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Editorial

Fight intensifying political repression by the US-Aquino regime

Over the past months, political repression by the US-Aquino regime has intensified further. This aims to cripple and derail the national democratic mass movement to ensure that measures dictated by his imperialist masters are implemented before the end of his term.

In the coming months, Aquino is focused on the scheduled Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) meetings in the Philippines up to November. These aim to further push pro-foreign and anti-people neoliberal policies.

The Aquino clique is pressing for the removal from the 1987 constitution of limits to foreign ownership of lands and businesses in the Philippines. This is in compliance with US conditions for Philippine participation in negotiations being rushed for the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP).

At the same time, the US wants to ensure the effectivity of the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA) in the face of questions and resistance by many groups and individuals. The US wants to make full use of the EDCA to establish its military bases in the country. It also wants Aquino to delete provisions of the 1987 constitution prohibiting foreign military bases, troops and facilities without senate-ratified agreements.

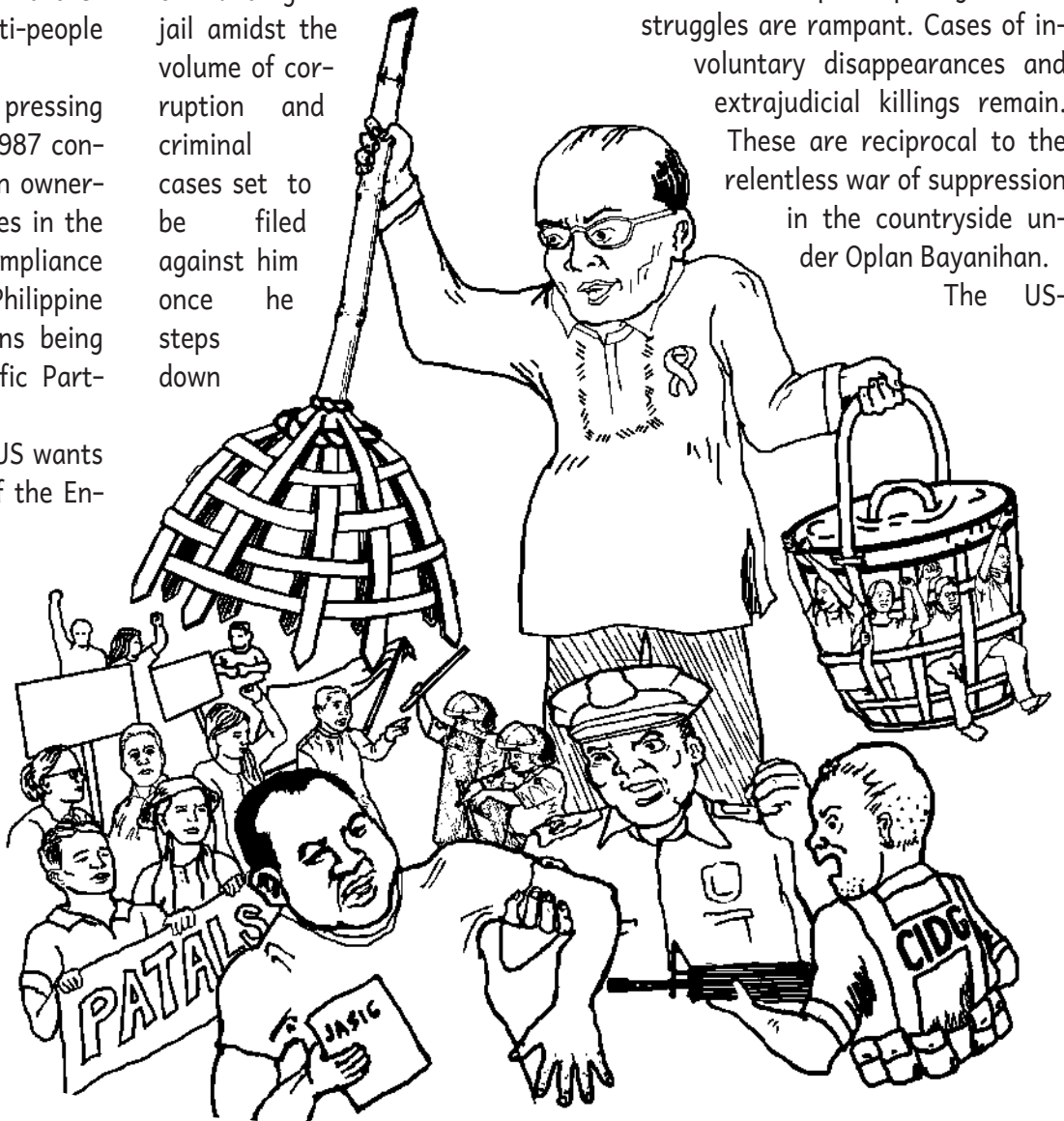
In the coming months, the Aquino clique also seeks to ensure their perpetuation in power. Aquino is terrified of the prospect of landing in jail amidst the volume of corruption and criminal cases set to be filed against him once he steps down

Aquino is repressing the national democratic forces. They are at the core of the struggles against neoliberal economic policies and against US intervention and military presence. They echo the people's clamor for the ouster of Aquino.

Cases of harassment, surveillance, arrest and detention of activists and those participating in mass struggles are rampant. Cases of involuntary disappearances and extrajudicial killings remain.

