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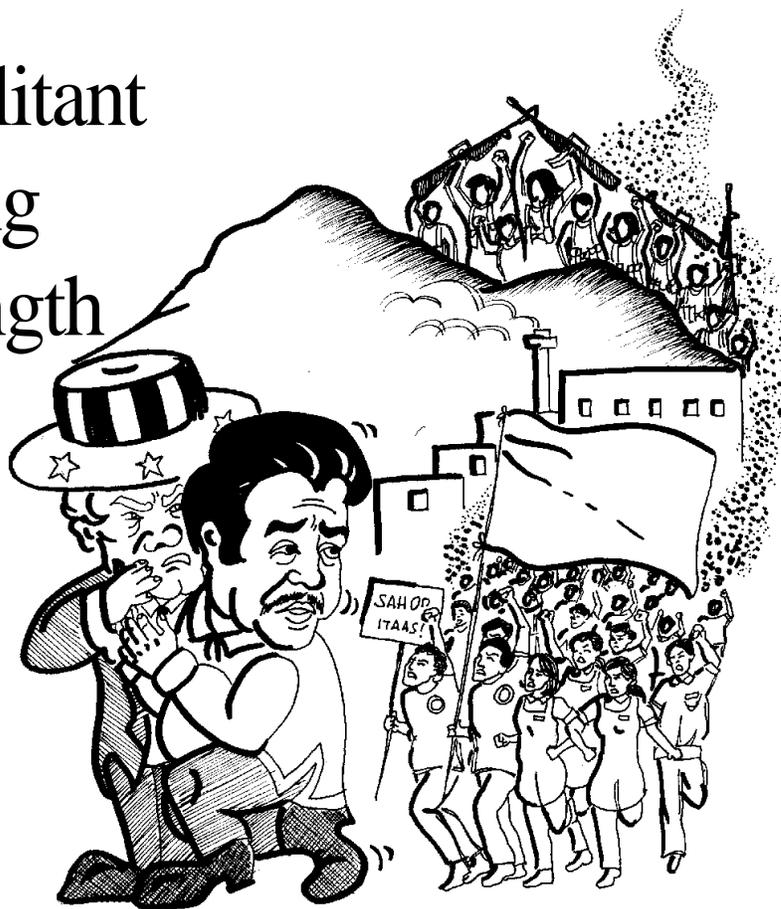
Editorial

## The workers' militant struggle is gaining breadth and strength

**T**he Filipino workers' struggle for higher wages, jobs, democratic and union rights is rapidly gaining strength and breadth. Workers and their supporters in different parts of the country are holding bigger rallies and street demonstrations participated in by thousands.

The simultaneous and coordinated struggle for a P125 increase in the workers' daily wage in the private sector and a P3,000 increase in the salaries of public workers and teachers is now gaining widespread support not only among workers and employees but also among the broad masses of the people. Repeated oil price increases imposed by foreign monopolies further underscore the need for a wage increase.

The workers and semiproletariat are likewise at the forefront of the struggle against oil price increases. Paralyzing transport strikes accompanied by massive rallies and other people's protests have already erupted in a number of cities in Mindanao and the Visayas. The current is moving to-



wards the waging of more widespread and massive strikes and protest actions.

Workers are also active in the broad protest movement of different political forces and sectors of society against the intensifying suppression of press freedom, the US-Estrada regime's maneuvers to rewrite the reactionary constitution to skew it even more in favor of foreign monopoly capitalists and bureaucrats in power, widespread corruption and anomalies in government, cronyism, the collusion of the Marcos and Estrada cliques to deny justice and indemnification to the thousands of victims of fascist abuses under the Marcos dictatorship and the return to power of the Marcoses and the late dictator's most hated min-

ions.

The destruction wrought by the capitalist crisis that has further impoverished the working masses and intensified the exploitation and suppression of labor is the most compelling force that drives the workers to struggle. The official policy that requires workers to toil for slave wages under sweatshop conditions and indulges the insatiable appetites of foreign capital has grown even more repulsive in the wake of the collapse of the so-called “newly emergent markets” and the global crisis’ invalidation of the supposed leapfrogging that “globalization”, deregulation and liberalization would bring about.

As proven by experience under the Marcos fascist dictatorship, fascist union busting and suppression of strikes can only temporarily stop the rising and resistance of the masses of workers. Sooner or later, even the concentration camp-like barracks in “export processing zones” will eventually be penetrated through efforts by workers to unite and wage collective struggle. It is the workers’ bitter experiences that have taught them not to rely on the benevolence and goodwill of profit-greedy capitalists or on the reasonableness and humaneness of bureaucrats who kowtow to the interests of big capital. Sooner or later, they will learn that they can rely only on their own unity and struggle in their defense of their rights within and outside the factory.

The newly resurgent militant workers’ movement likewise mirrors the victory of the Second Great Rectification Movement in the urban revolutionary movement. The workers’ movement could never

steadily advance along the correct revolutionary path until it has rectified and repudiated the serious deviations and errors that wrought great damage and setbacks to the entire revolutionary movement, including the revolutionary workers’ movement. The rapid deterioration, exposure, isolation and disintegration of the revisionist traitors present proof that the erroneous insurrectionist, militarist, revisionist, economist and populist line is the most virulent poison that could destroy the workers’ movement from within.

Due to the pernicious influence of urban insurrectionism, revisionism, economism and bureaucratism, the workers’ movement that boldly opposed the strike ban of the Marcos fascist dictatorship and reaped glorious victories in struggles waged even during the height of fascist terror was not able to firmly and effectively combat the initial onslaught of contractualization, casualization and anti-union and anti-strike policies under the Aquino and Ramos puppet regimes. Opportunities, forces and resources were wasted on insurrectionist projects and wishful thinking; basic ideological, political and organizational work were seriously neglected; and the proliferation of the revisionist, economist and populist line and thinking created an ever-deepening and -widening vacuum within our ranks. Great harm was wrought by the outright factionalism and anti-Party demolition campaign led by urban-based revisionist renegades.

Although the revolutionary workers’ movement is now once again vigorously advancing in various urban centers, it continues to reel from the extensive damage

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Letters to the *AB* editorial staff may be sent to the following email address:

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**AS THE WORKERS WAGE MILITANT STRUGGLES, THEIR CONSCIOUSNESS CONCERNING THE NATIONAL-DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION NEEDS TO BE RAISED, WITH PARTICULAR ATTENTION BEING GIVEN TO THE ARMED STRUGGLE IN THE COUNTRYSIDE, IN ORDER TO PROVIDE THEM AN ALL-SIDED VIEW OF THE REVOLUTIONARY PROCESS OF TRANSFORMING PHILIPPINE SOCIETY.**

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and setbacks of the past. There are important areas of workers' concentration that have to be recovered or where revolutionary work is extremely narrow in scope. We have yet to reach a large number in order to recover previous levels of organized strength. There is need to produce and train more organizers and union leaders, augment forces that are very thinly spread and improve on the disposition of tasks in many parts of the country. There are areas where the tasks of expansion and restrengthening continue to be complicated and difficult due to the revisionist traitors' sabotage and trouble-making.

Above all, the foreign and local big bourgeoisie and their network of bureaucrats, police forces and propagandists work nonstop to suppress, divide and destroy. From their experience of having engaged us in major struggles in the past three decades, they continuously come up with new and more brutal ways and tactics of suppressing, dividing and deceiving the people. The revolutionary proletariat need to address this firmly. There is need to tirelessly arouse, organize and mobilize an ever-increasing number of the masses of workers, even as we relentlessly study and master different forms and arenas of struggle.

