

## NPA seizes 20 firearms

DIFFERENT UNITS OF the New People's Army (NPA) confiscated up to 11 high-powered firearms, two pistols and various military equipment this past two weeks. Meanwhile, nine high-powered firearms and four pistols were seized from a raid in Bulacan last July.

### North Central Mindanao.

The NPA-Eastern Misamis Oriental-Northeastern Bukidnon Subregional Command launched three simultaneous military actions in different barangays of Impasug-ong, Bukidnon last September 29 at midnight. First was the raid on a CAA patrol base of the 8th IB in KM30, Sitio Nasandigan, Barangay Calabugao wherein the NPA was able to seize two M14 rifles, two Garand rifles, two carbines, a shotgun and a .38 caliber pistol. Next was the harassment operation against another CAA patrol base in Barangay Hagpa. The third was the disarming of National Greening Program guards in Sitio Bagaay, Barangay Calabugao where a carbine was confiscated.

**Far South Mindanao.** On September 23, Red fighters successfully disarmed Egong Pidad, former village chief of Barangay Maligang, Kiamba, Sarangani Province. One Garand, a shotgun and a calibre .38 pistol were seized from him. The Red fighters also launched an attack against armed Civilian Volunteer Organization mem-

"20 firearms..." continued on page 3



### EDITORIAL

## Duterte's utterly rotten bureaucrat capitalist rule

**R**odrigo Duterte is frothing in the mouth in browbeating organizations, institutions, individuals as well as agencies and officials of the reactionary government that are acting against his tyrannical rule. He is like a rabid animal in his threats and murder, attacks and arm-twisting, disinformation, intimidation and of trumped-up charges to silence those who stand against and expose his rottenness.

Duterte's tyrannical rule manifests worsening bureaucrat capitalist oppression of the reactionary state against the people. Duterte is brazenly using bureaucratic privilege and political power to serve the interests of the ruling classes and his particular reactionary faction.

Amid the deepening crisis of the semicolonial and semifeudal system, there is less room for accommodation and sharing of benefits of bureau-

cratic privilege. Duterte's maneuvers to monopolize power aim to monopolize these benefits. Because of this, other factions of the ruling classes are enraged.

As conflicts among the various factions of the ruling classes intensify, Duterte's clean, anti-corruption and anti-criminality pretensions become exposed. He is all over the place in defending himself and his family who are facing cases of corruption,

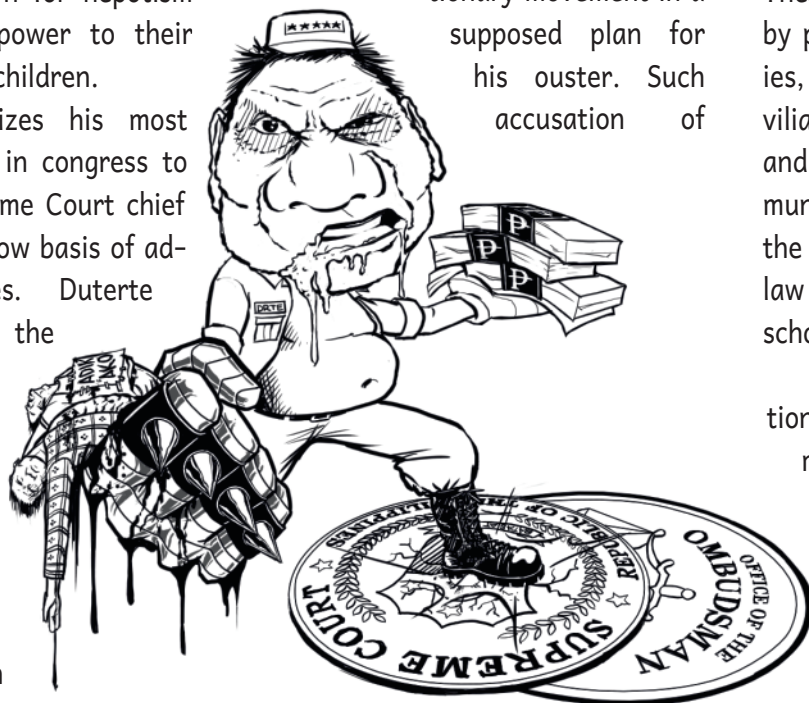
plunder and abuse of power. He and his family's use of power for such criminal acts as smuggling rice and illegal drugs is being exposed.

Duterte is a bureaucrat capitalist to the core. He is an expert in using state mechanisms and resources to hide the rottenness of his rule and persecute his political rivals. In clinging to power, the Dutertes are known for nepotism and transferring power to their children and grandchildren.

Duterte mobilizes his most ardent supporters in congress to impeach the Supreme Court chief justice on the narrow basis of administrative cases. Duterte urges them to do the same to the chief ombudsman in retaliation for investigating and exposing the documents showing his hidden wealth. Duterte has

set up his own "anti-corruption" commission to investigate and pressure the agency. He has threatened to investigate others in the ombudsman.

Senators belonging to the Liberal Party who are investigating the "war against drugs" are being charged left and right. He accuses them of conspiracy with the revolutionary movement in a supposed plan for his ouster. Such accusation of



conspiracy is part of Duterte's political repression against the opposition.

