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Editorial

Tear off Aquino's mask!

For the past three years, the ruling Aquino regime has been relentlessly trying to smash the machinery of corruption of the past Arroyo regime. This is not to cleanse the reactionary government of anomalies and corruption, but to set up a new machinery of thievery and plunder controlled and run by the Aquino-Cojuangco families and their cohorts.

If there is anything that has changed since Aquino came to power, it is the shrewd use of the mass media and publicity campaigns to portray the current rotten ruling regime as anti-corruption. Through its "righteous road" slogan repeated ad nauseam, the ruling regime wants to inculcate in the people's minds an image of Aquino as someone truly clean and without a shred of corruption and conceal the fact that corruption in the ruling system continues and has even worsened.

Aquino wears the "Mask of Righteousness" in order to appear upright and clean and bereft of any other motive except to ensure the people's welfare. All accusations of corruption are simply set aside and drowned with praises for his character and heritage: that the Aquinos, from Cory and Ninoy, to Benigno III and his sisters are saints and heroes who do not

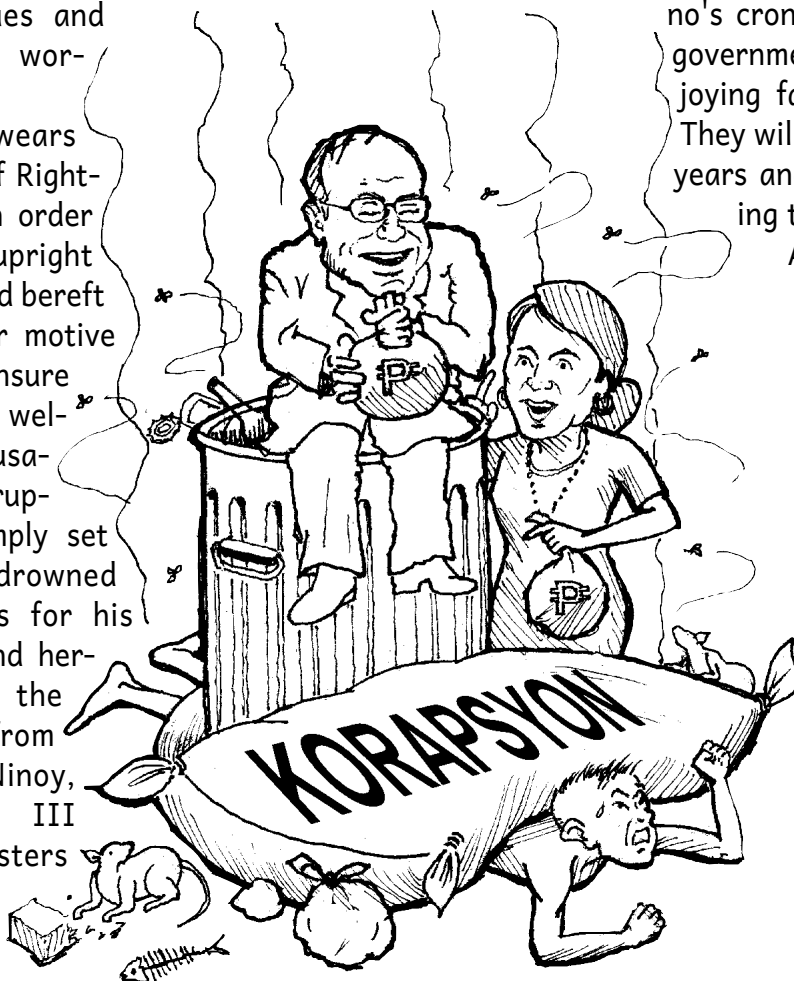
know how to steal, bribe or accept payolas.

Behind the myth of the ruling regime's "righteous road" is the Aquinos' "yellow army" composed of relatives and close friends of the Aquino-Cojuangco family who are experts at creating the illusion of political change and economic development. It is their goal to obtain the trust of the middle strata who they blind with shiny promises of change and to deceive the toiling masses and give them some hope to cling to.

This early, however, Aquino has been stumbling a lot in treading his "righteous road," with the foul smell of his regime's corruption reeking everywhere.

Cronyism is widespread and serious. In the face of the grave crisis of the ruling system, there is no stopping the greed and insatiability of Aquino's cronies who have been cornering one government contract after another and enjoying favors and the state's protection. They will, after all, only be in power for six years and have no assurance of maintaining their status beyond 2016.

As the saying goes, "weather-



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weather lang" and the Aquinos, Cojuangcos and their coterie of big landlords, big comprador bourgeoisie and big bureaucrats are having a heyday once again. They are the very same people who comprised "Kamag-anak Inc" during Corazon Aquino's time in 1986-1992. These days, they are known as "Kamag-anak, Kaklase, Kabarilan Inc," underscoring their close ties to Aquino.

Aquino's closest cronies are neck-deep in corruption, including his sisters and other relatives, friends and key officials of his cabinet and other governmental departments. Their involvement in bribe-taking, in benefiting from infrastructure contracts, interfering in the appointment of government officials, controlling greatly expanded smuggling operations, receiving payola from criminal syndicates as well as other anomalies is constantly being revealed.

One of the most execrable acts committed by this regime is to invoke floods and other ca-

lamities as pretexts for demolishing urban poor communities, when in fact, this is being done to seize land for the use of businesses owned by Aquino cronies. This approach denies the real reason behind floods and other disasters—the denudation of mountains and river siltation due to industrial waste.

With the ruling regime's corruption now unravelling, with the obvious absence of systemic change and the heightened suffering of the toiling masses, Aquino's "yellow army" has stepped up its efforts to distort data and information to conjure more illusions and create an impression among the people that changes in their lives are forthcoming.