In advancing the workers' struggle, we should prepare for and firmly resist the widening and intensifying fascist suppression and attacks of the US-Estrada regime. The Estrada regime's entire economic policy is based on impoverishing and suppressing the workers, so that it is ready to unleash the full brutality of fascism to hinder the advance of the workers' struggle. Thus, there is need to raise the workers' level of militancy and fighting will to boldly and firmly confront and defeat the regime's fascist campaign.

The latter will be forged in the furnace of boldly advancing and intensifying workers' strikes in factories.

Special attention must be given to building step-by-step the labor unions' unity and collective determination to concerted face sacrifices and overcome difficulties in the process of waging arduous and, at times, protracted strikes. Such unity and collective determination will ensure that, despite being long-drawn, workers' strikes will continue to gain strength, gather the sympathy and support of more and more workers and serve as an ever potent weapon in fighting for the interests of workers. These will also serve as basis for workers to gather the widening support of democratic and patriotic forces for their actions and struggles.

In waging their struggles, workers need to concentrate their strength from time to time and during opportune occasions through the mobilization of ever-growing numbers in mass actions. The outpouring of tens of thousands of workers into the streets and the waging of coordinated strikes serve as one of the most effective ways of asserting the demand for wage increases. It is also one of the most important elements in the Filipino people's struggle against the pro-imperialist and fascist policies of the reactionary US-Estrada regime. The workers' movement serves as the strongest fortress of the democratic mass movement in the cities, inspiring, emboldening and arousing the militancy of the democratic and patriotic forces.

As the workers wage militant struggles, their consciousness concerning the national-democratic revolution needs to be raised, with particular attention being given to the armed struggle in the countryside, in order to provide them an all-sided view of the revolutionary process of transforming Philippine society. While unions can be an avenue for revolutionary education, there will be continuing need to organize workers in underground groups and Party branches for the purpose of organizing illegal propaganda, gathering support for the armed struggle, integration in the countryside and recruitment into the New People's Army. We expect this task to gain momentum

*Rallies and strikes on  
November 16:*

## Intensifying struggle for a P125 wage increase

**B**ig mass actions, industrial and transport strikes led by militant workers' organizations will be launched on November 16 to advance labor's just demand for a P125 increase in the minimum daily wage. This is indicative of the broadening struggle of workers amid the worsening living conditions of the toiling masses and their continuing enslavement by the US-Estrada regime.

On October 13, more than 15,000 demonstrated in Mendiola to voice the demands of workers. A few days later, the US-Estrada regime and regional wage boards ordered increases of P20-25 in the workers' minimum daily wage. On October 15, an increase of P25.50 was announced for Metro Manila, a paltry sum compared to the additional amount needed by workers to enable them to cope with the skyrocketing prices of their daily needs.

It is correct for workers to reject this token wage increase. Workers' living conditions have taken a nosedive in past years due to the worsening economic crisis. Thus, a significant increase in wages is necessary to suitably uplift the workers' living conditions from the quagmire of poverty.

To effectively assert this demand, the workers and the Filipino people should undertake collective and militant actions in the face of the US-Estrada regime's intransigence in enforcing its policy of keeping workers' wages low. **AB**

## Deregulation of the oil industry

# Collusion between the imperialists, the oil cartels and the reactionary government

*Since April this year, Petron, Caltex and Shell have been raising the prices of petroleum products month after month. On September 30, prices were increased by 40 to 85 centavos per liter. The day after, Caltex and Shell added another 42 centavos. This latest increase led to a 20% hike in the minimum fare for jeeps and buses and a whirlwind rise in the prices of prime commodities .*

*With one burden after another being heaped on the people, the Estrada regime's only response has been to defend the policy of deregulation and make a token "request" to the oil companies to reduce fuel prices.*

**I**t was in July 1994 when the International Monetary Fund (IMF) ordered the Ramos regime to deregulate the oil industry as a condition for a \$650 million loan. The government was given until 1997 to put this into effect.

Full deregulation was implemented in February 1997.

The government's rationale: deregulation would supposedly smash the dominance of the three leading oil companies in the country, the so-called "Big Three": Petron Corp., Caltex Philippines Inc. and Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. The Ramos regime claimed that deregulation and incentives such as tax holidays would encourage other oil companies to come in, thus resulting in free competition. Eventually, this would eliminate the domination of the "Big Three". Prices of petroleum products would drop as a result of competition.

The people know very well that the opposite took place. That same year, the "Big Three's" combined profits reached P38 billion. Instead of having their dominance undermined, Petron, Caltex and Shell's monopoly control over the local oil industry has been further entrenched.

Protests resounded. The people's resistance culminated in the "Lakbayan ng Mamamayan Laban sa Kahirapan at Imperyalistang Pandarambong", a big march-rally in October 1997 joined by more than 20,000 people from Metro Manila,

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Central Luzon and Southern Tagalog. The rallyists condemned liberalization, deregulation and other policies that contributed to the people's impoverishment.

The first deregulation act was amended and the passage of a new law, RA 8479, or the new Downstream Oil Industry Deregulation Law, was railroaded that same year. The oil companies never had it so good. According to the Securities and Exchange Commission, profits of the "Big Three" zoomed by 1,090% in 1998!

Despite deregulation, Petron, Caltex and Shell still hog 96% of the sales of all petroleum products in the country. The three giant companies control up to 3,000 gasoline outlets nationwide compared to 30 owned by new companies, the so-called "new players".

Far from having their hands tied due to deregulation, the "Big Three" have further secured their business interests and strengthened their positions within the industry. (*see box*)

## Oil glut

Oil companies persist in raising the prices of petroleum products despite a long-existing oil glut that has led to the long-term trend of falling crude oil prices in the world market.

The trend has been evident since the second half of the '70s as a result of political, economic, military and diplomatic measures taken by imperialist countries and the oil companies to undermine the control of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) over the supply of crude oil. Added factors have been the discovery and development of alternative energy sources and energy-efficient motors and the maximization of old oil wells in Western countries. Besides this, oil was also discovered in the North Sea and Russia has been encouraged to dump ever-bigger supplies of crude in the international market. Another major factor that has contributed to the continuing oil glut is the big drop in the demand for crude due to the economic crisis that has been raging in Asia and most of the world with the exception of the US and a few Western European countries.

Within the framework of this long-term trend of falling crude oil prices are temporary fluctuations due to changes in seasonal demand, the flaring-up or cessation of disturbances (such as wars) in the Middle East (and even in the Balkans, the former Soviet Union and Afghanistan) which produces most of the world's oil, and the short-lived unity of OPEC members.

The latter took place in April when OPEC decided to cut production by two million barrels to jack up the price of crude. However, OPEC is only able to prevail temporarily. Major hikes in the prices of crude oil have not been sustainable. In fact, crude oil prices in the world market have already begun dropping in the first half of October due to the refusal of some OPEC members to abide by the decision to cut production and because there are other countries like Russia that are not OPEC

## PROFITS BY THE BARRELFUL



◆ 96% of all petroleum sales in the country are hogged by Petron, Caltex and Shell.

◆ 3,000 gasoline outlets nationwide are controlled by the "Big Three" compared to 30 owned by "new players"

◆ In 1999, Caltex laid out P3.9 billion, 39% more than in the previous year, to develop its refinery in Batangas and its nationwide marketing network.

