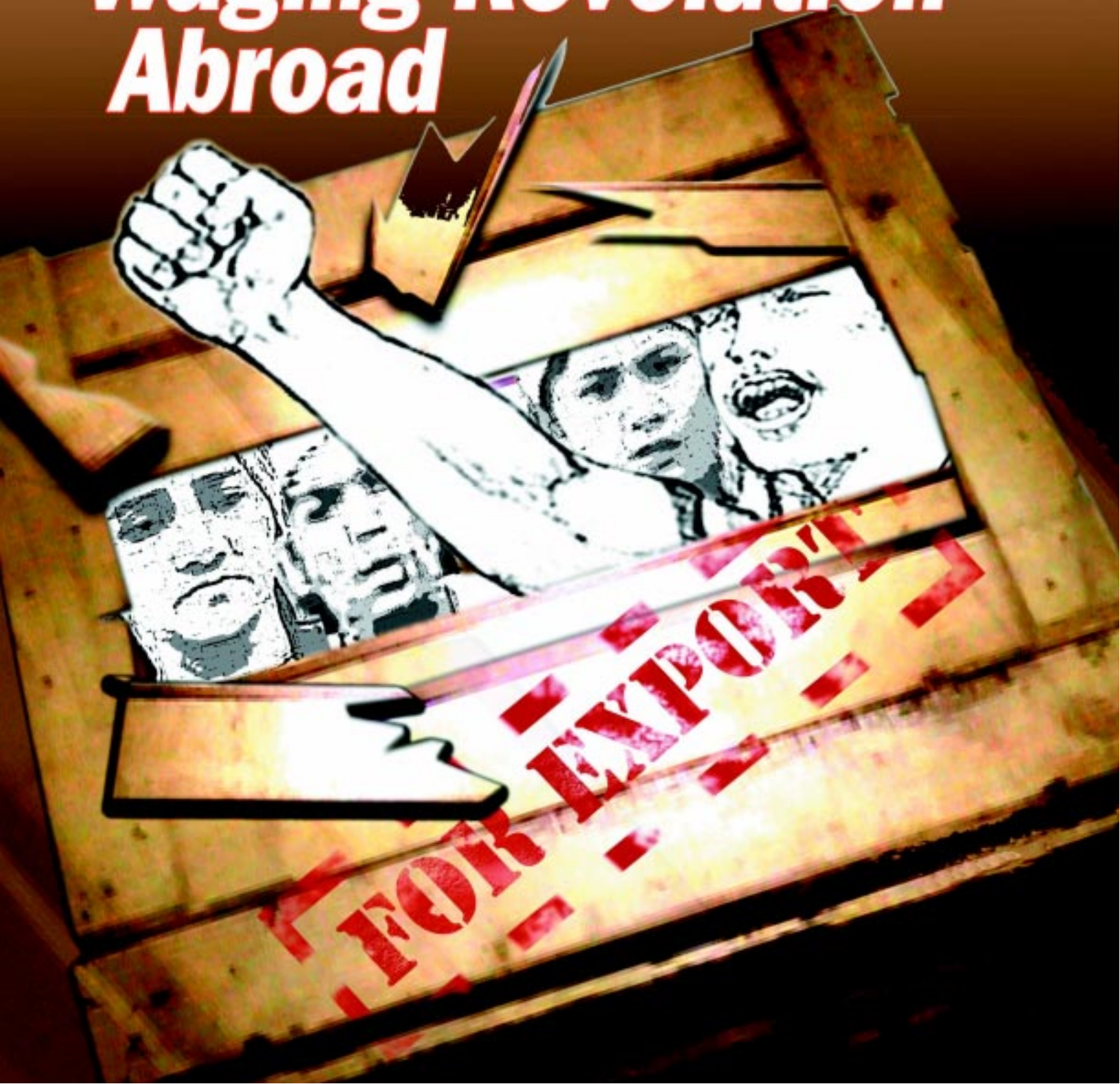


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MIGRANT FILIPINOS

Waging Revolution Abroad



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The National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) is an alliance of revolutionary organizations with roots in the various sectors and regions of the Philippines.

Its goal is to build a society that enjoys national sovereignty, authentic democracy, social justice, progress and peace.

It seeks to unite with all forces willing to achieve these goals.

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THE REVOLUTIONARY STRUGGLE IS NOTHING NEW TO MIGRANT FILIPINOS. Overseas Filipinos in fact have a long history of struggle dating back to the Spanish colonial times. Filipinos forced by the colonizers to work in the galleon trade for example, fought against Spanish brutalities and gained freedom by “jumping ship” and settling in the marshland of St. Malo in New Orleans, Louisiana. Many Filipinos who were in Australia, on the other hand, supported the Katipunan’s fight against Spain, donating the printing press used by the Katipuneros.

In the 1900s, the thousands of Filipinos – sent to the US as cheap labor for its agricultural and industrial production – waged valiant struggles against capitalist exploitation. Historical documents cite the massive strikes led by Filipino migrant Pedro Calosa in the 1920s. Then there were the likes of Carlos Bulosan who persistently organized migrant workers in the US in the 1930s, leading to the formation of farm laborers’ and cannery workers’ unions that defended the rights of, among others, Filipino workers.

Waging Revolution Abroad

By Juan Victor

The National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP), through its chapters and its member organizations in different parts of the world, continues to uphold this revolutionary tradition. It defends the rights and welfare of the millions of migrant Filipinos and seeks their liberation from oppression by arousing, organizing and mobilizing them and their families for the national democratic revolution.

Upholding a heroic heritage

Filipino migrants experience various forms of oppression and exploitation – from outright racism to discrimination in wages and working conditions to physical abuse. They are bereft of protection from the reactionary governments of both the Philippines and the receiving countries. They suffer from loss of dignity and self-esteem, as well as



loneliness and depression from being far from their families and friends. (Please see related article.)

In taking up the cudgel for Filipino migrants, the NDFP strives to achieve concrete changes in their conditions and provide assistance and protection to alleviate their plight.

In waging the national democratic revolution, the NDFP seeks to change the semi-colonial and semi-feudal conditions that have bred the chronic economic crisis that drives tens of thousands of OFWs away from home every year.

And in organizing migrant Filipinos, the NDFP works to fulfill its mission of uniting and rallying Filipinos, wherever they are, for the national democratic revolution.

Advancing the revolutionary alternative

Allan, a migrant organizer, explains the importance of organizing overseas Filipinos:

“Overseas Filipinos, both the immigrants and temporary migrants, are still part of the Filipino people. They were simply forced to leave the country because of the semi-colonial, semi-feudal conditions. This makes them potential forces for the revolution. For one, they comprise one-tenth of the entire population, with dependents at least four times this figure. Secondly, the migrant Filipinos remit over US\$12 billion a year and keep the economy from total collapse. Whatever developments occur in the sector have significant impact on a large segment of the population and the economy.”

Thirdly, he said, migrants are extremely vulnerable to exploitation and abuse, often denied the rights and benefits that citizens of the host countries enjoy. Among them, the undocumented workers or those without legal papers are particularly prone to abuse, with the threat of imprisonment and deportation always present. Organizing and teaching

them to fight for their rights is the best protection, Allan stressed.

He also added that most of overseas Filipino workers, despite their relatively higher wages compared to the workers back home, revert to their class origin soon after returning home.

“For every 10 Filipinos leaving for abroad, only two or three succeed, in the sense that they are able to improve their lives financially although they may or may not have experienced abuse and exploitation,” said Allan. The great majority though, once back home, are usually unable to find jobs, quickly losing whatever savings or small enterprise they may have set up while working abroad.

The ruling system simply does not give the migrant workers much leeway to move up the class ladder. In fact, for most migrant workers and their families, life has become a never-ending tale of migration, with family members leaving one after another in order to survive.

“Kailangan nila makita bakit kailangan magrebolusyon. Na ang kanilang pangingibang-bansa, bagamat di natin tinututulan at di natin sinisisi, ay dulot ng kalagayan ng ating bansa. At para mabago natin ang kalagayang ito, kailangang makibaka. Na rebolusyon talaga ang alternatibo,” (They have to see why they need to participate in the revolutionary struggle. That in migrating to other countries, which we neither oppose nor blame them for, is due to the conditions in the country. For us to change these conditions, we have to struggle. That revolution is the true alternative) Emma, another organizer, pointed out.

Painstaking work

Organizing migrant Filipinos goes through the same process of organizing Filipinos in the home country.

“The same principles, the same steps, the same joys and pains,”

grinned Emma. “Other comrades would usually refer to organizers people they know in the target area, usually their relatives, friends and other activists. They also link up with revolutionary or progressive groups such as solidarity groups and workers’ unions, if any, in the host country which may help them in organizing. Once we have the number, we set up an organizing group, later, an organizing committee until we have established a full blown chapter.”

“It’s just like opening a guerrilla zone. You look for initial contacts, conduct painstaking propaganda and education work, and steadily expand and consolidate,” Emma explained.

She pointed out, however, that the OFWs’ class position may change while working abroad. They may for example be professionals here but when they get to Canada or Hong Kong, they may become domestic helpers.

“Once in other countries, practically majority of them would be workers, mainly in the service sector. At the same time, there are also OFWs in executive positions, working in Chase Manhattan, the United Nations, ILO or embassies. Their class position is different and, therefore, their class standpoint. They are thus not your priority in organizing. The ones we prioritize are those in the rank and file.”

The revolutionary organizer thus looks at the migrants’ current working and living conditions abroad, taking as principal subjects for recruitment those who come from the toiling masses and are wage earners. In the case of immigrants, most remain workers. Some become petty bourgeois because they are able to practice their professions. A few become part of the middle bourgeoisie either through marriage or their class origin back home.

Organizers must evaluate how the migrants’ class position abroad

is impacting on their class origin back home to get a clear view of how they would stand in relation to the Philippine revolution.

Linking up with the homefront

Organizing migrant Filipinos may be done along sectoral concerns (i.e. women, artists, youth), areas of interest (cultural, sports), regional lines back home (Ilocanos, Cebuanos, Waray), areas of work (seafarers, domestic helpers) and geographical locations abroad (Middle East, Japan, Hong Kong). These organizations, open or underground, consciously and closely coordinate with Philippine-based groups in order to support each other through material assistance, propaganda and education campaigns, and others.

Armand, who has been organizing OFWs in Hong Kong for over a decade, pointed out the importance of linking migrants' issues with the different issues that the Filipino people contend with back home, and vice versa. Some of the campaigns that have gained support among overseas Filipinos are, among others, the anti-mining, anti-dam campaigns, Oust Erap campaign, anti-US war

and US troops in the Philippines, and the various cases of OFW abuse such as the Sarah Balabagan and Flor Contemplacion cases.

"In cases like that of Flor Contemplacion, there was widespread support from OFWs primarily because of the intense protest the issue generated in the Philippines," Emma pointed out. The growing strength of the revolutionary movement back home impacts on revolutionary work outside the country.

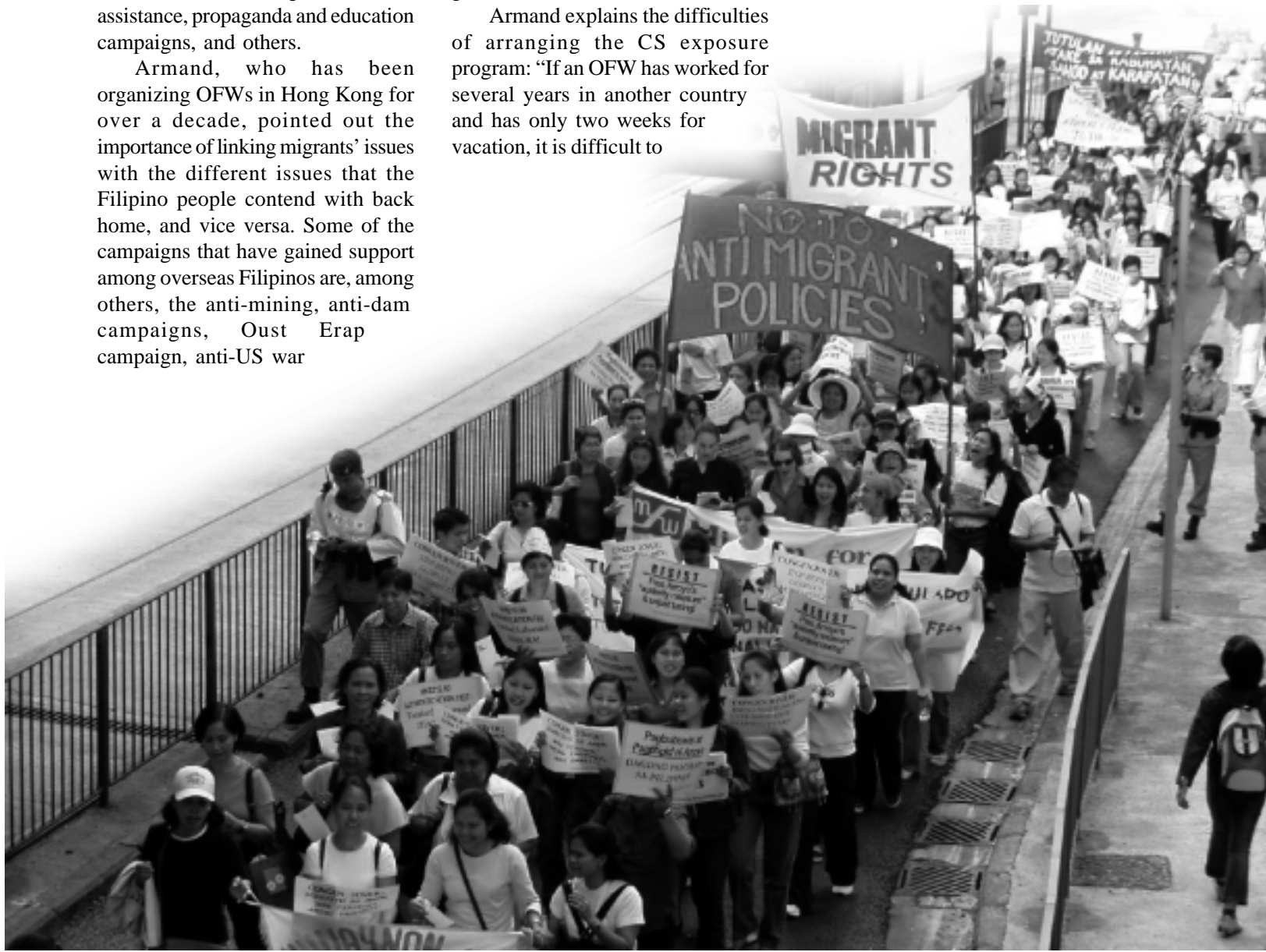
To raise the migrants' awareness regarding conditions back home, as well as make armed struggle more concrete for them, migrant activists are sent to integration programs to the countryside (CS) whenever they go home to visit.

Armand explains the difficulties of arranging the CS exposure program: "If an OFW has worked for several years in another country and has only two weeks for vacation, it is difficult to

'borrow' even just a few days of his leave and separate the OFW from his or her family. But there are still many who try to spare the time to, at the minimum, integrate with workers in the urban area." It is however mostly those in between contracts who are able to stay long in the countryside.

"Revolutionary work in the countryside is understandably abstract for them and this is solved by integration programs," said Armand. When they get back to work, they discuss their experience with the others and paint a vivid picture of the revolutionary movement back home.

"Lalo na para sa mga kababayan nating dun na sa ibayong dagat namulat at



naabot ng magandang balita ng rebolusyon, (Especially for our compatriots who were politicized and organized while working abroad),” Armand beamed.

Proudly, he recounts the cases of migrant activists who have decided to stay or go back permanently in the countryside after integrating with the New People’s Army (NPA).

Whenever NDFP personalities drop by their area, the comrades also arrange forums, tête-à-têtes and other activities that would help the OFWs get a better picture of how the revolutionary movement is advancing and serving the people, including migrant Filipinos.

NDFP leaders who have stopped over in Hong Kong, for example, have explained that once the national democratic revolution triumphs, the newly established revolutionary government will call on migrants to come home, experience the beginning of a better life and contribute their knowledge and skills to the socialist construction.

“But of course, it is not that easy. It will also depend on how fast we can rebuild the economy and wipe away the roots of migration. Definitely, the labor export as a policy will be stopped,” Emma clarified.

It is the implementation, however, of the NDFP’s program, which includes genuine land reform and national industrialization, that will eliminate the conditions the lead to forced migration.

“Migration would for sure continue. But this time, it would be because it is one’s right to choose where to live, not because one is forced by conditions to do so,” said Emma.

Divide and conquer

Meanwhile, reactionary governments try to stunt the migrants’ growing revolutionary strength by using the age-old tactic of divide and rule. Targets for divisive activities are

The issues of migrants, however, are not just theirs to pursue and fight for. Invariably, the migrants’ struggles are connected to the struggle of the rest of the Filipino people.

not just the Filipino migrants groups but also those of other nationalities, and the local workers.

“Hindi raw ba natatakot ang mga Pilipino sa pang-aagaw ng trabaho ng mga Indonesians,” (Aren’t Filipinos afraid of the Indonesians taking away jobs from Filipinos) related Armand. *“Pero dahil na rin sa matagal na at malalim nang pakikipagrelasyon natin sa ibang nasyunalidad, hindi nakaka-arangkada ang ganung klase ng linya at madali nating naililina na hindi ito usapin ng awayan ng manggagawang migrante na iba’t iba ang nasyunalidad.”* (But because we already have a long and deep relationship with migrants of other nationalities, this line failed to prosper. We were able to quickly explain that this is not a quarrel between migrants of different countries.)

