



ANG

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Editorial

Prisoners of war are treated humanely by the NPA

The New People's Army (NPA) has displayed a high level of discipline as a revolutionary army in its ability to treat its prisoners of war (POWs) humanely and in effecting their safe and orderly release on August 18.

For close to six months, the Romulo Jallores Command (RJC) took custody of, and accorded due respect to, Lt. Ronaldo Fidelino and Pfc. Ronnel Nemeño in compliance with the NPA's rules, the laws of the people's revolutionary government,

relevant provisions of the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL), and international rules of war, including the Geneva Conventions.

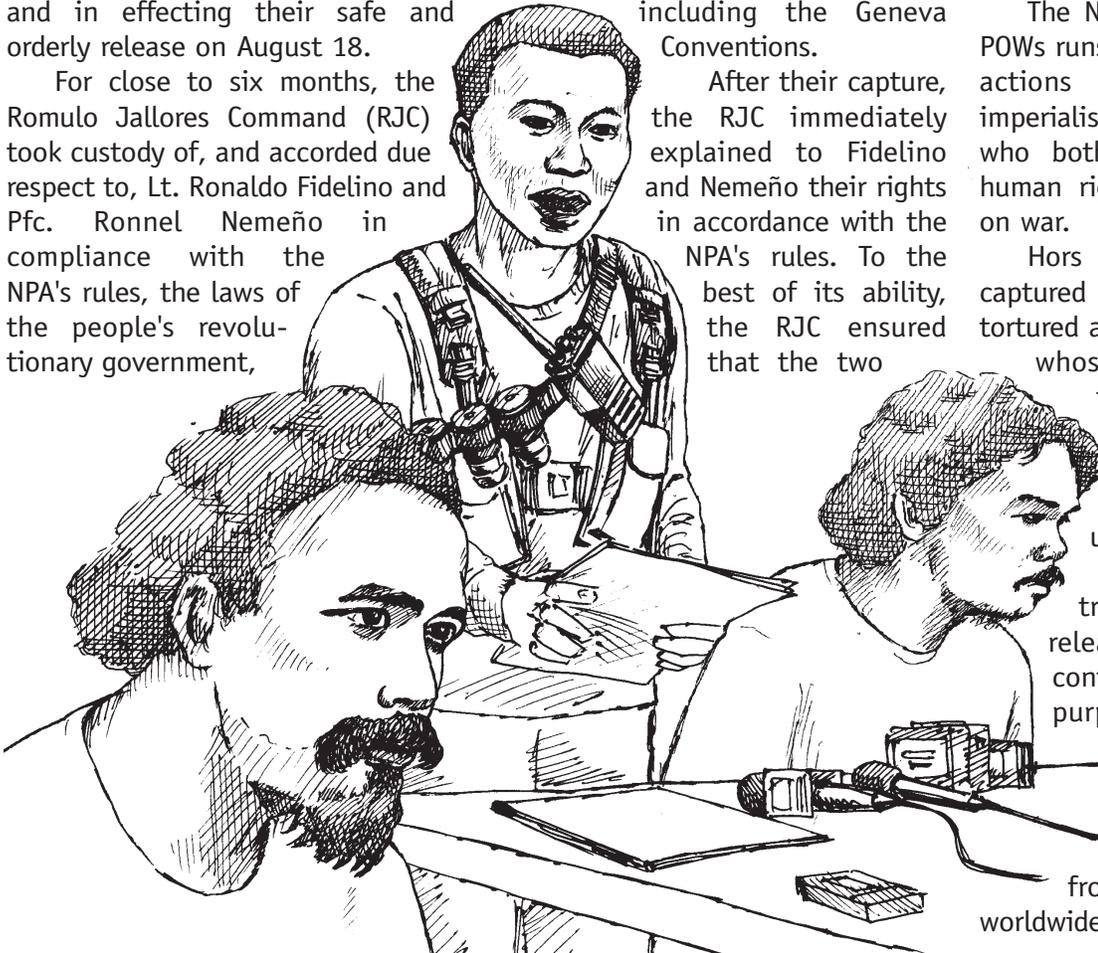
After their capture, the RJC immediately explained to Fidelino and Nemeño their rights in accordance with the NPA's rules. To the best of its ability, the RJC ensured that the two

captives were in good health, ate good food and were in good condition at all times. The RJC also took efforts to secure their immediate release.

The NPA's humane treatment of POWs runs counter to the policy and actions of the terrorist US imperialism and the Arroyo regime, who both indiscriminately violate human rights and the conventions on war.

Hors de combat Red fighters captured by the AFP are usually tortured and eventually killed. Those whose lives are spared are treated brutally, slapped with criminal charges and detained for years in cramped prison cells under inhuman conditions.

