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Editorial

Impose revolutionary punishment on Imelda and other cohorts of the Marcos dictatorship

On the occasion of the 13th year anniversary of the overthrow of the fascist US-Marcos dictatorship, the Communist Party of the Philippines expresses the conviction of the revolutionary movement to mete out the appropriate punishment to Imelda Romualdez-Marcos and other principal leaders and cohorts of the late dictator Marcos.

Reversal of the victories of Edsa

Amid a most acute economic crisis and the widespread and intense suffering of the Filipino people, the Estrada government is restoring and providing favors to the biggest and most hated reactionaries who promoted and benefited from the Marcos dictatorship. Under the protection of their former errand boy and now president Estrada, they are now totally free to reclaim their stolen wealth and plunder the economy and national treasury. The interests and aspiration for justice of the Filipino people, especially the tens of thousands of martial law victims, have been outrightly set aside and trampled upon.

The Philippine reactionary political authority continuously refuses to acknowledge the US-Marcos dictatorship's crimes against humanity. Victims of the fascist regime are denied rightful indemnification which is an essential aspect of their quest for justice. Instead, it is the dictator's co-conspirators who are given rights and complete freedom to reclaim their stolen wealth, grab political power and distort history.

The ruling system is unable and unwilling to satisfy the Filipino people's aspiration for justice. Despite the fact

that the Aquino regime was established on the foundations of the antifascist and anti-Marcos movement, it was unable to decisively punish the leaders and cohorts of the fascist dictator. The subsequent Ramos reactionary regime not only failed to seriously prosecute the Marcoses and their co-conspirators, it even laid open the path to enable them to gradually return to power and privilege. Thus, 13 years after the overthrow of the Marcos dictatorship, Imelda Marcos, Eduardo 'Danding' Cojuangco Jr., Lucio Tan and other cronies enjoy ever growing power in Philippine politics and economy.

The election of Joseph Estrada as president of the reactionary government is the biggest victory of the Marcoses since 1986 in their struggle to return to power. Within a few months under the Estrada regime, the influence and power of the Marcoses and their cohorts have progressively expanded. The former officials of the dictator, now strategically positioned in the central machineries of state power, ensure that policies, orders and decisions are favorable to the Marcoses and their cronies.

Twenty-seven cases of graft against the Marcoses and their cronies filed by the Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) have been dismissed by Aniano Desierto, Ombudsman of the Sandiganbayan and Marcos loyalist. Fourteen of these cases involve more than P69.5 billion. Desierto is poised to dismiss 34 more cases.

The Supreme Court upheld these decisions of Desierto in December 1998 through Justices A.R. Melo, Vicente Mendoza, Antonio Martinez and Reynato Puno, all Marcos

appointees. Melo, Mendoza and Puno, aside from Supreme Court Justice Santiago Kapunan and Fidel Purisima all served under Estelito Mendoza, Marcos' solicitor general and current general counsel of Imelda.

The graft case against Imelda Marcos concerning the Light Railway Transit project was also dismissed by the Supreme Court in October 1998. Prior to this, the Regional Trial Court of Quezon City dismissed the graft case against Imee Marcos concerning the defunct Kabataang Barangay. The Supreme Court also revoked in December 1998 the travel ban and arrest order against Danding Cojuangco. Filing of the P26.5 billion tax evasion case against Lucio Tan continues to be delayed, as it is being fixed by the BIR (Bureau of Internal Revenue) and DOJ (Department of Justice) to ensure Tan's acquittal.

Because of the favor and protection she has been receiving under the Estrada government, Imelda has had the audacity to openly assert and claim ownership of more than 200 big corporations worth more than P500 billion including San Miguel Corporation, Philippine Airlines, Philippine Long Distance Telephone Company, Fortune Tobacco, United Coconut Planters Bank, Allied Bank and Asia Brewery.

Estrada wishes to serve as coordinator and godfather of the big crooks of the Marcos dictatorship in return for a share of the reclaimed stolen wealth. This is not so easily done, however, because of the seething contradiction between the Marcoses and trusted cronies of the late dictator. On the one hand, Estrada is making sure of the Marcoses' acquittal in their criminal and civil cases in order to pave the way for their recovery of their stolen wealth. Yet, on the other hand, he allows the former Marcos cronies to claim ownership of the big corporations and property entrusted to them by the dictator, all of which

are now being claimed by Imelda.

Imelda has already filed cases to recover from the ex-cronies 200 corporations which she claims to legitimately own. The basic question being resolved in these cases is who among the thieves have rightful claim over the loot they stole together.

Whatever form these contradictions take, however intense they may be and whichever side prevails, it is the interests of the Filipino people that will certainly be trampled upon.

The crimes of the Marcos dictatorship against the Filipino people

Corollary to the political and economic rehabilitation of Imelda Marcos and her cohorts is the gross distortion of historical facts. There is an effort to cover up and obliterate, in particular, the bloody criminal record and all-out plunder perpetrated by the Marcoses and their cronies during their rule.

In order to counter these distortions and lay out the concrete basis of the people's aspiration for justice and the form of punishment due the criminals, there is need to record the crimes of the US-Marcos dictatorship against the Filipino people. As preparation for the criminal case and litigation in a special people's court, following is an initial enumeration of the crimes for which Imelda Marcos et. al. must be held responsible:*

Thievery and plunder of the economy. The Marcos family made use of absolute state power to plunder the economy and accumulate wealth. It is estimated that the Marcos family and its cohorts amassed more than P1.1 trillion from the national wealth during the dictatorship. The largest portion of the stolen wealth was cornered by the Marcoses and stashed away in the form of dollar deposits abroad, prime real estate and buildings in the US and Japan, corporations, expensive jewelry and others.

The Philippine foreign debt rose from \$2 billion to \$26 billion, most of which the Marcos dictatorship used to fund large but unproductive infrastructure projects, enlarge and arm the reactionary army, bankroll big crony corporations and the Imeldific lavishness and opulent living of the ruling classes.

On the other hand, the US-Marcos dictatorship pushed the Filipino people deeper into the rut of poverty by

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* The CPP is encouraging the readers of AB to submit comments and suggestions in order to further improve this listing

imposing policies which strengthened imperialist control of the economy and intensified the exploitation of workers and peasants. It carried out a bogus land reform program (PD 27) which was used to cover up the widespread land grabbing operations of the Marcoses, their cohorts and of the big foreign corporations. It implemented at the same time the Masagana 99 and "Green Revolution" program which dumped imported fertilizers, pesticides and agrichemicals into the local market and burdened the peasantry with loans even as they were forced to join bogus cooperatives and irrigation projects.

To the elation of the big foreign capitalists, Marcos also implemented the Investment Incentives Law, Export Incentives Law and other laws which reinforced the backward state of the Philippine economy and surrendered the country's national patrimony to imperialism.

Fascist violence and crimes against humanity. When Marcos declared martial law in 1972, he subsumed the entire fascist machinery of the military and police under his sole and absolute control. He appointed his most trusted men to the high command of the AFP to direct it in suppressing the people. He formed the Civilian Home Defense Force (CHDF) and other fanatical paramilitary groups and enlarged the AFP and police from 50,000 to 250,000. These served as the principal instruments in imposing dictatorial power.

Marcos employed his absolute power to impose decrees and laws which suppressed the people's rights. In pursuit of martial law, Marcos issued the Arrest, Search and Seizure Order (ASSO), the Preventive Detention Act (PDA) and the Presidential Commitment Order (PCO) which allowed warrantless searches and arrests; Presidential Decree (PD) 1866 (against the illegal possession of firearms in furtherance of rebellion); the Anti-subversion law; PD 772 (criminalization of squatting); the repressive Labor Code (PD 442) and the related PD 823 (strike ban), Batas Pambansa 130 (New Labor Relations Law) and PD 227 (allowing the ingress and egress of products during strikes).

Under the Marcos dictatorship, six million people were forcibly evacuated from their homes and sources of livelihood. This resulted from the relentless military operations in the countryside that were characterized by massacres, bombings, strafing, forced concentration of the population or hamletting, food and economic blockades, robbery and rape. More than 160,000 were killed, most of them peasants victimized by the state's counterrevolutionary war; hundreds of thousands were illegally arrested and detained; thousands were systematically subjected to torture; and more than 800 became *desaparecidos* or victims of involuntary

disappearance (illegally abducted and presumed to have been summarily executed by the military).