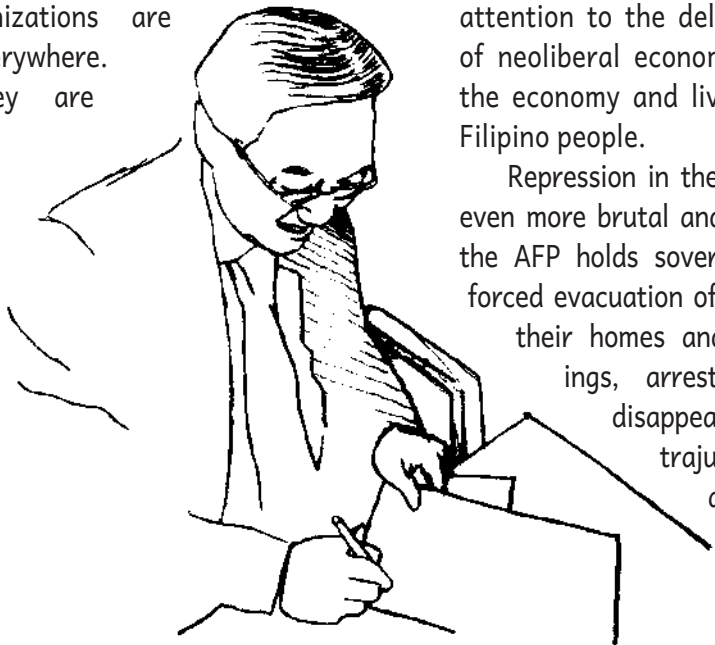
These are reciprocal to the relentless war of suppression in the countryside under Oplan Bayanihan.

The US-



Aquino regime is subjecting to prolonged detention 530 political prisoners including an infant ruthlessly imprisoned with its mother. Aquino keeps them in detention by filing trumped-up non-bailable criminal cases.

Every week since Aquino came into power, an activist is killed and more than three arrested illegally. Everyday, activists in urban areas experience threats and repression in schools, communities, factories and offices. Surveillance and monitoring of activities of progressive organizations are everywhere. They are



threatened and terrorized. The National ID system, which Aquino is rushing to get enacted, will surely be used to intensify political repression against the democratic mass movement.

Aquino also aims to suppress officers and consultants of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) in peace negotiations with the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GPH). Clearly, Aquino does not want the NDFP-GPH peace talks to progress as this will draw public attention to the deleterious effects of neoliberal economic policies on the economy and livelihood of the Filipino people.

Repression in the countryside is even more brutal and violent. Here, the AFP holds sovereign. Cases of forced evacuation of peasants from their homes and fields, maulings, arrests, involuntary disappearances and extrajudicial killings are rampant.

Aquino is manufacturing a gross

illusion that people enjoy democratic rights. He paints himself a champion of civil rights by invoking the memory of his late father who suffered political repression and was assassinated by the Marcos dictatorship.


But for the tens of thousands of victims of political repression, Aquino is the new Marcos. Like Marcos, he suppresses those who work for the national democratic interests of the people, and expose and oppose the puppetry, corruption and brutality of the ruling regime.

Activists and revolutionaries are suppressed using all coercive instruments of the state, principally the AFP. It uses the tactic of criminalization of political struggle and protest, and militarization of government agencies and civil institutions (such as the mass media and academe) and to use the latter in intelligence operations, psy-war and military operations.

We should unite the Filipino people and firmly resist the intensifying political repression under the Aquino regime. The situation calls for all sectors, personalities and groups who are pro-people and pro-civil rights to unite with the victims of repression.

The response to intensifying repression is to further strengthen the nationalist and democratic mass struggles. Workers must intensify further their struggles to defend their rights to unionize and to strike, and advance the struggle for higher wages and job security. Peasants must thoroughly advance their struggle for land and against feudal and semi-feudal exploitation.

The New People's Army must act to defend the rights and welfare of the Filipino people. The most notorious henchmen and worst violators of human rights must be punished. The people's army must strike the most vicious units of the AFP. The people's war must be intensified in response to escalating state facism. AB

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Harassments, arrests of NDFP consultants

Arrests and harassments against NDFP consultants in peace talks with the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GPH) have come one after the other. Aquino has, thus, further derailed the GPH-NDFP peace negotiation in the hope of causing its complete collapse.

Harassment of Ka Luis Jalandoni. The chief negotiator of the NDFP himself, Comrade Luis Jalandoni, was subjected to harassment when he recently visited the Philippines.

A day after he arrived in the Philippines last May 28, Ka Luis received a warrant of arrest that was improperly dropped in the mailbox of the house he was staying in at Makati City. The warrant was issued by the Surigao del Norte Provincial Prosecutor's Office for the case of kidnapping and serious illegal detention of four policemen held as prisoners of war (POW) by the New People's Army. The prisoners were released on July 29, 2014 in that province.

According to Jose Maria Sison, the US-Aquino regime is "the most malicious of all the regimes" because Interior Sec. Manuel Roxas and Hernani Braganza of the GPH Peace Panel themselves were the ones who requested Ka Luis to help coordinate the release of the said POWs on humanitarian grounds. Now they are using his assistance to file a criminal case against him.

The CPP also denounced the harassment of Ka Luis as "treachery of the highest order" and "part of the wave of political repression against the NDFP and the revolutionary movement.

Arrest of Adelberto Silva. Last June 1, another NDFP consultant on the peace talks, Adelberto Silva, was arrested in Molino, Bacoor, Cavite. Also arrested were his wife Sharon Cabusao and another companion, Isidro de Lima.

Silva, 67 years old, is among the NDFP personnel guaranteed against arrests under the Joint Agreement

on Security and Immunity Guarantees (JASIG). Silva was then in possession of his Document of Identification (DI) No. ND978229 with the name Percival Rojo which the arresting police officers and military men disregarded.

At least 17 NDFP consultants are presently detained in various prisons across the country. Not a few of have been imprisoned for more than five years. Last year, at least five NDFP consultants on the peace talks were arrested. At the same time, other NDFP personnel and consultants are continuously subjected to enemy surveillance and attempts to arrest them.

It can be recalled that last March 4, another NDFP consultant for peace talks, Ruben Saluta (JASIG DI No. ND978240), was arrested in Quezon City with his wife and 11 others.