◆ In 1998, Caltex's daily production reached 84,000 barrels, up from 70,000 barrels.

members but are capable to producing large quantities of crude. Besides, crude oil production, even in OPEC countries, is also controlled by the oil monopolies.

## Oil cartel

Despite falling prices of crude, the oil monopolies have been raising the prices of petroleum products in connivance with the IMF and reactionary governments.

With the oil giants and other monopoly capitalists controlling multilateral agencies such as the IMF, World Bank and World Trade Organization, it is no surprise that the policies being pushed by these agencies, such as deregulation and liberalization, all conform to, and serve, the interests of monopoly capital.

The local reactionary government serves as monopoly capital's instrument in ensuring that pro-imperialist policies are enforced in the country. In fact, the deregulation bill was approved, if not drafted, by the oil companies. Mario Tiaoqui, a former Petron official who is now Secretary of the Department of Energy under Estrada, serves as spokesman for the "Big Three". The Energy Department itself was created to oversee the process of deregulation.

In the Philippines, the "Big Three" that conspire to raise the prices of petroleum products comprise the local oil cartel.

Also a part of this cartel is the reactionary government, which rakes in a lot of revenue from taxes imposed on petroleum products. Forty-seven percent (47%) of every peso shelled out by a consumer for regular gasoline, 20% for diesel and 9% for kerosene accrue to the government as specific taxes—the cost of which the oil companies duly pass on to consumers.

On top of this, the “Big Three” have been brazenly cheating on their taxes to avoid a cutdown in profits. Hundreds of millions of pesos worth of tax credit certificates issued to other companies have reportedly been used illegally by the oil corporations to escape paying importation dues.

With the immensity of their annual profits, the “Big Three” are among the top 1,000 corporations not only in the Philippines but also in Asia.

In reality, their actual profits are far in excess of what they have declared due to their practice of “transfer pricing”. Through “transfer pricing”, the oil companies overstate the cost of importing crude oil and other items from their mother companies overseas in order to understate their declared net incomes, avoid paying the appropriate taxes and rationalize successive oil price hikes.

The “Big Three’s” criminal conspiracy and insatiable lust for profit are but extensions of the practices of their mother companies that belong to the powerful international oil cartel.

In the Philippines, members of the local cartel have reduced by 25% the amount of crude oil they have been refining upon orders of their mother companies. Pilipinas Shell has cut production by no less than 20,000 barrels per day; Petron Corp. by 25,000 barrels; and Caltex Philippines by 10,000 barrels to induce an artificial shortage and jack up the prices of petroleum products.

Pilipinas Shell is a subsidiary of Royal Dutch Shell, the world’s biggest oil company before it was overtaken by Exxon-Mobil which merged in 1998. Caltex is owned by Texaco, 24<sup>th</sup>, and Chevron, 38<sup>th</sup>, in *Fortune Magazine*’s list this year of the world’s top 500 corporations.

Meanwhile, Petron is 60% owned by Aramco, the world’s biggest producer of crude oil. Aramco is in turn 60% owned by Texaco and Standard Oil of California (Socal), the first company to extract oil in the Middle East. Secondary investors in Aramco are Exxon and Mobil. It was only in 1975 that the Saudi Arabian government acquired 40% ownership of the company.

The Government of the Republic of the Philippines maintains a 30% share in Petron, making it still a favorite milking cow of bureaucrat capitalists.

## Further monopolization

The trend of falling crude oil prices has led to a more vicious struggle in the world market. The oil giants are now engaged in a mad scramble, looking for ways to cut down on expenses, especially labor costs. The path inevitably taken: mergers involving the biggest oil corporations that have resulted in reduced workforces.

If there used to be seven oil companies comprising the international oil cartel in the ‘70s (the so-called “Seven Sisters”), today, there are only three: Exxon-Mobil, Royal Dutch Shell and British Petroleum-Amoco.

In 1998, Exxon and Mobil merged to form the biggest oil corporation in the world. That same year, British Petroleum (ranked 18<sup>th</sup> in the list of oil companies worldwide) and Amoco (54<sup>th</sup> on the list) merged to form BP-Amoco. After this, BP-Amoco acquired last May the US-based Atlantic Richfield Co.

The British Petroleum-Amoco merger is expected to result in cost cutdowns of up to \$2 billion by 2001. Half of this will be due to the loss of 6,000 jobs. The merged company is also expected to save \$250 million from acquiring the power to force suppliers to sell it crude oil at cheaper prices.

Another merger is looming, this time between Chevron and Texaco. When this is realized, it will have been the fourth merger among the oil giants in the past 11 months.

On the other hand, even as the fall of crude oil prices is expected to be a continuing trend, a shift is likewise being anticipated with the forthcoming depletion of oil deposits in the Middle East. Thus, the oil giants are in a fervid rush to launch exploration projects in order to establish control over the oil deposits in Central Asia and other areas. The enormity of the capital needed to extract crude oil from the ground and transport it to the West is another factor behind the oil companies’ mad scramble to merge and pool their resources.

For now, Exxon-Mobil holds the oil exploration contracts in Azerbaijan (in Central Asia) and Chad (in Africa).

It is the race to control the Central Asian oil deposits that lies behind ethnic strife in the region as well as local conflicts in the Balkan Peninsula and Africa, all of which are incited and provoked by monopoly capitalists.

Monopolization, barefaced and unbridled, predominates the face of the earth along with all its attendant abuses.

Under these circumstances, deregulation means no less than giving free rein to monop-

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**UPON VICTORY,  
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◀ lization and conspiracy among giants, and the encouragement of all manner of abuse, the worst and most brazen of which take place in backward countries like the Philippines. And the overall consequence—in both industrialized and underdeveloped countries—is the further entrenchment of monopoly. The unconcealed abuse of monopoly power, brazen profligacy in the midst of widespread poverty and the shameless obsequiousness of, and cover-ups perpetrated by, the puppets in government—are at the core of the masses’ intense reaction to and anger at, repeated oil price hikes.

The international capitalist system has reached the monopoly stage and will never revert to the period of “free competition” as what the drumbeaters of deregulation and liberalization claim.

The only solution is to advance the people’s democratic revolution to break the chains of exploitation and slavery at the hands of foreign monopolies and the local ruling classes.

Upon victory, basic and strategic industries, including the oil industry, shall be nationalized. In particular, the democratic coalition government shall take charge of capitalization and oversee the processing, distribution and marketing of oil. Thus, oil importation shall be centralized to guarantee a stable supply, stop “transfer pricing” and ensure that the fuel is obtained under conditions and prices that are acceptable. The people’s government shall persevere in discovering and creating alternative sources of energy. The state shall oversee the discovery and exploration of oil deposits within the country instead of leaving this in the hands of foreign corporations.

All this can be realized only under a revolutionary people’s government that advances the welfare and interests of the people and the development of society. **AB**

## A LETTER FROM THE ILOCOS-CORDILLERA REGION

*The following letter from Comrade Adi of the Ilocos-Cordillera Region comments on an article about the NDF-MILF alliance that appeared in **Ang Bayan’s (AB)** January-February 1999 issue. In this regard, **AB** is printing the succeeding article that further clarifies the Party’s analysis and stand on the struggle of the Moro people. In particular, the article further expounds on the historical and current basis for the Party’s recognition of the nation that the Moro people have been fighting for; and why the Party actively encourages and supports the Moro people’s struggle to secede from an oppressive system even as it continues to organize and mobilize them for the national-democratic revolution.*

Comrades in *Ang Bayan’s* editorial staff,

Ardent revolutionary greetings to you, comrades!

