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Editorial

Intensify peasant resistance against neoliberal policies

The peasant masses must take advantage of the upcoming November leaders meeting of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) in the Philippines to express their disgust and protest over their worsening oppression and sufferings under neoliberal policies promoted by the APEC and other imperialist agencies and instruments.

The Filipino people must use the opportunity to denounce worsening imperialist plunder and oppression in the country.

Starting this October, Peasant Month, they must thoroughly expose their worsening conditions after three decades of neoliberal impositions on the Philippines and the resultant deepening and worsening of the semicolonial and semifeudal system in the country.

Under the weight of neoliberal policies, the Philippines is further confined to a backward, non-industrial and agrarian state. Since there is no genuine land reform and landgrabbing is prevalent, more and more peasants have no land to till.

Most poor peasants and farm workers suffer worst conditions due to low wages, depressed farmgate prices, usury and high prices of commodities. Because of the absence of national industrialization, more peasants are being engulfed in the rising ocean of the unemployed.

In the countryside, production remains small-scale, backward and family-based. In tandem with neoliberal impositions, hundreds of thousands of

hectares of hacienda and capitalist plantations are further expanded to increase agricultural production for export.

The peasant masses are further mired in poverty and oppression after three decades of neoliberal policies. There is worsening landlessness, landgrabbing and concentration of land in the hands or control of big foreign companies and their local big landlord and big business partners.

The successive reactionary governments that upheld the neoliberal doctrine are all opposed to national industrialization and genuine land reform. They stifled the long-stand-

ing grievance of the peasant masses for democracy and social justice. They have turned a deaf ear to the clamor to end monopoly ownership and control of land by the few and big foreign business which serve as base of the different forms of feudal and semifeudal exploitation.

Over the past 27 years, five successive reactionary pro-landlord governments implemented the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) in order to dupe the peasant masses. Through the CARP and the CARP Extension with Reforms, the reactionary state makes it appear that it is addressing the demand for land reform.

Contrary to the clamor for social justice and democracy, CARP was carried out in accordance with the neoliberal concept that land can only be owned based on market value. The value of



land is determined by its productivity and profitability. The equivalent value was given to the big landlords as compensation or payment; and imposed on the peasant as amortization.

Various schemes were likewise employed to circumvent the actual distribution of land to the peasant such as the earlier stock distribution option and corporatization. To enable the landlords to regain the "distributed" land, there is widespread implementation of the *aryendo* or *prenda* system (anomalous leasehold agreements). A stark case is the use of this system in Hacienda Luisita by the Aquino-Cojuangcos and in other haciendas that remain undivided and under the control of big landlords.

"Land reform" under CARP, thus, is no different from real estate transactions. It is deaf to the clamor for social justice. In accordance to "non-intervention of the state", the reactionary government has taken no measure to ensure that peasants will gain and benefit from

the land they till. On the contrary, it has imposed policies which further burdened the peasants. As a result, almost 90% of the CARP "beneficiaries" can no longer amortize or have had their land taken back.

Over the past three decades, CARP has served to push neoliberal policies in agriculture. The CARP has paved the way for various schemes to allow foreign big capitalists in connivance with big landlords to control vast tracts of land.

So-called "agrarian reform communities" (ARCs) are being used as mechanism to subsume dispersed small-scale production into production for export, especially in palm oil, as well as in rubber, bananas, pineapple, corn, cacao and others. Through agribusiness venture agreements (AVA), small peasants are made to sign contracts to supply them with grain, pesticides and other inputs with a promise to buy their produce. Thus, individual peasant production is subjected to the overpowering commercial operations in partnership with foreign big capitalists that



seek to acquire such raw materials.

Foreign control of vast tracts of land in the Philippines is being reinforced in order to push production for export, build debt-funded infrastructure (such as dams or dikes) and pave the way for foreign plunder of the country's resources. Local food production is endangered.

There are now moves to change the 1987 constitution to remove restrictions against foreign ownership of land in the Philippines. While prohibitions under the 1987 constitution still exist, these are circumvented through the use of partner local big compradors. There are also various laws that allow them to virtually own the land such as the Foreign Bank Liberalization Law which allows foreign banks to own for several years land used as collateral for unpaid loans; as well as the Mining Act which gives them the right to plunder and extract the riches of the land.

Since the early part of the 1990s, all out trade liberalization was carried out under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and World Trade Organization including breaking down tariffs on imported agricultural products.

In blind obeisance to neoliberalism, successive reactionary governments in the Philippines made no effort to aid the local small peasants in the face of dumping of garlic, onion, rice, livestock and poultry and other agricultural produce. This is despite the fact that



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production of rice and other agricultural produce continue to be state-subsidized and -controlled in the US, Japan, China, Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia and other countries enabling them to dump cheap products in the Philippines to the detriment of local production.

The reactionary state ignores the demand to raise the buying price of palay. Instead, it has allowed imported rice to flood the country. This has also resulted in worsening smuggling and corruption in import contracts as well as in manipulation to cause the increase in rice prices.