Punish the Marcoses and their cohorts

The revolutionary movement wields the political authority to exact people's justice against the leaders and cohorts of the Marcos dictatorship. There is a standing order from the CPP Central Committee to all units of the New People's Army to arrest Imelda Romualdez Marcos and Ferdinand 'Bongbong' Marcos Jr. as principal co-conspirators of the late dictator Marcos and for them to face trial in the people's court. This order also covers the arrest of Danding Cojuangco, Lucio Tan and other principal cohorts of the Marcos dictatorship.

The people's court will hold Imelda Marcos et. al. responsible for all their crimes against the Filipino people. Revolutionary punishment will be unreservedly carried out against them for crimes that they will be found guilty of.

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Never will the crimes of the US-Marcos dictatorship be erased from the Filipino people's memory. Never will the people's aspiration for justice and the conviction to punish the Marcoses and their principal cohorts ever wane.

Despite the victorious overthrow the fascist Marcos regime in 1986, this aspiration for justice is yet unrealized. The exploiting ruling classes have proven that they are not a wellspring of justice for the Filipino people. In fact, they who have the gall to exculpate and solicitously care for the Marcoses are those who now plunder and inflict violence on the oppressed masses.

History has proven that the Edsa revolution was not enough to achieve justice for the people victimized by the Marcos dictatorship. The neocolonial political system continues to breed corruption, bureaucratic thievery, economic plunder and fascist violence against the people.

This system and all the evil that goes with it can be ended only by waging armed revolutionary struggle. Only the people's war can decisively render justice to the people not only for the crimes of the US-Marcos dictatorship, but for all the crimes of the exploitative ruling classes. **AB**

Fascist violence and counterrevolutionary war in the countryside

VILLA BELLO, JONES, ISABELA. JULY 1998. Two youths and a group of peasants were hit with rifle butts on the chest and head and were ordered to carry the corpses of soldiers from the 21st IB who died in an encounter with the New People's Army (NPA). The next morning, the same troops led by a certain Lieutenant Bernardo burned down the houses of Satur Lorenzo, Pedring Lorenzo and Eddie Maltezo, all poor farmers from Villa Bello. The soldiers turned the barangay school, barangay hall and a number of houses into barracks. The fascists imposed a curfew, forced the residents to clean the streets, threatening to slap a P60 fine against those who refused, and coerced the barriofolk into constructing additional barracks.

Despite all these, or because of these, the 21st IB, which has been involved in crimes such as holdups and robberies and in promote vices, was named "Best Battalion" by the AFP last December 1998.

This is but an example of the widespread and intensifying fascist violence and counterrevolutionary war being waged by the US-Estrada regime nationwide. The counterrevolutionary war that victimizes people in the countryside is being intensified by the reactionary state to give way to policies that favor the interests of the foreign and local ruling class and further impoverish the majority of the people.

All-out militarization and fascist violence signify the regime's desperate attempts to repress the ever-widening and heightening people's resistance to the worsening economic and social crisis.

Counterrevolutionary violence against the people

In the fascist state's frantic attempts to quell the revolutionary movement, it inflicts violence upon unarmed civilians systematically, brutally and without letup. It has perpetrated so many massacres, salvagings (summary executions), strafing, hamletting, beatings, illegal arrests, illegal searches, arson and others.

In the first week of February, six persons were massacred in Kapakuan, Palapag, Northern Samar by a commando team from the 19th IB PA led by Cpl. Priscillo Recilo and 1st Lt. Marlon Bellarmino of the 801st Bde. Killed were Ermito Nuguit, his wife, their three children including a 10-month-old infant, and their houseguest Raul Trapallo. The military covered up its responsibility for the massacre, claiming it was an "encounter" with the NPA. Assailed by human rights groups, they later claimed that Nuguit was a fugitive.

In Landing, Tagkawayan, Quezon, troops under the 16th IB of the 2nd ID continuously fired upon a house where Red fighters were resting last November 13 despite the presence of civilians. Killed along with four Red fighters were the house's owners Vicente and Elsa Capistrano, their father Loreto and Gemmalyn Velasco who was four months pregnant. The military threw all the corpses into a single grave and threatened relatives of the deceased to prevent them from claiming the bodies.

These are only the latest in a series of killings by AFP troops of suspected supporters of the revolutionary

movement. From August to September 1998, seven civilians were reported killed by soldiers engaged in "counter-insurgency" operations in separate incidents in the provinces of Quezon, Palawan, Agusan del Sur and Misamis Oriental. Before Lagonglong, Misamis Oriental was declared "no man's land" last September 1998, the 31st Special Forces Coy, 4th ID PA murdered Richard Balangiao, a farmer. His two companions were arrested, detained and tortured. Six families were harassed. Their homes were also illegally searched by the soldiers.

Various forms of abuse against civilians persist. In December 3, 1998, 12th IB troopers led by Lieutenant Calibo forcibly entered and illegally searched a house in Sitio Viejo, Sebaste, Antique. The troopers supposedly discovered a "list" of members of an alleged underground organization. One night, drunken soldiers returned to the house and ordered the women whose names were on the "list" to assemble for interrogation. The women hid themselves and fled, fearing that they would be harmed by the fascists.

There is widespread intimidation, illegal searches and burning of homes, violent and forced evacuations, theft of property and destruction of farmers' livelihood. In August 1998, the 37th IB PA ejected 29 families from Batasan, Makilala, North Cotabato. In September 1998, the 31st IB PA strafed Rogelio Ortega's house in Lopez, Quezon and robbed him of half a sack of rice, shoes, a wallet and his residence certificate. In October 1998, a crippled 40-year-old

farmer, was arrested by soldiers in Compostela Valley at midnight and interrogated until 5 o'clock the next morning.

In Pulot, San Antonio, Kalayaan, Laguna last November 6, troopers of the 9th Scout Ranger Company raided the house of Priscilla and Jose Federico. The latter, along with three other civilians and Ka Jonas, staff of the CPP Information Bureau, were illegally arrested and charged with criminal offenses. The soldiers robbed and later demolished the Federicos' house and sari-sari store. Ka Jonas was hidden for days and deprived of the right to see his family and lawyer.

There are also growing cases wherein barriofolk accused as NPA members or supporters are forced to declare themselves as surrenderees. They are compelled to act as guides in military operations and are forcibly conscripted into paramilitary groups such as the CAFGU in Isabela, Rizal, Capiz, Agusan del Sur and other provinces. Seven farmers were made to appear as surrenderees by the 21st IB PA in Minuri, Jones, Isabela in August. Two Manobos were shot by troops of the 401st Bde in Prosperidad, Agusan del Sur in September, after they refused to join the "Bagani Warriors", a paramilitary group.

In November 12, 1998, Cresencio Cruz of Bgy. Puray, Rodriguez, Rizal, was arrested and detained for two days by the 6th and 9th Army Scout Rangers. While forcing him to join them in a military operation, the soldiers ruthlessly beat him with a rifle butt until he defecated and was crippled. Three of his companions were also abused by the troopers.

In the name of pro-foreign and anti-people policies

Where there are giant foreign capitalist and local bourgeois comprador-landlord businesses, there, too, are widespread military operations

and abuses. These are part and parcel of the Estrada regime's brazen-faced imposition of policies such as the Mining Act and the Land Lease Act that cater to the economic interests of imperialists and local reactionaries despite—and in an attempt to quash—the people's growing resistance.

In Pampanga, Bulacan, Batangas, Cebu, Bohol and Compostela Valley, police and military forces attack entire peasant communities, leaving hacenderos and developers free to grab the farmers' lands.

To quell resistance to landgrabbing by the Dalahican Agro-marine Corporation and the First Noveleta Realty and Development Corporation, Roberto Kinney, a peasant leader in Noveleta, Cavite, was ordered killed in December 1998. Four peasant leaders like Kinney were also killed in Leyte, Bohol and Cebu, in separate incidents.

