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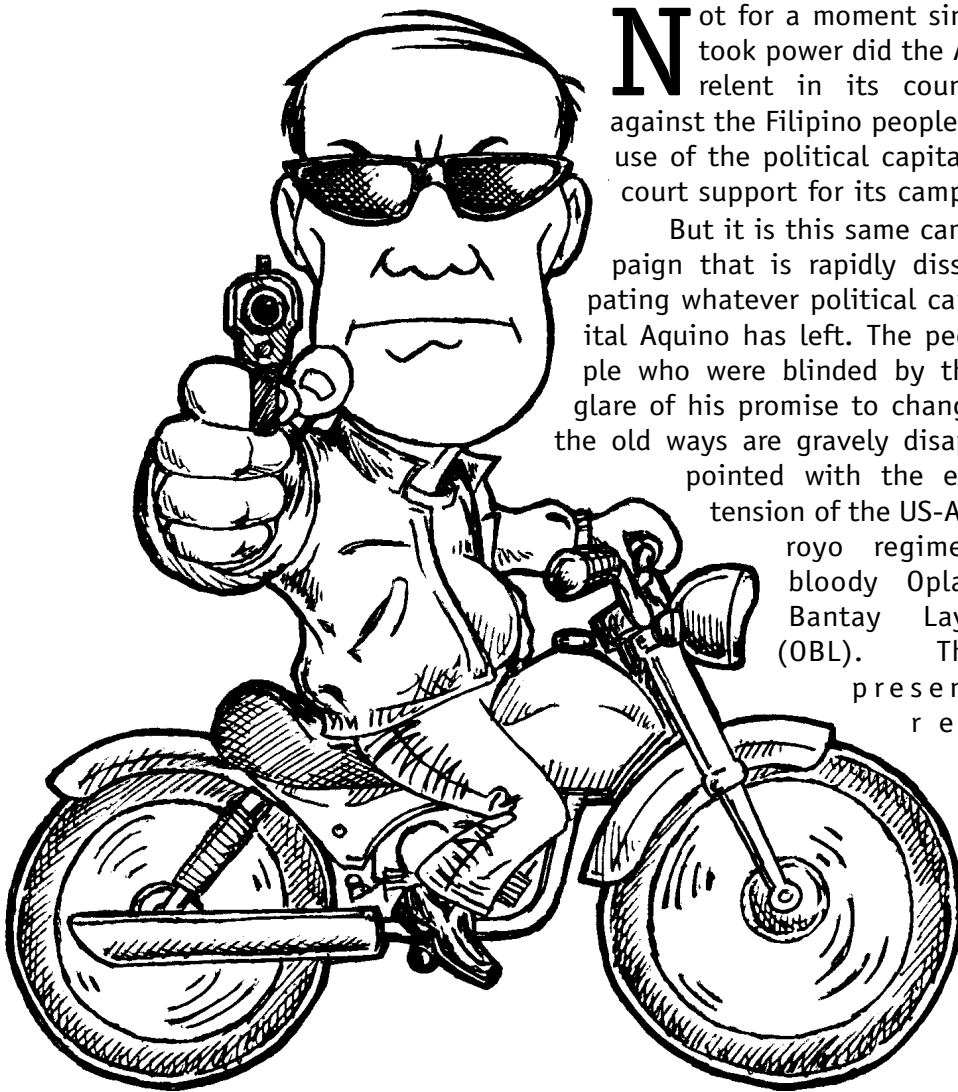
Pahayagan ng Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas  
Pinapatnubayan ng Marxismo-Leninismo-Maoismo

# Bayan

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Editorial

## Expose and oppose the Aquino regime's deception and militarism



**N**ot for a moment since Benigno Aquino III's new regime took power did the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) relent in its counterrevolutionary military campaign against the Filipino people. The US-Aquino regime is making full use of the political capital it gained from the last election to court support for its campaign of repression.

But it is this same campaign that is rapidly dissipating whatever political capital Aquino has left. The people who were blinded by the glare of his promise to change the old ways are gravely disappointed with the extension of the US-Arrroyo regime's bloody Oplan Bantay Laya (OBL). The present

game is turning out to be no different from its predecessor in terms of the intensity and brutality of its fascist repression.

The AFP has been conducting a relentless and all-out military campaign for more than two months now in Ilocos-Cordillera, Bicol, Eastern Visayas, Negros and practically the whole of Mindanao. Up to seven Philippine Army divisions are now launching military operations and sowing terror among the people in these areas. AFP military operations have also continued in other regions.

These operations have resulted in myriad cases of fascist violence and human rights violations and wrought havoc on the people's livelihoods. The AFP has been brazenly abusing human rights and international humanitarian law.

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In a matter of a little over two months, soldiers and other military operatives have committed massacres, abductions and torture, destroyed crops and other sources of livelihood, conducted illegal searches, theft and forcible recruitment and terrorized civilians. There has so far been an average of more than one victim of extrajudicial killing per week under the new regime.

The renewed spate of fascist suppression by the AFP in the first few months of the new puppet Aquino regime is driven by three factors that are inextricably intertwined.

