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INTERNATIONAL

APRIL-JUNE 2024



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PHILIPPINES AT THE PRECIPICE OF INTER-IMPERIALIST WAR

Philippines at the precipice of inter-imperialist war

As US imperialist war provocations against China continue to escalate, the Philippines finds itself precariously positioned at the precipice of an imminent war. The recent intensification of US military operations in the archipelago, exemplified by the Balikatan war games and the recently concluded aerial war exercises underscore how the US government is preparing the Philippines as its forward military base in an expansive war front against imperialist China.

The historical context of US-Philippines relations, marked by colonial rule and its current neocolonial arrangement, frames these latest developments. Under the US Military Bases Agreement (MBA) of 1947, approximately 70,000 hectares of land had been occupied by US military bases since 1947 to 1992. The construction of these military bases is a witness to the long history of seizures of ancestral and agricultural lands, subjugation and eviction of national minorities and peasant masses.

In addition to the MBA, the Mutual Defense Treaty (MDT) of 1951 binds the Philippines to US foreign policy and is the basis for the involvement of the Philippines in wars the US has created in the past decades, including its wars of aggression and intervention in Korea, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Iran and Afghanistan.

The Filipino people emerged victorious when the Senate rejected on September 17, 1992, the extension of the MBA due to overwhelming anti-US bases protests. Nevertheless, even though the biggest symbol of US military domination was ejected, in essence it continued through US control over the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP). The US and the Philippine puppet regime would later sign the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) of 1998 which paved the way to the

unbridled entry and exit of American troops in the Philippines under the cover of 'rotational presence' of different US warships and the yearly Balikatan military war exercises. In addition to the VFA, the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA) was signed in 2014 allowing the US to build military bases inside so-called "agreed locations" within Philippine soil.

Marcos Jr.'s servility to the US and his betrayal of Philippine sovereignty are the reasons why the country is being dragged into a war that has nothing to do with its national interest. In exchange for military aid and political favors, the Marcos Jr. regime blindly follows the wishes and needs of the US military for the construction of more bases and facilities.

Meanwhile, the annual Balikatan war exercises have taken on a more combative edge in recent years. This year's iteration is the biggest in history thus far with a significant increase in troop deployment, advanced weaponry training, the involvement of the French and Australian Navy, and increasingly complex tactical maneuvers designed to stimulate high-intensity conflict scenarios. The recently concluded aerial war games between the Philippine Air Force and the US Pacific Air Forces dubbed "Cope Thunder" further highlights the shift towards preparing for looming military confrontations with China.

These exercises, however, are more than just routine military drills; they are a clear signal of US war designs being rolled out in the Asian region. By positioning the Philippines as a critical component of its encirclement strategy, the US is using the archipelago as a frontline in its broader first island chain strategy against imperialist China.



In conjunction with this plan, the US is intensifying the counterrevolutionary war in the Philippines against the armed revolutionary movement and at the same time dragging the Marcos Jr. puppet state in its war escalations against China.

For the Filipino masses, the implications of this heightened military activity are profound and perilous. The Philippines' strategic location makes it an invaluable asset for the US strategy to encircle and contain China. However, this position also places the Filipino people at significant risk in a conflict similar to the last two inter-imperialist World Wars that led to massive loss of lives, human suffering and destruction.

On the other hand, the US-directed and financed counterrevolutionary war is systematically employing weaponry that targets peasant communities and civilians through extensive nationwide bombing campaigns, strafing and artillery shelling – all of which are tantamount to war crimes under international humanitarian law.

The current trajectory of US imperialist military advances in the Philippines and war provocations against China is therefore unsustainable and reckless. The Filipino masses, particularly those in regions close to the contested maritime territories, already bear the brunt of aggressive actions from both Chinese naval forces and the heightened military presence of the US. The local fishing communities, which rely on these waters for their livelihoods, face increasing danger and uncertainty as their home becomes a flashpoint for inter-imperialist conflict.

The Filipino people must act immediately and rise up to defend the country's national freedom and sovereignty, denounce the Marcos Jr. puppet regime, and vigorously fight US plans to use the Philippines as a pawn in its dangerous game against China. 🚩

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

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LIBERATION INTERNATIONAL is a publication of the NDFP International Office

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Defend the Motherland: A fierce embodiment of the Philippine spirit rises, wielding a bolo in defense of her sovereignty and amid a looming war between imperialist rivals - US and China. Artwork by Rosa Liwayway



The IPT Verdict: The international community is watching

By Jose Emilio Jacinto III

Guilty verdict ignites further international attention and campaign versus the US-Marcos regime's war crimes, and strengthens international solidarity for the Filipino people's resistance

The verdict of the recently concluded International People's Tribunal (IPT) declared the US-Marcos and Duterte regimes and the US government guilty of war crimes and grave violations of international humanitarian law. It resonated not only to those seeking justice in the Philippines but also to the friends of the Filipino people abroad seeking stronger solidarity with the Filipino people's resistance.

Eloquently stating the impact of the verdict, Jan Fermon, a member of the prosecution team and a distinguished Belgian lawyer, declared: "The verdict of this Tribunal will empower the Filipino people and their allies across the globe to demand accountability from those responsible for these heinous crimes. Ultimately, the claimants' aspiration is to create a society where such atrocities cease to exist, and where the Filipino people can fully enjoy their rights without hindrance."

It is significant to note that the IPT verdict has found "serious violations of treaty and customary international law". (Read the full verdict at: <https://peopletribunal.net/documents/>)

These acts and violations, the IPT recognized, were all committed in the context of the armed conflict between the NDFP, the underground revolutionary alliance leading the armed resistance of the Filipino people, and the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP), aided and supported by the US Government.

In connection with the armed resistance of the Filipino people, it bears noting that the verdict of the Permanent People's Tribunal (PPT) Session on the Philippines in

October 1980 in Antwerp, Belgium, declared the Marcos dictatorship never represented the Filipino people, and recognized the NDFP as the true representative of the Filipino people. The PPT is a tribunal that upholds the rights of peoples to self-determination as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Peoples, also known as the Algiers Declaration.

Another significance is the IPT Panel of Jurors' order that the verdict be furnished to the following: the Philippine Embassy in Brussels and the United States Embassy in Brussels – representative offices of the guilty parties; the European External Action Service; the European Parliament; the International Criminal Court; the International Court of Justice; the United Nations Human Rights Council; the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights; the International Committee of the Red Cross; the Secretary-General of the United Nations; and, the Permanent People's Tribunal.

Several of these entities, such as the European Parliament, the UN HRC, the UNHCHR, the ICRC, and the PPT, have come out strongly against the grave IHL violations committed by the US-Marcos and Duterte regimes, some even applying economic and political sanctions on the Philippine government. The ICC also has an ongoing investigation into the mass murders committed by the Duterte regime in relation to its so-called war on drugs.

Complicit governments and parties to these IHL violations would conveniently dismiss the IPT verdict

as political and not legally binding. However, as one expert witness at the IPT testified, the IPT verdict “can provide a peoples’ record for future litigation, both nationally and internationally”. The expert witness cited that in a similar tribunal in support of the victims of the chemical agent orange used by the US in its war of aggression against the Vietnamese people, the records and findings of the said tribunal were used to file lawsuits and prosecute the US government.

Most importantly, the IPT verdict has further galvanized the international community, particularly the broad spectrum of the solidarity movement for the Philippines, to resolutely campaign against state terrorism and intensifying fascism, especially in the countryside and the peasant masses. Similar to the period of the US-Marcos fascist dictatorship, broad solidarity formations and initiatives are taking shape not only on the national levels but more importantly on local communities, schools, campuses, local churches and concerned groups of individuals.

Human rights organizations in the Philippines continue to disseminate the IPT’s verdict to local communities and other organizations, and plan to present it to the Philippine Congress as part of their action to hold accountable those involved in human rights violations.

Human rights group Karapatan said that the IPT verdict put on center stage the inutility of domestic redress mechanisms. These mechanisms fail to exact justice and accountability of the Duterte and Marcos Jr. regimes. The verdict paves the way for independent investigations under the auspices of the UN Human Rights Council and other competent bodies from the international community.

“The success of the IPT shows the strength of the people’s movement in the Philippines for justice, self-determination, and peace. It also shows the strength of the international solidarity movement for the Filipino people,” said the International Coalition for Human Rights in the Philippines (ICHRP), a global network campaigning for a just and lasting peace in the Philippines. Members of the coalition across the world held mobilizations from May to June to further draw attention to the verdict. These actions included delivery of the verdict to embassies of the Philippine and United States governments; public protest actions and rallies;

educational forums; webinars; and watch sessions of the IPT proceedings. The actions took place in several cities including Brussels, The Hague, Vancouver, Ottawa, Portland, Baltimore, San Francisco, and Washington DC.