They manipulate surveys to make it appear that Aquino has been receiving high approval ratings from the Filipino people despite the widespread problem of unemployment, low wages, brutal forms of exploitation in the factories, rampant land-grabbing, low incomes of workers, peasants, rank and file em-


ployees and small professionals, skyrocketing prices of food, oil and other basic commodities and the barrage of demolitions of urban poor communities.

They hail the bright and shiny cases of those who have "benefited" from their doleout programs without presenting the entire picture, and certainly without showing the more complete image of mass poverty. Declaring the "pantawid pamilya" program a success is like throwing a tiny gold nugget into a huge dung heap, taking a picture of it, framing and putting it on display in order to give everyone hope that they too, could become like that piece of gold.

Aquino's media people are savvy at showcasing tiny bits of information in order to prevent the people from seeing the big picture. They use this tactic to present a false image of an improving, developing and advancing Philippine society even if on the whole, the economy is decrepit and moving backward and the people's poverty is worsening.

They are also in cahoots with the US military in creating antagonism towards China on the issue of the Spratly Islands and other disputed territories in the South China Sea. This is in an effort to justify the massive deployment of US military forces in the Philippines even if this means openly trampling on the Philippines' territorial integrity. They misrepresent Aquino's puppetry and obsequiousness to his imperialist masters as "patriotism."

We must tear off Benigno Aquino III's mask and put an end to his deception of the Filipino people. We must match and even surpass the US-Aquino regime's redoubled efforts to conceal the corruption of the ruling system. We must challenge all of

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Aquino's much-vaunted data, stories and information and expose the lies, distortions and fabrications behind them. We must expose and oppose Aquino's Department of Truth. We must bare the fact that it is controlled by Aquino's "yellow army" in consort with the US Embassy and expose how its minions have been accessing the mass media, the internet, the academe and other conduits of information and influence.

We must expose the gravity and breadth of cronyism under the US-Aquino regime. We must expose how Aquino has been using his power to ensure that government serves the interests of his sisters, relatives and close friends.

Above all, we must show that corruption is an intrinsic part of the decadent semicolonial and semifeudal system. We must show that the reactionary state currently being administered by Aquino is an instrument of class rule to maintain the imperialist domination, suppression and oppression of the people. It is an instrument whose control is being fought for by rival ruling class cliques in order to use it for their economic interests.

The ruling landlord and comprador bourgeois classes in the Philippines are like leeches that gorge themselves on the people's blood. They contribute nothing to economic advance. They are bereft of any interest in developing the economy's capability to manufacture steel, chemicals or other basic elements for the establishment of a modern economy.

Neither are they interested in building progressive food processing or machine making industries. They are content to rely on foreign debt which is granted in exchange for various

Big irony in Aquino's defense of pork barrel

All this talk by Benigno Aquino III about his "righteous road" is pure hogwash with his refusal to scrap the allocation for the Priority Development Assistance Fund (PDAF) in the national budget for 2014. The PDAF is better known as the Congressional pork barrel.

Aquino's absurdity had become even plainer to see after he countered the position taken by the Makabayan bloc in Congress to put a stop to the distribution of the PDAF and its equivalent, the Presidential Special Fund which Aquino controls. Makabayan has proposed instead that the funds be used by the state to build more classrooms, hospitals and low-cost housing units.

Makabayan announced its decision on August 2 amid a massive corruption scandal involving Congress' pork barrel system. The Makabayan bloc is composed of seven congressional representatives from progressive parties.

In the biggest scandal to date in the history of Philippine reactionary politics, ₱10 billion worth of the PDAF of various congresspersons and senators were coursed through the JLN Corporation owned by businessperson Janet Lim-Napoles. Napoles has been identified as the founder of several bogus peasant organizations purported to have been PDAF beneficiaries.

Many of the congresspersons so far linked to the anomaly are Aquino allies, including 98 lawmakers who were formerly with the US-Arroyo regime but have since joined the Liberal Party. Also involved are Department of Agriculture Sec. Proceso Alcala, former Rep. Risa Hontiveros of Akbayan and current DSWD Sec. Corazon "Dinky" Soliman.



privileges to foreign monopoly capitalists that enable them to earn superprofits from the sweat of the Filipino people and exploit the Philippines' natural resources and patrimony.

The parasitic ruling classes in the Philippines know nothing more than to wield governmental power for their own benefit. Corruption under the current regime is not primarily due to the character flaws, greed or insatiability of its leaders. It is inherent under the ruling semico-

lonial and semifeudal system where the ruling classes use the state to obtain favors and privileges to further their businesses and economic interests.

Decadence and corruption persist and are worsening, marking the intensification of the economic crisis of the ruling system. We must raise the people's consciousness on the issue of corruption under the ruling Aquino regime. We must liberate them from the prison of illusion and prevarication!

Reeking stench of Kamag-Anak Incorporated

Anomalies involving the so-called KKK or Benigno Aquino III's Kamag-Anak, Kabarkada at Kabarilan Inc. are continually being unravelled to the public. This, despite attempts by his regime's operators to put a lid on it.

News filtered out in June about an attempt by Aquino's eldest sister Ma. Elena "Ballsy" Aquino-Cruz to extort up to \$30 million from the Inekon Group, a Czech company eyeing the MRT-3 project.

To prevent a bigger scandal, Malacañang pressured the publisher of the *Manila Times*, which first broke the news. Palace operators likewise put the squeeze on Josef Rychtar, Czech ambassador to the Philippines who exposed the extortion attempt. The ambassador became silent and absolved the Aquino sister of any wrongdoing.