On the other hand, to keep local workers from uniting with militant migrant workers, they are told that migrant workers compete with them for available jobs.

“We need to explain, where there are trade union movements, that all these are part of imperialism’s design. That imperialism is our common enemy because imperialism exploits all of us,” said Emma. “Thus, it is part of the organizers’ task to explain the need for all workers and migrants everywhere to unite.”

Organizing families

Revolutionary work among migrants, however, is not limited to the migrants but also includes organizing their families.

Allan, who has had a long experience in organizing migrant families, stressed that they are directly affected by whatever happens in the sector and would naturally be among the most concerned with migrant issues.

Just like in organizing migrants, poor migrant workers’ families are given priority. “We target communities where there is a large concentration of migrant worker families. At present, we focus on urban poor communities although we also organize among middle class families.”

The organizers closely coordinate with the local territorial units under which the community falls.

The psychological effect of separation from loved ones, extra-marital relations of spouses and the tendency for the children to get involved in anti-social activities, as well as economic issues that directly affect the OFWs (i.e. imposition of taxes on OFWs) are among the major concerns of migrant families.

Not just for migrants

The issues of migrants, however, are not just theirs to pursue and fight for. Invariably, the migrants’ struggles are connected to the struggle of the rest of the Filipino people.

Points out Emma, “This is why our work, even though focused on migrants and their families, is also linked to the struggle of the entire Filipino people. OFWs, after all, come from different classes and their issues naturally cut across classes.”

Thus, by understanding the root causes of migration, organizing themselves and participating in the national democratic revolution, migrant Filipinos and their families are helping the country achieve a brighter future.

▲

Overseas Filipino Workers:

MODERN-DAY Slaves

By Juan Victor

The first Filipino workers to leave the country were those who sailed in the 16th century to work for the Galleon Trade in Mexico. Sent by Spanish colonizers, they worked in Mexican plantations that produced the crops needed by Spain, or served as slaves of Spanish officials.



There is very little difference between them and the overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) today who fly to far away shores to work. While the Filipinos then left for fear of being sent to the garrote and had the *guardia civil's* sword pointed at them all the way to the ship, the Filipinos today leave to save themselves and their families from starvation and impoverishment, held at gunpoint by imperialist globalization.

Roots of migration

Under the country's semi-feudal conditions, the big landlords, multinational agribusiness and mining corporations own or control most of the land. This has left millions of peasants displaced and without any means of survival. Aggravating this condition is the policy of land conversion which in the past decade has paved the way for agricultural lands to be converted into industrial zones, residential villages, golf courses and tourist resorts.

In the old days, the unemployed

landless peasants resorted to *kaingin* (slash and burn farming) to open new crop land in nearby towns and provinces in order to survive. Then, they migrated to other islands in the hope of getting better crop land. Others went to the cities to find work.

Towards the late 60s, when frontier land had been almost exhausted, migration from the countryside to the cities intensified. Shantytowns sprouted in every bit of space available. Some of the displaced peasants found work in the construction and service industries, while others became domestic helpers. But the majority could not find jobs in the few assembly plants and packaging companies in the urban areas.

Without basic industries, the Philippines could not create the jobs needed by its fast growing labor force. Even the thousands of graduates of medical, engineering, teaching and other professions found it hard to find jobs with salaries commensurate to their training. They are then forced to seek

employment abroad.

During the '20s and '30s, Filipinos went to Hawaii and other states in the US to work as fruit and cotton pickers. In the '50s, they went to the US, Canada and Europe in increasing numbers to work in hospitals, nursing homes, sweatshop factories and the service industry.

During the Second World War, Filipino workers went to Guam, Okinawa and Waki Islands to work in US military bases, then in Canada and Australia. Later, Filipinos started working in logging and construction firms in Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia.

Forced to leave

Since migration is a product of the chronic economic crisis, it is only natural that the biggest number of migrants would come from the peasant and working classes, the sectors hit the hardest by the crisis.

From 1990 to 2002, the number of production workers who migrated

reached 812,615, while those in services numbered 1,072,324.

Filipinos who leave the country are usually within the age bracket of 25-35 years. This means that they leave while at their prime and, therefore, most productive years.

There are also now more women OFWs than men, comprising 57% of the Filipinos who left from 1990-2002. The majority worked in the service sector, as domestic helpers, entertainers and caregivers – also the types of employment most vulnerable to exploitation and violence.

Meanwhile, only one-fourth of OFWs come from the National Capital Region. The rest come from the different provinces, particularly those where job opportunities are scarce.

To say that a Filipino migrant's decision to work abroad is an individual choice, that the state has nothing to do with the decision, is erroneous and deceiving.

The fundamental problems of imperialism, bureaucrat capitalism and feudalism breed the conditions that have driven Filipinos to seeking livelihood abroad to avoid penury and misery for themselves and their families. These basic ills of Philippine society have kept the country in perpetual backwardness, hopelessly agrarian state, and without any basic industry to speak of.

No thanks to the corruption, inefficiency and puppetry to the US of Philippine leaders, past and present, this abysmal situation has continued. In fact, things went from bad to worse with the formal adoption by the Philippine government of labor export as a state policy in the '70s.

The exodus of Filipino workers must also be seen in the context of the global capitalist crisis. Advanced capitalist countries need cheap but highly educated and skilled labor. Thus, they take on migrant workers from poor countries like the Philippines, giving rise to the term "internationally shared labor resource."

The US, Canada, Australia, Japan and the countries in Europe that accept

migrant workers do not do so out of the goodness of their leaders' hearts but because migrant workers are paid lower than their local counterparts and would usually not dare complain against harsh working conditions. Migrant workers form a large reserve force of cheap and docile labor, thereby giving the host countries greater profits.

For them, OFWs are mere commodities, just like sugar, leather, textiles and other export goods, sold and bought in the international market.

The migration thus of Filipinos is a forced migration programmed by a regime unable to provide the basic needs of its people and purposely encouraged under the present exploitative system that treats migrants as a commodity.

Maltreatment and abuse

Sarah Jane Dematera, who left for Saudi Arabia in 1992 to work as a domestic helper, will be 33 years old this coming December 17. Unable to speak Arabic and unfamiliar with Saudi laws and legal procedures, Sarah Jane has spent the last 12 years, or one-third of her life, in Saudi Arabia's death row, wrongfully convicted of murder and denied of due process.

Sarah Jane's case is not uncommon. As of August 2004, there are 3,431 Filipinos languishing in jails in 56 countries worldwide. While a small number may be in jail for actual criminal offenses, the great majority is imprisoned for being undocumented workers or because of trumped up charges.

Sixty-nine-year old Ofelia Gonzales, on the other hand, had worked for various employers in Saudi Arabia for 14 years until she suffered a heart attack last August 1. She has since been comatose at the King Khalid University Hospital in Riyadh, with just 10% chance of survival. Her children learned of Ofelia's illness from other OFWs. Nobody from the Philippine Embassy in Riyadh bothered to inform them of her condition, which is being compounded by the lack of food and medical assistance.

Meanwhile, Minda (not her real name) went to Kuwait to work as a domestic helper but was forced to flee her employer because of maltreatment. But when she sought the assistance of the Philippine Embassy, the officials there turned her over to the Kuwaiti police, even if the employer had not filed any case against her. While in detention, three Kuwaiti policemen took turns in raping her.

On June 7, 2003, five Filipino seamen died when the merchant ship SS Norway's boiler room exploded off the coast of Miami. One of the Filipino surviving victims, whose body was badly burned and would never board a ship again, attempted to file charges against the ship's owner. But the government, instead of giving assistance, stopped him because the case would affect the "viability" of Filipino seafarers.

There are around 500,000 seafarers currently registered with the POEA but at any given time, only 40 percent of them work on board international vessels. Still, the Philippines remain as the world's number one supplier of seafarers.

There are also cases of OFWs who return to the Philippines mentally ill. Joyce Sano Alon-Alon, 22, from San Pedro, Laguna graduated at the top of her nutrition and dietetics class, and immediately left for Riyadh to work as a dietician. But 12 days later, she came back, with apparent loss of sanity. Joyce has been incoherent and would do



Hostaged Filipino truck driver Angelo dela Cruz shown by his captors in an Al Jazeera footage

The migration of Filipinos is a forced migration programmed by a regime unable to provide the basic needs of its people and purposely encouraged under the present exploitative system that treats migrants as a commodity

nothing but cry in between taking baths, as if wanting to get rid of some dirt on her body.

Joyce is only one of at least 38 OFWs who have suffered mental breakdown while working abroad.

The most painful for the families of migrant workers, however, is when their kin return lying inside caskets, especially so if the accounts of their death are not consistent with the physical evidence. Juanita Lajot, 35, a domestic helper in Singapore, allegedly killed herself by jumping off her employer's 18th floor balcony on February 10 this year. When Juanita's body arrived, her family saw that she bore two stab wounds at the back, and her internal organs had been taken out, her abdominal cavity almost empty.

Since 1999, at least seven OFWs have died under mysterious circumstances. Five of the cases involved domestic helpers who allegedly jumped off from balconies. Another was that of a seaman who reportedly jumped overboard and a boiler technician who reportedly hanged himself. All of them bore physical evidences of foul play. Per the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) figures, 4691 Filipinos died overseas from 1991 to 1995. This means that every day, almost three Filipinos die abroad from various causes.

War is, of course, another pressing concern, particularly for OFWs in the war ravaged Middle East. There's the case of Rodrigo Reyes, the Filipino driver who was with a convoy of vans owned by Kellogg, Brown and Root (KBR), a subsidiary of the defense contractor giant Halliburton. The convoy was ambushed by rebels while on its way back to Kuwait from war-torn Iraq, and Reyes was killed. Another OFW, Angelo de la Cruz, was driving

an oil tanker from Saudi Arabia to a US military camp in Falluja, Iraq, when captured by the Iraqi Islamic Army. Public outrage forced the Arroyo government to withdraw Philippine troops in Iraq to pave the way for Angelo's release.

But then, as OFWs quip, "*Sa Iraq isa lang ang kalaban – ang gera. Sa Pilipinas, tatlo ang kalaban araw-araw: almusal, tanghalian at hapunan.*" (In Iraq, there is only one enemy – the war. In the Philippines, you have to contend daily with three adversaries: breakfast, lunch and dinner.) Thus, despite what happened to de la Cruz and Reyes, some 4,000 OFWs have found their way to Iraq, braving bombs and hostage takers, a vivid but sad illustration of the poverty that drives Filipinos to desperate measures.

Contract substitution is also a common practice in many countries. In the United Kingdom, many Filipinos who thought that they would be working as nurses and caregivers have been made to sign new contracts, ending up cleaning toilets and kitchens of nursing homes at slave wages.

These are only some of the accounts of maltreatment and exploitation being suffered by OFWs. Still others are: not being paid on time or, worse, not being paid at all; forced overtime; verbal and physical abuse; hazardous working conditions; racism; and lack of support from the Philippine embassies and consulates.

But then, even before the OFW leaves the country, he or she already has to face a mountain of difficulties, most of them created by the government's callousness and ineptness.

For one, the fees that one has to pay to get papers processed and approved, are staggering:

State Exactions	
76 signatures needed	
at P100 per signature	7,600
Passport fee	550
POEA fee (US100 x56)	5,600
OWWA fee (US\$25 x 56)	1,400
Medicare	900
Total State Exactions	16,050
Recruitment fee*	150,000
*may vary depending on the destination and job being applied for	

Illegal recruiters are, of course, a major problem for overseas workers. They continue to thrive, despite government pronouncements and the arrest now and then of some operators, because they are in cahoots with police and POEA officials.

But once their plane has taken off, the OFWs soon have another set of problems to deal with: the social problems spawned by migration. The physical break up of the family often leads to spouse infidelity, children falling into bad company, getting into illegal drugs and other unsavory and illegal activities, and, eventually, to shattered families. These have serious consequences on the emotional and psychological ties that bind the family.

The improvement gained in the family's standard of living usually lasts only for as long as the family member works abroad, thus rendering it artificial.

Meanwhile, the trends of "de-skilling" and brain drain are also major social issues. De-skilling means graduates of higher courses accept jobs that need lower training requirements. The most telling illustration is that of doctors accepting nursing posts abroad. But long before this, teachers have already been accepting jobs as nannies or domestic helpers while nurses take on the posts of caregivers.

Brain drain, on the other hand, means the loss of skilled and trained workers in the country of origin.

State as the biggest recruitment agency

It was the Dictator Ferdinand Marcos who first officially declared as state policy the export of Filipino labor through the Labor Export Program (LEP). When the oil crisis in the '70s erupted and the government found its balance of payment deficit becoming insurmountable, Marcos' solution was, aside from making massive foreign borrowings, to send Filipino workers abroad.

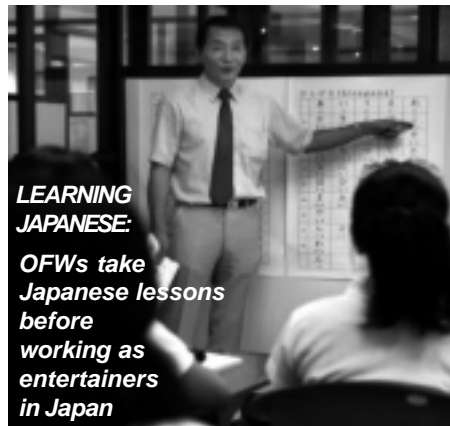
It was a period of great crisis in the country, characterized by ballooning foreign debt, oil crisis, massive unemployment, political unrest and martial rule. In fact, the LEP was not just an economic move. It was a clever political maneuver as well.

With the LEP, Marcos hit three birds with one stone: LEP helped reduce the fast growing unemployment rate, diffused the heightening social tension due to the economic crisis, and increased the country's foreign exchange earnings, which was badly needed for foreign loan payments.

The LEP resulted in the exodus of Filipinos, and labor became one of the country's most important export products. It is thus not surprising that the next administrations, from Corazon Aquino to Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, did not just continue with the program but systematized it even further to squeeze as much revenue as possible from each domestic helper or construction worker who leaves the country.

At present, the almost 10 million Filipino migrants can be categorized into four types: immigrants/residents, contract workers, undocumented workers and refugees. The biggest number of immigrants is in the US, while the biggest number of contract workers is in the Middle East (estimated at 1.5 million). The biggest number of refugees is in Sabah, Malaysia.

According to statistics, 2,383 OFWs leave the country every day. Central Bank figures show that they



remit an average of US \$8 billion a year. The International Labor Organization, however, places the total amount of remittances to the Philippine at US \$12 billion to US \$15 billion a year, including the funds sent through informal channels such as door-to-door remittances.

The government also earns an additional P13 billion every year from various forms of state exactions. These included fees needed to get official record of birth, NBI clearance, artist's accreditation certificate and passport.

Migrante International, the militant alliance of overseas Filipino groups, says the US \$12 billion (P672 billion) annual remittance alone is:

- higher than the combined total of the country's first five export goods in 2003
- higher than the 2003 national budget of P640 billion
- almost a hundred times bigger than last year's Foreign Direct Investments
- almost one-fourth of the country's 2003 Gross National Product of P4.6 trillion
- 26 times greater than the combined military assistance of the US to the Philippines from 1990 to 2001.

The remittances and government earnings from state exactions are so important for the crisis-ridden country that the Philippine-American Chamber of Commerce president was quoted as saying that if OFWs stopped remitting funds just for three days, the country's economy would immediately crumble.

Migrante has an apt description of what the labor export program is for the state: a goose that lays US \$12 billion worth of golden eggs every year. Unlike the Government Owned and Controlled

Corporations (GOCCs) that need billions for capital and operational funds, the government need not spend anything for the LEP, what with only the Filipino workers as its capital.

Just like during Marcos time, the LEP today helps to artificially reduce the number of the unemployed Filipinos (and therefore the widespread discontent), which would have reached a staggering 18 million if the number of OFWs is added to the number of unemployed and underemployed.

Anti-migrant

If during the Marcos regime there were the vocational schools and technical institutes that produced skilled workers for overseas deployment, Aquino and Ramos instituted trainings on how to operate vacuum cleaners and microwave ovens and speak English. Under Estrada, KTV clubs multiplied, giving applicant entertainers rehearsal venues before being sent to clubs abroad, particularly Japan.

Arroyo took this further by coming out with the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) Order No. 10, bringing down from 25 to 18 years the minimum age requirement for stints abroad. This has resulted in the increase in cases of white slavery in Malaysia, Hong Kong, United Arab Emirates and other countries.

It is also under Arroyo that care-giver training centers mushroomed, with even established universities such as the Far Eastern University in Manila and St. Louis University in Baguio City offering care-giving courses.

Indeed, the Arroyo regime has further intensified the labor export program by systematically conducting studies of possible labor markets and tailoring the educational system to the demands of target host countries.

It has, for example, conducted a study of Japan, creating a demand for care-givers who could help take care of its senior citizens. This would explain recent media announcements that Japan is opening its doors to Filipino migrants, particularly medical professionals.

