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PINAPATNUBAYAN NG
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Editorial

The people and the revolutionary movement will defeat the US-Estrada regime's military solution



Like a mad dog, the reactionary US-Estrada regime mindlessly and rabidly insists on using a military solution to resolve social questions and its political problems. However, just like his fascist mentor Marcos, Estrada has only succeeded in digging his own grave. Estrada is exacerbating the crisis of the ruling system and is provoking the intensification and broadening of antifascist and anti-Estrada struggles. And just as the iron fist of the Marcos dictatorship was crushed, the people and the revolutionary movement will defeat Estrada's military solution.

Upon assuming power in 1998, Estrada immediately carried out Operational Plan (Oplan) Makabayan that stresses military means as the method to combat the revolutionary movement. The reactionary state made this

adjustment in response to the all-sided restrengthening of the Party and the revolutionary movement since 1992 consequent to the Second Great Rectification Movement; as well as to the reintensification of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front-Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Forces (MILF-BIAF) armed struggle since 1996. After the Party exhibited its militant determination, Estrada set aside the political tactics of cooptation and inducing capitulation as the major method of fighting the revolution.

Under Oplan Makabayan, the military and police are being greatly strengthened. The same is true of paramilitary forces such as the Citizens' Armed Forces Geographical Unit and vigilante groups. Oplan Makabayan seeks to provide the fascist military with modern munitions, raise its intelligence capability and expand the counterrevolutionary vigilante groups.

In line with this is the campaign of disinformation and slander against the Party and the New People's Army (NPA) and the anticommunist witch hunt against the national and democratic legal organizations.

In 1999, Estrada's popularity nose-dived, anti-Estrada protests and tactical offensives of the NPA gathered momentum and the crisis of rule of the US-Estrada regime deteriorated. In his desperation to secure his hold on power, Estrada unleashed simultaneously his bloodthirsty fascist troops and heightened a corresponding anticommunist and antipeople propaganda campaign to sow terror among the people, silence them, suppress their democratic rights and try to hinder the rapidly intensifying mass protests and armed struggle.

Presently, the US-Estrada regime is concentrating its firepower in Southern Tagalog and MILF-BIAF areas in Mindanao while increasing its capability to rapidly deploy forces anywhere in the Philippines. Through brigade-sized operations, the fascist regime hopes to win tactical victories in the distorted notion that this will fortify its rule.

A vicious counterrevolutionary war is being waged in the countryside and cities. The people's civil rights, rules of war and international humanitarian law are wantonly being violated. All aspects of martial law prevail especially

in the countryside. The policies of torture, "salvaging", food blockades, bombings, forced evacuation, illegal arrests and the filing of trumped-up criminal charges against suspected revolutionaries are being carried out. In the cities, the so-called policy of "maximum tolerance" in dealing with demonstrations has been put aside to give way to the all-out use of force to break up militant rallies of workers, students and other sectors.

Based on partial records, the reactionary Estrada government can be expected to surpass the Marcos dictatorship and subsequent fascist regimes in terms of the number of cases and victims of human rights violations.

By giving up political methods to combat the revolutionary movement, the reactionary government has set aside as well its pretensions to being a respecter of human rights and international humanitarian law. The Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) has collapsed the peace negotiations with the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) in order to scrap the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law and eliminate any impediment to conducting all-out war.

The Estrada regime is also bent on hastening the collapse of the GRP-MILF peace negotiations. Despite continuing negotiations, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) has deployed thousands of troops and carried out a large-scale assault against the MILF's Camp Omar this February. This is in violation of earlier GRP-MILF agreements and a direct provocation to the MILF to withdraw from the peace negotiations.

In its hunger for war, the fascist military disregards even the welfare of its personnel who are prisoners of war. Instead of reciprocating the NDFP's humanitarian offer to release prisoners of war such as Maj. Noel Buan and P/Chief Insp. Abelardo Martin, Estrada has ordered brigade-sized operations in Southern Tagalog.

However, the laws of history stipulate that as long as it employs guerrilla tactics and adheres to the line of protracted people's war that upholds the interest of the masses and relies on them, the revolutionary armed movement will continuously grow and strengthen and weaken the gigantic reactionary army step-by-step. For the Party and the entire revolutionary movement, the reactionary Estrada government's adamance in pressing a military solution creates a much better situation for the all-sided advance of revolutionary work, especially in the field of armed struggle.

The unity and capability of the NPA should be raised. It is important to carry out political training that focuses on the study of Philippine society and revolution, Party documents and directives, the particular problems of the

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masses and the methods of organizing and mobilizing them. Military training should also be carried out in order to raise the capability of fighters in offensive and defensive maneuvers, firing and other military skills; and the capability of officers in evaluation and planning and leading operations.

In this regard, units of the NPA should take advantage of opportunities to strike at the troops of the reactionary army. In guerrilla fronts, fighters can take advantage of the blind maneuvers of the AFP and the PNP, the low morale of their troops and the unequal deployment of their forces. By cooperating with the masses, the maneuvers of the fascist groups can be monitored in order to come up with appropriate plans for launching tactical offensives that the NPA is capable of winning.

The unity of the Army and people should also be strengthened. This can be achieved by addressing their problems and encouraging their support and participation in the armed struggle. From their ranks, we must aggressively recruit as fighters of the NPA, able-bodied men and women who pass the minimum age requirement and possess a good record.

The people's militancy and courage should be raised in order to confront and fight the viciousness of fascist groups and demand justice for military abuses. The most notorious units and officials of the reactionary army and police, as well as the worst reactionary politicians, should be punished for their crimes against the people.

By exposing the idiocy of Estrada's military solution, widespread political support for the armed struggle can be harnessed. Attention should be given to encouraging different forms of support for the people's army from the urban petty bourgeoisie and other sectors in the cities. Take advantage of all opportunities, including those offered by the mass media, to expose military abuses and atrocities and violations of human rights, international humanitarian law and rules of war.

As Estrada grows more pigheaded about his military solution, it becomes more evident that his fascist regime has no intentions of resolving the fundamental social problems that cause widespread poverty and political and economic crisis. The more the antipeople and counterrevolutionary war of the reactionary Estrada government heightens in its brutality, the more certain it is to fail--and the more will it feed the fires of the Filipino people's burning revolutionary struggle. **AB**

On intensifying AFP aggression against the MILF-BIAF

**Central Committee
Communist Party of the Philippines
February 22, 2000**

The massive military operations of the AFP against the MILF-BIAF's Camp Omar since February 19, the eve of the scheduled round of talks between the MILF and GRP negotiating panels, is an arrogant act of provocation and a flagrant violation of the ongoing peace process between the MILF and GRP.

The Communist Party of the Philippine roundly condemns the AFP for shamelessly stabbing the MILF-BIAF in the back. This treachery is a big insult to the peace negotiations and the ceasefire agreement between the MILF and GRP. More than this, it has wrought great havoc and damage on ordinary Moro and non-Moro peoples in central and southwestern Mindanao.

It is completely within reason for the MILF-BIAF to exhaust all military, political, diplomatic and other means to thoroughly resist and frustrate the reactionary US-Estrada regime's evil assault. It is ever-clear that the reactionary, bloodthirsty US-Estrada regime bears full responsibility for the likely eventual collapse of the peace negotiations between the MILF and GRP and more widespread and intense armed conflict.

It is the duty of the Party and all its allied organizations within the NDF to tirelessly support and assist the revolutionary and progressive Moro forces who are relentlessly being attacked by the Manila-based reactionary, puppet and fascist forces. This is in accordance with the NDF-MILF agreement on cooperation and mutual support signed on July 24, 1999 and is strictly demanded by revolutionary principle. Thus, the Communist Party of the Philippines calls for the further intensification of tactical offensives as well as mass protests and struggles in the countryside and urban areas.