The NPA's proper treatment and orderly release of POWs are acts contrary to terrorism. Their purpose is to make the conduct of the current civil war civilized and humane and implement rules and policies drawn from the history of wars worldwide.



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As people's war advances, the NPA is bound to capture other AFP and PNP personnel. Like Fidelino and Nemeño, these other captives of the NPA will enjoy rights as POWs.

The NPA ensures all soldiers and policemen that their rights will be respected in the event that they are captured in combat. It is thus better for them to voluntarily surrender when they are cornered in battle than to risk their lives for a war that serves only the interests of the decadent and oppressive ruling system.

The NPA likewise assures the orderly release of all POWs as long as they have not committed any grave crimes against the people.

The NPA ensures all soldiers and policemen that their rights will be respected in the event that they are captured in combat. It is thus better for them to voluntarily surrender.

The NPA's release of prisoners of war forms part of its obligations under CARHRIHL, the agreement signed by both the NDF and the Government of the Republic of the Philippines.

The revolutionary forces and the Filipino people hope that the release of POWs will be reciprocated by the GRP by releasing political prisoners and implementing its other obligations in the peace talks. AB

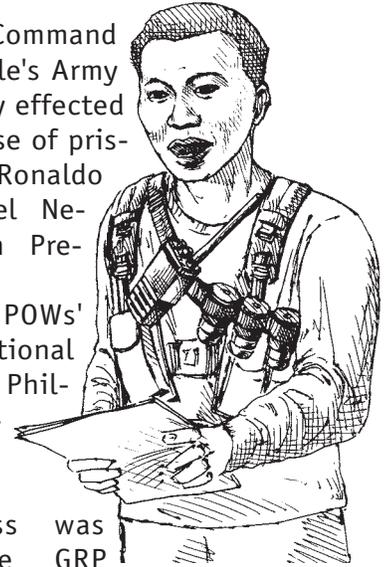
NPA successfully effects POWs' safe and orderly release

The Romulo Jallores Command (RJC) of the New People's Army (NPA) in Bicol successfully effected the safe and orderly release of prisoners of war (POWs) Lt. Ronaldo Fidelino and Pfc. Ronnel Nemeño on August 18 in Presentacion, Camarines Sur

The order for the POWs' release was signed by National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) negotiating panel chair, Comrade Luis Jalandoni.

The release process was agreed upon by the GRP (Government of the Republic of the Philippines) and the NDFP negotiating panels. Through negotiations, the GRP likewise agreed to order the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Philippine National Police (PNP) to enforce a suspension of offensive military and police operations (SOMO/SOPO) in the provinces of Albay and Camarines Sur.

The SOMO/SOPO is a requisite for the safe and orderly release of POWs. The GRP formally announced the order for the SOMO/SOPO on August 16 through Rolando Andaya Jr. who served as the regime's official negotiator.



Fidelino and Nemeño would have been released much sooner had it not been for the AFP and PNP's intransigence. In fact, three days after their capture, the NPA had already expressed its readiness to have them released.

It was as early as April 2 when the NDF first received a formal letter from the GRP negotiating panel requesting the release of the two captives. The matter was tabled at the second round of the peace negotiations in April 2004 in Oslo, Norway. The GRP agreed at that time to implement a SOMO/SOPO in Camarines Norte,

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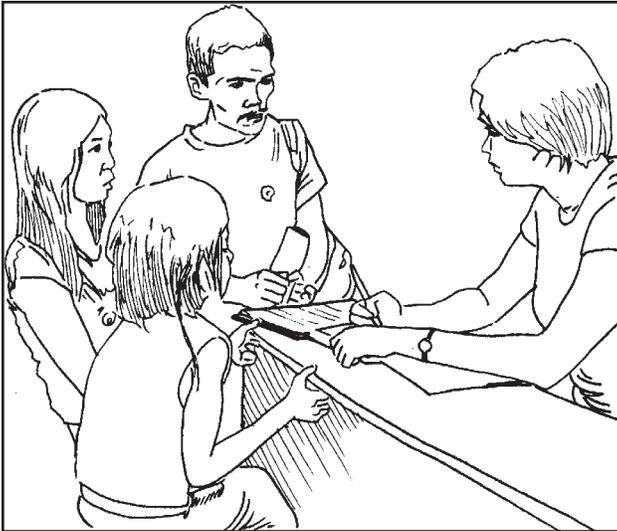
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Over 100 cases filed with the JMC



Over 100 cases of human rights violations have already been filed with the Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC) this July against the armed forces of the GRP. Almost 90% of the cases involve military and police forces. On the other hand, the JMC has yet to receive a single case filed against the NPA.