What Duterte calls a "conspiracy" is actually the broad ranks of people from various political and social groups who are now resisting his abuse of power and authoritarianism and the widespread and relentless violations of human rights. These include the relentless killings by police, soldiers and paramilitaries, aerial bombardment against civilian communities, militarization and threats to bomb minority communities and schools, suspension of the writ habeas corpus and martial law in Mindanao, threats against schools and others.

Duterte is intolerant of opposition and dissent. He intends to monopolize political power and silence all those who denounce his policies and methods. His officials have declared plans to use all means to charge and arrest all those who protest. To defend himself against attacks, he has repeatedly threatened to declare nationwide martial law.

Among the most recent fascist measures of the regime is the establishment of the Citizen National Guard, a vigilante organization comprised of his most zealous loyalists, including retired soldiers and police. This was openly endorsed by his justice secretary. It openly calls for attacks against those whom it has declared "enemies of the state" just for opposing the regime.

Duterte's resort to such tactics only show his desperation and isolation from the people. There is already widespread people's resistance against his three wars of death and destruction, fascist and bureaucrat capitalist rule, and puppetry to US interests. No matter what Duterte does, he can no longer stop the mounting calls for his ouster.

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# Duterte's corruption and cronyism

It is not surprising that corruption cases are filed against Rodrigo Duterte in the Office of the Ombudsman. Neither are his wildly varying statements on the issue. In the past, he has been called the "king of lies" in relation to his family's actual source of wealth.

## Bureaucrat-capitalist family

Like other bureaucrat-capitalists, Duterte's family amassed wealth while in power. His father was the governor of the then single Davao province. His mother came from one of the region's rich clans. In his speech last September, Duterte boasted that he became a "millionaire" in his teens after inheriting properties from his mother.

Last year, a journal exposed that when he was Davao mayor, Duterte's wealth grew annually as he declared in his SALN or Statement of Assets, Liabilities and Net Worth. The SALN is a public document detailing personal funds and properties of government officials which most politicians falsify. From 1997 to 2015, Duterte's wealth grew by 2,500% from P897,792 in 1997 to P23.5 million in 2015 (with an average annual growth of 133%). This excludes land, vehicles and other properties under his children's names

which he admitted that he had accepted as gifts. Six months into his presidency, his declared worth rose further by P3 million.

## Kingdom of Davao

The Dutertes treat Davao City as their personal kingdom. No less than seven members of their family hold various local government positions. This include his two children, Sara and Paolo, who serve as mayor and vice-mayor of the city respectively.

In 2007, the two declared P38 million in their SALNs, which they supposedly came into after their parents separated. This is despite Duterte's SALN declaration of only P8.7 million the year before (2006) and declaring only P2 million when he formally separated from his first wife (2000).

In the decade they held office, the younger Dutertes have been involved in the usual bureaucratic corruption

cases, including overpricing of the municipal building and other infrastructure, awarding public contracts to their own companies and bribery. Paolo and Manases Carpio, Sara's husband, are currently embroiled in cases of rice and illegal drugs smuggling.

## Big bourgeois comprador and bureaucrat support

Duterte's reign in Davao and his current presidency is supported by his fellow bureaucrats and businessmen who have been favored with public contracts in Davao City. One of his biggest campaign contributors is the Marcos family, which he publicly admitted but did not include in his report of expenditures to the Comelec. In this report, the Floirendo family, an old Marcos crony, was named as his biggest contributor. The Floirendos

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*"20 firearms..." continued from page 1*

bers in Barangay Tudok, T'boli, South Cotabato last September 27. The paramilitaries immediately surrendered their arms, including one M16 armalite, one Garand rifle and one carbine. The Red fighters were also able to confiscate a 2-way radio, Garand clips, carbine magazines and other ammunition.

**Bicol.** A squad belonging to the NPA-Sorsogon (Celso Minguez Command) launched a harassment operation against the detachment of the 5th PPSB's 3rd Manuever Company in Barangay San Ignacio, Gubat, Sorsogon last September 18. The Red fighters also set afire several unplated motorcycles inside the camp. This military action by the NPA serves as punishment for the military and police units' active participation in extrajudicial killings in the province.

**Negros.** The NPA-South West Negros (Armando Sumayang Command) meted out punishment on Joevanie Banista last September 9 in Barangay Lukotan, Kabangkalan City. Seized from him was a calibre .45 pistol with three magazines. Banista is an element of the RPA-ABB who has been conniving with the military since the 1990s in its counterinsurgency operations in Southwest

Negros. He also served as an intelligence agent of the AFP. Multiple charges of human rights violations have been filed against him in the people's court.

MEANWHILE, IN CENTRAL Luzon, the NPA-Bulacan successfully raided the office and detachment of the armed personnel of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP)-Ayala Land in Barangay San Isidro, San Jose Del Monte City, Bulacan, on the evening of July 23. Confiscated from them were 13 firearms including nine high-powered rifles and four pistols, ammunition and other military equipment such as a 2-way radio, combat shoes and military packs. Before this, another NPA platoon raided the armed goons of Atty. Artemio Caña, a landgrabber, in Barangay San Mateo, Norzagaray, Bulacan.