But as it squeezes every cent it could get from OFWs, the Arroyo regime refuses to provide the services and assistance they need. Since 2003, it has implemented the OWWA Omnibus Policies which deny migrant workers whatever rights they have and benefits they could get from the OWWA funds. State abandonment of its responsibility to protect the migrants and their families is legitimized, along with complete government control over the funds.

Meanwhile, various scams and controversies have already been discovered involving the misuse of OWWA funds by the Arroyo regime. An example is the transfer of millions of funds to different government agencies such as the PhilHealth to bankroll the distribution of free Philhealth cards as part of Arroyo's electioneering during the 2004 elections. There was also the "use" of OWWA funds for non-existent plans for the evacuation of OFWs in the Middle East.

In the name of LEP, the Arroyo government has also entered into questionable agreements with labor-importing countries to the detriment of OFWs. For example, it agreed to have salaries of OFWs in Taiwan slashed by 20 percent, in Hong Kong by 5-10 percent, and in Saudi Arabia by 20 percent. It has also conspired with the Japanese and Korean governments in the implementation of the Trainee System, a scheme that provides lower

pay and allows greater exploitation and oppression of OFWs.

Arroyo apparently intends to do everything she could to achieve her unabashed goal of sending millions more of Filipino workers overseas to toil in what migrant groups have described as the "3Ds" – dirty, difficult and dangerous jobs, that local workers shun.

Meanwhile, in various seas around the world, Filipino seafarers endure back-breaking work, not stepping on land for months and not seeing their families for years. In Saudi Arabia's death row, Sarah Jane awaits in vain for government help. In a hospital in Riyadh, 69-year old Ofelia lays comatose. And at Manila's international airport, more caskets bearing dead OFWs continue to arrive daily.

Slaves of the crisis

With the worsening crisis of the semi-colonial, semi-feudal system, more Filipinos desperately seek employment abroad. And the reactionary state is even more aggressive in exporting labor.

The increasing number of medical doctors aiming to work as nurses abroad, teachers serving as nannies in the Middle East or teaching long hours in special education classes or inner city schools in the US, and professionals willing to accept work as caregivers, only manifest the worsening crisis of Philippine society. This shows that the crisis is already hitting hard not only the masses of workers and peasants but also the middle class. It also reflects the worsening social crisis where society expends resources in training professionals who end up settling for jobs requiring less training.

But it is still the masses of workers and peasants who bear the brunt of the crisis even abroad. Peasant women work abroad in vulnerable occupations as entertainers and domestic helpers. They become more vulnerable to violence and abysmal working conditions as their employers, majority of whom are from the middle classes of their respective countries, get affected by the crisis affecting the world capitalist system. A lot also end up as

captives of white slavery syndicates. Workers, both women and men, are already being forced to accept lower pay, with many ending up with much less than what was promised them before they left.

Worse, violent attacks victimizing migrant workers are increasing. They are being used as convenient scapegoats of imperialist countries in crisis as their own workers become restless because of the worsening unemployment and increasing poverty. Cases of racist instigated attacks against migrants are increasing. Those in the Middle East have become targets of anti-US armed groups.

But confronted with the decision of choosing between risking one's life abroad or slowly dying because of poverty in the country, most Filipinos choose the former. It has become a choice between slaving it out and risking life and limb abroad, or poverty and starvation in the country. But with the worsening crisis of the world capitalist system, even the option of working gainfully abroad will become extremely difficult.

The problem of poverty can only be solved permanently if the roots of the crisis are addressed. Only by removing imperialist oppression and exploitation can the country stand up on its own, determine its own course of development, and benefit from its own natural resources. Only by solving the problem of feudal backwardness and exploitation through a genuine agrarian reform program and national industrialization can Philippine society emerge from its chronic crisis. And only through the national democratic revolution with a socialist perspective led by the proletariat can the masses of workers and peasants, the petty bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie destroy the joint dictatorship of the comprador bourgeoisie and the big landlords, work for the development of the country and its people, and move towards the establishment of a society where oppression and exploitation will cease to exist. ▲



IN DEMAND: *Students flock to nursing schools in order to work abroad as caregivers*

RevolutionaRIES

Fidel Agcaoili: Using Different Strokes with Different Folks

Whether as a young man, a political detainee or as a diplomat for the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP), Fidel Agcaoili always finds himself at the negotiating table. He applies different strokes with different folks but always keeps the people's interest forward.

Struggling with a lawyer

As a struggling young activist at 16, Fidel had to argue a lot with his father who was a superb lawyer. His father was in fact a batch mate of then Pres. Ferdinand E. Marcos with a clientele that included international banks and financial corporations.

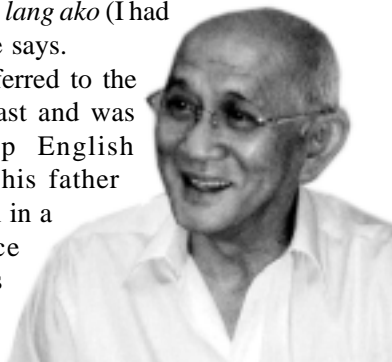
Their point of contention: Fidel's involvement in the popular mass movement in the late 1960s. Fidel, whom friends say was the ultimate rich kid in college, always in style and one of the few who came to school aboard a flashy sports car, was in second year college when he joined the SCAUP.

He says his political involvement went from being a Christian believer – his mother was a devote Catholic – to agnosticism, existentialism and, eventually, communism.

"My route was intellectual, not through a personal experience of oppression," Fidel says as he admits being born to a family from the comprador bourgeoisie.

He was arbitrarily taken out of UP when his father learned of his political involvement. "He managed to do it by simply withdrawing money for my tuition fee and allowances. *Sa bahay lang ako* (I had to stay at home)," he says.

He finally transferred to the University of the East and was forced to take up English Literature because his father refused to enroll him in a political science course. But his



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Louie Jalandoni and Coni Ledesma: Devoted to the National Democratic Revolution

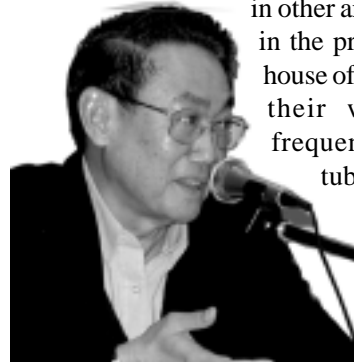
Although born from a wealthy family of landowners in Negros, Luis "Louie" G. Jalandoni, lived a different life. Since his birth on Feb. 26, 1935, it was Graciana Barcolis, a peasant woman whom Louie called "Mamang (mother)," who nurtured a man who would later find his real calling in life – a revolutionary's mission.

Louie spent most of his childhood days with his siblings Baby and Kuya Cesar in Manila before they all transferred to Silay City, Negros Occidental in 1945 to continue their studies at Sta. Teresita College. Later, he and his brother Caesar would enroll at De la Salle-Taft in Manila in 1947 for their high school education. He finished Commerce major in Accounting in 1956, also in De la Salle. Afterwards, he entered the San Carlos Seminary in Makati and in the seven years that he was there, he frequented urban poor communities, his critical mind reflecting on the real solution to the problem of poor people.

Louie recalled what Fr. Senden, a missionary from the Netherlands who used to teach at the seminary, had said. Fr. Senden thought that public officials should be professionals serving the people to avoid corruption and prevent them from pursuing their self-interest. Fr. Senden set up the Asian Social Institute (ASI), which produced economists, sociologists and other professionals.

When assigned in Negros in 1962, Louie surveyed the condition of the housing, health and marriage of some underprivileged residents living near their hacienda, and

in other areas owned by their family in the province. By staying in the house of a worker, he learned about their way of life. He also frequented patients, especially tuberculosis patients, at the provincial hospitals to give communion. He saw the poor condition



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IN EXILE

MAINSTREAM

Developments in the people's movement

Jose Ma. Sison: 45 Years in Struggle, Still Serving the People at 65

Patriotic and a true revolutionary is how Jose Ma. Sison is described by many of his contemporaries, friends and comrades.

But who is Jose Maria Sison, whose story of struggle presented in a two-and-a-half hour cultural event, *Kalibre 45*, moved even those who did not know him personally?

De kalibre

In honor of Sison's 45 years of service to the national democratic movement, *Kalibre 45* was shown twice, on March 10 at the Bahay ng Alumni in the University of the Philippines (UP), Diliman and on May 25 at the UP Theater, also in UP Diliman.

De kalibre, which means "of quality," depicts the value of the 45 years of Sison's contribution to the people's movement.

With the theme *Araw ng Pagkilala sa 45-Taong Paglilingkod ni Kasamang Jose Ma. Sison sa Pambansa Demokratikong Kilusan ng Sambayanang Pilipino* (A Day to Celebrate Comrade Jose Ma. Sison's 45 Years of Service to the National Democratic Movement of the People), the presentation tackled the different periods in Sison's life starting from his youth activist days. Cultural groups such as SinagBayan, Tambisan sa Sining, Tag-ani, Kumasa-Pamantik, Sining Bugkos, Karatula, Musikang Bayan, Haranang Bayan and Sining Bulosan interpreted in songs and dances his poems.

The Committee Defend International, Defend Philippines, *Bagong Alyansang Makabayan* (New Patriotic Alliance) and the First Quarter Storm Movement (FQSM) organized the program.

The presentation also featured the album, "Joma

Sings: *Pag-ibig sa Tinubuang Lupa*," a double-compact disc containing songs performed by Sison. The songs are accompanied with video clips on Sison prepared by Kodao Productions for the Defend JMS Movement.

For the activists of the late '60s and early '70s, who enthusiastically watched both performances, *Kalibre 45* elicited memories of their moments with Sison and his influences on them.

But for the young activists who have only heard of him, *Kalibre 45* was a learning experience, tracing not just Sison's life but the history of the national democratic movement as well.

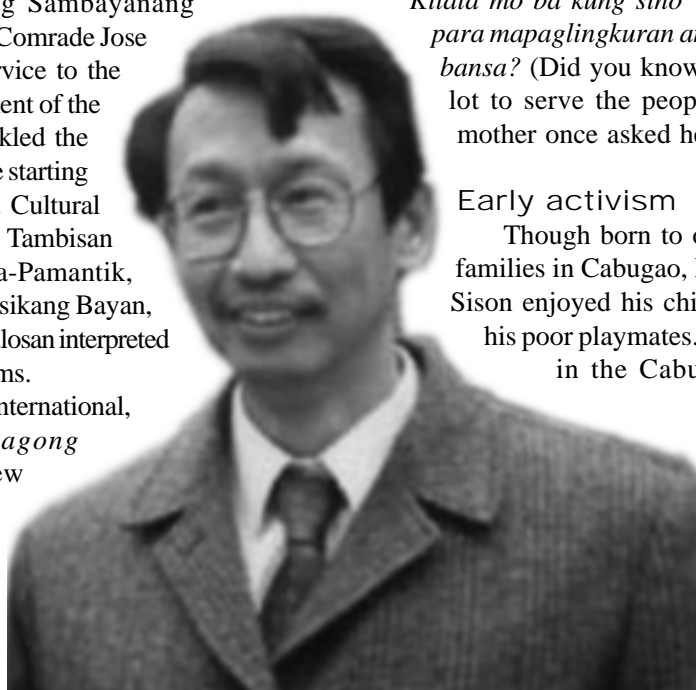
Teenagers Tricia and Erika were among those who watched *Kalibre*, wanting to know more about the man they had known only through media reports and other comrades' accounts. Although Tricia's mother used to be a New People's Army (NPA) guerrilla, it was only through *Kalibre* that she learned more about the man who until now has a very strong influence on her mother.

"*Kilala mo ba kung sino 'yung taong nagsakripisyo para mapaglingkuran ang mga mamamayan at ang bansa?* (Did you know him who has sacrificed a lot to serve the people and his country?)" her mother once asked her.

Early activism

Though born to one of the big landowning families in Cabugao, Ilocos Sur on Feb. 8, 1939, Sison enjoyed his childhood in the company of his poor playmates. His friends and classmates

in the Cabugao Elementary School, where he graduated as valedictorian, were from underprivileged families. Sison and his friends enjoyed "stealing" fruits from trees which turned out to be owned by his family.



When he was in third year high school, Sison became interested in a study that compared Christianity and Marxism. He found that the quotations from Karl Marx and Friederich Engels, which were cited in the dissertation, made more sense.

At UP, he finished his AB English Literature course *cum laude* in 1959 and enrolled in the Master's Program in Comparative Literature. While taking up his master's degree, he organized the Student Cultural Association of UP (SCAUP). As its chairman from 1959-1962, Sison put forward the theory that the basic ills of Philippine society were imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism.

He was a Teaching Fellow at UP's English Department from 1959-61. This was before he left for Jakarta, Indonesia to study Indonesian language and literature in 1962. He returned to teach again in Manila the following year.

Being one of the pillars of the progressive youth and student movement, Sison was invited to the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) in 1962, later becoming a member of its Executive Committee.

Sison helped organize progressive student organizations in other schools such as the Lyceum of the Philippines, University of the East (UE) and Far Eastern University (FEU). In 1964, he formed the Kabataang Makabayan (KM) on Andres Bonifacio's 101st birthday. He was its national chairman until 1968.

Sison said that while he rarely treated them to meals and even made them suffer with his corny jokes, he was able to convince many students and out-of-school youths to join the movement.

Under Sison's guidance, SCAUP's membership increased from 15 to 120 by the end of 1969. Its members actively participated in the historical series of protest actions,

eventually imprinted in history as the First Quarter Storm of 1970.

Sison consistently persevered in making the student movement part of the broader people's movement.

He succeeded in linking the KM with labor unions particularly the Lapiang Manggagawa, of which he was vice president for education in 1963-1964. KM also had close ties with the National

Association of Trade Unions (NATU). Sison became NATU's director for education from 1964-68 and national general secretary of the Socialist Party of the Philippines, formerly Lapiang Manggagawa, from 1964-65. He was eventually elected as the Socialist Party's vice president from 1965-1968. Sison also served a consultant of the Malayang Samahang Magsasaka from 1964-71.

Ka Chabeng, widow of Ka Bert Olalia, founding chairman of the Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU), recalled her days with Sison when she was the business manager of Katubusan (Liberation). Ka Chabeng described those times as a period of agitation for change, for revolution.

Life in the underground

Continuing to respond to the calls of the times, Sison co-founded in 1966 the Movement for the Advancement of Nationalism (MAN), a united front organization for national independence and democracy.

Sison prepared a summing-up report for the old CPP's Central Committee, criticizing the weaknesses and errors of the party. The Lava leadership ignored the report.

Subsequently, with some cadres from the workers and youth movements, he formed a new provisional Political Bureau of the



A campaign leaflet supporting the Sison family's petition for political asylum

CPP. Sison wrote several documents which became the unifying basis for the CPP's reestablishment on Dec. 26, 1968. These documents were "Rectify Our Errors and Rebuild the Party," "Program for a People's Democratic Revolution," "Constitution of the Communist Party of the Philippines," "Rules of the New People's Army" and "Organizational Guide for Party Cadres and Members." He was also instrumental in the formation of the NPA on March 29, 1969.

In a video clip, Ka Juaning Rivera, one of the original NPA leaders, showed the site where he, Sison, Dante Buscayno and Arturo Garcia, other KM members and old Hukbong Mapagpalaya ng Bayan (HMB) leaders, held their meetings in Sta. Rita, Capas, Tarlac. "If only this tree could speak, it would tell how a part of history took place in its sanctuary," mused Ka Juaning.

Ka Amading Cornejo, also a founding member of the new CPP, recounted their days in Sta. Rita. They fondly referred to a small hut in the middle of a ricefield as the "White House." It was where they waited for other comrades to arrive and where they held meetings. It was also where the draft of the National Democratic Front's 10-Point Program and early issues of the Ang

Bayan, the CPP's publication, were written. He recalled how "an Ilocano, Bicolano, Kapampangan and a half-purist Batangueño" translated Ang Bayan and various Party documents into Filipino.

Aside from writing, Ka Amading said, Sison performed administrative tasks during the day. He presided over meetings, conducted education work and led discussions, even in the evenings.

Later, the CPP and the NPA formed the "territorial organizations" of the Party, which in effect gave local Party units a self-governing character. As Sison puts it, the Party's Central Committee should formulate and carry the "general line" but the regional Party organizations should take action in accordance with local conditions. In this sense, centralized leadership was combined with "dispersed operations."

Sison also specified the need for "liaison teams" which made the NPA closer to the masses. These teams conducted "social investigation" and established close contact with the public at large "through various flexible methods."

Also under Sison's leadership, the NDFP's Preparatory Commission was formed in 1971.

Bayan Muna Representative Satur Ocampo, member of the NDFP Negotiating Panel in the 1986 peace negotiations, said that it was Sison who wrote the draft of the NDFP's 10-Point Program. The formation of the NDF, according to Ocampo, was one of the requisites in the re-establishment of the CPP. The NDF serves as the vehicle in unifying revolutionary organizations and the mass movements in support of the revolution.

Dark days

Sison was arrested in November 1977. As soldiers barged into their rented house and surrounded the

premises, Sison shouted, "Magnanakaw, magnanakaw!" (Thieves, thieves!) to call their neighbors' attention to the military raid and hopefully prevent summary execution.