Under the direct command of AFP chief Gen. Angelo Reyes, hundreds of troops of the 2nd Scout Ranger Battalion and other AFP troops supported by cannons, war planes, tanks and armored vehicles attacked Camp Omar in Shariff Aguak, Maguindanao. Camp Omar is one of the leading camps of the MILF recognized by the GRP as stipulated in the Second Joint Acknowledgment signed by the panels of both parties on October 6, 1999. It is the same camp attacked by AFP troops on January 9-12 while the MILF was busy with prayers at the end of Ramadan, the most important annual religious feast of Muslims the world over, besides being the eve of another scheduled round of talks between the MILF and GRP panels.

The AFP's repeated attacks that were unleashed until the camp was completely overrun merely constituted a step in a scheme by highly placed officials of the GRP under the US-Estrada regime to demolish the peace process and go all-out to enforce a military solution that had already failed in the past. Along with launching Oplan Makabayan against the NPA, the AFP is implementing Oplan Pisces Alpha against the MILF-BIAF. With the start of the year 2000, the AFP began implementing its new Campaign Plan Balangai that focused on extending and intensifying military offensives against the revolutionary forces (particularly the NDF and MILF) nationwide.

Thus, after collapsing the peace talks between the NDF and GRP, it is the MILF-GRP peace negotiation that is now being destroyed by the US-Estrada regime. Armed assaults are being intensified, arbitrary and unreasonable conditions are being imposed in quick succession that are tantamount to no less than the outright surrender and self-criminalization of the MILF, past agreements are repeatedly being violated and an arbitrary and unrealistic deadline is being forcibly imposed.

In 1999, seven more Philippine Army battalions, two oversized Scout Ranger battalions and six Special Forces battalions were transferred to Mindanao. Majority of the armored vehicles, tanks, helicopters and war planes of the AFP were also concentrated in central Mindanao. The entire 6th Infantry Division, a brigade of the 3rd Infantry Division and a brigade of the 4th Infantry Division have set up a huge wall of armor and offensive strength that encircles the major MILF-BIAF camps in Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur, North Cotabato and Sultan Kudarat.

Since November 1999, attacks against MILF camps have been conducted more and more often, with minor camps being attacked at first and eventually, big camps like Camp Omar. The despised and fascist CAFGU, vigilantes and cultists like the Tadtad are again massively being organized and armed. Surveillance of revolutionary forces and ordinary citizens is being conducted more extensively. There are indications that suggest the revival of the evil genocidal campaign of Marcos, Estrada's

fascist master and mentor. Through such attacks and various kinds of pressure, the MILF is being forced into capitulation or else caused to become severely weakened and divided. The ultimate goal of the US-Estrada regime's all-out militarization, armed provocations and attacks and fascist repression is to suppress the Moro people's struggle for self-determination. Along with this is, it ensures that US troops could freely and securely use

central and southwestern Mindanao for their basing needs, maneuvers and supplies and that foreign monopoly corporations could seize oil and natural gas deposits in Liguasan Marsh and surrounding areas.

But the rapid deterioration of the reactionary ruling system's economic and political crisis is beyond the US-Estrada regime's subjective wishes. The reactionary, puppet and fascist Estrada ruling clique is being seriously exposed and isolated. Even among the ranks of reactionaries, there is rapidly spreading and intensifying disgust over Estrada's corruption, brusqueness and erratic administration. Armed and unarmed resistance against the ruling regime and the corrupt semicolonial and semifeudal system it is defending are fast spreading and gaining strength.

Continually developing relations and cooperation between the MILF and NDF constitute a big push to the more rapid advance of revolutionary struggle nationwide and will lead to even bigger blows against reactionary power and strength.

The ruling US-Estrada regime's defilement of the peace negotiations and agreements between the MILF and GRP and before this, of the peace negotiations and agreements between the NDF and GRP, present glaring proof of the closed-mindedness of US imperialism and its local reactionary minions regarding the most impassioned cries of the broad masses of the Filipino people. Repeated, bitter experiences teach us that we can never rely on pleas and negotiations with the reactionary ruling classes to resolve the national and social problems of the Moro people and the entire Filipino people.

To defend their national, social and political rights and welfare, the people must rely mainly on painstakingly advancing the revolutionary armed struggle until total victory. **AB**

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HAD ALREADY FAILED IN
THE PAST.**

The US-Estrada regime is sabotaging the release of Martin and Buan

The US-Estrada regime is sabotaging the release of Philippine Army Maj. Noel Buan and P/Chief Insp. Abelardo Martin. Instead of paving the way for the orderly release of the prisoners of war by the New People's Army (NPA), Estrada has ordered the further intensification of military operations in Southern Tagalog.

On January 12, the NDFP negotiating panel and the Humanitarian and Peace Mission of Sen. Loren Legarda, Bishop Jesus Varela and Supreme Bishop Tomas Millamena signed a Memorandum of Understanding concerning the prisoners. This stipulated steps for the orderly release of the prisoners, including the suspension of trial proceedings against Buan and Martin by the Regional Operational Command of the NPA in Southern Tagalog; and the securing by the Humanitarian and Peace Mission from the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) of an order suspending military operations and the withdrawal of forces in some areas in the region.

Instead of favorably considering the Memorandum of Agreement and achieving an easy solution to the release of the prisoners of war, the GRP has ordered relentless brigade-sized operations under

the Southern Luzon Command and the 2nd Infantry Division of the Philippine Army. Aside from preventing the National Executive Committee of the NDF from convening in order to give consideration to the Memorandum of Understanding, this has also wrought grave harm on the livelihood and rights of the people of Southern Tagalog.

The GRP has mobilized for so-called rescue operations Task Forces Banahaw, Seagull and Panther and the 201st Brigade of the 2nd Infantry Division. In direct contrast to the humanitarian treatment by the NPA of Buan and Martin, and in violation of the rules of war, the 5th Scout Ranger Coy and the 49th IB mercilessly tortured and killed Ka Sixto (Armando Cerna Jr., 45) after the latter was captured in a gunbattle in Victoria, Oriental Mindoro on January 29 (*see related article*).

The capture of Buan and Martin is a humanitarian act by the NPA. Contrary to the policy of the GRP of detaining and criminalizing or torturing and killing their captives, it is the policy of the NPA to arrest as prisoners of war anyone who is captured or surrenders in battle.

The NPA respects the rights of prisoners of war in accordance with international humanitarian laws and rules of war. Their right to defend themselves in a fair trial is recognized. Prisoners may be released for humanitarian and political considerations.

Due to the insistence of the US-Estrada regime on resolving the issue of the prisoners of war through relentless military operations instead of the easy way of negotiations, the release of Major Buan and P/Chief Inspector Martin will be delayed substantially. Responsibility rests squarely on Estrada's shoulders should any harm befall the prisoners of war and their custodians as a result of these operations. For as long as the reactionary regime refuses to reciprocate its offer, the NDFP negotiating panel may withdraw its endorsement of the appeal of the Humanitarian and Peace Mission. And for as long as the prisoners of war are in its custody, the NPA reserves the right to continue investigating them for possible trial. **AB**

13 victorious tactical offensives launched in Southern Tagalog!

In the spirit of all-out resistance against the US-Estrada regime's Oplan Makabayan and advancing guerrilla war to a new and higher level, the NPA launched in 1999 in five provinces in the Southern Tagalog region seven raids, one ambush, two sparrow operations and one special tactical offensive. From these offensives, the NPA reaped 25 high-caliber firearms, one M72-A2 (anti-tank weapon) and 22 short arms. The NPA also confiscated communications equipment, punished a police official and captured two officers of the AFP and PNP. The most important key to the victory of each tactical offensive was the support of a broad and deep mass base that continues to cherish the NPA and rejoices in each of its triumphs.

January 7. An NPA platoon raided the PNP detachment at Barangay Pagbahan, Sta. Cruz, Occidental Mindoro. One M16 rifle and one cal .45 pistol was confiscated. A wounded policeman was brought to the hospital

after which the detachment was burned to the ground. After three days, an NPA blocking force thwarted the advance of the enemy's reinforcement troops. A Red fighter was wounded in the firefight but the comrades were nonetheless able to retreat safely. The punitive action against police forces who were active instruments of the despotic big landlord Abeleda was a success.