On the whole, the article “Unity and Cooperation Against the Reactionary Enemy” that appeared in *AB’s* January-February 1999 issue was well-written. It is heartening to know that relations between the NDFP/NPA and the MILF/BIAF have reached the stage where the two have entered into a formal alliance.

I would just like to draw attention to the end of the article’s last sentence: “... the objective of further consolidating and developing the revolutionary alliance between the Filipino people and the Moro people will be advanced.” It seems to imply some other meaning.

Readers may interpret this to mean that the Filipino people and Moro people are different entities, when the Moro people at present are in fact merely a part of the Filipino people as national minorities within the Philippines as a whole, even if they are going through a process of asserting their nationhood. To “... develop the revolutionary alliance between the NDFP and MILF” would have been a better way of putting it, because after all, these two organizations that entered into an alliance are really different from each other (one is not a part of the other). But, if the context were a people-to-people alliance, wouldn’t it have been more correct to refer specifically to the “revolutionary alliance between the Moro people and other sections of the Filipino people”?

It is the MNLF that said outright in the past that the Filipino people and Moro people are different. Do we see this same viewpoint in the MILF, or does it remain open to the idea that the evolving Moro nation may remain a part of the Philippines as a whole under a new order that is truly democratic, enjoys national sovereignty and recognizes the self-determination of the Moro people and other national minorities?

Wouldn’t it be better to have mentioned that the Moro people are still part of the Filipino people even as there is recognition of the desire and ▶



# On the issue of secession and the Moro people's right to self-determination



**I**n the political arena, the right to self-determination may be realized through any of the following means: First, the enactment of special laws that shall guarantee the equality of all groups within a state and the concomitant abrogation of all restrictions that may bar the participation of minority groups; second, regional autonomy; third, federation; and fourth, secession.

Due to the small and scattered character of their economies and communities, the vast majority of ethno-linguistic groups in the Philippines do not assert their right to secede. Historically, these groups have often united with the rest of the Filipino people to resist foreign colonialists. For them, the only road to liberation from oppression and exploitation is through their participation in the national-democratic revolution in unity with the entire Filipino people.

Among minorities today, the emergence of organized Moro forces asserting and actually fighting for their right to secede from the reactionary government is a distinct development. The Moro National Liberation Front/Bangsamoro Army (MNLFB/BMA) has a place in

◀ absolute right of the Moro people to self-determination and the stage that their struggle has reached in building a Moro nation, and that the latter may lead in the future to autonomy within a people's democratic republic of the Philippines but may also culminate in secession from the Philippines?

Accordingly, the statement, in the way it was phrased, may be interpreted to mean that our objective is limited to building an alliance between the two peoples. It is true that the (article's) title captures the essence, but wouldn't it have been better if there was direct mention at the end about "... advancing the objective of further strengthening and developing revolutionary unity and cooperation between the Moro people and other Filipino people" in order to stress the higher objective of the revolutionary proletariat to tighten relations between the Moro people and other Filipino people, especially on the part of the proletariat and other toiling masses? This, even if the nature of relations between the NDFP and MILF is that of an alliance.

I share this as "food for thought" to further sharpen our discussions and viewpoint on these issues. I would be glad if you could also relay to me your reactions on this. **AB**

the history of the Moro people as the first force ever to banner this struggle by advancing the concept of Moro nationalism and building unity among the various small ethno-linguistic groups in Southern Mindanao.

The MNLFB's signing of the Tripoli Agreement in 1976, however, and its abandonment of armed struggle led to the gradual decline of the MNLFB/BMA. In 1996, MNLFB/BMA leader Nur Misuari and his minions thoroughly betrayed the Moro struggle when they entered into an anomalous agreement with the US-Ramos regime. In exchange for bogus autonomy for the Moro people ("autonomy" under an oppressive state) and a position in the reactionary bureaucracy for Misuari, the MNLFB turned its back on the Moro people's long history of armed struggle and formally accepted the Bangsamoro's integration into the current reactionary government.

The struggle that has been abandoned by the MNLFB is being continued by the Moro Islamic Liberation Front/Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Force (MILFB/BIAF). The MILFB/BIAF militantly stand against the reactionary enemy and its pacification campaign.

**T**he Bangsamoro include all oppressed and exploited sectors and classes within the Maranao, Maguindanao, Tausog, Samal, Yakan, Sanggil, Palawani, Badjao, Kalibugan, Jama-Mapun, Iranun, Kalagan and Molbog ethno-linguistic groups. Also encompassed by the term Moro are the tribes and parts of tribes as well as individuals advocating the Moro struggle for the right to self-determination, those who have a long history of political, economic and cultural relations with them and

those who have long been living within defined Moro areas.

Based on this definition, an estimated 28-35% of the entire population of Mindanao at present are Moro people. The Moro people comprise the majority of the population in the provinces of Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur, Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-tawi. They also comprise the majority in 11 municipalities in other provinces (seven in Lanao del Norte; two in Zamboanga del Norte; one in North Cotabato; and one in Palawan).

Of all the national minority groups and tribes in the Philippines, it is the Moro people who had the most advanced social system before the arrival of the Spanish colonialists. It is they who have also had the longest and most sustained history of armed resistance against the succession of colonialists that occupied their territories.

The Moro people's right to secede from the oppressive Government of the Republic of the Philippines and form their own country has basis both in history and in present conditions. The most striking factor is their culture. Their territories have defined boundaries. There is fertile ground for the further development of Moro nationalism.

Nonetheless, Moro history, society and communities are tightly linked with the evolution of the Philippines as a country and the system engulfing the entire Filipino nation. Despite the Moro people's continued armed resistance against foreign colonialists, their ruling class leaders have repeatedly capitulated. It is these leaders who served as conduits for colonial policies that oppressed the Moro people. Later, with US imperialism's complete domination of the Philippines, it was able to subjugate Moro society and the Moro system under the authority of the reactionary government based in Manila.

Moro communities are not exempt from the oppression and exploitation of imperialists, landlords and the big comprador bourgeoisie. In fact, the Moro people, like other national minorities in the Philippines, are among the most oppressed, exploited and systematically neglected by the counterrevolutionary state and therefore, have a big stake in the national-democratic revolution. Foreign capitalists and the local ruling classes have perpetrated the large-scale grabbing and plunder of their land and natural resources. For decades, successive puppet and fascist governments have victimized them through repeated and brutal military and genocidal campaigns that have included bombings, arson and forcible displacement from their territories.

The Party and the revolutionary movement have long supported and encouraged Moro people's organizations to assert their right to self-determination, including their right to secession, as their weapon against the reactionary state, national oppression and Christian chauvinism. It is in the interest of the Filipino and Moro peoples for Moro organizations to advance the armed struggle to assert this right.

Similarly, the national-democratic movement has always encouraged the Moro people to unite with the entire Filipino people to cooperate in overthrowing imperialism, bureaucrat capitalism and feudalism and liberate Philippine society in general and Moro society in particular from exploitation and oppression.