Silva was charged with cases of multiple murder in Aparri, Cagayan, and Laoang, Northern Samar. Meanwhile, Cabusao and de Lima, who were both arrested without warrants, were charged with harboring a fugitive. All three were charged with illegal possession of firearms and illegal possession of explosives. They are presently detained in Camp Crame.

Progressive mass organizations and party lists promptly demanded the immediate release of Silva, Cabusao and de Lima. Among those who joined the picket-protest in front of

Camp Crame were Gabriela, Karapatan, SELDA, and KMU.

The KMU identified Silva as one of its consultants. Gabriela named Cabusao as a former officer. Cabusao also served as an editor of the newspaper Pinoy Weekly last 2002 and is currently a researcher and consultant of the Crispin B. Beltran Resource Center.

Arraignment of NDFP consultants. The Manila Regional Trial Court last May 8 pushed through with its arraignment of Benito Tiamzon, Wilma Tiamzon, Satur Ocampo, Vicente Ladlad, Randall Echanis and Rafael Baylosis who are all NDFP consultants and among the 50 who were charged with several cases of murder. The accused refused to enter a plea. The arraignment pushed through despite pending appeals for certiorari filed by the consultant's lawyers.

Many of the NDFP consultants have been thrown into the case of alleged murders in Hilongos, Leyte in 1984. Bones that were supposedly dug up by the military from an alleged mass grave in Mahaplag, Hindang and Inopacan, Leyte have been transferred from one place to another to make it appear that there were many murders to manufacture a new criminal cases.

This case has been used to arrest and detain NDFP consultants, revolutionary leaders, and leaders of the open democratic mass movement. AB



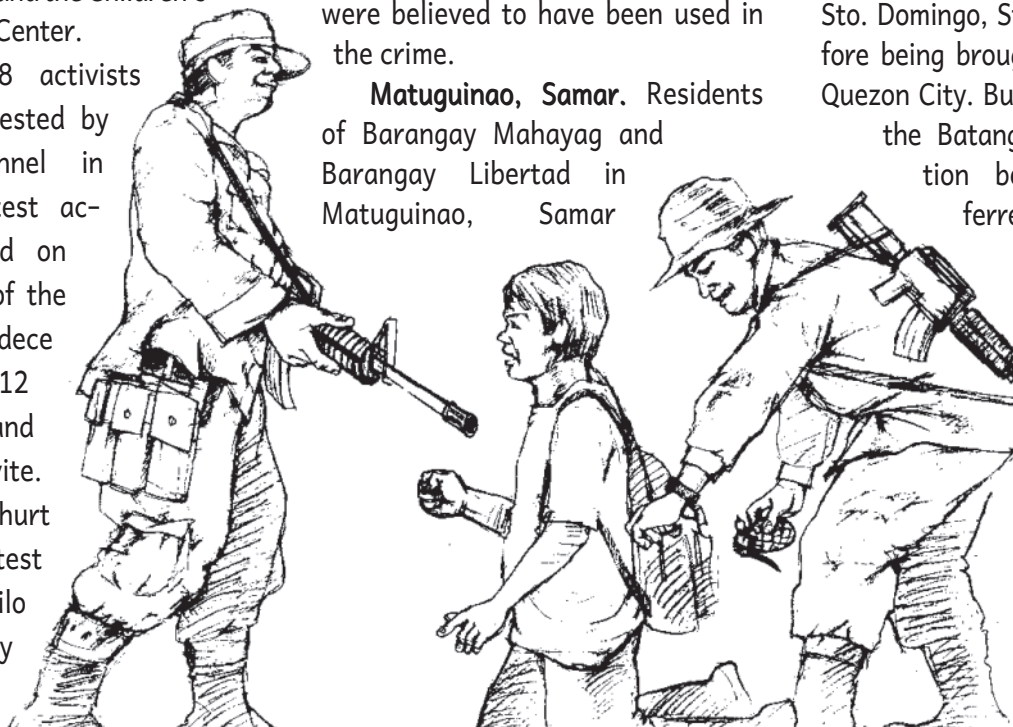
Public worker activists receive threats

Five leaders and members of the Confederation of Unity of Recognition and Advancement for Government Employees (COURAGE) were harassed through letters containing threats that supposedly detail their links with the CPP and the NPA.

Letters were received last April 27 by Roman M. Sanchez, national chair of the National Food Authority Employees Association (NFAEA); Evelyn P. Garcia, deputy secretary general of NFAEA; Fely Saño, vice chair of CUE-NHA; Rosalinda Nartates, national chair of CUE-NHA and secretary-general of COURAGE; and Manuel Baclagon, national president of the Social Welfare Employees Association-Department of Social Welfare and Development (SWEAP-DSWD) and former deputy secretary-general of COURAGE.

Meanwhile, last May 14-16, military and police agents tailed Madella Santiago and Eilekrenes Manano, both retired social workers and activist staffers of the Salinlahi alliance and the Children's Rehabilitation Center.

Up to 18 activists were also arrested by police personnel in separate protest actions launched on the occasion of the false independence day last June 12 at Iloilo City and Kawit, Cavite. Scores were hurt when the protest action in Iloilo was violently dispersed. **AB**



Soldiers kill peasant couple in Negros

The killings and arrests of peasants and militarization of communities under the US-Aquino regime's Oplan Bayanihan is relentless.

Guihulngan City, Negros Oriental. Last May 24, elements of the 11th Infantry Battalion killed peasant leader Endric Calago, 47 and his wife Rosalie, 45 in their home in Barangay Tacpao, Guihulngan, Negros Oriental.

Endric serves as an official of Kapunungan Alang sa Ugma sa Gagmayang Mag-uuma (Kaugmaon), a local chapter of Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) in Negros Oriental.

At around 10:45 in the evening, neighbors heard noise from the Calagos and Rosalie's cries of "Help us, there are soldiers here!". After a few minutes, they heard gunfire and later saw the house burning.