He was charged with subversion and conspiracy to commit rebellion. He was physically and mentally tortured by the fascist military to get information about the underground movement. But they failed.

Though the mental torture was tough, he believed he beat his captors in their game. Besides, Sison laughingly quipped in a video clip, he really did not know the answer to their first question.

It was during Sison's recollection of his arrest and detention that Tricia and Erika, who were unfamiliar with the oppressive conditions of martial rule, were moved to tears. They also could not take the harsh fate that the revolutionary leader had gone through.

In the same video clip, Julie, Sison's comrade and wife, recalled how it was after their arrest. Though she, too, was held in solitary confinement, Julie proudly said that this period in their life strengthened even more their revolutionary commitment.

Julie shared how she received news about her husband while in solitary confinement. She said there were times for example when Sison's guards were later assigned to her. There was one who told her, "*Si sir may tula para sa'yo!*" (Sir has a poem for you). To her amazement, the guard proceeded to recite the poem from memory.

The couple was presented to the media only after two years. During the presentation, they were still ridiculously kept

apart from each other, with Sison placed out front and Julie at the other end of the room.

On March 5, 1986, Sison was finally released as part of the Aquino regime's commitment to release all political prisoners detained during martial law. Julie was released earlier.

Sison's "ceaseless weapon"

"For Whom?" This question, originally posed by Mao Zedong during the Chinese Revolution, opened the minds of young Filipino writers seeking participation in the national democratic revolution. Patriotic poets and fictionists used the pen to serve the movement. In his case, Sison used the English language to send the message of revolution to a broad range of audience.

His first collection of poems published in 1962, *Brothers*, made him a nationally recognized poet. It was followed by *Prison and Beyond: Selected Poems* published in 1984, with second printing in 1986. *Prison and Beyond*, according to poet laureate Bienvenido Lumbera, shows "Sison the poet crossing over to another tradition of writing in the Philippines, his theoretical and practical work in the national democratic movement having led him to the key question of committed writing in the beginning of the 1970s."

Among his highly regarded poems was the "Fragments of a Nightmare" written in December 1979. It stands as the centerpiece of the collection *Prison and Beyond*



which speaks of the poet's arrest, interrogation, torture and imprisonment. The poem is considered by some as a masterpiece in revolutionary aesthetics. It effectively illustrates the strength of the character of the man despite all kinds of suffering.

Aside from literary pieces, Sison founded the political, economic and cultural journal *Progressive Review* and was its editor from 1963-1968. He laughingly recalled that while his name was written on the publication as its editor he also performed all sorts of technical stuff including, he said, licking the stamps and pasting them on envelopes. He was also the editor of *Ang Bayan* from 1969-1977.

Sison's *Struggle for National Democracy*, published in 1967, serves to this day as a great education medium for the youth, workers and peasants in understanding the revolution. It is a comprehensive book of essays on Philippine politics, economy, culture and foreign relations which has influenced the national democratic movement since the 1960s. Many of those who read the book responded to Sison's call for a cultural revolution.

As the founding chairman of the re-established Party, Sison made a comprehensive class analysis for the revolution contained in his book *Philippine Society and Revolution* (PSR), which was published in 1971 under the name Amado Guerrero. Formerly called *Philippine Crisis*, the contents of the PSR were aired over DZME for several weeks in February 1970.

Rafael Baylosis, consultant for political affairs of the militant Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU) and vice chairperson of the progressive partylist group Anakpawis, described PSR as a "consolidation, systematization and popularization of all the important studies of history and state of the Filipino society that were



contained in Sison's critical writings from 1959-70." These include studies in the areas of economy, politics and culture, domestic and international.

The book, which has available translations in Filipino, English, Chinese, Japanese, German and Turkish, has been used by revolutionary organizations as a basic textbook on Philippine history, basic social problems and the national democratic revolution.

Baylosis said he was proud to have been directly involved in the publication of the PSR. He recalled that in April 1970, Sison instructed him to deliver a copy of the PSR to Manila for publication in the Philippine Collegian, UP's student publication. From Tarlac, he first went to Baguio before proceeding to Manila. This roundabout way was intended to confuse the enemy regarding the base of the underground movement.

In his closing statement, Baylosis, raising a copy of the PSR, called for its popularization among activists and the general public.

As a writer, Sison has been connected with various organizations such as the UP Writers' Club, Afro-Asian Journalists' Association, Afro-Asian Writers' Bureau,

Wereldschrijvers Werkgroep, Netherlands and Vereniging van Letterkundigen-Vakbond van Schrijvers (Association of Literary Arts - Union of Writers, Netherlands).

He received several awards in writing. Among these were the Literary Achievement Award for poetry and essay writing from the Writers' Union of the Philippines (1985), the National Book Award for Poetry (for *Prison and Beyond*) from the Manila Critics Circle (1985) and the 1986 Southeast Asia (SEA) WRITE Award for the Philippines for essay writing and poetry, chiefly for *Prison and Beyond*.

A special award was given to him for his outstanding contribution as a selfless and humane leader, patient teacher, caring and compassionate friend and exemplary comrade to the national democratic struggle of the peasants, workers and the entire Filipino people in November 1994 during KM's 30th anniversary.

The College Editors Guild of the Philippines (CEGP), through its Marcelo H. del Pilar Award, also recognized Sison as its most distinguished alumnus.

Indeed, even in the field of arts and literature, Sison is assured of a place of honor in the intellectual tradition.

Meanwhile, unknown to many, Sison loves to sing. He loves to joke that had he not become a revolutionary, he would have been a balladeer. Ruth de Leon, chairperson of the Committee Defend International, recalled how pleased Sison was when comrades from the US gave him a karaoke.

A longtime comrade and friend of Sison, Ruth kidded during the *Kalilbre 45* program that while Sison relaxes himself by singing, "it was those around him who get stressed up."

Away from home

After almost nine years in prison, Sison studied and elucidated the

correct conduct and tasks of the legal democratic movement during reactionary elections. Thus he led the establishment of the Partido ng Bayan (PnB), which during its time served as the political party of patriotic and democratic forces. Reacting out of desperation, the US-Aquino regime terrorized and violently attacked the organizers and campaigners of PnB and tried to shut it down during the 1987 elections.

Meanwhile, people of other countries admire Sison and want to learn from him. He is frequently invited to various fora, symposia and seminars and requested to convey solidarity messages.

In 1987, Sison went on a world lecture tour in India, Australia, Cuba, Japan, The Netherlands, Germany and Belgium. He sought political asylum in The Netherlands after the Aquino government cancelled his passport and filed subversion charges against him.

The Netherlands's Council of State, the highest administrative court, decided in 1995 that Sison is a political refugee with a "well-founded fear of persecution." However, the three-judge panel of the Rechtseenheidskamer (REK, or the Law Unity Chamber) later denied Sison's application, contradicting the Council of State.

The US also tried to intervene in his application for political asylum. In one of the hearings before the Council of State, a Dutch government official admitted that a government friendly to both the Dutch and Philippine governments would be displeased or offended if Sison was granted political asylum in the Netherlands.

Ruth said that the reputation Sison has earned through the years helped him gain the support of progressive international groups that resist US imperialist domination. In fact, he was the chairman of the International Initiative Committee of the International League for Peoples'



Sison with writer Ninotcha Rosca

Struggle (ILPS) from 2000-01 and became its general consultant in 2001.

Living in exile, Ruth said that it is still writing that eats most of Sison's time. She belied the enemies' vile propaganda that Sison has become ignorant of Philippine issues and situation since his exile, and that he is living comfortably in The Netherlands. This, she said, is part of the psychological warfare of the enemy to discredit and demonize Sison. She pointed out that aside from technological advances, like electronic mail and chat, revolutionary leaders in the Philippines and abroad keep Sison informed of the real situation in the Philippines.

She added that the story being spread by reactionary groups that the Sisons are enjoying a luxurious life is a downright lie. "Those who have visited them have seen their simple life," she said. Since his exile, Sison has not been allowed to seek employment and thus has been unable to earn any income.

In addition, since the "terrorist" tag by the US government in August 2001, followed by the European Union, Australian and Canadian governments, Sison's social and welfare fund has been frozen, his family threatened with ejection from their house.

In an attempt to justify its move to deny political asylum to the Sison family, the Dutch justice ministry claims that Sison has committed "terrorist" acts and continues to maintain contacts with "terrorist" organizations. The "terrorist" label is in line with the moves of imperialist and reactionary governments around the world to intensify repression against revolutionaries.

Unshakable

Public Interest Law Center (PILC) lawyer and United Nations *ad litem* Judge Romeo Capulong described Sison as a client from whom he has learned a lot. He admitted that the legal system is just a mechanism of the state and the ruling elite to undermine and repress the masses and its leaders. However, Capulong said, Sison relies more on the strength of the mass movement in winning his court battles.

The more Sison is repressed and threatened with court cases, the more he gets strengthened. Even after the "terror" tag, it is the US and the EU that are on the defensive because Sison is winning public opinion, Capulong said. Aside from this, there is the lack of concrete cases that could be presented against Sison, giving rise to the strong possibility of victory.

Capulong stressed that the attacks against Sison are actually attacks against the national democratic movement, legal or underground. "Joe is just a symbol of the movement that is defending the masses," he said.

An inspiration to all

Joe, Joma, Tatang or JMS. His name may vary from one generation to the next, but one thing remains constant. Sison is widely respected – as a theoretician, writer and revolutionary, who can be counted on to give insightful political analysis



BRIDGE TO PEACE: Revolutionaries in exile serve as panelists and consultants in the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations

and in, as a comrade put it, “determining the line of march.”

Ronalyn Olea, former CEGP president, attests to Sison’s valuable contributions to the youth.

“Sison is an inspiration especially to the youth whose petty-bourgeois tendencies continue to haunt them. Or more accurately, Sison is a phenomenal sage.”

On the other hand, Wilma, a Canadian, admitted that it was only through *Kalibre 45* that she first came to know Sison. She said she was touched by Sison’s writings which were interpreted through songs and dances. Her favorite was “Fragments of a Nightmare.”

“Now, I see him as someone who has led an incredible life and formed the movement that’s really strong and continues to inspire so many people here and all over the world.”

Meanwhile, Ka Jose, a fisherman who have witnessed the wretched condition of his sector and the rest of the Filipino people since the ‘70s, could not explain enough how grateful he was when in 2000, he met Sison in person.

“Nababasa ko lang ang aklat niya. Ni sa pangarap, di ko akalaing makikita ko sya. Napakapalad ko na kahit ako’y isa lamang mangingisda, nakita ko s’ya nang personal,

nakasalo ko s’ya sa pagkain, nakapanayam, nakadaupang-palad (I only read his books. Not even in my dreams did I expect to ever meet him. I am very fortunate because even though I am just a poor fisherman, I met him personally, shared a meal and discussed with him).”

Ka Jose recalled Sison’s forecast about the collapse of the Estrada administration. *“Hindi magtatagal si Erap dahil hindi na n’ya kayang linlangin pa ang mamamayan. Tulad ng iba pang kagaya n’ya, babagsak si Erap* (Erap won’t last because he could no longer fool the people. Just like the others like him, Erap will fall).” True enough, Estrada was ousted a few months later.

Ka Jose said Sison is just like any other man living a simple life. What differentiates him though from the others is his analysis of Philippine society, politics and ideologies.

It is also Sison who revolutionized the outlook of an engineering graduate working for a multinational company.

Ka Tino’s life changed after reading *Struggle for National Democracy* which he found in a bookstore in 1969. He had already heard of Sison and the KM but his attention at that time was concentrated on his work. What

struck him most was the article in the SND analyzing the graft and corruption in the Philippines. He also saw his situation reflected in the various articles in the book.

Ka Tino – who had worked for the American company BF Goodrich, the British company Allied Thread Textile Mill and Eduardo “Danding” Cojuangco’s San Miguel Corporation – was among the Filipino professionals working for multinational companies who are not being paid enough. He later joined the *Samahan ng mga Makabayang Siyentista* and eventually went underground.

Unlike the others, he had met Sison personally several times, mostly for educational discussions. He describes Sison as tireless in political discussions and fond of making jokes. He said they would often laugh not at the jokes but at Sison’s delivery.

Concerned Artists of the Philippines’ (CAP) Bonifacio Ilagan, *Kalibre 45* director and FQSM chairperson, asked activists during the program to stand up, calling on them by generation, from the ‘70s to the 2000s, effectively pointing out how Sison has sown the seeds that sustain the revolutionary struggle.

INDEED, IT IS THE UNDYING PRINCIPLE of a man who has spent 45 years of his life for the national democratic struggle and still serving the people at 65 – which provides inspiration in the struggle for national liberation and social emancipation.

As Sison himself said, *“Walang pagod ang nang-aapi sa pang-aapi, e bakit mapapagod ang inaapi? Sa pagpupursige, sa pakikibaka, mangingibabaw ang uring anakpawis* (The oppressors do not tire in exploiting the masses, how can the oppressed masses get tired of fighting? With perseverance in the struggle, the toiling masses will surely achieve victory).” (By Toni Hernandez) ▲



Kay Joma: Ang Pagwawasto

ni Bienvenido Lumbera
Concerned Artists of the Philippines

Ang pagwawasto
Ay pagsalunga sa masukal na landas
Paakyat sa bundok ng rebolusyon.
Iniwasan itong tahakin ng tamad at huwad
Dahil atubili silang paglapatin ang dunong
at danas,
Ibinaling nila ang mga hakbang ng
mandirigmang
Sumalunga sa kadiliman habol ang
bukang-liwayway;
Iniligaw sila ng nahawing talahib at baging
nalagtas,
Mga intelektuwal na hinibang ng malaong
paghihintay;
At binakuran ng siit ng kawayan at tinik ng
aruma
Ang kanilang pananaw na pinakipot ng
mga pagkabigo.

Ang pagwawasto
Ay gawain ng Kasamang matibay ang pag-asang
Ang mga silahis na nakaguhit sa abot-
tanaw
Ay maningning na hudyat ng sigabo at init
Na magpuputong ng dangal sa bawat
mandirigmang
Sa kadilima'y hindi natigatig, tapat na
talibang
Nagtiis ng ginaw at pangungulila bago
magliwayway.

Ganyan ka, sinipat mo ang bundok at
nagpasya:
Naroon sa ituktok ang katuparan ng
paglaya,
Kailangang hawanin ang mga landas
paakyat
Na pinagsukal ng haka at akalang
Pinalago, pinayabong ng lisyang alaga,
At nagsanga-sanga at nagsala-salabat
Hanggang maging gubat, madilim,
mapanglaw,
Di kayang dalawin ng sikat ng araw.

Ang pagwawasto ay pagpasok sa gubat,
Kipkip ang araw na itatanglaw
Sa lahat ng mali at kasinungalingan,
Lahat ng yabang at kapusukan,
Lahat ng delusyon at kapalaluang
Leon, basilisko at buwitreng
Walang babala kung pumaslang
Ng Floranteng tapat ang kalooban,
Ng Alading ubod ng tapang, subalit
Hindi pinagkamuwang.

Ang pagwawasto ay landas na bumukas
Tungo sa liwayway ng malayang bukas,
Mula sa dalisdis magpahanggang ituktok,
Hahakbang kaming walang pagkatakot.
Sumibol man ang bago't panimulang sukal,
Sumilim man muli ang datihang karimlan,
Sa landas nami'y may humawan at
naglatag,
Ang paghakbang nami'y kay tatag ng
akyat.

This poem was written and recited by Prof. Bien Lumbera during "*Kalibre 45*," a cultural celebration of Sison's 45 years of service to the Filipino people's national democratic struggle.

involvement in the mass movement continued, though clandestinely, to avoid skirmishes with his father.

But it did not take too long for his father to take notice and, as punishment, immediately sent him to the United States. But he spent his two years in the US joining anti-Vietnam War protests, and took several units on protest literature at the University of California.

Homecoming

He flew back to the country in 1967, reunited with friends and comrades and joined the cultural group of the Kabataang Makabayan (KM), which, he would later find out, was the hotbed of those who would eventually leave KM to the Samahang Demokratiko ng Kabataan (SDK).

"I was caught in between. I was totally in the dark," Fidel said. His confusion regarding the developments in the organization made him decide to sidestep. He was also then newly married and opted to work for his father's insurance company.

But one day, a former comrade gave him papers on the reestablishment of the Communist Party of the Philippines and the minutes of its first congress. "Of course, that won me over," he says. It paved the way to Fidel's most welcome re-entry into the mainstream people's movement.

Fidel later worked as production staff for *Ang Bayan* (AB), the Party's official organ, until 1972. He tried to fit three different things into his hectic schedule: as manager of his father's insurance company, an organizer in the same company, and a part-time staffmember of AB.

But he again earned his father's ire when sometime in early 1972, he left his office work for an important trip to Isabela. He came back to



Manila to find that he no longer had a job and home.

Fidel went underground in July 1972, two months before the declaration of martial law.

Arrest and torture

In May 1974 when Fidel was arrested in an underground house in Pangasinan. His wife and two boys, ages two and four, were also taken to the Philippine National Police Headquarters in Camp Crame. The two boys were released after a few days but Chit stayed in prison for two years.

The next 10 years of his life he spent in jail making him the longest detained political prisoner during the martial law years. He was charged with rebellion and implicated in the Karagatan case. MV Karagatan was the name of the ship which allegedly brought in arms for the CPP-NPA from abroad.