Alongside the national-democratic movement's offer of revolutionary unity and cooperation with Moro organizations, it organizes the Moro people and develops revolutionary cadres and activists from their ranks. The revolutionary movement actively repudiates and resists the reactionary state's schemes to incite Christian chauvinism among the majority against the Bangsamoro. In the same light, the revolutionary movement repudiates and resists Moro ethnocentrism which

separates the Moro struggle from the struggle of the entire Filipino people.

It is important to strengthen relations between the Moro people and the Filipino people in order to link their revolutionary movements with other people's revolutionary forces and other oppressed peoples the world over.

Under the democratic coalition government, the Party and the revolutionary movement look forward to advancing regional autonomy in the Bangsamoro's areas of concentration and local democratic coalition governments in areas where they are not concentrated. Such a political order will guarantee the interests of the Moro people within the people's government, eliminate chauvinism in all its forms and strengthen the entire Filipino people's spirit of internationalism.

This order will also facilitate the process of development of relatively backward communities and the thorough realization of national equality among the various nationalities within the people's democratic government. **AB**

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**THE MORO  
PEOPLE'S RIGHT TO  
SECEDE FROM THE  
OPPRESSIVE  
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THE REPUBLIC OF  
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AND FORM THEIR  
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# On the 50th anniversary of the victory of China's democratic revolution

**O**ctober 1, 1999. The Chinese people and proletarian revolutionaries the world over celebrated the 50th anniversary of the great victory of the democratic revolution in China against imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism. The national and social liberation of 600 million Chinese people comprising one-sixth of the world population has been the most important victory in the world proletarian revolution since the 1917 October Revolution in Russia. This earth-shaking event left a gaping hole in the imperialists' hegemony in the East and brought the oppressed nations and peoples in the colonies and semi-colonies solidly onto the path of anti-imperialist and socialist revolutions.

Inspired by the Chinese revolution and by the giant strides achieved by revolutionary movements around the world after the Second World War and spurred by the worsening crisis of imperialism, the armed revolution in the Philippines advanced vigorously. However, the very favorable internal and external conditions and the armed and mass strength accumulated by the Party rapidly dissipated with the worst Right and "Left" opportunist errors of the Lavas and Tarucs who never understood the line of two-stage revolution, the new democratic revolution experienced in China through protracted people's war and its appropriateness to the Philippines based on the prevailing objective conditions.

For more or less 25 years after nationwide victory, the Chinese proletariat and people waged socialist revolution and construction led by the Communist Party of China and Comrade Mao Zedong. Through this, the victory of the revolution was defended and consolidated. Step by step—through self-reliance and painstaking struggle, faith in the revolutionary cause and daring to go against the tide—the old oppressed, backward and starving China was transformed into a free, developed and powerful nation. China achieved historical and hitherto unsurpassed



advances in terms of national unity, people's democracy, industrial and agricultural production, science and technology, education and culture, health and other fields.

The Communist Party of China and the Democratic Republic of China firmly fought imperialism, revisionism and all forms of reaction and served as a solid fortress of proletarian revolution and anti-imperialism. Despite the relentless imperialist encirclement and threats of armed assault, the Communist Party of China upheld and actively supported the struggle against imperialist aggression such as in Korea and Indochina. The People's Republic of China also led in uniting and collectively mobilizing the countries of the Third World to oppose and fight colonialism and neocolonialism.

Led by Comrade Mao, the Communist Party of China upheld Marxism-Leninism and persevered along the path of socialist revolution and construction and unrelenting revolutionary transformation in the fields of politics and culture despite grave hardships and internal and external threats. It struggled against Khrushchovite revisionism which prevailed in the Soviet Union after the death of Stalin, as well as against the attempts by the revisionist Soviet Union to sabotage, constrict and foment various disturbances in, China. It faced internal struggles which flared and intensified in connection with the heightened struggle against the revisionism of some key leaders of the Communist Party of China. These struggles were related to the major changes that resulted from waging socialist revolution and construction. In these struggles, which were much more complicated and difficult compared to the revolutionary struggle against the semicolonial and semifeudal system, Mao formulated the theory and line of continuing revolution in the period of proletarian dictatorship.

Mao launched and led the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in 1966 in order to mobilize the Party and Chinese people to expose and oppose revisionism and the revisionist bourgeois elements who penetrated the leadership of the Communist Party and upheld the capitalist line. For 10 years, it successfully mobilized the people in their hundreds of millions in order to defend the proletarian dictatorship against revisionism and continually raised the economic level of, and quality of life in, China. Despite being defeated in the end when the revisionist Deng clique prevailed after Mao's death, the correctness of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution and the theory and line of continuing revolution in the period of proletarian dictatorship was thoroughly proven by the rapid deterioration and eventual dismantling of Soviet revisionism, as well as by the restoration of capitalism in China and its return to the morass of neocolonialism and oppression under the revisionist regime.

For the past 25 years, more or less, the revisionist Deng clique and its heir, the bureaucrat capitalist Jiang Zemin leadership, have remorselessly demolished the most important victories and main pillars of socialism in China. Like many counteroffensives against the revolution, the antisocialist demolition campaign of the Deng clique waved the red flag to bring down the red flag. It shamelessly appropriated for itself and utilized the prestige of the Communist Party and Mao to proclaim its fraudulent "socialism with Chinese characteristics" which is nothing but bureaucratic corruption, bourgeois comprador exploitation and collaboration with imperialism.

The antisocialist demolition campaign immediately targeted the socialist agricultural system in order to encourage bourgeois and petty bourgeois production in agriculture, strengthen the social base for the return of capitalism and destroy the foundations, not only of socialist industrialization, but of any type of self-reliant industrialization. The promise of rapid modernization and the individual freedom to enrich oneself were used to consolidate the bourgeoisie's power, completely revoke socialist revolution and construction and fully embrace capitalism and neocolonialism. The accumulation of capital for heavy industry was repudiated in favor of the policy of relying on foreign capital and one-sidedly directing production towards light consumer goods and commodities for export.

Foreign monopoly capital has resumed with a vengeance its exploitation of labor power and scramble for dominance over the Chinese market. The dismantling of

communes and cooperatives in the countryside immediately created an ocean of hundreds of millions of displaced unemployed peasants who sell their labor power at very cheap rates. Year after year, millions more join the reserve army of labor due to landgrabbing, land conversion and because of the basic inability of agriculture and industry to absorb and provide employment to new

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**NOTWITHSTANDING THE TWISTS AND TURNS IT HAS GONE THROUGH, THE CHINESE REVOLUTION HAS TRANSFORMED, NOT ONLY CHINA'S HISTORY AND SOCIETY, BUT THAT OF THE WHOLE WORLD.**

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entrants to the labor force. One can find in China's "export processing zones" conditions of labor that can be considered as among the worst in terms of wages, working hours, health and safety and union rights.

To boast of the "advantages" of capitalism, Western media often feature new capitalists and the profligate spending and excessive lifestyle of the handful who comprise the new affluent class. But their reports ignore the fact that Chinese society is wracked by a rapidly deepening socio-economic crisis and widespread discontent among the people that have led to armed and other popular uprisings by workers, peasants and other common folk. The bloody suppression of the people's protest in Tiananmen in 1989 only temporarily silenced the people's expression of anger and condemnation of rampant corruption and degenerate officials and of the worsening conditions of the people while a few indulged in luxury. In wide areas of the countryside, conditions are rapidly ripening for reigniting the people's armed resistance.