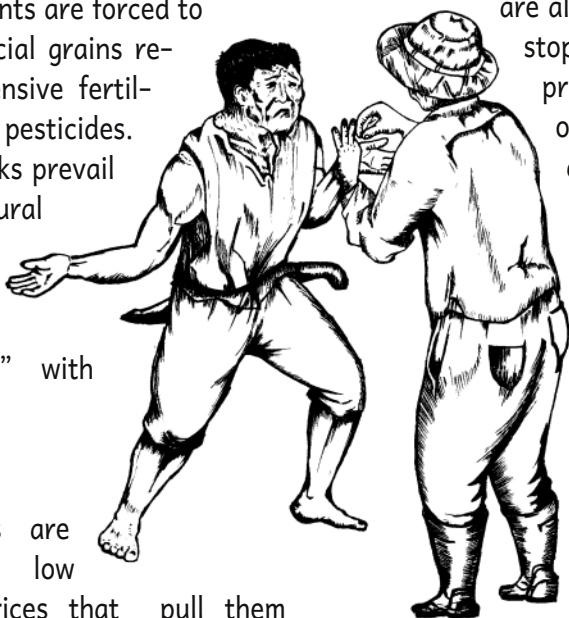
Neoliberal policies are a burden on millions upon millions of peasants. They continue to call for democracy and social justice in the face of the continued absence of land reform. Big landlords continue to retain large land monopolies.

In the face of the continuing international capitalist crisis, the backward system of production in the country is further exploited to extract cheap raw materials. The Philippines and other semicolonial states under imperialist domination are being pushed onto this path.

Under the weight of neoliberalism, forms of feudal and semifeudal exploitation of the peasant masses are worsening. Landgrabbing and displacement of peasants have become more frequent and brutal.

Usury has become more prevalent as peasants are forced to use commercial grains requiring expensive fertilizers and pesticides. Big loansharks prevail alongside "rural banks" and "development corporations" with similarly burdensome loans.

Peasants are subject to low farmgate prices that pull them deeper into debt and misery. They



are also victims of non-stop rise in consumer prices and absence of public health and education services.

The anti-feudal struggles of the peasant masses must be heightened and advanced across the country. The worsening forms and methods of feudal and semifeudal exploitation

being further pushed by the neoliberal policies imposed by US imperialism and its various agencies must be exposed. As imperialism deepens feudalism in wide swathes of the countryside, the development of the industrial base and the economy in general will not happen.

The Filipino people must promote the struggle of the peasant masses against various form of feudal and semifeudal exploitation and oppression. On the other hand, the peasant masses should firmly link up their struggle to the struggle of the people for national and social liberation.

AB

Unity against expansion of plantations to be formed

THE Resist Expansion of Agricultural Plantations (REAP) Mindanao Network will be established on October 28 during the National Conference on Plantations in Mindanao at the University of the Philippines in Dili-man, Quezon City to unite various organizations and individuals who are against the expansion of plantations in Mindanao.

REAP aims to gain broad local and international support around issues in Mindanao. Mindanao is home to a large part of the country's total estimated mineral wealth, but these are controlled by intrusive transnational, multinational and conniving local agribusiness firms.

Also in Mindanao are the largest plantations of rubber, banana and pineapple under giant corporations Del Monte, Sumifru and Dole in Bukidnon, South Cotabato, Sarangani, Compostela Valley and Davao. About one million hectares of grasslands are now being converted to oil palm plantations in Sultan Kudarat, North Cotabato, Caraga and Northern Mindanao.

The initiators of REAP are calling for an end to land monopoly, land-grabbing and dispossession. They are also calling for respect for life, livelihood, traditional beliefs and culture of indigenous peoples' or Lumad communities affected by the intrusion of agricultural plantations. They uphold agricultural workers' welfare against retrenchment, contractualization and other forms of flexible labor, slave-like wages, health and work hazards and inhuman working conditions in plantations and related mills, factories and packaging plants. They also call for the end to impunity and to uphold the peoples' civil and political rights. They seek to stop environmental degradation and ecological destruction brought about by the expansion of plantations. REAP seeks to highlight the crucial role of the agricultural sector in attaining genuine national industrialization and other sustainable and pro-people measures.

The founding of REAP Mindanao Network is initiated by the Rural Missionaries of the Philippines, Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas, Unyon ng mga Manggagawa sa Agrikultura, and the Center for Trade Union and Human Rights.

Farmworkers assail land reconcentration in Hacienda Luisita

The UMA (Unyon ng mga Manggagawa sa Agrikultura or Agricultural Workers Union) assailed the US-Aquino regime's various schemes to restore the Cojuangco-Aquino family's control over distributed lands in Hacienda Luisita Incorporated (HLI).

One of these schemes is sugar block farming which will consolidate small land holdings under CARP. These blocks, which will group together 30-50 hectares of land, will ensure the continued planting of sugarcane on the hacienda scale.

Peasants have long objected to this scheme since it will only restore control of their crops and production to the Cojuangco-Aquino family who will then act as the sole buyer of their harvest. They understand fully that under block farming, they will be landowners only on paper, but in reality will be farmworkers again to the hacienda system.