He was subjected to different forms of torture, the worst of which was when he was injected with truth serum while under tactical interrogation.

The first questions, he recalls, were seemingly innocent ones but asked in rapid-fire manner:

"Ano'ng pangalan mo? (What is your name?)"

"Ano'ng pangalan ng asawa mo? (What is your wife's name?)"

"Ano'ng pangalan ng tatay mo?

(What is your father's name?)"

"Ilang taon ka na? (How old are you?)"

"Ilan ang anak mo? (How many children do you have?)"

Out of the blue, the interrogator would ask loaded questions like "*Nasaan si Joma?* (Where is Joma?)," referring to Jose Maria Sison, founding chair of the CPP.

As the substance affects the motor functions, Fidel explained, it becomes difficult to control the senses, Fidel explained. "But what they failed to consider," he says, "was that my other senses, like hearing, was still sharp. *Kaya dama ko kung kelan sila magtatanong ng sensitibong impormasyon* (I could feel when they were trying to fish out sensitive tactical information)."

Fidel was "drugged" for two days until the third day when his parents were allowed to see him. Afterwards, he was placed under solitary confinement for six months. "*Mas mahirap na ito kasi ang kalaban mo na ang sarili mo*, (Solitary confinement was more difficult because you are put up against yourself)," he says.

He was also subjected to more inhuman conditions. He was given only a biscuit can where he could pee and dispose human waste and allowed to take a bath only once a week. He was also incommunicado for three months.

During this time, Fidel said, he discovered that the most effective way to kill time was to play with ants and lizards. He also used his time to compose poems but since he had neither paper nor pen, he only could only commit them to memory.

Dealing with the enemy

In 1975, representatives of the international human rights group Amnesty International came to document the cases of torture. All 78 political prisoners, including Fidel, launched their first hunger strike to put an end to the ruthless torture, demand better prison conditions and visitation rights, and for transfer to the Camp Bagong Diwa in Bicutan, Taguig.

It was Fidel and another comrade who represented the detainees in the negotiations during the hunger strike. Across the negotiating table was then Philippine Constabulary (PC) Chief Fidel V. Ramos.

But while Ramos was trying to convince them to call off the strike, he ordered his men to beat up the other detainees inside the prison cell.

“Pagbalik namin sa selda, nakita namin yung ibang kasama bugbog-sarado na, kaya tinuloy namin yung strike, (When we went back to the prison cell we saw our comrades beaten black and blue, so we continued the hunger strike,)” he recalls.

It was Carmelo Barbaro, Marcos’s Defense Chief, another Ilocano who was close to the dictator, who negotiated with the detainees. He promised to transfer the detainees to Bicutan within three months.

In April 1976, all political detainees in Camp Crame were transferred to Bicutan, where they held their second hunger strike, this time with higher demands: the release of nursing mothers and permission for conjugal visits. Barbero agreed to

their demands on one condition: that Fidel and another detainee be placed in isolation.

The detainees got their demands but Fidel had to spend another year and a half in isolation.

Dealing with the gangsters

In 1981, Pope John Paul II visited the Philippines. He also intended to visit the political detainees in Bicutan. But Marcos told the Pope that Bicutan was already closed and there were no political prisoners. To back up his claim, he transferred all the detainees to the Maximum Security Compound in Muntinlupa to make it appear that they were common criminals.

The detainees planned another hunger strike to coincide with the Papal visit but they were warned by the jail superintendent that it could put an end to the “atmosphere of peace” inside the Muntinlupa prison compound.

It refers to when the gangs inside the prison compound could earn money from their “small businesses.” Each gang was “in charge” of a business, which ranged from drug pushing, smuggling in of hard drinks and prostitution to handicrafts production and vegetable gardening.

The political detainees were told that if they went on hunger strike, the jail management would put a stop to these “businesses.” “If that happens,” the superintendent warned, “there will be discontent and life inside the prison compound would become very cheap. Anybody could hire a killer in exchange for a piece of chicken.”

But the detainees were undaunted. *“Kahit takutin n’yo kami, itutuloy namin ang hunger strike, (We will continue with the hunger strike regardless of your threats,)”* Fidel retorted.

Before the hunger strike could

begin, the gang leaders approached the political detainees. *“Parang nasa mafia, (Just like in the mafia,)”* was how Fidel now describes the confrontation.

As the lead negotiator, Fidel had to show toughness. He explained to the gang leaders that they were in fact detained because they were fighting the government and that they, too, have their own army – the New People’s Army (NPA).

The tough stance, he explained, was necessary to show strength and leadership inside the prison compound. The detainees were only 32; the gangs had hundreds of members.

The detainees also arranged for the “big guns” like former Senators Lorenzo Tanada and Jovito Salonga and church leaders to visit them in prison.

This approach worked to the detainees’ advantage. When the Pope arrived, the hunger strike pushed through as planned and no violence occurred. After the hunger strike, the gang leaders and members showed grudging respect at the political detainees.

Human rights work

In 1984, Fidel was released from prison, primarily because of the relentless campaign waged by comrades and human rights groups.

His release was just in time for the founding assembly of the human rights group Selda (*Samahan ng mga Ex-Detainees Laban sa Detensyon at para sa Amnestiya*). He became its founding secretary general.

He also volunteered to work with the Task Force Detainees of the Philippines (TFDP) where he helped complete the list of victims of involuntary disappearance during the martial law years. He was also instrumental in the formation of the organization of the relatives of the disappeared.

Later, Fidel became a member of the executive committee of Bayan (Bagong Alyansang Makabayan or New Patriotic Alliance). He presided as chair of Partido ng Bayan in 1987 after the assassination of its former Chair, Ka Rolando Olalia.

He joined Sison, Satur Ocampo, Antonio Zumel and leaders of the revolutionary movement in exploratory talks with the Aquino regime after the Edsa People Power in 1986.

NDFP

Before Fidel left for the Netherlands, he underwent a rigorous medical regimen for his thyroid ailment. He started to perform diplomatic work for the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) in 1989.

His extensive knowledge of human rights work helped Fidel perform his task as chair of the Reciprocal Working Committee for the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL) starting in 1993.

It took five painstaking years to negotiate with the government until both parties signed the CARHRIHL in 1998. Signing as principals were NDFP chair Mariano Orosa in April and ousted President Joseph Estrada in August. The CARHRIHL mandated both parties to form the Joint Monitoring Committee to monitor the implementation of the agreement. It took another six years for both parties to actually set up the monitoring committee.

In 2004, during the formal talks in Oslo Norway, with the Norwegian government as third party facilitator, the GRP and the NDFP agreed to start operations of the Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC). Fidel is JMC's co-chairperson, representing NDFP while Carlos Medina represents the GRP. ▲ (By Ama San Isidro)

of health care in their province.

Louie pursued postgraduate studies on theology abroad from 1964-1967. When he came back, he noticed that the local churches have started organizing programs for the people. Bishop Antonio Fortich of Negros opened a cooperative project called "Kaisahan Settlement Project." It later developed into a multi-purpose cooperative for small peasants. This helped the farmers form a credit union. Louie served as its consultant, and later its director.

The feisty nun

Ma. Consuelo "Coni" Ledesma is also from a prominent haciendero lineage in Silay. A graduate of Maryknoll College, she joined the Religious of the Good Shepherd (RGS) in search of her mission in life.

In an interview published in *Pilipinas*, the official publication of the Christians for National Liberation (CNL), Coni narrated how as an RGS nun assigned to teach at St. Bridget's College in Batangas City, she was exposed to news of students shouting their rage against the so-called "three isms" – feudalism, bureaucrat capitalism and imperialism. At the same time, the political turmoil had spread to the religious sector, with many nuns, priests and lay workers already asking themselves how they could help the poor, deprived and oppressed.

In the mid-'70s, Coni was transferred to Cebu and became the principal of a small girls' school in Banawa Hills. As principal, she wanted her students to become aware of the developments in Philippine society, particularly in Cebu. Thus, she educated them with the realities of life, showing the correctness of the worker and peasant struggles.

"*Bitbit ko ang mga third and fourth year students kung may*

demonstration or sit-in sa City Hall. *Sa loob-loob ko, alam kong tama ang ginagawa ko kahit di pa talaga ganun kalalim ang kamulatan ko noon.*" (I brought my third and fourth year students to demonstrations or sit-ins at the City Hall. I felt confident that what I was doing was right although my political awareness was still new.) The activists saw how sympathetic Coni was and thus flocked to the RGS convent for support. At the same time they discussed issues with her, enriching her political awareness.

"In essence, the early '70s was to me a time of searching – and my search led me to the national democratic movement. It was the movement that had the analysis of the ills of Philippine society and the solution to those ills," said Coni.

That Coni took the revolutionary path was not surprising. She is, after all, the granddaughter of two strong-willed individuals who fought American colonization. Teodoro M. Kalaw was editor of the first Philippine newspaper, *El Renacimiento*, which published the controversial anti-US editorial entitled "Birds of Prey." Pura Villanueva was a delegate to the *Kongreso Obrero* in 1913 and among those who pushed for an eight-hour work schedule and laws to protect women workers. Pura was also a founder



of the Asociacion Feminista Ilongga, one of the first organizations in the Philippines to work for women's suffrage. Coni's mother, Purita Kalaw-Ledesma, was one of the founders of the Art Association of the Philippines (AAP) and a well-known art patron who through the years had helped many young artists.

Turning point

In mid-1969, Louie was appointed Social Action Director for the Diocese of Bacolod. Victims of land grabbing, and those struggling with low wages and poor working and living conditions approached his office for assistance.

He set up a legal aid program with two resident lawyers to assist the peasants in agrarian disputes. Cases continued to increase even if the sugar industry boomed because of the US embargo on Cuba. The local sugar industry benefited when 30 to 40 percent of the sugar quota from Cuba was given to the Philippines. Louie's office also provided education seminars on the rights of the peasants.

The use of force by landlords to repress mobilizations and strikes were common those days but Louie remained a reformist. An incident, however, made him realize the need for armed revolution.

In 1971, sugar workers of the largest sugar firm, Victoria Milling, in Bais went on strike. Louie visited their picket line. The protesting workers had built huts along the road. Security guards hired by the landlords tried to dismantle the houses. When the strikers fought back, the guards started shooting at them with shotguns.

Louie dove into a canal along with other sugar workers for cover, then ran to the fields to hide from the guards chasing them. Five sugar workers were wounded. With Louie as the driver, they were brought to the hospital. It was then that he became convinced that the workers

have to have their own armed strength.

Louie lived with the workers for about six months during the strike. He was inspired by the resolve of the strikers. Its leader had to undergo an operation, as his intestines were diagnosed to be intertwined. This leader had to walk four kilometers from their home to reach the picket line, with no food for his family. But even when the management offered him money, he did not abandon his fellow workers.

In the summer of 1971, Coni was assigned to Bacolod. She requested that she be allowed to help in the Social Action Center of the diocese. When the Bais workers struck, she visited them and met others from the church sector who were helping them. Coni helped in writing manifestos regarding the demands and issues of the peasants and workers.

It was also the first time that their paths crossed. Coni and Louie gradually got to know each other well.

"There were other lesser known strikes that occurred then in Negros. And together with the other religious, we would visit the striking workers, listen to them and learn a lot from them. This was also the time when many settlers in the mountains of Negros were being driven from their land by land grabbers," recalled Coni.

Their experiences made them realize that the system had become so rotten – that the needs of the farmers, settlers and workers, among other sectors, had to be genuinely addressed. They witnessed the weakness of the judicial system – which was controlled by politicians and landlords – after none of the 68 cases the strikers filed against the landlords won.

Revolutionary Christians

According to Coni, many of the religious who were helping workers and farmers started to have meetings. Breaking out of traditions, they

formed study groups, shared experiences with those coming from other Visayan islands – Panay, Cebu, Bohol and Leyte – and joined demonstrations. "We were united in the belief that the church community should be involved in the struggle of the people. We then agreed to form an organization to consolidate and direct our efforts," she recounted.

On February 17, 1972, the same day when three martyr priests known as Gomburza were executed by Spanish colonizers in 1872, the Christians for National Liberation (CNL) was born. Louie and Coni attended its founding congress on August 17 the same year, and were elected members of the National Executive Council. As the culminating activity of the CNL congress, they marched down the streets of Manila, ending in front of the Quiapo Church.

Coni remembers how the students who participated in the march shouted "*Imperyalismo!*" (Imperialism) and the religious shouted back, "*Ibagsak!*" (Dismantle).

"Then the students shouted, '*Sagot sa martial law!*' *Tinginan kaming lahat. Ano ba ang sagot sa martial law?*'" ("The solution to martial law!" We looked at each other, thinking, what IS the solution to martial law?) Coni recalls. "*Digmaan, digmaan, digmaang bayan!*' *pala ang sagot. Ngayon alam na namin ito!*" (The answer is 'People's war.' We know this now.)

When Martial Law was declared in September, the CNL went underground and became one of the allied organizations of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP). Coni also went underground and eventually left the convent.

Louie was still at the Bishop's House, but he practically considered himself discharged as a priest since he was spending more time outside with the masses than inside the church.

The night former president

Ferdinand Marcos set a curfew, he and other progressives wrote a manifesto denouncing martial law, made 5,000 copies which they planned to distribute during a protest action set the following day.

That same night, Louie found out that 15 men from the Philippine Constabulary (PC) and four agents of the Central Intelligence Service (CIS) were looking for him and other activists at the Bishop's House. The clerk and cook, whom the military men accosted, turned out to be sympathetic to the revolutionary movement and told the PC and CIS men that two American bishops were staying in Louie's room to keep them from searching it. The bishops were actually in the adjoining room. The raiders thus bypassed Louie's room – where the 5,000 manifesto leaflets were stored, thinking that the Americans were there.

Love and revolution

Louie went underground on Sept. 24. Thirty minutes after he went out of the Bishops' House, the PC troops led by their provincial commander surrounded the house, looking for him.

The martial law declaration was a decisive point for Louie and Coni. Their relationship was deeply linked to the revolutionary movement. "It grew and developed in our involvement in the struggle of the people," said Coni.

They had three weddings. The first was their wedding in the movement held in Negros in January 1973. Next was a civil wedding facilitated by a judge, then a church wedding officiated by Cardinal Jaime Sin, both in 1974.

Louie and Coni helped in the establishment and development of underground organizations in Negros. They found safe underground houses for comrades, held educational discussions, and assisted in the preparation of guerilla zones. Louie was also one of the initiators of the



Louie and Conie with Secretary Ermita during a peace conference in 2001

revolutionary publication *Paghimakas* (Struggle), which came out with its first issue in January 1973.

After a year in the underground, Louie and Coni, together with their other comrades were arrested. They were transferred to a detention center in San Carlos City in Cebu after three weeks in the Bacolod provincial jail. They were transported to Fort Bonifacio in Manila a week later and detained in separate cells.

Louie and Coni were released in August and July 1974 respectively, after almost a year of detention. It was the result of the campaign for the release of political prisoners.

It took only two days for them to communicate with comrades. Louie again became involved in education work with workers. They eventually set up the Church Labor Center. Coni worked as staff of the desk of Association of Major Religious Superiors in the Philippines (AMRSP) for sugar workers. Louie was involved in the famous La Tondeña strike, mobilizing church people and the youth to support the workers.

In 1975 after the La Tondeña strike, the military filed a case of rebellion, insurrection and conspiracy against the couple. After a hearing, with the late Jose W. Diokno serving as Louie's lawyer, two friends of Louie from the religious sector warned him of his possible arrest.

That night, he again went underground and stayed in a house near the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City.

The problem that time was the increasing cases of deaths, torture, disappearances and illegal arrests. At the same time protests against the Marcos dictatorship was also intensifying. Though there was a Party delegation in China and some progressive organizations in the US, there was a dearth abroad of news about the Philippines.

After 10 months in the underground, Louie and Coni were assigned international tasks by the NDFP. Aside from ensuring that developments in the Philippines reach the international community, they were tasked to establish solidarity relations with peoples, organizations and governments in behalf of the NDFP.

International work

"The mere thought of leaving the country with no definite timeframe and the uncertainty of what will confront us there made leaving difficult," Coni confessed. But they abided by the task given to them. Their son Pendong was then only five months old.

They were in the watch list of the government but they managed to secure a passport and travel under fictitious names.

The Jalandonis arrived in Holland

in December 1976. They sought political asylum, which was granted in 1988.

Louie and Coni gave talks on the Philippine situation and conducted study sessions on the Philippine revolution. In return, the solidarity group supported the national democratic struggle in the Philippines even to the extent of accepting tasks.

When the production of *Ang Bayan* became difficult in the Philippines, Edgar Jopson, then head of the NDFP Preparatory Commission, requested that the publication be reproduced and disseminated by comrades in Europe.

They would send out one handwritten copy to Holland. There, it would be typewritten and reproduced by the group. For security, they had to go to Belgium or Germany for the mailing out of copies to contacts worldwide. The group also campaigned to get support for the NPA.

In July 1977, Louie was officially designated as NDFP's international representative. He initially took on an after-office job while attending to political tasks. But in 1979, he quit and dedicated all of his time to the NDFP.

The NDFP established its office in Holland in 1983. But their presence in the office depends on the schedule of their meetings and other appointments. Coni tried to schedule her meetings in the afternoon so that she could still attend to family needs and do needed paper work. Even if sometimes they had to go to Utrecht or Amsterdam to meet comrades, they made sure that they could visit the office at least once to thrice a week.