According to Ka Jose del Pilar of the NPA-Bulacan, the raid is in response to demands for justice by the indigenous Dumagat, peasants and townfolk exploited by the BSP-Ayala Land collusion, which has started with its landgrabbing under the Aquino regime. Its arrogation of lands has become more hasty, more violent and widespread under the present regime. AB

# US control over AFP tightens under Duterte

Less than a year after Rodrigo Duterte declared that he is “separating from the US,” he has completely turned around and praised the supposed “important security alliance” with the US. He declared this in mockery of the Filipino people’s commemoration of their forebears’ heroism in the Balangiga Uprising against American colonizers. He likewise said that the US has “redeemed” itself from its crimes against the people during the Philippine-American War up to the present.

Duterte’s declarations epitomize his complete puppetry to the US imperialists. Particularly on the military aspect, the Armed Forces of the Philippines and other state security forces have remained pillars of US rule in the country. Duterte himself admitted that Department of National Defense secretary Delfin Lorenzana is an agent of the US Central Intelli-

gence Agency. Lorenzana spearheads the implementation of US’ design for Duterte’s government. The AFP continues to be dependent upon US military aid—in the form of finances, weapons and equipment, training and indoctrination.

## Intensified military presence

Last October 2, the joint milit-

ary exercise “Kamandag” between 900 US Marines and Philippine Marines set off in seven different venues in Luzon. Apart from underscoring exercises on invasion from the sea, the US likewise trained the AFP on the use of computers and the internet for electronic surveillance and attacks.

Amidst the AFP and US’ siege of Marawi, US Marines held an urban warfare training for the Philippine Marines. Incorporated in these military exercises are psywar activities such as repairs of school buildings and medical missions.

The AFP also participates in

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*“Corruption...,” continued from page 3*

were awarded the contract to operate a commercial plantation on public lands. (Read related article on page 8.)

Among his campaign donors, 18 are individuals who hold public contracts or operate public utilities, large-scale mining and plantations which require licenses from the local government. Most of them are Duterte’s cronies and are believed to be his dummies. They sit in interlocking directorates of different companies.

## Duterte’s cronies

Duterte’s cronies are currently experiencing a windfall. These include Dennis Uy who owns Phoenix Petroleum. Among Phoenix’ “consultants” is previous AFP chief and current National Security Adviser Hermogenes Esperon. In 2010, the company was slapped with an oil smuggling case in Davao. The charges were dropped when Duterte interfered with the case.

Samuel Uy, head of the city’s Chinese businessmen, is another Duterte crony. Duterte himself co-owns one of his businesses in General Santos City. Both Uys are cur-

rently involved in doing “humanitarian” work among the soldiers in Marawi. Dennis Uy established a P100-million trust fund for the slain soldiers’ families while Samuel Uy is a major donor in putting up “temporary shelters” in the city.

Within six months of his presidency, Duterte managed to shower his donors with positions, lucrative public contracts and extraordinary business opportunities. One such company is Dennis Uy’s Udenna, which has embarked on a buying spree of companies and properties amounting to millions in a bid to expand his holdings, mainly Phoenix Petroleum, using Duterte’s influence on loans. Last year, Phoenix Petroleum reduced its tax payments by half due to exemptions and other incentives granted by the regime.

Among Uy’s acquisitions include the majority shares in 2GO of the Ayalas and Ederun Colleges of the Sorianos. With the Sy family’s (of the SM Group) backing, he plans to consolidate his interests in 2GO under his Chelsea Logistics Holdings Corporation, Udenna’s marine logistics arm. Duterte also awarded Uy the license to build and operate a resort

and casino in Cebu worth P300 million. These private projects will be funded by Chinese loans clinched during Duterte’s official state visits.

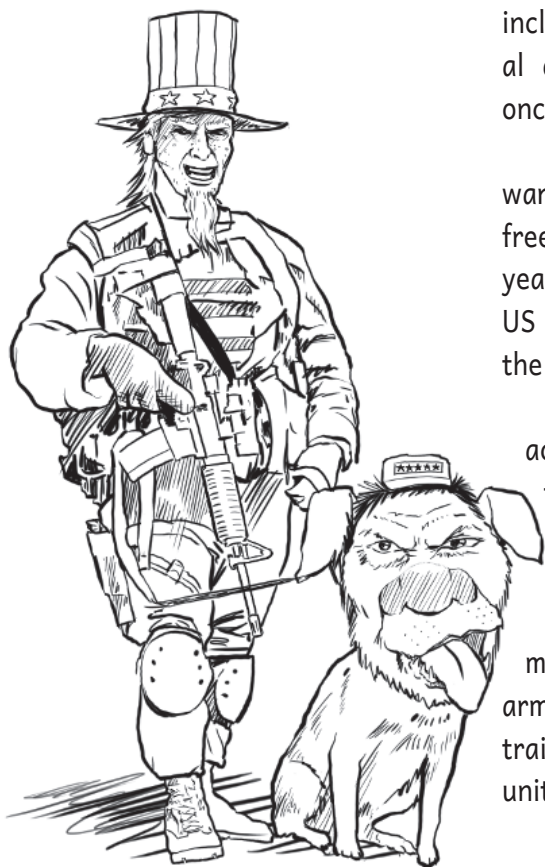
In Davao, Uy and his fellow Duterte cronies are partners in infrastructure projects, including the planned construction of a road system that will cut across the island. He, as well as his fellow directors, sits in the boards of other crony companies with big interests in mining and commercial plantations. This includes a seat in Apex Mining’s board of directors. Apex Mining is owned by Walter Brown, who also owns A. Brown Company Inc. A. Brown is currently involved in a land grabbing case in Central Bukidnon where it plans to establish an oil palm plantation.