Despite protests, the Department of Agriculture, Department of Agrarian Reform and Sugar Regulatory Committee conspired to push the scheme forward. This September, the three offices announced al-

locating P2 billion for sugar block farming. Block farming is no different to agribusiness venture agreements most hacenderos have employed to take back their lands.

Block farming will prop up and strengthen the *aryendo* system that is now widespread in the hacienda. Under this system, beneficiaries "rent out" their land parcels to hacenderos for an extremely low fee. Currently, most of the sugarlands distributed under CARP have been returned to the hacenderos. In Hacienda Luisita, many beneficiaries have "rented out" their lands to dummies of the Cojuangco-Aquino family through the *aryendo* system under which the hacendero pays P7,500 annual fee for the use of a .66-hectare parcel of land.

Benigno Aquino himself confirmed the widespread use of the

aryendo system in Hacienda Luisita when he defended his close friend and fellow gun enthusiast Virginia Torres. Torres is notoriously known as the "aryendo queen" in HLI. She herself admitted to "renting" land inside the hacienda, though denied that Aquino had prior knowledge or endorsed her scheme. In Aquino's haste in defending her against sugar smuggling allegations, he inadvertently exposed his knowledge of Torres' activities in HLI. According to Aquino, why should she (Torres) help in smuggling sugar when she has heavily invested in its local production? Peasants have long known that Torres is a mere dummy of the Cojuangco-Aquinos.

CARP prohibits the renting out or sale of distributed lands. But this does not prevent hacenderos and their cohorts in forcing, intimidating and deceiving peasants into entering anomalous agreements to rent out their lands.

In Negros, another home to large sugar haciendas, estimates show that hacenderos have taken back control of up to 80% of CARP lands through the *prenda* system, a scheme similar to the *aryendo* system. AB

APEC in Manila:

Collusion and conflict between imperialist powers

"THE coming APEC Summit will display conflict and collusion between the US and China. They will collude to continue neoliberal policies and they also aim to compete for profits in this region of Southeast Asia and the Philippines." This is the statement of Jose Maria Sison in thanking the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan, Aklat ng Bayan and Liga ng Kabataang Propagandista who launched his new book.

He continued, "They are in conflict because the US wants to gain bigger profits and the pro-US bourgeoisie to dominate within China itself."

Two proposed templates are in a race within the APEC: the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) which is ruled by the US and requires a higher level of integra-

tion of many countries in the Asia-Pacific but excludes China, and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, which is based in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) and has a looser form of integration including China but without the US. There is the possibility the the APEC will craft a hybrid proposal, which will become more encompassing than either of the two. Whichever will be agreed upon, the yearly push of the APEC is already putting in place measures for regional integration.

Various methods are being applied such that liberalization of trade and investment is being fully implemented and destroying the country's remaining national protection of natural and human resources.

US maneuvers

The US excluded China from the TPP because the former wants to press China to privatize strategic public enterprises. The US wants easier entry of its investments and further access to the immense Chinese market.

The US is also displaying its containment policy of China by transferring or increasing US military forces in East Asia. US-led forces including Japan, Canada and Australia are dominant in the world and determined to complete the TPP talks and the US pivot to East Asia. This includes guaranteeing EDCA in the Philippines to expedite positioning of naval troops in the West Philippine Sea.

China maneuvers

On the other hand, China is continuously fortifying its position by building closer economic relations with Russia, India, and other states in South Asia and Central Asia within the expanding Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and in the world through the newly established BRICS (Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa) New Development Bank.

Last July, China initiated setting up the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) together with 49 other countries in Asia-Pacific, Europe, Africa and Latin America. Seven other countries have expressed their intention of joining—including the Philippines. This will be fully established by the end of 2015. By setting up the AIIB, China hopes to rival on the one hand, and complement on the other, the International Monetary Fund as a new imperialist tool for its plans to attain hegemony and dictate the terms of inter-regional integration.

Another grand Chinese project is the New Silk Road and Maritime Silk Road, a trade route that features special infrastructures for closer economic integration of Asia and Europe. This is composed of highways and railways for the most modern, high-speed passenger and

cargo trains that traverse the continent from China to Russia, Central Asia, until Western Europe and Africa. This system of roads and railways will connect to the sea to Europe through ports in Italy, Greece, and Turkey; to the Mediterranean, Red Sea, Arabian Sea, spanning the coast of the Indian Ocean; to Malacca and the China Sea. This will be joined up by a system of railways in Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, and Laos, the \$46 billion railway from the Chinese border to Pakistan, and the newly finished railway connecting the ports of Ethiopia in Africa. Through the Silk Road, China is establishing itself as a trade center while elbowing out the US.

Currency war

The currency war is intensifying. With Russia, the Chinese yuan increasingly threatens the US-dollar domination in world trade. It aims to undermine the dollar and US supremacy. China is continuously expanding its dollar reserves, rapidly dumping US Treasury Bills and setting up yuan exchange centers in Europe and other parts of the world. At the same time, China and Russia are increasing direct yuan-ruble trade. Also being strengthened are trade between Russia, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and other nations of the Commonwealth of Independent States that do not use dollars or euro.