The first are Aquino and the AFP top brass' marching orders to crush the people's armed revolutionary resistance in three years. The orders were issued after the AFP's failure to defeat the NPA despite a decade of the bloody OBL. Aquino has ordered its extension while he prepares his own "internal security operational plan" for next year. He has practically doubled the AFP budget for 2011, announced plans to expand the military and is now begging for more military assistance from his imperi-

alist master.

Second, there has been an outpouring of US support to the AFP and the puppet Aquino regime's counterinsurgency program. The US has recently approved \$434 million in aid for programs related to the counterrevolutionary war, on top of the financial aid and surplus military equipment it has been providing to the AFP and the police. The 2010 Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT) is currently being held in various areas of Luzon involving more than 4,000 American soldiers and 1,000 elements from the Philippine Navy and Marines. The US continues to intervene and call the shots in the AFP's counterinsurgency operations. It is the moving force behind the new operational plan being drafted for next year, which will focus on stepping up psywar and political gimmickry to justify and support an intensified campaign of suppression.

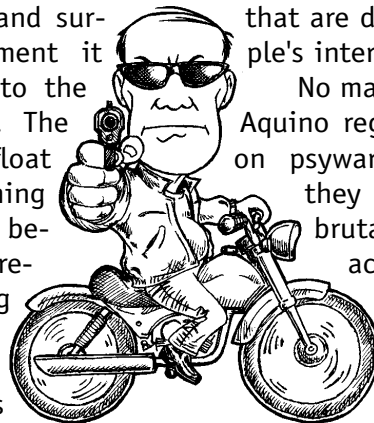
Third, current massive military campaigns are closely connected to

particular big foreign comprador and bourgeois comprador projects. These campaigns are aimed at suppressing the people's resistance to plans to initiate and expand the operations of large-scale mining and agro-industrial companies as well as other plunderous projects that are detrimental to the people's interests.

No matter how much the US-Aquino regime and the AFP rely on psywar gimmicky and lies, they cannot cover up the brutality of their fascist acts. The AFP has been taking instruction from the US Counterinsurgency Guide to rev up its psywar and civil-military operations (CMO). Thus, alongside its military operations, the AFP has been conducting showcase medical and dental missions. Alongside its terroristic acts, the AFP has continuously been prating about "advocating human rights." It has been utilizing the mass media to spread distorted information and malign the NPA and the revolutionary movement.

Aquino and his subalterns have also been going on and on about "peace" despite the absence of any decisive step towards the resumption of talks with the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP). In perpetuating the policies that have served as stumbling blocks to the peace talks' resumption, Aquino has shown his lack of intention to resolve the roots of the civil war through political negotiations.

The large-scale campaign of repression and unrelenting violence against the people expose the US-Aquino regime's militarist, reactionary and antipeople character lurking behind its promises of change. Aquino's much-vaunted "straight path" is in fact a crooked



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road paved by fascism and watched over by his armed forces in order to give full vent to foreign monopoly capitalists and their big bourgeois comprador, landlord and bureaucrat capitalist cohorts to plunder and oppress the people.

Aquino's intensification and expansion of his campaign of repression and violations of the people's rights are stoking the people's anger and fuelling their determination to defend themselves and wage resistance.

We must pull out all stops to expose and oppose the deceitful US-Aquino regime's worsening militarism and oppression.

The Filipino people must unite against the puppet regime's US-dictated militarist policy. We must continuously expose the US-Aquino regime's pretenses and its sham promises of change. We must support the widespread clamor to resume the peace talks in order to seek a just and lasting resolution to the civil war raging in the country.

We must fire up the people's courage to resist the various ways by which the military and the state's armed forces have been brutalizing and terrorizing the countryside and urban areas. The people must mobilize themselves in their numbers to show that they see through the US-Aquino regime's deceptions and have not been crushed.

The NPA must step up its tactical offensives to thwart the AFP's fascist military operations and punish it and the Aquino regime for their atrocities. Let the US-Aquino regime shake to its very foundations as it confronts tactical offensives growing in scale and intensity. Let us show the entire nation that the national democratic revolution continues to advance and gain strength. **AB**

## Family massacred in Albay

**A** massacre in Albay and widespread violations of human rights in Samar province are among the reports compiled by *Ang Bayan* this October.

**October 20.** A ten-year old boy was wounded in the foot when soldiers of the 49th IB rained automatic fire on the house of a civilian in Sta. Lourdez, Barcelona, Sorsogon at around 6:30 a.m.

**October 11.** Elements of the 2nd IB massacred a family in Barangay Nabas-an, Daraga, Albay at around 2 a.m. Shot dead were Barangay Councilman Wilfredo Lotino, his wife Evelyn and their nephew Anjo Martos. The Lotinos' daughter Jenny was wounded.

The victims were sleeping in their house when the soldiers forced themselves in and mercilessly gunned them down. The soldiers perpetrated the massacre a few hours after the NPA attacked the 2nd IB's tactical patrol base in Barangay San Ramon, Daraga.