Although there are many national-democratic organizations in Europe, the main task of conducting propaganda and solidarity work for the NDFP rested on the international office. Louie and Coni attended to several political activities and wrote a lot of solidarity messages to different organizations. In these

occasions, "we try to make use of all the opportunities to talk about the Philippines," Coni said.

Louie was finally able to visit the Philippines as NDF consultant in a short-lived ceasefire agreement between the government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the NDFP on December 10, 1986. It collapsed after the brutal killing of peasant rallyists at Mendiola on Jan. 22, 1987, known as the "Mendiola massacre." The need to leave his homeland again was difficult for Louie.

On the other hand, technological advances made some of their work easier and faster, and communications with comrades in the Philippines got regularized.

In some cases, they just email documents instead of printing or publishing them. Aside from being a faster medium, it also reaches a wider range of audience. Through facsimile and phones, they can provide the media with interviews on the position of the NDFP on various issues.

Coni belied the psywar propaganda of the reactionaries that they do not know what is happening in the Philippines. They read reports coming from the NDF Secretariat and NDF allied organizations based in the Philippines. They constantly discuss with comrades, relatives and friends from the homefront. Through the internet, they also get to read fresh news and even listen to radio reports online concerning the Philippines. Also, with the Joint Agreement on Security and Immunity Guarantees (JASIG), they could visit the country.

During one meeting of the peace panels of the GRP and the NDFP the latter presented a pile of documents about a highly militarized area in Mindanao, a GRP member told them, "*Mas alam pa ninyo ang sitwasyon sa Davao, kesa sa akin* (You know the situation in Davao better than we

do)," recalled Coni.

Commitment

Coni also sits in the NDFP peace negotiating panel and serves as the international representative of the Malayang Kilusan ng Bagong Kababaihan or Makibaka, an NDFP allied organization of women. She stressed that abroad one must have a strong commitment to the struggle in order to continue doing political work. "*Doon kung walang kikilos walang mangyayari, walang suporta para sa Pilipinas, hindi mag-a-arise spontaneously ang suporta para sa Pilipinas. Kaya lahat ino-organize yan.* (If nobody moves or acts abroad, nothing will happen, and support for the Philippines will not arise spontaneously. Everything has to be organized)."

So it's a challenge for anyone outside the Philippines to be politically active and to sustain one's political activity. There is always the temptation to take the opportunity to live a leisurely life abroad. "Though not all could be full-time activists, I admire the comrades' resolve to perform political tasks despite family life and jobs," according to Coni.

For Louie and Coni, commitment to the national democratic movement is an inherent part of their lives. Pendong, their son who finished law from the University of Amsterdam in 2002, provides legal aide to Filipinos.

Coni recounted how a comrade kidded Pendong about being his future legal counsel. At present, Pendong helps in the research on Prof. Jose Maria Sison's case. Indeed, Louie and Coni's commitment to serve the people is slowly being imbibed by Pendong who, they proudly say, is their personal contribution to the next generation of Filipino activists. (By Toni Hernandez) ▲

REVOLUTIONARY TEACHERS IN 2004:

‘Here Again’

By Jacinto Maypag-asa

THE EVENT IS MORE THAN A QUARTER YEAR PAST, but those who were there or knew about it by other ways still talk about it.

The journalists requested to cover the activity had been advised that something big was going to happen at 8 a.m. in front of the Bustillos Church in Sampaloc, Manila on March 28. But 8 a.m. had come, and then 8:10, and the event was still to be.

All the while though, they could observe a group of men and women huddled in a corner, wearing dark glasses. Some had their heads covered with bandanas or scarves. By the way they kept looking around, they appeared to be testing the waters, so to speak.

At about 8:15 they marched in front of the church – in full view of some barangay *tanods* (community security men) – and send through the air a reverberating “Viva CPP-NPA-NDF!”

They brought out placards and distributed copies of an article from *Ang Bayan*, the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP)’s official publication, as they marched.

They stood in front of the church for about three minutes, chanting: “Long live the CPP! Long live the NPA! Long live the NDF!” Then one of them, a big stocky man, yelled out the command for the group to leave.



As they were leaving a petite woman shouted, “Long live Kaguma!”

By this time the journalists were already having a field day taking photos of the event – which would appear in the next day’s newspapers. Still, some of them could not help turning to each other, asking: “Pare, what’s Kaguma?”

What’s Kaguma, indeed?

That same day they would learn that Kaguma is the *Katipunan ng mga Gurong Makabayan*, a revolutionary underground organization of teachers and education students, an allied organization of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP).

Kaguma organizes teachers and educators in propagating a patriotic, scientific and mass-based culture and education system, and in fighting for the interest of the sector within the context of the national-democratic

revolution. It propagates the national and democratic aspirations and struggles of the Filipino people inside and outside the classroom. Kaguma gathers political and material support for the revolutionary armed struggle, even deploying cadres and members to the countryside.

At the same time, it works with the NPA in literacy, numeracy and other alternative education programs in the countryside – where people can reach the age of 60 without ever seeing the inside of a classroom.

The placards proclaimed the 33rd anniversary of Kaguma and the 35th anniversary of the New People’s Army, which was to fall the following day.

It was the group’s first-ever lightning rally, according to Kaguma Chairperson Ka Cesar Magturo, who gave a media interview after the event. The revolutionary teachers’ movement

is “here again,” he had told a journalist, and the lightning rally was Kaguma’s way of marking it.

Invaluable role

Kaguma was correct in considering its 33rd anniversary a momentous occasion, after all that it had been through since 1971.

Starting out as a legal organization fighting for the rights and welfare of teachers within the context of the national democratic mass struggle, it was outlawed upon the declaration of martial law the following year.

Thereupon it was transformed into a revolutionary underground organization. Many of its members performed clandestine revolutionary work in the cities and town centers; others took to the hills and joined the NPA. Kaguma would later become one of the founding member organizations of the NDFP in 1973.

Kaguma contributed significantly to the ouster of the US-Marcos fascist dictatorship in 1986.

In the post-Marcos period, Kaguma came under the unfavorable influences of insurrectionism and economism. This caused the organization a number of major tactical and strategic setbacks, including the near decimation of its ranks.

With the Second Great Rectification Movement launched by the CPP in 1992, Kaguma summed-up its work and expelled the leaders who promoted factionalism while refusing to recognize their errors. It re-established links with members who had laid low during the pre-rectification stage. It worked hard to improve its organizing work.

Kaguma’s rectification efforts succeeded, according to Ka Gary, a Kaguma National Council member who was interviewed with Ka Cesar. He revealed that from almost total obliteration, Kaguma now has thousands of members



all over the country.

Kaguma, as an organization of teachers and educators, plays a particularly significant part in advancing the national democratic revolution with a socialist perspective.

CPP founding chair Jose Maria Sison, himself a former teacher, said in his book, *Struggle for National Democracy which was published in 1966*: “The movement of events in this nation and in the whole world is so rapid. We who presume to be teachers must be constantly alert students or else our schools will become isolated purveyors of outmoded thoughts and illusion. If the teacher fails to update the content and quality of his teaching, he will surely fail to prepare his students for a fruitful and practical struggle. The surge of the national democratic revolution will certainly expose their ineptitude and inadequacies. The teacher who doggedly allows himself to be bound by traditional relations, methods and illusions becomes an instrument of reaction. It is now our duty to reexamine and repudiate the structure of thinking that exploiting nations and exploiting classes have built into our educational system.”

He also wrote in 1988 that teachers make up the most widely spread but concentrated segment of the Philippine intelligentsia, which has an important and decisive role in preparing public opinion for the national democratic revolution on a nationwide scale.

Sixteen years later, Ka Gary pointed out that teachers still make up the largest Philippine profession. There are 500,000 teachers all over the Philippines at present.

Teachers are also very influential in the community, emphasized Ka Cesar. “When you are a teacher, it is not only

the students you are able to influence, but also their parents.”

2004

Aside from being a show of force for Kaguma, the March 28 lightning rally foreshadowed the significance of the teachers’ struggle in the Philippines, of which Kaguma is a significant and active participant.

Less than two months later, teachers would serve in the presidential elections. The polls once again highlighted the sorry fact of teachers being severely overworked and grossly underpaid. A lot of the country’s teachers work in public schools, which suffer from insufficient funds, courtesy of a government that considers “debts” to imperialism and the fascist military higher budgetary priorities than education, a basic people’s right.

In the weeks leading to the election, there was a vigorous broad campaign for credible and peaceful polls. Teachers were among the most prominent in this campaign.

In the weeks after the election, teachers worked with the Church and other sectors in exposing election-related fraud and violence. They joined fact-finding missions and were able to document various instances of poll fraud and violence. The documentation they undertook with other sectors, which were concerned with credible and peaceful elections, served to belie the government’s claim that Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, who was proclaimed as the winner, had the people’s mandate.

Come June, teachers rallied with their students against the perennial problem of tuition fee hikes and the continuously deteriorating quality of the imperialist-imposed educational program.

From the underground, Kaguma was in the midst of all these, its members successfully encouraging their fellow teachers to take part in these campaigns. With that, Ka Cesar can indeed rightly say that the revolutionary teachers’ movement is “here again.” ▲

Chronic Financial Crisis and The Way Out



By Prof. Jose Ma. Sison
Chief Political Consultant, National Democratic Front of the Philippines

**The economists and propagandists serving every reactionary regime
never cease to sing the virtues of staying within the bounds of the economic,
financial and trade policies dictated by the United States and such US-
controlled multilateral agencies.**

The Problem: Chronic Financial Crisis

The subject of chronic financial crisis in the Philippines is complex enough. But the puppet politicians and their retinue of economists and propagandists make it appear as far more complex than it is by obscuring its root causes. Out of fear, habitual ignorance or craven dishonesty, they conceal above all the principal responsibility of the US imperialists or finance capitalists for the chronic and current economic and financial crisis.

Usually, puppet politicians blame each other for corruption and wanton spending. However, to evade or mitigate their major share of culpability, they sometimes refer to the crisis of the US and world capitalist system as the cause of the Philippine economic and financial crisis. Of course, they do not mention the fact that they are willing puppets who benefit from the status quo and accept the economic and financial bondage of the Philippines to foreign monopoly capitalism.

The economists and propagandists serving every reactionary regime never cease to sing the virtues of staying within the bounds of the economic, financial and trade policies dictated by the United States and such US-controlled multilateral agencies as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Since the time that the Philippines became a US colony in the early years of the 20th century, the US imperialists have ensured political control of the Filipino people through acts and threats of military and police suppression. This has enabled them to hold the Philippine economy in their vise, keeping it pre-industrial, agrarian and semifeudal, afflicted by chronic budgetary and trade deficits and therefore ever vulnerable to foreign indebtedness and financial manipulation.

Since their grant of nominal independence to the Philippines in 1946, after reconquering it from the Japanese fascists, the US imperialists have conceded national administration to the politicians of the big compradors and landlords but maintained a strong grip

on the levers of political, military, economic, financial and cultural control over the people.

Among such levers of control, what the imperialist master considers the smartest is financial. This is supposed to be the most effective tool of neocolonialism, in combination with the other tools, especially in ever prostrate economically backward colonies or semicolonies like the Philippines. Financial control by the foreign monopoly capitalists negates or hollows out the substance of what the rulers of the semicolonial client state claim as political and economic independence.

What differentiates modern imperialism or monopoly capitalism from old style colonialism in the period of free competition capitalism is the growing importance of the export of capital over the export of goods. Basically, the export of capital from the imperialist country to the Philippines takes two forms: direct investments for internal control of the client economy and indirect investments or loans to the puppet state and to private entities. Ultimately, the superprofits drawn from direct investments and the servicing of loans far exceed any new capital export from the imperialist countries.

The US has gained control over the Philippine economy by using various kinds of financial instruments. Let me mention some at crucial points in Philippine history. After conquering the Philippines, the US colonial authorities floated bonds on Wall Street in order to pay the costs for the invasion and occupation of the Philippines and collected taxes from the Filipino people in order to redeem these bonds. The US would get far more in return after paying Spain USD 20 million for the Philippines.

After reconquering the Philippines from Japan at the end of World War II, US war damage payments to the Philippines were made mainly to US firms to assist these in rebuilding their plants and inventories. The rest went to the puppet government and private claimants, both of which promptly spent the money for consumption, especially the importation of consumption goods.

After the basic recovery of the Philippines economy from the ravages of World War II, the first big financial

The Arroyo regime is deaf to proposals for a review, not to mention reversal, of the policy of automatic appropriations for debt payments and adherence to the impositions of foreign monopoly capital.

crisis in the Philippine semicolony occurred when in 1949 the foreign exchange reserves amounting to USD 2 billion (mostly from war damage payments) were depleted. The trade deficit had widened because of unbridled importations of consumer goods. Austerity measures had to be adopted.

The US conceded for a while up to 1959 to the puppet government the institution of foreign exchange controls and the establishment of so-called import-substitution industries. These encouraged Filipino entrepreneurs to raise the demand for national industrialization. Even the Garcia regime espoused the “Filipino First” policy. The US reacted by cutting off loans from the US Export-Import Bank and US private banks, thus causing a financial crisis. This destabilized the Garcia regime in 1960 and paved the way for Macapagal to get US support for ensuring his election to the presidency.

Thus, it was the Macapagal regime that proclaimed the full decontrol policy, which enabled the US monopoly firms to remit superprofits freely and legally. This policy caused the first big devaluation of the peso. The trade deficits widened from year to year as the importation of consumer goods increased. The regime touted a “land reform” program and an integrated steel mill project but failed to develop the economy as a whole. It used the slogan of “free enterprise” to mean further opening up the economy to foreign monopolies. The USD 200 million foreign debt at the end of the Garcia regime reached USD 600 million at the end of the Macapagal regime.

The Marcos regime adopted and implemented the “development plans” designed for the Philippines by the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank (ADB). These plans involved using domestic resources, Japanese reparations and foreign loans for rapid and massive infrastructure projects and encouraging foreign monopoly firms to invest in raw material production (sugar and coconut mills) and mining mills (copper and nickel). The regime did not carry out any real program of land reform and national industrialization despite bombastic pretenses. It used colossal foreign borrowing in the name of development in order to favor big comprador enterprises and undercut the people’s demand for national industrialization.

After the declaration of martial law in 1972, the regime engaged in unbridled foreign borrowing. This

went on under the encouragement of the World Bank, even as the inability of the Philippines to repay the loans became more and more obvious. The IMF offered special drawing rights, debt restructuring and structural adjustment plans, always demanding more incentives to foreign investments and ensuring foreign capital repatriation, profit remittances, state guarantees for private debt and priority for debt servicing. Ultimately, the regime pushed foreign debt to the level of USD 27.2 billion at the time of the Marcos fall. In addition, it left a local public debt of PhP 144.4 billion.

The flow of international credit started to slow down after 1979 when the crisis of overproduction in raw materials began to hit hard the third world countries, including the Philippines. The US policy makers began to criticize the World Bank policy of undertaking “Keynesian” official lending for infrastructure building and enhancing raw material production. They began to favor a monetarist and neoliberal policy of using high interest rates to attract global funds to the US.

The Philippines suffered a severe financial crisis in 1983. By then, the foreign debt level had reached USD 24.6 billion. Exports in sugar, coconut and copper concentrate fell. The favored construction and related firms floundered. The Marcos regime had to declare a moratorium on foreign debt payments. This combined with the public outrage over the killing of Aquino to mark the beginning of the rapid fall of the fascist regime.

The Aquino regime tried to take new foreign loans but could not get much beyond the amount needed to service the accumulated foreign debt, cover the growing trade deficits and buttress government deficit spending. It harped on the slogans of free market and import liberalization. It did not undertake genuine land reform and national industrialization. It could not borrow much from abroad because global funds were attracted to the US by high interest rates and investment returns. It had to resort to local public borrowing, thus local public debt rose to PhP 521 billion in 1992. Foreign debt at the end of Aquino regime stood at USD 29.9 billion.

The Ramos regime surpassed the rate of both local and foreign borrowing by the Marcos regime that under its 20-year watch had accumulated some PhP 144 billion in domestic debt and USD 26.6 billion in foreign debt. In only six years, local public debt ballooned to PhP 922

billion and foreign debt to more than USD 45 billion. The regime's so-called medium term development program completely ignored land reform and national industrialization.

It used the local public debt to increase graft-ridden spending for the benefit of "independent power producers", special projects of various sorts, infrastructure related to private real estate projects and state purchases of computers and vehicles. It used the foreign loans to cover the trade deficits that were due to high import costs of components for the so-called export-oriented low value-added semi-manufacturing and to finance a boom in private construction, which went bust in the Southeast Asia-wide financial crisis of 1997. The foreign loans came mainly from foreign commercial banks.

Since 1997, the Philippines has been in a protracted and unprecedentedly severe financial crisis. This was clearly due to an unrelieved crisis of overproduction in the types of goods for export (raw materials and low value-added semimanufactures) to the industrial capitalist countries and in the overcapacity generated by the private construction boom. The financial crisis has followed from the crisis of overproduction and the failure to pay the loans. Ramos was complicit with the imperialists in further bankrupting the economy and making the people suffer. Ironically, the reactionaries still tout him as a great manager.