February. The NPA punished the JAC Liner Company for refusing to pay the appropriate revolutionary tax.

An NPA team burned a JAC Liner bus. A cal .45 pistol was also confiscated from a policeman aboard the bus.

February 13. The NPA raided Metro Manila Development Authority chief Jejomar Binay's ranch in Barangay Bayawang, Rosario, eastern Batangas. The BHB disarmed Binay's private army and security guards who harassed workers and residents of the ranch and surrounding areas. The raid also served as punishment to Binay who refused to pay revolutionary taxes.

Two M16 rifles, one M14 rifle, two shotguns, three grenades, three rifle grenades, one 9 mm, one cal .380 pistol, two cal .38 pistols, ammunition and other equipment were confiscated.

May 6. A seven-man NPA unit raided the house of Captain Abarrientos of the Philippine Army in Pangil, Laguna. Through a ruse, the NPA was able to enter Abarrientos' house at around 7:00 in the evening upon confirming that the official was not around. Three Garand rifles and a baby M16 rifle were confiscated without a single shot being fired. Before leaving, the comrades explained matters to the family and others who were around and warned against gun-owners who abuse the masses.

May 14. At 8:00 in the evening, an NPA squad raided Navy Captain Togonon's unguarded bunkhouse at Sitio Absukot, Barangay Tubili, Paluan, Occidental Mindoro. The comrades confiscated a baby M16 rifle, ammunition, a baby chainsaw and a cal .45 pistol magazine without meeting any resistance. This was punitive action taken against a syndicate of pirates who victimized people from Paluan to Lubang Island.

June 10. At around 8:40 in the morning, an NPA squad ambushed five goons serving despotic landlord Ding Quintos at Sityo Kasuy, Barangay Balansay, Mamburao, Occidental Mindoro. The goons were responsible for killing and evicting farmers from lands being grabbed by Quintos. The NPA confiscated one carbine, one shotgun and one cal .38 revolver.

June 15. A six-man NPA team punished Barangay Capt. Max Lemeta of Barrio Calayo and his three companions in Barangay Wawa, Nasugbu, Batangas. One 9 mm pistol and a magazine were confiscated from them. The four were responsible for abducting and salvaging peasant leaders opposing their eviction from Hacienda Looc, Nasugbu.

July 6. A special tactical offensive involving the entrapment of Army Maj. Noel Buan, intelligence chief of the Southern Luzon Command (SOLCOM), was successfully undertaken. Buan was captured and swiftly spirited away from Laguna. His capture remained confidential until he was declared a prisoner of war in the first week of December.

October 11. An NPA platoon launched a punitive operation in two adjacent barrios infested by notorious elements. The NPA proceeded to Barangay Matipunso, San Antonio, Quezon and found the target barangay captain and his son. Believing the ruse that the comrades were soldiers conducting an inspection, father and son voluntarily showed their cal .45 and 9 mm pistols. They later brought out their M16 and M14 rifles and a cal .38 pistol after the comrades were compelled to ►

A big head blow through accumulated small victories

The enemy bled from 61 wounds inflicted through various small operations launched by the NPA in Southern Tagalog in 1999.

Up to 53 were killed and more than 14 were wounded, including soldiers, policemen, paramilitary personnel and bad elements.

The NPA seized four M16s, two M14s, six .45s, 10 .38s, five .22s, one 9 mm, eight shotguns, 25 assorted magazines and ammunition. The NPA likewise confiscated three VHF radios, a boat, a motorcycle and other matériel from the enemy. Also seized were documents from opportunist renegades.

On the NPA side, a Red fighter was martyred and another was slightly wounded.

The operations included defensive situations turned into offensives by the Red fighters, punitive action against opportunist renegade grouplets, meting out of revolutionary justice to those with grave crimes against the people and frustrating the fascist enemy's attempts to destroy the revolutionary unity prevailing in the barrios. **AB**

From "Small tactical offensives of the NPA in different provinces in Southern Tagalog in 1999", report of the Southern Tagalog Regional Operational Command.

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Onward to 2000

Southern Tagalog met the year 2000 head-on with the continued launching of tactical offensives.

A Philippine Army soldier died and two others were seriously wounded in an ambush by NPA guerrillas in Laguna on February 15. The three soldiers who belonged to the 9th Scout Ranger Coy were aboard a Kennedy-type jeep when they were ambushed along the highway of Barangay Amuyong, Mabitac, near the Laguna- Rizal border.

Meanwhile, three elements who wrought harm on the people and the revolutionary movement were punished by the NPA in January and February. Two .45 pistols were seized in these operations.

On February 6, the NPA punished Oscar Aldaba, mayor of San Teodoro, Oriental Mindoro. Aldaba was a Philippine Army major and intelligence official. His counterrevolutionary crimes included the abduction of a former Red fighter and the execution of a local mass leader.

Capt. Henry Oben was also punished in Sampaloc, Tanay, Rizal on January 15. Oben was assigned to the 2nd Infantry Division based in Camp Capinpin, Tanay. Confiscated from Oben was a .45.

On January 4, PO2 Tito Corpuz of Barangay Fatima, Mamburao, Occidental Mindoro was also punished. Corpuz who belonged to the Provincial Police Mobile Group was involved in intelligence activities. A .45 was confiscated from him. **AB**

NPA tactical offensives resume in Negros

The NPA in Negros greeted the new millennium by launching victorious tactical offensives against the fascist troops and armed goons of the reactionary enemy.

What the people and the revolutionary forces had long desired since 1994-1999 has been fulfilled!

On February 5, an NPA unit ambushed a soldier and six elements of the Civilian Armed Auxiliary (CAA) in Namolo 2, Barangay Santol, Binalbagan, Negros Occidental at 5:15 in the afternoon. Killed were Cpl. Domingo Romero of the 11th IB and two elements of the CAA. One CAA was wounded and three were allowed to escape.

The enemy was taken by surprise and was unable to offer any resistance to the NPA. They were drunk while walking back from the gambling center from which they extorted money every Saturday while claiming to give it protection. Four M14 rifles and ammunition were confiscated in the 10-minute encounter.

The ambushed unit was part of a contingent of Philippine Army soldiers stationed at a detachment in Tilangkoy whose services were being used by warlords like Alfredo Montelibano Jr. Montelibano coddles the unit and uses it to terrorize the peasants in the area.

On January 11 at 11:30 in the morning, a guerrilla unit successfully disarmed private goons of the despotic ►

◄ introduce themselves as NPA. An M1 carbine, a 9 mm pistol and two communication radios were also confiscated.

October 22. A six-man NPA team punished P/Insp. Leodecario Turno, chief of police of San Teodoro, Oriental Mindoro while he was on his way to his station. A cal .45 was confiscated from him.

October 30. An NPA squad raided the compound of Keangnam Construction Company, a Korean company in Sta. Rosa, Mulanay, Quezon, for refusing to pay taxes according to the rules of the people's democratic government. Eleven trucks and other construction equipment were burned. Office equipment were also confiscated.

November 1. A 12-man NPA team attacked the PNP station at Pola, Oriental Mindoro at around 8:00 in the evening. Immediately confiscated from the armory were two M16 rifles, an M14 rifle and one anti-tank weapon (M72-A2). Also seized by the NPA were two cal .45 pistols, one cal .38 pistol, one 9 mm pistol, ammunition and

a magazine, one VHF base radio, one colored TV, two typewriters and other military equipment.

November 3. In a surprise attack, an undersized NPA platoon raided the police station at Dolores, Quezon. Comrades immediately played a ruse on P/Chief Insp. Abelardo Martin, who was armed with a pistol. The police chief and his two other men were disarmed while other weapons and military equipment were being seized. The NPA was able to control the town within 10 minutes as soon as other elements of the platoon assumed their respective assignments. The NPA captured Martin.