Although the worst effects of the crisis that slammed East Asia in 1997 did not hit China, it continues to be threatened with collapse. Its main exports, composed of low-technology cheap consumption products, are experiencing difficulties in competition because of the overproduction of such commodities in the global market, especially from backward neocolonial countries. There was a big decline in exports in the first months of 1999 (almost 25% in the case of textiles) and this has resulted in an overall decline in production and of the entire economy.

The inrush of foreign investments which China relied on primarily in its export-oriented industrialization from 1992 to 1997 has stopped since 1998 and is not expected to resume in many years to come. The main centers of the import-export economy, especially Southern China, which was opened to the free influx of foreign monopoly capital, are suffering from overconstruction, overcapa- ►

◀ city and growing incidents of bankruptcies. At the same time, in the central and northern provinces of China, industries are rotting and agricultural production is dwindling due to neglect by the central government. Most of the state-owned corporations and banks are staggering due to the enormous amounts of bad debts that are estimated to be 30% of the banks' total exposure. To liven up the sluggish production and market, the government has embarked on deficit spending. As time passes, China is sinking ever deeper into foreign indebtedness.

With the complete degeneration of the Communist Party of China, the re-establishment of a revolutionary party and movement depends on the genuine proletarian revolutionaries outside of, and fighting, the ruling party. In the face of the further worsening global crisis of imperialism, of the intensifying crisis within China and intensifying oppression of Chinese workers and peasants, the need to restrengthen the proletarian revolutionary movement and struggle in China becomes ever important.

Notwithstanding the twists and turns it has gone through, the Chinese revolution has transformed, not only China's history and society, but that of the whole world. And despite the big defeats suffered by the Chinese revolution, its most important legacy to the world proletarian revolution will never fade away—the theory and line of Maoism that raised Marxism-Leninism to a new and higher level now serve to illumine the proletarian revolutionaries the world over in the painstaking effort to restrengthen themselves and advance anew along the great path of socialist proletarian revolution. ■

## The enslavement of workers in China

**T**he current economic condition of workers in China is worsening. Neoliberal policies attendant to monopoly capitalist globalization are bludgeoning Chinese industry and agriculture, further pegging workers' wages at very low levels. State enterprises are being privatized. Industry has become export-oriented even as the state has been frantically kowtowing before foreigners to attract investments and loans.



This is one of the facets of capitalist restoration in China. Revisionists call it “socialism with Chinese characteristics”. In fact, it is a clear distortion of the theory and practice of scientific socialism. It is the impoverishment of Chinese workers and the suppression of their rights.

### Conditions of enslavement

When the revisionist regime opened China to foreign investments, the Chinese workers were dealt a heavy blow.

Labor power has been kept cheap as an incentive to foreign imperialists to invest in the country. In Shanghai, China's center of commerce, workers receive an hourly wage of only \$0.90 (in the Philippines, the workers' minimum wage is \$1.30/ hour), the lowest in all of Asia. This amount is woefully inadequate to enable workers to cope with the continuously rising prices of basic commodities.

The current rate of unemployment in China has reached 33%. In the cities, 15.4-16.4 million people were jobless in 1998. An estimated three to four million workers are fired yearly. About 24 million out of 150 million state employees will be jobless within the next 15 years because 300,000 state enterprises have already been in the doldrums since March. Likewise, around 300 million people in the countryside will lose their jobs due to land conversion. Thus, like desperate Filipinos, thousands of Chinese citizens have been migrating to different parts of Asia and Europe to look for work.

Meanwhile, Chinese workers who find employment suffer from such despicable working conditions and the suppression of their rights, lack benefits and receive low wages.

In 1995, 61% of all industrial employees worked for more than six days a week with more than one-third forced to work overtime without pay. Workers in many small foreign-owned factories also have no protection against the toxic chemicals they inhale.

An increasing number of workers die in the workplace. From 1991-93 alone, 60,000 died in factories due to extremely difficult working conditions, lack of protective gadgets and work-related accidents. Some factories ►

also lock workers in allegedly to prevent them from stealing. This has resulted in the death of workers due to accidents that have occurred inside the factories, such as what happened at the Zhili Toy Factory in Shenzhen, Guangdong province in 1995, where 81 workers died and 42 were injured when a fire struck the factory.

Workers are stripped of benefits such as housing, insurance and free education even before they join the workforce. This exerts further pressure on the slave wages they receive.

The government of China is currently the chief implementor of the contractual system. In Shanghai, up to 98% of all workers in state enterprises are contractual.

Strikes, the workers' foremost weapon in fighting the capitalists, are absolutely banned. The banning of strikes was written into the constitution of China as early as 1979. Independent unions are also prohibited; instead, workers' associations controlled by the capitalists and management are being organized. Authorities strictly monitor all workers' gatherings inside and outside factories. In contrast, managers have been granted more power to fire workers and dictate wages.

### Distortion of socialism

Not a trace of the socialist system can be seen in the current situation of workers in China. The state enforces a policy of keeping wages low, depriving workers of benefits and maintaining difficult working conditions, using this to entice foreign investors.

Workers are made to toil for the benefit of bureaucratic corruption and to support the private sector's drive to amass profit. They no longer have a role in organizing production because the latter is premised once more on the extraction of the surplus value created by workers and geared towards foreign markets.

This runs counter to the socialist principle that workers should work based on a centralized plan that addresses the needs of the whole society; and that workers should be organized and enjoy benefits and subsidies from the socialist state. Under the leadership of Chairman Mao Zedong, life-long job security was ensured by means of sound economic planning. Workers also had time for study and recreation.

China has retreated a long way. But the advances that the Chinese workers achieved in 27 years of socialist revolution have not lost their significance. They will serve as a guiding light for workers to fight the exploitation and oppression perpetrated by the new revisionist ruling class. **AB**

## The socialist transformation of the countryside and its reversal



**W**hen the revisionist regime dismantled the cooperatives and communes in China starting 1978, it unleashed forces in the countryside that yanked back and shackled the Chinese peasant masses to oppression, poverty and hunger. At present, private property and privilege are in command, giving free rein to a small section to exploit the majority of the peasants and creating widespread inequality in the countryside.

**A**longside the completion of land reform in 1949, the democratic government in China immediately carried out step-by-step the socialist transformation of agriculture especially in the northeastern parts of China. Cooperatives, established as initial forms of socialist property, organized mainly the poor peasantry and farmworkers and liberated them from exploitation.

The cooperative system of production, the collective effort to raise the productivity of large tracts of land, opened avenues for widespread mechanization and expanded agricultural production. This laid out the foundations for firmly establishing unity between the cities and countryside and between workers and peasants. A large part of the labor force in the countryside was freed from agricultural production to build light industries for the production of consumer goods and the construction of large public infrastructure projects especially since 1959 during the Great Leap Forward.

The countryside advanced all-sidedly. This was achieved in line with Chairman Mao Zedong's call to "take grain as the key link, develop silviculture (forestry, fruit growing), animal husbandry, fisheries, and sideline occupations in order to realize the full potential of each rural community".

**T**he victories in the revolutionary transformation of the Chinese countryside under proletarian dictatorship were squandered by the revisionist regime through policies that ►

◀ were aimed at resurrecting the right to own and expand private property.

The socialist transformation of agriculture was abandoned in favor of the “family contract” and “responsibility system”. Under this scheme, the administration and development of “state-owned” land are shouldered by individual families contracted to sell to the state a certain quota of grain at prices also set by the state; production in excess of the quota accrue to the individual contractors. Although the land remains public property in name, in essence, control is in the hands of individuals and families. These contracts, in fact, may be passed on to one's heirs.