In a forum organized by Pilgrims for Peace and KARAPATAN, Atty. Edre Olalia, legal consultant of the NDFP Nominated Section of the JMC Joint Secretariat reported that the over 100 complaints involve 3,333 human rights violations with victims numbering over 100,000. The cases include illegal arrests, summary killings, massacres and abductions perpetrated by military and police elements.

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Camarines Sur, Albay and Sorsogon, but requested that the order be withheld from the public.

The GRP never implemented its own SOMO/SOPO then. Neither did it offer any explanation for its inaction. By June, the GRP once again brought up the matter of releasing the POWs in the negotiations. Again, it requested that the declaration be withheld from the media.

The GRP formally provided the NDFP with a copy of an internal memorandum signed by Lt. Gen Edgardo Batenga, Undersecretary for Armed Forces Operations of the Department of National Defense (DND). According to the memorandum dated July 28, Arroyo approved a 20-day SOMO/SOPO to commence July 27, covering the provinces of Albay and Camarines Sur. Batenga was emphatic that the AFP would not admit to agreeing to the SOMO and the release of the captives.

But the AFP's military operations continued, con-

trary to the ordered SOMO/SOPO. Military spokespersons stubbornly denied that they had ever declared a suspension of offensive operations. The RJC received reports that since July 27, AFP operations have been ongoing in Oas, Albay, in Lupi, Camarines Sur and in other areas.

The AFP and PNP insisted on "saving" the POWs through their detrimental "rescue operations." Residents of Camarines Sur suffered tremendously at the hands of the 42nd IB, which perpetrated a great number of heinous killings, illegal arrests, detention and torture, theft, rape and

molestation of women. The AFP must pay for the grave harm it has wrought on the people of Tinambac, Camarines Sur and neighboring towns.

Due to the AFP and PNP's failure to implement the SOMO/SOPO order, the NPA-RJC was forced to cancel the scheduled release on August 7.

During renewed negotiations in the second week of August, the NDFP insisted this time that it was necessary to publicize the SOMO/SOPO declaration to ensure its implementation. The GRP and the AFP-PNP agreed, but only after the order's existence had been exposed in the media and due to intense pressure from various sectors for the safe and orderly release of the two captives.

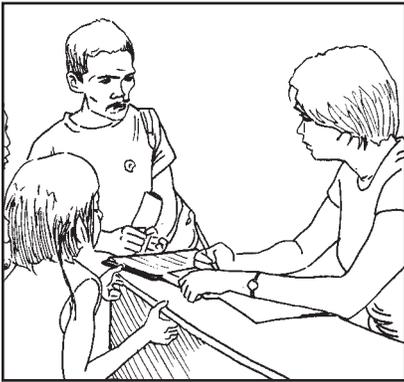
As a reciprocal measure, the NDFP has ordered the NPA in Bicol to halt and refrain from any military offensives against the AFP and PNP in the same provinces. The order is expected to stay in effect until August 25, seven days after the POWs' release. **AB**



More cases

Two separate cases of brutality and desecration of the remains of NPA fighters committed last month are set to be filed with the JMC by human rights groups.

Cavite: Three Red fighters were found dead on June 16, their bodies riddled with bullets after a firefight between an NPA unit and a combined force of military and police elements in



The NDFP continues to encourage the documentation and filing of cases of human rights violations perpetrated by the AFP, PNP and the regime's other armed forces.

Barangay Mabacao, Maragondon, Cavite. According to the Cavite Ecumenical Movement for Justice and Peace (CEMJP), the bodies of Ka Gary, Ka Ivan and Ka Nira were almost unrecognizable when they were found in a funeral parlor in Nasugbu, Batangas. The bodies of the victims were bullet-ridden and Ka Gary's right foot severed.

Zamboanga del Sur: A Red

fighter was wounded and left to die by the military in a firefight between Red fighters and the 10th IB in Barangay Mayamaya, Tambulig, Zamboanga del Sur on June 15. An investigation by KARAPATAN-Western Mindanao revealed that Rey Gulane (Ka Titing), 32, was tortured before he was left to die. Soldiers also severed his right ear. Members of KARAPATAN and Gulane's relatives exhumed his remains on June 16 and brought them to the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) office in Pagadian City for a medico-legal examination.

Cases from the Cordillera

The Cordillera Human Rights Organizations (CHRO) has submitted in the first week of August the first batch of cases of military abuse in the Cordillera. The cases include

- * the shooting death on July 24, of Bernabe Banguay in Abra, by elements of the 41st IB. Banguay and a companion were accused by the military of being NPA members. He was hit in the calf. Instead of administering first aid on Banguay, the military left him to die from loss of blood.

- * the killing of Etfew Chadya-as in Mountain Province and Victor Balais in Pinukpuk, Kalinga in 2002, by troops of the Philippine Army Northern Luzon Command; and of Efen Agsayang in Mankayan, Benguet in 2003.