Confiscated from this raid were five M16 rifles, one M14 rifle, two 9 mm, four cal .38 pistols, four rifle grenades, ammunition, two base radios (HF and VHF), one VHF handheld radio, one colored TV and other military equipment. **AB**

From a report of the Southern Tagalog Regional Operational Command

The US-Estrada regime's blatant fascist and terrorist rule in Southern Tagalog

It is no longer necessary for the US-Estrada regime to declare martial law as Marcos-style open fascist and terrorist rule prevails in Southern Tagalog. Fascist troops have been relentlessly launching violent attacks all over Southern Tagalog. The nine Philippine Army (PA) battalions, three Marine battalions, two special battalions and the Provincial Mobile Group of the Philippine National Police (PNP) as well as Citizens' Armed Forces Geographical Unit companies have done nothing but perpetrate various heinous crimes against the people of the region. Different sectors of the toiling masses in the countryside and cities as well as other people of the region have been witness to the US-Estrada regime's daily flagrant violations of human rights.

The regime's long list of fascist crimes includes massacres, salvaging, illegal arrests, criminalization of suspected members of the New People's Army (NPA), economic blockades, bombings and mass evacuation of barriofolk.

Following are only a few of the most notorious cases of terrorist

suppression perpetrated by the regime in the region in 1999:

In Quezon, five defenseless NPA fighters were sprayed with gunfire in Barrio Calantas, Tayabas on August 24 at around 7:00 p.m. All killed after being shot in the back were Melinda de Castro, 36; Juanito Rocafort, 32; Teodoro Gonzales, 34; and Leo Mansit, 18. Marlon Cabrera, 25, who was wounded, was captured and forcibly brought to the V. Luna Hospital where he was threatened and his dextrose tubes injected with various drugs. He was wracked with more pain and suffering before he was located by a representative of KARAPATAN. The perpetrators were 76th IB troops led by Maj. Emmanuel Mendoza.

In Laguna, "Ka Junard", a Red fighter wounded in a firefight in Balian, Pangil on May 6, 1999, had his leg mercilessly amputated. He was captured while recuperating in a hospital in Manila. Doctors averred that

◀ landgrabber, Mr. Yap of Guihulngan, Negros Oriental.

The armed goons did not resist. One shotgun and four .38 revolvers were confiscated from them.

These victories show that only through armed struggle can we effectively resist the "peace" being imposed by the reactionaries.

In Negros, the reactionaries are represented foremost by the Cojuangco faction. The Cojuangco-Maranon-Zayco alliance under the United Negros Alliance in Negros Occidental and its co-conspirator Paras faction in Negros Oriental constitute an alliance of Marcos cronies, warlords and drug lords that aims to lord it over the local economy and politics. The promotion of the executioner-commander, Julius Javier as chief of the 3rd ID and his resumption of command of the criminal battalion 11th IB, complete the fascist politico-military machinery of the reactionaries aimed at prolonging the bloody history of the exploitation and oppression of the people of Negros.

It is correct for the broad masses to rejoice in the

resumption of tactical offensives in Negros. It is time for the exploited and oppressed to demand payment from the reactionary diehards who have incurred blood debts, such as Cojuangco and other comprador-landlord Marcos cronies.

The resumption of tactical offensives is also a call to the members of the CAFGU and ordinary elements of

the AFP-PNP to resign or secretly link with the NPA in order to extend covert assistance to the armed revolutionary movement.

We also call on the members of the RPM-RPA-ABB to repudiate and abandon

the gangster Tabara-Calizo-de la Cruz-de los Reyes leadership, drinking partners of Estrada. Since 1993, they have abandoned the armed struggle and used their armed units as tools to conceal their counterrevolution. **AB**

Excerpts from a statement by Bayani Obrero of the NPA-"Boy" Gatmaitan Command, Negros Island, February 10, 2000

the amputation was unnecessary. The crime was committed by the 16th ISU-ISG led by Capt. Edgardo Cumahig.

In Rizal, cases of illegal arrests, torture and forcing of villagers to guide soldiers to NPA locations are widespread. On March 5, 1999, three suspected guerrillas were captured, brutally tortured and forced to serve as guides. First to be captured was Rocky Pajardo followed by Cayaon Calapang and Muay Sapiccio. On September 16, 1999, a civilian named Corante from San Ysiro, Antipolo City was illegally arrested. He was tortured and forced to serve as guide to an NPA camp. Involved were elements of the 5th SRC led by Lt. Eric Lycoco.

In Batangas, Ireneo Marasigan was killed at the Lipa City public market on January 8, 1999. This was followed on February 15, 1999 by the murder of Lodrigio de Guzman, a resident of Abong, San Juan and member of a local Party branch.

On May 12, 1999, four civilians were massacred in Sitio Malabnig, Balatbat, Lobo by elements of the 20th Special Forces Company led by Sergeant Batayola. The house of Flaviano Cortas was sprayed with gunfire, killing him, his two children and his brother-in-law Nilo Palalay, 25.

On December 27, 1999, Naning Hernandez, a peasant leader from Barrio Hukay, Calatagan was killed by hired goons protected by the military and the mayor of Calatagan.

In Occidental Mindoro, Roger Aloro's wife and child were brutally fired upon, killing his nine-month-old child and a suspected NPA member in Sitio Prubinsya Agaton, Tanyag, Calintaan on October 26, 1999. Perpetrators were elements of the Regional Mobile Group and 407th PNP PPMG led by P/Col. Rolando Ravara and P/Insp. Victor Jaycees S. Tolentino.

Meanwhile, Lurching, 26, an ex-NPA fighter from Alacaac, Sta. Cruz, Occidental Mindoro was illegally arrested, subjected to electric shock treatment and detained for almost a month by a composite team of the 76th IB led by Lt. Felixberto Ama. Violy Alcantara, 40, was also arrested in the same village. She was threatened and forced to admit to taking in NPA guerrillas.

In Marinduque, elements of the 74th IB mercilessly shot an old man and his three-year-old grandchild despite his pleas that they were civilians. The child survived because the old man told him to run. The incident occurred on April 2, 1999 in Mompog, Marinduque.

In Palawan, Norjury Unggong, owner of a house in Sitio Maligaya, Aramaywan, Narra where a firefight between the NPA and the Philippine Marines took place on June 21, 1999, was wounded and captured. He was hit in the calf but doctors at the WESCOM Hospital (Western Command) amputated him from the knee. Responsible were elements of the 21st Marine Coy of the 1st Marine Battalion Landing Team based in Abu-abo, Sofronio Española, Palawan and led by Lt. ▶

Armando "Ka Sixto" Cerna Jr.

Victim of the fascist regime's cruelty

In matters regarding prisoners of war, the revolutionary movement and the reactionary state have diametrically opposed standards. In contrast with the national democratic movement's humane treatment of Maj. Noel Buan and P/Chief Insp. Abelardo Martin, Comrade Armando Cerna Jr. (Ka Sixto) was brutally tortured and murdered by fascist troops.

Ka Sixto was wounded and captured after a firefight. He was hit in the arm after the 5th Scout Ranger Company (SRC) and the 49th IB raided the house where Ka Sixto's unit was staying. This occurred at around 5:30 in the morning on January 29 in Sitio Mainaw, Barangay San Antonio, Victoria, Oriental Mindoro.

Upon capturing and recognizing him, 1Lt. Samuel Manzano, commander of the 5th SRC, ordered his troops not to extend medical treatment to Ka Sixto and to let him bleed to death instead. But because Ka Sixto was only wounded in the arm, the fascist troops later grew impatient and broke his neck so he would die sooner.

Thinking that Ka Sixto was dead, the soldiers stripped and hog-tied him and brought his naked body to the Victoria town square where he was exposed from morning until noon. He was still breathing when the 5th SRC brought him near a garbage dump to bury him. Before they could do so, however, members of KARAPATAN, a human rights organization, were able to claim his body.

When the organization brought Ka Sixto to a funeral home, however, the mortician refused to embalm him because he was still moving. Efforts to save his life were in vain, and the valiant fighter died.

Upon his capture, Ka Sixto had clearly been rendered *hors d'combat* and should have enjoyed his corresponding rights under international laws of war. He was a victim of the regime's cruelty and a martyr of the revolution.