Upon orders of the revisionist regime, collectives and communes were forcibly dismantled. This destroyed the peasants' unity and gave rise to widespread poverty in the countryside.

Contracts were awarded to close friends and relatives of local officials or to those who could shell out large amounts of bribe money. In the first year alone of the “responsibility system”, more than 30% of former members of communes and collectives were excluded, with only half of this number able to find alternative employment. With the unity of industry and agriculture destroyed, industry is no longer able to absorb the surplus labor from the countryside, resulting in an ever burgeoning reserve army of labor.

The large farms that used to be tilled collectively were divided into separate parcels and allotted to individuals and families who were awarded contracts. Because of the parcelling out of farmland, large machineries such as tractors that were designed for use on vast tracts of land fell into disuse and rotted.

Although there was a slight growth in agricultural production in the first years under revisionist rule due to the infrastructure built by the collectives and communes, grain production eventually stagnated. By the latter part of the '80s, tens of thousands were plagued by famine or intense shortages.

To have dismantled the cooperatives and communes and abandoned agricultural mechanization was to have destroyed the unity of industry and agriculture, of city and countryside and of workers and peasants. The correct role of agriculture as the base of industry was shattered. Because of the reversion to small-scale production, the prices of agricultural products increased—consequently raising the cost of living of workers, the cost of industrial production and prices of industrial products. The costs of agricultural production also shot up, including production inputs from industry such as fuel, fertilizers,

small tractors, threshers as well as rent paid for use of privatized irrigation facilities.

The revisionist slogan “Get rich quickly!” and “Some will get rich before others” caused further disunity among the people. This served as a license for the privileged few to exploit the poverty of the vast majority who did not benefit from the dismantling of the collectives. Ever larger tracts of land are being concentrated in the hands of a few. Corollarily, the hiring of wage-labor and other forms of exploitation have returned.

After more than two decades of “modernization” and “reforms”, the most backward practices and forms of exploitation once again prevail.

Local government officials carry on like the warlords and feudal lords of old. They are free to capriciously impose taxes and other levies such as dues for acquiring licenses, road taxes and so on. Usury is also widespread, feeding on the extreme poverty of poor peasants.

With the repudiation of collectivization and mechanization and with production now individual- and family-based, premium is given to having sons who serve as extra hands in working the land. Thus, women are once again accorded low status, a mark of the old feudal China. Abortion and female infanticide are growing widespread.

From practicing a revolutionary culture that upheld the key role of the masses in transforming society, there has been a revival of mysticism and other feudal beliefs. The number of young people who are able to acquire an education is dwindling. More than 70% do not finish secondary education both because they need to work on the fields and because of the rising cost of education.

Battered by extreme poverty and oppression, millions of peasant masses are rising up to oppose the despised local authorities. In 1996-97, gigantic demonstrations of several hundred thousand peasants were launched in Hubei, Anhui, Hunan and other provinces. But since these have yet to be organized into a definitive revolutionary movement, such struggles have not gone beyond the level of expressing the oppressed peasants' demands concerning everyday problems. There have been instances when these struggles ended up in riots and raids on granaries out of the peasants' desperation and hunger.

Nonetheless, for the revolutionary proletariat, these are all indications that there is fertile ground for the reemergence and solid advance of the revolutionary movement in the countryside, indications that need to be correctly taken advantage of to fight for the interests of the Chinese peasant masses. ■

# Filipino people congratulate the East Timor people and condemn attacks on them by Indonesian fascists

**National Council  
5 September 1999  
National Democratic Front of the Philippines**

**On behalf of the Filipino people, we the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) congratulate the East Timorese people and all their revolutionary forces for national independence for their overwhelming victory in the referendum administered by the United Nations.**

We admire the resoluteness and perseverance of the East Timorese people in their revolutionary struggle for national independence. We share their joy in triumphantly asserting and manifesting their sovereign will against the occupation forces of the Indonesian reactionary state.

The Indonesian state must respect the results of the referendum in which almost 80% of the population in East Timor from a voter turnout of more than 97% made clear their choice of independence, despite the campaign of terror unleashed by the Indonesian fascists and their puppets.

Together with the people of the world, we demand that the East Timorese people and democratic forces be unhampered in establishing their own independent state and government and developing their own country in peace.

We condemn the desperate actions of the most reactionary Indonesian officials and military forces, that are the proxies and extensions of the persistent Suharto fascist military dictatorship, to encumber, delay or prevent the East Timorese people from establishing their own independent state and government.

We condemn the massacres, the assassinations, looting and arson being perpetrated by Indonesian fascist army and police troops, masquerading as militia men and combining with a handful of hooligans, against the people and leaders of East Timor. We condemn the imposition of martial law on East Timor at the further expense of the East Timorese people.

It is outrageous that even Catholic Bishop Belo and the clergy and the personnel of the UN, the International Committee of the Red Cross, diplomatic missions and the international press have been targeted for the most vicious physical attacks and have been forced to evacuate. We can never forget how the Indonesian fascist troops invaded East Timor and massacred thousands in 1975. Thenceforth, they imposed on East Timor the most brutal kind of occupation, oppression and exploitation causing the death of 200,000 or a third of the people of East Timor.

We decry the failure of the UN to promptly adopt and implement effective measures to ensure the safety of the East Timorese people and give due course to their sovereign will and independence. The imperialist powers could use their financial leverage to compel the resignation of the fascist dictator Suharto and direct a so-called transition to "democracy" in order to cover up their responsibility for the plunder of Indonesia. But in the case of East Timor, they give free rein to the fascists in prolonging their occupation of East Timor and flagrantly committing the most dastardly crimes against the people.

The imperialist powers can at will use the name of the UN to attack or occupy sovereign states like Iraq and Yugoslavia. But they are deliberately slow in compelling their puppet state in Indonesia to respect the results of the referendum.

The imperialist powers headed by the US are obviously balancing their larger economic and political interests in Indonesia against the national sovereignty of East Timor and are trying to extract advantages from both Indonesia and East Timor even if in the meantime the East Timorese people are being massacred, robbed and forced to evacuate.

We condemn any scheme to make East Timor a client state of the imperialist powers and the neighboring state of Indonesia. As always, we support the East Timorese people in their struggle for national liberation and democracy.

## Initial gains in eliminating *resikada*

**I**n North Quezon, “*resikada*” refers to a percentage of the weight of copra that is subtracted by big copra buyers because of the moisture content that is allegedly lost while the copra is stored before it is brought to market. This is one of the leading sources of the huge profits amassed by local merchants.

Local merchants have been enforcing *resikada* since the mid-’70s. It was also then that the Marcos dictatorship began to impose one of its schemes, the anti-peasant coco levy. Until 1999, merchants were subtracting up to 15% of the weight of copra. In a year, this meant a loss of P9,000 to P13,000 to every coconut farmer.

Local merchants buy copra mainly from three of North Quezon’s eight towns (Panukalan, Infanta and Real).

**T**here are lessons to be learned about the step-by-step advance of agrarian revolution from the initial gains achieved by peasants in eliminating *resikada* in a number of towns in North Quezon.