In Kayrilaw, Nasugbu, Batangas, Danilo Caisip and Jayson Nieva were seized, tied and brutally mauled on December 8, 1998 by Barangay Captain Jorge Gerpacio, Gregorio Dimapilis, Eric Gerpacio, Serafin Alegre, Domingo de Padua, Rudy Vidal and other unknown culprits. Caisip and Nieva are among the farmers firmly protesting the rampant land-use conversion of agricultural lands in Nasugbu to construct tourist facilities. After the mauling, they were turned over to the 401st PNP Mobile Force of Palico, Nasugbu headed by Maj. Israel Ephraim. Up to now, Caisip and Nieva have not yet been surfaced.

Also in November 1998, residents of Bgy. San Antonio in Cuartero and Bgy. Ginbialan in Maayon, Capiz were subjected to intense browbeating and physical abuse by troopers of the 6th IB led

by 1Lt. Harold Argamoza and 2Lt. Federico Amboy. One resident whose hair was pulled during interrogation was threatened that his eight-year-old child would be shot. Since July 1998, soldiers have incessantly terrorized residents resisting the exploration activities of Mt. Isa Manera, an Australian mining company based in Lemery, Iloilo.

In Bohol, alleged "counter-insurgency" operations were launched to quell peasant organizations' protests against the Cebu-Inabanga Water Deal. Military might dominates Tuburan, Cebu—operations to repress the farmers' struggle against landgrabbing under the pro-imperialist Socialized Integrated Forestry Management Areas program were likewise referred to as "counter-insurgency" measures.

Violations of international humanitarian law

Even the Estrada regime's arbitrary refusal to implement the Comprehensive Agreement for the Respect of Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL) and its arrogant and unilateral suspension of the peace talks are proof that the regime will not hesitate to crush any impediment to its faithful service to its ruling class masters, *compadres*, kin and confreres.

From the PNP, the reactionary state has in fact scrambled to return to the AFP the primary responsibility for "counter-insurgency" operations to suppress the invigoration of the armed struggle and of mass protests and struggles. Intensifying fascism and military offensives are now aimed at the militant and revolutionary masses.

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The fascist crimes of Gen. Panfilo Lacson in Cebu

Gen. Panfilo Lacson, chief of the Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force (PAOCTF), is a perfect embodiment of fascist cruelty against the people. Lacson, who currently serves as Estrada's supercop, his favorite and most trusted officer, has a record dripping with blood.

Through the investigation being conducted by the Regional Operational Command of the New People's Army in Central Visayas, details are being brought to light about Gen. Lacson's criminal record especially when he was Commander of Metrodiscom-Cebu

from the second half of the '80s. Also under investigation is the record of Lacson's cohort, Gen. Benjamin Paclibar, who is presently chief of the PAOCTF-Visayas and former Commanding Officer of the 341st PC Company based in Camp Sotero Cabahug in Lahur City, Cebu.

The NPA-Central Visayas continues to receive reports and evidence regarding the fascist crimes of Lacson and Paclibar. Among the initial findings are the following:

1. Militarization and sowing of fascist terror in Barrio Luz, T. Padilla, B. Rodriguez, Ibabao, Mandaue and other urban poor communities in Cebu

from 1988-89. Entire urban poor communities were hamletted and widespread and arbitrary searches and arrests were carried out disrupting the livelihood of urban poor residents.

2. The torture of suspected partisan operative Teodoro Serecon in February 1990. While he was undergoing interrogation, Serecon's back was repeatedly punctured with staple wires and nails were hammered into his feet and legs.

3. The torture by Paclibar of Simplicio Abendan, an *hors de combat* Red fighter who was arrested by the military in July ▶

In the field of battle, the fascist AFP's treatment of prisoners of war has become even crueller and inhuman. There are growing numbers of cases of fighters who had been rendered *hors de combat* but were nonetheless tortured, summarily executed or involuntarily disappeared by AFP and PNP troops.

In Dituray, Tigbao, Zamboanga del Sur, combined forces of the CAFGU and the 51st IB PA treacherously murdered Myra Algarme (Ka Noah), staff of the NDFP, while she was bathing in a river last January 17. Another Red fighter, Alejandro Alcareza (Ka Oca), was wounded when captured by soldiers. Instead of applying first aid, the troopers interrogated him, causing him to bleed to death. The soldiers tied up and carried the bodies of Ka Noah and Ka Oca like pigs and brought these to the town of Tigbao. Their remains were buried only upon the request of civilian authorities.

In December 7, 1998, Domingo Baluncio (Ka Mel), a Red fighter, was also deprived of medical attention by elements of the 1st IB PA. Baluncio was wounded in the thigh in an encounter in Bato, Camarines Sur. Despite his clearly being *hors de combat* and the request and offer of villagers to bring him to the hospital, Baluncio was captured, thrown inside a military truck and tortured by the soldiers. He was later found dead with numerous hematomas all over his body—one kilometer away from where he was arrested.

The AFP deprives wounded Red fighters of medical attention as well as ordinary people. In September 1998,

the PNP Regional Mobile Group of Bohol harassed a medical team and prevented its members from rendering service to Bgy. Ilaya, Inabanga allegedly because only NPA supporters would be benefited by the group. Likewise, in October 1998, elements of the 29th and 36th IB threatened residents of Rosario, Agusan del Sur, declaring that anyone who joins the Basic Christian Communities and volunteers as a barangay health worker would be considered an NPA supporter.

Psychological warfare, which always complements the fascist state's violent suppression of the people, is now actively engaged in by opportunists and revisionist renegades. Psywar, however, has become a worn-out mask that is being torn to shreds by the reactionary regime's ceaseless counterrevolutionary violence.

Violations of human rights and international humanitarian laws by the reactionary state are persistent, relentless and intensifying. As the economic and political crisis of the reactionary system worsens, the Estrada regime will surely magnify its use of counterrevolutionary violence against the people and the revolutionary movement.

Heightening fascism will only hasten the isolation of the reactionary US-Estrada regime and will push ever-broader sections of the people to stand up and fight, persevere further in expanding revolutionary and progressive organizations, and further develop expertise in advancing various forms of armed and unarmed resistance. ■

NPA arrests AFP General, 2 other officers

1990 in Pung-ol, Sibugay, Cebu City. In full view of his men and residents of the area, Paclibar, using a bayonet, gouged out the eyes of Abendan who was then still alive.

4. Illegal arrest and mauling of Erasmo Vitualla, suspected partisan operative, in October 1990. He was arrested during his wedding together with his bride and guests.

5. The disappearance of Jimmy Badayos, labor leader, in November 1990.

6. Formation and promotion of fanatical and anticommunist vigilante groups that terrorized thousands of families in Central Cebu and the mountain barangays of Metro Cebu such as Talisay and Pardo in 1987-1990. Lacson and Paclibar led in the formation of fanatical paramilitary groups, in the forcible recruitment, training and arming of barriofolk. These groups were compelled and ordered to carry out indiscriminate strafing; to maul, abuse and murder suspected fighters, supporters and sympathizers of the NPA, many of whom were their neighbors and relatives. This bloody campaign led by Lacson and Paclibar caused widespread dislocation of the lives of the people of Central and Metro Cebu.

The high command of the reactionary government and AFP refuses to investigate Lacson's criminal activities and those of other fascist officers. Instead, Lacson and his ilk continue to be rewarded with promotions enabling them to now lord it over the fascist police under the Estrada government. With ever increasing powers being granted to Lacson, he now has the capability of sowing nationwide the terror he had sown in Metro Cebu.

It is correct to continue the investigation, documentation and prosecution of the fascist crimes perpetrated under the US-Marcos dictatorship and under the subsequent regimes of Aquino, Ramos and Estrada. All victims of such crimes and their relatives should be encouraged to approach the responsible units of the NPA and NDF so they could be assisted in attaining justice. **AB**

February 17, 2:15 PM – The Merardo Arce Command of the New People's Army (NPA) arrested two high-ranking officers of the Philippine Army in So. Tabak, Brgy. Carmen, Baguio District, Davao City.