Unresolvable world crisis

Amid the US and China schemes in East Asia, the crisis of world capitalism goes unabated. While still reeling from the blows brought by the 2008 crisis of world capitalism,

signs of a new and greater crisis are appearing. Recession continues in the US. On a bigger scale, production is falling especially in China and various financial bubbles are bursting, including the debt bubbles of states and stock and bond markets.

Last September 25, the biggest Chinese coal mining corporation decided to retrench 100,000 workers. As the second biggest economy in the world, the three successive yuan devaluations last August 10-12 shook the dollar and other currencies in the world that are tied both to the dollar and yuan. China dumped at least \$107 billion US Treasury Bills in 2015 to accumulate more dollars and control the the yuan. This created apprehension in the US, fearing the further devaluation of the yuan and other currencies will follow. Finance agencies estimate that China holds around \$1.48 trillion of US debts in the form of Treasury Bills.

The imperialists can not solve the problems of their system. There is intensifying oppression and exploitation of the working people in imperialist and underdeveloped countries. The imperialists themselves are in conflict and come into collusion only when they are able to pass the burdens of the crisis on to the working people and impoverished countries. APEC is only an arena of this collusion and conflict. The sufferings of the working masses can only inflame and amplify their struggle. AB



Fisherfolk protest pro-foreign amendments to fisheries law

PROTEST actions by fisherfolk and operators were successively launched these past weeks against RA 10654 or law against illegal fishing and amendments to the Fisheries Code of 1998.

A "fish holiday" was held on September 2-3. Fisherfolk, big fishing companies and markets in Quezon, Camarines Norte and other parts of Bicol stopped fishing operations. In Navotas, fish supply fell from 100 tons to less than 10 tons that day. On September 3, some 1,000 marched from the Quirino Grandstand to the front of the Senate building in Manila.

On September 22-23, similar protest actions were launched by 20 big commercial fishing boat operators in Western Visayas. This coincided with the APEC Ministerial Meeting on Small and Medium Enterprises in Iloilo City.

Even earlier, on August 29, Anakpawis-National Capital Region initiated a gathering of affected small fisherfolk and operators in Navotas against RA 10654 which they described as a way to direct the country's fishery sector towards aquaculture along the lines of an intensified export-orientation.

RA 10654 was enacted after the European Union imposed more stringent policies in importing fish. This used as pretext the allegedly high incidence of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing which violate Council Regulation No. 1005/2008. The EU threatened on June 2014 to stop fish importation from the Philippines.

Both houses of Congress hurriedly passed RA 10654 by the end of 2014.

RA 10654 took effect on

February 27. This amended the fisheries law or RA 8550 to abide by European Union policy. It raised the fine for violations of earlier prohibitions against fishing within 15 kilometers from the shoreline and the use of nets and other "active fishing gear". This further limits the volume of fish that can be caught from permitted fishing areas.

It is clear that the implementation of the law is in accordance with foreign dictates to the detriment of millions of small fisherfolk and fishing operators in the country.

"It is not true that small fisherfolk will benefit from this amendments because even in municipal fishing, fines for violations were raised to as much as P30,000 while those for small and medium-scale fishing were raised to P9-15 million," according to Fernando Hicap, Anakpawis representative.

"The government aims to destroy the livelihood of the mass of small fisherfolk and operators to allow the big and foreign commercial fishing to monopolize our water resources and the big and foreign business to monopolize aquaculture."

Anakpawis denounces the Fisheries Code as the root of the worsening conditions of fisherfolk, who are considered the "poorest among the poor".

An ordinary fisher family earn a measly P190 per day.

AB



Manila vendors win against privatization

MARKET vendors simultaneously closed their stalls in five markets in Trabajo, Sampaloc, San Andres, Sta. Ana and parts of Quinta to rally in front of the Manila City Hall. Market vendors from Paco and Dagonoy, as well as ambulant vendors from Rizal Park, Pedro Gil, Padre Faura and Manila Bay area, joined the protests. During their negotiations with Manila City Mayor Joseph Estrada, they attained one of their demands — to stop the privatization of public markets.

This is the second protest of the Save Manila Public Market Alliance or SAMPAL against plans to privatize 17 city public markets. The alliance called for the scrapping of City Ordinance 8346 or the Joint Venture Agreement (JVA) and for the defense of small vendors' livelihoods over those of a few private companies. They likewise called for the upgrading of market facilities instead of privatizing them.

Aside from putting a stop to privatization plans, market



vendors also successfully demanded that fees remain in accordance to current laws. Thus, stall fees will be

maintained for the next two years at their current level and increases in the succeeding years will be limited to 5-10%.

Also, public markets in Sta. Ana and other markets “in good condition” will not be demolished.

Estrada’s concessions are substantial victories in negotiations initiated by the vendors. The mayor clearly did not anticipate the widespread protests, especially by the stall owners who face the threat not only of losing money but of losing their stalls altogether. There are no assurances that would-be private concessionaires will honor previous stall ownership after markets are reopened. Furthermore, an estimate of 50,000 ambulant vendors will lose their livelihood due to the JVA.

Meanwhile, vendors and stall-owners in San Andres market conducted a noise barrage on October 1 against the supplemental agreement drafted by the city government. The said agreement runs counter to Estrada’s promises during the September 12 negotiations that the said market will remain public.