The Uys are just a few of Duterte cronies based in Davao which include big mining and concessionaires who were previously Marcos cronies. Among them are the Alcantaras and the Navarretes, who funded Duterte’s campaign and are now enjoying the fruits of their donations. They are joined by bigger Marcos cronies like Ramon Ang, Eduardo Cojuangco’s heir to his empire. **AB**

multinational military exercises directed by the US. In the recent Balikatan exercises last May, among the foreign troops who joined the trainings come from Australia and Japan, two of the US' closest allies. Lorenzana likewise forged a separate agreement with Australia to hold military exercises supposedly to counter ISIS, in addition to the drones already being used by the Australian Defense Force in Marawi.

In recent military exercises, the US blatantly used the ISIS "black scare." The exercises Sama-sama and Tempest Wind both simulated battles with ISIS as the enemy. Trainings were conducted regarding the rescue of victims of an airplane supposedly hi-jacked by ISIS, despite confirmations by the US and the DND that no such scenario is being faced by the Philippines in the near future.

The US and Australia also played up the drug issue and the supposed threat of "terrorism-illegal drugs" combination. Duterte repeated this line when he presented a "matrix" of druglords who supposedly funded the Maute



group. It is likely that the US will exploit the drug issue in the Philippines as a pretext for its military intervention like what it did in the creation of counter-revolutionary paramilitary groups in Colombia.

It is also probable that Duterte and the US will shift the extrajudicial killings of drug suspects towards the revolutionary forces. The pretext of "terrorism-illegal drugs" was underscored during the Southeast Asia Cooperation and Training exercises led by the US Coast Guard and participated in by coast guards and military forces from the Philippines, Australia and other countries.

Last September 7 and 26, Philippine military officials were among those assembled by the US Pacific Command (PACOM) from different Indo-Asia-Pacific countries. The consecutive meetings are part of US consolidation of its hegemony in the region. Meanwhile, last September 27-28, the Mutual Defense Board-Security Engagement Board meeting was held at the US PACOM headquarters in Hawaii wherein the holding of 261 military exercises in 2018 was agreed upon, including the launching of territorial defense exercises, which were once opposed by Duterte.

Also, no less than seven US warships and submarines have freely docked in the Philippines this year, while since February, other US warships have been patrolling the South China Sea.

Even in Marawi, the regime has acceded to US military intervention and direction of the city's siege through its control of drones which conduct surveillance and aerial bombardments, as well as the supply of arms and the intensified use of US-trained Philippine special military units.

Lorenzana also admitted to the

presence of more than 100 US soldiers in other parts of Mindanao who are conducting aircraft and drone surveillance. During the last week of August, Duterte met with US PACOM Chief Adm. Harry Harris, Jr. to agree upon the further involvement of US troops in the battles in Marawi. Following this, in September, the US supplemented its current deployment of drones in Marawi with a more developed drone system.

Aside from these, the US uses aid to control the military. Last 2016, the Duterte government received more than \$60 million in military aid from the US. Included in this amount are \$9 million purportedly for eradicating illegal drugs. Likewise, the Duterte government sent 194 officials of the military and civilian agencies to undergo training and education in the US under the International Military Education and Training (IMET). Up to \$3.4 million was spent on IMET for the said year.

This year, the Philippines is asking up to \$54 million in military aid from the US. Included in this is \$2 million for IMET, \$9 million for anti-illegal drug operations, and \$3.5 million for "counter-terrorism" and other related programs. The remaining \$40 million will serve as loans for the procurement of US weapons. These amounts are part of the \$188 million foreign aid allotted by the US for the Philippines.

In addition to its anti-people wars and economic policies, the Duterte regime is becoming more isolated from the Filipino people because of its complete subservience to the US. The scheduled visit this November by US President Donald Trump, foremost representative of US imperialism, will surely be met with intensified protest by the people. AB

# Struggle to reclaim plantations

**A** new front in the struggle of peasants is presently taking shape in Mindanao—the struggle of disenfranchised peasants for ownership and control of plantation lands.

During the 1980s, the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) extended coverage to plantation lands. Government agencies were ordered to parcel out large plantations and transfer the titles of ownership to plantation workers who then were called agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARB).

But after more than three decades of CARP implementation, big landlords and agribusiness corporations remain in control of the titled lands. They took advantage of CARP's distorted provisions, myriad exemptions and deceptive structures and processes to retain control of the land and the beneficiaries, rendering the ARB's titles worthless in the latter's hands. It fell upon the ARBs to fight for their rights to own and use the land according to their own decisions.

The 28,816-hectare banana plantation of the Tagum Agricultural Development Company (Tadeco) of the Floirendo family is a clear ex-

ample. In this plantation, not one of more than 1,890 ARBs benefit from the use of their “own” land. They remain as plantation workers, make do with low wages, and worse, are laid off when they complain. There are 100,886 ARBs in Southern Mindanao Region alone.