Despite this, the revolutionary movement will continue to treat Major Buan and Chief Inspector Martin well as it practices without pretense or deception its policy of humanitarian treatment of prisoners of war. **AB**

◄ Col. Ariel Querubin.

In Cavite, two suspected NPA members, Francisco Morillo, 20 of Kaong, Silang and Francisco Arpia, 46 of Barangay Burgos, Mulanay, Quezon were arrested on July 15, 1999 and were never seen again. Arrested with them was Rolando Torres who was released after a few days. The case is similar to the arrest and disappearance of Danilo Caisip, 43 and Jason Nieva, 19 on December 8, 1998 in Kaybanban, Cayrilao, Nasugbu. Their bodies have not been discovered to date. The perpetrators were elements of the PNP and the private army of Mayor Filomeno Maligaya (formerly Sergeant Maligaya who was involved in the murder of Ka Lando Olalia and Leonor Alay-ay) of Magallanes, Cavite. Also involved was PPAG Col. Rustico Francisco.

In Romblon, a house in Barrio Matutuna, San Andres was sprayed with bullets on September 18, 1999 after Ka Aljun or Felix Dumalagan was killed there by troopers of the 412 PMG of Romblon led by Police Chief Inspector de Villa and Police Inspector Miranda. The men in the house were ordered to get out with their arms raised, line up against a wall and take their clothes off. Arrested were civilians Ronnie Fajilagot, Walter Ortega, Virgilio Mani and Rustico Mijares. Only two of those arrested were NPA fighters (Emma Montoya and Joemari Gusi who was seriously wounded in the chest) but the civilians were nonetheless detained indefinitely. This was followed by the execution of Ka Alvin, 18 or Raymond Magbata Manggao of Barangay Cabulutan, San Agustin, Romblon.

In Oriental Mindoro, a Mangyan community suffered tremendously after a strafing operation conducted by troops of the Alpha Coy of the Recon Bn led by Captain Pipit and Marines led by Captain Montojo and 1Lieutenant Coronel of Task Force Seagull which is under the command of Col. Carlito Gamit. This occurred on January 20 in Sitio Tambangan, Barangay San Juan, Bulalacao. Sustaining much damage to property, the Mangyan were subjected to fascist terror and warned not to take in the NPA.

The regime has bloodied hands. The terrorism sowed by Oplan Makabayan has exacerbated the hardships suffered by the masses in Southern Tagalog. But the regime's flagrant fascist attacks against the people in the region are debts that the fascists shall pay for dearly. Said the Melito Glor Command (MGC): "All NPA units under the MGC shall continue waging tactical offensives to demonstrate to the US-Estrada regime that it cannot terrorize the people of Southern Tagalog. It has become ever-clear to the people of the region that the justice they seek for the US-Estrada regime's human rights violations can only be attained upon the victory of the people's democratic revolution through protracted people's war." AB

*Based on a statement of the Southern Tagalog
Regional Operational Command*

Balikatan 2000

Intensified militarization in Central Luzon

Massive military exercises involving American troops and soldiers of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) dubbed "Balikatan 2000" are being used as an excuse to further militarize Central Luzon.

The region has turned into a virtual garrison with the influx since the last week of January of 2,380 American troops from US military bases in Okinawa, Japan and the Pacific Command in Hawaii who have come to participate in the war games along with 2,383 AFP troops.

The exercises to be held until March will be conducted mainly at the former US military bases in Clark (Pampanga) and Subic (Zambales) and at an AFP camp in Fort Magsaysay, Laur, Nueva Ecija. Naval exercises will also be held in Cavite and Palawan.

Faced with the people's open and intense opposition to Balikatan, AFP officials and soldiers have been scrambling to ensure the safety of the US troops. More than a month before Balikatan was held, the AFP launched operations to "clear" the region for the war games.

A massive military operation was conducted along the Zambales-Pampanga-Bataan border from December 4 to December 23 in flagrant violation of the Christmas ceasefire declared by the Estrada regime. Led by the 7th ID, a company from the Special Action Forces (under a Major Marzan) plus troops of the 24th IB, 68th IB, 69th IB, 71st IB, Division Training Unit, 703rd Bde and the Intelligence Service of the AFP combed through the mountains and foothills of San Marcelino and San Felipe in Zambales; Dinalupihan, Bataan; and Floridablanca, Lubao and Porac in Pampanga. Part of the operation involved putting to the torch hundreds of houses and the mass arrests and mauling of Aetas.

Hunger also plagued Aetas in Sitio Palis, Baytan and Maquisquis inside the Loob Bunga resettlement area in Botolan, Zambales after a food blockade was imposed by Philippine Army troops in the last week of February. Hundreds of Aeta families were also forced to evacuate their homes in Sitio Tarukan, Barangay Sta. Ana, ►

Violent dispersals and dismantling of pickets

As the fascist military and police aggressively attack the people and revolutionary forces in the countryside, the just and legitimate aspirations of the progressive and legal democratic forces in the cities are likewise met with military force.

On February 12, the picket line of protesting employees of the Manila Hotel was forcefully broken on orders of Chief Supt. Edgardo Aglipay, PNP-National Capital Region Director. Many members of the Manila Hotel Employees' Association (MHEA) were hurt in the dispersal conducted by about 150 members of the Western Police District, Central Police District and Special Weapons and Tactics Team. Twelve others, including MHEA president Ferdinand Barles, were arrested and charged.

Despite the violent dispersal, the Manila Hotel employees and their supporters are continuing their protests. The regime, however, persistently meets their demands with an iron fist.

On February 14, they were again violently dispersed. Crispin Beltran and Arnaldo Seminiano of the Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU), Teddy Casiño of the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan and Peter Banatan, an MHEA member, were arrested. Before this, 300 members of the KMU, Anakbayan and League of Filipino Students (LFS) were hosed down with water cannons in front of the Pilipinas Shell in Makati on February 4 while protesting the new round of oil price increases. The demonstrators were bludgeoned with truncheons. Thirty were reported hurt in this incident. Simultaneously, students protesting in front of the US Embassy were violently dispersed. The students were hit with truncheons in response to their condemnation of the ongoing "Balikatan 2000".

On January 27, four protesters were arrested after the police violently dispersed a rally in front of Malacañang by students from the LFS, College Editors Guild of the Philippines, National Union of Students of the Philippines and Anakbayan. They were demanding an increase in the education budget.

At the House of the Representatives on January 10, Congress security dragged away student activists right in the presence of the congressmen. The students were protesting cuts in the budget of the University of the Philippines and other state colleges and universities.

Intensifying open fascism in the cities is a state policy to stifle the people's rage. **AB**

◀ Capas, Tarlac because of their proximity to the Crow Valley bombing and gunnery range, which was used as a training site.

In a related incident, residents of Talisayin, San Antonio, Zambales fled their village after it was hit by a bomb when naval exercises were held nearby in February.

Meanwhile, even ordinary hawkers and consumers

in the vicinity of Clark in Angeles City are being subjected to stringent measures by authorities.

The ferocity of attacks by the AFP is clearly intended to secure the safety of its imperialist masters. We must thoroughly oppose and condemn the AFP's unbridled use of fascist violence against the people and its rabid puppetry to the US. **AB**

*Thorough degeneration of the
old party*

The fascist Baguisa clique

The remnants of the old revisionist party have further degenerated. Under the leadership of Pedro Baguisa, its secretary-general, the old party has now completely veered towards fascism. Like the CAFGU and other anticommunist armed cults, this armed group serves as a paramilitary force under the 1st Scout Ranger Regiment in San Miguel, Bulacan, fights the New People's Army and wreaks havoc on the people.

In October 1999, the presence of an NPA unit was tipped off by identified leaders and members of the old party in Doña Remedios Trinidad, Bulacan. This resulted in the death of two fighters.