The supplemental agreement was discussed in a forum which the vendors boycotted in protest against the JVA. Clearly, the mayor is taking back what he promised in the dialogue conducted during the market holiday.

Privatization of public markets has long been implemented in other cities. Among the corporations which have won concessions are the Titanium Corporation (owner of the Legend Hotel and operator of the Mayon Market in Quezon City) and companies owned by Henry Sy. Meanwhile, the Balintawak market has been sold to the Ayala group of companies. AB

Calamity victims launch protests in EV

In Eastern Visayas, the people’s anger at the US-Aquino regime’s gross neglect of Yolanda and other typhoon victims is intensifying. They are enraged mainly by the slow-moving and arbitrary distribution of the P30,000 Emergency Shelter Assistance (ESA) which should have been given them in November 2013.

The Department of Social Work and Development (DSWD) delisted many Yolanda survivors from its beneficiaries, while burdening those in the list with numerous documentary requisites. Those who are earning P15,000 per month are dropped from the list, as well as those who are residing in hazardous zones and those who have received temporary shelter from relatives, other agencies or organizations.

Worse, the DSWD is in cahoots with usurers in the “kase-kase” scheme, wherein ESA funds are released to them and offered as loan to identified beneficiaries at 16% interests.

According to government statistics, out of 205,000, only 73,000 of the poorest families have received housing funds from the regime. Majority, or 132,000 of the poorest families remain homeless. Almost two years after Yolanda’s devastation, they still live in tents or bunkhouses in Tacloban and other areas. This is because the US-Aquino regime has released to the local government only a third or P21 billion out of the P75 billion allotted for the re-

construction of houses.

Last September 7, more than 600 people under the banner of People Surge demonstrated in front of Julita, Leyte’s municipal building to press the mayor and the DSWD to release their ESA. Julita is not listed as an ESA recipient. The people there are outraged by this neglect since their town suffered extensive damage from the typhoon. Earlier, around 4,000 residents from Basey, Samar also launched a rally to condemn the slow-moving and arbitrary ESA distribution.

Local governments have united with the people against the DSWD and Aquino regime’s scheme to withhold ESA funds and other aid from calamity victims. The Yolanda survivors’ organization People Surge likewise demanded from the DSWD the P400 million fund earmarked for the survivors that has been left sitting in the bank. The People Surge also united with victims of typhoons Ruby and Senyang to push for the people’s interests in the face of the Aquino regime’s neglect. AB



Groups hold Int'l Day of Protest

NATIONAL-DEMOCRATIC

groups and human rights advocates in the Philippines and abroad held an International Day of Protest last September 21. The coordinated protests are part of the series of protests and actions against the continuing militarization and human rights violations of Lumads, other minorities and civilians under the US-Aquino regime's Oplan Bayanihan. The action was also held to mark the 43rd anniversary of the declaration of martial law.

In Metro Manila, groups trooped to Mendiola to call for an immediate halt to the killings (#stopLumadkillings) and to hold the US-Aquino regime accountable for its role in the intensification of state fascism. In attendance was Michelle Campos, daughter of MAPASU head Dionel Campos who was brutally murdered by paramilitary groups on September 1.

Also in the rally was Andrea Rosal, daughter of the late Communist Party of the Philippines' spokesperson Gregorio Rosal, who called for the release of more than 700 political prisoners in the country.

Similar rallies were held in Baguio, Davao, Cagayan de Oro, Bicol and other cities. Bayan, other national-democratic groups abroad and Mi-grante spearheaded protests in the US and Europe.

On September 24, the New York-based Human Rights Watch called for a quick resolution to the attacks against the Lumads, the dismantling of paramilitary groups and punishment of soldiers who support these groups. **AB**



AFP captures 26th IB soldier in Agusan Sur

The New People's Army-Western Agusan Norte-Agusan Sur Subregional Command arrested a member of the 26th IB last September 19 at Km.16, Barangay Policarpo, San Luis, Agusan del Sur. Sergeant Adriano Delapeña Bengil (Serial Number: 831966), team leader of a Peace and Development Team (PDT) of the 26th IB was taken prisoner while conducting psywar operations in Mahagsay, Agusan del Sur.

On September 20, around 4:30 a.m., an NPA unit used a command-detonated explosives against a 26th IB platoon that was pursuing the arresting unit of Bengil. Two troopers and one member of the Civilian Armed Auxilliary (CAA) were killed and four were wounded.

On September 21, at 6:45 am, an NPA team harassed a column of the 26th IB in the mountains of Kamingawan, Barangay Balit, San Luis. Five were killed and an undetermined number of soldiers were wounded.

Ka Allan Juanito, spokesperson of NPA-North Central Mindanao Regional Command, praised the NPA units for their successful tactical offensives against the military operations. He also clarified that "As we have done with the POW of last year and the captured member of 58th IB last July in Alagatan, Gingoog City, we will formally release him as another gesture of goodwill and sincerity in seeking the resumption of peacetalks with the Aquino regime."