The ICHRP mobilized its international network of supporters in support of the IPT hearings, and vowed to campaign and mobilize the broadest solidarity support for the Filipino people against the US-backed “counterinsurgency” campaign.

The Friends of the Filipino People (FFPS), one of the convenors of the IPT, hailed the verdict as a testament to the strength of the fighting Filipino masses and their struggle for genuine social change. They said that the verdict plays an important role in exposing the violent US-puppet regimes of Marcos Jr and Duterte for their crimes against the Filipino people and bringing it to attention to the international community. Further, the FFPS asserts that the verdict underscores the Filipino people’s right to self-determination and the justness of their struggle for national liberation.

Days after the IPT verdict was announced, the FFPS launched a global week of action, calling on solidarity organizations for the Philippines to conduct activities to echo the ruling of the IPT, such as militant demonstrations, creative media actions, art initiatives, and actions at key government institutions in different countries and international agencies. They also called for lobbying efforts and engaging with key personalities, such as parliamentarians, government officials, church leaders, policy-making bodies, and concerned institutions. The FFPS stressed that apart from amplifying and supporting the Filipino people’s cry for justice and their struggle for national and social liberation, it is urgent that the role of US imperialism in the “counterinsurgency” war on the Filipino people be exposed and opposed by the international community.

Indeed, as Severine De Laveleye, Belgian member of parliament, and one of the IPT jurors, stated, “To the defendants, this verdict is a solemn reminder that the international community is watching you and will hold accountable those who perpetrate or condone human rights abuses and violations of international laws governing the rules of war.”





War crime victims bear witness to US-directed Marcos and Duterte atrocities in the Philippines

By Ricardo Lozano

On May 18, 2024, the International People's Tribunal (IPT) issued a guilty verdict to Ferdinand Marcos Jr., Rodrigo Duterte, the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and Joseph Biden representing the United States government for war crimes against the Filipino people and violations of international humanitarian law (IHL).

The guilty verdict of the IPT was founded on evidence and testimonies from witnesses who each recounted their personal ordeals and losses under the oppressive Marcos Jr. and Duterte regimes. Witness accounts provided a chilling picture of the extent and nature of the war crimes including extrajudicial killings, civilian massacres, enforced disappearances, and other human rights abuses.

Desecration of remains of slain NPA fighter

Eufemia Cullamat, former representative in the Philippine congress, took the stand with tears brimming in her eyes. Her voice trembled as she recounted how she learned about her daughter's killing. Her 22-year-old daughter, Jelyvn Cullamat, was a member of the New People's Army (NPA) slain by a 12-man Army Special Forces team in the mountains of Surigao del Sur on November 28, 2020.

Days after Jelyvn's death, the military released photographs of her lifeless body with a rifle slung to her chest and surrounded by firearms and personal belongings. Soldiers also posed with the flags of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), the NPA and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) displayed behind her corpse as soldiers grinned and gloated.

"I love my daughter dearly. I grieved her killing. But my grief was immeasurable when the military desecrated her remains. The military did not recognize her rights, the sanctity of life, and did not even have the decency

to cover her dead body," said Cullamat during her testimony.

Under customary international humanitarian law, parties to the conflict are required to respect the remains of those who died in combat. Thus, the verdict points out:

"The shocking conduct of GRP forces are blatant violations of the most fundamental rules of warfare: the duty to treat captured enemies humanely and to allow the fallen their dignity in death. Apart from being war crimes, these acts of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) expose an utter disdain for the principle of humanity and deserve the utmost condemnation by this Tribunal."

Attacks against NDFP peace consultants

The tribunal also heard the case on the murder of Randall "Ka Randy" Echanis. Ka Randy was one of the peace consultants of the NDFP for the Comprehensive Agreement on Social and Economic Reforms (CASER). He was killed by five state agents in his apartment unit in Quezon City on August 10, 2020. His autopsy report revealed his cause of death as a stab wound to the back. His skull was also found fractured due to blunt-force trauma. His body was covered in bruises and multiple stab wounds indicating signs of torture. A sharp metal similar to an icepick was still lodged on his back when his body was sent for autopsy.

Ariel Casilao, former member of the Philippine House of Representatives spoke at the tribunal to testify on the killing of Ka Randy. Casilao said, "The barbarity, the brutality and the ruthlessness of the killing of Ka Randy is a crystal clear violation of IHL and all existing human rights laws in the Philippines. Ka Randy was an unarmed consultant of the NDFP. He had no involvement in combat operations."

“Yet, the ‘counterinsurgency’ operation both by the previous Duterte administration and the present Marcos Jr. administration targets all, including unarmed civilians. They all consider us enemies of the state,” Casilao added.

Abductions, enforced disappearances and forced surrenders

On September 2, 2023, environmental activists Jhed Tamano and Jonila Castro were forcibly taken by military forces while they were walking after meeting with rural poor communities in Orion, Bataan. Their hands were tied, eyes blindfolded, and their mouths gagged with a piece of cloth and duct tape. The two activists would disappear from the public for more than two weeks. They would only be surfaced on September 19 in a press conference organized by the military that was supposed to coerce them to talk about how they willingly ‘surrendered’ as former NPA members.

To the shock of the military and the notorious red-tagging agency National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC), Tamano and Castro exposed the GRP’s lies and told the public the truth about their abduction and forced surrender eventually forcing their captors to release them after overwhelming public clamor.

Castro shared her harrowing experience in the hands of the military during her testimony at the IPT: “They subjected us to unending interrogation. They used death threats, such as putting us in one grave or cutting our tongue...The abductors told us we should never go back to activism, to advocacy work and to the


movement, because if they ever get us again, they said there will be no more interrogation. They will just kill us.”

US culpability in war crimes vs the Filipino people

The findings of the tribunal further pointed to the role of the US government not just as a mere supporter of the GRP’s counterrevolutionary war against the Filipino people, but as its main instigator. The tribunal found US imperialism equally culpable to war crimes for designing, financing and in some cases even directly participating in combat operations.

Former parliamentarian and expert witness to the IPT Teddy Casiño testified: “The US has supported every puppet regime that came to power, providing them with military arms and equipment, training and advice, sometimes even directly involving US troops in combat operations.”

American lawyer, legal scholar and expert witness to the IPT Marjorie Cohn stated, “It is the Philippine government engaging in terrorism backed by the United States.”

“The NDFP is waging a war of national liberation through its armed component, the New People’s Army, in the exercise of the Filipino people’s inherent right of self-determination. The Philippine government, fully supported and enabled by the US government, has engaged in violent repression of the Filipino people through ‘counterinsurgency’ and ‘counterterrorism’ campaigns, and widespread violations of international human rights and humanitarian law,” Cohn added. 



22 enemy troops killed, 10 wounded in separate TOs by NPA

By Ana Rosario

Guided by the rules of engagement in the conduct of war, the Red fighters of the New People's Army (NPA) launched several tactical military offensives in different parts of the country in the period of January-May 2024. With the support of the masses, ambushade and harassment military operations were successfully launched against the brutal troops of the reactionary Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) resulting in 22 enemy troops killed and 10 wounded. The NPA also frustrated enemy attacks against its guerrilla fighters and masses through defensive maneuvers. These operations dealt heavy blows and demoralization on the armed forces of the reactionary state.

The NPA also called upon the forces of the enemy soldiers to cease serving under the AFP. Majority of the enemy troops comes from the toiling masses of workers, peasants, urban poor who are forced to enlist in the AFP for lack of other employment. They are systematically being transformed into inhuman, brutal killings monsters in order to serve the interests of the ruling classes.