**September.** Soldiers from the 34th IB trained their guns at Rosalie Gagbo, 30, and hit her neck several times with a piece of wood on September 20. They did this in front of Gagbo's three young children. Gagbo, wife of a village councilor of Barrio Casaba, Jiabong, Samar was being forced to confess membership in the NPA and provide information on the Red fighters' alleged base camp. She was then forced to sign a document stating that they did not hurt her. Before the military left, they stole chickens and other fam-

ily belongings. The soldiers returned after a week to make Rosalie's seven-year old child sign a document stating that her mother was treated well.

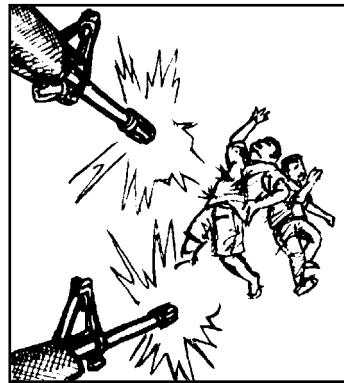
A week after the incident, more than 20 troopers of the 34th IB launched another operation, this time in Barangay Bunga, Motiong, Samar. The soldiers bought food worth ₱4,000 on credit from

a store owned by Irene and Serafin Pacios. Before they left, they took other items worth ₱2,000. The couple could no longer demand payment because the soldiers did not give their names or say who their commanding

officer was. The same military unit had earlier bought things on credit from a store owned by Wenceslao Jomagdao in the same barangay but also failed to pay him.

This same unit under the 34th IB also stole crops from Arcenia and Jose Labong of Barangay Bunga and trampled on the family's rice fields, ruining the crop. They also failed to pay for items bought on credit from Remedios and Gabriel Paqueta.

Meanwhile, in the towns of Matuguinao and San Jose de Buan, helicopters used rice fields as landing pads, wreaking widespread havoc on the farmers' crops. The helicopters were bringing in supplies for a large-scale operation that began in September. **AB**





# NPA thwarts AFP operation in Ilocos Sur

**R**ed fighters under the Alfredo Cesar Command (ACC) of the New People's Army (NPA) in Ilocos Sur thwarted a massive military onslaught that had been wreaking havoc in the province since June. At least 500 soldiers from the 86th, 50th and 77th IB as well as Scout Ranger and CAFGU elements conducted the operation.

The NPA did not suffer any casualties. Instead, two soldiers were killed and at least three elements on the enemy side were wounded in a firefight in the villages of Sapang and Conconig East in Sta. Lucia on September 10. A Huey heli-

copter providing support to the soldiers crashed after being hit.

The military operation has resulted in violations of human rights. The worst was the abduction and extrajudicial killing of civilians Nicolas Ramos of Poblacion Norte, Salcedo on July 28 and Elmer Valdez of Conconig East on September 12.

The fascist troops brusquely searched residents' houses and stole their personal belongings and produce. They terrorized, mauled, harassed and threatened residents who happened to be at home, and required them to give them supplies like rice and chickens. The military also set up checkpoints in various places.

Elements of the 50th IB also posed as NPA guerrillas in the vil-

lages of Galimuyod, Candon, Sta. Lucia and Salcedo. They stole the masses' farm animals and pets, cleaned out their fishponds, extorted and held up even pandesal vendors, aside from committing other acts of banditry.

Such banditry and criminal acts are marks of the soldiers of the ruling classes, said the ACC. "We call on the masses and the public to carefully discern these elements masquerading as NPA members. We trust that they will be able to distinguish between the ways of the disciplined army of the poor and the bandit troops of the AFP."

"In its more than 30 years of operating in Ilocos, the NPA has proven that it is a revolutionary army that is disciplined and truly stands and fights for the interests of the poor and exploited masses. The masses evidently continue to support and value the NPA even in the face of hardships and amid gunbattles." **AB**



# Progressive groups assail SC affirmation of Anti-Terror Law

**P**rogressive organizations expressed dismay at the Supreme Court after the latter dismissed their petition questioning Republic Act 9372 or the Human Security Act of 2007 (HSA 2007). The law allows warrantless arrests of suspected terrorists and detention without charges.

In a 45-page decision penned by Associate Justice Conchita Carpio Morales, the Supreme Court threw out on October 11 the petition filed by Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (BAYAN), Karapatan, Kilusang Mayo Uno, Integrated Bar of the Philippines, Southern Hemisphere Engagement Network Inc. and BAYAN-Southern Tagalog to

declare illegal the cases filed against activists under HSA 2007.

Karapatan asserted its opposition to HSA 2007. Said Karapatan deputy secretary-general Jigs Clamor, HSA 2007 will pave the way for further human rights abuses by elements of the state. Karapatan and other groups have been fighting the enactment of the Anti-Ter-

rorism Law since 2001.

BAYAN secretary-general Renato Reyes said many persons have already been illegally arrested, tortured, placed under surveillance and subjected to other abuses since the law was enforced in 2007. Reyes added that their stand against HSA 2007 has not changed with Benigno Aquino III taking the reins of power. Up to 16 persons have already been killed, two abducted and three arrested under the new regime.