The CARP itself was used by the landlords to preserve this order. Under the sham land reform program, the government set up Agrarian Reform Communities (ARCs) purportedly to organize land distribution, amortization payments, and government support services. Beneficiaries were formed into “cooperatives” to relate to the government and the capitalists.

Through the ARC system, clusters of communities were thus brought under DAR and agribusiness capitalist control and land grabbing was facilitated. Capitalists in wide plantations exert different levels of control over production processes, wages, market and prices

of farm inputs. Some methods used by landlords and agribusiness capitalists are:

**Agribusiness Venture Agreement (AVA)** or contracts between ARB cooperatives and agribusiness companies. The company decides the prices of farm inputs and lowers that of the peasants' products. ARBs' incomes become just enough to pay for the loaned farm inputs. There are many cases of lands being sequestered due to indebtedness or rights to till sold to others because of poverty.

**Grower system** or contract between individuals or cooperatives and the company. The company takes charge of all expenses but also monopolizes the market. The grower shoulders the workers' wages and whatever shortages due to crop failure. There are also systems wherein the grower shoulders the expenses but is obliged to sell the product to the contracting company. As buyer, the capitalist still exercises quality control.

**Cooperative system.** Farm inputs are loaned by the company to

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## AFP prevents evacuees' return to Marawi

The Duterte regime is giving all kinds of excuses to prevent Marawi evacuees from returning to their communities. They are being placed in relocation areas, disguised as “temporary housing” while the AFP is consolidating its hold on the city. The regime continues to sideline them in the planning of the city's reconstruction and rehabilitation.

Using an outdated decree, the AFP now controls the identification and distribution of lots to Marawi residents. In the meantime, they are housed in cheap and insulting “temporary shelters.” On October 4, Duterte himself opened one such shelter consisting of 50 substandard huts made of bamboo and nipa materials with a floor space of eight by eight meters. Worse, he prioritized the families of soldiers slain in Marawi and not the evacuees.

Meanwhile, a Maranao group

announced their plan to file a case in the International Court of Justice to hold the Duterte regime responsible for the AFP's destruction and abuses in Marawi. This was stated by the Bangsa Mranao Congress, a newly founded group in Lanao del Sur, after a two-day conference attended by big clans from Marawi and the nearby municipalities of Guimba Duma Sani, Toros, Bacolod and Cabugatan. They are asking for a P120 billion payment for damages

for all the regime's destruction and abuses.

Earlier, a new armed group, the Meranaw Victims Movement, announced their presence and their intention to defend their right to take up arms through a video message to defend their identity and city against the AFP at the regime's attacks. They called for the immediate stop to the bombings, AFP's retreat from Marawi and for the immediate return of the evacuees to their communities. They also assailed the Maute group for disregarding the civilians' welfare and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front's non-objection to the Duterte regime's continuing destruction of the city. **AB**

cooperatives of small landowners. The cooperative acts as employment agencies to absorb the company's obligations to the farm workers and employees. These also act as transmitters of equipment and technology dependent on imported chemicals for production. Unions are strictly prohibited because these are registered as cooperatives.

**Leaseback system.** Beneficiaries lease their awarded land to the company to become workers in their own land. Many such agreements are effective for 30 years. The capitalist deducts supposed workers' pension funds from the land rent, and all the workers' years of service previous to CARP are not counted. The Marsman, Lapanday, and some parts of Tadeco plantations fall under this system.

**Corporate farming.** Land is reclassified as commercial to avoid distribution to tenants. Thus, many peasants lose the lands they have been tilling.

**Leasehold.** The company rents private or public lands to convert into plantations, usually at very low prices of P6,500 hectares per year. Many public lands in Mindanao are under leasehold, as in the Tadeco contract of wide swathes of the Davao Penal Colony, or private lands leased to Marsman.

Although peasants have asserted the legal bases for their just stand on land ownership (right to decide how to use the land), the reactionary government does not voluntarily implement this. On the contrary, various government and military agencies contrive to deliberately block the peasants from attaining their right to the land. Only when peasant leader Ka Paeng Mariano became the DAR secretary did the agency support the peasants' call in the celebrated Lapanday case.

The peasants know that they can attain their right to land only through collective action as in the case of Lapanday Foods where 159 ARBs under MARBAI were able to

reclaim 146 hectares. In Arakan Valley, 3,100 families organized under MAFAI were able to get recognition for their rights to more than 4,387 hectares of land they have been tilling for more than seven decades that have been arrogated to become part of a school reservation.

These struggles inspired the peasants to strengthen their organizations that struggle for social justice. Thus, after the intense struggle of MARBAI last April, they formed the ARB One Movement (AOM) as a federation of ARB organizations to actively assert their right to land against CARP machinations.

The AOM comprehensively addresses the ARC question by strengthening and expanding the AOM federation throughout Southern Mindanao to implement genuine agrarian reform. They carry out trainings on paralegal, sustainable agriculture, organizing, even public speaking and other skills.

ARBs who have already won control of their land, face the immediate problem of developing production on land poisoned by dec-

ades of chemicals, likewise the skills and knowledge of peasants and the market for their products.

In this case, they are obliged to maintain banana production to a certain level. Their organizations discuss how to steer clear of usurious debts or at least borrow at low interest rates, to gradually put an end to one of the landlords' and capitalists' most effective ways of land-grabbing. The question of markets for their banana crops will surely become a central point of discussion.