The following morning, the residents, together with their 16-year old daughter Erlic, who arrived from town, and local police officers went to the house of the Calagos. The bullet-riddled bloodied corpse of Endric was seen outside the house. Rosalie's corpse was seen inside the house with a bullet wound to the chest. Scattered all over the place were M16 and M203 casings. At least four magazines were believed to have been used in the crime.

Matuguinao, Samar. Residents of Barangay Mahayag and Barangay Libertad in Matuguinao, Samar

were forcibly evacuated by elements of the 8th ID last June 5. Soldiers also took two pigs, agricultural products and other household items of peasants. After suffering from an NPA ambush, the soldiers vented their ire on civilian residents. (See related news on page 6.)

Lemery, Batangas. Operatives of the Philippine National Police-Criminal Investigation and Detection Group and the PNP-Special Action Forces illegally arrested the couple Norberto Burrico and Evelyn Flauta last April 23 in their home in Barangay Niogan, Lemery, Batangas.

At around 6 a.m., the couple had just finished feeding their animals and were about to enter their house when police officers wearing camouflage uniforms arrived and forced them to drop to the ground. After being made to stand up, they were frisked, brought out and forced into separate vehicles.

After a 30-minute search of their house, police came out with two sacks of things which the couple believes will be used against them. Flauta was brought to Fort Sto. Domingo, Sta. Rosa, Laguna before being brought to Camp Crame, Quezon City. Burrico was brought to the Batangas City Police Station before being transferred to Camp Crame.

Burrico is accused of being a member of the NPA and charged with "illegal possession of explosives", which he denied. Flauta is detained at the Major Crimes Investigation. **AB**

AFP, DepEd harass Lumad school in Talaingod

THE Aquino regime is relentlessly aggravating the Manobo Lumad school in Talaingod, Davao del Norte.

Residents of Sitio Tibukag, Talaingod and teachers of the Salugpungan Ta Tanu Igkanugon Community Learning Center (STTICLC) were subjected to threats issued by 68th IB troopers during the first week of June. Datu Ginom Andel said soldiers ordered them to raze down the school "because it is being run by the communists".

The residents refused and asserted that they own the school which provide them free education. The STTICLC is an alternative school run by Lumad groups to provide children with education. This is recognized as a formal school by the DepEd Central Office under the Indigenous Peoples Education Office.

At the same time, the superintendent of the DepEd Division of Davao del Norte recommended the closure of the STTICLC and the establishment of a different public high school that "will use soldiers as para-teachers". It will be recalled that last May 2014, AFP troopers descended on the different sitios of Talaingod. The STTICLC was one of the schools used by the soldiers as barracks displacing the students and traumatizing the community.

Bohol peasants suffer military harassment

FASCIST soldiers subjected peasants of Bohol to endless harassments. According to the Hugpong Mag-uumang Bol-anon (Humabol), a progressive peasant group in Bohol, AFP troopers are singling out its leaders and members. Humabol is an affiliate of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas.

Last April 6, the 2nd Special Forces Battalion started to build their 2nd District Command Post inside the compound of the rice mill operated by the Talibon-Trinidad Integrated Farmers Association (TTIFA). The TTIFA is a local organization of Humabol.

According to the AFP, up to 80 of its men will be stationed in the premises of the mill compound. The peasants demanded that the construction of the said camp be stopped.

The peasants also condemned the AFP for its campaign to villify Danilo Olayvar, head of Humabol. Soldiers of the 6th Special Forces Battalion have been distributing leaflets depicting Olayvar as a criminal.

In September 2006, Danilo's brother Victor was among those killed by the AFP.

Court orders release of Lumban 3

AFTER almost five years of detention, three peasant activists from Laguna were released last June 1. The Sta. Cruz Regional Trial Court Branch 91 ordered the release of Darwin Liwag, Reynaldo Malaborbor and Aries Cuazon, known as the Lumban 3. According to the court, the AFP failed to present sufficient evidence to support the charge of "illegal possession of firearms and explosives" filed against them.

Liwag and his companions were arrested by soldiers and policemen last October 5, 2010 in Lumban, Laguna after their jeep was waylaid while travelling to Sta. Cruz, Laguna. They were brought to the camp of the 1st IB in Cavinti.

Liwag was then secretary-general of the Pagkakaisa at Ugnayan ng Mag-sasaka sa Laguna (Pumalag). Malaborbor and Cuazon both worked for the Pumalag staff. They have the option of filing counter-charges for the five-year wrongful detention.

Congress bars activists and media officers

The House of Representatives (HOR) banned from its premises at least 50 individuals including officials of student organizations, campus journalists and other sectoral leaders.

The order was contained in a March 18, 2015 memorandum issued by the HOR's Legislative Security Bureau entitled "Blacklisted/Banned Persons to the House of Representatives," which listed people banned from entering the HOR. The memorandum was publicized only last May.

Among those in the list are Prof. Danilo Arao of the University of the Philippines-College of Mass Communications, Charlotte Velasco of the League of Filipino Students, John Clifford Sibayan of the National Union of Students of the Philippines and Marc Lino Abila, president of the College Editors Guild of the Philippines.

The named individuals were barred from the HOR supposedly for violating "decorum" inside congress for making political statements and displaying streamers and others.

According to the Altermidya, a group of progressive and patriotic journalists, the order violates the right to free speech and assembly. It was described as "repressive and regressive" and "reminds us of martial law repression".

Samar offensives net 8 firearms

Red fighters of the New People's Army (NPA) launched three successful tactical offensives in Samar last June 5, 10 and 13.

On June 13 at 4 a.m., Red fighters of the NPA-Arnulfo Ortiz Command (NPA-AOC) raided the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology in Barangay Lagundi, Catbalogan City. Four high-caliber rifles and four pistols were taken from the jail guards.

On June 10, the NPA-Serafin Pacimos Command (NPA-SPC) harassed enemy troops in Barangay Mahayag, Matuguinao. Two soldiers were killed while two others were wounded.

On June 5, the NPA-SPC harassed enemy troops operating in Matuguinao. One soldier was killed.