But he maintained that an extortion try did occur and accused officials of the Department of Transportation and Communications, the MRT-3 and then DOTC secretary Manuel "Mar" Roxas II.

On July 30, Ballsy Cruz admitted that she and her husband had indeed gone to the Czech Republic in 2011 but only to pray before the image of the Holy Infant of Prague. She denied meeting any government officials or businessmen.

Nonetheless, on the same day, news broke out that aside from Ballsy and her husband Eldon Cruz, another relative,

Jorge Aquino Lichauco had tried to manipulate the bidding for the MRT-3 project in favor of the Inekon Group. Lichauco is a first cousin of the Aquino siblings and a son of Ma. Aurora "Maur" Aquino-Lichauco, an aunt of Benigno Aquino III. Reports said that ever since Ballsy's group had taken that trip to Prague, Lichauco had continually liaised with high-ranking executives of the Inekon Group.

In November 2011, Inekon's top executives came to the country along with their Philippine representative Yorgos Psinakis, a nephew of Stavros "Steve" Psinakis, a businessman-ally of the Aquinos and a son-in-law of the late Eugenio Lopez of the Lopez Group of Companies.

Inekon and Psinakis held talks with high-ranking DOTC and MRT-3 officials. The Czech company fully expected to corner the con-

tract because of the payolas it had already given to Ballsy and Eldon Cruz.

Inekon, however, failed to bag the contract because Lichauco submitted the Terms of Reference to MRT-3 Gen. Manager Al Vitangcol only on April 10, way past the February deadline.

Vitangcol had also lowered the ceiling bid for every train coach from \$3 million to \$1.8 million. As a result, Inekon withdrew from the bidding, because at this price, it would no longer be able to recoup the kickbacks it had paid the Cruz couple and Lichauco.

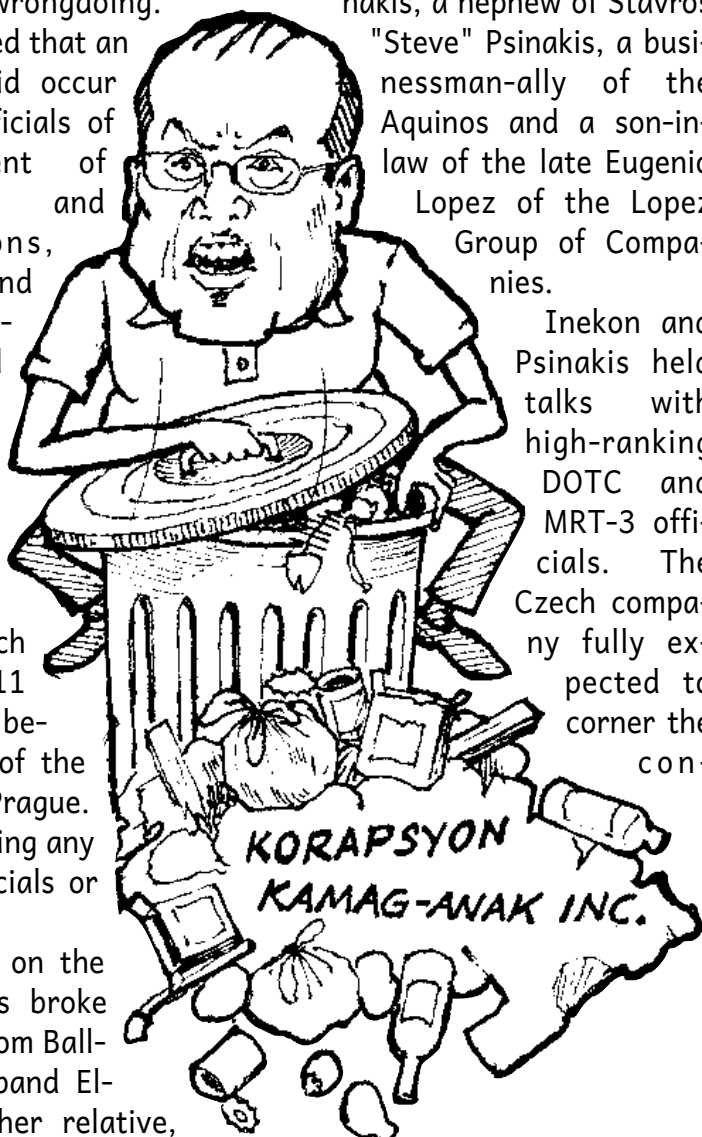
The regime eventually awarded the contract to the Dalian Locomotive and Rolling Co. CBR Group of China at a lower price (P33.7 billion for 48 brand new coaches or \$1.76 million each).

An angered Inekon leaked the Cruz couple's extortion try to the media through Ambassador Rychtar.

To save Ballsy and other close relations of Aquino, the axe has been made to fall on Al Vitangcol, who is known to belong to Sec. Mar Roxas' camp. Current DOTC Sec. Joseph Abaya has announced that Vitangcol has taken a month-long leave as the anomaly is being investigated.

The DOTC has used this as a pretext to suspend the contract with the Chinese company. After a long silence, a Malacañang spokesperson finally said that Aquino has allegedly ordered the Department of Justice to have the matter probed by the National Bureau of Investigation.

Meanwhile, Bayan Muna and four other progressive parties in Congress have demanded the conduct of an independent investigation. **AB**



No change in 3 years!

Nothing has changed in Benigno Aquino III's first three years in power. Thus declared some 15,000 people who gathered along Commonwealth Avenue, Quezon City during Aquino's State of the Nation Address (SONA) on July 22. According to the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (BAYAN), Aquino said practically nothing new in his speech that spanned nearly two hours, except to brag more about his deceptive "road of righteousness" program.

