear of arrest or harassment. Meanwhile, CAHRIHL established mutually binding commitments to uphold human rights and international humanitarian law, offering a concrete mechanism to protect civilians and regulate the conduct

of forces on both sides. Taken together, these agreements helped create a pathway to pursue just and lasting peace in the negotiating table.

During the actual conduct of the peace talks, both representatives stood firmly behind revolutionary principles and diplomacy that guide the negotiations. Coni would be the NDFP panel's technical and logistics organizer, and the panel's "bridge" to the third party facilitator (RNG) in the talks. In this role, Coni would relay to the RNG the NDFP panel's wishes for the smooth conduct of the talks. And after every debacle in the entire process during the talks, Coni would be able to explain to the NDFP panel staff in simple ways the intricacies that brought the talks, for instance, to a standstill. On the other hand, she would be the panel's first broadcaster to announce joyously the achievements of the panel in every important phase of the talks. As part of CAHRIHL's implementation, Coni was appointed as member of the NDFP's Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC).

Julie, on the other hand, is also a panel member since the 1990s, and her appointment in 2020 as NDFP interim peace panel chairperson and later as chairperson, signals a new phase in the talks as its resumption faces greater obstacles with the GRP's move to dismiss previously agreed HJD and the JASIG, firmly reminding the Filipino people that "in the peace negotiations, we are constantly guided by the mutually acceptable principles of national sovereignty, democracy and social justice".

In the formal peace talks, Julie took an unassuming and low-profile role allowing the more senior members of the panel to engage the GRP in discussions and to be able to focus on the grueling work on the ground, chairing the NDFP Reciprocal Working Committee on Social and Economic Reforms (RWC-SER) which produced the NDFP draft Comprehensive Agreement on Social and Economic Reforms (CASER). The work on the NDFP CASER draft started way back in the late 1990s, and Julie worked hard to assemble a formidable lineup of consultants – mass leaders from workers and peasant mass organizations, academics, well-known economists, researchers, church leaders and allies from the national bourgeoisie. Julie led in this painstaking and arduous project that took more took more than a decade to produce.

Described as still a work in progress, the draft NDFP CASER is a “radical path of socioeconomic transformation” and a blueprint of a nationalist and democratic program designed to address the root causes of the armed conflict in the country by dismantling land monopoly and promoting national industrialization, and a program that upholds the interests of working people—specifically farmers, workers, and national minorities—over the interests of foreign and domestic monopoly capital.

Despite the refusal of the US-Marcos regime to resume talks and address the roots of the armed conflict, Julie has tirelessly issued calls on peace advocates and people’s organizations to demand that the GRP and NDFP build further on the mutual agreements already made on human rights and international humanitarian law and to move forward to realizing a comprehensive agreement on social and economic reforms, and political and constitutional reforms.

The real and essential work of these two women of peace, however, can best be seen outside the negotiating table. Julie has long dedicated her life as a revolutionary, and her expertise as a researcher, teacher, organizer and educator for the national democratic revolutionary movement. Professor Sison's enduring body of works have the undeniable footprint of Julie as she and Joma are wedded together in the same

ideological and political standpoint, viewpoint and method. Also notable were, and are, Julie's countless contributions, inputs and tireless efforts to the revolutionary women's movement and the building of the revolutionary united front.

After the passing of Comrade Sison in 2022, Julie took on the task as guardian of Sison's body of works. Prof. Sison's writings and revolutionary mementos are now entrusted to a foundation created in Sison's honor and memory to help propagate the CPP founder's legacy to a growing generation of new and young activists and revolutionaries.

Coni, on the other hand, is a household name, so to speak, in the international work of the NDFP. Together with her late comrade-partner, Louie Jalandoni, Coni played an instrumental role in establishing the presence of the NDFP in Europe, the building of the solidarity movement for the revolutionary struggle in the homefront. As international representative of MAKIBAKA, the underground revolutionary mass organization of Filipino women, Coni led in echoing the women's struggle in the Philippines to the international stage. As head of the NDFP Special Office for the Protection of Children, Coni constantly monitors and strongly speaks out against the GRP's grave violations of Filipino children's rights, especially those who become victims of the GRP's dirty war against the people.