The NPA assured Sgt. Bengil's family and the public that he is being treated well and will be able to return as soon as conditions allow his safe and orderly release. What could pose as threat to his safety are the rescue operations of the AFP.

Two soldiers were also captured by the NPA in Compostela Valley on September 30, 1:00 pm, at a checkpoint in Barangay Casoon, Monkayo, Compostela Valley. Pfc. Nino L. Alavaro and Pfc. Marjon S. Anover left army headquarters in Banlag, Monkayo and were on their way to conduct military operations in the area. Two

caliber .45 pistols were confiscated from them.

According to Aris Francisco, spokesperson of NPA-Comval-North Davao South Agusan Subregional Command, they arrested Alavaro and Anover who both were part of the operating troops of the 25th IB, for their role in the atrocities perpetrated by their unit against the people.

"The NPA mounted the checkpoint in response to the atrocities committed by the 25th Infantry Battalion. The fascist Army troops committed grave human rights violations in the villages when they ransacked several houses, encamped in village centers, waged intense psychological warfare and arrested civilians on account of fake criminal charges. It was the same army unit which seized and tortured to death three Red fighters in Montevista, Compostela Valley last year," Francisco said.

According to Francisco, the arrested soldiers will be investigated and subjected to "the judicial process under the tenets of revolutionary justice." Francisco also stated that under the protocols of war, the NPA custodial unit is duty-bound to treat the soldiers humanely and leniently.

Meanwhile, on July 29, Red fighters of the Arnulfo Ortiz Command ambushed goons of the Tan dynasty in Parek, Matuguinao, Western Samar. Red fighters confiscated two M16 rifles and one caliber .45 pistol. The military action aims to punish the powerful Tan dynasty that has long been violating strict regulations of the people's democratic government regarding the use of goons and violence against the people. **AB**



Army kills peasant couple in Bulacan

Amidst the people's wrath and condemnation of successive and brutal killing of Lumad and other civilians, armed state agents unflinchingly killed a peasant couple who are community leaders in San Jose del Monte, Bulacan. At the same time, there is relentless harassment of national-democratic activists, indigenous peoples and National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) consultants.

Bulacan. Motorcycle-riding armed men gunned down couple Lucila and Roger Vargas who were on their way home to San Isidro, San Jose del Monte on September 19. The couple were active members of the Nagkakaisang Samahan ng Magsasaka sa San Isidro (United Farmers in San Isidro) and Alyansa ng Magbubukid sa Bulacan (Bulacan Peasant Alliance), organizations affiliated with the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (Philippine Peasant Movement). Roger was shot on the head and died immediately. Lucila managed to call fellow peasant Cecil Rapis and tell her she recognized the gunmen but died before she could name the culprits.

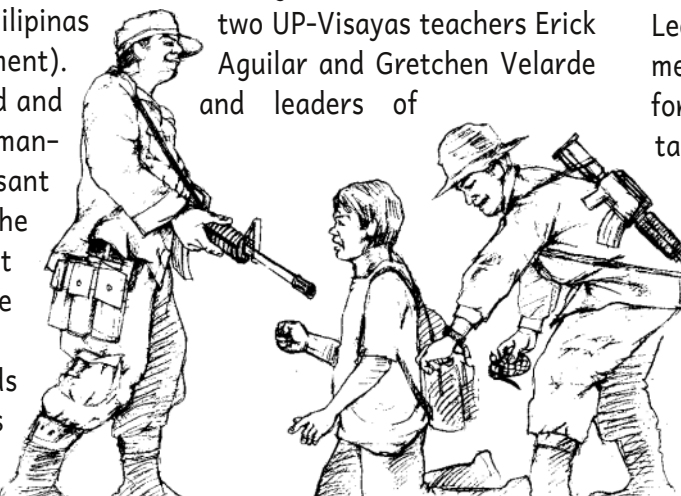
A day earlier, guards who identified themselves as personnel of the Singson family from Ilocos Sur threatened the couple. The Vargases stayed on a 2.5 hectare land which is part of the 11-hectare property being claimed by the Singsons.

Cagayan. Members of the 17th IB abducted an indigenous Aggay from Barangay Masi, Rizal last October 3. According to his family, soldiers forced out an ailing Leonor Danao from his hut and made him walk in the rain from Barangay Masi to Barangay Gagamutan before he was bundled into a military vehicle. Before the abduction, soldiers searched his hut where a "baby armalite" was supposedly discovered. He was brought to a precinct in Rizal where trumped-up charges were

filed against him.

Iloilo. Eleven rallyists were illegally arrested while protesting cuts in the budget of the University of the Philippines (UP) last September 22. Around 500 students, teachers and their supporters were marching from the UP campus to Gen. Luna St. when they were accosted by hundreds of police officers.

Among those arrested were two UP-Visayas teachers Erick Aguilar and Gretchen Velarde and leaders of



national-democratic organizations and the progressive church. They were charged with illegal assembly and civil disobedience, detained in Iloilo City Police Station 1, but were released on the same day.