BAYAN added that Aquino's remaining three years in power will see an intensification of the privatization, liberalization and deregulation of the Philippine economy which will further cause suffering to the people. So will his attacks on the people worsen.

In the SONA mass action alone, more than 50 protesters were injured and nine arrested after police attempted to break the rallyists' ranks. Among the injured were former Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo and Teddy Casiño, Migrant chair Gary Martinez and 77-year old SELDA member Rodolfo del Rosario.

The "People's SONA 2013" exposed the pitiful state of the nation under the current regime, contrary to the Aquino administration's claimed accomplishments. The rallyists called for Aquino's ouster. To dramatize their call, the demonstrators burned an 18-foot effigy of Aquino.

Meanwhile, mass actions were likewise launched in other areas to counter Aquino's SONA. In Baguio, hundreds of activists marched to the city's bustling public market. They mainly called for a stop to state violence and human rights violations. Progressive groups in Bicol held a forum to counter the SO-

NA. BAYAN-Southern Tagalog, on the other hand, had already launched mass actions on July 21 in Batangas, Rizal, Laguna and Cavite. Before proceeding to Commonwealth Avenue, they held a caravan to Aquino's house on Times Street in Quezon City.

In Panay, up to 3,000 people rallied at the Casa Plaza in Iloilo City. They burned an effigy of Aquino and assailed his antipeople and antipoor Public-Private Partnership program. Protest actions were also held in the neighboring provinces of Aklan and Capiz. Rallies were also held in Bacolod City and Cebu City, where progressive groups gathered in front of Gaisano Mall.

In Mindanao, more than 2,500 people marched from Freedom Park towards Rizal Park in Davao City.

BAYAN-Southern Mindanao slammed the mounting human rights violations nationwide under Oplan Bayanihan. In Koronadal, South Cotabato, activists opposed the destructive operations of foreign mining companies in the area, particularly Glencore SMI-Xstrata. In Iligan City, urban poor victims of a demolition in Barangay Calangahan, Lugait, Misamis Oriental rallied, with support from Mindanao State University students who demanded a higher budget for their school.

Protests and activities were likewise held overseas, such as in the US where mass actions were launched in the cities of Los Angeles, Seattle, San Francisco and New York. BAYAN-USA assailed the unabated unemployment, hunger and poverty which compel up to 4,500 Filipinos daily to work abroad. Filipino migrants in Hongkong expressed disappointment with Aquino's failure to mention anything about the welfare of migrant workers. They rallied from Chater Garden Central towards the Philippine consulate. Groups of migrants from Canada and the Middle East likewise held their own counter-SONAs. AB



The truth about Aluling Bridge

No less than the people are belying Benigno Aquino III's lies, especially his claimed achievements during his latest State of the Nation Address (SONA).

One of the things Aquino bragged about was the completion of the Aluling Bridge in Cervantes, Ilocos Sur which links Mountain Province to Ilocos Sur. Aquino misrepresented the bridge's completion as part of his regime's programs. He failed to mention that the locals have been waiting for the bridge to be completed for the past 35 years and that Aquino's hurry had nothing to do with the people's welfare but for the interests of foreign mining companies operating in the area.

According to the Alfredo Cesar Command (ACC-NPA-Ilocos Sur), the Aluling Bridge project has been a milch cow of local politicians since it was begun in 1978. It received funding yearly but remained unfinished for a long time even if it was only less than a hundred meters long. The project has been sarcastically referred to by the people of Mountain Province and Ilocos Sur as "the longest bridge."

Added the ACC, the Aluling Bridge is like the US-Aquino regime's "righteous road"—an illusion of progress that is being used to cloak the bigger and deeper roots of the people's poverty. Aquino has no intentions of rectifying the sins of the past, and is in fact perpetuating them. **AB**

Ka Oris condemns Mindanao bombing

National Democratic Front-Mindanao spokesperson Jorge "Ka Oris" Madlos and the entire revolutionary movement roundly condemned the bombing of civilians in Cagayan de Oro City on July 27. The bomb, which was detonated at the Limketkai Center, a mall in Cagayan de Oro City, killed eight civilians, including a provincial board member of Misamis Oriental and injured 37 others. On August 5, another bomb exploded in Cotabato City, killing eight and injuring 40 others. A third bomb was detonated in Midsayap, North Cotabato on August 7. These bombings aim to sow disorder and terrorism in Mindanao. Their targets were civilians, including children.

According to Ka Oris, the series of bombings belie Aquino's claims that peace now reigns in the island with the signing of the Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro between the regime and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. There has actually been no stop to violence in Mindanao, whether in Moro or Christian areas. This has resulted in destruction to the people's lives and livelihoods and to widespread violations of their human rights. The violence has worsened, even affecting relatively peaceful areas like Cagayan de Oro City. **AB**

17 soldiers killed in NPA offensives in Samar

Seventeen soldiers of the reactionary government were killed and 11 other troopers wounded in a series of tactical offensives by Red fighters under the Rodante Urtal Command (RUC-NPA-Northern Samar) from June to July.

The series of military actions against troops of the Philippine Army 8th ID occurred in the villages of Avelino, Cuenco and Lakandula in Las Navas, Northern Samar in June, where 12 soldiers enemy soldiers were killed and two wounded. Five more 20th IB troopers were killed and nine wounded in a harassment operation conducted by the NPA and the people's militia on July 25 along the village boundaries of Lungib and Luisita in Victoria town.