Following is a partial round up of tactical offensives launched by the people's army in the period of January-May 2024:

Ambuscades and Encounters

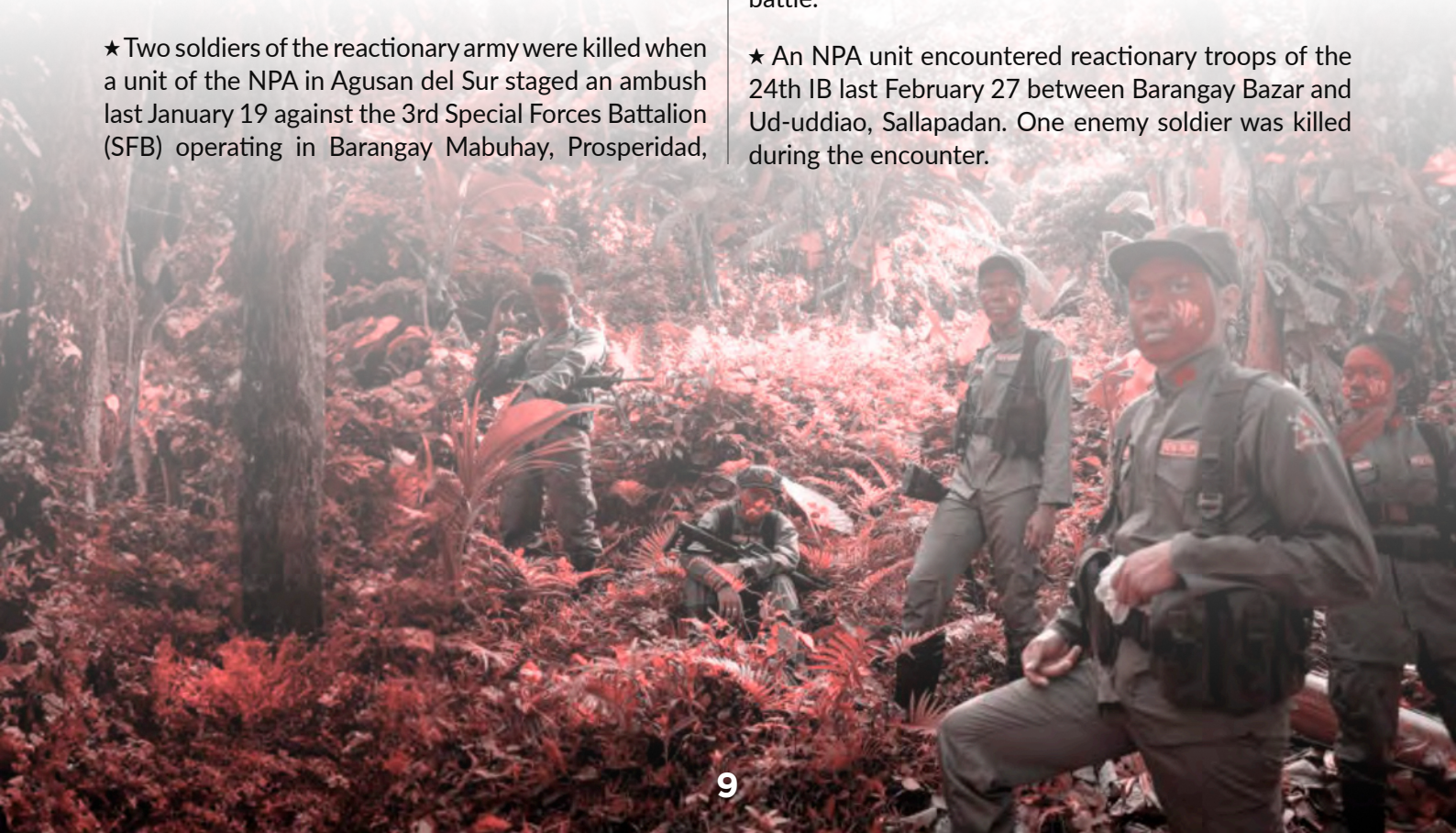
★ Two soldiers of the reactionary army were killed when a unit of the NPA in Agusan del Sur staged an ambush last January 19 against the 3rd Special Forces Battalion (SFB) operating in Barangay Mabuhay, Prosperidad,

Agusan del Sur. The NPA unit withdrew safely. The NPA offensive was in response to the continuing military operations of reactionary troops in the mountain areas bordering Agusan del Sur and Surigao del Sur. These operations since 2022 have disrupted the livelihood of indigenous peoples and peasant masses and caused hunger and hardships for the masses.

★ An NPA-Rizal unit ambushed troops of the 80th IB engaged in military operations in Barangay San Isidro, Rodriguez, Rizal last January 31. One enemy soldier was killed while two others were seriously wounded. The AFP troops acted as security for the destructive Wawa-Violago Dam project in Rizal. They also protect the interest and lands of the big ruling comprador big bourgeoisies, the Araneta, Villar and Robles. The 80th IB continues to cause great difficulties for the people of Rizal, setting up checkpoints, harassing the people of the area, making entry and exit of the area very difficult, illegal arrest and interrogation of farmers and the Dumagats-Remontado indigenous peoples, and sowing terror among the people.

★ On February 23, a unit of NPA-Abra held defensive battle against troops of the 50th IB operating between Barangay Naguilian, Sallapadan and Barangay Abang, Bucay. A soldier of the reactionary army was killed in battle.

★ An NPA unit encountered reactionary troops of the 24th IB last February 27 between Barangay Bazar and Ud-uddiao, Sallapadan. One enemy soldier was killed during the encounter.



★ On March 14, the NPA opened fire on the 65th IB troopers operating in Barangay Pinanggalaan, Agusan del Sur. Two soldiers were killed.

★ Red fighters of the NPA- Quezon (Apolonio Mendoza Command) ambushed a 30-strong unit of the 85th IB operating in Barangay Doña Aurora, Calauag on March 25. Three of the fascist soldiers were reported injured. Ka Cleo del Mundo, spokesperson of the NPA unit in the province, said Red fighters blew up a command detonated explosive at the 85th IB, and the clash lasted for 10 minutes. The NPA unit safely withdrew.

★ A unit of the Jose Rapsing Command of the NPA turned the table against forces of the 96th Infantry Battalion-Philippine army when it thwarted the attacks of the enemy against the NPA in the morning of April 18 in Barangay B Titong, Masbate City. Two soldiers were killed and two more were seriously wounded from the enemy side. There were no casualties on the side of the people's army.

★ Red fighters of the NPA-Western Samar (Arnulfo Ortiz Command) seized an R4 rifle when it ambushed elements of the 3rd IB in Barangay Gayondato, San Jorge, Western Samar on May 14. The offensive killed Cpl. Reycon Remedio and injured another soldier.

★ Red fighters of the NPA, with the support of the peasant masses in the towns of Maria Aurora and Dipaculao in Aurora province, frustrated the relentless focused military operations of the 91st IB and 84th IB during the month of May. At least seven military troopers were killed while two others were injured in three consecutive clashes between the enemy troops and the people's guerrilla fighters. The first encounter took place in Barangay Toytoy, Dipaculao on May 20, followed by a battle in Barangay Salay, Dipaculao on May 21 and another on May 28 in Barangay Bazal, Maria Aurora. The people's army fought bravely and maneuvered to safety.

★ At least five soldiers of the 2nd IB were killed in an encounter with the New People's Army (NPA)-Masbate (Jose Rapsing Command) on May 23 in Barangay Lague-

lague, Cawayan town. The NPA unit was in the area to hold consultations on the situation and problems of the community residents. The Red fighters withdrew safely.

Harassment operations

★ A unit of NPA-Masbate harassed the 96th IB troopers operating in Barangay Gangao, Baleno, Masbate last January 13. Said enemy military unit was shaken and immediately hid their casualties to cover up their losses.

★ In Oriental Mindoro, the NPA-Mindoro (Lucio de Guzman Command) fired shots at 4th IB soldiers in a military camp in Sitio Sigao, Barangay Lisap, Bongabong on May 20. The soldiers have been encamped in the area imposing martial law on the people since 2022.

★ In Negros Oriental, a unit of the NPA-Central Negros (Leonardo Panaligan Command) launched harassment operations against the 62nd IB. They attacked the 62nd IB bases in Barangay Hinakpan, Guihulngan City on the evening of May 27.

The people's war rages on

The AFP continues to deploy excessive numbers of military forces in a vain attempt to quash the revolutionary movement. The AFP uses bombs, helicopters, drones and other superior weapons for its combat operations. They terrorize the people, bomb villages, deprive the people of their homes and livelihood, commit brutal and dastardly acts. This is what is taking place in provinces like Quezon, Rizal, Oriental Mindoro, Masbate, Negros Oriental, Surigao del Sur and Agusan del Sur.

But the NPA has the support of the masses who stand steadfast with the Red fighters in advancing people's war. Contrary to the enemy's expectation, their acts of terror and brutality have further galvanized the people to continue the struggle for their liberation from intolerable exploitation and oppression. When the masses, especially those from the toiling classes, are aroused, organized and mobilized, they become not only a rich wellspring but a powerful fighting army of the revolution. 🚩



The victory of the armed people's movement in Myanmar is unstoppable

From Ang Bayan, May 7, 2024

Armed groups of national minorities and people fighting in different regions in Myanmar against the fascist Tatmadaw junta have achieved successive victories. From separate efforts, the unity and coordination of the armed anti-junta groups have increased. Simultaneous and, in some parts, coordinated offensives from late 2023 have also accelerated. They are confident in significantly weakening, if not completely overthrowing, the despised regime this year.