Even the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines is also against HSA 2007, saying that Aquino's enemies will only multiply with the Supreme Court's recent decision. **AB**

# Karapatan dismayed at Aquino regime

**K**arapatan has expressed dismay at the administration of Benigno Aquino III, saying that the number of human rights violations had increased in its first 100 days.

Compared to the 18 activists killed in the first six months of 2010 (the last months of the Arroyo regime and OBL), there were up to 16 victims of extrajudicial killings in Aquino's first 100 days in power. Violations were brazen—houses were forcibly entered and victims dragged, tortured and killed in front of children and family.

Aquino has failed to fulfill his promise of solving extrajudicial killings. He formed the Truth Commission, but its mandate does not include resolving human rights issues. The Morong 43 and 338 other political detainees are still behind bars. Aquino has even extended Oplan Bantay Laya until December 2010.

To date, the Aquino regime has yet to mete punishment on ele-

ments of the state involved in human rights violations.

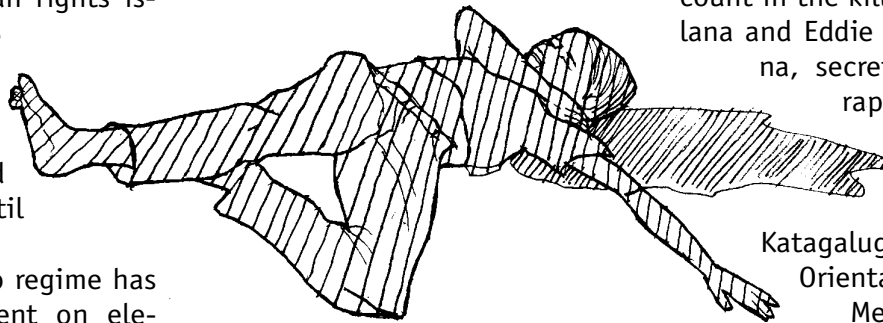
Meanwhile, Amnesty International (AI) also denounced the failure of the Aquino regime to act on human rights issues in the Philippines in its first 100 days. This came after the mothers of abducted students Karen Empeño and Sherlyn Cadapan attended an AI conference last October 8 along with another victim, Raymond Manalo. They recounted before the delegates the circumstances surrounding their daughters' abduc-

tion, and Manalo and his brother's ordeal in the hands of the military.

The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) also issued a resolution holding the AFP and the reactionary government accountable for the killing of Benjamine "Beng" Hernandez by military forces. Hernandez, then deputy secretary-general of Karapatan-Southern Mindanao was killed in North Cotabato in 2002. The UNHRC said that the Philippine government violated the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

In October 2008, the UNHRC also called the government to account in the killing of Eden Marcelana and Eddie Gumanoy. Marcelana, secretary-general of Karapatan-Southern Tagalog, and Gumanoy, president of KASAMA-Timog Katagalugan were killed in Oriental Mindoro in 2003.

Meanwhile, calls are mounting for Aquino to free the political detainees, particularly the Morong 43 who have been incarcerated for eight months now. Over 1,000 professors and groups of health workers as well as past secretaries of the Department of Health signed a letter pressing Aquino to release them. The letter was published as a paid advertisement in the national broadsheet *Philippine Daily Inquirer* last October 18. The health secretaries who signed the letter were Dr. Esperanza Cabral (Arroyo), Dr. Jaime Galvez-Tan (Ramos), and Dr. Alberto Romualdez (Estrada). The US-based Association of Democratic Lawyers earlier sent a similar letter to Aquino.



## Detained labor leader released

**E**astern Visayas labor leader Vincent "Bebot" Borja, 41, was released after three years of languishing in jail due to false charges slapped by the military.

Borja was found innocent of killing Marianito Calibo on July 8, 2006. He was also accused of killing Junie Manigo and Simeon Cabonegro. The 19th IB, which arrested and fabricated charges against Borja boasted of having a witness who would nail him. But in a hearing held October 13, the witness failed to identify Borja, resulting in his immediate release.

Borja is a member of the Kilusang Mayo Uno National Council representing Eastern Visayas. He is also the regional coordinator of the Anakpawis Party and leader of the workers' union at the Philippine National Oil Company in Leyte which led a successful strike in 2004. He was arrested on May 7, 2007 in Malinao, Ormoc City at the height of the election campaign.

AB

# Workers in Agusan del Sur strike

OVER 1,000 workers of the country's biggest palm plantation launched a strike to protest the company's antilabor schemes.

Led by the Filipinas Palm Oil Plantations Inc. Workers Union (FPPIWU), the workers barricaded the premises of the Filipinas Palm Oil Plantations Inc. in Rosario, Agusan del Sur last October 5. FPPIWU supporters also held a rally the next day at the FPPI office in Paseo de Roxas, Makati City. FPPIWU is an affiliate of the National Federation of Labor Unions.

The union demanded favorable action after negotiations for a Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) collapsed. It also pressed for higher wages and bene-

fits and the regularization of contractual workers.

The workers demanded a P130-150 hike in their daily wage. But the company only offered a niggardly P4 increase. It also refused to provide 25 other benefits stipulated in the CBA.