In a successful entrapment operation, Red fighters were able to capture Brig. Gen. Victor Obillo, Capt. Eduardo Montealto, a Corporal Lipaolipao and their driver Rogelio Mendoza. Obillo is the commander of the 55th Engineering and Construction Brigade (ECB) based in Davao City. Montealto is the brigade's logistics officer while Lipaolipao is Obillo's aide-de-camp. After a few hours, Lipaolipao and Mendoza were released to relay the Merardo Arce Command's message to the AFP. Both Obillo and Montealto were armed with .45s when apprehended.

In a statement, the Merardo Arce Command said that the two officers were arrested while conducting counterrevolutionary activities within the territories of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP).

Four days later, on February 21, the NPA-Sorsogon arrested Chief Insp. Roberto Bernal, intelligence officer of the Philippine National Police (PNP) who currently holds office in the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) in Quezon City. At about 11 o'clock in the morning in San Juan, Bacon, Sorsogon, Red fighters bagged Bernal while the latter was consulting one of his assets in ►

Against Lacson's Warrantless Arrest

The Communist Party joins the broad sections of society in condemning the fascist proposal of Gen. Panfilo Lacson to revive the ASSO and PDA of the deposed US-Marcos dictatorship. In the second half of February, Gen. Lacson insisted on legalizing "warrantless arrests" or the granting of powers to the reactionary military and police to make arrests without going through the legal processes and without proper court injunction.

This presents yet other proof of how the reactionary US-Estrada regime uses the issue of criminality and the campaign against crime to commit widespread suppression of democratic rights and, thus, enable it to impose worse antipeople, antinational and antidemocratic policies.

Lacson's proposal is just one of the many openly fascist policies and laws that are already being implemented and prepared by the Estrada regime including the moratorium on strikes, repeal of the minimum wage law and others. These measures will certainly meet with the people's anger and militant resistance. The Party is confident that relentless violations of human rights will be roundly defeated by the Filipino people. **AB**

the barrio.

The NPA-Sorsogon issued a statement stating that Bernal was arrested in a tactical offensive because of his “active role in setting up an intelligence network against the revolutionary movement not only in Sorsogon but in the entire Bicol region”. Bernal frequents Sorsogon to check on the network and to visit his mistress.

The arrests of Obillo, Montealto and Bernal are victories that mark the advance of the armed struggle based on an ever-widening and ever-deepening mass base. These are also in compliance with the call of the CPP Central Committee to intensify tactical offensives, including taking as prisoners, whenever possible, officers and enlisted personnel of the AFP and the PNP.

The three officers shall be treated as prisoners of war and will enjoy rights in accordance with the policies of the NPA, the people’s democratic government, the Comprehensive Agreement on the Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law or CARHRIHL and international laws such as the Geneva Conventions and Protocol 1. This is in line with the recognition of their status as combatants of the reactionary armed forces.

The NPA units serving as custodians of the prisoners of war, respect the rights and assure the health and safety of the three officers. In line with their status as prisoners of war, they can be tried in a revolutionary people’s court, and if found guilty, will be punished as war criminals with

due consideration for the gravity of the crimes committed. On the other hand, they can be pardoned and released in line with the revolutionary movement’s long-standing policy of humane and lenient treatment of prisoners of war.

In this regard, the NDFP immediately expressed its readiness to negotiate with the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) for the possible early release of the prisoners of war. The NDFP Negotiating Panel is the sole organ of the revolutionary movement authorized to negotiate with the GRP in relation to prisoners of war.

But the Estrada regime outrightly ignored the NDFP Negotiating Panel’s generous offer. Instead, it deployed more troops to the mountains of Davao City, zoned the communities, set up checkpoints along roads and even boastfully announced that it has imposed a food blockade in certain areas. Worse, through its mindless military operations, the regime has trampled on the rights and livelihood of thousands of people in the area.

Meanwhile, in a demonstration of irresponsibility, impetuosity and ignorance of the peace process, Estrada formally suspended the peace talks between the NDFP and the GRP, and illegally cancelled the effectivity of the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees (JASIG).

The Estrada regime is being caught in the tangled web of its own lies and its utter incapacity to defeat the revolutionary movement. **AB**

Who is considered a combatant?

When the NPA arrested Gen. Victor Obillo and Capt. Eduardo Montealto, GRP and AFP officials insisted that they were “non-combatants” and are not legitimate targets of the armed conflict. Thus, they claimed, the arrests violated international rules of war. In this regard, the GRP stubbornly maintains that the two officers are not prisoners of war, are instead kidnap victims and that the GRP will not negotiate with the NDFP for their release.

These two stances of the GRP/AFP contradict each other: On the one hand, they demand that the NPA follow international rules of war, in particular, to strictly differentiate between combatants and non-combatants. On the other hand, they continue to refuse to recognize the NPA’s status as a co-belligerent in a civil war and insist on branding the revolutionary movement as an internal police problem, an “insurgency” not covered by rules of war.

Obillo and Montealto are in fact, combatants.

As stated in Protocol 1, “members of the armed forces of a Party to a conflict (other than medical personnel and

chaplains...) are combatants, that is to say, they have the right to participate directly in hostilities”.

Thus, it is outright disinformation when Orlando Mercado, Secretary of the Department of National Defense and other high-ranking officers of the AFP, claim that Obillo and Montealto, officers of the 55th ECB, are not combatants and are involved merely in the construction of roads and bridges, as if they were no different from the personnel of the Department of Public Works and Highways.

In the AFP’s structure, the ECB is a combat support unit; it is an armed unit whose responsibility is focused on building the required infrastructure for military operations and objectives. Aside from the ECB, the Philippine Army’s other combat support units include Signal (radio communications) and PALAB (Philippine Army Light Armor Brigade). These units are a direct and significant part of combat operations, unlike service support units (e.g. medical personnel and chaplains).

Obillo and Montealto, who were both armed with .45 pistols when apprehended, are combatants and are legitimate targets of the NPA’s armed actions. **AB**

Along the path of steadfast advance

“The current of advance is certain.”

This was confidently declared by the Mindanao Commission of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) as it reviewed the situation of the revolutionary movement in the island since the Second Great Rectification Movement (SGRM) was launched in 1992-93. A special issue of *Pulang Tamdanan* (political journal of the Party in Mindanao) published on the occasion of the CPP's 30th anniversary described the reinvigoration of the revolutionary movement in Mindanao in its various aspects.

Said the Mindanao Commission, the revolutionary forces continued to grow and strengthen from 1995 to the present. This is the fruit of resolutely advancing the Second Great Rectification Movement and striving to advance anew in accordance with the correct line of people's democratic revolution and protracted people's war.

Not only did the Party and the revolutionary forces preserve themselves. They have further consolidated by repudiating the grave deviations and errors of the past. They determinedly restrengthened themselves through painstakingly arousing and organizing the masses and militantly leading the people's armed and unarmed struggles. Thus, they overcame the great damage and reversals brought about by military adventurism and urban insurrectionism and the all-out military offensives of the enemy from the mid-'80s to the early '90s. The revolutionary movement in Mindanao is once more treading the path of steadfast advance along the correct revolutionary direction.

Reinvigoration of the Party

The Second Great Rectification Movement's most significant victory in Mindanao is the ideological consolidation of the Party organization. The entire Party's consciousness regarding Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and the line of people's democratic revolution has been raised to a level far higher than at any time in the past.

Ideological building. The Commission and the Regional Committees consider ideological work as their number one priority, particularly the summing-up of experiences, dissemination of the basic rectification documents and studies on the three-level Party course as

well as the extensive implementation of criticism and self-criticism.

More than 90% of Party cadres and members have studied the basic rectification documents. Almost simultaneous with this, an education campaign on the Basic Party Course (BPC) was launched. More than 80% of full-time Party members, aside from members of local Party branches and groups have finished the course. An education campaign on the Intermediate Party Course has also been going on since 1995. Since 1997, leading committees and cadres have been taking more intensive studies on the BPC's topics and references while awaiting the Advanced Course which is directly supervised by the Party's central leadership.

The Party's experience in Mindanao from 1979 to 1992 has been comprehensively summed-up, resulting in the revolutionary forces' unified understanding of past revolutionary practice and its concrete historical circumstances. Advances, reversals and the reasons for these were cited, and lessons were drawn to guide efforts to rectify errors and reinvigorate the revolutionary movement. The four regions in Mindanao (Northern, Southern, Far South and Western) and other lower-level territorial Party organizations have likewise summed-up their experiences. Assessments of revolutionary work at various levels of the organization are regularly conducted along with criticism and self-criticism.