National minorities have been fighting Myanmar's fascist military even before the February 2021 coup that ousted the civilian government of Aung San Suu Kyi. They have long carried out struggle in the states of Kayah and Kachin in the eastern part; in Rakhine state which opens to the Indian Ocean; and in the northern state of Shan, which borders China. After the coup, national minorities from Sagaing and Magway regions also fought, as well as those from Chin state in the northwest, and national minorities from Karen (also called Kayah) state around the

border with Thailand. These groups are just some of the more than 20 armed ethnolinguistic groups in Myanmar today. Many of them have been struggling for decades for the right to self-determination against national oppression by Myanmar's reactionary state and military.

By 2023, the Three Brotherhood Alliance had recaptured much of the territory from the junta forces. This is after they launched Operation 1027 from October last year. The alliance seized from junta forces important towns on the Myanmar-China border where trade flows between the two countries. Hundreds of detachments and camps were defeated by coordinated attacks during the first 10 days of the offensive. Thousands of soldiers, including several senior Tatmadaw officers, surrendered to the alliance.

The Karen National Union and Karenni Nationalities Defense Forces have also liberated large territories since it launched Operation 1111 in November




2023. Together with other armed groups, it seized important institutions and agencies, including the police station in Loikaw, the Karen state center, in December 2023. On April 24, the Karenni State Interim Executive Council declared that it has 90% of the state under its control.

At the same time, the resistance of the Chinland Defense Forces to oust the junta forces from their territory is increasing. On April 29, it captured the headquarters of the Tatmadaw battalion that controls the part of the Irrawady river that is a key portal to the Kachin capital.

In Naypyitaw, Yangon and other urban centers of the country, the People's Defense Forces (PDF), the armed group established by the National Unity Government from youth groups and activists, is intensifying its attacks. On April 5, the PDF conducted a coordinated attack using 28 "kamikaze drones" at the house of junta leader Min Aung

Hlaing, the main military headquarters and a major airbase, all in the capital Naypyitaw. Before this, many camps, detachments and checkpoints were overrun by armed groups using small drones.

Armed groups carry out widespread and intensive offensives due to the support of the democratic sectors of the majority Bamar people, and national minority groups. Combining regular and guerrilla warfare, they are able to stretch Tatmadaw forces and strike at them from various sides.

In response, the fascist Tatmadaw intensified its attacks on the states with the strongest resistance. Using planes, helicopters and drones, it indiscriminately bombs and attacks civilian communities. These led to the displacement of 2.8 million individuals, the deaths of at least 6,000 civilians including many children and women. An estimated 25,000 have been arbitrarily arrested by the junta since 2021. 



IMPERIALIST ECONOMIC CRISES NECESSITATE SOCIALIST REVOLUTION

By Ricardo Lozano

Imperialism is in the midst of a profound and deepening economic crisis. The foundations of the United States' hegemony continue to erode in the current decade marking the strategic decline of US imperialism and the corresponding rise of China as a formidable global rival. This was the subject of inquiry during the National Democratic Front of the Philippines' (NDFP) International Theoretical Conference on the Economic Crises of Imperialism last 28-29 March 2024.

Despite occasional growth spurts, the US economy has struggled to achieve sustained and robust economic growth. In the post-World War II period, US growth rates averaged above 4 percent only to drop to around 3 percent in the 1970s to the 1980s. Bourgeois economists portray this period after WWII up to the 1970s as an era of the "long boom" implying the steady growth and stability of the capitalist system while conveniently ignoring the warning signs that would eventually lead to the current period of ever-deepening busts.

In the last ten years however, the US average GDP (Gross Domestic Product) growth rate has stumbled below 2 percent and has never reached the 5 percent level since the second quarter of 2000. The World Bank's latest GDP outlook for the US predicts a 2.5% economic expansion in 2024, but in the same breath notes that global growth remains sluggish by past standards. Countries struggle under the weight of heavy debts and high interest rates on top of the brutal wars in Ukraine and the genocide in Palestine both of which are inflicting further pressure on national economies. Productivity gains have been modest, and economic recovery post-2008 has been largely uneven and grossly insufficient.

In spotlight: Filipino mass struggles vs worsening politico-economic crises

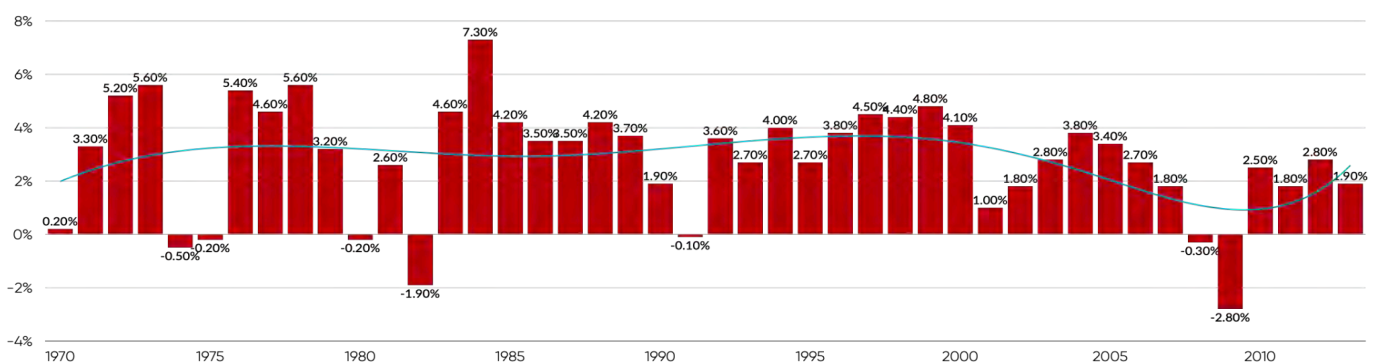
Amidst the ever-worsening and deepening economic and political crisis in the Philippines, the Filipino people continue the mass struggle against the anti-people policies and programs of the US-Marcos Jr. regime. Led by the national democratic movement, they have carried various sectoral issues and demands through nationwide campaigns and protests.

Nationwide transport strikes against PUV Modernization

Since March last year, various transport groups led by Piston and Manibela have organized a series of nationwide transport strikes against the Public Utility Vehicle Modernization Program (PUVMP) and the mandatory franchise consolidation policy of the Marcos Jr. administration. The PUVMP requires jeepney drivers and operators to purchase electric jeepneys at a price that is unaffordable, allowing rich corporations to monopolize e-jeepney ownership and mire drivers and operators further into debt.

This year, with strong support from various organisations, commuters and their families, the transport groups staged a total of eight days nationwide strikes on different

Graph: Real Annual GDP Growth Rate of the United States, 1970-2013



The sustainability of US dominance has always been precarious. The inherent contradictions of capitalism – overproduction, underconsumption, and the tendency of the rate of profit to fall – periodically plunge the system into crises. The 2008 financial crisis exemplified these contradictions, exposing deep-seated vulnerabilities in the global economic order led by the US. The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) Central Committee reminds us in its keynote speech during the Theoretical Conference that the productive capacity of the US and its continued expansion after WWII “made it even more vulnerable to crises of overproduction in the face of substantial reduction of markets, sources of raw materials and spheres of influence.”

“It is insoluble as it is unavoidable since it arises from the basic contradiction at the level of the mode of production, between the social character of the forces of production which rebels against the capitalist relations of production,” the CPP explains the inevitability of economic crises under imperialism.

Facing economic stagnation and the erosion of its industrial base, US imperialism and its local agents have increasingly resorted to fascism to repress working class resistance. The Communist Party of India (Maoist) pointed out how “the proletariat is suffering from severe unemployment and poverty due to economic crises.” Indeed, economic crises are driving the working class to the brink, exacerbating poverty and hunger. As the cost-of-living crisis intensifies and wages stagnate, working families face insurmountable financial pressures. Job insecurity and underemployment leave many struggling to make ends meet, forcing difficult choices between essentials like food, housing, and healthcare. The erosion of social safety nets and the rising cost of basic necessities have deepened inequality, leaving the working class vulnerable to economic shocks.

This persistent hardship fuels social unrest and revolutionary stirrings that threaten to overthrow the current capitalist world order. CPI (Maoist) concurs “worker, peasant, middle class and other oppressed people of backward countries and proletariat and middle-class people of the capitalist countries are taking up militant struggles in various places.”

On the other hand, the US has also escalated its military aggression to secure its broader geopolitical interests. This shift is a response to both internal economic pressures and external challenges, particularly from rising powers like China and Russia. The CPP notes how the past century “has been the most violent and exploitative in the history of humankind, with monopoly capitalism resorting to the most aggressive and

occasions from April to June to protest the following: April 15-16, a 2-day strike against franchise consolidation deadline. They asked the Supreme Court to issue a temporary restraining order (TRO) against the new guidelines of the PUMVP; April 29-May 1, a 3-day strike calling for the return of 5-year franchises; and June 10-12, a 3-day strike against the Department of Transportation officials’ crackdown on unconsolidated PUVs.