Meanwhile, RUC spokesperson Ka Amado Pesante clarified that the 53 people who reportedly surrendered in Bobon, Northern Samar are not NPA Red

fighters but innocent farmers victimized by the psywar operations of 20th IB chief Lt. Col. Noel Vestuir and 8th ID chief Maj. Gen. Gerardo Layug in their desperate attempt to conceal the advance of the armed revolutionary movement in the region. The farmers were forced by the military to attend a meeting, where they were declared "surrenderers." **AB**



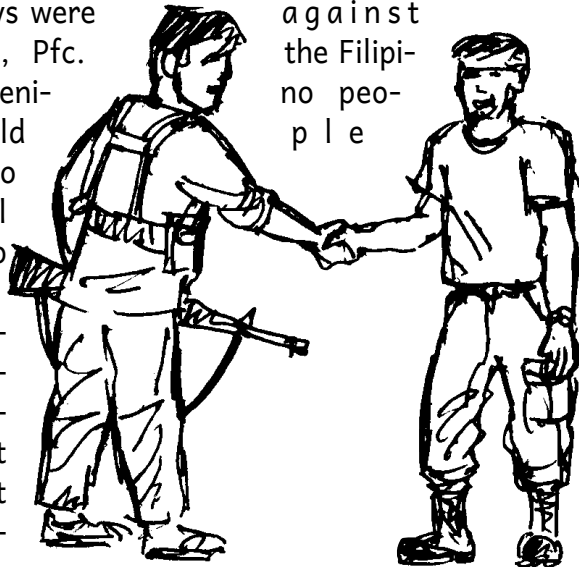
NPA frees 5 POW in SMR

The 1st Pulang Bagani Battalion of the New People's Army (1st PBB-NPA) released five prisoners of war in a remote barangay in Paquibato District, Davao City on July 31. The prisoners are troops of the Philippine Army 60th IB. The release was effected through Leoncio "Ka Parago" Pitao, spokesperson of the 1st PBB-NPA, in accordance with the orders of the National Democratic Front-Southern Mindanao Region (NDF-SMR).

The released soldiers, who were detained for 44 days were Cpl. Emmanuel Quezon, Pfc. Vernie Padilla, Pvt. Marteniano Pasigas, Pfc. Ronald Gura and Pfc. Donato Estandian. They were all assigned to Paquibato District.

An investigation conducted by responsible organs of the people's democratic government showed that there was not enough evidence to prose-

cute them for grave crimes against the Filipino people



and the revolutionary movement.

NDF-SMR spokesperson Rubi del Mundo said the release was done in accordance with provisions of the Geneva Conventions of August 12, 1949; Protocol 1 of July 5, 1996 which was deposited at the Swiss Federal Council; and the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law; and also in accordance with the decision of an organ of the People's Democratic Government.

It was likewise an act of goodwill done in response to calls by the prisoner of wars' relatives and peace advocates, added the NDF-SMR.

After receiving the prisoners, Davao City Mayor Rodrigo Duterte renewed calls to the Aquino government to become open to peace negotiations with the National Democratic Front of the Philippines. AB

NDFP greets Cuban people and government

The National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) extended its warm revolutionary greetings to the Cuban government and people on the 60th anniversary of the attack on the Moncada Barracks on July 26, 1953. It was the start of revolutionary actions that overthrew the US-Batista dictatorship on January 1, 1959. The attack was led by Fidel Castro and Abel Santamaria.

The victorious Cuban revolution established a democratic government that asserted the sovereignty of the Cuban people. It made great strides in the fields of education, health and other areas of people's welfare. The Cuban people successfully resisted and frustrated many interventionist attacks by the US imperialists, including an invasion, assassination attempts on Castro, and destabilization moves. They have overcome an economic embargo and won the support of many of the world's peoples.

Cuba has been able to provide militant support to the liberation struggles of other peoples. In Africa, Cuban fighters fought alongside Angolan and Namibian revolutionaries in their struggles against the former apartheid regime in South Africa. They were also able to provide invaluable support to the revolutionary forces of South Africa, Guinea-Bissau and other countries in Africa. Thousands of Cuban martyrs gave up their lives as the highest expression of revolutionary international solidarity.

Cuba has also sent thousands of doctors, health workers and other development workers to countries in Latin America and elsewhere. One of the beneficiaries of its advanced medical and health care system are Palestinian children victimized by the Zionist regime of Israel. Another set of beneficiaries were the victims of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster in Russia. AB

Continue the peace talks

The International Conference on Human Rights and Peace in the Philippines (ICHRPP) called on the Aquino regime to continue peace negotiations with the NDFP in the face of intense poverty and worsening human rights violations in the country. They also asked that this be done on the basis of The Hague Joint Declaration of 1992 and other past agreements like the CARHRIHL and JASIG.

The ICHRPP resolution is an added push to local efforts by eight groups in the country: Sulong CARHRIHL, Pilgrims for Peace, Philippine Economic Peace Platforms (PEPP), Waging Peace Phil., Generation Peace Youth Network, Women Engaged in Action 1325, Initiative for International Dialogue and Philippine Peace Center—which have issued a joint statement calling for the continuation of the peace negotiations.

The ICHRPP delegates who came from 26 countries were alarmed at the Aquino regime's continuing repressive tactics through Oplan Bayanihan. Before the conference, the foreign activists joined a fact-finding mission to Central Luzon, Metro Manila, Southern Tagalog and Mindanao to investigate and document cases of military abuse and familiarize themselves with the socio-economic conditions of the people. Through this, the country's real human rights situation became concrete to them.