The NDFP continues to encourage the documentation and filing of cases of human rights violations perpetrated by the AFP, PNP and the regime's other armed forces. **AB**

Family illegally detained

Tanggol-Karapatan exposed on July 26 the AFP fascist troops' indiscriminate violation of the human rights of civilians, especially those of children, in the name of the "anti-terrorist war."



It referred in particular to the illegal arrest and detention of a family of charcoal makers in the mountainous barrio of Mabacao, Maragondon, Cavite.

It was on July 13 when combined elements of the Philippine Air Force (PAF) and PNP rained bullets on a hut next to the house of Isidro Bartolome, a charcoal maker. In this hut were 12 members of the New People's Army (NPA).

The fighting between the NPA and the military lasted for an hour. When the NPA retreated, the PAF troops illegally arrested and detained the Bartolome couple, Isidro and Gemma, and their children, Rico, Gemmalyn and Jinggo. Gemmalyn is four years old, and Jinggo, two years old.

Isidro and his son Rico were charged with rebellion. Although Rico was wounded, he was not brought immediately to a hospital. Instead, he was brought to Villamor Air Base where he was detained together with his father. Rico was not provided any medical attention except for the initial pain killers and antibiotics given to him. Neither has he been scheduled for an operation to extract the bullets from his body.

Gemma was likewise charged with a trumped-up case of rebellion and detained for almost a month with her two small children at the Philippine Air Force Base in Nasugbu, Batangas. **AB**

Peace talks postponed

THE National Democratic Front has announced the postponement of the fourth round of peace negotiations which was set to take place from August 24 to 30 in Oslo, Norway.

The deferment was due to the Arroyo regime's failure to carry out its obligations from the first and second round of talks on February 14 and April 3.

These obligations included taking decisive steps to have Comrade Jose Maria Sison, the New People's Army (NPA) and the Communist Party of the Phil-

ippines (CPP) dropped from the US "terrorist" listing; releasing political prisoners; and immediately indemnifying victims of human rights violations under the Marcos dictatorship.

The US announced on August 15 that it was retaining Comrade Sison, the NPA and the CPP in its terrorist list.

With two of its allied organizations and its senior political consultant continuously regarded as "terrorists," the NDFP will always be in a precarious position. The reactionary military

will likewise continue to invoke this listing to launch violent military campaigns against the people and the revolutionary movement.

The NDFP is prepared to postpone the peace negotiations to give the Arroyo regime the opportunity to carry out its obligations.

Should the regime continue to refuse to do so, Comrade Sison has suggested that the NDFP be open to the possible suspension or collapse of the peace talks. AB

The AFP's systematic lies

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) systematically spins yarns to deceive the people on the true course of its armed encounters with the New People's Army (NPA).

Since last year, the AFP has been distorting facts and coming up with accounts that are the exact opposite of what actually transpired in order to conceal its losing course and show that it has the upper hand against the NPA, if only in its propaganda.

Manufacturers of media releases within the AFP may be regarded as disciples of the fascist Adolf Hitler's chief propagandist Joseph Goebbels. According to Goebbels, lies become truths if they are told repeatedly.

Today, one does not have to look far to see the new Goebbelses. He is embodied by the professional propagandists and psy-war experts of the AFP, who hope that with enough repetition, the public will be conditioned to accept the AFP's lies—hook, line and sinker.

Yarn spinning is usually done at the highest levels of the military leadership, such as the

brigade, division and regional commands, if not at the level of the AFP national command.

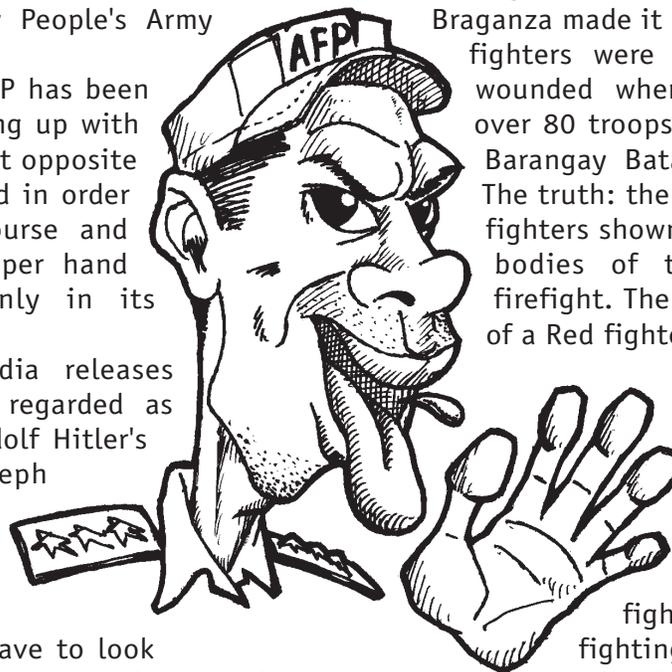
On July 4, 2003, 7th ID chief Maj. Gen. Alfredo Braganza made it appear that at least three NPA fighters were killed and many more were wounded when an NPA unit encountered over 80 troops of the 79th IB and police in Barangay Batang II, Sasmuan, Pampanga. The truth: the supposed picture of dead Red fighters shown to the media was that of the bodies of two soldiers killed in the firefight. The third body, alleged to be that of a Red fighter who was shot while fleeing,