Students and youth against the US-PH Balikatan Exercises

On May 6, Gabriela-Youth together with other women’s organisations trooped to the US embassy in Manila to denounce the US-PH Balikatan exercises, stating that the Philippines is being used as a playground for US war games. The US-led joint military exercises took place from April 22 to May 18, 2024, in the most northern part of Luzon and Palawan, covering the West Philippine Sea, South China Sea and the sea near the Taiwan strait.

The group criticized the US-Marcos Jr. regime for prioritizing the Balikatan exercises and the building of more EDCA sites, rather than addressing the plight of Filipino students who were heavily affected by soaring prices due to inflation and expensive costs of education. They also highlighted that the US presence in the country would only lead to terror and the potential exploitation of and violence against young women, children and LGBTQ+.

Environmental groups and advocates against large-scale mining and environmental destruction

On March 4, Kalikasan PNE, Katribu and other environmental groups and advocates held a protest at the Department of Environmental and Natural Resources (DENR) to reiterate their call to repeal the 1995 Philippine Mining Act. They asserted that for the past 29 years, the law has allowed multinational and transnational mining companies, such as Apex Mining in Davao de Oro to conduct destructive large-scale mining operations, resulting in environmental damage and negatively impacting the communities of indigenous peoples and farmers. They underscored the role of reactionary state and the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) in aiding these mining companies in exploiting ancestral lands and militarizing the

rapacious policies, and waging wars to control sources of raw materials, markets and spheres of investment.”

CPI (Maoist) further adds that “all kinds of attempts of the imperialist countries in the past 15 years to solve the world economic crisis utterly failed. These countries are making preparations for war in a large scale for the re-division of world. There is increasing military efficiency and holding more military exercises. Militarization and war always provided enormous profits to imperialist monopoly enterprises. These take this path mainly in the period of severe economic crisis. With these developments the danger of World War III is rising and there is a big danger to world peace.”

Despite the threat of a full-pledged inter-imperialist war, the CPP notes “imperialist economic crises necessitate socialist revolution” underlining the fertile ground for the eventual overthrow of the current capitalist system. 🚩

indigenous communities, with the support of NTF-Elcac and state security forces. The group also demanded justice for all the victims of landslides caused by large-scale mining, deforestations and other disasters.

People’s organizations against US and China’s militarization of the West Philippine Sea

Carrying the call, ‘Atin ang Pinas, China Layas!’ (Philippines is Ours, China Go Away!’, mass organisations under BAYAN rallied outside the Chinese consulate in Makati on April 10. They protested China’s ongoing intimidation of Filipino fisherfolk and its continuous intrusion in the West Philippine Sea. At the same time, they also demanded the removal of US and other foreign military troops in the Philippines, who recently conducted war games using Philippine waters, including the West Philippine Sea. 🚩



HONOR JASIG!

By Raya Andres-Montaños

This year marks the 29th year since The Joint Agreement for the Safety and Immunity Guarantees (JASIG) was signed on 24 February 1995. It officially took effect upon the approval of Mariano Orosa, chairperson of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP), on 10 April 1995 and of Fidel Ramos, Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) former president on 25 April 1995.

A historical milestone in the peace process, and one of the key documents in the GRP - NDFP peace negotiations, the JASIG's primary purposes "are to facilitate the peace negotiations, create a favorable atmosphere conducive to free discussion and free movement during the peace negotiations, and avert any incident that may jeopardize the peace negotiations."

JASIG was designed to help create a conducive environment for peace negotiations by protecting those directly engaged in the negotiations. It guarantees immunity from surveillance, harassment, search, arrest, detention, prosecution, and interrogation. JASIG provides a safety net vital in enabling both sides to communicate freely without the looming threat of repercussions or violence.

While the NDFP dutifully adheres to the JASIG, the GRP continues to violate it by perpetually subjecting NDFP peace consultants and personnel to surveillance, harassments, enforced disappearances, arrests, detentions and extrajudicial killings.

Since the Duterte government unilaterally terminated the peace negotiations in 2017, there have been 17

unjustly detained, four disappeared and at least 20 murdered NDFP peace consultants.

Among those killed are NDFP consultants for socioeconomic reforms Randy Malayao, who was shot dead in a bus in 2019 and Randall Echanis, who was stabbed to death in 2020. Under the Marcos Jr. regime, NDFP consultants Benito Tiamzon and Wilma Austria-Tiamzon were captured alive, severely tortured and slain along with eight other members of the New People's Army (NPA) in 2022.

On November 30, 2022, NDFP consultant on socioeconomic reforms Ericson Acosta was killed by elements of the 94th Infantry Battalion while resting in Barangay Camansi, Kabankalan City, Negros Occidental. The 94th IB likewise abducted and murdered NDFP-Negros peace consultant Rogelio Posadas on April 19, 2023. Fascist soldiers also summarily executed NDF-Bohol consultant Manuel "Ka Dodie" Tinio on April 14, 2023. He was shot seven times while driving a motorcycle along the boundary of San Miguel and Ubay in Bohol.

Honoring JASIG is more than just procedural necessity; it bears moral and political significance that reflect each party's genuine commitment to peace. For the past 29 years, the JASIG document has been crucial in making the peace negotiations possible. The sincerity of moving towards peace, thus, lies in honoring the JASIG and all other peace negotiations agreements between the GRP and the NDFP. 🚩





The NDFP and the Filipino people are waging a just war

By Jose Emilio Jacinto III

Terror-tagging the Filipino armed resistance movement is derogating the people's inherent right to self-determination

On June 2021, the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) arbitrarily and unjustly designated the Communist Party of the Philippines, the New People's Army (NPA) and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) as so-called 'terrorist' organizations. Contrary to their claim, the armed revolutionary struggle of the Filipino people against the repressive and oppressive governments of the Philippines and US imperialism derives its justness from the universal and inherent right of all oppressed peoples to self-determination. This right to self-determination is enshrined in many international treaties.

Unable to break the determination of the people to fight for self-determination, the US and their lackeys directed its Philippine puppet state to incorporate the CPP, NPA and the NDFP, in their list of so-called terrorists. It also encouraged its imperialist allies in Asia-Pacific and Europe to do the same, in its wish to isolate and demonize the CPP-NPA-NDFP internationally and locally.

Delivering a compelling testimony as an expert witness at the IPT in Brussels, Belgium last May 17-18, Marjorie Cohn, an American legal scholar and political analyst, said that the right of the Filipino people to self-determination is the highest form of international law.

"Under international law, the Filipino people have a legal right to resist the repression of the Philippine government, including by the use of armed struggle. A 1982 resolution of the UN General Assembly reaffirmed the legitimacy of the struggle of peoples for independence, territorial integrity, national unity and

liberation from colonial and foreign domination and foreign occupation by all available means, including armed struggle", Cohn stated.

The Philippine fascist regime and the US government in their futile effort to deny the Filipino people this right to self-determination have launched a brutal war of aggression employing the violent, treacherous and dirtiest means to this end. Philippine puppet regimes from the time of the Marcos fascist dictatorship up to the current Marcos Jr. fascist regime have embraced and employed the US "counterinsurgency" scheme that has resulted to the grave and heinous violations of IHL.

The US-Marcos regime wishes to deny and revise the revolutionary tradition of the Filipino people who fought against Spanish colonialism and US war of aggression during the Philippine-American war. The CPP-NPA-NDF continue this revolutionary tradition by waging a people's war for national liberation and democracy against the semicolonial and semifudal ruling system.

Since its founding in April 1973, the NDFP has drawn and continues to draw support, inspiration and solidarity from a cross section of Philippine society and from its broad network of friends abroad. In the Philippines, the NDFP represents the most solid alliance of the workers and peasants together with the youth, women, overseas Filipinos, indigenous peoples, Lumad, health professionals, church workers, cultural artists, legal professionals and academics and scientists, and patriotic business entrepreneurs. It has worked and cooperated even with reactionary politicians on issues,

programs and activities that advance the people's rights and welfare, and the national democratic revolution.

During the First Session of the Permanent People's Tribunal (PPT) on the Philippines held in Antwerp, Belgium in 1980, the US-Marcos fascist dictatorship was found guilty of economic and political crimes against the people and declared the NDFP as the genuine representative of the Filipino people.