For years, the ICHRPP has been campaigning for a stop to human rights violations in the Philippines. This year, an international solidarity coalition for the Philippines was formed to call for the release of political prisoners and a stop to extrajudicial killings and militarization in the countryside. The conference also resolved to raise their cause before the United Na-

tions, national parliaments and other international institutions and hold the presidents of the Philippines accountable for their crimes against the people. They vowed to continue mobilizing the international community on human rights issues in the Philippines.

The International Workshop on Freedom of Association was likewise held on July 16-17. It was an important step in strengthening international solidarity and consolidating local campaigns to fight neoliberal globalization's subjugation of unions and other workers' organizations. Among its activities was to launch a solidarity march that was joined by labor unions

and 60 foreign delegates to the conference.

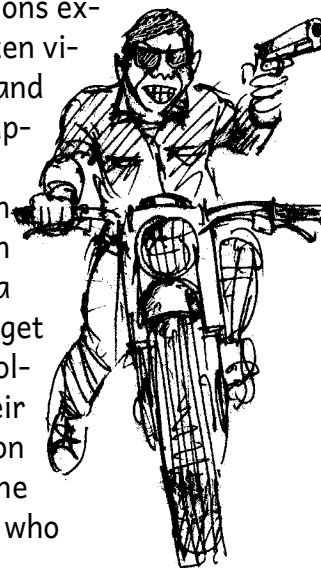
Meanwhile, the Bureau of Immigration arrested Dutch activist Thomas van Beersum on August 6 while he was at the airport and about to board a flight to The Netherlands. He was deported the day after. Beersum was one of the foreign activists who attended the ICHRPP, exposed the conditions of the Filipino people and supported their struggle against the repressive and antipeople policies of the reactionary state. He also joined the protest against Aquino's SONA and actively condemned the actual violence inflicted by the police. His arrest was condemned by progressive groups.



NDFP condemns GPH harassment of Agcaoili et al

National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) Peace Panel member Fidel V. Agcaoili strongly condemned the surveillance and harassment he and his companions experienced on July 29, saying it was a brazen violation of the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees (JASIG) that is supposed to ensure his security.

Agcaoili and his companions were then traversing EDSA on the way to Quezon City when they noticed two men aboard a motorcycle following them. They tried to get rid of their tail but the men persisted in following them. To avoid compromising their security, they entered a private subdivision in Makati to ask assistance from the guards. A guard alerted his fellow guards who



stopped the motorcycle. But the two men were able to escape before the guards could investigate them.

The NDFP condemned the GPH for surveilling and harassing Agcaoili, saying this incident would further aggravate the current impasse in the peace negotiations.

Meanwhile, the Cordillera Human Rights Alliance (CHRA) and SELDA condemned the reactionary government's criminalization of the cases faced by political detainees. The latest cases involved Gabriel Kennedy Bangibang, NDFP consultant on the Cordillera and National Minority Affairs who was forcibly transferred to another detention facility and the arrest of Ma. Loida Magpatok.

Bangibang was arbitrarily transferred from the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology in Tabuk City, Kalinga to the BJMP in Baguio City on July 25. His secret transfer was made after a trial of one of the 11 trumped-up cases filed against him. Bangibang questioned the move and asked for a copy of the court order on his transfer. But he was instead shoved into a waiting vehicle.

Neither were his lawyers given prior notice. They only received a copy of the court order after he had already been transferred, when the order had in fact been secretly prepared as early as April.

Magpatok, 52, was arrested at the bus terminal in Barangay Zone III, Digos City on July 28 by a combined force from the Davao del Sur Police Office and the 1002nd IBde. She was slapped with trumped-up charges of murder and destruction to property. A ₱5 million reward was offered for her capture. **AB**

Rights groups condemn military abuses in Mindanao

KARAPATAN and the Mindanao Human Rights Action Center (MinHRAC) expressed alarm over the worsening cases of human rights violations against Moro and Lumad civilians, among others, as a result of military operations. Above all, they assailed the abuses being committed against minors.

July 28. Military operations by combined forces of the 26th IB and the Bagani Forces paramilitary group persist against civilians in Loreto, Agusan del Sur. As a result, 423 individuals from the villages of Kauswagan, Sabud, Mansanitas and San Mariano have evacuated. Most of the evacuees are Lumad. They are currently staying at a school in Barangay Kauswagan.

July 22. Forces of the 26th IB arbitrarily detained four minors on suspicion that they were involved in a recent NPA ambush. Two of the four detainees were eventually released. The other two—Arturo and BJ (not their real names)—were tortured and charged with murder. They were hit in the face, abdomen and nape. BJ's lips were burned with cigarettes and bullets were pressed between his fingers. They both lost consciousness when their heads were wrapped in plastic.

June 21. Three hundred Moro families evacuated from Barangay Kulasi, General Salipada K. Pendatun, Maguindanao and other neighboring villages due to intense fighting in Sitio Bagumbayan, Barangay Kulasi between the military and the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters. They went to evacua-

tion centers in Barangay Tongol, Barangay Sumakubay and Migkunding. But hunger and deprivation forced them to return to their homes.

Among those who returned were eight Moros dubbed the "Bagumbayan 8" who suffered grave maltreatment in the hands of soldiers of the 33rd IB. The "Bagumbayan 8" included three minors. They were hogtied, detained and tortured and transferred to police custody only after two days.

With the MinHRAC's help, the three minors were released on June 24, but the five others remain in PNP custody at the Quirino municipal hall. They have been branded as terrorists and charged with illegal possession of explosives. The military has already manufactured evidence for use against them.

The MinHRAC also discovered that on June 26, three houses were burned down in Sitio Bagumbayan, the detainees' community. Residents of nearby communities witnessed the burning.