Together with troops of the 7th Scout Ranger Coy, armed members of the old party also attacked a Dumagat cooperative in the area of Ipo Dam. They terrorized the indigenous masses and stole sacks of rice. The Dumagat cooperative was targeted because it was being used by the masses to break free from the merchant-usurers who used to control the rattan trade. Some of the biggest merchant-usurers who exploit the indigenous people in the area are leaders of the old party.

On January 21, 10 armed goons wearing bonnets who were identified as leaders and members of the Aniban ng mga Manggagawa sa Agrikultura (AMA) entered a community along the boundary of Norzagaray and Doña Remedios Trinidad, Bulacan and terrorized the peasants and fisherfolk. They tied up a suspected NPA supporter, beat him up and forced him to reveal the whereabouts of the NPA unit. The following day, they ambushed an NPA team. The latter fought back and safely withdrew.

Presently, the fascist clique of the old party continues to sow terror along the boundary of these two towns. They continue to collaborate with AFP and PNP troops in terrorizing the people in different areas of the Sierra Madre in Bulacan.

The old party has been thoroughly exposed and has completely degenerated after being swallowed up by revisionism and openly surrendering to and collaborating with the US-Marcos dictatorship in 1973. However, because of our vacillation in opposing revisionism in the latter part of the 1980s and the resulting Right opportunist alliances we formed with the anticommunist petty bourgeois groups, the old party was given the opportunity to mend its tattered reputation and infiltrate the ranks of the democratic movement.

They celebrated momentarily, in chorus with the reactionary regime and the anticommunist petty bourgeois groups, when the anti-Party demolition campaign started in 1993. However, by reaffirming the antirevisionist stand and basic Marxist-Leninist-Maoist principles, and due to the reinvigoration of the revolutionary struggle, the Party is now able to sharply expose the rottenness and bankruptcy of the old party as well as the revisionism and opportunism of the anticommunist elements and grouplets.

Presently, the remnants of the old party constitute a vanishing kingdom ruled by its opportunist leaders. It survives in some parts of Bulacan, collaborating with the military's counterrevolutionary campaign and ravaging the people. Baguisa's pretensions to being a communist and his "Marxist-Leninist" phrase-mongering are desperate attempts to conceal his fascism and capitulation to imperialism and reaction.

However, even if Baguisa should weave a very complex web of deception, his treachery could no longer be concealed. **AB**

Norberto Manero:

Portrait of a mercenary and cold-blooded murderer

Another notorious henchman of the martial law era who has been judged by history has been rehabilitated by Estrada.

Towards the end of 1999, Joseph Estrada granted a presidential pardon and ordered the release of Norberto Manero, leader of a dreaded paramilitary force that sowed terror in southeastern Mindanao at the height of martial law. Manero and seven others were sentenced to life imprisonment in 1987 for the brutal murder of Italian priest Fr. Tullio Favali. Favali, then parish priest of Kidapawan, North Cotabato was shot to death by Manero and his gang on April 11, 1985 in La Esperanza, Tulunán, North Cotabato. The gang boasted of killing Favali as an example to other church people accused of supporting the revolutionary movement.

Manero, together with his father Norberto Sr. and his seven brothers were members of the dreaded Ilaga that had its heyday in the '70s until the mid-'80s.

The Ilaga began as a group of ordinary peasants who wanted to defend themselves against the terrorism sowed by the Black Shirts/Barracuda formed by reactionary Moro politicians and landlords in the late '60s. Black Shirts/Barracuda leaders exploited and intensified tensions between Moro peasants and Christian settlers and used the organization to terrorize settlers.

Upon the declaration of martial law, the fascist regime systematically used the Ilaga as a terrorist force against the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and New People's Army. Consequently, the Ilaga fused with the Integrated Civilian Home Defense Force or ICHDF.

Manero's bloody record includes the 1977 massacre of about 200 Singgil, Kalagan (both Moro tribes), B'laan and Manobo minorities along the Davao del Sur-South Cotabato border. The massacre occurred after a firefight between the MNLF and a composite force of the 5th and 7th IBs of the Philippine Army and the Ilaga-ICHDF.

The military believed that there was an MNLF camp nearby and that residents of the area were part of the MNLF's mass base. Manero herded the civilians inside a school, supposedly for a peace dialogue. Most of those gathered were children, elderly folk and women, some of whom were pregnant. When the soldiers and Ilaga sprayed them with bullets, the victims tumbled down almost simultaneously like banana trees felled by a strong typhoon. Most of those massacred were beheaded and had their ears lopped off to be used as amulets by the

perpetrators.

It was after this massacre that the military formally gave Manero the monicker Kumander Bucay, a dreaded killer despised by the people, both Moro and non-Moro. Meanwhile, because of his notoriety as a mercenary, Manero was hired by politicians and multinational corporations to intimidate peasants whose lands they wanted to grab. Along with the "Lost Command" led by Col. Carlos Lademora, the Ilaga-ICHDF under Manero was instrumental in evicting and terrorizing peasants whose lands were grabbed by NDC-Guthrie in Agusan del Sur and Surigao del Sur and Prosperidad Agricultural Corp. in Agusan del Sur owned by Danding Cojuangco.

The Ilaga were also involved in numerous cases of arson, rape, terrorism and other human rights violations. Once, in an interview, Manero admitted and boasted of having killed up to 500 people.

The Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines has roundly condemned Manero's release and has demanded that Estrada revoke the presidential pardon. The Moro Islamic Liberation Front has also assailed the grant of pardon. Many believe that Manero remains capable of inflicting harm on the people despite his age.

Estrada, without a doubt, implements a perverted kind of justice. We must banish from our memories, he says, the grim experience of martial law. Thus he had tried to distort the truth, honor Marcos as a hero and exonerate the family and minions of the despised dictator. He has placed in high positions those who served under martial law, and extended favors to those who profited from dictatorship. The grant of pardon to the henchman Manero comes as no surprise.

Definitely, justice can never be expected from a government of this kind. **AB**

Conrado Balweg punished

On December 31, 1999, Conrado Balweg was punished in Barangay Buanao, Malibcong, Abra by a unit of the New People's Army (NPA) Chadli Molintas Command in the Cordillera.

Conrado Balweg was guilty of a long list of crimes against the people and the revolutionary movement as the top leader of the Cordillera People's Liberation Army (CPLA), a notorious counterrevolutionary paramilitary force in the region.

Conrado Balweg was an active instrument in the service of the US-Estrada regime's fascist schemes when punished by the NPA. In fact, he had gone to Malibcong to implement a vicious plan to dispossess the townsfolk of their ancestral lands and facilitate the entry of the foreign Newcrest Mining Corporation.

In a statement, the Chadli Molintas Command bared that as early as September 1999, the CPLA already had plans to demolish whatever political structures and economic programs the revolutionary movement had set up in northern Abra. For this, Balweg received P5 million from the Countryside Development Fund of Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, a former general. Forty-four percent (44%) or P2.2 million of this amount was malversed and channeled to unfinished "socio-economic projects" while the balance of P2.8 million was allotted for "counter-insurgency". Malibcong was targeted as the pilot area for Biazon's "Zone of Peace and Development" project.

Accordingly, Balweg had planned to go to every village to call mass meetings against the NPA. He wanted to abolish all national-democratic organizations set up by the people of Malibcong to defend their land, lives and resources and advance the interests of impoverished classes and sectors. Balweg promised to give P8,000 to every leader and member who would repudiate his or her organization. Anyone who objected was branded a communist and harassed.

Balweg planned to put up in their stead the Bodong Development Cooperative, Inc. which would enter into a joint venture with Newcrest Mining Corporation.

This was merely the latest of Balweg's crimes. As early as 1986-87, appropriate organs of the Communist Party of the Philippines had already deliberated on his cases. Because of the number and gravity of his crimes that included the incurrence of many blood debts, the Party had decided that it was just to impose the death penalty. Over the years, the matter was weighed several more times and the decision affirmed repeatedly as Balweg committed more transgressions (*refer to table*).