The NPA-Eastern Visayas (Efren Martirez Command) commended the Red fighters under the NPA-AOC and NPA-SPC for launching the series of tactical offensives. This is a slap against AFP 8th ID chief Maj. Gen. Jet Velarmino who recently boasted that there were no more NPA units in Samar. (See the related article in page 4.) **AB**

NPA releases POW in Sarangani

The New People's Army (NPA) released Pfc. Khen Subere last June 13 in Barangay Tamadong, Kiamba, Sarangani. The release was carried out by Red fighters under the NPA-Mt. Daguma Subregional Command under the NPA-Far South Mindanao Region (NPA-FSMR).

Subere, an element of the 27th IB, was seized by the NPA last April 12 when their unit conducted "civil-military operations" in T'boli, South Cotabato. He was declared a prisoner-of-war by the NPA-FSMR and was accorded rights due his status. He was investigated for being part of Oplan Bayanihan operations.

According to the NPA-FSMR, they found no reason to charge him. Mayor Rodrigo Duterte of Davao City, who mediated in behalf of the family, attended the release ceremony.

Meanwhile, successive tactical offensives were launched by the NPA in the different towns of Davao Oriental. The past issue of Ang Bayan reported the coordinated May 22 raid and ambush in the towns of Tarragona and Baganga. (See "NPA-SMR seizes 88 firearms", Ang Bayan, Special Issue June 1, 2015).

Rigoberto Sanchez, spokesperson of the NPA-Southern Mindanao Region, reported that

last April-May, the following tactical offensives were also carried out in the province:

1) attack against the police station in Mati City;

2) ambush against a military vehicle in Sitio Palina, Binondo, Baganga last April 7 at 2 a.m. Command-detonated explosives (CDX) were used against the said vehicle.

3) ambush against a five-truck convoy near the headquarters of the 67th IB in the early morning of April 24

4) encounter between the NPA and elements of the 67th IB and CAFGU near the Uwabangon patrol base last May 8. Two soldiers and one CAFGU element were killed.

5) NPA ambush against the battalion test mission of the Scout Rangers in Paglascon, Kasunugan, Mahanob, Banganay last May 10. Five soldiers were killed while two were wounded.

6) blasting of the vehicle carrying the police chief of Aliwagwag, Cateel last May 19. **AB**

PDT ambushed in Sorsogon

RED fighters under the Celso Minguez Command of the New People's Army-Sorsogon ambushed elements of the 31st IB in Barangay Benguet, Gubat last May 30. The two soldiers belonged to a peace and development team (PDT) and were conducting an operation in the said barrio when ambushed. One soldier was killed while another was wounded.

Meanwhile, the spokesperson of the National Democratic Front-Bicol, belied the earlier claims of the 9th IB that Camarines Norte, Albay, Catanduanes and Camarines Norte are now "manageable conflict areas" where NPA units are supposed to have weakened.

In statements last May 27 and 31, Ka Maria enumerated successive military actions of the NPA in the region against elements of the police, soldiers and their criminal syndicates. These include the coordinated ambush last May 29 launched by the NPA-Camarines Sur or Eduardo Olbara Command (NPA-EOC) against elements of the CAFGU who are known agents of the military and involved in the syndicates.

Earlier, the NPA-EOC razed the detachment of the PDTs of the 22nd IB and 42nd IB in Barangay Ipil, Buhi. **AB**

Alliance launches protest actions against US, China

More than a thousand people marched on June 12 in front of the US embassy in Roxas Boulevard and the Chinese consulate in Makati. The rally was led by the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (BAYAN) and P1NAS (Pilipinong Nagkakaisa para sa Soberanya or Filipinos United for Sovereignty) and coincided with the day of the false Philippine independence.

Rallyists simultaneously condemned US maneuvers to reestablish military bases in the Philippines and continued Chinese encroachments of the Panatag Shoal, Kalayaan Islands and other small islands, reefs and shoals in Philippine waters in the South China Sea.

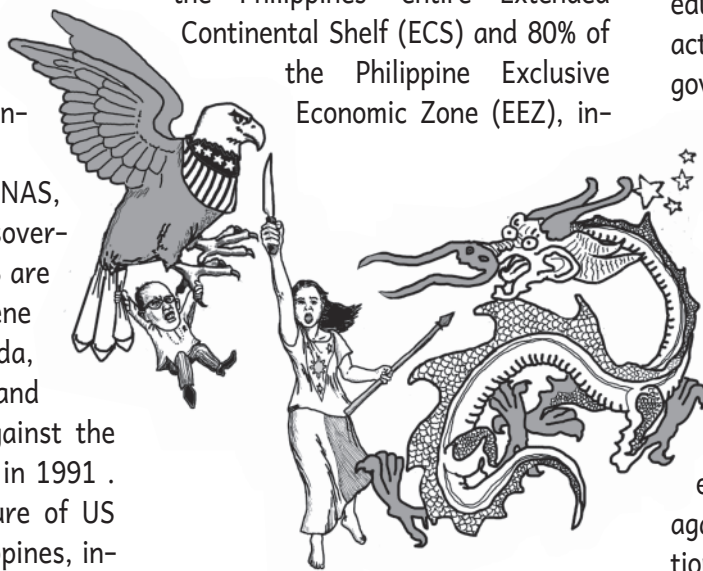
According to BAYAN, the US is “interested in reestablishing its bases and in expanding its troop presence in the Philippines as part of its pivot to Asia. Decades-long American military presence in the country has wrought nonstop exploitation and shameful weakening of our sovereignty.”

BAYAN is part of P1NAS, an alliance for national sovereignty. Also part of P1NAS are former senators Rene Saguisag, Ernesto Maceda, Leticia Ramos Shahani and Victor Ziga who voted against the Military Bases Agreement in 1991. The vote led to the closure of US military bases in the Philippines, in-

cluding the Subic Naval Base and Clark Air Base.