was that of Mauricio Miranda, a 40-year-old fisherman from Sapang Kawayan, Masantol, Pampanga who was on his way home when chanced upon by soldiers in the nearby river. The Red

fighters who emerged from the fighting unscathed had already been resting in a safe area when they heard

Miranda and his two companions being shot at. The soldiers stole Miranda's fish catch and hid his wrecked dugout canoe from the media.

The 5th ID came up with an even bigger distortion in its account of the fighting that took



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place in Sitio Curawitan, Barangay Binatog, San Mariano, Isabela on October 25, 2003. According to the 5th ID, six Red fighters were killed in the firefight. The truth: 22 soldiers were killed and two were seriously wounded in two hours of fighting. The NPA had practically wiped out the 33-man contingent from the 53rd Recon Coy and 45th IB.

The NPA once again inflicted several casualties on the same enemy units on March 19, 2004 when nine soldiers from a 15-man AFP patrol were killed in Barangay Dicomay Uno, Jones, Isabela.

On the 14th of March, 1st ID deputy chief, Col. Roland Rodriguez boasted that the 10th IB sustained zero casualties when it fought the NPA for over two hours in Lower Bautista, Sapang Dalaga, Misamis Occidental. The truth: at least four soldiers were killed and three were wounded in the firefight that lasted about 45 minutes.

In Eastern Visayas, 8th ID chief Maj. Gen. Glen Rabonza bragged that seven guerrillas were killed when the 20th IB assaulted an NPA camp in Barangay Palanit, San Isidro, Northern Samar on May 5. The truth: six to eight soldiers were killed and five were wounded while the NPA sustained not a single casualty.

In Southern Tagalog, Southern Luzon Unified Command public information officer Maj. Jose Broso reported only one soldier killed and three wounded in an encounter between the 74th IB and an NPA unit in Barangay Nanadiego, Mulanay, Quezon on June 16, with the NPA allegedly sustaining an undetermined number of casualties. The truth:

15 enemy troops were killed and an undetermined number were wounded in this firefight. One NPA Red fighter was killed.

In other instances, the AFP tries to hide the fact that firefights have taken place at all, out of extreme embarrassment. News about the encounters eventually leak out, however.

In Western Visayas, 303rd Brigade chief Brig. Gen. Jeffrey Sodusta at first kept mum on the fighting on June 12 in Guihulngan, Negros Oriental. Later, however, he boastfully claimed that only one sergeant was killed while an undetermined number of Red fighters were

The AFP is making a huge mistake by worshipping Goebbels, whose views obviously heap scorn on the people's ability to think and analyze.

killed and wounded in the 11th IB's assault on an NPA camp. The truth: eight were killed and seven wounded on the enemy side, and one Red fighter was martyred.

In North Central Mindanao, the 401st Brigade refused at first to issue a statement when troops of the 41st and 42nd Scout Ranger Coy fought it out with an NPA unit in Sitio Balacatan, Guinabsan, Buenavista, Agusan del Norte on August 5. It turned out that the AFP lost even though it initiated the firefight that took place near the Training Area of the 4th ID in Mayapay, Buenavista. Later, the 401st Bde announced that five soldiers had been killed, with many guerrillas dead and wounded in the military's continuing pursuit of the NPA. The truth: eight troops

were killed and nine high-powered firearms were seized by the NPA from the enemy. A Red fighter was killed in the fighting.

One of the AFP's most recent outright prevarications was its claim of having crushed the revolutionary movement in Camarines Sur. In its desperate bid to recover from a successful NPA ambush on the 42nd IB on March 1 in Barangay Bataan, Tinambac, Camarines Sur, where three troopers were killed and two soldiers were taken as prisoners of war, at least 15 unarmed civilians have since been summarily executed by the military in the towns of Tinambac, Goa and Lagonoy in the same province. Meanwhile, after refusing for several months to negotiate with the NDFP for the POWs' safe and orderly release, AFP spokesperson Lt. Col. Daniel Lucero and Defense Secretary Eduardo Ermita categorically denied the existence of the agreements reached by the two parties in July, particularly regarding the suspension of offensive military operations in Albay and Camarines Sur. The POWs' release was thus postponed several times.

