

Philippine Maoists support US war drive against China

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On Thursday, Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (BAYAN), the legal umbrella front organization of the Maoist Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), staged a protest outside the Chinese consulate in the Manila business district of Makati. The protests, timed to coincide with the 26th anniversary of the Tiananmen Square massacre, denounced China's "aggression" in the South China Sea.

The CPP and its front organizations, including BAYAN, are playing a vital role in the service of US imperialism. They have staged similar anti-China protests over the past two years.

BAYAN secretary general Renato Reyes denounced China's land reclamation activity in the disputed Spratly Islands as an act of "robbery" and "an affront to our sovereignty." He said: "Filipinos have the patriotic duty to oppose these aggressive actions as well as to call on our own government to defend our territorial integrity."

Reyes called on Philippine President Benigno Aquino to nationalize Chinese-owned businesses in the Philippines, saying "Kailangan mapa-aray natin ang China dito/We need to hurt China here."

BAYAN and the CPP have worked over the past year to whip up furious anti-Chinese nationalism. They have denounced China as a "brute" and an "imperialist" power that is poised to invade the Philippines. Both Reyes and Joma Sison, founder of the CPP, have repeatedly compared Beijing's leaders to Benito Mussolini, the Italian fascist dictator.

Mong Palatino, chair of BAYAN Metro Manila, issued a statement last year that concluded: "Hate China? Then join the people's army, strengthen the people's movement, and be prepared to fight for the motherland."

BAYAN and the CPP claim to oppose US intervention in the South China Sea and in the Philippines, but their war-mongering against China objectively serves the interest of US imperialism.

What is more, the CPP's "opposition" to the United States intervention is premised on the false claim that Washington is not serious about its war-drive against China.

Reyes told the demonstrators: "It is not true that the US is out to protect us against China's incursions and reclamation projects in the West Philippine Sea. The US has repeatedly said that it that does not take sides in the maritime dispute.

"The US is a huge debtor to China, to the tune of \$US1.3 trillion. The US will not engage China in a shooting war. Our national leaders are only being made to believe that the US is there to support us."

The CPP has repeatedly claimed that Washington is avoiding antagonizing China, and that Beijing and Washington are "covertly working hand-in-hand" to oppress the Philippines. These political contortions are designed to obscure the fact that the CPP, having denounced US imperialism for decades, is now in Washington's camp.

It is not Beijing but Washington that has deliberately inflamed tensions over the South China Sea and is preparing for war with China, in order to ensure its continued dominance in Asia. To tell the working class that there is no threat of war between Washington and Beijing, while the United States is rapidly marshaling its forces to conduct just such a catastrophic conflict, is a political crime of the highest order.

On this basis, BAYAN filed an appeal against the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA) basing agreement before the Philippine Supreme Court last year. BAYAN opposed the basing deal because, it claimed, the United States was not committed to war with China. The logic that follows from this is that BAYAN would publicly support the basing deal if Washington announced its commitment to go to war against China over Philippine territorial claims.

BAYAN and the CPP have given full-throated support to the case filed by Manila before the International Tribunal on the Law of the Sea (ITLOS), urging President Aquino to press forward the Philippines dispute with China. The ITLOS case was drawn up by Washington and is instrumental to its propaganda that China is flouting international norms. CPP founder Sison wrote that the ITLOS case would help assure “free and safe navigation,” the mantra of the US State Department. In the South China Sea, Sison and the CPP are reading off Washington’s crib sheet.

At every turn, BAYAN and the CPP have served the political interests of US imperialism in its drive against China. This role is the necessary outcome of the CPP’s Stalinist political program in new historical circumstances.

The Maoist CPP was founded in 1968 out of a split in the Philippine Communist Party (PKP) during the 1960s. This split was a direct product of the conflict between the Chinese and Soviet regimes. Rooted in the bankrupt Stalinist program of “Socialism in One Country,” Moscow and Beijing fought for their rival national interests, competing for influence in, and then splitting, communist parties throughout the world.

The CPP did not make any fundamental change to the anti-Marxist program of the Moscow-oriented PKP. Both were founded on the Stalinist doctrines of “two-stage” revolution and a “bloc of four classes.” The CPP pursued a strategy of guerrilla warfare and supported Beijing’s foreign policy interests. To this end, it entered into intimate alliances with bourgeois Filipino politicians who supported the opening of trade and political relations with China.

When Mao and the Communist Party leadership in Beijing opened political ties with Washington in 1972, the CPP was isolated. The Chinese Communist Party’s last attempt to smuggle arms to the CPP in 1974 failed and all ties were effectively severed.

With the end of the Marcos dictatorship in 1986, the CPP floundered, looking to restore international political ties. Not receiving support from China, which had openly initiated the restoration of capitalism in 1978, Sison offered to drop the party’s opposition to Moscow and instead to oppose Beijing. In return, he looked for support from the Soviet Union. His overtures went unanswered.

In 1991 the CPP fragmented. A portion of the party retained the name and remained under Sison’s leadership. Through its front organizations, the CPP threw itself into mainstream politics, running candidates for office and

forming alliances with leading bourgeois parties. It increasingly became part of the political establishment in Manila, tasked with preventing the independent struggle of the working class for socialism.

In the face of worsening economic crises and mounting geo-political tensions, the dominant sections of the Philippine ruling class have turned to their old colonial master—US imperialism—as the means for defending their interests. The Aquino government has played a leading role in provoking and escalating conflict with China on Washington’s behalf. And the CPP, in line with the shift in ruling circles, has joined the clamor for war.

The political trajectory of the Philippine Maoists strongly parallels that of the pseudo-left in the United States, Australia and Europe, who are all pushing ahead with the agenda of imperialism. This is a reflection of the petty-bourgeois and nationalist basis of these organizations. Their interests lie not with the working class, but with their country’s bourgeoisie.

To the deepening economic crisis and the looming threat of war, there is only one alternative: socialist revolution. The Maoists in the Philippines, and the pseudo-left groupings throughout the world, are hostile to the working class and to socialism.

The nationalism of BAYAN and the CPP will lead only to war. The only way forward for the working masses of the Philippines is to break with these groups, and to organize independently in defense of their own class interests. To do this they must join with their class brothers and sisters around the world in the struggle for socialism by building a section of the world party of socialist revolution, the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI).



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