Despite their advanced age, these two women of peace remain as unwavering as ever in their commitment and belief that only in addressing and vanquishing landlessness, fascism, bureaucratic corruption and foreign domination, and the building of a genuinely free, democratic and prosperous Philippines will genuine and lasting peace flourish.

In the meantime, as Julie would always resolutely emphasize, with or without peace talks, the NDFP continues the quest for peace by pursuing the main content of the national democratic revolution - agrarian revolution to liberate the peasant masses from landlord exploitation and oppression, and the Filipino working masses in general enslaved by the semifeudal and semicolonial ruling system. 🚩



WOMEN WORKERS AND PEASANTS IN STRUGGLE

By Raya Andres - Montañosa

Structural inequalities embedded in semicolonial and semifeudal Philippine society, which perpetuates a feudal-patriarchal system and culture, have long entrenched women's marginalized position within the economy. Women workers endure low wages and precarious working environments. In the countryside, women peasants face landlessness, militarization, and displacement—conditions that undermine both their livelihoods and their security. At the same time, they suffer gender-based violence and exploitation that this system legitimizes.

Amid the ongoing economic crisis brought about by imperialist neoliberal policies of the Marcos Jr. regime, their situation is further worsened by the US-Israel war of aggression against Iran. As oil prices soar, the cost of basic commodities continues to rise, while wages and farm incomes remain stagnant.

Yet, they refuse to remain silent in the face of these oppressive conditions. Women workers and peasants resist and organize, advancing collective struggles for decent living wages, better jobs, national industrialization, safe workplaces, and genuine land reform.

Women workers

The 2024 Philippine data shows that women's labor participation remains lower at 52.3% compared to 75.2% for men, despite women comprising nearly half of the total labor force. At the same time, many women are concentrated in the informal sector, where wages are lower, and there is little to no access to benefits and labor protection. Kilusan ng Manggagawang Kababaihan (KMK, or Women Workers' Movement), for instance, cites the case of women packers and sorters for e-commerce companies and their subcontracting agencies.

During the onslaught of Typhoon Uwan in November 2025, work was not suspended to accommodate the companies' major promotional sale, known as "11.11". For a meager wage of Php 550.20 (€7.88 at an exchange rate of Php 69.84), which is 20 pesos below the approved daily minimum, women workers were forced to wade through flood waters in Bulacan to reach logistics hubs.

Furthermore, as an austerity measure in response to rising oil prices, Marcos Jr signed Memorandum Circular 114 to implement the Compressed Work Week (CWW), in which the standard 40-hour workweek is compressed into four days. This means that instead of working eight hours a day, workers are required to work 10 to 12 hours. Beyond concerns over overtime pay, working more than 8 hours exposes workers to unsafe and exhausting working conditions. More importantly, the 8-hour work day is a historic victory of the working class against excessively long working days – a hard-won right that protects workers' need for rest and humane conditions.

The CWW measure represents yet another way in which the Marcos Jr's regime shifts the burden of the

crisis to the people. Women workers, in particular, bear the brunt of this intensified burden, as longer working hours deepen their double burden of paid labor and unpaid care work. At the same time, women in working-class households are compelled to take on additional domestic and income-generating responsibilities to sustain their families, as heavy consumption taxes such as VAT and excise taxes further strain household incomes.

The current crisis presents a cruel irony for women workers: more and more women are compelled to seek work abroad, while women migrant workers are simultaneously threatened by the ongoing US-Israeli war of aggression in the Middle East. According to the Center for Women's Resources (CWR), around 3,000 Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) are currently facing charges, including 24 on death row. Likewise, many are vulnerable to human trafficking, illegal recruitment and scams.

Yet, many still take their chances and leave, despite these risks.