UP students condemned the arrests and police overkill which they believe are part of the tightening of security measures in preparation for the Asia Pacific Economic leaders' meeting to be held in the city. According to the protesters, they were only fighting for their right to education which the US-Aquino regime is grossly neglecting. The entire UP system's budget is set to be reduced by P2.2 billion, from P13.4 billion in 2015 to P10.9 billion in 2016.

Nueva Ecija. On September 17, the Pasig City Regional Trial Court sentenced Emeterio Antalan and Leopoldo Caloza to life imprisonment with no possibility of parole for a fabricated murder case. Antalan and Caloza are NDFP consultants who were illegally arrested in Nueva Ecija. The NDFP strongly condemned the sentencing, and called on the regime to stop filing trumped-up charges against its consultants, and stop criminalizing political acts.

AB

Guards disperse Tanduary workers

A protest launched by Tanduary Distillers Inc. workers and their supporters was met with gunshots last September 22. The workers were marching towards Gate 2 of the Asia Brewery Complex in Cabuyao, Laguna when company guards pelted them with rocks. A firetruck also bombarded them with water. Meanwhile, police armed with high-powered rifles attempted to run over protesters at the tail end of the march.

The workers were demanding that Tanduary comply with the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) order to declare them as regular workers. In September 8, the DOLE secretary affirmed the earlier decision of its regional office ordering Tanduary to regularize its workers. The Tanduary management still refuses to implement the order.

Prior to this, the workers held protests in front of the Nestle factory to commemorate the 10th death anniversary of its late union president, Diosdado Fortuna (Ka Fort). Ka Fort was killed in the height of the union's struggle for higher wages and benefits.

AB



State continues war against the Lumad

Militarization of Lumad communities and brazen violation of their rights persist and continue to spread despite the opening of the Senate investigation last October 1 and protests by Lumad leaders at the Commission on Human Rights last September 24.

Terror and martial rule

In Surigao del Sur, about 1,000 Manobos evacuated from sitios Luknodon, Palunpon and San Roque in Barangay Mahaba, Marihatag last October 2. According to the residents, soldiers first arrived in their communities on October 1. On the same day, a Magahat-Bagani group led by a certain Bobby Tejeros also descended on them. Tejeros asked for the residents' names and told them to identify who among them are "NPA members."

Fearing another Lianga-like massacre, the residents decided to leave their communities the next day and sought refuge in the mayor's office. They added to the swelling number of Lumad evacuees, of which more than 3,000 are temporarily staying in Tandag City.

In White Kulaman, Kitaotao, Bukidnon, the local barangay captain is forcibly closing down a Lumad school in the pretext that it is being run by "NPA members." In October 1, Felipe Cabugnason ordered the closure of the Fr. Fausto Tentorio Memorial School being run by the religious group Mindanao Interfaith Services Foundation Inc. Cabugnason cited the school's supposed failure to acquire a permit from the local council as his excuse.

The captain's order was met with strong protest from teachers and administrators, especially since the captain himself accompanied them to apply for accreditation from the Department of Education last year. The school was established in response to the request of the local peasant organization,

the Nagkahiusang Mag-uuma sa White Kulaman (United Peasants in White Kulaman or NAMABAW).

Last August 26, 13 NAMABAW members were illegally arrested, forcibly bundled into helicopters and flown to Malaybalay City. Charges of rebellion and illegal possession of firearms against the 13 were dismissed and the courts ordered their immediate release.

Earlier, Cabugnason attempted to stop the 300-member fact finding mission which sought to document human rights violations in White Kulaman in September 16-18.

In Help Kitaotao Mercy Mission's report, the barangay is virtually under martial rule. Soldiers are using the barangay hall as barracks. They impose restrictions on the residents' movements and activities, as well as the entry and exit of resources, including food and commodities. They even ban sending text messages, or the retail of cell-phone "load" (credits). Because of this, more than 55 families have left

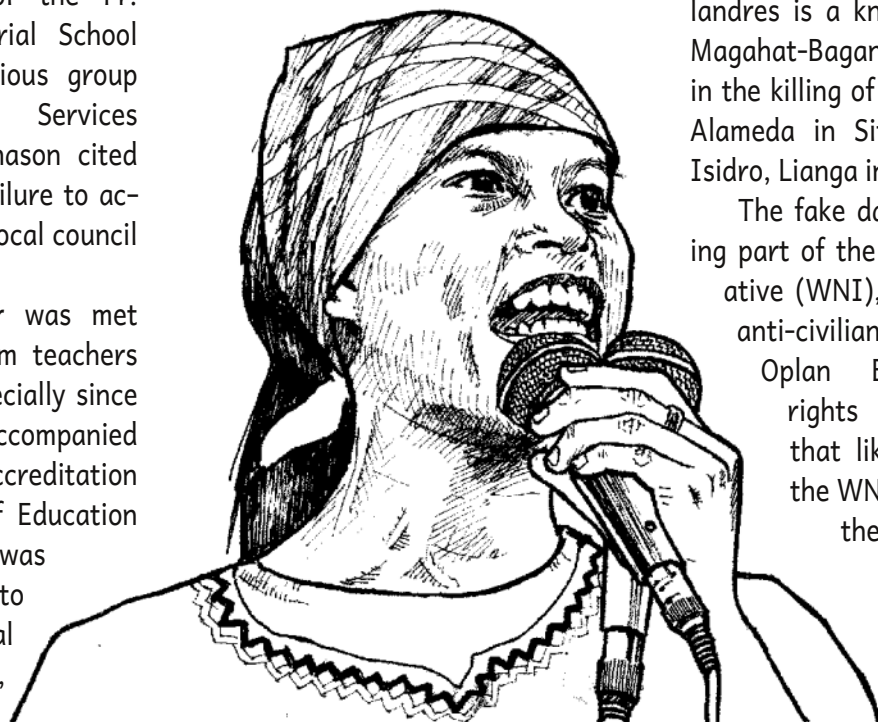
the area. Most of them are now staying with relatives in Arakan Valley, North Cotabato.