The AFP is making a huge mistake by worshipping Goebbels, whose views obviously heap scorn on the people's ability to think and analyze. The AFP possesses the same outlook on the Filipino people—that they are ignorant, uncritical, and could easily be made fools of. But no matter how many times the AFP spins its yarns, it can never win over or deceive a people who are aware of the truth. On the contrary, it is a people whose consciousness has been raised who firmly take a stand and resolutely wage resistance. AB

Revolutionary journalism, according to Manong Tony Zumel

Antonio Zumel, one of the most outstanding revolutionary journalists, is better known as "Manong" to tens of thousands of activists and revolutionaries. On August 10, his 72nd birth anniversary, his comrades, family and various friends of the revolutionary movement inaugurated the Antonio Zumel Foundation and a collection of his most important writings since the 1960s.

Highlighting the commemoration of Manong's life were recollections of his contributions to revolutionary journalism and revolutionary propaganda work in general.

Manong highly valued the importance of "facts" or the concrete conditions and concrete experiences of the people. This was also what he constantly reminded writers of, and anyone conducting revolutionary propaganda work. According to Prof. Carolina "Bobbie" Malay of the UP College of Mass Communications who was formerly in the same collective as Manong in *Ang Bayan*, facts are important for revolutionary propaganda to become effective. As editor of the Communist Party of the Philippines' official publication, Manong always stressed their importance to *AB* writers because, he said, we were fighting for the people's hearts and minds.

We must always bear in mind

that the masses are awash in all sorts of enemy propaganda, he said. Manong always emphasized that revolutionary publications, such as *Ang Bayan, Liberation* (and back then, the *Balita ng Malayang Pilipinas*), must be



better and sharper than reactionary publications.

Manong's writing style was simple and direct. It had no fancy phrases or circuitous prose so that it could easily be understood by the broad masses, especially the toiling masses, who are the principal targets of

revolutionary statements and publications.

Even before he became a revolutionary propagandist, Manong learned the importance of facts when he started to work for a newspaper, first as a copy boy who, among others, prepared coffee and ran other errands; then, as a janitor; and then, as a reporter in the early 1950s. Among the positive qualities that Manong brought with him to revolutionary journalism was the degree of respect and importance he attached to deadlines.

Revolutionary journalism means collective writing. Manong learned this when in 1971, he, together with Rep. Satur Ocampo of Bayan Muna, put out *Tingga* ("lead"), a publication for newspaper workers. Manong was then the president of the National Press Club while Ka Satur was the vice president. This spirit of collective writing was deepened and developed further when Manong joined the revolutionary underground movement after martial law was declared in September 1972.

Manong's life did not end with his death from a serious illness on August 13, 2001. His influence lives on in various fields of struggle within the revolutionary movement. Likewise, his spirit lives on in every journalist who loves truth, freedom and democracy.

As he always liked to stress, writing about the struggle of the Filipino people and the toiling masses has not ended. It goes on as history marches further on the road to victory. AB

For a deeper discussion on the life of Comrade Antonio "Tony" Zumel, read the collection of his writings and watch Kodao Productions' 50-minute video documentary "He Never Wrote '30': A Glimpse Into the Life of Tony Zumel."

Bribery and coercion in the WTO

US imperialism and the European Union have effectively overcome the tenuous opposition to their dictates in the World Trade Organization (WTO) by resorting to bribery and arm-twisting. On July 31, the WTO General Council signed an agreement touted as being instrumental in effecting the resumption of the disrupted trade negotiations.

It may be recalled that negotiations in the WTO collapsed in September 2003 in Cancun, Mexico when the US and EU insisted on further liberalizing agriculture and extending the WTO's scope. Cancun gave rise to the Group of 20 or G20, an alliance of large and small countries and neocolonies that depend principally on agricultural production. The US and the EU blamed the G20 for the talks' collapse, when in fact it was the US and EU's ministers who suspended the negotiations when it became clear that the G20 would not budge from its position in the talks.

The key to the formulation of the latest agreement was Brazil and India's consent to its onerous provisions. Their acquiescence of these countries, considered the leaders of the G20, has been crucial in convincing the majority, composed of smaller countries.

The US and the EU invited Brazil and India to join exclusive talks to frame the agreement. Together with Australia, they

formed the "five interested parties," or FIPS which would set the direction of the trade talks until the next WTO meeting in 2005.

G20's impending collapse

The latest agreement's only achievement is the impending dissolution of the G20's unity in the face of relentless maneuvers by the US and EU. Brazil and India's inclusion in the agreement is but the latest tactic employed by the imperialist countries. Long before this, the imperialists were already going all-out in their schemes to coerce other countries to leave the formation.

After Cancun, the US threat-

the rescheduling of debt payments if G20 member-countries continued to defy the US' wishes.