The NDFP further enjoys the respect, admiration and support of the international community – some governments, political parties in power, prominent political leaders, and movements from the Asia-Pacific, Latin America, Europe, the US and Canada, New Zealand and Australia and the African continent. It is a national liberation movement (NLM) that is admired by other NLMs, whose prestige is recognized alongside the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), the African National Congress (ANC) other NLMs in Africa and Latin America.

The NDFP's international and domestic recognition, and its revolutionary resilience and determination, from which it derives its status of belligerency, further bolsters the fact that there exist two governments in the Philippines – the US puppet regime based in Manila, and the revolutionary government of the workers and peasants administered by the NDFP's organs of political power in the countryside.

In her testimony as an expert witness during the recent IPT in May 2024, Julieta De Lima, Chairperson of the Peace Negotiating Panel of the NDFP, explained in full clarity, the NDFP as deserving of the recognition as a government of the Filipino people in the exercise of their right to self-determination. Significant excerpts from that presentation deserve to be amplified here, thus:

“The ongoing armed conflict in our country has reached such intensity and scope – in terms of the frequency and regularity of the armed clashes, the number of

armed forces involved, and the systematic and orchestrated abuses and atrocities by the reactionary state on both civilians and combatants – as to make the application of the rules of war imperative,” added De Lima.

On August 15, 1991, the NDFP issued its Declaration of Adherence to Common Article 3 and Protocol II of the Geneva Conventions formalizing its compliance with international laws governing the rules of war. Furthermore, the NDFP issued its Declaration of Undertaking to Apply the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and Protocol 1 of 1977 on July 5, 1996.

The NDFP has signed bilateral agreements with the GRP in the course of peace negotiations including the Comprehensive Agreement on the Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL) of March 16, 1998. In addition, the NPA since its founding in 1969 has adopted its own internal protocols including basic rules of discipline which subjects all Red fighters to the Three Main Rules of Discipline and the Eight Points of Attention which includes the protection of civilians and the humane treatment of prisoners of war.

The NDFP has shown its consistent and long-standing cognizance of the declarations it has issued and agreements it has signed. It is a national liberation movement that truly respects human rights and international humanitarian law. In its campaign to misrepresent and demonize the revolutionary movement as “terrorist”, the US and the GRP both aim to intimidate and pressure the NDFP to capitulate one way or the other.

“Against these, the NDFP asserts its status of belligerency which it has established from decades-long revolutionary armed struggle. The NDFP will always defend and fight for the rights of the exploited toiling Filipino masses in their struggle for national and social liberation and will seek justice everywhere and anywhere,” De Lima concluded. 🚩



Remembering Divine 'Ka Zoe' Sureta

By Hugo Francisco

On March 28, 2024, in the province of Quezon, Philippines, the Filipino people lost a beloved revolutionary and Red fighter – Divine 'Ka Zoe' Sureta. Born on May 14, 1990 in Paracale, Camarines Norte, Ka Zoe's life as a revered Red fighter of the New People's Army is a story of profound dedication, resilience, and sacrifice that inspires generations of national minorities to take their place in the national democratic revolution.

Ka Zoe belongs to the Manide tribe, a national minority group based in Camarines Norte and Quezon provinces. From an early age, she was inspired by a deep respect for her roots and a strong sense of responsibility for her community. Her pursuit of an AB History degree in the Camarines Norte State College was a testament to her passion for understanding and preserving the narratives of her ancestors.

After her studies, Ka Zoe was granted multiple opportunities to serve as a leader of the Manide tribe. She worked at the National Commission of Indigenous People, and served as a teacher in a number of educational institutions.

In 2016, driven by an unyielding spirit to bring about change to her community, Ka Zoe joined the NPA. Since then, Ka Zoe has courageously taken the revolutionary path of the national democratic struggle. Her commitment to the cause was unwavering, and she quickly became a symbol of strength and resilience within the revolutionary movement of the Quezon-Bicol Zone.

Ka Zoe played an instrumental role in the resurgence of mass struggles to increase copra and coconut

farmgate prices to the benefit of farmers in the towns of Sta. Elena and Capalonga in Camarines Norte. She was also known as Ka Joy and Ka Jervin to the masses.

During the pandemic, Ka Zoe's compassionate nature led her to serve as a medic, providing essential medical services across the Bondoc Peninsula, Quezon, and Bicol region. This commitment showcased her dedication to the well-being of the masses and her comrades, even in the most challenging times.

Ka Zoe was also an educator. She taught indigenous children in communities including reading, writing, mathematics, and the value of conserving their cultural heritage as indigenous peoples. She empowered the next generation with the tools to honor their past, preserve their source of livelihood, and strive for a better future.

Her martyrdom on March 28, 2024 together with Red fighter Paul "Ka Isko" Cruz, during an encounter in Quezon province, is a profound loss to the revolutionary movement and to the masses they dearly served. Ka Zoe's legacy will forever be etched in the hearts of those who knew her and in the ongoing struggle for the rights and self-determination of the Filipino people. 🚩



Student encampments for Palestine gain momentum

By Ricardo Lozano

A series of student-led encampments in support of Palestine has gained traction across hundreds of university campuses worldwide. In the United States alone, at least 80 college and university campuses demanded their universities to divest from entities that support the occupation of Palestine. Various student groups have launched their own encampments in Australia, Austria, Belgium, Costa Rica, Cuba, Denmark, Egypt, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, India, Indonesia, Ireland, the Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, and the United Kingdom attracting thousands of students demanding an end to the genocidal war in Palestine.

The youth and student-led movement sees students setting up temporary protest camps to symbolize their demand to uphold and respect Palestinian rights and raise awareness about the ongoing genocide committed by the Zionist Israeli state with full support from the US government. Students have set up tents, organized teach-ins and held rallies to draw attention to issues such as the bombing of hospitals in Gaza, the killing of Palestinian children, and the continuing blockade of humanitarian assistance.

Some university administrations, however, have responded with repressive measures against student organizers. On May 9, 2024, Filipino international student Eliana Atienza was suspended for participating in the protest encampment at the University of Pennsylvania (UPenn). The protest camp, organized by Atienza urged UPenn to cut ties with Israel and lasted for 17 days despite the administration calling for police back up and arresting 32 people.

In addition to suspending Atienza who is the daughter of Filipino TV host Kim Atienza, and five other students, the UPenn administration also denied them access to their university dorms, leaving the student organizers 'homeless.'

"Eliana's suspension from school shall not cower but rather empower students in participating in political discourse and raising it into action. It is a challenge for every youth intellectual to dedicate their intelligence and spirit in service of the oppressed people around the world," said the League of Filipino Students (LFS) in a statement.

As of writing, the worldwide student encampments and the call to end US and Israeli genocide of Palestinians and to free Palestine continue to grow, reflecting a popular desire not only among the younger generation, but among all freedom-loving peoples, for justice, peace and human rights for Palestine. 🇵🇸





No reason to celebrate 126th anniversary of fake independence

Originally published in Updates Philippines, Vol. VI, No. 11 – June 15, 2024

There is no cause for celebrating the so-called 126th anniversary of Philippine independence. The country has been subservient to the United States since 1898 until today.

300 years of Spanish colonial exploitation and oppression generated hundreds of local uprisings, which eventually galvanized into a nationwide revolution. The Aguinaldo leadership of the revolutionary government readily surrendered to the Spanish forces and was exiled to Hongkong where he was approached by the US.

On June 12, 1898, Aguinaldo made the Kawit proclamation of independence which carried the unfortunate qualification, “under the protection of the Mighty and Humane North American nation.” Unwittingly, he declared the so-called First Philippines Republic to be a mere protectorate of US imperialism.

American colonial rule made the Philippines a strategic bastion in its plunder of the southern coast of China. US hegemony over the country was disrupted only by the invasion by Japan of the Philippines in 1942 which lasted until 1945 when the US reoccupied the country.

While the US forces left the country and ordered its remaining forces to surrender to the Japanese, Filipino guerrillas continued the fight against the invaders. In most parts of Central Luzon, widespread guerrilla resistance was launched by the Hukbo ng Bayan Laban sa Hapon (People’s Army against Japan) led by the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP).


Direct colonial rule became more untenable with the rise of strong national liberation movements in the aftermath of WW2. In response, the US transformed the Philippines into a neo-colony, i.e., from directly ruling the

country into an indirect rule thru its neocolonial state. The succeeding neocolonial setup of the Philippines enabled the US to continue its plunder of the country’s natural resources and its control of the economy, politics and military.

After WW2, the US maintained the Clark Air Force Base and the Subic Naval Base as major military bases in Asia to maintain its dominance and as launching bases for its interventionist actions.