AFP's fake datus

Lumad victims of state fascism and brutality condemned the AFP's presentation of fake datus to make it appear that the massacres, extrajudicial killings and militarization of their communities are consequences of a mere war among Lumad groups. Nestor Apas, Rico Mapa and Marcial Belandres are not just fake datus, they are also leaders of armed paramilitary groups who actively take part in AFP operations. In the military press conference, the military virtually crowed over its control over these paramilitary groups.

Apas is known as an Alamara leader, the paramilitary group engaged in harassing schools in Davao del Norte, and was involved in the botched "rescue" operations of Lumads staying in Haran Compound led by Nancy Catamco. He initiated the filing of trumped-up charges of illegal detention and kidnapping against the supporters of the evacuees, which the prosecution dismissed last September 8 due to lack of evidence. Maco is a member of the paramilitary group headed by a certain Hasmin Acebedo which has been sowing terror in San Miguel, Surigao del Sur. Meanwhile, Belandres is a known member of the Magahat-Bagani and was involved in the killing of Lumad leader Henry Alameda in Sitio Cabalawan, San Isidro, Lianga in October 24, 2014.

The fake datus admitted to being part of the Whole Nation Initiative (WNI), an anti-Lumad and anti-civilian scheme under the Oplan Bayanihan. Human rights groups discovered that like Oplan Bayanihan, the WNI was hatched under the guidance and direction of the US Joint Special Operations Task Force. The said US milit-



ary unit has based itself in Mindanao since 2002.

International pressure

Meanwhile, the US-Aquino regime has once again turned down the repeated requests of three UN investigators to visit the country to document the situation of victims of militarization and human rights violations.

Victoria Tauli-Corpus, UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples and Michel Forst, UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, declared that "military occupation of civilian structures like schools which should serve as a safe haven to children against all forms of violence, as well as killing of civilians, are unacceptable, deplorable and against international human rights laws and international humanitarian standards." Forst reiterated his request to visit the country to assess the situation and see for himself the situation of human rights defenders. Christof Heyns, UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary and arbitrary executions, made a similar appeal. AB

Perverted views of perverted politicians

INTENSE outrage was directed at a congressman for having a hired group of young women dance a lewd number in public last October 1 in Laguna. In his birthday party, Rep. Benjamin Agarao, allowed the libidinous dance show of girls who were supposed to be "gifts" from another politician, MMDA chairman Francis Tolentino.

An internet petition was initiated demanding Aquino's accountability as head of state and chairman of the Liberal Party (LP).

The group also demanded that Secretary Manuel Roxas II, Tolentino and Agarao be investigated and be "held liable if proven guilty" for violating sections of the law that forbids "portrayal of women in a discriminatory, demeaning and/or derogatory manner."

Tolentino denied that he was the "gift-giver" after receiving flak from the internet. On his part, Agarao said he saw nothing lascivious in the show. On the internet, many slammed Tolentino and Agarao, saying it was "disgraceful" and "offensive" to refer to

women as "gifts."

Women's group Gabriela said, "MMDA Chair Tolentino, do you consider these women objects that you can give as surprise 'gifts?' Shame on you."

Gabriela added, "Despite Tolentino's denials, the fact remains that he was not appalled by the incident and did not have the decency to stop the show when it was obviously becoming lewd. Even Congressman Agarao did not find anything wrong with the show and obviously enjoyed it."

The performance was done after the oath-taking of 80 new officials to the LP in Agarao's house, in front of the public where students, women and minors were present.

Soldiers kill peasant in Samar

FASCIST troops of the 87th IB killed farmer Generoso Gabane, 46, in Barangay Caulayanan, Motiong, Samar last August 19. Gabane was harvesting coconuts with his nephew Michael, 26, when soldiers arrived and opened fire. The 15 soldiers were conducting operations against an NPA unit in the area. Gabane was killed immediately. The soldiers beat up the wounded Michael before taking him with them.

To cover up their crime, the 87th IB told the media that the two peasants were "NPA members." Afterwards, they audaciously distributed relief goods in the barrio. The soldiers have yet to release Michael. Meanwhile, Generoso Gabane's family is determined to file charges and has refused all "help" from the military.

On September 14, operating soldiers from the 87th IB trampled and damaged



Ang Bayan
**will
publish
the fourth**

**installment in the
series of articles on
the US National
Security Strategy on
the next issue.**