Responding to the company's demand to quell the strike, the DOLE assumed jurisdiction over the case and ordered the workers to return to work last October 13 although none of their demands had been met.

Put up in 1979 by billionaire Dennis Villareal, FPPI covers 8,429 hectares, equivalent to 30% of the land area occupied by all palm plantations in the Philippines.

## ABS-CBN workers put up picket line

RETRENCHED workers belonging to the Internal Job Market Workers Union (IJMWU) put up a picket line in front of ABS-CBN in Quezon City last October 12 to protest government inaction over the company's retrenchment campaign.

Workers of Kowloon House and members of Anakbayan, Kabataan Party and Bagong Alyansang Makabayan-National Capital Region also took part in the protest action.

Alain Cadag, vice-president of IJMWU said they are demanding the implementation of the Depart-

ment of Labor and Employment's (DOLE) decision last August ordering ABS-CBN to reinstate and recognize as regular employees the 114 workers it had laid off. DOLE also called for the conduct of certification elections for the formal recognition of the union.

IJMWU had earlier launched protest actions seeking a stop to unabated retrenchment and the company's union-busting moves. It also denounced the Aquino regime for not acting on the issue of contractualization among workers of ABS-CBN and other companies.

## KMU protests hike in Philhealth contributions

MEMBERS of the Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU) held a picket-rally outside the Philhealth office last October 12 to oppose the 200% hike in Philhealth contributions of professional and self-employed workers starting this month.

The KMU said that members will be paying up to P600 quarterly this year and P900 per quarter next year. The previous contribution was P300 per quarter.

The hike is unjust, said KMU secretary-general Roger Soluta. Members have to pay three times more than the original contribution while the government reduced the Philhealth budget from P5.17 billion this year to P3.5 billion in 2011. The health budget has also been slashed by P2 billion from P40 billion, Soluta added. The KMU demanded that the government raise the health budget instead of passing the burden to workers through hiked Philhealth contributions.

## Drivers launch picket-rallies

PROGRESSIVE drivers launched simultaneous protest actions nationwide last October 13 to press for the scrapping of a Department of Transportation and Communication (DOTC) order that imposes higher penalties for traffic violations and to oppose continuing oil price increases.

Led by the Pinagkaisang Samahan ng Tsuper at Operators Nationwide (PISTON), drivers gathered at the Quezon City Memorial Circle at around 8 a.m. before marching towards the central office of the DOTC in Ortigas, Mandaluyong City. They then held a picket-rally at the main office of Petron Oil Corp. inside the San Miguel Complex in Ortigas Center.

The drivers also launched protest actions at local branches of the Land Transportation Office in Biñan, Laguna and in the cities of Legazpi, Iloilo, Roxas, Bacolod, Davao, Cagayan de Oro and General Santos.

PISTON expressed dismay at Aquino's refusal to scrap the Oil Deregulation Law which allows oil companies to freely hike prices. It is poised to launch a massive transport strike if oil price increases continue.



## NPA military actions in Bicol

Ten soldiers were killed and two were wounded in nine military actions launched by the New People's Army (NPA) in different parts of Bicol from October 9 to 18.

**In Masbate.** The Jose Rapsing Command (JRC) of the NPA ambushed two policemen last October 18 in Barangay Buenasuerte, Pio V. Corpus. Killed were PO3 Nonilon Agbones and SP01 Nilo Abejuela who were actively building an intelligence network in the area. A caliber .45 and a 9 mm pistol, magazines and ammunition were taken from them.

A day before, two soldiers were killed and two others were wounded when another team from the JRC-NPA peppered their vehicle with bullets in Barangay Maravilla, Palanas.

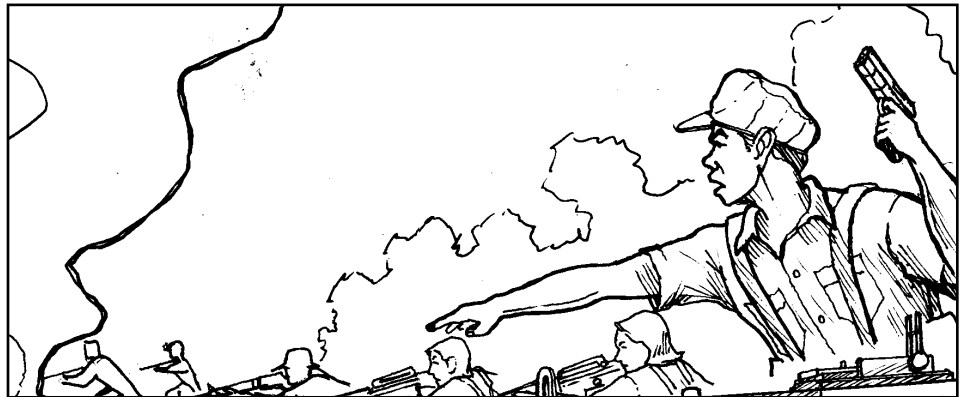
**In Sorsogon.** Four soldiers of the 49th IB under a certain Lieutenant De Jesus were killed and a number were wounded when the NPA detonated a bomb that hit a military truck in Sitio Cagdagat,

Barangay Boton, Casiguran at exactly ten minutes past noon on October 11. The blown up truck was immediately cordoned off by Philippine Army soldiers to hide their casualties from the public.