A win for the US and EU

The content of the latest agreement is no different from the US and EU's agenda in Cancun both on the issue of the further liberalization of agriculture and the expansion of the WTO's scope. The negotiations centered on achieving a minimum 80% reduction on agricultural tariffs and subsidies. The US and the EU have been pushing for this since 1999, when the implementation of the Uruguay Round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and

Trade (GATT) was about to be completed. In the two instances that the US and the EU tried to force agreement (first in Seattle and again in Cancun), negotiations collapsed because of the people's strong and widespread opposition.

There is likewise nothing new in the the US and EU's refusal to reduce subsidies on their own agricultural products.

The new agreement provides that countries may declare certain products as "sensitive" to exempt them from the reduction requirement. The US immediately declared its own sugar products sensitive and refused to reduce high tariffs on imported sugar. The EU and Australia also refused to reduce tariffs on their respective countries' wheat, dairy and other agricultural imports. **AB**



ened the countries of Latin America that it would revoke their small trade privileges if they refused to dissociate themselves from the G20. As a result, Guatemala, Ecuador, Peru, Costa Rica and Colombia have bolted the formation. The US has also been using the aid it extends to desperate countries as a leverage to gain allies. It has even threatened to refuse credit and disallow

US feigns interest in resolving turmoil in the Sudan

Control of oil is the real motive

George W. Bush's government is in a mad scramble to "resolve" the turmoil that has embroiled the Sudan because the US greatly covets the Sudan's oil.

The Bush government makes it appear that its only desire is to end the chaos in Darfur, Sudan and eliminate human rights violations against the Darfurians. The US has also invoked claims that the Sudan is infested with terrorist groups.

It is clear, however, that the US' real purpose is to gain control of the Sudan's oil industry. The US intervenes in the Sudan just as it has subjugated Iraq for its oil and occupied Afghanistan to pursue its plans of constructing an oil pipeline across the country.

It is extremely important for the US to take control of the Sudan's oil because it needs alternative fuel sources. In the Middle East, where the significant US oil suppliers are Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, tension remains high due to continued resistance by armed Iraqi militants to US forces in Iraq. In Saudi Arabia, attacks from anti-US groups disrupt the operations of oil companies.

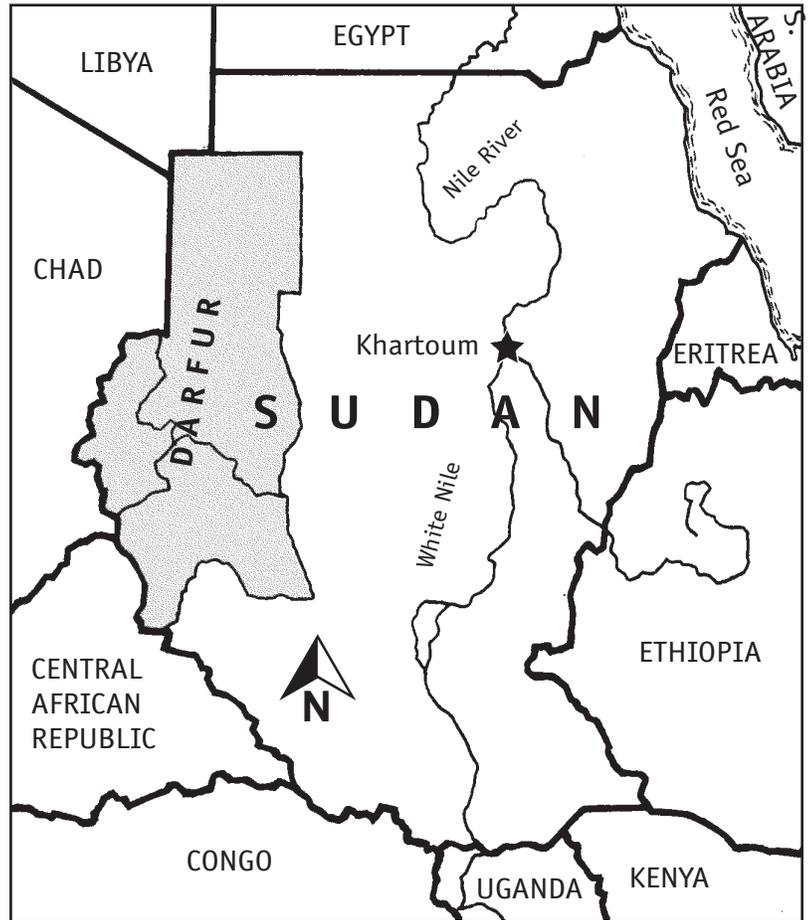
The US imports 60% of its total oil consumption every year.

According to representatives of the Sudanese Energy Ministry, Sudan has 700 million barrels in proven oil reserves plus an estimated 300 million barrels more.