In 2024, around 1.25 million—more than half of the total 2.19 million OFWs—were women, many of whom are concentrated in low-paid and precarious sectors such as domestic work, caregiving, and service work. In 2025, a significant number of OFWs were deployed to the Middle East, such as the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Kuwait. In return, the Marcos Jr's regime received a record-high USD 35.64 billion in cash remittances in 2024. Despite this, it has failed to ensure the safe return of Filipinos or provide adequate protection, especially for victims of human trafficking and exploitative labor practices. Worse, it remains tone-deaf to calls to dismantle VAT and excise taxes, and to create jobs at home instead of promoting labor-export.



Women peasants

In the countryside, women peasants carry the same heavy economic burden. They shoulder both domestic responsibilities and agricultural labor, working in the fields alongside their husbands or as daily wage farmworkers, and because of their gender, earn less than men.

For instance, in Panay, a female farmworker earns Php 270 per day while male farmworkers earn between Php 350 and 400 per day. Sugar farmworkers in Negros receive even less, with a meager piece-rate wage of as low as Php 82 per day.

As land tillers, peasants face the persistently rising costs – from seeds to basic commodities, especially amid the oil price hikes, forcing them to rely heavily on usurers, often under high interest and exploitative terms.

According to Amihan (National Federation of Peasant Women), the oil price hikes have driven up the price of rice from Php 48 per kilo to between Php 55 and Php 70, leaving many peasant families hungry—a burden that falls heavily on women, who manage household budgets and food.

As a result, many peasant women are forced to seek additional sources of income just to meet their basic needs, especially during the lean season. The jobs available to them in the countryside are often menial and low-paid, leaving women vulnerable to abuse and violence.

Beyond this, peasants also struggle to sell their produce at viable prices. This further limits women peasants' already low and unstable incomes. Due to the Rice Liberalization Law, the Philippines imports rice from other countries, causing the local farmgate price of palay to drop sharply. In 2019, the average farmgate price fell to Php 15.63 per kilo, down from Php 20.14 the previous year. In some areas, prices dropped even further, ranging between Php 7 and Php 10 per kilo. Additionally, during typhoons, farms and crops are often severely damaged, leaving peasants with no harvest, thus, drowning them in debt.

At the root of these conditions is feudalism—a system that enables big landlord-compradors to own and control the vast majority of agricultural land in the country. As a result, landlessness persists. Without land of their own, peasants are forced to rely heavily on landlords and usurers for capital, including seeds and farm inputs.

According to IBON Foundation, 78.2%—or roughly seven out of ten—agricultural families are landless, while only 4.3 million have ownership of or secure rights to the land they till.

Marcos Jr. refuses to genuinely address persistent landlessness. Despite decades of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP), many peasants remain landless. His neo-liberal and populist agrarian programs such as the New Agrarian Emancipation Act (NAEA)—a debt relief measure, and the World Bank-funded Support to Parcelization of Lands for Individual Titling (SPLIT), amount to token measures that fail to resolve the problem of landlessness.

Instead, the Marcos Jr's regime unleashes state terror and fascism against urban and peasant communities through its counterrevolutionary and anti-development scheme - the National Action Plan for Unity, Peace and Development (NAP-UPD) 2025 – 2028, primarily enforced by NTF-Elcac together with the mercenary Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Philippine National Police (PNP).

Since the start of his presidency, there have been thousands of documented human rights violations, including killings, abductions, torture, arrest, and detention, as well as, forced evacuation and displacement. Intensified militarization involving combat operations, aerial strafing and bombing force residents to leave their homes and farms. Likewise, the Balikatan war exercises directly threaten the women peasants' livelihood and contributes to a climate of fear in affected communities.



Women workers' and peasants' struggles

Women workers and peasants firmly resist these oppressive and exploitative conditions. Beyond organizing in factories, migrant communities, and rural areas, they conduct studies, launch sectoral campaigns, mobilize communities, and build alliances with other women to advance the rights and welfare of workers and peasants. Across sectors, these struggles are interconnected, rooted in the same conditions of exploitation, landlessness, and economic uncertainty.