Amidst the popular anti-bases movement in the 1990s, the Philippine Senate did not renew the US-Philippine military agreement, affirming the constitutional ban against foreign troops permanent basing in the country. In collusion with successive puppet regimes in the Philippines, a series of agreements, like the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA), the Military Logistics Support Agreement (MLSA), and the Enhanced Defence Cooperation Agreement (EDCA) were formulated by US imperialism to circumvent this prohibition.

Today, the US is exploiting the territorial conflict between the Philippines and China over the West Philippine Sea/South China Sea to drag the Armed Forces of the Philippines into the frontline of the US war preparation against China. As tension escalates, there is real danger of war exploding between the two great powers.

The Filipino people should expose and oppose the sham independence and continue to struggle for national liberation and democracy. Amid rising inter-imperialist tensions, the NDFP enjoins the Filipino people to fight for genuine Philippine sovereignty and promote non-alignment, peaceful resolution of conflicts, peaceful co-existence and mutual benefit with other countries. 

In Her Own Words:

Sharing of Ka Handum



Liberation International is reprinting The Sharing of Ka Handum that came out in the revolutionary cultural publication ULOS in 2022. Ka Handum is the nom de guerre of Comrade Wilma Austria Tiamzon, a courageous noble revolutionary martyr of the Filipino people who was brutally killed by the forces of the fascist Armed Forces of the Philippines. In short vignettes, she narrated her experience as a trade union organizer, work in the province of Samar and Central Luzon. Her outstanding work and performance of tasks and responsibilities were acknowledged by the Communist Party of the Philippines, the comrades and masses she served by entrusting her with responsible high positions in the Party organization.

I heard the stories narrated by the old folks in our neighborhood about the hardships during the time of the Japanese occupation. My grandfather was a guerrilla who escaped the torture of the Japanese, their stories were imprinted in my consciousness; it was always a special occasion to watch the band and town parade and the waving of the Philippine flag every June 12 to commemorate Philippine Independence Day; I like to listen to one particular song of the Hukbalahap (Hukbong Bayan Laban sa Hapon – People’s Army Against Japan) taught to us by our third grade elementary teacher, also her stories about the lives of the guerrillas; and some high school teachers who spoke to our class about their patriotic sentiments and social commentaries.

I was attracted to the group discussions at the UP (University of the Philippines) that discussed patriotic writings and books of the likes of Claro M. Recto and Renato Constantino, and the Struggle for National Democracy (SND) by Jose Maria Sison. These paved the way to sit down with the group for further discussions

of several articles of great Communist teachers like Marx and Mao. I joined rallies and integrations in the workers picket lines until I decided to join Samahang Demokratiko ng Kabataan (SDK-Democratic Association of Youth). It was during the discussion groups and in the SDK labor committee that my high school boyfriend and I met and sealed our political path which became a revolutionary love relationship nearly half a century ago.

Amado Guerrero's Ang Krisis at Rebolusyong Pilipino, which was later published under the title Philippine Society and Revolution (Lipunan at Rebolusyong Pilipino) formed my understanding of the condition of the people, encouraging me to appreciate the study of Philippine history, pointed out why the poverty of the broad Filipino masses cannot be solved because of the existence of the three fundamental problems of imperialism, feudalism and bureaucratic capitalism that have burdened the people, and laid out firmly why a new type of national-democratic revolution is absolutely necessary under the leadership of the proletariat and its party, the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP). The power of the revolutionary theory of the Philippine society and revolution cannot be underestimated in rousing all the motive forces of the revolution. It should and must be the starting point and stepping stone for understanding other specific conditions and issues of classes and sectors.

At the beginning of the first semester of the second year of college, before the suspension of the writ of habeas corpus in 1971, I decided to work full-time in the revolution. I was just one of the thousands of offsprings of the storm (First Quarter Storm) of 1970 in the new revolutionary stirrings under the leadership of the CPP.

Before martial law, until the early part of the Marcos dictatorship, I performed the duties of the secretary of the trade union movement in a district and at the same time was a member of the district committee. I became the trade union movement secretary in the textile and garment line industry in the Manila-Rizal region and became the secretary of the regional bureau in the trade union movement before I was arrested in July 1973. In between these times I became the secretary of the district I was assigned to.

During the storm, new recruits, young people and reliable bodies for various tasks rapidly appeared, the pace of conducting the work was extraordinary; days became nights and there were a lot of studies and theoretical explorations to be put into practice, large-scale actions and changes easily took shape. My experience of action in Manila-Rizal that lasted just over two years provided invaluable lessons and wisdom that served as a long-term foundation for carrying out work in the countryside and on wider levels. The method of sporadic visits on the picket line and integration and support for the striking workers during our time on the Labor Committee in SDK were not enough. It was necessary to visit the factories, systematically plan their organization on a district-wide basis with an appreciation of the size of the factory workforce and its strategic economic and political significance, incorporate specific issues of the trade union movement in the continuous study of Philippine Society and Revolution and MLM (Marxism-Leninism-Maoism) theory. The desire of the workers to build their own union was strong. The number of unionized workers was still very small, and in the factories that had a union, even if it was held by the yellows, it was a company union.

The number of factories that could be reached by the organizing groups was still limited. During the storm, it was necessary to seize the recognition of the national-democratic movement by the working masses and to establish mass connection with the workers and to gather the loosely organized into a broad organization.

A simple project of an open lecture on unionism and the labor movement whose invitations were simply posted at bus stops and churches attracted an attendance of over a hundred. From this, the Progressive Union of Workers in the district was formed. It became a productive center for the training of organizers, revolutionaries, became a school for MLM, expansion, support during strikes, mobilization in rallies and many others. It became a model for the formation of similar alliances in other parts of Manila-Rizal, and it can be said that it became a seed experience

for the establishment of Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU-May 1st Movement).

There were major trade union struggles launched in the district, most of which turned violent due to the forced dismantling of picket lines by strikebreakers and goons who were supported by the police. I directly participated and was a part of many of these strikes. I learned that the strike was bravely sustained. Firstly, due to the unity and steadfastness of the factory workers with a revolutionary core at the leadership. Secondly, the strike was sustained through the help of other workers, and thirdly, through the support from other existing mass organizations. The last strike I participated in was preceded by a declaration of martial law—a strike at Presto/CFC by employees supported by rank-and-file unions from various CFC factories. Two workers on the picket line were shot and killed by the security of the factory while they were preventing the forced dismantling of their picket line by goons and strikebreakers. I was on the picket line when it happened. I just heard that after more than 40 years, the decision was a victory for the workers' strike.



The period of my work in a Manila-Rizal district was a period of intense mobilization for rallies in the center of Manila. It was a period of intensive propaganda-agitation work and tireless recruitment and building of chapters of mass organizations to mobilize large forces for mass actions. It was a time when we organized a long march (modelled after the long march of 1971 against poverty participated by farmers) that went around the entire district and was fashioned as a rally-propaganda-education-recruitment march. It was an era of forming broad alliances and organizing cultural activities in communities and streets. It was a time of deploying forces for specific battles of district-level significance; pulling forces from other tasks to help the

masses affected by the widespread flooding of July-August in 1972 which resulted in strong ties with the masses for the continuation of organizing in their communities, factories and schools after the flood, recruiting Party members and starting to send cadres and activists to the countryside.

When the districts were abolished during the early days of martial law, I was appointed to head the textile and garment line industry and later became the secretary of the regional trade union movement. In this short period of time, all forces under the area of leadership were united in the policy of upholding, as much as possible, the spirit of disobedience against the prohibitions and suppression of martial law in the labor movement, not to cower and bow down to the threats of the dictatorship, pursue group discussions and studies in a secret way, develop a secret system of distribution of literature, turn the many houses of the workers into a network of meeting places, gather strength and launch potential union struggles, and encourage those ready to go to the countryside to serve the armed struggle. Some strikes were launched but were not sustained in the face of the strong reaction from the capitalists and the fascist state. Until I was arrested in July 1973.

The revolutionary consciousness I developed, the actions and struggles with the masses and many comrades, and my deep hatred towards the enemy became my source of strength to firmly face and overcome the interrogation and torture of the enemy when I was arrested.

The experience of being arrested and detained became an additional incitement to the decisiveness to immediately be free in order to return to the mainstream of the struggle. We reached the already

established areas in Samar, particularly in some towns in Western Samar and Eastern Samar. We were assigned in December 1975 to a division of Samar - the Northern Area which covers the towns in the northern half from the three provinces of Eastern Samar, Western Samar or just Samar and Northern Samar (Samar was then divided into the Northern Area and Southern Area). In parallel with this was the work at the regional level. In January 1976, I joined the previous batch that included my husband to Eastern Samar after an 11-day journey.