The US wants to seize and control the country's oil which is currently in the hands of Lundin Oil of Sweden, Petronas of Malaysia, the state-owned China National Petroleum Company, OMV of Austria, Qatari Gulf Petroleum Company, TotalFinaElf of France, ONGC Videsh Ltd. of India, and the Sudanese government-owned Sudapet.

Aside from its plans to control Sudanese oil, the US intends to extend an oil pipeline from the Arabian Gulf which would run through the port of Yanbu in Saudi Arabia towards Arous in the Sudan, traverse Darfur towards Chad, and go onward to the Atlantic Ocean once the tension dissipates in Iraq.

Despite an agreement signed on April 8 by



Darfur is a region in the western part of the Sudan, a country in Northeastern Africa.

the Sudanese government and the United Nations to end the anarchy in the country, the US has initiated a resolution approved by the UN Security Council, ordering the Sudanese government to disarm the group that has been fomenting chaos in Darfur and put an end to all its attacks in 30 days, or face more serious sanctions.

The Sudanese government has refused to comply with the resolution, saying that it contravenes its previous agreement with the UN. The US has threatened an economic embargo, which would actually redound to greater hardships for Sudanese refugees.

The US continues to intervene in the conflict in Darfur. It continues to pressure the Sudanese government, not to save the millions of people in Darfur and achieve peace, but to take control of and plunder the Sudan's oil that it covets. **AB**

Grave anarchy in Darfur

There are two main groups in Darfur challenging the Sudanese government—the Sudanese Liberation Army (SLA) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM).

The SLA opposes the Sudanese government's discrimination and oppression of Darfurians and its bias towards the Arab minority population in the Sudan. There have been long-standing tensions in Darfur due to land disputes between the Arab nomads and Black farmers in the region.

In April 2003, the SLA and JEM assaulted a number of government installations in Darfur. Because of the huge embarrassment wrought by the rebel attacks on the government of Pres. Omar al-Bashir, the latter launched retaliatory actions.

Instead of attacking the SLA and the JEM, however, the government has been attacking the people of Darfur. The al-Bashir regime conducts air strikes in the area and has mobilized an Arab militia group called the Janjaweed.

The Janjaweed are notorious for carrying out a scorched earth policy. They kill the men, rape the women, steal their belongings and burn down entire settlements.

Estimates put the number of people killed to up to 50,000. Meanwhile, up to two million Darfurians out of a population of approximately six million have evacuated their homes, with about 125,000 fleeing to the neighboring country of Chad.

The refugees suffer from severe shortages of food, water and medicine. At present, 20% of child refugees are malnourished. Many of them have died because of it, with others dying due to other illnesses such as diarrhea.

Even around the refugee camps where Darfurians have fled, Janjaweed militia members lie in stalk, killing the men and raping the women who stray far to fetch water or search for firewood.

The al-Bashir government has, in the past several weeks, been accepting Janjaweed elements into the paramilitary Popular Defense Force (PDF) and the police instead of disbanding the militia. The PDF has likewise been wreaking havoc on the people of Darfur. AB

11 civilians killed in bombing

AT least 11 Moro civilians were killed and an undetermined number wounded when the AFP indiscriminately bombed suspected lairs of the bandit Pentagon Gang on August 13 in the Liguasan Marsh.

Two OV-10 airplanes and four M520 helicopter gunships attacked Barangay Midpandakan, Salipada K. Pendatun, Maguindanao and Barangay Pambalayan, Lambayang, Sultan Kudarat.

The civilians were killed when bombs hit a mosque and five houses in Barangay Midpandakan. The victims included six children. Over 200 families evacuated as a result of this military operation. Many houses were likewise damaged by the bombing.

People's caravan vs. Balikatan launched

PROGRESSIVE and democratic groups in Mindanao launched a two-day People's Caravan for Peace and Sovereignty to show widespread opposition and condemnation for worsening US imperialist intervention in the Philippines, and in Mindanao in particular.

Over 10,000 people and 120 vehicles joined the caravan which began in Davao City and ended in the town of Carmen, North Cotabato on August 13.

The protesters assailed the US for its deceptive policy of permanently occupying the country in the guise of temporary arrangements. Without admitting it, the US has actually been using the whole of Mindanao as a virtual military base.

Hugo Chávez wins recall referendum in Venezuela

VENEZUELAN president Hugo Chávez's victory in a recent recall referendum belied claims by his opponents that a large majority of Venezuelans want him out of power.

Chávez's presidency was subjected to a referendum on August 15 where 59% of voters expressed their desire to have him stay on as president.

International observers monitoring the referendum said the results were legitimate and that they saw no evidence of fraud.

Chávez is well-known for his anti-US stance, especially in his opposition to US attempts to control Venezuela's oil industry.