Together with the immediate questions, peasants are also looking at the long-term challenges on how to prevent the landlords from retaking the land. Crucial to this is the effort to veer away from monocrop production and promote comprehensive, integrated, planned and collective farming, especially among farmers who have practically grown up doing plantation work.

This is needed to reduce the risks of crop disasters of diseases, overcome agribusiness monopoly on the market, ensure food security,



## Farmers push to reclaim land in Davao

MORE THAN A thousand farmers from various Davao del Norte municipalities are camped out in front of the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) provincial office in Barangay Mankilam in Tagum City. They demand control over their lands being used as banana plantations despite having been distributed to

them under reactionary laws.

From September 27, farmers under the Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries One Movement (AOM) gathered to demand that DAR release the Installation Order to allow them to take over their land. The AOM is a federation of organizations of CARP beneficiaries whose lands have been taken from them.

According to Billy Cabintoy, secretary-general of AOM, eight beneficiaries' organizations are seeking the return of at least 1,476.44 hectares of land in the cities of Panabo and Tagum, and municipality of Kapalong.

Four organizations of agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARB) in lands controlled by Tadeco are reclaiming 800 hectares—the WADECOR Em-

ployees Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Association, Inc., Checkered Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries and Employees Multi-purpose Cooperative, PAHECO Employees Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Association, Inc., and Linda District Employees Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Association, Inc.

The Alberto Marfori Soriano Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Or-

ganization is claiming 91 hectares in Kapalong, some ARBs are claiming 152 hectares from the Baret landlords, while Gagmay'ng Maguuma Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Association, Inc. and Hijo Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Cooperative are reclaiming 116.9 hectares controlled by Lapanday Foods Corporation in Barangay Madaum, Tagum City.

On October 11-15, the campout peasants will travel to Metro Manila in a lakbayan to assert their demands at the DAR national office. They will be accompanied by more than 200 peasants from Bufalo, Tamaraw, Limus (BTL) who are seeking for the issuance of a writ of transfer to award land they have been cultivating within the Central Mindanao University. AB

## Landlord Floirendo amassed wealth from peasants

TAGUM AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT Company (Tadeco), flagship company of Anflo Management and Investment Corp. (Anflocor) of the Floirendo family, flourished on the blood and sweat of workers and peasants. Playing patsy and bribery of politicians in power in the government ensured that this wealth grew and remained in his hands.

Tadeco is the biggest contiguous banana plantation in the world today. It exports Cavendish bananas to Japan, Hong Kong, China, Korea, Middle East, Russia, Malaysia and Singapore under the Del Monte and Dole brands. It has an annual average production of 5,000 boxes per hectare. Its companies in Davao Oriental, Davao Occidental and Compostela Valley Provinces support the 6,639.85 hectare plantation of which 5,343 hectares are public land of the Davao Penal Colony (Dapecol). It also runs a Tadeco Livelihood and Training Center which turns out hand-made products from banana plants. With other private lands under lease, the Floirendos control some 30,522 hectares of land.

### Using corrupt politicians to amass wealth

Antonio Floirendo, Sr. subdivided his land into 1,024 hectares each for his children in line with legal retention limits set for foreign corporations. Some of the districts encompassed by the plantation are named after his children, aside from the 1,024 hectares in the name of Panabo Hemp Company and other smaller plantations which are actually owned by the family.

Floirendo's greedy amassing of wealth began in 1956 when the government awarded him the controversial contract to process hemp in the land of the Davao Penal Colony (Dapecol) under the supervision of Abaca Corporation of the Philippines, a public corporation.

Good relations with politicians resulted in the Tadeco contract with the Bureau of Corrections (BuCor) in 1969 to turn the said land into a banana plantation, to be worked on by soon-to-be-released prisoners. In exchange for juicy contracts, Floirendo served as a Marcos dummy. When Marcos was ousted, Floirendo turned over some Marcos properties that have been registered in his name to the Corazon Aquino regime. He also turned over more than P70 million to the Presidential Commission on Good Government in a so-called "compromise agreement," cementing his good relations with the new regime.

As early as 1986, Floirendo's World Agricultural Development Corporation converted corn and sorghum lands into banana plantations to evade CARP distribution. When it came under CARP coverage in 1988, Floirendo colluded with the DAR to attain a 10 year



moratorium on the land's distribution supposedly to enable him to recoup his expenses on the plantation's development. At the same time family members went into politics until they controlled Davao del Norte's local government. Since the 1980s, Davao del Norte had had no congressman or governor besides the del Rosario-Floirendo clan. Antonio Floirendo Jr, who owns P7.5 million, or the biggest shares of Tadeco, is a congressman. He also gave almost P100 million, the biggest contribution, to Duterte's presidential election campaign. His nephew, Antonio Floirendo-Lagdameo, former Anflocor vice president, is also a congressman, and sits at the congress' Committee on Agrarian Reform.

Thus, whatever case is brought against them, such as the illegal BuCor contract, the Floirendo family's power remains intact. It is reported that despite BuCor's annual income of P26,541,809 from the Tadeco contract, the government loses P106,167,191. This is also illegal because the land is listed as "unclassified public forest" which can not be used by private individuals. For four decades, successive regimes conveniently looked the other way because of their close relations with the family. AB



# AFP bombs civilian communities in Batangas

There is no declared martial law nationwide but the Duterte regime launches brutal military operations against the people in different parts of the country. Under Oplan Kapayapaan, aerial bombings, shelling, strafing, killings, illegal arrests and detention, and even burning civilian houses continue.