At present, the women workers' movement calls for across-the-board wage increases, the nationalization of the oil industry, and the junking of the Oil Deregulation Law, which enables the "Big Three" (Petron, Caltex, and Shell) to monopolize oil prices, as well as the removal of VAT and excise taxes. Together with other women workers' groups, they also push for stronger implementation and amendments to the Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Law and endorse the Safe World of Work Bill to ensure workplaces free from gender-based violence.

Women migrant workers demand better jobs at home, better protection and security abroad, a safety net upon returning, and an end to the labor-export policy.

Peasant women demand genuine land reform - land for those who till it. They also support the broader peasant movement's call for a Php 50,000 subsidy for farmers affected by rising production costs.

In response, Marcos Jr's regime weaponizes the law and intensifies state repression to suppress struggling women workers and peasants, resulting in mounting human rights violations. Leaders are red-tagged and terror-tagged, vilified by the NTF-Elcac, and often arrested and imprisoned on trumped-up charges—or worse, abducted, forcibly disappeared, or killed.

Cases in point include the red- and terror tagging of Migrante Philippines Chairperson Criselda Fiel; Ugnayan ng Manggagawa sa Agrikultura-Isabela leader Dominga Aberion; Amihan leader Miriam Villanueva; and Nexperia union leader Mary Ann Castillo, as well as the disappearance of women workers' organizer Loi Magbanua, among many others.

Despite these vicious and relentless attacks, women workers and peasants continue to resist and push back against exploitation and state fascism. As they dare to struggle and dare to win alongside broader people's movements, they advance the fight for national industrialization and genuine agrarian reform, and an end to gender-based violence rooted in the feudal-patriarchal system. 



MEMOIRS OF A GUERRILLA

By Ka Uma, political officer, NPA platoon
Contribution from MAKIBAKA

It was on the eve of the new millenium, in 1999, when I went to the countrysides on an integration program with the New People's Army (NPA).

I was 20 years old then, a student at the university, and was already a member of the underground Communist Party of the Philippines. I realized that genuine change in our society could only come through a people's revolution. I resolved to dedicate my life to serving the people as a Red fighter.

In practice, however, it took me five years to convince myself that I could really be effective as a guerrilla fighter. Life in the countrysides was very difficult, and I had to fight off my desire for the conveniences of urban life, and for the comfort of living in one's own home.

Besides, I am a lesbian. I was wary of coming out in the beginning. I knew that the Party guaranteed everyone's right to choose their sexual orientation. I had read "On the Relation of Sexes"—a document that spells out the Party's principles on marriage, courtship and building a proletarian family, but I was still afraid of ridicule and discrimination. Eventually, I fell in love with a female comrade, and we decided to come out. It was awkward in the beginning. There was talk that some male comrades who had planned to woo either me or my partner were "frustrated". It became the subject of jokes among our comrades. After the prescribed period, our comrades arranged for our Party wedding. The marriage, however, ended a few years later when my partner suffered a trauma and eventually decided to leave the movement. I filed a case of divorce, which the Party granted after a series of talks to try to patch things up. A few years after, I fell in love with another female comrade. We got married in Party ceremonies. She remains my comrade and partner to this day.

Living with the masses was a source of great fulfillment for me. It helped that my first assignment was an area where the barriofolk—even, and especially the women—have had years of experience with guerrilla war. Years of abuse they had suffered when the military set up camp nearby have militated them for the struggle. Some of them had sons who have sacrificed their lives for the war. While we were their fighting army, they also served as our source of strength—they were our eyes and ears, and made our work of consolidating and expanding our revolutionary front relatively easy.

I steadily rose from the ranks, from being a new and inexperienced fighter to being a political officer of the platoon.

The real test would come soon enough, however, when a large-scale military operation in the area resulted in a series of encounters with enemy forces, wounding and killing a number of my comrades. I was overcome with grief for my comrades who fell, especially since it became clear that several weaknesses on our part—those who were in leadership positions—made us vulnerable to the attacks.