Also part of P1NAS are Bayan Muna Rep. Neri Colmenares, director-writer Bibeth Orteza, singer Heber Bartolome, former congressman Teddy Casino and other patriotic organizations like Gabriela, KMP, Pamalakaya, SCMP, NUSP and LFS.

China’s claims to the South China Sea, a major international ship route and site of large deposits of oil and natural gas reserves, extend to the Philippines’ entire Extended Continental Shelf (ECS) and 80% of the Philippine Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), in-



cluding Malampaya. China likewise claimed Mischief Reef in 1995 and Scarborough Shoal in 2012.

While P1NAS condemned China, it also criticized the US for engendering tension between China and the Philippines and using this to reestablish military bases in the Philippines. “If we don’t want Chinese bases in the Spratlys, we surely don’t want US bases in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao,” the group clarified in its statement. “We don’t want to be caught between two competing giants.”

P1NAS held a rally first in front of the Chinese consulate, then proceeded to the US embassy. BAYAN chapters likewise held rallies in US, Europe, Hongkong, Canada and other places overseas.

BAYAN promised to carry out more actions to assert Philippine sovereignty. Among the planned activities are protest actions, extensive education campaigns and other activities to press the reactionary government to nullify one-sided agreements such as the EDCA, demand the nationalization of industries and other businesses belonging to countries which are acting against Philippine interests, and advance the struggle for national industrialization and genuine land reform to strengthen the economy and thus enable us to defend ourselves against those who trample on our national sovereignty. **AB**

Senator Santiago: EDCA should go through the Senate

LED by Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago, the Senate drafted a proposed resolution last June 11 expressing the view that the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA) is invalid unless the Senate ratifies it.

The resolution, which was signed by 13 senators, questioned the President’s authority to enter into agreements with other nations without Senate ratification. The Aquino government describes the EDCA as an “executive agreement” that does not need to be submitted to the Senate. The resolution will be submitted to the Supreme Court once it is ratified by the Senate.

Numerous complaints against the EDCA have earlier been filed in the Supreme Court by progressive organiz-

ations, lawyers, church people, academics and senators who voted against US military bases in 1991.

Meanwhile, the Aquino regime and the Japanese government signed the Philippine-Japanese Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) which will permit Japanese ships and airplanes to use Philippine bases for refueling and resupply. It will also permit Japanese ships patrolling the South China Sea to enter Philippine waters. The agreement gives way for Japanese military troops to use Philippine bases for rotational purposes, similar to the privilege claimed by the US and Australia. Concomitant to the VFA signing, the Philippines likewise agreed to purchase from Japan 10 patrol boats for the Philippine Coast Guard. **AB**

Economic cha-cha: US economic intervention

Resolution of Both Houses 1 (RBH1), a bill known as “economic cha-cha” or amending seven economic provisions in the 1987 constitution was withdrawn from plenary voting last June 13 when Congress adjourned. The bill was pushed by House Speaker Feliciano Belmonte as directed by the US and its agencies in the country. Belmonte is Aquino’s partymate and leading congressional ally.

Under RBH1, the phrase “unless otherwise provided by law” will be inserted in the provisions which limit foreign ownership and participation in the following areas: 1) exploration and use of natural resources; 2) public lands; 3) private lands; 4) businesses reserved for Filipino nationals; 5) public utilities; 6) educational institutions; and 7) mass media and advertising. It will also remove provisions that require administrative officers and managers of public utilities to be Filipino citizens. Through these, restrictions against foreign ownership from the said sectors will be lifted.

By pushing for “cha-cha”, Belmonte is promoting the distorted belief that foreign investment is the key to economic growth, thus the need to remove all restrictions that hinder its entry into the country. This is part of the neoliberal propaganda for denationalization, liberalization, privatization and deregulation and total foreign control of key industries and sectors of the economy.

Belmonte may seem to have failed to push for “economic cha-cha.” But this will not be the last time that the ruling class and the US will push for constitutional change. Nor will they confine themselves to charter change in order to open up the economy to foreign exploitation. In fact, even without cha-cha, the reactionary state has already managed to open up numerous economic sectors to full foreign ownership.

US, main promoter of “economic cha-cha”

US imperialism is the main promoter of “economic cha-cha”. In partnership with the Aquino regime, it has been setting-up agencies and programs and poured millions to directly intervene in local processes and pass favorable bills and laws.

Among these is the Partnership for Growth (PFG), one of the most comprehensive instrument for US economic intervention. The US established the PFG, in partnership with the Aquino regime, in 2011 with a \$739 million fund (P33 billion at \$1=P44). It ensures the drafting and enactment of policies that will open up the economy and award benefits and privileges to American capitalists and corporations.

Another US instrument is The

Arangkada Philippines Project (TAPP), that serves as the main lobby group for “economic cha-cha” in Congress. The TAPP is run by the American Chamber of Commerce (AmCham), together with the Joint Foreign Chambers of Commerce, and funded with \$1 million dollars (P44 million) by the USAID.

Concomitant with “economic cha-cha”, AmCham is also actively pushing for removal of restrictions set in the Foreign Investment Negative List (FINL, a list of businesses reserved for Filipino nationals and businesses).

Last June 8, it identified as prerequisite to participation in the Trans-Pacific Partnership the further opening up of the Philippine economy. On May 15, the Joint Foreign Chambers of the Philippines insisted on the removal of restrictions to foreign ownership of land, natural resources, media, advertising and public utilities.

On May 29, the US-Aquino regime removed restrictions for foreign ownership of credit, investment and other finance companies through Executive Order No. 184. It also removed restrictions on foreign employment in pharmaceutical and other health-related occupations, criminology, forestry and law. AB

Organizations launch alliance for land reform

On May 28, the Philippine Land Reform Movement (PLRM), an alliance for genuine land reform, was launched in the University of the Philippines (UP)-Diliman in Quezon City.