**Batangas.** Last September 24, the 730th Combat Group of Philippine Air Force and 202nd IB launched indiscriminate firing, strafing and aerial bombing on the surrounding communities of Mt. Banoy. It occurred after an encounter with a unit of New People's Army-Batangas (Eduardo Dagli Command) in Barangay Cumba, Batangas City. Two civilians were killed, including a child, in the AFP operations. Almost 400 families from Barangay Cumba and Talahib

Pandayan have been forced to evacuate to escape from the bombings. Fifteen schools from nearby barangays (Payapa, Talumpok Silangan and Kanluran, Conde and Sto. Domingo) suspended their classes due to the intensified operations.

Human rights advocates urgently responded on September 26 but they were blocked by AFP and RPSB checkpoints. A fact-finding and humanitarian mission led by Pilgrims for Peace on September 30

was also barred by the military forces and local government from entering the communities and visiting the evacuees.

These barangays (Sto. Domingo, Cumba, Conde Itaas, Sico, Pinamuncan, Simlong, Talahib Pandayan, Talumpok Silangan, Banalo, Lobo, Mabilog na Bundok) are part of 29,000 hectares in Mt. Banoy and Mt. Nagueling Complex which the Mindoro Resources Limited (MRL Gold) and Egerton Gold are planning to mine.

Meanwhile, last October 6 in Calatagan, four members of Samahan ng Maliit na Mangingisda at Magsasaka sa Baha at Talibayog

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## Metro Manila Flood Control Project to displace millions

THE WORLD BANK and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) announced last September 28 that they will each loan \$207.63 (or P10.56 billion) to fund the P25.45 billion worth Flood Management Project of the Duterte regime. Construction of the said infrastructures will begin on 2018 until 2024.

Similar to most of the projects under Duterte regime's "Build, Build, Build" program, the said grand infrastructure project is not new. Since 2009, it was already included in the Flood Management Masterplan led by the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) during the Arroyo regime, after the onslaught of typhoon Ondoy and Pepeng the same year.

The project comprises the construction of 20 new pumping stations and other infrastructure in various towns and cities in Metro Manila. The said plan will definitely cause widespread demolition of urban poor communities, especially those structures along rivers and waterways.

In the guise of disaster mitigation and disease prevention or Oplan Likas, previous administrations have already succeeded to displace 104,000 families from Pasig, Tullahan, Manggahan River,

San Juan River, Estero de Tripa de Gallina, Estero de Maypajo and Estero de Sunog Apog. Families were moved to remote relocation sites such as Golden Horizon in Cavite, San Jose del Monte Heights and Pandi Residences in Bulacan.

But due to lack of livelihood and capacity to pay for the government's profit oriented housing units, majority of the residents opted to return to previous or nearby communities. According to a report released by World Bank, those who were forcibly relocated were required to pay P1,500 monthly in fees for the required amortization of a P410,000.

Around 800,000 families are living along 56 drainage areas and pumping stations of DPWH that will be reconstructed under the flood control project. Construction of drainage areas in Balut, Paco and Vitas in Manila, Tripa de Gallina in

Pasay and Labasan, Taguig will begin during the first year of project implementation, this will affect around 60,000 residents. The Laguna Lakeshore Expressway Dike Project (LLEDP) is also included in the masterplan, a reclamation project in Laguna Lake that will destroy the lives and livelihood of more than 3.9 million fishermen and poor families.

To pay for the looming foreign debt, the Philippine economy will be further liberalization, including such sectors as construction and operation of key infrastructures. Under the Duterte regime, the people are faced with widespread dislocation, rising cost of taxes and fees and destruction of livelihood. With these, it is clear that genuine change will never come under Duterte's economic policy. Furthermore, his administration has no intention to solve fundamental problems of the people.

It is just to hold his regime accountable for all his broken promises and to advance the democratic interests of the people. AB

were illegally arrested with planted evidence by the PNP. They are active in the struggle against land-grabbing by Ramon Ang's Asturias Chemical Industries. The arrested were identified as Noel Delos Reyes, barangay chief of Talibayog, and peasant leaders Eduardo Peñafloreda, Senando Marco and Joseph Marasigan.

**Quezon.** Last October 2, the 85th IB of the Philippine Army burned the house of farmer Bryan Panoso and shot his horse in Sitio Katmon, Barangay Ilayang Ilog A, Lopez. Bryan's mother and sister were illegally arrested. These harassment occurred after the soldiers loss in a firefight with an NPA unit.

**Masbate.** Civilians Dagul Lalonguna, Locloc and Baby Merdegia, Boboy Dela Cruz, Opaw Balayan, Romy Pautan and his two sons, residents of Sitio Pili, Barangay San Jose, Uson and Barangay Sawmill, Mobo were arbitrarily arrested last September 27 by joined forces of 2nd IB, 98th MICO

and RIU 5. In nearby Brgy. Madao, Uson, Ompoy Escovilla was arrested along with his companion who was slapped by the soldiers. Their house was illegally searched. Couple Merdegia's house was destroyed and the soldiers even robbed them of their P 50,000 savings.