The Estrada regime was in dire financial straits from the very beginning because of the economic and financial state left by the Ramos regime. At any rate, it was still able to push the foreign debt level to USD 50 billion and the local public debt level to PhP 1.068 trillion at year

end 2000. The new foreign loans were used for servicing the accumulated foreign debt and covering new trade deficits. With less foreign funds to manipulate for serving his corrupt ends, Estrada turned to local public borrowing, raiding social security funds for financing scams and collecting cash from the numbers game and other forms of gambling.

Focus on the Arroyo Regime

So long as it can still borrow from domestic sources and from abroad, a puppet regime would not admit that the Philippines has a chronic financial crisis. But now the crisis has become so severe that the Arroyo regime cannot deny it. The widespread collapse of enterprises, massive unemployment, depressed incomes, peso devaluation, inflation due to scarcity of basic goods, declining social services and other realities expose the grave economic and financial crisis.

Foreign debt under the Arroyo regime is USD 56.3 billion as of end June 2004 and is expected to reach almost USD 60 billion by the end of this year. The local public debt is PhP 1.833 trillion. In so short a time, the Arroyo regime raised the foreign debt by USD 6.3 billion and the local public debt by PhP 765 billion. The accumulated debt will continue to rise to new levels because new foreign loans are used to service foreign debt and cover budgetary and trade deficits. The Arroyo regime has made debt payments amounting to PhP 358 billion in 2002, PhP 425.7 billion in 2003, and has earmarked PhP 542 billion in 2004. It has claimed that in 2005 it can make PhP 310 billion and PhP 385 billion respectively in interest and principal payments or a total of PhP 695 billion.

Clearly, the "normal" or "non-crisis" situation, from



the viewpoint of reactionary regimes, is for the debt payments to increase as foreign debt correspondingly increases. Despite all these, the balance of payments, which takes into account loans and debt repayments, as well as the trade balance of goods and services and transfers such as OFW remittances, is still projected to be at a deficit of PhP 600 billion in 2004.

The IMF prescription is for the Arroyo puppet regime to give priority to automatic appropriations for servicing the accumulated foreign debt, to raise the tax burden, to reduce deficit spending and adopt austerity measures at the expense of the people in an already devastated economy supposedly in order to counter inflation due to scarcity of goods and the printing of money. The regime is frenziedly trying to con the Filipino people into accepting more and higher taxes, more wage cuts and freezes, more cuts on the already deteriorated social services, the privatization of government-controlled corporations and the assumption of their debts by the state, especially the colossal debts of the National Power Corporation.

Arroyo's economic managers claim that the regime would be able to raise additional revenues and cut this year's gargantuan P200 billion government deficit to more manageable levels, continue to making bigger debt payments, and thereby convince the IMF-WB and foreign commercial creditors of its ability to incur more and bigger debts.

The Arroyo regime is silent on losses due to rampant and high-level graft and corruption and the tax evasion by the wealthiest and most rapacious big compradors and landlords. Conservative estimates place losses due to graft and corruption at P100 - 120 billion annually. The most recent and most serious charges of graft and corruption have involved not only members of Macapagal-Arroyo's official family such as the alleged \$14 M IMPSA

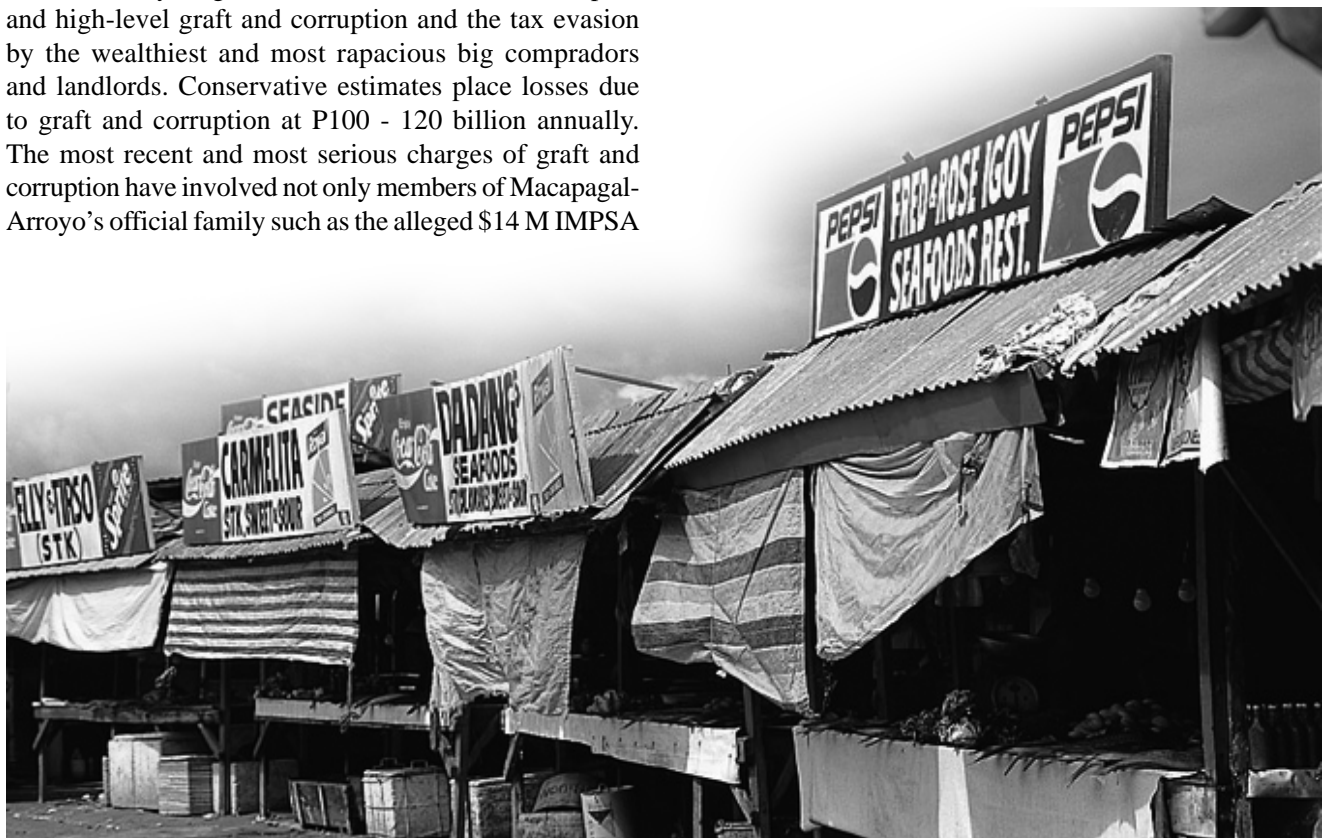
scam bribe and P1.1 B GSIS loan to PEA for the Macapagal Highway, by members no less of Macapagal-Arroyo's immediate first family.

The Arroyo regime is deaf to proposals for a review, not to mention reversal, of the policy of automatic appropriations for debt payments and adherence to the impositions of foreign monopoly capital. It persists in imposing new and higher taxes in accordance with IMF-WB and WTO prescriptions and impositions.

The fact is that time is fast running out on the Arroyo regime and the people are bound to rise up and resist the blatantly anti-people and anti-national policies and pretended solutions which are in fact further impositions and exactions. These so-called solutions will only aggravate the situation and exacerbate the suffering of the entire nation.

The Arroyo regime blames the crisis on an unfavorable international economic situation, and on the large deficits and debts that its predecessors incurred. But the main point of Arroyo is to conceal from the public her own culpability for subservience to the interests of foreign monopoly capitalism and the local exploiting classes and for taking the path of surpassing the rates reached by her predecessors in local and foreign borrowing and in further sinking the Philippine economy into bankruptcy and beggary.

The Arroyo regime fails to mention all the root causes



Acting in subservience to US imperialism, the Arroyo regime is imposing on the Philippines all the US policy dictates on the economy, finance and other matters.

of the financial crisis: foreign domination of the economy, feudal backwardness, and bureaucrat-capitalism. The current regime, like all its predecessors, conceals the culpability of US and other foreign monopoly capitalists in keeping the Philippine economy agrarian and pre-industrial, with the collaboration of bureaucrat capitalists who are themselves big compradors and landlords.

Foreign monopoly and feudal exploitation of the people over the past century has resulted in economic stagnation, chronic crisis, the absence of basic industries, chronic trade and current accounts deficits, deepening indebtedness, and a quagmire of poverty and misery into which more and more of the toiling masses are forced to flounder. Even the doctored and manipulated government statistics would reveal that the percentages of employment in the industrial and manufacturing sectors have not increased over the past four decades but have in fact steadily decreased from 16.5% (industrial) and 12% (manufacturing) in 1970 to 15.1% and 9.2% respectively in 2003. Further underdevelopment and worsening crisis have pushed more than 80% of the population below the poverty line.

The Arroyo regime refuses to admit that the Philippine economy has further deteriorated and has been stricken with an unprecedented crisis after being brought into the WTO under the neoliberal policy of “free market” globalization. It must be recalled that it was through a legislation sponsored by then Senator Macapagal Arroyo that Philippine entry into the WTO was effected.

“Free market” globalization enabled the foreign monopoly capitalists to plunder with utmost rapacity the third world economies and to degrade the so-called “tiger” and “emergent” economies and weaker capitalist countries. The result has been the rapid reconcentration of capital into the hands of a few giant monopoly capitalists in the US principally and in the two other centers of capitalism, Europe and Japan; and the consequent devastation of the third world and retrogressive countries, which continue to sink in the ocean of foreign debt and poverty.

Third world countries are being crushed by a mounting debt burden. Total third world debt amounts to US\$ 3 trillion. Debt service, the ratio of debt to GNP, and the ratio of debt service to exports have rapidly increased over the decades, as the following table shows:

	1970	1980	1990	2000
Third World debt	72.8	609.4	1,458.4	2,492.0
Debt service	9.2	93.4	163.8	398.9
Debt/GNP ratio	10.9	21.0	34.1	39.1
Debt service/exports		13.5	18.1	18.1

(Source: WB, Global Development Finance, different years)

For the Philippines, the average debt-to-GDP ratio from 1972 to 1980's was 15%. From 1980 to 1986, it had shot up from 19% to 55.6%, to 67.1% in 1993 and 77.3 % in 2003. Clearly, the 1990s figures were way above the third world average.

Even as the US and other imperialist countries enjoy the privileges of power within the WTO, they are nonetheless afflicted by economic and financial crisis arising from the inherent contradictions of capitalism. Japan and Europe were struck hard by the crisis of overproduction and recession in the wake of the 1997 Asian financial crisis. Then, the “high tech bubble” burst in the US in 2000. Since then, the global depression has worsened, driving the major imperialist powers all the more to intensify the exploitation and oppression of the proletariat and people of the world. At the same time, they have heightened their own competition and contention.

The worsening crisis of the world capitalist system has driven the US to become ever more rapacious and violent, to the detriment of the proletariat and people and even its imperialist allies. The US has been trying to stimulate its economy by giving tax cuts to the monopoly bourgeoisie and stepping up military production. Relatedly, it is whipping up repression on a global scale under the pretext of anti-terrorism and launching wars of aggression in order to assert hegemony and seize sources of raw materials (especially oil), markets, fields of investment and spheres of influence.

Acting in subservience to US imperialism, the Arroyo regime is imposing on the Philippines all the US policy dictates on the economy, finance and other matters. Thus the crisis of the US and world capitalist system will continue to worsen the crisis of the Philippine ruling system. There is no way out for the Filipino people but to fight for their national and democratic rights and interests in a comprehensive way against US imperialism and the local puppets.

... there can be no end to the chronic economic and financial crisis and to the monopoly capitalists' practice of international usury, unless the entire nation, especially the toiling masses of workers and peasants, are able to wield power.

The Solution: *Reforms and Revolution*

The broad masses of the people demand the strengthening and completion of the struggle for national liberation and democracy, the cancellation of all fraudulent and odious foreign loans benefiting the foreign and local exploiters, the confiscation of ill-gotten assets obtained through such loans and the termination of the puppet law providing automatic appropriations servicing foreign debt. They know that there can be no end to the chronic economic and financial crisis and to the monopoly capitalists' practice of international usury, unless the entire nation, especially the toiling masses of workers and peasants, are able to wield power.

The comprehensive solution to the chronic economic and financial crisis is for the Filipino people themselves to gain power by fighting for national and social liberation, undo the dominance of US imperialism, domestic feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism, uphold national sovereignty and independence, defend economic sovereignty and national patrimony and undertake economic and social development through genuine land reform and national industrialization.

There are various ideas on how to carry out the solution. These include carrying out the electoral struggle to put into office good men and women who will push the necessary reforms, using the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations to forge agreements on reforms and arrive at truce and alliance against common problems, changing the present regime through a peaceful mass uprising in order to put up a new government that would undertake reforms and overthrowing the ruling system through armed revolution in order to make a social revolution.

1. Let us consider electoral struggle. It is possible to put into executive and legislative offices some good men and women. They can advocate economic, financial and other reforms and in the process expose the rottenness and puppetry of those who oppose these as well as the entire ruling system. However, they need to be aware that the US and the local exploiting classes will always seek to ensure the overwhelming dominance of the rabid reactionaries and buy off or discredit those who seek to change or challenge the fundamentals of the system.

A good indicator of the rottenness and subservience of the local wielders of power in the semicolonial and

semifeudal system is the fact that the presidential decree of Marcos providing for automatic appropriations for debt servicing remains a law more than 18 years after his fall, through one presidential successor to another and one Congress to another. This is not proof of how powerful is the ghost of Marcos. This is proof of how powerful is the US master over its series of puppets with regard to economic and financial policy.

A very small number of national executive and legislative officials express patriotic and progressive views. The US and the ruling politicians see them as ineffectual against the scheme to amend the 1987 constitution for the purpose of undercutting civil and political liberties, removing the nationality provisions that seek to limit foreign investments and paving the way for the return of US military bases and the deployment of foreign troops on the Philippines. They are pushing the scheme under the guise of changing the form of government from presidential to parliamentary and shielding the Arroyo regime from a people's mass uprising similar to those against Marcos in 1986 and against Estrada in 2001.

2. Let us consider the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations. The NDFP can clarify and ventilate the reforms that need to be adopted and implemented. The objective is to work out comprehensive agreements in economic, social, political and constitutional reforms and go for a truce and alliance against common problems or inimical forces. But these negotiations are easily subject to sabotage by the US and its worst puppets.

Right now, the NDFP wishes to negotiate social and economic reforms. With regard to economic and financial policy, the objective of the NDFP is to persuade the GRP to agree on the adoption of certain measures to protect the people from the devastating consequences of the policy dictates of the US and such US-dominated multilateral agencies as the IMF, World Bank and WTO. The Philippine government in the 1950s adopted some of these measures to some extent. In recent times, China and Malaysia have been able to hold their ground against the worst US and IMF dictates on financial policy. But so far, the Macapagal Arroyo regime is tightly bound to US dictates and the myth of "free market" globalization.

The rabid puppets of the US imperialists in the Arroyo

cabinet and in the military as well as agents of clerico-fascism are in control of the GRP side of negotiations and are blocking the progress of the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations. They endorse, condone and applaud US imperialism for listing the Communist Party of the Philippines, New People's Army and the NDFP chief political consultant as "terrorists". They agree to the US violation of the national sovereignty of the Filipino people and to the usurpation of jurisdiction over the internal affairs of the Philippines. They attack the safety and immunity guarantees for duly-authorized persons in the peace negotiations. They connive with the US in using the "terrorist" label to violate human rights in general and the Hernandez political offense doctrine in Philippine jurisprudence in particular.

3. Let us consider how a broad united front can replace the Arroyo regime. It is possible for a people's uprising to occur as it did in 1986 and 2001 in order to remove the incumbent ruling clique from power, and to install a new government that is patriotic and progressive, enjoying the support of the broad masses of the people and a broad range of forces bound by a program of reforms similar to those envisioned by the Movement for the Advancement of Nationalism in 1966. I think that the NDFP would be open to such a possibility.

Recently, I have publicly exchanged views with the distinguished nationalist economist Alejandro Lichauco on how to confront the chronic all-round rottenness and crisis of the ruling system and how to constitute a new government that can be the instrument for realizing the people's demands for national independence, democracy,

development, social justice and peace. May I reiterate my view that all patriotic and progressive forces can try working together in forming a united front government, which includes the real and sincere representatives of workers, peasants and the middle social strata as well as the civil bureaucrats and military personnel who criticize and repudiate the corruption and subservience of the ruling politicians to the US.

If such a government can arise, the question of economic and financial policy can be resolved along the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal line. It is possible for the working people and the middle social strata, represented in such a government, to agree on a firm policy of canceling all fraudulent and odious foreign debts, undertaking genuine land reform and national industrialization and strengthening diplomatic and economic relations with the ASEAN, China and Japan as well as Russia, France and Germany against the hegemony of the US.

4. Let us consider the new democratic revolution through people's war. It has been going on since 1969. It aims at the armed seizure of political power in order to carry out the all-round social revolution of the working people and the middle social strata. It is the people's ever available and effective method for achieving optimal results.

It is extremely difficult or impossible to achieve basic reforms (like the end of foreign monopoly domination, land reform and national industrialization) within the ruling system because the US and the exploiting classes of big compradors and landlords wield powerful instruments of violence against the people. Thus, the people have chosen the path of armed revolution and built their own revolutionary army on order to carry out a new democratic revolution, with a socialist perspective.

