

The Neoliberal War against the Filipino People

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There is a war going on in the Philippines.

It's not the so-called 'War on Terrorism.'

It's not the usual regional wars that have been waged in developing countries.

It's a war waged against the Filipino people by the neo-liberal government of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

What is happening in the Philippines is happening all around the world. Countries are using the mask of the 'war on terror' to destabilize, attack and destroy dissident groups; or any groups that oppose the State.

In the Philippines, the government is responding to the criticism and dissent by trying to intimidate and liquidate its opponents.

In March alone, the beleaguered Arroyo government has unleashed a wave of repression against its opponents. For example;

Mar. 1: Four members of GABRIELA, (a national alliance of women's organizations) were unlawfully arrested and detained in Quezon province.

Mar. 3: Abelardo Ladera, a city councilor and a provincial coordinator of the Bayan Muna Partylist was shot dead....

Mar. 9: Romeo Sanchez, Bayan Muna Partylist Regional Coordinator and former Bayan Regional Secretary General and radio broadcaster in the Ilocos region, was shot dead in Baguio City, Northern Luzon.

Mar. 10: Ernesto Bang, provincial information officer of the AnakPawis Partylist of workers, peasants and urban poor, was killed in front of his residence in Camarines Sur, Bikol.

Mar. 13: Fr. William Tadena, Philippine Independent Church priest, was shot dead on his way home from officiating a mass.... [Excerpts from Fact Sheet of the Int'l Solidarity Mission: In Defense of A People Fighting Repression, p. 2]

The most recent stage of the Filipino human rights crisis was sparked by the November 16, 2004 massacre of 7 striking workers of Hacienda Luisita (HLI) in Tarlac, Central Luzon, when

Philippine government soldiers opened fire on their picket line. Many of the people slain, arrested, or 'disappeared' in the following March, were people publicly supporting the HLI strikers. Many of them became victims of a vicious military that reminds one of the US-supported military juntas and death squads of Latin America during the '70s, '80s, and beyond.

Indeed, many Philippine military officers are armed and trained by the Americans.

The Macapagal-Arroyo regime has been implicated in an election scandal that suggests it bought its way into power. The Bayan-USA (the overseas chapter of the Philippines-based opposition alliance) has dubbed "Gloriagate" the tapes indicating the president engaged in electoral fraud.

At a recent protest in L.A. against the Macapagal-Arroyo regime, Bev Tang, an organizer of the Filipino youth activist group, Anakbayan, talked about the state terrorism that the U.S. funds by supporting the regime: "They cut funding for social services here in America so that they can fund the Philippine military and police who torture and kill journalists, priests, human rights advocates...." Bev Tang added, "They cut the budget on education here in the U.S., so that they can give more money to repressive states such as the Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo regime under the auspices of the War on Terror." [Fr. Angel Buensuceso, "Filipinos in LA Rally for GMA's Ouster," *Bulatlat* (Philippine alternative weekly newsmagazine), July 3-9, 2005.]

In August, 2005, an International Solidarity Mission will visit the Philippines, in five teams, in five different areas of the country, to gain firsthand knowledge of the nation's human rights crisis. Afterwards, a Peoples' Tribunal is planned, where ISM-observers will present their findings.

This international fact-finding mission is designed to be a popular tool to expose and mitigate the horrific human rights crisis gripping the Philippines today.

What the Filipino people are really fighting is the neo-liberalism that has placed a series of post-Marcos regimes in place, in the service of the US/IMF powers, and against the democratic rights of the Filipino people. Various Filipino puppets to US/IMF will have been waging a real war against the people, to please their foreign masters.

That war seems only to be getting hotter!

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Mr. Jamal's new work, *WE WANT FREEDOM: A Life in the Black Panther Party*, is now available from South End Press, Cambridge, MA. (<http://www.southendpress.org>). Check out Mumia's NEW book: "Faith of Our Fathers: An Examination of the Spiritual Life of African and African-American People": <http://www.africanworld.com>

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