Leading Party committees and cadres have been steeled through hard struggle. They have resolutely persevered in the people's democratic revolution through protracted people's war in the face of all-out offensives by the reactionary puppet state and the relentless sabotage and attacks waged by the counterrevolutionary revisionist renegades. It was also necessary to overcome the “Left” and Right tendencies that intensified within the Party due to the longtime dominance of disorientation and lapses and the accumulated damage and worsening problems that complicated each other.

Complicated struggles were waged against the revisionist renegades who resorted to all kinds of intrigues and distortions and fostered regionalism and sentimentalism to divide and destroy the Party. But Party cadres and members—with the exception of a handful who eventually

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wallowed in revisionism, opportunism and decadence — remained loyal to revolutionary proletarian principles, honorably defended the Party and revolutionary movement's integrity and thoroughly vanquished the revisionist

renegades and their counterrevolutionary demolition operations.

Currently, there are continuing efforts to wage the education campaign throughout the Party to further raise the theoretical capability of Party cadres and members. The summings-up of certain regions still have to be documented so that lessons drawn from past practice could be systematically disseminated within their respective areas of responsibility.

Assessment and study meetings are being systematized to shorten them. Cadres are also in need of additional and more systematic training to accelerate their comprehensive development. In this regard, the Commission has paid particular attention to the need to further train leaders of units and teams engaged in mass work.

Organizational building. Party expansion has also proceeded apace consequent to the rectification movement. The Party has drawn a bigger number of recruits from among advanced mass activists. Overall, the wellspring of new Party members has grown more abundant because of the continued emergence of numerous mass activists from the ranks of the peasantry, workers, youth, women and professionals in the countryside and cities. Party membership, which expanded by 10% from 1994 to 1995, further grew in the succeeding years. It is, at present, 50% greater than what it was in 1994. This is a significant leap compared to the 1992-1994 levels, when Party membership plummeted to about a thousand from a peak strength of several thousands in 1983-84.

Growing numbers of Party members and activists from the cities are being deployed to the countryside. From 1996 to the present, more than a hundred of them have joined the people's army. There is a continuing effort to reinforce this trend. This is in complete contrast to what prevailed in the past, when the exodus was from the countryside to the cities—a practice that was encouraged by the insurrectionist RAWA ("red area - white area") line and which weakened the Party and movement in the countryside and as a whole.

The Party organization in Mindanao consciously upholds the principle of democratic centralism. Ultrademocracy has been rectified along with bureaucratism,

both of which were severe organizational problems in the past. Leading organs strictly implement the committee system — which explains why the Party organization evidently functions effectively at various levels.

Nonetheless, the Mindanao Commission cited the need to intensify efforts to enlarge the Party organization relative to the accelerated expansion of the organized masses. In this regard, there is a continuing struggle against the tendency to set excessively high and sectarian standards, aside from simply neglecting to give due attention to systematic expansion.

Armed struggle and movement in the countryside

The leadership and influence of the Party and the national-democratic revolution continue to broaden in Mindanao. The revolutionary forces operate in 18 out of the island's 24 provinces and in 65% of priority towns and cities.

Revolutionary mass movement in the countryside. The scope of guerrilla zones is being assiduously expanded. In 1998, the number of barrios covered grew almost 200% compared to the 1994 level. This includes several hundred lumad communities that actively participate in the revolutionary struggle.

The contraction of guerrilla zones was halted by 1995 and new ones have been opened since then. In 1996-97, a significant portion of what was formerly Central Mindanao was recovered—an area adversely affected by the revisionist renegades' demolition operations. A large portion of Western Mindanao has also been recovered; existing guerrilla zones in Northern, Southern and Far South Mindanao have expanded. Only a few of the former guerrilla zones have not yet been recovered. At present, there are 22 guerrilla zones in the island, representing one-fourth of the total number of guerrilla zones nationwide.

Nonetheless, the Commission called on the entire membership to focus on further accelerating the expansion and consolidation of the mass base. The Commission called the entire Party organization's attention to the need to develop many more full-time cadres and fighters to further expand the mass base and guerrilla zones.

Antifeudal struggles. Since 1996-97, an increasing number of antifeudal struggles has been waged in the countryside. Aside from campaigns to reduce land rent, raise farm workers' wages and reduce interest rates on loans as well as rice milling fees, other types of land-related struggles have also been launched.

In Far South Mindanao, a mass campaign against the landgrabbing Western Mining Company has gained strength. The campaign has mobilized not only the basic masses but has gained the support of many middle forces. In Southern Mindanao, there is a widespread campaign

against the IFMA (Integrated Forest Management Agreement). In the municipality of Talaingod, Davao del Norte, the lumad masses are advancing their legal and armed resistance against Alcantara & Sons (Alsons), a logging company that has been grabbing land from the Ata-Manobo. In Northern Mindanao, mass struggles have been waged against landgrabbing by companies owned by the big comprador bourgeoisie. In Western Mindanao, a successful mass campaign has been waged to allow the Subanen natives to return to their lands after having been forced to evacuate in the '80s and early '90s due to intense military operations by the AFP. A mass campaign against landgrabbing by foreign mining companies has also commenced in the region.

Thousands of people throughout Mindanao have been mobilized and are providing support for these mass actions.

The Commission cited the need to further intensify and expand antifeudal struggles because the latter serve as the key link of mass work in the countryside. It is also necessary to improve investigation and analysis of socio-economic issues in every barrio to identify concrete problems that inflict suffering on the masses and address these through appropriate tactics and mass campaigns.

Within the guerrilla zones, the organs of political power (most of which are at the barrio or front level) enjoy an ever-broadening scope.

These organs which serve as the seeds of Red political authority, are capable of enforcing laws within their respective territorial jurisdictions.

Armed struggle. Since 1995, more than 50 tactical offensives have been launched by the people's army in Mindanao, yielding more than 100 high-powered firearms. This February 17, in an operation that sent shock waves to the highest leadership of the GRP and AFP, the NPA Merardo Arce Command in Southern Mindanao captured Maj. Gen. Victor Obillo (commander of the 55th Engineering and Construction Brigade) and Capt. Eduardo Montealto (the brigade's logistics officer) in Bgy. Carmen, Baguio, Davao City. All these are proof of the decisive turnabout from the damage, reversals and inertia brought about by the grave deviations and errors of the past.

Due to victories in expanding and strengthening the mass base, the people's army has further consolidated, become more active and grown in number. Recruitment of Red fighters and expansion of guerrilla forces are once again brisk.

Each front has a main guerrilla unit, usually platoon-size, while those of others are squad-size. These guerrilla units conduct comprehensive military work, mass work and production. They possess a high level of discipline and have intimate links with the masses.

Aside from the full-time NPA units, there are thousands of militia who continue engaging in their livelihood in their farms even as they participate in guerrilla operations from time to time, assist in maintaining order in the barrios and perform other supportive military work.

There is continued dissemination and systematization of politico-military training among Red commanders and fighters. There is a sufficient core of military cadres who have extensive experience in leading the people's army and in planning and commanding military actions.

Revolutionary movement in the cities

The legal democratic movement in the cities is expanding and strengthening. Legal mass organizations that advance national-democratic struggles are at the forefront of open struggles against intensifying exploitation by the past reactionary US-Ramos regime and the current reactionary US-Estrada regime.

Since 1995, protests and mass mobilizations have been waged in the leading cities of Mindanao such as Davao, Iligan, Cagayan de Oro, Gen. Santos, Butuan, Tagum and Pagadian. The number of people joining mass mobilizations has been growing yearly, from a few in the early '90s to hundreds and thousands at present. Big mobilizations have been witnessed in rallies launched against Ramos' charter change ("cha-cha") scheme as well as mobilizations against rising prices of gasoline and other commodities, GATT-WTO, the Visiting Forces Agreement and others.