In the morning of the same day, two soldiers were killed when the NPA launched sapper operations in Marinas, Sorsogon City at around 5:30, in Barangay Cabi-

gaan, Gubat at around 6:30, and in Barangay Sangat, Gubat at about 8:00. Sapper operations are a type of warfare using explosives and done behind enemy lines or in close combat to lend support to main military actions.

**In Albay.** Three harassment operations were launched by Red fighters against a 2nd IB detachment in Barangay San Ramon, Dagara last October 10 and another detachment in Barangay Taplacon, Camalig. Earlier, the NPA also harassed the 2nd IB tactical command post in Barangay Cabran Pequeño, Camalig. AB



## NPA military actions in Panay

Six shotguns, a 9 mm pistol and assorted military equipment were seized by the New People's Army in Panay in six military actions launched from June to August. Two soldiers were also killed and three more were wounded, according to the September 2010 issue of *Daba-daba*, the revolutionary mass paper in Panay.

**August 20.** A unit under the Napoleon Tumagtang Command of the NPA-Southern Front harassed a detachment of the 82nd IB and CAFGU in Barangay Molina, Tubungan, Iloilo.

**July 30.** Three shotguns, a 9 mm pistol and rounds of ammunition of various caliber were seized from a barangay captain in a disarming operation launched by the Nonito Aguirre Sr. Command of the NPA-Eastern Front. Two of the responding policemen were wounded

when they were ambushed by the guerrillas. In a separate incident, another NPA unit also successfully launched an ambush operation, carting away three shotguns.

**July 29.** An NPA unit harassed a sleeping Reengineered Special Operations Team (RSOT) in Barangay Bagacay, Igaras, Iloilo. Out of fear, the RSOT fired back indiscriminately, hitting the leg of civilian Juanita Española who was sleeping in her house in adjacent Barangay Passi. To cover up their shame,

they took pictures of her and claimed she was a victim of NPA strafing.

**July 27.** A soldier was killed when an NPA unit harassed another 82nd IB detachment in Barangay Osorio-1, San Remigio, Antique. The incident was hidden from the public.

**July 13.** A soldier of the 47th IB was killed when an NPA unit foiled an enemy operation in Barangay Ipil, Calinog, Iloilo.

**June 25.** A sergeant serving as the commanding officer of a 47th IB detachment was wounded in a sniping operation launched by a unit of the Jose Percival Estocada Command of the NPA-Central Front in Barangay Sto. Rosario, Jaminan, Capiz. AB

# People's court orders arrest of 2 generals, 5 colonels

**A** people's court in Negros issued arrest warrants against two generals and five colonels of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) responsible for the June 14 killing of Benjamin Bayles and the escalation of human rights violations in the island since the US-Arroyo regime took power. Bayles was a former Bayan Muna member of Himamaylan City.

Frank Fernandez, spokesperson of the National Democratic Front (NDF)-Negros said last October 13 that all NPA operational commands and units have been ordered to arrest the seven military officers.

The subjects of the arrest warrants are current or former officers of the 3rd Infantry Division of the Philippine Army operating in Panay, Negros and Guimaras: Maj. Gen. Vicente Porto, Brig. Gen. Josue Gaverza, Col. Cesar Yano, Col. Maximo Caro, Col. Manuel L. Ocho-

torena, Lt. Col. Ricardo Bayhon and Lt. Col. Ramil Bitong.

Porto is chief of the 3rd ID-PA based in Camp Mariano Peralta, Jamindan, Capiz in Panay. Replaced by Caro, Gaverza was former chief of the 303rd Brigade based in Minoayan, Murcia, Negros Occidental. Yano was also replaced last June by Ochotorena as 302nd Brigade commanding officer. Bayhon and Bitong are commanding officers of the 61st IB and 11th IB, respectively.

Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin and AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Ricardo David had recently admitted that Bayles' assailants are both soldiers. However, the AFP claimed that the two were not ordered to kill the victim. A few hours after the killing, police arrested them at a checkpoint in Silay City, Negros Occidental. Two caliber .45 pistols were taken from them.

The two, who identified themselves as Roger Bahon, 26, and Ronnie Caurino, 24, are presently imprisoned at the Silay City Jail and are facing a criminal case lodged at the Regional Trial Court. But last October 9, Col. Edilberto Surante, Philippine Army Adjutant General, issued a certification proving that the two are actually PFC Rafael Cordova and PFC Reygine Luas, both 61st IB soldiers under Bayhon. The 3rd ID had earlier disowned the two. **AB**

## The myth of new jobs

**C**ontrary to the promises of Benigno Aquino III, the new regime shows little seriousness or has hardly made significant steps towards solving the grave problem of unemployment.

The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) has nothing to show but the "new jobs" expected to be created by the entry of new foreign investments in export processing zones (EPZs), business process outsourcing (BPO) and other similar services such as customer service, clerical jobs and driving.

