



UPDATES PHILIPPINES

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Amsterdamsestraatweg 50, 3513AG Utrecht, The Netherlands
T: : +31 30 2310431 | E: updates.philippines@ndfp.org | W: updates.ndfp.org

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EDITORIAL Building a New Tomorrow

In the midst of the debilitating economic crisis, political repression and civil war, the forces of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) under the leadership of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) are building the seeds of the liberated and democratic society in ever-larger areas of the archipelago.

Associations of the oppressed and working people –peasants and agricultural workers, indigenous peoples, industrial and service workers, professionals, women, the youth, the clergy and other sectors of society – are being organized in rural villages as well as in the towns & city centers. They are roused by extreme poverty, oppression, injustice and repression to fight for their rights, demand for economic, political and social reforms, and strive to overthrow the entire unjust and moribund social system.

The revolutionary people establish new village and town councils. They form local governance committees including for organization, education, economy and agrarian reform, health and self-defense. Collective farms are being opened and developed; schools for literacy and social awareness are being built; nutrition, sanitation and health programs are being undertaken; and local militia and self-defense units are being formed and trained. The New People's Army grows in strength while it smashes the security forces of the Manila government. We have taken strides in building the New Tomorrow but we have yet a long way to go.

The organized strength of the revolutionary people in their tens of millions is key in tipping the balance and overthrowing the moribund semifeudal and neocolonial society. Support from friends of the Filipino people around the world plays a vital role in this arduous struggle for national sovereignty, genuine democracy, economic development and social justice. **UP**



Mae Paner, in the four-act monologue 'Tao Po'.
Photo: citynews.com.au

Europe audiences pack theater performance on 'drug war'

The four-act monologue 'Tao Po' about the Duterte government's deadly 'war on illegal drugs' drew packed theater audiences and standing ovations when it toured six cities in Europe and the UK in late September and in October.

Starring Filipino artist Mae Paner, the monologue depicted the lives of four individuals – a photo journalist, a Zumba instructor, a policeman-assassin, and an orphaned child – all victimized by the so-called drug war. Paner was accompanied in the tour by two mothers of slain victims, the International Coalition for Human Rights in the Philippines (ICHRP), and Rise Up for Life and for Rights (Rise Up), the grassroots

organization of victims' families and advocates.

The delegation held performances in packed venues in Amsterdam, Berlin, Geneva, London, Rome and Vienna. During the post-play Talk Back segments, the victims' mothers spoke about their experiences and the continuing repression in the country. Delegation members explained that "the targets of Duterte's war on drugs are the poor and those opposing his tyrannical rule."

The group also had meetings with members of European and national parliaments, officials of national governments, officials of political parties, human rights institutions, and human rights advocates, where they provided facts about the deteriorating human rights situation in the country. According to Rise Up, they were able to secure commitments to look further into the welfare of the victims' families and to put more pressure on the Manila government in stopping the killings.

Meanwhile, rabid pro-Duterte elements and trolls in social media were threatening to picket, sabotage and hold protest demonstrations at the venues of 'Tao Po'. Despite the social media uproar however, less than a handful showed up in the Vienna and Rome legs of the tour. There were no reported disruptions to the entire theater tour by any group of Duterte supporters. **UP**

NPA commander: There is democracy in the people's army

Amid the reign of fascist tyranny by the Rodrigo Duterte government, a commander of the New People's Army (NPA) reveals that democracy flourishes within their ranks and in the territories of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP).

"Democracy flows in the revolution. It is found in mass organizations, organs of political power and people's government, the Communist Party and the NPA," said Ka (Comrade) Ando, an NPA commander.

"The voice, grievances and aspirations of the oppressed classes and democratic sectors, along with their anger and contempt of the current regime, flow in these formations."

In these venues, he stated, "the people can freely present their plight without fear or reservations. Just and appropriate resolutions are then implemented to address their problems, and they are confident that these will be fully supported and defended by the people's army."

Ka Ando explained that democracy in the NPA is upheld in the spheres of politics, military and economy.

To uphold democracy in the political field, he said, the NPA guarantees the right of its commanders and fighters to freely express their opinions in regular and daily short meetings. This is contrary to the culture of silence within the security forces of the reactionary government, where communication is 'top-down', and soldiers are told to shut up and simply obey commands.

Democracy in the military sphere, he said, includes the right of Red fighters to express their opinions on military matters. Meetings are held to discuss and assess operational plans, fighting strategies and tactics, and the victories obtained in military offensives.

NPA commanders and officers, Ka Ando further explained, heed Mao Zedong's dictum to "be a squad leader," that is, to completely involve themselves in the daily activities and struggles of the people's army – unlike the generals and officials of the reactionary army. They are examples of "simple living, arduous struggle" to Red fighters and the masses.

To uphold democracy in the economic sphere, he said, NPA commanders and fighters "are allocated the same food ration and budget" and even supplies. This is in contrast to the huge salaries and bonuses, as well as corruption booty, awarded to generals and other top officials of the reactionary military.

"Among the three democracies, that in the economic sphere best demonstrates equality," stressed Ka Ando.

One would think that attacks from the military would diminish democracy in the NPA's ranks, but he says that "Democracy and discipline in NPA units is steeled in these situations." **UP**

Philippine court drops third ill-gotten wealth case against Marcoses

In a decision handed down on 14 October, Philippine anti-graft court Sandiganbayan dismissed another case against the Marcos family involving millions of dollars of ill-gotten wealth, for insufficiency of evidence. The court ruled that the evidence presented by prosecutors had 'critical defects', among these, receipts, tax certificates and affidavits from bank executives were photocopies.

The Manila government's Philippine Commission for Good Government (PCGG) and the Office of the Solicitor General filed a complaint on 21 July 1987 against Fe Gimenez, her husband Ignacio, and three others, for conniving with the Marcoses to "acquire, accumulate and misappropriate public funds". Ms. Gimenez was the former social secretary of Imelda Marcos.

Ms. Gimenez was charged with unlawfully transferring millions of dollars of state funds to several foreign bank accounts in her name and disbursing the money for her and the Marcoses' benefit. She also used the money to purchase expensive artwork and properties in New York.

This was the third case lost by the PCGG in their effort to recover billions of dollars of the Marcoses' ill-gotten wealth. The PCGG was established in 1987 to recover money, properties and jewelry the Marcoses had accumulated during their years in power.

Last August, the Sandiganbayan also dismissed a 102 billion peso forfeiture case against Marcos and his late crony, Roberto Benedicto. In September, a 1.052 billion peso suit against Marcos was also dismissed. In both cases, insufficiency of evidence was cited in dismissing the case.

Congressman Carlos Zarate (Bayan Muna) condemned the latest decision. "This is an outrage! It is as if the Sandiganbayan is in overdrive to dismiss all the cases involving the Marcoses and revise history altogether. It is as if they are saying there is a crime but no criminal."

Human rights lawyer, Jose Manuel Diokno called on the Duterte government to revisit charges against the Marcos family. He urged a review of all the pending cases against the Marcos family to find out what is wrong and to "do something about it".

During his 20-year fascist reign, Ferdinand Marcos and his family amassed an estimated US\$10 billion in ill-gotten wealth, according to the PCGG. **UP**