The progressive trade union movement is resolutely restrengthening along with the determined expansion of of the revolutionary underground movement in factories, plantations, mines and other places of concentration of workers. The number of factories where the Party operates has doubled since 1993-94. Other indications of the expansion of progressive and militant unionism are the ever-bigger mobilizations during May 1 and the growing number of workers joining anti-imperialist, antifascist and antifeudal mass protests. In 1997-98, a handful of labor aristocrats brazenly colluded with big capitalists to bust progressive unions and oust progressive labor leaders from factories. This was fiercely resisted by the militant workers' movement and the masses of workers.

Meanwhile, the youth and student movement has also been expanding. There are progressive organizations in scores of big schools in various parts of Mindanao. Progressive forces in schools actively mobilize the masses

SINCE 1995, PROTESTS AND MASS MOBILIZATIONS HAVE BEEN WAGED IN THE LEADING CITIES OF MINDANAO SUCH AS DAVAO, ILIGAN, CAGAYAN DE ORO, GEN. SANTOS, BUTUAN, TAGUM AND PAGADIAN.

of students in struggles against puppet reactionary rule aside from the suppression of academic freedom and other democratic rights of students and teachers and the continued hikes in school fees. The masses of members of legal youth organizations continue to join sectoral and multisectoral mobilizations. More and more advanced youth activists have decided to go to the countryside to participate directly in the armed struggle.

United front work. With respect to united front work, the development of the basic alliance of the toiling masses is evident. A good number of those from the petty bourgeoisie and other sectors are joining struggles bannered the nationalist and democratic line on various issues. The number of underground cells and chapters of the allied organizations of the NDF has also grown among the ranks of the middle forces. Their membership has grown to thousands, reflecting a 50% increase compared to the 1994 level.

The Mindanao-wide Peace Forum held from May 24 to July 4, 1998 and led by NDF peace negotiators Ka Luis Jalandoni and Ka Coni Ledesma, gained wide support from various sectors. Up to 10,000 attended the consultations conducted in the cities of Pagadian, Ozamiz, Dipolog, Gen. Santos, Cagayan de Oro, Butuan and Davao.

Nonetheless, the Commission stressed the need to further expand the membership of revolutionary mass organizations as well as legal progressive organizations because these serve as channels for waging widespread revolutionary and militant struggles that promote and defend the interests of the broad masses of the people. It is also necessary to win over ever-bigger numbers from the middle forces and to strengthen and expand their organizations.

The revolutionary movement has maintained its links with the Moro masses within or near guerrilla zones. A number of revolutionary groups has been set up among them in areas where the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) does not operate. There has also been progress in alliance work with revolutionary Moros. Political and military cooperation between the National Democratic Front and the MILF continue to develop as the two revolutionary forces face a common enemy (*see related article*).

ON THE WHOLE, it is clear that the Party organization in Mindanao has now gained more solid victories due to its adherence to the correct line and policies. With this, the urgent call to “seize the day, seize the hour” has been issued by the Commission so that the Party and revolutionary movement in Mindanao could achieve even more victories and advance more rapidly. **AB**

NDF-MILF Alliance

Unity and cooperation against the reactionary enemy

The National Democratic Front (NDF) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), the two largest and most significant revolutionary armed forces in the Philippines today, are both vigorously expanding and intensifying their armed struggles. Recently, both made public their new and higher level of unity, cooperation and alliance against the Manila-based neo-colonial and reactionary puppet government and its US imperialist master.

In their declaration, NDF and MILF leaders stressed that the alliance will further consolidate and strengthen the revolutionary struggles of the Moro and Filipino people so that they could concentrate stronger blows against the reactionary enemy which exists primarily to exploit and oppress them.

Concomitant with the advance of the just and revolutionary struggle in Mindanao and the entire nation, the NDF-MILF alliance develops further the understanding, trust and respect between the Moro and Filipino peoples, whom US imperialists and local reactionaries have, for so long, divided and played against each other.

The NDF alliance with the MILF is based on the NDF program’s recognition and support of the Moro people’s struggle for self-determination and freedom. On the other hand, the MILF has declared support for the Filipino people’s struggle for national liberation and democracy.

The two movements are naturally and closely related due to their long common history of arduous and bloody struggles against foreign colonialists and the local reactionary puppet state. Territories of both sides have long had common boundaries. In some areas, the two revolutionary authorities even overlap.

Their alliance reflects the positive experience and deepening of mutual understanding not only among leading elements but also

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among ordinary members and the masses who support the two revolutionary movements.

The national significance of and the urgent need for the established alliance have been proven by the widespread and large-scale military offensives and the intensifying fascist suppression being perpetrated by the reactionary state in Mindanao.

More than a third of the AFP's maneuver battalions, which include 34 infantry battalions of the Philippine Army, the Navy's six Marine Battalion Landing Teams and a battalion of the Philippine Air Force, are deployed in guerrilla fronts of the New People's Army (NPA) and camps of the Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Forces (BIAF) in Mindanao. There is a high concentration of high-powered weapons of the AFP in the island, such as fighter planes and armored vehicles, tanks and cannons.

The Estrada regime is intensifying its counterrevolutionary war upon orders of US imperialists to secure Mindanao as a main port for their warships and a runway for their war planes.

Foreign monopoly companies likewise have their eyes set on the oil deposits in Liguasan Marsh and the rich mineral deposits in different parts of the island. Militarization and fascist abuse are most intense not only in areas where the NPA and BIAF are strongest but also in the areas covered by these giant foreign companies' speculation and mining activities.

The AFP and PNP's campaigns of suppression have been going on without letup in Mindanao. Cruelty and violations of the human rights of the people in the island, especially of the toiling masses, continue and go on unabated.

There is once again a widespread drive to form CAFGUs and fanatical vigilante groups. Towards this, the reactionary state actively provokes conflicts between the Moro and non-Moro masses. They shell and bomb not only open and suspected camps of the NPA and BIAF; even barrios and communities, homes and farms of ordinary peasants and minorities are not spared. Burning of houses and crops, arbitrary arrests and searches, tortures and execution of prisoners are widespread.

Despite all these, the NDF and MILF, the NPA and BIAF have further consolidated and strengthened. The revolutionary movement led by the Communist Party of the Philippines has vigorously revitalized itself and is now advancing. (*see related article*)

The MILF has militantly stood its ground against the reactionary government's pacification campaign and has squarely faced the AFP's fascist attacks after Nur Misuari and his MNLF betrayed the Moro struggle. Over the years, it has established and strengthened its camps.

The MILF's political authority prevails within its 47 camps, which in turn, serve as base areas for its struggle for an independent Moro state. Each camp covers entire barrios. The biggest are in Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur, Lanao del Norte, Davao del Norte, North Cotabato, Sarangani, Zamboanga del Norte and Sultan Kudarat. Camp Abubakar, along the Maguindanao and Lanao del Sur border, serves as the main camp.

The MILF and BIAF continue to consolidate their armed strength to actively defend these camps against attacks by the reactionary state. In line with this, they have taken a militant stance in engaging in peace talks with the reactionary government to deflect AFP attacks on their camps, assert their right to establish and expand these and continue advancing the struggle of the Moro people for self-determination.

The NDF and MILF express their determination to continue and further develop and expand their unity and cooperation, base on mutual need and mutually acceptable principles.

The NDF assures the MILF that it recognizes and respects the identity, integrity and way of life and culture of the Moro people and is against any form of national oppression, discrimination, chauvinism and coercion against them.

The NDF guarantees the right of the Moro people to self-determination, extending to their right to secede from a state of national oppression and to establish their own state or choose federation or local autonomy under the People's Democratic Republic of the Philippines.

The NDF recognizes their right to a Moro homeland and to a system embodying the Moro people's social, political, economic and religious aspirations under a leadership that they so elect.

In line with the principles of unity of the revolutionary movement, the NDFP assures the MILF that any understanding between the two movements shall be conducted within the framework of recognition and respect for each other's identity, integrity, principles and program and on the independence and initiative of each organization.

It is expected that through the continued and regular meetings of authorized representatives from both sides and, if necessary, of representatives from the highest and most basic levels of the organization, the objective of further consolidating and developing the revolutionary alliance between the Filipino people and the Moro people will be advanced. **AB**

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Landgrabbing in Cagayan Valley

AB's past issue tackled how widespread land use conversion and landgrabbing in different parts of the country are being systematically implemented through reactionary laws such as the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law (CARL) and deceptive government programs like the Agrarian Reform Communities (ARC).