It has been proven in the past that EPZs do not contribute substantially to the solution of the unemployment problem. Foreign companies in the EPZs now directly employ only 600,000 workers—only 1.68% of the 36.3 million Filipinos listed as employed. Even doubling the number of EPZs will not solve the problem.

Worse, the harshest forms of exploitation and oppression of

workers and violations of trade union and other workers' rights take place in the EPZs where contractualization is a staple.

Moreover, investments and production in the EPZs are geared for the export of semi-processed manufactures from imported components. It is divorced from the entire Philippine economy and contributes no real benefit for the national economy. Instead, it shackles the economy to semimanufacturing and impedes the development of genuine national industry.

Most of the so-called "new jobs" are in the BPO sector with 80% in call centers. Some 500,000 Filipinos work in this sector.

The US and other imperialist countries outsource such jobs to

underdeveloped countries where wages are low. Most of those employed in this sector are either college graduates or dropouts who get hired for their proficiency in English regardless of the courses they took in college. **AB**





# Destructive mining in Northern Cagayan

Foreign mining corporations have been operating in the towns of Northern Cagayan for several years. The scope of the operations include the area between Aparri and Lallo and the towns in the northwest of the province such as Sanchez Mira and Pamplona.

The mining operations center on a 16-hectare area along river banks in the towns of Aparri, Camalaniugan and Lallo. The projects are supposedly being undertaken by several entities including a Taiwanese corporation which curiously list the same office address. In fact, local bourgeois compradors led by the Enrile dynasty are behind the projects.

Magnetite is the main mineral being mined in the region. The province of Cagayan has the largest deposits of the mineral in the country. Magnetite is naturally found mixed with sand in seas and rivers where it serves as ballast protecting against the erosion of coastlines and riverbanks. Sand from the area contains 60% mag-

netite.

The government itself pushed for such large-scale mining in Cagayan. It entered into an agreement with a Taiwanese company in 2006 for the Cagayan River Basin Flood Mitigation Project in exchange for the province's magnetite.

Due to the massive quarrying, rains bring floods to the riverside communities, washing out crops and drowning ricefields. The dry season, on the other hand, quickly dries up the Apagonan River which is a local source of livelihood.

The arrival of big foreign mining corporations has destroyed the river which provided the locals fish and clams for decades.

Since the outset of the mining projects, residents of the affected

areas have expressed their dismay and opposition. Five hundred farmers set up a barricade in 2008 to block the project but they were suppressed by the police.

In 2007, reformist groups like Akbayan tried to enter the affected areas to convince the residents to enter into a settlement with the corporation and abandon their militant struggle.

All major rivers from Buguey town up to Sta. Ana, Cagayan are now quarrying and mining sites. The operations mainly serve the construction of Port Irene, a major part of the Cagayan Economic Zone Authority, a project of the Enriles.

The quarrying and mining operations are making the rivers deeper, destroying the water supply of hectares of rice paddies. Wangag River, once considered the cleanest river in the country, has not been spared. AB

## Peasants march for land reform

PEASANTS successfully launched a mass action from October 18 to 21 to demand genuine land reform. Dubbed "Lakbayan ng Magsasaka at Anakpawis para sa Lupa at Hustisya," the mass action was led by the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) and affiliated organizations.

The peasants marched from Central Luzon and Southern Tagalog to Mendiola in Manila. The march started in Hacienda Luisita in Tarlac and Sta. Rosa in Laguna with support from farmers from Bicol, Cagayan Valley and Negros.

The marchers called for the junking of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program Extension with Reforms (CARPER) and the Public-Private Partnership Program of foreigners in the country. They also demanded a stop to the extrajudicial killing of peasants and activists. The Katipunan ng Magsasaka sa Timog Katagalugan and the Alyansa ng Magbubukid sa Gitnang Luzon denounced the intensifying militarization of the countryside and the planned Balikatan exercises in Hacienda Luisita.

## Aquino waters down hostage report

PRES. Benigno Aquino III has watered down the report and recommendations of the Incident Investigation and Review Committee (IIRC) led by Justice Sec. Leila de Lima regarding the hostage-taking incident in Luneta on August 23.

Aquino particularly rejected the recommendation to file charges of criminal negligence against officers of the PNP and certain top government officials. He instead ordered the filing of administrative or lesser cases against the officials involved.

The president shielded his close friends Interior Undersecretary Enrico E. Puno and Manila Mayor Alfredo Lim from possible criminal charges. He had earlier refused to disclose the recommendations to the public and released only the first part of the report. However, the entire report was leaked on the internet.

Aquino's indecision to hold accountable his incompetent officials drew much flak. Even Hongkong officials have expressed disappointment over Aquino's decision to reject the IIRC's recommendations.

# Severe power crisis in Mindanao

**T**he longrunning power crisis in Mindanao continues to worsen. The people in the entire island suffer up to five-hour brownouts everyday.