Our Northern Area committee has now become a three-tiered committee —working as a guerrilla field committee, as a Northern Area committee and as a regional executive committee. This arrangement was productive because we focused on the actual development of a guerrilla front, using the experience we gained for expansion to the rest of the northern part of the island, and to lead the entire region. The committee within the Northern Area was a good and successful leadership committee where the talents and skills of all its members were well gathered and harnessed.

Within three years, from 1976 to 1978, the formation of mass organizations spread like fire in the barrios, the Philippine Society and Revolution, teachings and lessons of the MLKMZD or MLM were spread, the anti-feudal movement was launched characterized by the large-scale formation of people's militias, young people enthusiastically joining the NPA, and eventually the formation of the main platoon force of the NPA for the entire Northern Area and other squads and platoons located in the three rear guerrilla areas of the district, and emergence of capable local cadres to lead districts and sections. My main role was in education and propaganda work, so I contributed to the formulation of short courses in mass and Party studies, traveling to give studies to army units, to district and section committees and even mass organizations. For a short time, I was the secretary of the resettled barrios in the forest area, able to gather direct personal experience in the formation and operation of full-fledged mass organizations, waging the antifeudal struggle and developing social research and class analysis in the barrios.

The said three years was marked by a new level of revolutionary maturity in terms of my grasp of MLMZD, knowing firsthand the conditions of the Philippine countryside, and applying revolutionary theory and practice in advancing the revolutionary armed struggle.

I value the lessons on how the peasant masses can be quickly aroused, organized and mobilized from the

concrete method of simple cooperatives or cooperative endeavors, of using the principles of political economy to analyze the status of the rural classes, of launching productive investigation meetings, the formation of NPA units and lessons in launching tactical offensives, and the successful gathering and formulation of policies and guidelines for the overall advancement of the revolutionary struggle.

The work in Central Luzon became a new challenge and further enriched our understanding of revolutionary theory and deepened our revolutionary practice. It was a time for another storm - the anti-dictatorship storm that led to the popular uprising at the same time as the military rebellion that overthrew the Marcos dictatorship. It was again a time of leaps and bounds in theoretical and practical knowledge in the revolution.

The outpouring of anger against the Marcos dictatorship after the assassination of former senator Benigno Aquino, Sr. was amazing. The previously dormant towns in different parts of Central Luzon rose up and spontaneously took to the streets. At this time, the issue is how to combine rural strength with massive street action in the urban centers, how to seize extraordinary opportunities to quickly expand and strengthen both the rural and urban areas and how the NPA can contribute to the overthrow of the Marcos dictatorship.

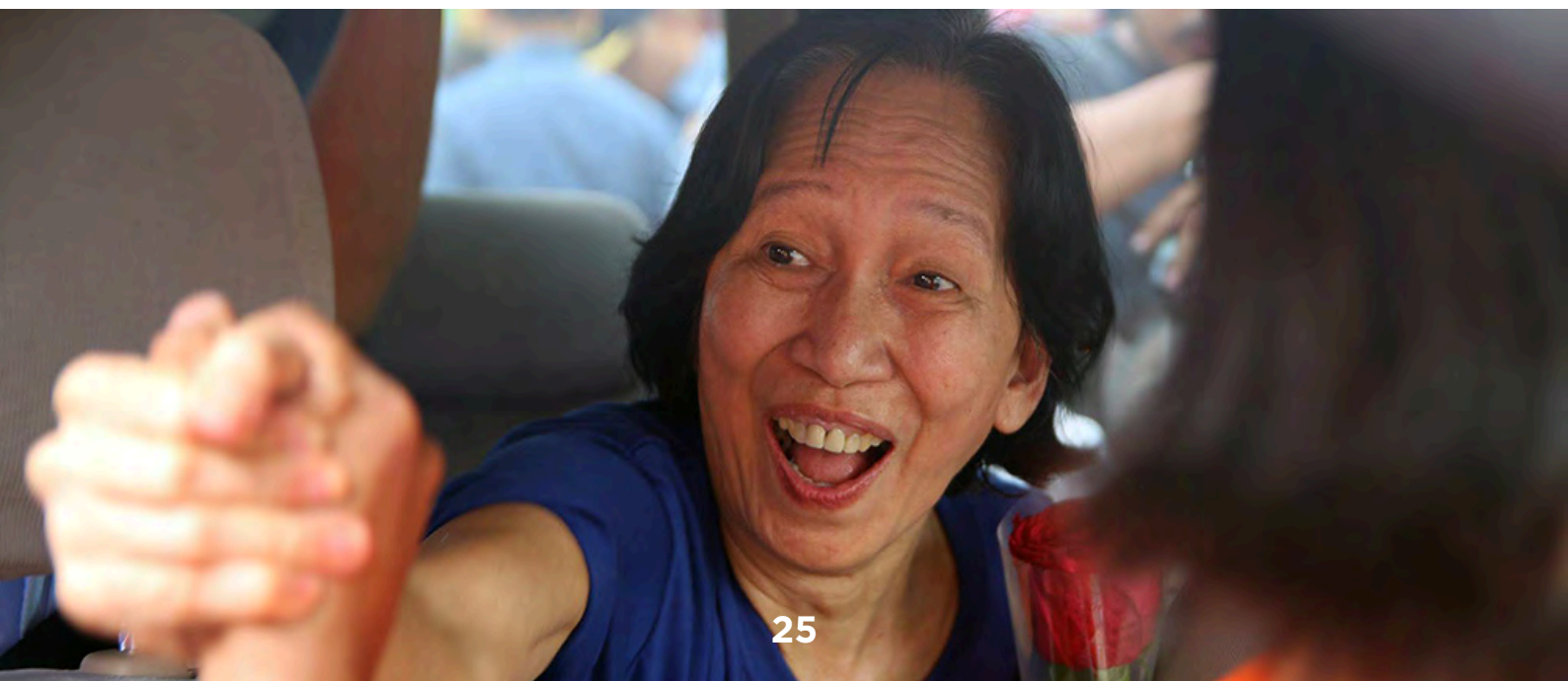
A significant large-scale action that Central Luzon participated in was the Lakbayan of 1984 to promote the boycott movement against the fake IBP (Interim Batasang Pambansa) Election of the Marcos dictatorship. It linked the boycott campaign to the call to overthrow the Marcos dictatorship, to fight imperialism, which was propping up the fascist dictatorship, and to promote genuine land reform.

The preparation for the Lakbayan and the actual Lakbayan was truly a feast for the masses. Entire villages spent the night preparing the food to bring, organizing marching groups, appointing marshals, painting placards and streamers, arranging shelters and sleeping quarters, forming a group of speakers in each stop stations and diligently gathering financial support.

In fact, the warmth of the countryside and the city met. Donations of food and water flowed; even extra places to sleep. Many people contributed financial assistance that exceeded the needs of the Lakbayan. Speakers at impromptu rallies at every station were listened to attentively and cultural performances were enthusiastically applauded. For the rural masses of Central Luzon who have long suffered from large-scale and brutal military operations, participating in such a broad open mobilization to denounce and protest against the fascist Marcos dictatorship was like releasing water that had long been stored in a dam. Everyone felt that the Marcos fascist dictatorship was doomed to fall.

For me, the victory of the revolution and a bright morning for the oppressed and exploited masses and the proletariat class are proven every day by the masses' embrace of the revolutionary theory of society and the Philippine revolution - in their organizing and struggle, in persistence of the NPA on the path of armed struggle, in the full effort of the CPP to merge the universal theory of MLM with the concrete practice of revolution by the Filipino people.

I have full trust in the masses and in the Party that we will reach greater times than the previous storms and achieve the complete victory of the revolution. Even if new obstacles and difficulties arise in the march to victory, the lessons of the past, the leadership of the Party and the awakening of the masses will surely prevail. 🚩



The Forest is Still Enchanted

by Jose Maria Sison

The fickle-minded spirits and fairies
Have fled the old trees and groves,
Dark caves and mounds in the shadows,
Mossy rocks and whispering streams.
The gnarled balete and the blackbird
Have lost their intriguing power.

The uncertainties of the past ages
No longer lurk to exact awe and fear.
In the forest throbs discreetly
A certainty above the certainties
Of chopping wood, hunting boar and deer,
Gathering fruits, honey and even orchids.

But the forest is still enchanted.
There is a new hymn in the wind;
There is a new magic in the dark green,
So the peasant folks say to friends.
A single fighting spirit has taken over
To lure in and astonish the intruders.

A photograph of two soldiers in military uniforms and helmets, equipped with rifles, standing in a dense, lush green forest. The soldiers are positioned in the lower right quadrant of the page, partially obscured by the foreground foliage. The background shows tall, thin trees and a thick canopy of leaves, creating a sense of a deep, unexplored wilderness.

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