On June 28, the "Bagumbayan 8" submitted their counter-affidavits to the Provincial Prosecutor's Office in Isulan, Sultan Kudarat, along with other victims of military brutality. **AB**



Threats of demolition

Residents of Barangay West Kamias in Quezon City are braced for more demolitions in their community now that the deadline given to them by the local government to voluntarily leave has expired.

First to be demolished was their health center. Their day care center was supposed to go next, but the demolition did not push through because of the presence of 40 pupils inside.

On July 30, the residents erected a barricade after hearing that the demolition team was on its way back to the community.

Meanwhile, residents of Barangay Bagong Silangan, Quezon City are likewise ready to confront the impending eviction of families living by the riverside after the local government imposed a deadline on July 30 for them to voluntarily leave.

The continuing attacks and repression against the urban poor have prompted Anakpawis Partylist Rep. Fernando Hicap to file House Resolution 120 on July 30 calling for a moratorium on all demolitions. Various progressive groups picketed the Batasan Pambansa to express support for the resolution.

Meanwhile, the Samahan ng Magkakapitbahay ng Road 10, Tondo, Manila protested the impending demolition of their community. They have rejected the relocation sites offered in San Pedro, Laguna and Bocaue, Bulacan. More than 500 families will be affected by the demolition. AB

Successful antifeudal campaign in Cagayan

Peasants in two Cagayan towns succeeded in having the price per kilo of corn raised and achieving other benefits after a series of militant actions. More than 15,000 farmers benefited in 32 villages of Baggao and five barrios of Amulung.

In Baggao. Some 1,000 farmers from 11 villages launched a rally-confrontation against seven big merchant-usurers in the town on March 10. They demanded a hike in the farmgate price per kilo of yellow corn from ₱11.00 to ₱15.00. Their proposed price was arrived at after a study by the peasant organization that determined that corn prices were too low compared to the expenses shouldered by the farmers for inputs such as seeds and pesticides. The leading organization in Barangay Bunugan said that even if farmers do not borrow money, they still end up in the red because of the serious difficulties involved in planting corn.

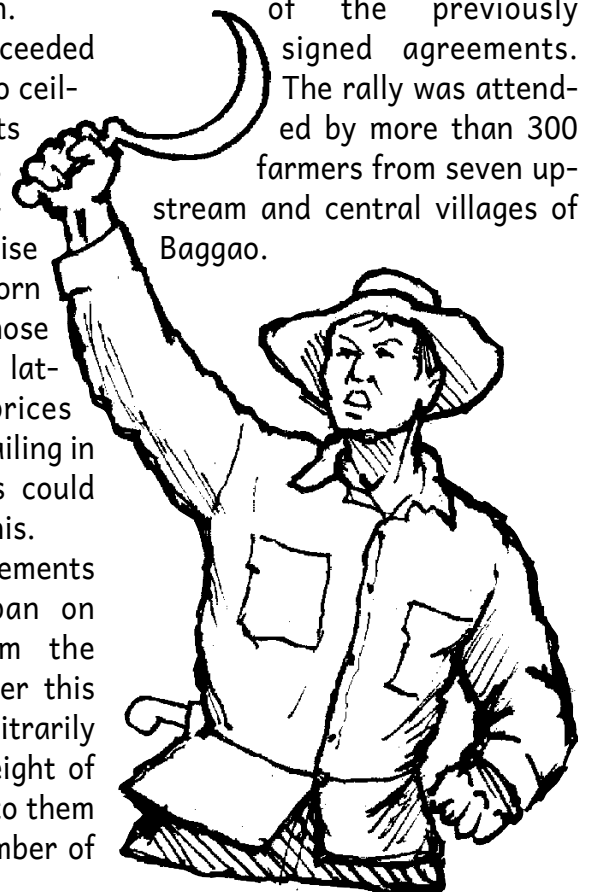
The farmers also succeeded in imposing a 50-centavo ceiling per kilo in the profits of merchant-usurers selling corn at the trading centers. They likewise decided to offer their corn to other buyers, even those from other towns, if the latter offered higher prices compared to those prevailing in Baggao. The merchants could not do a thing to stop this.

Also among the agreements signed concerned a ban on slashing "resiko" from the farmers' products. Under this system, merchants arbitrarily reduce the recorded weight of every sack of corn sold to them by the farmers by a number of

kilos on the pretext that the corn had not completely dried and would eventually become lighter after evaporation.

At the end of the confrontation, the farmers agreed to dump sacks of their produce in cornfields and roads until they are offered higher prices. Their objective is to stop merchants from underbuying their corn. They also agreed to make daily checks on the prevailing corn prices in other towns and villages to know where they could find a better price for their produce.

After two weeks, the farmers held another confrontation-rally in San Jose, Baggao to demand the implementation of the previously signed agreements. The rally was attended by more than 300 farmers from seven upstream and central villages of Baggao.



In Amulung. More than 60 peasants rallied on May 5 in Barangay Gabut to confront usurer Delia Marcos, the biggest usurer operating in five of the town's villages. The farmers demanded a reaccounting of the peasants' debts because Marcos continued to impose interest even if most of the peasants were already fully paid. They also demanded a stop to the practice of seizing the farmers' land, carabaos and other properties as payment for their debts.

The confrontation failed to push through when Marcos' blood pressure shot up.

Previously, farmers from the towns of Alcala, Amulung and Iguig rallied twice in front of the National Irrigation Administration (NIA) office in Barangay Baculud to assail the government's neglect of irrigation services, the high rental for irrigation and the huge back accounts being charged by the NIA. The peasants have accumulated back accounts dating back to the 1970s.