My comrades' morale plunged, conservatism was high among us. We lost some of our best comrades. I experienced a crisis of confidence, and refrained from volunteering for counter operations against the enemy, worried that my comrades would not have confidence in my military leadership.

It took quite some time, with the help of a series of assessments and criticism-self-criticism, presided over by some senior Party cadres, for many of us to overcome our desire to leave the revolution. It was particularly hard for me, as both my parents were sick and very old, with no one to take care of them. I sought the help of comrades in the city and I also took a short leave to talk to my kin in our hometown. When my father died, I was able to visit his wake one evening. My relatives consoled me, saying I have no reason to feel guilty as I was doing something honorable, and those words strengthened me when I went back to the countryside. But the next blow came when my partner was captured in an encounter with enemy forces.

I knew I had to steel myself up. I was facing a personal crisis, yet I also knew that it was an urgent task to help raise my comrades' fighting will. I prepared well for assessments and meetings in order to help my comrades get a good grasp of our situation, our strengths as well as our weakness. I learned the importance of getting a detailed and objective view of events in order to draw up lessons and better prepare for the work and battles ahead. Whenever possible, we went back to the sites of battles to analyze the circumstances and other important details. Through such painstaking process, we eventually were able to launch a string of successful tactical operations against the fascist military forces with the invaluable help of the organized masses in the area.

Being a Party member operating as a fulltime guerrilla fighter for many years, I am always conscious of the need for constant study, both in terms of constantly evaluating the situation, and relying on the teachings and writings of the great Marxist leaders to guide my practical work. Criticism-self-criticism sessions taught me to be more patient, especially when struggling out ideas with comrades who are less experienced, and those who are wont to have a rather narrow view of the problems we face. This has not been easy, and I had been once severely criticized for an ultra-left handling of a comrade who sometimes made an issue of my gender, saying during arguments that I was "only a woman". He eventually asked to be deployed to another work.

I am currently assigned to "guerrilla zone preparation"—which means that the revolutionary base is not yet established. This requires us to be very mobile, not only because of the military dangers but also because of the need to reach as many villages as possible in order to quickly build a revolutionary base. It also means carrying very heavy load everyday—anywhere between 10-15 kilos, excluding the guns assigned to us.

I remain unfazed, however. I remain fully convinced there is no way to liberate our people but through armed revolution. Also, things have become a lot lighter for me, as my partner is now back beside me, having been released from prison through the help of friends and comrades in the city. 🍷

RED FIGHTERS STRIKE BACK: NPA UNITS FOIL MULTIPLE AFP ATTACKS

By Ricardo Lozano

A series of reports from various commands of the New People's Army (NPA) detail intensified armed encounters across the Philippine countryside in the first quarter of 2026, marked by rapid-response offensives, defensive maneuvers, and punitive actions against fascist military elements and intelligence assets.

On January 1, in Abra de Ilog, Occidental Mindoro, a unit of the NPA engaged a large combined enemy force consisting of multiple infantry battalions and four attack helicopters. The encounter occurred as the NPA unit was hosting youth researchers conducting immersion studies among local communities.

Despite facing overwhelming force, the guerrillas executed active defense operations, successfully protecting both themselves and the civilians present.

More recently, on March 23, an NPA unit under the Lucio De Guzman Command launched a preemptive strike against troops of the 203rd Infantry Brigade (IBde) in Sitio Danlog, Barangay Monteclaro, San Jose, Occidental Mindoro. The military unit was reportedly preparing to mount an attack when Red fighters opened fire.

According to spokesperson Ka Madaay Gasic, the NPA unit fought "valiantly" before executing a full and safe withdrawal without casualties. He said the encounter

directly contradicts claims by the 203rd IBde that guerrilla forces no longer exist on the island.

Gasic further criticized intensified military operations under the government's National Action Plan for Unity, Peace and Development (NAP-UPD), describing them as "destructive and burdensome" to local communities. He added that the peasants' and Mangyan's only hope for having land, better lives, peace and an end to militarization is through the NPA and the revolutionary movement.