**Nueva Vizcaya.** Military operations and bombings by the 84th IB of AFP continue in Kasibu which has resulted in the evacuation of 133 families from barangays of Kakiduguen, Dine, and Biyoy last September 16. Afterwards, Vicente Ollagon, Joshua Hiquiana, Ferdinand Pakiwon, Marilyn Lango and minor Jogiemar Wayas were tagged as members of NPA and were illegally arrested last September 29 by PNP and AFP troops in Barangay Mabuslo, Bambang. They were members of Kasibu Inter-Tribal Response for Ecological Development and Samahang Pangkarapatan ng Katutubong Magsasaka at Manggagawa, Inc. These organizations are part of

the fierce people's barricade against mining of Australian companies Royalco and OceanaGold.

**North Cotabato.** Military bombings of Lumad schools and communities has not ended. Last September 20, bombs were dropped near Fr. Pops Tentorio Memorial School in Magpet.

**Leyte.** Farmer Jason Montalla died last September 28, two weeks after he was shot by an agent of the 78th IB last September 5. He is a member of Mag-uuma nga Nagkahiusa (MANA), in Albuera.

**Davao Region.** AFP agents killed Rene Magayano, Maragusan Workers Association chairperson, at the Maragusan public market last September 28. A member of Alyansa sa Mag-uuma sa Sidlakang Dabaw (Almasid), Toto Lompaodan, was killed by Dexter Sallian of the 67th IB in Cateel, Davao Oriental last September 26. Almost 50 peasants have been killed in the Davao Region under the Duterte regime. **AB**

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## Protests by teachers and workers continue

TEACHERS LED BY the Alliance of Concerned Teachers marched towards Mendiola last October 5 to call for the increase in monthly salary of up to P25,000 for Teacher 1 and P16,000 for Salary Grade 1. They also demanded for a national daily minimum wage of P750 and an end to contractualization. The protest action was held coinciding with the commemoration of World Teachers' Day.

Meanwhile, workers continue to take action for their rights and fight against repression by the US-Duterte regime. In Cebu, members of BPO Industry Employees Network (BIEN) and KMU staged a protest last October 6 in front of the DOLE 7 office to call for the trashing of the proposed Compressed Work Week Scheme.

In Samar, 24 retrenched workers of Eastern Samar Electric Cooperative (ESAMELCO) picketed outside the National Labor Relations Commission in Tacloban City last September 24. They demanded their reinstatement and regularization as workers for having served the company for long.

In November last year, 99

workers were expelled by ESAMELCO despite having served the company for more than 10 years. ESAMELCO is under the National Electrification Administration and monopolizes the supply of energy in the whole of Eastern Samar.

In Caraga, workers belonging to the Surigao Dockworkers Labor Union (SDLU) have been staging a strike for more than 35 days already at the Port Area, Surigao City. The workers are employed by Prudential Custom Brokerage Stevedory Inc. They held their strike after reaching a deadlock in the negotiations. Trumped-up charges were filed against the workers. The capitalists of PSBS remain unresponsive to the plight

of the workers, but they remain steadfast in fighting for their rights.

Meanwhile, last September 22 in Southern Tagalog, a combined force of 100 police officers, 100 company guards and paid goons violently dispersed striking workers of Manila Cordage Company/Manila Synthetic Industry (MCC/MSI) in Laguna. The police were armed with M16s and calibre .45 pistols, donned in full battle gear as though going to war, while the workers firmly stood their ground for legitimate rights.

Led by Roberto Fernandez, the workers' picket line was violently dispersed, their placards and banners destroyed, together with their temporary cots which they used to block the factory's gate. Other workers who came to support their fellow workers in the barricades were blocked at the entrance of the Industrial Park. **AB**

## Intensifying attacks on youth and students

LAST SEPTEMBER, ATTACKS on democratic rights of youth and students escalated.

At the Polytechnic University of the Philippines (PUP)-Sta. Mesa Campus, the school administration removed and replaced the student regent by an appointee. This was followed by the closure of student organization offices and hang-outs, and the campus publication, *The Catalyst*, last September 27. At the same time, the school administration suspended the student council elections. To impose these measures, students were harassed and progressive university organizations were threatened.

These attacks obviously intend to silence the students and remove opposition to the PUP administration's commercialization plan. These include the previous years' plans to increase tuition and other fees, compulsory uniforms and other income generating projects. Student protests continue against the administration's martial law-like measures.

In the University of the Philippines-Diliman, the Col-

lege of Mass Communications administration enforced a policy preventing freshmen to join college-based organizations. They even removed the offices of the organization, student council, and *Tinig ng Plaridel*, the college student publication. While attacking the rights of the students, the administration allowed PNP officials to enter the college for their so-called 'communication skills workshop.'

In the Lyceum of the Philippines University, the administration removed the current editorial board of *The Sentinel*, official student publication, and removed its funds.

In Bicol, the Camarines Sur Polytechnic College-Nabua discovered last September 25 that their publication *The Spark* was on the AFP's watch list. Other publications included in the list are *The Pillars* of Ateneo de Naga University, *Seafarer's Gazette* of Mariners Polytechnic College Foundation, and *The Stateans* of Central Bicol State University of Agriculture. AB