One of PLRM’s main objectives is to fight attempts of the Aquino landlord government to sell Philippine public and private lands to foreigners through “economic charter change.”

The proposed changes to the constitution aim to amend provisions which prohibit foreign ownership of land and limit foreign ownership of business operations in the country. Hundreds of thousands of hectares are set to be controlled by foreigners in the form of banana, pineapple,

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oil palm, rubber tree and other plantations.

Among those who participated in the PLRM launch are peasant-members of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) from Central Luzon, Southern Tagalog, Panay, Cordillera, Cagayan Valley and Mindanao. Also present were academics from UP and CONTEND, researchers from Ibon Foundation, leaders and members of Makabayan, BAYAN, Kilusang Mayo Uno, National Economic Protectionism Association, Magsasaka at Siyentipiko para sa Pag-unlad ng Agrikultura, nuns from the Religious of the Good Shepherd, Rural Missionaries of the Philippines and young activists. The Anti-Trapo Movement, Pilgrims for Peace and WE Govern Institute also attended.

Earlier, the KMP launched protest actions in front of Congress against “economic cha-cha” and moves to extend the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program. According to the KMP, under the two anti-peasant bills, landgrabbing and enforced peasant displacement will only worsen. Both bills failed to pass.

Still, even without changes to the constitution, the Aquino regime is already selling public and private lands indiscriminately. An example is the “Clark Green City,” an ambitious project which encompass 36,000 hectares of land in Mabalacat, Bataan and Capas in Tarlac and Pampanga. Aquino is now offering the project to foreign investors and their comprador counterparts under the Public-Private Partnership program.

AB

K-12: Anti-national, commercialized, scourge to the people

Protests greeted the K-12 Program during the first day of classes last June 1. Students and teachers under the Stop K to 12 Alliated marched to Mendiola, the Supreme Court and the Department of Education (DepEd) in Manila in an indictment of the neoliberal education policies of the US-Aquino regime.

The protesters exposed the immense problems in the K-12 program's implementation, including severe shortages of teachers, books, classrooms and seats, as well as the lack of electricity, water and other utilities. The alliance condemned the spiralling cost of education resulting in an increasing number of out of school youth. This is bound to worsen with the implementation of senior high school (SHS), the two-year addition to high school, starting 2016.

They also condemned the anti-national and commercialized character of K-12. They disputed the Aquino regime's proclamation that this will help in solving the unemployment problem of the country.

At present, five petitions to stop K-12 have been filed in the Supreme Court by various groups.

Education for contractual and low-quality jobs

Contrary to DepEd Sec. Armin Luistro's claims that the main purpose of K-12 is to raise the quality of education, the real aim of K-12 is

to produce workers with low and middle skills for short-term, contractual and low-quality jobs inside and outside the country.

Luistro and the Aquino regime talk of so-called “job mismatch” or the disjoint between the courses or workers' skills with “available” jobs. The Aquino regime conceals the problem of widespread unemployment in the local economy. It desires to justify the implementation of a curriculum or educational program that stresses on giving skills sought by capitalists or employers abroad.

This is evident in the SHS program. The DepEd projects in K12 that almost half (49%) of high school graduates will fall under the technical-vocational livelihood (TVL) category. This means that almost half of SHS graduates will pass through technical courses in house-keeping (to be employed as domestic help), welding, plumbing, tailoring, bartending, massage-giving and the like. Most of the jobs needing these skills can be found in Middle East countries.

Other categories for high school graduates are in arts and design, sports and academic (such as science and engineering).

With the K-12, more workers will join the ranks of the labor force at a younger age. This will swell the ranks of the unemployed due to the heightened lack of jobs in the local economy.



The number of underemployed and unemployed reached 12 million in 2014. According to the Ibon Foundation, almost half (47%) are youth in the 15-24 age bracket while a third (32%) are in the 25-24 age group. Seven out of ten finished high school or college.

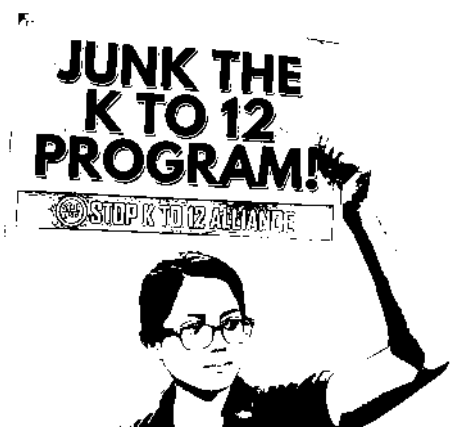
In 2014, the US-Aquino regime boasted creating 518,000 new jobs. This is less than the 554,000 new graduates. More workers are leaving for jobs abroad (4,500) daily compared to jobs created inside the country (2,800). Worse, most of the jobs found in the country are low-quality, part-time and low-earning.

Education for profit


The cost of education is set to rise under the K-12. According to the estimates of the Kabataan Partylist (KPL), a student enrolled in public school needs no less than P50,000/year while those in private schools spend double (P100,000/year). Thus, the extra two years of SHS means an additional P100,000 (public) to P200,000 (private) increase per student.


K-12 will further raise the number of students who could not enter school due to high costs. Data from DepEd itself indicates that some 2.3 million youths between the ages five and 15 could not go to school due to poverty. Among these are more than half a million who failed to enter kinder, more than 800,000 who stopped school while in elementary and 1.1 million who stopped schooling in high school.


This is set to increase further in 2016 when Grade 11 under SHS





SEVERE SHORTAGES


 **TEACHERS:** 57,167 + 4,000 unfilled positions in 2014


 **TEXTBOOKS:** 24 million + 13 million undelivered in 2014

 **WITHOUT ELECTRICITY:** 10,514 schools

 **UNFINISHED internet projects:** 395

CLASSROOMS: 113,000 regular + 95,000 for SHS 

WITHOUT WATER: 14,000 schools 

UNDELIVERED science and math equipment: 35,000 

UNDELIVERED equipment for information and communication technology: 10,383

starts. According to the KPL, less than half of more than 2.2 million Grade 10 graduates in 2016, will have an SHS to enter. Less than half of more than 8,000 public high schools, or only 3,839 are ready to open SHS classes. Thus, 1.4 million students may be forced to stop schooling or transfer to private schools.