In Tanjay City, Negros Oriental, three successive encounters on February 15 between NPA fighters and the 11th IB resulted in the deaths of five soldiers. The clashes began at dawn and continued over a span of 90 minutes.

NPA Negros Oriental spokesperson Ka Estrella Banagbanag said "The Red fighters foiled the attack by seizing the initiative," she said, disputing military claims that the presence of the NPA in the region had been neutralized.

Meanwhile, in Southwest Negros, the Armando Sumayang Jr Command reported a series of harassment operations throughout March in celebration of the NPA's 57th anniversary. These included coordinated strikes against 15th IB detachments and operating troops in Candoni and Cauayan towns on March 1, 9, and 16.



In Northern Samar, the Rodante Urtal Command reported multiple successful operations against the 19th IB in the latter half of 2025. These included:

- A December 15 ambush in Las Navas, killing two soldiers and wounding several others
- A December 10 defensive action in Silvino Lobos, where one soldier was killed

The command asserted that these actions contradict official government claims that guerrilla fronts in the region have been dismantled.

Across Negros Occidental and Leyte, NPA units carried out a series of punitive actions against individuals accused of acting as military informants or committing crimes against civilians.

- In Jaro, Leyte, an alleged intelligence asset of the 93rd IB was executed following a decision by a revolutionary court.
- In Escalante City, two individuals identified as intelligence operatives were targeted in separate operations, with firearms and documents seized.

- Another operation on March 4 targeted an individual accused of murder, who had previously been released from police custody.

Additionally, Red fighters disabled heavy equipment belonging to an agricultural enterprise in Himamaylan City, rendering multiple vehicles inoperable.

Across all reported incidents, NPA commands emphasized a strategy of “active defense,” describing it as a method of countering superior military force through mobility, intelligence, and local support.

Throughout the reported encounters, NPA spokespersons emphasized that the sustained support of local communities has been crucial. Residents provided timely information about troop movements, sheltered Red fighters during operations, and helped sustain logistics in the most remote areas.

“As long as exploitation persists,” Banagbanag stated, “the people’s army will continue to strengthen.” 



REJOICE, RECTIFY, REMEMBER

EXCERPTS FROM JULIETA DE LIMA'S
BIRTHDAY TRIBUTE TO KA JOMA

By Julie De Lima



NOTE: This is an excerpt from the full tribute article which can be accessed via josemariasison.com

Jose Maria Sison, or as many of you knew him, Ka Joma, was born from one of the richest families in Cabugao, Ilocos Sur, the sixth of seven surviving children, on February 8, 1939. Today would have been his 87th birthday.

In its tribute to Joma, the CPP Second Congress called him “the torch bearer of the international communist movement. ... and stated that with the “treasure of Marxist-Leninist-Maoist work that Ka Joma has produced over the past five decades of revolutionary practice, the Party is well-equipped in leading the national democratic revolution to greater heights and complete victory in the coming years.”

Let me sum up Joma’s ideological, political and organizational achievements. He adopted the fundamental principles in the three components of Marxism—materialist philosophy, political economy and scientific socialism—as laid down by Marx and Engels and applied these on the concrete conditions of his own country.

By following Lenin’s identification of the law of the unity of opposites, as the most fundamental of the laws of contradiction, he deepened our understanding of the law of materialist dialectics. From Mao Zedong, he learned how social practice encompasses production, class struggle and scientific experiment as the source of correct ideas. He learned the dialectical relationship between knowledge and social practice; as well as that of perceptual and rational levels of knowledge in the process of cognition.

He learned from all our great Marxist predecessors that in general, the forces of production are primary to the relations of production; and the mode of production is primary to the superstructure. But in the process of sustained revolutionary change, the resulting relation of production and superstructure can play the primary role. The former releases the forces of production from the old fetters and the latter enhances the mode of production.

He taught us what he learned from his Marxist predecessors that class character is determined not only by the ownership of the means of production, the role in the production process and the distribution of the social product but also by the mode of thinking by which social production is carried out. He understood and taught us the dialectical relationship between social being and social consciousness and laid stress on the need for us to continually revolutionize our consciousness through the process of cultural revolution.