On December 31, the Cordillera peoples' cries for justice against Balweg's many crimes was heeded. **AB**

**CONRADO BALWEG
WAS GUILTY OF A
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Partial list of Conrado Balweg's crimes

Murder of Fr. Bruno Ortega, SVD in December 1987 as he was sleeping at the CPLA headquarters at Cordillera House, Baguio City. Days before he died, Ortega had planned to return to the revolutionary movement after realizing the grave error of joining Balweg's group.

Abduction and murder on October 6, 1997 of Daniel Ngaya-an, head of the Cordillera Bodong Association and member of the Executive Committee of the Cordillera People's Alliance (CPA). Balweg openly boasted that they had killed Ngaya-an.

Abduction, torture and murder of Romy Gardo, a CPA organizer, on December 28, 1987.

Murder by firing squad of Jonathan Bisnan and Tito Babasa, both farmers from Tubo, Abra, in 1987.

Murder of Benito Dang-aw of Tugtuba, Tubo, Abra in 1987.

Murder of two elders of Salegseg, Balbalan, Kalinga and two children from Balbalan in 1987.

Torture and murder of Pagpag Afarag in 1988.

Massacre of 16 civilians and destruction of masses' property in Paco Valley, Apayao in March 1987.

Liquidation of two NPA Red fighters who were *hors d'combat* and recuperating from their wounds in Butot, Abra in February 1988. CPLA troops also raped two female medics who were attending to the patients.

Murder of Ayangwa Claver, son of Congressman William Claver, in Pinukpuk, Kalinga on January 21, 1990. With the CPLA forces who killed him were troops of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and goons of then Pinukpuk mayor Dominador Belac.

Destruction of people's livelihood projects in 1987 such as a cooperative in Upper Tinglayan, Kalinga and a water-powered rice pounder in Ngibat, Tinglayan, Kalinga.

Harassment of residents of Ampucao, Itogon, Benguet who opposed illegal logging in their ancestral lands by the CPLA.

Illegal entry and searching of houses and confiscation of property of families in Abra suspected of sympathizing with the NPA.

Use of arms to intimidate certain tribes into changing their village boundaries to favor CPLA officials and elements, as what occurred with the boundaries of the Saclit and Butbut tribes.

Landgrabbing in Tabuk, Kalinga and Baguio City.

Harassment of delegates to Cordillera Day in Tubo, Abra in 1998.

Hurling death threats against leaders of progressive organizations.

Cagayan Valley

Overcoming conservatism and advancing anew

*In its March-April 1999 issue, **Ang Bayan** published an article on how the Central Visayas region successfully struggled against conservatism in the armed struggle. The following article based on material submitted by Cagayan Valley (Cagayan, Isabela, Nueva Vizcaya and Quirino) also shares valuable lessons on the region's experience in struggling against and overcoming this problem.*

Despite promptly embracing and upholding the rectification movement since 1992, the revolutionary movement in Cagayan Valley failed to advance in the different aspects of its work.

There was an earnest desire to rectify the military adventurism and urban insurrectionism of the past but conservatism prevailed in the armed struggle and the legal democratic movement due to insufficient grasp of the dialectical relationship among the various aspects of revolutionary work.

Prevalence of conservatism

After military adventurism and urban insurrectionism had been successfully rectified, conservatism prevailed since 1997 as the foremost obstacle blocking the advance of revolutionary work in the region.

The revolutionary forces failed to take advantage of objective conditions that were becoming more favorable. Instead, there was a contraction in the number of villages and towns within areas of operation. The number of Red fighters, New People's Army (NPA) formations, cadres, members, local Party branches and the mass base also dwindled. For years, there were no tactical offensives.

There was failure to grasp the line of extensive and intensive guerrilla warfare based on an ever-expanding and -deepening mass base, and the fact that it was correct and necessary to launch tactical

offensives that could be won. This is done along with aggressively arousing and mobilizing ever-broader sections of the people for the revolution.

In rectifying the verticalized formations that engaged full-time in military work, all NPA units were deployed in equal-size units for mass work, without assigning a unit that would serve as the center of gravity.

There were very few recruits. Among the factors responsible were the contraction of areas of operation, the lackluster conduct of agrarian revolution, unenthusiastic organizing work among the youth and, in some units, the adoption of higher standards for recruitment.

On the whole, the minimum program of agrarian revolution was sluggishly implemented as the key link in revolutionary work in the countryside. This, despite the persistence and intensification of the feudal and semifeudal exploitation of the peasant masses and the wealth of experience in agrarian revolution in vast areas of the region's countryside.

Only land problems among the masses were attended to, with not enough stress given to forging the unity of the peasant masses against the landlords.

There was a prevalent idea that before agrarian revolution could be launched, it was necessary to set up the revolutionary mass organizations and popularize mass courses extensively. There was failure to grasp that revolutionary tasks, organizing, mass education and mobilization had a dialectical relationship at every stage of development of the mass movement.

In setting overextended areas of responsibility for NPA units, the latter were unable to reach many areas or neglected them. On many occasions, the level of revolutionary work in villages was lowered to that of an organizing group (OG) despite the presence of factors appropriate for a higher level. There were also cases where additional requisites for organizing an OG were adopted, where organizing committees were abolished or where organizers refused to set them up -- all of which slowed down the pace of expanding and consolidating the mass organizations.

In urban areas, only underground organizations were set up, with the building of legal formations abandoned, in an effort to rectify past errors in organizing.

Opportunities to launch mass actions were missed because of the erroneous idea that such actions could only be conducted after revolutionary mass organizations had been set up over a wide area. There was failure to grasp the

dialectical relationship between mobilizing and organizing.

Renewed advance in revolutionary struggle

It was in the last quarter of 1998 when the Party regional leadership identified conservatism as the foremost obstacle to revolutionary advance. A call was issued to struggle against it and advance in a big way. The call was enthusiastically heeded by the revolutionary forces. By the third quarter of 1999, initial advances had made their mark on guerrilla fronts and on the movement in cities and town centers.

An increasing number of NPA units are now able to cover their entire area of responsibility.

In areas where agrarian revolution was advanced as the key link in reaching out to, arousing, recovering and organizing the people, the mass base has rapidly been expanded and recovered. Underground organizations of peasants, women and youth are rapidly being set up in entire barrios and large districts.

Mass struggles to lower land rent, raise farm workers' wages and resist landgrabbing by bureaucrat capitalists are stirring.

In the first half of 1999 alone, the number of organized masses doubled from its size at the end of 1998. The number of activists also doubled. The number of organizing committees has almost doubled and conditions have become ripe for

setting them up in more areas. Underground cells among the middle forces in the countryside have also been organized.

The Party has again been taking root at the basic levels. The growing number of local Party branches being organized or reactivated is adding to those that have already been set up.

NPA recruitment is picking up, especially in areas where antifeudal struggles are already being waged. It is the youth who have been organized in underground or open movements who are most enthusiastic to become Red fighters.

It was the successful raid on a PNP detachment in Barangay Pilitan, Tumauni, Isabela in June 1999 that broke the prolonged cessation of tactical offensives in the region. After this, successive tactical offensives have been launched to meet concrete needs in the tasks of recovery and reconstruction.

In accordance with current needs, military actions primarily target spies or so-called civilian informers who have incurred blood debts to the people and the revolution and former NPA members who have stolen firearms and collaborated with the enemy.

CONSERVATISM WAS IDENTIFIED AS THE FOREMOST OBSTACLE TO REVOLUTIONARY ADVANCE. A CALL WAS ISSUED TO STRUGGLE AGAINST IT AND ADVANCE IN A BIG WAY. BY THE THIRD QUARTER OF 1999, INITIAL ADVANCES HAD MADE THEIR MARK IN GUERRILLA FRONTS AND IN THE MOVEMENT IN CITIES AND TOWN CENTERS.

Five punitive actions were undertaken from July to October. Those punished were first tried in the people's court. Three spies were also punished.

In an encounter in Jones, Isabela on September 7, nine troopers from the 45th IB were killed. An NPA fighter was slain in the firefight where an NPA squad battled with a platoon of AFP troopers. It was a demonstration of the Red guerrillas' fighting spirit.