In the National Capital Region (NCR), only 20% of public high schools are ready and have facilities to teach SHS in 2016. Nine out of ten SHS are private schools.

The DepEd's solution to hand out "vouchers" or subsidies for students forced to transfer to private schools is a scam. Under this system, private schools will be given P16,500-P22,000 per student annually to accommodate those who could not enrol in public schools. This is less than the usual P35,000-P70,000 tuition in private schools. The P20 billion to be allotted for 1.4 million students who cannot be accommodated in public SHS would not be sufficient.

Big capitalist school owners are ready to pounce on this subsidy. Even now, STI, AMA, Informatics and the Affordable Private Education Centers (APEC) to be set up by

the Ayala family have expressed readiness to accept students.

Scourge of teachers

In the middle of the severe shortage of teachers, K-12 will lead to massive unemployment in the sector in 2016. The Alliance of Concerned Teachers (ACT) estimates that some 100,000 college teachers and staff will lose their jobs in the first year of SHS as enrollment will stop for first year college. Job displacements will continue in succeeding years due to K-12's design of pushing graduates to find work immediately instead of proceeding to college.

Private college owners are encouraging professors who will be displaced to reapply as teachers in SHS. ACT fears that this will be used by these owners to justify the removal of regular teachers and reinstate them as contractuels. In addition, ACT foresees that private schools will use this opportunity to dissolve faculty unions active in the campaign against K-12. The struggle is expected to continue and intensify further as the K-12's full implementation approaches the first year.

AB

Aquino's PPP: Undue burden and corruption

Benigno S. Aquino's Public-Private Partnership projects are replete with corruption and will bring undue burden to the people. Before the end of Aquino's term, contracts are being rushed for two infrastructure projects: the Laguna Lakeshore Expressway Dike (LLED) and the Sasa Wharf Modernization Project.

Pernicious harm to be brought about by the Laguna Lake Megadike

The LLED, set to be one of the largest projects under the PPP, has been called the Megadike of Laguna Lake. It would cost P124.9 billion. The plan involves building a 45-kilometer dike and a 47-kilometer expressway between Taguig City and Los Banos, Laguna. The dike will be built half a kilometer from the lake's present shoreline. From the dike some 700 hectares will be reclaimed, including a portion of the lake. A canal 100-150 meters wide will be built. This will supposedly solve the flooding problem around the lake and reduce the traffic at the South Luzon Expressway (SLEX).

In a speech last May 25, Bayan Muna Rep. Carlos Isagani Zarate castigated the planned LLED as it will result in the eviction of those living along the lake's shoreline. Whole communities of small fishermen, vegetable farmers as well as duck growers in Taguig, Biñan, Sta. Rosa and San Pedro will be displaced. Furthermore, this will endanger the lives of the Filipino people as it is located only a few meters from the Marikina West Valley Fault. He added that the dike does not really offer a solution to soil erosion as it is too far from the lakeshore.

Zarate added that if flooding is to be solved, it would be cheaper to undertake regular dredging or the removal of the sludge at the bottom of the lake to deepen it, along with the opening of the Napindan flood-

way to allow the overflow water from Laguna Lake to flow into the Pasig river.

The project's real intention, according to Zarate, is for big capitalist developers to profit and ultimately own Laguna Lake for their own selfish interests. The contract winner will have 37 years to earn and offset expenses through toll fees that will be imposed on the said six-lane expressway.

Zarate alleges that the reason for the project's distance from the shoreline is to allow the reclamation of 700 hectares from the lake upon which highrise buildings, condominiums, hotels and shopping malls will be developed, bringing in huge profit to its capitalist developers.

Bloated cost of the Sasa Wharf modernization

Meanwhile, the original cost of the Sasa Wharf expansion project in Davao City was bloated from P4 billion to P17 billion under the PPP. The International Finance Corporation, an agency created by and affiliated with the World Bank, raised the contract price to include in the port's expansion project the ability to accommodate heavier and larger boats that even Manila's port does not have.

Zarate questioned the project cost that is several times larger than estimates for the expansion of other ports in the Davao Gulf.

In his May 27 speech, Zarate compared the estimated cost for Sasa Wharf's expansion to similar projects.

He pointed out that the planned expansion of the Hijo Port in Tagum City costs only P5.5 billion even if it will have triple the capacity of Sasa Wharf. The Hijo Port will take up 54 hectares. From an initial yearly capacity of 450,000 TEU (Twenty-Foot Equivalent Units or the capacity of a container van), this will be expanded to 2 million TEU. Zarate added that the planned expansion of the Davao International Container Terminal in Panabo City with a yearly capacity of 800,000 TEU would only cost P2.5 billion. Sasa Wharf occupies only 18 hectares and a capacity of 550,000 TEU.

The winning bidder will determine and collect docking and wharfage fees from the port users for a period of not less than 30 years. Since the contractors will offset investment in the project through the increase in fees, importers and exporters will then pass on to consumers the added cost through higher prices of imported products.

The estimated cost of 3,077 proposed projects of the PPP will reach P6.58 trillion, double the country's current annual budget. Almost half, or some P3 trillion, will be for transportation infrastructure, while the others will be for projects in social service, communication, water and energy. The government will incur an estimated P1.3 trillion in additional debt including the direct public loans as well as loan guarantees for the private capitalists.

The North-South Rail, costing P170 billion will be the largest of the project.

Zarate called the Aquino administration's PPP as "Pabigat, Pambusabos at Pasanin" (Burden, Enslavement and Hardship) to the Filipino people. AB