*The following article drawn from **Baringkuas** (the revolutionary mass paper in Cagayan Valley) exposes the ruling class and reactionary government's use of laws such as the Indigenous People's Rights Act (IPRA) and Mining Act of 1995. The article also exposes the manipulation of existing agrarian laws to allow the widespread grabbing of lands from settlers and minorities in the forests and mountain areas of Nueva Vizcaya, Isabela and Quirino.*

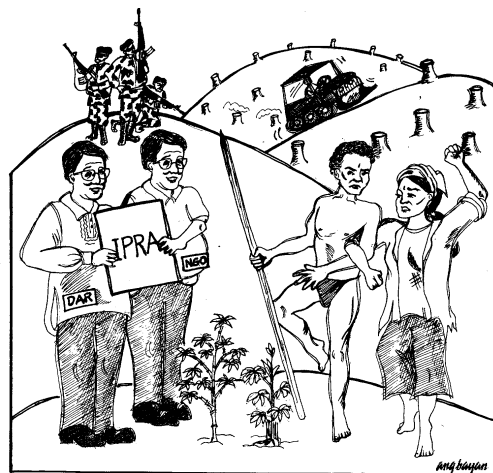
In Cagayan Valley, it is the reactionary state that serves as the most despotic landlord and the biggest grabber of land from settlers and minorities. It uses deceptive and repressive laws to seize land from the people for the benefit of foreign corporations and the local ruling class.

IPRA: Trampling on the rights of minorities

The Ramos regime made into law the Indigenous People's Rights Act (IPRA) in 1997, boasting that this was proof of his government's recognition and protection of the national minorities' ancestral domain.

But for the Agta, Bungkalot, Igorot and other minorities in Cagayan Valley, the IPRA means the loss of their right to the vast expanse of communal lands they had inherited from their forebears and from which they derive their livelihood.

Like the CADC (Certificate of Ancestral Domain Claim) scheme, the IPRA confines minorities to limited areas designated as "ancestral domains". Before boundaries are declared, the land is first surveyed to determine which portions are the most productive and the richest in profitable resources. The most profitable portions are excluded from the scope of the "ancestral domain" and declared as public lands that are up for grabs by foreign capitalists and the big local comprador bourgeoisie and landlords. With the land already surveyed, it becomes very easy for the state to take control over it or to buy, sell or grab the land.



In Cagayan Valley, the pro-foreign Mining Act of 1995 obviously dovetails the IPRA and CADC. Five foreign mining companies have had their applications approved to open concessions in the entire land area of Kasibu, Nueva Vizcaya, most of which are Ilongot and settler lands. These are Climax-Arimco Mining Corp., Dalton Pacific Mining Resources, Inc., Red Earth Mining Corp., St. Patrick Mining Resources and Lasseter Mining Co.

The biggest among these is Climax-Arimco, an Australian corporation, encompassing 100,000 hectares in 32 barrios in Nueva Vizcaya and Quirino. Upon its arrival, it swiftly swooped down like a vulture to grab lands in four barrios of Kasibu and a barangay in Cabarroguis, Quirino. It also immediately forbade gold panning which the masses engage in to supplement their livelihood. To suppress any form of protest, a battalion of the PNP Recom 2 Regional Mobile Force has been deployed to the area. The PNP-Nueva Vizcaya also immediately set up CAFGU (Citizens Armed Forces Geographical Unit) units in Kasibu.

The local people's intense resistance to Arimco led them to put up on their own, an armed group led by Benjamin Buhe to fight the gigantic corporation. Buhe was killed by the PNP in 1998.

Meanwhile, the monstrous Casecnan Dam is being built to assure the mines with an uninterrupted power supply. Thirteen thousand minorities and settlers from more than 23 barrios in Dupax del Norte, Dupax del Sur, Nagtipunan and Alfonso Castañeda in Nueva Vizcaya are being forcibly evacuated to give way to the

construction of the dam.

Homesteads: Vanishing frontier

The state spares no one in its landgrabbing forays, not even settlers who had opened homesteads and had long been in possession of legal papers or paying real estate taxes.

The mountains and foothills of Sierra Madre used to be a vast frontier for settlers from Ilocos, Cordillera, Central Luzon, Bicol and the Visayas who built farms and orchards. Now, the settlers are gradually being evicted, their lands seized to make way for plantations, logging concessions, mines, pasturelands and other businesses owned by landlords, compradors and foreign corporations.

The government allowed homesteads of up to 24 hectares until the '50s. By the time the Marcos dictatorship was ousted in 1986, the allowable homestead had been reduced to less than 10 hectares. This was reduced by one hectare under the Aquino regime and by another two hectares under the Ramos regime.

The reactionary regime has been systematically pushing settlers to the wall these past months in the homestead areas in remote barrios of eastern Isabela: the lands are subjected to new surveys; these are divided into small parcels, with the settlers being slapped with several years' back taxes. Those who are unable to pay are stripped of their right to the land they had cleared and developed for decades.

In a curious method of implementing "land reform," the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) orders other settlers to pay P40,000 per hectare for the next 30 years as amortization for the land. The Land Bank forecloses the land of those who default on their payments and sells this for P100,000 per hectare to businessmen and landlords.

This legal form of landgrabbing is widespread in the towns of Echague, Jones and San Guillermo in Isabela. Based on investigations conducted by mass work units of the New People's Army operating in the area, at least 3,600 hectares and thousands of persons have already been affected by this scheme.

"Reforestation": Millions looted

"Reforestation" and awarding stewardship contracts to farmers who supposedly serve as caretakers of the forest comprise another cunning way of grabbing land from settlers and minorities in Cagayan Valley and other regions.

The stewardship scheme merely provides the state, through the Department of Environment and Natural

Resources (DENR), with a means of gaining control over the settlers' farmlands.

As a supposed part of its reforestation project, the DENR obliges anyone who has entered into a stewardship contract to plant Gmelina, a fast-growing industrial tree. This, despite the fact that no other flora could survive near the Gmelina as the latter sucks in a lot of water.

A steward is not allowed to sell, pawn or pass on as inheritance the land under his "care". Neither is he allowed to cut and sell the trees without permission from the DENR, for which he must also pay a fee. He may own the land in name, but he is no longer free to decide what to do with it.

"Reforestation" became a fad in the '80s when the World Bank provided massive funds for it. Under the Aquino regime, the government also allotted P139 billion as local counterpart for the World Bank loan. Despite

such huge funding for "reforestation", forests remain denuded. The money has merely been looted by government officials, logging companies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) pretending to be for the masses.

Among those who benefited are former Gov. Junie Cua (now Presidential Adviser for Northern Luzon) who wiped out the reforestation funds for Quirino; Gov. Faustino Dy of Isabela, a logger

who set up his own "reforestation NGO" to serve as channel for funds; Rep. Heherson Alvarez, former DENR Secretary under the Aquino regime and erstwhile senator; and former San Mariano mayor Teodoro Go who pocketed, along with the former mayor of Ilagan, P2 million in 1986 and P7 million in 1997.

In Isabela, the "NGOs" Plan International and Silayan Cooperative also partook of the loot from the reforestation funds. Silayan Cooperative, which is owned by Chinese businessman Roland Lee, supplies lumber for the housing projects of Plan International, a front of the US Central Intelligence Agency masquerading as a charitable American institution.

The Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement (PRRM), which has an office in Nueva Vizcaya, is also involved in the "reforestation" scheme (aside from pursuing intelligence activities and waging psywar against the revolutionary movement). Former PRRM director Horacio 'Boy' Morales is the current DAR Secretary.

The latter implies nothing else but that the large-scale "legal" grabbing of lands by the state from settlers and minority peoples will definitely persist under the Estrada regime. ■

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Long live proletarian internationalism!

The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) expresses gratitude to all the Marxist-Leninist parties and revolutionary organizations that sent greetings and messages of solidarity on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the Party's reestablishment. The messages reflected the recognition and praise bestowed on the CPP by the world's proletarian parties and revolutionary movements for its perseverance along the path of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism (MLM) and in advancing the people's democratic revolution through protracted people's war, especially in the face of the grave crisis of world capitalism.