Four copra buyers, including Jolito Abellaneda Gucilatar or “Jag”, the most despotic local merchant in North Quezon, have been shaken by the force of hundreds of united peasants. Thus, they were compelled to sign a document eliminating the 15% *resikada* they subtracted from the copra they bought from coconut farmers. This has been a victory highlighting the undeniable strength wielded by a united peasantry.

Nonetheless, Gucilatar’s refusal to honor the document, the stonewalling of other local merchants in the face of the peasants’ just demands and the various maneuvers of merchants and usurers as they continued to take advantage of the peasants indicate the need to further advance along the path of agrarian revolution.

**T**he campaign to eliminate *resikada* is a struggle of all peasants—from the most basic sectors to middle and rich peasants who sell copra to a handful of rich merchants. Within the framework of the minimum program of agrarian revolution, this is a step towards raising the prices of coconut products, which should benefit foremost the small peasants who work in, and maintain, coconut plantations.

The New People’s Army (NPA) began operating in North Quezon in 1984 amid an intensifying economic crisis that severely afflicted the livelihood of peasants in the area. But due to the disorientation that had also begun to

grow widespread at the time, the NPA and the peasant masses were unable to address the issue of *resikada*.

It was in 1990-91 when the organized peasants first addressed the issue. In a mass action that marked the depth of their anger at the *resikada* system, about 400 peasants rallied to confront the local merchants and demand an end to the unjust practice.

Nonetheless, there was a blending of the correct and erroneous lines in advancing this struggle.

The peasants’ demand for all merchants, big and small, to completely eliminate the 15% *resikada* was one that the peasants could not fight for sustainedly. When the merchants refused, the peasants discontinued their collective actions and hard struggle. Eventually, due to the absence of a strong organization, the peasants approached the merchants individually and compromised with them.

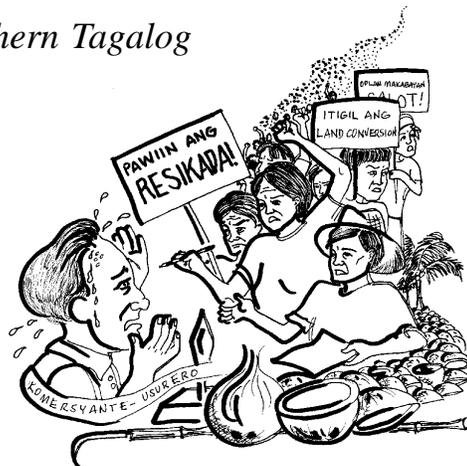
There were instances when smaller merchants agreed to a 7% reduction in *resikada*. Eventually, this only led to the loss of face of small merchants who could not afford to buy the big volume of copra that suddenly poured in as a result.

Other peasants became drawn to trading and to entering into business deals with funding agencies and rich peasants, instead of relying on the unity of the poor and the collective struggle to advance their livelihood.

The mass movement continued to decline.

**W**hen the Second Great Rectification Movement was launched, the tight coordination between the peasant masses and the NPA was restored. Under the Party’s guidance, stress was given to arousing, organizing and mobilizing the peasant masses for the agrarian revolution within the framework of the people’s democratic revolution.

Thus, in the midst of an intensifying crisis in the people’s livelihood, the minimum program of agrarian revolution was once more advanced in North Quezon. The peasant masses developed various forms and methods of struggle. This was in the face of widespread speculation and landgrabbing of public lands by the few who were wealthy, such as the creeping commer- ►



◀ cialization of areas near the shores of Real, Infanta and Nakar that further impoverished poor peasants and deprived them of land.

It was in this context that the issue of *resikada* once more gained prominence. On May 3, 1998, the united peasants again confronted the merchants who were conniving to take advantage of the farmers. Through the militant and concerted action of about 800 peasants, the five local merchants were forced to agree to a 5% reduction in *resikada*.

The greedy merchants, however, did not evenly implement what the peasants won. This fuelled the peasants' resolve to strengthen their ranks. The peasants persisted in struggling for the complete elimination of *resikada* as a step towards the overall advance of agrarian revolution.

**I**n July 1999, around 200 peasants—most of whom were coconut farmworkers—successfully compelled the big merchants, among them Glo, Capili, Relativo and Gucilatar—to completely do away with *resikada*.

First to negotiate with the merchants were 10 peasant leaders. At first, it was only Glo who agreed to reduce the *resikada* (by 6%) while the others stubbornly refused, arguing that the copra was of poor quality and that enforcing *resikada* was a policy of the Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA).

The peasants considered the merchants' possible moves before confronting them in a "people's camp" held in front of each merchant's house on July 24. The peasants agreed on a 10% fallback in their demand in negotiating with each merchant.

The farmers marched around Infanta to dramatize their resistance and their other demands. It was then that the PCA was forced to admit that there was never any legal basis for the practice of *resikada*.

The merchants ran out of rationalizations. Although there were protracted negotiations particularly with Capili and with the despotic Gucilatar, the big merchants were forced to agree to abolish the 15% *resikada*.

**T**his is another victory in advancing the protracted struggle against the exploitation of peasants at the hands of landlords, merchants and usurers. The peasants of North Quezon have proven that they could cause the retreat of those who strut around like kings in the face of the solid unity of "small folk" like the *magkakawit* (coconut pickers), *magtatapas* (coconut husk peelers), *magkokopras* (copra makers) and middle to rich peasants.

The merchants' continued intransigence in doing away with *resikada*—and Gucilatar's wiliness in concurrently reducing the price of copra—are a reminder of the class-based cunning of big merchants, the continued existence of a system dominated by the exploitative classes and the need to further expand, deepen and strengthen the ranks of the revolutionary people to overthrow the ruling system. **AB**

*"If we accumulate small gains,  
We shall reap great victories"*

## Tactical offensives continue in Bicol

**T**he New People's Army (NPA) continues to launch tactical offensives in the various provinces of Bicol. From June to August, 14 were killed and 20 assorted firearms were confiscated in eight offensives.

Last August, forces of the Philippine National Police (PNP) and Citizens' Armed Forces Geographical Unit (CAFGU) were taken by surprise by a tactical offensive launched by combined forces of the Communist Party provincial committee in Masbate and the NPA-Bicol regional guerrilla unit. The NPA punished a PNP agent, ambushed the PNP and CAFGU elements that served as reinforcement and came to the agent's rescue and confiscated 18 assorted firearms.

Barangay Captain Roberto Inopia, an active PNP spy who was guilty of a long list of crimes against the people, was punished on August 1 in Sitio Bat-og, Balite, Aroroy, Masbate. An M16, a .45, a .357, a .22 and two riot shotguns were confiscated from him.

The following day, at 2:00 a.m., PNP troops aboard a jeep, a truck and two motorcycles charged towards the spot where Inopia was punished. They were ambushed by Red fighters who concentrated their fire at the jeep and one of the motorcycles, as the truck and the other motorcycle quickly retreated. Four policemen and a CAFGU were killed. Three others who were wounded, surrendered. The NPA confiscated six M16s, two garands, one M14, two .45s, a .38, magazines and assorted ammunition.

The wounded PNP troops were given medicine, treated as prisoners of war and advised to resign.

Also on the morning of August 2 at Lukbanan, Capalonga, Camarines Norte, an NPA special team punished Nilo Elip y Rosas after he was proven to have tipped the enemy on the NPA's movements on two occasions. He also served as guide in enemy operations. He was punished after he ignored the opportunity given him by the movement to reform, and because the people of the area demanded his punishment.

It was also on August 2 when a special team ►