He defined culture as the reflection of economics and politics, with which it has a dialectical relationship. In art and literary theory, he called for the reflection of the revolutionary class struggle and for revolutionary workers, peasants and soldiers to be depicted as heroes. He practiced revolutionary romanticism in writing poetry and declared that art and literature are indispensable methods for educating the masses.

He was inspired by the teachings of his great predecessors, regarding historical materialism, particularly the state and

revolution in class society. He passionately espoused the revolutionary essence of Marxism; asserting that the proletariat must wage class struggle, seize political power, and establish the socialist state as a class dictatorship of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie.

In revolutionary practice, he stressed the importance of the concrete analysis of concrete conditions, social investigation and mass work, combatting all forms of idealism, subjectivism and “Left” and Right opportunism and taking the mass line in order to transform correct ideas into a material force.

He acquired a deep understanding of the critique of capitalism and outline of scientific socialism by Marx and Engels as well as the critique of monopoly capitalism or modern imperialism and the realization of socialist revolution and construction by Lenin and Stalin.

He extended and further developed our knowledge of Marxist political economy and scientific socialism by studying and the positive and negative lessons from building socialism in the Soviet Union, by leading the criticism and repudiation of Lavaite revisionist renegades in our country in the first rectification movement in preparation for the reestablishment of the Communist Party of the Philippines in 1968 on the theoretical foundation of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism.

He was guided by the teachings of the great Lenin regarding the building of the Communist Party as the advanced detachment of the working class. He introduced the rectification movement as the method for ensuring the ideological, political and organizational strengthening of the proletarian revolutionary party.

He pursued the theory and strategic line of protracted people’s war that guides the revolutionary forces in

various forms of armed struggle. He led the Party to engage in the revolutionary united front to arouse, organize and mobilize the people in their millions for the armed revolution. At the same time, he ensured the vanguard role, independence and initiative of the working class party. He advocated the building of organs of political power at various levels—barrio, municipality, province and upward—to constitute the people’s democratic state.

He led our Party and other revolutionary parties worldwide to stand for socialism and repudiate modern revisionism by exposing the degeneration of the Soviet Union from being socialist to being monopoly bureaucrat capitalist with a general tendency towards social-fascism; by opposing the neocolonialism of the two superpowers, US imperialism and Soviet social imperialism and most important of all by waging the Philippine revolution self-reliantly and in the spirit of international solidarity and proletarian internationalism.

He integrated the universal theory of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism on the concrete semicolonial and semifeudal conditions of the Philippines under the class leadership of the proletariat within the context of the world proletarian-socialist revolution and by doing so, we can be proud of him as a great Communist thinker and leader.

Ka Joma lives on in the perseverance of the revolutionary forces and masses in the struggle against imperialism and all reaction. Let us carry on his legacy by winning the battle for democracy to open the gates to socialism. Let us build on the strong Marxist-Leninist-Maoist foundation that Ka Joma helped build with his works and deeds and advance the people’s epic—the revolutionary movement as an endless movement of strength. 



Maria Lorena Barros

By Raya Andres - Montañosa

Maria Lorena Morelos Barros, or Laurie as she was fondly called, was born on 18 March 1948 in Baguio City, Philippines. She graduated magna cum laude in Anthropology at the University of the Philippines in Diliman.