Expressions of unity with the CPP coming from more than 80 MLM parties and revolutionary organizations from different parts of the globe prove that the oppressed people's resistance movement against imperialist domination is broadening and expanding throughout the world. Meanwhile, the Party continues to expand its links and cooperates with various proletarian and revolutionary parties and semicolonial and semifeudal countries all over the world within the framework of upholding and promoting MLM, the proletarian revolutionary socialist line versus imperialism, revisionism and all kinds of reaction. It launches and participates in international conferences discussing significant ideological and political questions. The CPP is actively engaged in strengthening international anti-imperialist solidarity among the peoples of the world.

Following is a partial list of the parties and revolutionary organizations that sent greetings to the CPP (in alphabetical order according to country of origin): ▶

Partido De La Liberacion (PL) De Argentina ● Communist Party of Australia ● Communist Party of Australia (ML) ● Marxist Workers' Party (Australia) ● Initiative of Marxists-Leninists (Austria) ● Revolutionary United Front of Bangladesh ● Bangladesher Samyabadi Dal (ML) ● Socialist Party of Bangladesh ● Workers' Party of Bangladesh ● Mouvement Des Communistes En Belgique Workers' Party of Belgium ● Communist Party of Bohemia And Moravia ● Brazilian Communist Party - PCB ● New Communist Party of Britain ● Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist) ● Northstar COMPASS ● Socialist Action Group Canada ● Ceylon Communist Party (Maoist) ● Comunista Chileno (Accion Proletaria) ● Progressive Party of Working People (Cyprus) ● Communist Party of Denmark Marxist-Leninist ● Communist Worker's Party, Finland ● Marxist-Leninist Party of Germany (MLPD) ● Deutsch - Philippinische Freunde (Germany) ● *A/Synechia* (Revolutionary Marxist Organization-Greece) ● Communist Party of Greece (Marxist-Leninist) ● Communist Party of India - Marxist-Leninist ● Communist Party of India - Marxist Leninist (People's War) ● Communist Party of India - Marxist Leninist (Red Flag) ● Communist Party of India - Marxist Leninist (Red Flag - Janashakti) ● Maoist Communist Centre (India) ● Socialist Unity Centre of India ● Indonesian Organization For People's Solidarity ● Iranian People's Fedayee Guerrillas ● Union of The Communists of Iran ● International Leninist Current (ILC) - Italy ● Lotta Per La Pace E Il Socialismo (Forum of The Communists - Italy) ● Red Worker - Italy ● Italian Marxists-Leninists ● Communist Party of Japan - Left ● Japan Communist League ● Japan Communist League (Senki) ● Workers Socialist League (Japan) ● General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions (GEFONT) ● Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist) ● 1 Mei Komitee - (Amsterdam, Netherlands) ● Nieuwe Communistische Partij - Netherlands ● Communist Party of Aotearoa (New Zealand) ● Workers' Party of New Zealand ● Union of Polish Communists - Proletariat ● Uniao Democratica Popular (Portugal) ● Workers And Peasants' Russian Party ● National Democratic Front of South Korea (NDFSK) ● Partido Comunista De España ● Partido Comunista Revolucionario (España) ● Communist Party of The Sudan ● Communist Party of Sweden (KPML-R) ● DHKC Front Revolutionnaire De Liberation Du Peuple - Turkey ● Communist Party of Turkey - Marxist Leninist ● Bolsevik Parti (Kuzu Kurdistan-Turkiye) ● Partido Comunista Revolucionario Del Uruguay ● Ghetto Liberation Party (GLP) - USA ● Maoist Internationalist Movement - USA ● Revolutionary Communist Party, USA ● Workers World Party - USA ● Working People's News (USA) ● Communist Party of The Valencian Country (PCPV) ●

REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT ADVANCING IN EASTERN VISAYAS

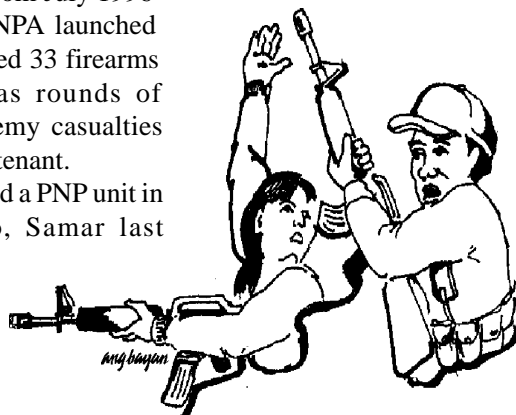
The Party and the revolutionary movement in Eastern Visayas continue to reap victories consequent to the Second Great Rectification Movement.

According to *Larab*, the region's revolutionary mass paper, the most significant gain was achieved in launching the educational campaign which ideologically, politically and organizationally consolidated the entire Party membership.

Based on the Party's regional assessment in the latter part of 1998, Party membership increased by 26% in Eastern Visayas since July 1996. The number of organized masses grew by 48% in the same period.

The New People's Army (NPA) marked a 111% increase in membership. From July 1996 to the last quarter of 1998, the NPA launched 38 military actions and confiscated 33 firearms of assorted caliber as well as rounds of ammunition. There were 30 enemy casualties including two captains and a lieutenant.

Meanwhile, the NPA ambushed a PNP unit in Brgy. Laygayon, Pinabacdao, Samar last December 2. According to *Larab*, a policeman was killed while another escaped. A pistol was confiscated in the ambush.



BUREAUCRAT'S HACIENDA RAIDED BY N.P.A.-BATANGAS

Without firing a single shot, the NPA successfully raided the hacienda of Jejomar Binay, head of the Metro Manila Development Authority and ex-mayor of Makati City. Eight assorted firearms were seized.

It was in the morning of February 13 when the NPA penetrated Binay's 60-hectare piggery and breeding farm for fighting cocks in Bgy. Maligaya, Rosario, Batangas. The guards mistook the NPA for military troops, allowing the Red fighters to enter the hacienda premises. The NPA confiscated two M16s, two shotguns, four pistols, one telescope, one cellular phone and one handheld radio.

SUCCESSFUL SPARROW OPERATIONS LAUNCHED IN CAMARINES SUR

Four succesful sparrow operations against the enemies of the people were launched by the NPA in Camarines Sur in November and December 1998.

According to *Silyab*, Bicol's revolutionary mass paper, the NPA punished Cpl. Rodel R. Rondario of the 42nd IB last November 14 in Bgy. Baya, Ragay, Camarines Sur. An M203 rifle was seized from Rondario. The 42nd IB to which Rondario belongs has perpetrated crimes such as rape and robbery against Ragay residents.

Last November 1 and December 4, Jaime Pimentel and Armando Alicaway were punished with death in Bgy. Calagbangan and Bgy. Villazar, respectively, both in the town of Sipocot. A .45 and a magazine were confiscated from Alicaway. Both Alicaway and Pimentel were bad elements. Roberto Solis, an informer, was also punished by the NPA last November 2 in Bgy. Balaogan, Bula, Camarines Sur.

In the meantime, the people of Camarines Sur continue to condemn the acts of violence ceaselessly perpetrated by troops of the reactionary armed forces, particularly the 1st and 42nd Infantry Battalions. They likewise assailed the bad elements who roam Camarines Sur and persist in committing crimes.

SEMINAR ON MAO AND PEOPLE'S WAR HELD

Marxist-Leninist-Maoist parties launched the International Seminar on Mao and People's War last December 1998 in celebration of Comrade Mao

Zedong's 105th birth anniversary.

Twenty-seven parties and organizations participated in the international seminar. Of these, six were Maoist parties engaged in people's war while 21 were parties and organizations supportive of people's war.

Discussed were Comrade Mao Zedong's teachings on people's war. The participants upheld their significance and necessity in advancing national liberation movements, the broad anti-imperialist movement and the international proletarian revolution.

As a result, the delegates attained a higher level of unity regarding their understanding of the crisis of the world capitalist system and the relevance of Mao and people's war. Despite differences in viewpoint, the participants likewise declared their readiness to continue conducting political and ideological discussions and simultaneously carry out practical duties towards greater unity.

The seminar issued a General Declaration on Mao and People's War and adopted resolutions on important issues.