Advance of the legal democratic movement

The legal democratic movement is once more on the advance in Cagayan Valley. Successive mass actions launched from June to October were preludes to bigger advances in mass struggles.

Thousands of peasants, youth and students, professionals and church people joined mass actions against the monopoly of land by landlords, the plunder of the country's resources by imperialists and bureaucrat capitalists and their destruction of the people's livelihood, the relentless and intensifying fascist violence in the countryside, the Estrada regime's attempt to revise the constitution of the Republic of the Philippines and the commercialized and repressive educational system.

From June to July 1999, hundreds of peasants in various parts of the region joined successive mass actions to oppose the reactionary government's foreclosure of lands covered by Operation Land Transfer. Seven barangays immediately benefited. The speciousness of the reactionary government's land reform program was exposed before broad sections of the people.

A large number of middle forces were mobilized to join the mass movement. The open progressive movement extended its influence to other areas.

In August 1999, more than 200 students rallied in front of the Commission on Higher Education in Tuguegarao, Cagayan to assert students' democratic rights and oppose higher tuition fees. It was the first organized student mobilization since 1995.

On August 21 and September 21, 1999, hundreds of peasants, youth and middle forces participated in various forms of protest against the Estrada regime's attempts to rewrite the constitution of the Government of the Republic of the Philippines.

In the third week of October 1999, thousands of peasants, middle forces, youth and church people launched various forms of mass actions to condemn the construction of a carbon plant and mine that would encompass several towns in Isabela.

These are but initial advances in Cagayan Valley. Bigger advances are sure to come with the dawning of the 21st century. **AB**

Russian aggression in Chechnya

Expanding the Russian empire

With the ultra-nationalist objective of expanding the Russian empire, thousands of troops of the reactionary government of Boris Yeltsin and Vladimir Putin attacked Chechnya once again in October 1999 to annihilate the armed Chechen forces, capture the independent Chechen republic and subjugate it to Russia.

Thousands of Chechens have died in the relentless bombings from October to December 1999 and up to 118,000 people have been forced to evacuate their homes. Most of the victims are Chechen civilians because of Russia's attacks on population centers and its targeting of civilians. Earlier, an equally fierce assault on Chechnya in 1994 left 40,000 to 70,000 dead and led to the forced displacement of up to 300,000 people. Again, the vast majority of the victims were Chechen civilians who died in the indiscriminate, massive Russian bombing raids.

Chechnya is a small country lying southwest of Russia that used to be within the Soviet Union as part of the Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic. It is found in the region of Caucasia in southeastern Europe. Chechnya also lies along the northern slopes of the Caucasus, a mountain range that separates Asia and Europe. Aside from Russia in the north, Chechnya is bounded by the Stavropol Territory on the northwest, the Republic of Daghestan on the northeast and east, Georgia on the south and the Republic of Ingushetia on the west.

Most of the inhabitants of Chechnya belong to the Nokhchii ethnic group who are native to Caucasia. They have their own language and culture and the majority are Muslims like many of the people living in its neighboring republics and in the nearby region of Central Asia. When the revisionist Gorbachov regime collapsed in 1991, Chechnya separated from Ingushetia and joined the other former republics of the Soviet Union that declared independence. Meanwhile, the Yeltsin regime (that took over from the Gorbachov regime) formed the Russian Federation composed of Russia and 20 republics of the defunct Soviet Union. The Yeltsin regime refused to recognize the independence of Chechnya and considered it part of the Russian Federation. In 1994, hundreds of thousands of Russian troops invaded Chechnya.

Chechnya has long had strategic significance for Russia. With Russia just to the north of it, the country has served as

a gateway for whoever wished to penetrate Russia from the south. Since the 16th century, Persia, the Ottoman Empire and Tsarist Russia have fought for control of Chechnya's territory. This gave rise to armed movements against foreign invaders in the 18th and 19th centuries that were both crushed by Russia. Russia formally annexed Chechnya in 1859.

Chechnya attained further significance at the turn of the 20th century with the discovery of rich oil deposits in its territory. To date, oil production and refining remain the backbone of Chechnya's economy. Russia and the Western imperialists are now struggling for supremacy over Caucasasia for its oil wealth and strategic location.

The Chechen people's intense desire to liberate themselves from Russian domination, oppression and exploitation is now being stoked by imperialists who want to gain control of Chechnya's oil deposits and the oil pipelines that pass through the Caucasian region. Thus, the imperialists have been using reactionary politicians in both countries as well as Chechen warlords to feed the fires of chauvinism and Islamic fundamentalism in the region. Chechen warlords banner the slogan of banishing Russia from Caucasasia and forming a unified Islamic state that would join together Chechnya, Daghestan, Ingushetia and other countries in the region.

To achieve this objective, warlords Shamil Basayev and Khatab led 2,000 troops in August that attacked and bombed different cities in the Russian Federation, including its capital, Moscow. Russia retaliated through massive bombings of Chechen villages and Grozny (Chechnya's capital) itself, thus causing the death of many civilians. By October, up to 140,000 Russian troops attacked northern Chechnya and occupied a third of Chechen territory.

The case of Chechnya is not much different from that of Kosovo. In both

instances, imperialists have been fomenting ultra-nationalism and chauvinism, fanning the flames of ethnic and religious tensions to incite wars and justify imperialist intervention and the stationing of troops from the US and its allies in the region.

Basayev and Khatab's troops are also funded, armed and trained by the imperialists. The former receive huge amounts of aid that the imperialists funnel through reactionary pro-US Arab oil-exporting regimes. One report indicates that Jordan donated \$20 million to Chechen warlords for their invasion of Daghestan.

Without such aid, Chechnya which, for all its people's strong fighting spirit, would have easily fallen as it is much smaller and weaker than Russia. Despite Russia's occupation of Grozny, Chechen guerrillas are carrying on the war to free their country.

The imperialists will also persist in exploiting the situation in Chechnya. It is to their strategic interest if the Chechens' struggle to maintain their independence continues and succeeds. It would be even more favorable to them should a unified anti-Russian Islamic republic be established in the region as an added buffer against Russia.

Meanwhile, forming an adjunct to this imperialist-sponsored conflict are widespread and flagrant violations of human rights and international laws of war that have victimized hundreds of thousands of civilians and reaped the strongest condemnation the world over.

This proves that monopoly capital does not hesitate to sacrifice the lives, welfare and property of the world's peoples on the altar of superprofit.

We must expose and strongly oppose Russian aggression against Chechnya. We must also condemn the imperialists for inciting ethnic and religious conflicts to divide the peoples of the world and divert them from the anti-imperialist and socialist struggle so that they could easily be conquered and ruled. **AB**

NEWSNEWSNEWS

AFP DETACHMENT IN BUKIDNON RAIDED, BURNED

Nineteen (19) high-powered firearms were seized and two elements of the Citizens' Armed Forces Geographical Unit were killed in a raid by the New People's Army on a detachment in Bukidnon. The raid was conducted on a detachment of the 5th Special Forces Battalion in Barangay Kagalangan, San Fernando on February 12. Confiscated were an M60, nine M14s, six Garands and three M16s. Also seized were a .38 and a .357. Before conducting the raid, the guerrillas cut off the detachment's electricity and communication lines to prevent the enemy from calling in reinforcements. They burned the detachment before retreating.

TELEPHONE COMPANY PUNISHED IN NORTH COTABATO

New People's Army (NPA) guerrillas torched a telephone company relay station in Makilala, North Cotabato on February 4. Punitive action was taken against Smart Communications Inc., a maker of cellular phones, for its refusal to abide by the taxation laws and regulations of the revolutionary movement and the people's democratic republic.

3 SOLDIERS KILLED IN TARLAC

Three soldiers died in an encounter between Red fighters and soldiers of the 69th IB in Tarlac. The firefight occurred in Barangay Cut-cut, Tarlac City on January 6. The site of the gunbattle is a village within the 6,000-hectare Hacienda Luisita owned by the family of former President Corazon Cojuangco Aquino.