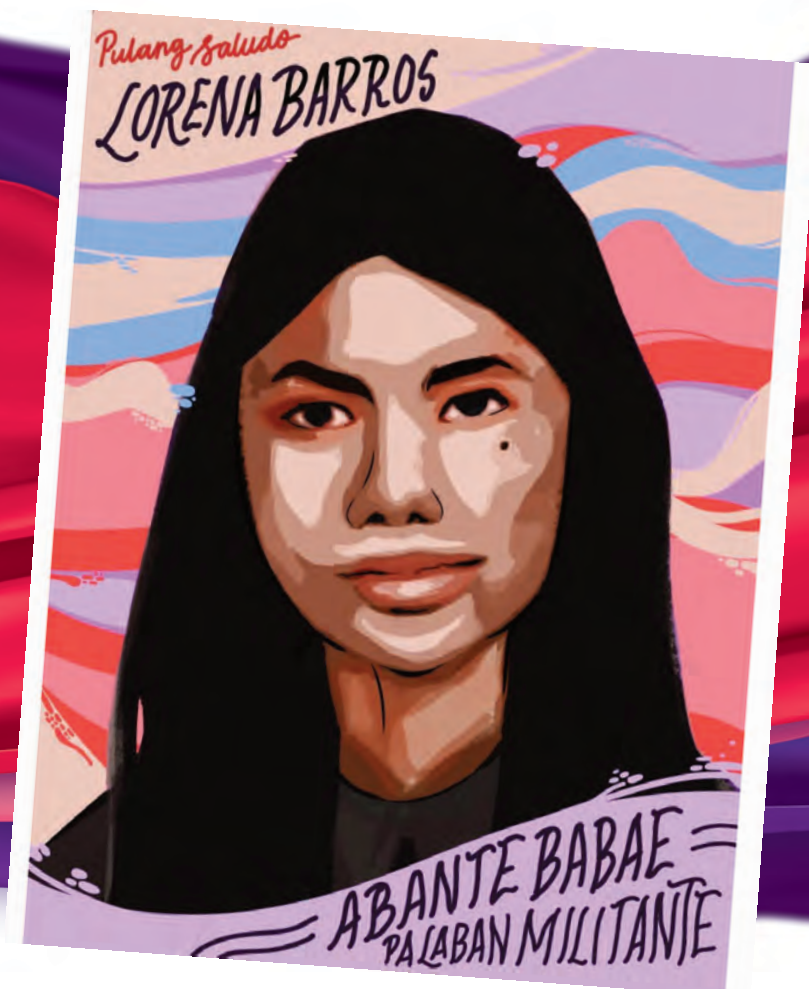
In April 1970, together with other young women revolutionaries, she co-founded MAKIBAKA or *Malayang Kilusan ng Bagong Kababaihan* (Free Movement of New Women), the first national democratic organization of women that carried the call for genuine freedom democracy and sought for the liberation of women in the context of the struggle against imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism in the Philippines.

Before the founding of MAKIBAKA, Laurie, also a prolific writer and poet, wrote two seminal essays, *Liberated Women I and II*, in which she discussed the role of women in society and their place in the revolutionary struggle. In *Liberated Women II*, she asserts that “the new woman, the new Filipina, is first and foremost a militant,” directly challenging the entrenched feudal-patriarchal system and culture that dominate women.

In August 1971, when the Writ of Habeas Corpus was suspended, Laurie went underground and joined the New People’s Army in Isabela. Two years later, during Martial Law, she was captured in Sorsogon and detained at the Ipil detention center, Fort Bonifacio. She later escaped with several others and rejoined the NPA in Southern Tagalog.

On March 24, 1976, just six days after turning 28, Laurie, then a guerrilla squad leader was killed in a military operation in Mauban, Quezon.

Gone for 50 years, yet her indomitable revolutionary spirit lives on, inspiring many women to continue the fight and join the revolutionary militant struggle for women’s genuine liberation. 



Sampaguita

This morning Little Comrade
gave me a flower's bud
I look at it now
remembering you, Felix,
dear friend and comrade
and all the brave sons and daughters
of our suffering land
whose death
makes our blades sharper
gives our bullets
surer aim.

How like this pure white bud
are our martyrs
fiercely fragrant with love
for our country and people!
With what radiance they should still have unfolded!

But sadness should not be
their monument.
Whipped and lashed desperately
by bombed-raised storms
has not our Asian land
continued to bloom?

Look how bravely our ranks
bloom into each gap.
With the same intense purity and fragrance
we are learning to overcome.

Ma. Lorena Barros
Summer of 1973
Published in Ulos