Mindanao suffers power shortages of between 300 and 500 megawatts (MW) due to the reduced capacity of hydroelectric power plants that supply most of the island's power needs. These plants generate electricity from the flow of dam water which has been weakened by the siltation of rivers due to destructive logging and mining.

As a result, the 727-megawatt capacity of the Agus plants has been reduced to 125 MW, while the 255-megawatt capacity of the Pulangi plants is now down to 100 MW. The actual power output of these plants is only around 10% of their capacity. Water in the dams at times reaches critical levels, threatening to halt the operation of the power plants altogether.

Instead of finding solutions to the siltation of the lakes and rivers, the government entered into contracts with private companies in the power industry to cover the gaping power shortage.

These contracts are anomalous and only favor the independent power producers (IPPs) which produce electricity by burning imported diesel fuel or coal. In their pursuit of bigger profits, these IPPs often pass on to consumers the enormous costs of such inefficient

## US homeless growing in number

**T**he continuing economic depression in the US is marked by rising homelessness and foreclosures. The National Alliance to End Homelessness estimates that up to 3.5 million Americans lose their homes each year.

Some 670,000 people spend nights without a roof over their heads, most of them sleeping in the streets and in parks. Others live in their cars or mobile homes. Yet others live with relatives or friends, pitch tents in public places or find refuge in shelters run by the government, the church or private charitable organizations.

Among the homeless are middle-class professionals who lost their jobs, small businessmen who went bankrupt, Iraq and Afghanistan veterans and ordinary soldiers. Among veteran soldiers, up to 400,000 are homeless in every given year.

Up to eight million out of 90 million mortgaged home owners defaulted on their amortizations in May. Some 1.2 million houses will be foreclosed this year.

Poverty is worsening in the US with one in seven Americans living under the poverty line in 2009. In 2008-2009, the number of Americans living in poverty reached 43.6 million after four million people joined their ranks due to the recession. An estimated 40 million Americans now live on food stamps.

Under conditions of rising unemployment in the US, poverty and homelessness are bound to become more widespread. The Obama administration has allocated \$1.2 billion for programs for the homeless.

The amount is but a pittance compared to the \$787 billion the government has released to bail out the banks and finance companies responsible for the anomalous housing bubble.

Meanwhile, a new scandal was exposed in September involving banks and finance companies that extend housing credit. It was revealed that the banks are rushing the processing of foreclosure documents. Banks have been falsifying documents to "complete" the requirements of foreclosures in order to place the affected houses back in the market.

Ally Financial (formerly GMAC Mortgage) was forced to stop its anomalous foreclosure of houses after successive investigations throughout the US shed light on the illegal practice. The US government owns 53.6% of Ally Financial, one of the biggest companies bailed out by the government from bankruptcy with \$17.2 billion in credit. The revelations also compelled JP Morgan Chase, PNC Financial and Bank of America to stop its foreclosures. They are also among the big banks and finance companies bailed out by the US government.

Due to the scandal, calls are mounting for the declaration of a moratorium on all foreclosures. However, President Obama refused to sign a bill recently approved by the US Congress making it easier for homeowners to dispute the foreclosure of their homes in court. The Obama government fears that such a law would slow down the recovery of the US economy if not further shake the nation's financial system. AE

power generation.

In February, Aboitiz Power Corporation (APC) won the contract for filling the power shortage in Mindanao, especially in the southern and northeastern parts. The APC is expected to supply an additional 200 MW of power.

APC, through its subsidiary Therma Marine Inc. (TMI), bought and now operates the NPC's two old and idle coal-fired power barges, each having a capacity of 100 MW. The APC purchased the barges for only \$30 million (₱1.4 billion) although their actual price is around \$47 million (₱1.5 billion).

The APC can easily recoup its investment in the power barges with its contract with the NPC amounting to ₱1.58 billion annually, covering not just the actual power consumption but the entire power generation capacity (ancillary charge) stipulated in the contract. TMI now collects ancillary charges ten times bigger than in the previous year.

As a result, electric power cost shot up to ₱1.3209-₱1.4028 per kWh from ₱0.1830 per kWh or a 622-627% increase.

**Aboitiz control over power supply.** APC's control over electric power supply is national in scope. It cur-

rently owns 20 hydroelectric power plants, 13 thermal plants (including two geothermal and three coal-fired plants), seven distribution facilities and two electric service and consultancy companies. Most of these were purchased from the government since the enactment of the Electric Power Industry Reform Act (EPIRA).

APC is under the Aboitiz clan's holding company—Aboitiz Equity Ventures (AEV). Aside from its power business which accounts for the biggest part of its revenues (56% of its ₱8.3 billion net income in 2009), the AEV also has interests in banking, food and transportation.

The Aboitizes have had strong connections with previous regimes and now has close ties with the new US-Aquino regime. Current Department of Energy Secretary Jose Rene Almendras was treasurer of Aboitiz & Co. and Aboitiz Equity Ventures before joining the Ayalas. The DOE manages and controls all energy-related plans and projects in the country.

Aside from the Aboitizes, the Lopezes and other big compradors in the country who own big businesses in the power industry, the puppet regime is also urging foreign companies to invest in the privatization of power service in the country. AB