The NIA is charging millions of pesos in back accounts from close to 100,000 farmers in Amulung, Alcala and Iguig. It has also been demanding payment even during the rainy season when the NIA does not provide irrigation. In fact, there have been times when the NIA failed to provide irrigation even during droughts. Some farmers are being charged up to ₱300,000 by the NIA for irrigating a mere hectare of farmland.

On April 25, some 300 peasants rallied at the NIA, followed by another demonstration by a hundred farmers on April 27. With their demands on the back accounts being ignored, peasants from the three towns have decided to stop paying the NIA altogether. **AB**

Japan Prime Minister's visit opposed

Three generations of women greeted Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's visit to the country on July 26 with protests. Abe visited the Philippines to strengthen the military alliance between Japan and the Philippines as part of alleged efforts to ensure maritime security in disputed territories in the South China Sea. The US has been pushing Japan to enhance its interventionism in the Asia-Pacific region.

Among the protesters were GABRIELA and Lila Pilipinas (an organization of comfort women). GABRIELA said Abe's visit constituted warmongering against China and North Korea.

GABRIELA assailed Japan for its continued failure to admit culpability for establishing the comfort women system in the countries it occupied during the Second World War. Neither has it apologized for its abuses against Filipino comfort women. GABRIELA charged that if Japan is granted the privilege to use Philippine facilities, the comfort women system will be repeated in areas where joint military exercises with the US and other countries will be conducted.

ILPS greets North Korea on 60th anniversary of victory

The International League of People's Struggle (ILPS) expressed solidarity with the Korean people on the 60th anniversary of Victory Day in the Great Fatherland Liberation War against US-led imperialist aggression. The signing of the Armistice Agreement on July 27, 1953 signalled the defeat of US plans to occupy the whole of Korea. Through this agreement, a ceasefire was declared and the Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) was created.

The ILPS supports the view of the Korean people and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) that the said agreement must be replaced with a peace treaty that calls for the withdrawal of US military troops and nuclear weapons from the peninsula. This will pave the way

for the peaceful reunification of North and South Korea.

The ILPS said it was deeply pleased with the success of the worldwide signature campaign and the Korean people's march from Pyongyang to the DMZ to demand the unification of Korea. The Armistice Agreement was designed as a transitional measure to ensure the complete cessation of all hostilities and the withdrawal of all armed forces from Korea until a real peace treaty is signed. But the US continued the war, occupied South Korea and violated the armistice by stockpiling nuclear arms in South Korea. It has conducted military exercises and other provocative acts in collaboration with the puppet South Korean regime to prevent the unification of Korea.

Tower downed in Sagada

Residents of Besao and Sagada in Mountain Province toppled a windmill tower in the second week of June. The tower forms part of a wind farm project that is being forcibly implemented in the area.

The toppling was an act of protest against Philcarbon's insistence on pushing through with the construction of the Windmill Farm in the area despite the residents' opposition. They expressed their opposition in the latter part of May. (See related article in the June 7, 2013 issue of Ang Bayan)

Philcarbon plans to construct on a ridge ten 100-meter high towers like those it erected in Bangui, Ilocos Norte. The towers will be generating 15 megawatts of electricity. Besao and Sagada, however, have 11 barangays located below the ridge which will be affected by the project.

Among the capitalists pushing for this project is Rufino Bumas-ang, former undersecretary of the Department of Energy and Tom Kilip, project consultant. They are national minorities who have no compassion for the people and do not care if they destroy the environment. Their only interest is to enrich themselves by stealing community property and damaging the watersheds whose preservation is crucial to the people's livelihood. **AB**

Detroit, other US cities going bankrupt

The city of Detroit in Michigan, USA is bankrupt. In declaring a state of insolvency on July 18, it formally admitted inability to settle up to \$18.5 billion (₱444 billion) in debts. Detroit, known for being the center of the automobile industry in the US, is the latest and biggest US city to declare bankruptcy this year.

This formerly sprawling city is now in a pitiful state. It has 78,000 abandoned buildings. Its street lights are in a state of disrepair. Its fire department lacks personnel and has a building that is old and rickety. Up to 60% of its children live on the poverty line. And more than 30% of its people live below the poverty level.

Detroit's economy has long been crumbling. The city's deindustrialization began as far back as the 1970s, when capitalists began to relocate automobile factories to other countries or places where wages were lower in order to rake in more superprofits. They broke up unions and laid off union members. The local unemployment rate currently stands at 16%.

The big capitalists and their politician cohorts are responsible for the widespread destruction of livelihoods and basic services in Detroit. It is the workers who will be bearing the brunt of the hardships and sacrifices that will come with their city's bankruptcy.

To be able to continue paying the banks, the local government will be slashing wages and rewriting contracts with the unions. It will reduce the health and pension benefits of all active and retired workers, downgrade public services,

privatize public lighting, transportation and sanitation and sell public property like the water treatment plant, parks, zoos and the public museum. More than 31,000 government employees and pensioners will be suffering whittled down salaries and pensions.

As a result, Detroit's more than 700,000 residents will be further mired in poverty. Thousands of small businesses will be folding up. On the other hand, hundreds of millions of dollars worth of public funds will be ending up with the banks and big businessmen who lent money to the city, including Mike Ilitch who owns a baseball team and plans to build a new sports arena, and real estate mogul Dan Gilbert who will be building exclusive districts in the city.

Aside from Detroit, there are other cities in the US that have gone bankrupt. In 2012, a number of cities in California like Stockton, Mammoth Lakes and San Bernardino declared bankruptcy. In 2011, the city of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania likewise filed for bankruptcy, but its petition was denied. Some US officials have admitted that there are a hundred other cities that are in the same bind as Detroit and are expected to declare bankruptcy as well. **AB**