Only when the workers, peasants and the middle social strata have won power would they be able to adopt and implement an economic and financial policy that defends economic sovereignty and the national patrimony, abolishes completely the dominance of imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism, develops the economy on a self-reliant basis through centralized planning and carries forward an independent foreign policy of promoting international solidarity, development, fair and equitable economic relations among all countries and fostering world peace. ▲



TRIBUTE

Life and struggles of revolutionary martyrs

Her Short Life was Like A Thousand Years

By Jacinto Maypag-asa

NO ONE WHO KNEW LOURDES “JENG” CRISOSTOMO expected her to get sick with cancer and die of it when she did. At 41, Jeng still had the very bubbly personality and overwhelming zest for life of one just in the peak of youth.

And what else is age 41 but a small step after youth? Jeng was still too young to die, and comrades were rightly saddened and enraged that she had died last Aug. 31 in the manner that she did.

But we, and the masses she served with the full measure of her strength and talent, can take consolation in the fact that short as her life was, it was as though she had lived more than the cat’s mythical nine lives.

Jeng started serving the people at the age of 16, as an activist in the youth & student movement. It was the martial law period and she had a few brushes with the fascist police. In 1980 she was arrested in a rally against oil price hikes.

She was in prison with some of the top cadres of the revolutionary underground, and from them she learned the ropes, so to speak – even as she stayed with them for less than a year.

After her release, Jeng embarked on an integration program with Red fighters in the Cordillera region.

She would afterward return to the city whence she came. She and a few others stayed in an underground (UG) house somewhere in Metro Manila, distributing educational and propaganda materials for the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP).

This early she exhibited in her work the traits that would make her stand out for the rest of her life.

Full of energy and enthusiasm. Resourceful. Creative. These are the words invariably used to describe Jeng by comrades who had the pleasure of working with her.

Hers was a mind that forever cooked up ways to perform her tasks more effectively.

For instance, on what looked like a very ordinary day in the UG house, Jeng – straight out of the blue – asked a comrade, “Let’s collect *kaning-baboy* (pig slop) from the neighbors.”

“Whatever do you need *kaning-baboy* for?” the astounded comrade shot back.

“If we collect *kaning-baboy* from the neighbors, we can do SI



(social investigation) among them,” she quickly replied. And how right she was, the comrade realized.

She was able to gather news about what was happening around them by befriending the *istambays* (the unemployed who hang around street corners) and the tricycle drivers in the community where their UG house was located. And she was able to do all that without betraying her real identity or that of the others in her collective!

All this facilitated the not-so-easy work that their collective had to do.

Jeng was always interested in learning new things, it is said of her. She tried to learn, and learned successfully, the basics of writing from a comrade editing revolutionary publications. She would often inspect gadgets like the electric fan and the mimeographing machine to see how they worked.

Not only that, they say: she was willing to undertake several tasks all at once – from the simplest chores to the most mind-boggling and painstaking work – to get the

important things done right away. She had the almost boundless energy for that, and that energy she poured into her work.

Aside from that she was artistically inclined, having considerable skills in music, silkscreen design – and yes, she danced so well despite being a bit on the plump side. She would find good use for all this later in life.

There was a period when Jeng was based in the countryside, doing communication work for the Party. She also became a member of a staff unit of the Party's National United Front Commission.

It was while she was underground that Jeng got married and gave birth to her two sons. Her second son is a special child.

Desirous of personally attending to her second son's special needs, Jeng decided to surface and go back to school. She went back to school, completing her Education course in 1987 with high honors. After graduation her college immediately hired her as a teacher.

The things she learned from her university studies would come in very handy as she helped her second son face the demands of mental development and schooling.

Even then, Jeng never lost ties with comrades in the movement. Whenever the need arose she contributed whatever she could to the revolution.

When her second son had attained a more-than-satisfactory level of competence, she went into full-time organizing in the teachers' movement.

She maintained her legal status even as she eventually resumed performing some tasks for the revolutionary underground.



Forty-one years is too short a life, especially for one who loved life so much she could not even think of living it “like a tree without a shadow,”

Later on she would be tasked with campaign coordination work in one of the key organizations of the legal democratic movement, and after that she moved to organizing and cultural work in the progressive women's movement.

It was in this period that she gave vent to her artistic acumen – both to complement her political work and to contribute to her family's finances.

Just a little over a month before her death, she was still her ever-bubbly self, always on the go “like a

kiti-kiti (a wriggler)” as comrades would describe her in good-natured jest.

But around that time she started to complain that she felt like she was developing an ulcer, “maybe from often eating only instant noodles,” she would tell comrades. But ulcer it was not: it was pancreatic cancer, and it quickly spread to other parts of her body.

On Aug. 31, she was gone, but not from our memory and love.

Even as she lay on her deathbed, she was thinking of how to help others. She donated her eyes when she learned that she was terminally ill.

Her love of country was equaled only by her love for her family. It was her most ardent dream to see upon our land a society in which all are free and equal, where children like her sons are assured of the brightest future. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo should stop calling herself *Ina ng Bayan* because by doing so she shamelessly debases a title that most properly belongs to the likes of Lourdes “Jeng” Crisostomo.

Forty-one years is too short a life, especially for one who loved life so much she could not even think of living it “like a tree without a shadow,” in the words of the revolutionary philosopher-poet Emilio Jacinto. But considering the dedication with which she poured her strength and talent into the service of the masses and the advancement of their revolutionary quest for national and social emancipation, even while attending to her family's urgent needs, her 41 years were like a thousand years. ▲

TRIBUTE

Life and struggles of revolutionary martyrs

Shaped in Revolutionary Mass Work and Struggle



LANKY, FAIR-SKINNED, AND GOOD-LOOKING, JOSELITO “JOJO” TALENS was often teased by comrades and family as a “Piolo Pascual look-alike”. Added to that, he was witty, played the guitar excellently and had a good singing voice — definitely “showbiz material.” But Jojo, known as Ka Ivan/Boyot/Bing was made of sterner stuff.

Ka Ivan belonged to a middle petty bourgeois family of professionals who run their own business, have well-paying jobs and lead comfortable lives. But Ka Ivan had dedicated his mind, talent and skills to revolutionary mass work, and had prepared himself for revolutionary sacrifice. It was in the service of the people that he died, in an encounter with the fascist military in San Felipe, Zambales on March 9. He gave his life along side with seven other comrades: Anabel Rivera or Ka Dea, Ka Emil, Ka Ezie, Ka Cris, Ka Marco and Ka Henry.

“*Akala ko, matapang na ako* (I thought I was already tough),” said Ka Ivan’s father, a politician in Nueva Ecija, at his tribute. “*Pero dinaig ako ng anak ko...* (But my son proved to be tougher)” he said, stopped in mid-sentence by tears. He was the one who received his son’s remains at their home in Cabiao, Nueva Ecija. Ka Ivan’s body showed he succumbed to shots in the head, chest and body. He was 39.

Find the solution to the problem

Ka Ivan was a second year dentistry student at the University of the East in 1982 when he became a member of an organization of Nueva

Ecija students. He was recruited to the Kabataang Makabayan (KM) in 1983. As an activist, he became enlightened with the solution to society’s ills, thus Ka Ivan committed himself to the revolutionary struggle.

A close female friend and comrade in KM recalled how as a student activist, Ka Ivan never let himself be stumped by problems. He simply sought to find the proper solution, then he carried on with his work.

Ka Ivan was recruited as a candidate member of the Communist Party of the Philippines in 1985. About the same time, he returned to his home province of Nueva Ecija where he strived to put into practice Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, remold his petty bourgeois ways and adhere to the proletarian principles, perspective and style of work. Two years later in 1987, he took oath as a full-fledged member of the Party. From 1985 to June 1987, Ka Ivan was one of the key cadres in the provincial youth staff organ in Nueva Ecija.

In June 1987, Ka Ivan, then 22 years old, decided to join the New People’s Army (NPA) and pursue the revolutionary armed struggle in the countryside.

The years 1987 to 1989 were the height of the implementation of the “Strategic Counter-Offensive” or SCO. The erroneous political line aimed for victory through military offensives in the countryside and insurrection in the cities and urban centers, all the while neglecting mass base-building and consolidation. The NPA became devoid of mass work and got detached from the mass base.

Ka Ivan was appointed political officer (PO) of a platoon and was part of the unit command. But he had no guidance from the Party, there being no Party collective in his assigned platoon. Although new to guerilla front work, and not even properly oriented on his task as a PO, Ka Ivan strived to carry on his assumed duties by conducting political and Party education for Red fighters. He led in the conduct of assessment, as well as criticism-self-criticism (CSC) sessions. His efforts hoped to strengthen the commitment and revolutionary spirit of the comrades in the platoon.

In 1988, a group of cadres from Central Luzon were arrested by the military. Ka Ivan was then with a different group in the city for a meeting. As a consequence, Ka Ivan lost contact with other comrades for four months. When he finally returned to his platoon, Ka Ivan was confronted with the hysteria caused by the anti-infiltration campaign.

A comrade close to Ka Ivan was arrested and wrongly accused of being a deep penetration agent. Ka Ivan also became a suspect because the

suspected comrade was the one who recruited him to KM. He was eventually cleared of suspicions, but Ka Ivan became downhearted with the atmosphere of hysteria and heavy distrust among comrades. With his morale at a record low, he asked permission to go home.

Those in command refused his request and instead transferred Ka Ivan to an urban-based staff organ. He became even more demoralized as he witnessed how some responsible cadres led their lives in luxury. It was then that Ka Ivan decided to go home, and became politically passive for two years.

Ka Ivan went back to school to finish his studies, and eventually gained employment. He helped both his mother and a cousin in their respective stores. He worked as an airport employee. All the while Ka Ivan informed those in the mainstream revolutionary movement of all his activities and the work he engaged in. He never lost contact with the comrades, and had continued to support the movement along with his whole family.

In 1991, Ka Ivan decided to return as a full-time revolutionary. He was appointed as a member of the Regional Military Staff and was part of an intelligence team.

In 1992, the Party began the Second Great Rectification Movement (SGRM) after a 10-year summing up. The Party denounced SCO and the resulting ideological, political and organizational errors. Ka Ivan was able to assess his experience within the framework of the rectification movement. He was inspired by the SGRM, and had since then continued to carry his revolutionary tasks with renewed fervor. Ka Ivan was one of the many comrades in Central Luzon and in the whole country who contributed to the restrengthening of the Party and the revolutionary movement.

Tarlac: the masses are the forests

In April 1994, Ka Ivan was assigned to a semi-legal team tasked with guerilla zone preparation work in the northeastern part of Tarlac province. The terrain in the northeastern part of Tarlac consisted of plains covered with sugarcane and rice fields. There were no hills or mountains with forests to serve as rear. The roads were interconnected, the communities heavily populated, and, most of all, the headquarters of the Northern Luzon Command (NOLCOM) of the AFP was based in the area.

Yet Ka Ivan and his team found the means to succeed in their task. The area later became a guerilla front, after an operating NPA unit was established. Ka Ivan became the commanding officer as well as political officer of the unit. Ka Ivan also became the secretary of the Guerilla front committee, and a member of the Party Provincial committee in Tarlac.

In 2001, revolutionary forces in Tarlac suffered a setback when two units were wiped out in succession. Amidst continuous military operations, the movement succeeded in preserving the rest of its forces. Eventually it even expanded and restrengthened the people's army, the mass base and the Party. Ka Ivan was one of the key cadres and pillars heavily depended on by the Party during those critical times.

He was transferred as secretary to the northern front of Tarlac, where the "wipe-out" encounters took place. Ka Ivan likewise took his place as the provincial commanding officer of the NPA in Tarlac. With the leadership of the Party and Ka Ivan, the NPA launched a series of successful tactical offensives. He participated and led the offensives that raised the morale of the army and the mass base.

Ka Ivan was elected as a member of the Party Regional committee in April 2000 because of his consistent leadership, steadfastness, adherence to Party principles and political line, and

concrete contributions to the revolutionary movement since 1983.

A true proletariat is prepared to accept criticisms and to self-criticize, said Comrade Lenin. And this, Ka Ivan had shown in practice as he humbly accepted errors in his ways and rectified them as guided by basic Party principles and other comrades.

In 2003, Ka Ivan was assigned to a guerilla unit in Zambales. Ka Ivan and other comrades lived among the Aetas, conducting mass work in the poorest communities. The Aetas lived mainly on forest resources, swidden farming and making barbecue sticks. The masses were in dire poverty and Ka Ivan said that living among them helped strengthen and mold him and other comrades.

Ka Ivan's flutes

One comrade recalled Ka Ivan's love for music extended to making musical instruments, such as flutes from *buho*. He would carefully measure the distance between the holes, using cigarette foil as an improvised ruler. He would put the finishing touches, using a pen to draw barbed wires or a pen knife to inscribe messages on the flute. He would weave dried wild grass into rings to finish the decoration. Precious gifts from the forest, hand-made made by a Red commander. Ka Ivan attended to such intricate details in his flutes as he did in his revolutionary work.

A comrade remembered last seeing Ka Ivan with his first born son, then aged four, as they sang "Awit ng Pag-asa." Indeed, it will be through his children that his voice will continue to resonate. It will be through his hand-made *buho* flutes that tunes of freedom will continue to play. And it will be through the comrades who "pick up the weapons dropped by martyrs" like Ka Ivan that the revolution will continue to be waged, and eventually, be won. ▲
(Based on the statement of the CPP-Central Luzon as tribute to the eight revolutionary martyrs of San Felipe.)

CULTURAL

Bihag Pa Rin

Composition: Danny Fabella

Singer: Danny Fabella and Lala Javier

Kung akala nyo'y malaya na
Si Angelo dela Cruz
At wala na ang kanyang gapos
At pasan-pasang krus
Mali kayo, mali kayo, mali kayong lahat

Kung akala nyo'y payapa na
Si Flor Contemplacion
At mga bulaklak sa puntod nya'y
Tuluyan nang sumibol
Mali kayo, mali kayo, mali kayong lahat
Siya's sumisigaw pa rin
Katarunga'y hanap

Korus

Pagkat sila yaong libong mga Pilipino
Inaapi't dinadahas sa ibayong dagat
Mga bihag ng kawalan at ng lipunan
Biktima ng pabayang pamahalaan

Kung akala nyo'y naghilom na
Kay Sarah Balabagan
Bawat latay ng hagupit
Sa musmos niyang katawan
Mali kayo, mali kayo, mali kayong lahat
Siya'y nakakulong pa rin
Dumaraing sa hirap
(Ulitin ang koro)

Ngunit kung may isang amang muntik nang pugutan
At kung mayroon isang inang pinaslang sa bitayan
Lagi't laging may isang anak katulad ni Sarah
Magtatanggol at lalaban, pumatay kung kailangan
(Ulitin ang koro)

Kung akala nyo'y malaya na
Payapa't sagana si Angelo, Flor at Sarah
Dito sa ating bansa
Mali kayo, mali kayo, mali kayong lahat
Sila'y nagdurusa pa rin
Sa ibayong dagat

POINTBLANK

This fictitious e-mail letter has sent migrant Filipinos rolling all over the floor, laughing as well as crying:

Mahal kong mga kapatid:

>>> *Hayan na si Inay. Pasensya na kayo't hindi ko nasamahan ang Inay sa pag-uwi diyan sa Pilipinas sa dahilang pagkamahal-mahal ng pamasaha. Ang gastos ko nga lang sa kanya ay kulang-kulang sa labing-limang libo (kabaong at shipment). Ayoko ng isipin ang eksaktong halaga.*

>>> *Ipinadala ko kasama ni Inay ang:*

>>>>> *24 na karne norte na nasa liko ni Inay. Maghati-dati na kayo.*

>>>>> *anim na bagong labas na Reebok sneakers... isa suot-suot ni Inay... ang lima nasa ulunan... isa-isa na kayo riyan.*

>>>>> *iba't ibang klaseng tsokolate, nasa puwit ni Inay... maghati-hati kayong lahat.*

>>>>> *anim na Ralph Lauren na t-shirts suot-suot ni Inay... para sa iyo, Kuya, at isa-isa sa mga pamangkin ko.*

>>>>> *isang dosenang Wonderbra na gustong-gusto ninyo, mga kapatid ko, suot lahat ni Inay. Maghati-hati na kayo riyan.*

>>>>> *dalawang dosenang Victoria's Secret na panties na inaasam-asam ninyo, suot-suot din ni Inay. Maghati-hati na kayo, Ate.*

>>>>> *walong Dockers na pantalon suot din ni Inay... Kuya, Diko, isa-isa na kayo pati ng mga pamangkin ko.*

>>>>> *ang Rolex na hinahabilin mo, Kuya, nasa braso ni Inay. Kunin mo na.*

>>>>> *ang hikaw, singsing at kuwintas na gustong-gusto mo, Ate, suot-suot din ni Inay.*

>>>>> *mga Chanel na medyas, suot din ni Inay. Tigi-tigisa kayo at mga pamangkin ko.*

>>> *Bahala na kayo kay Inay. Pamimisahan ko na lang siya dito. Balitaan niyo na lang ako pagkatapos ng libing.*

>>> *Nagmamahal na kapatid, NENE*