



ANG

Bayan

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

English Edition
Vol. XLI No. 13
July 7, 2010

www.philippinerevolution.net

Editorial

Noynoy Aquino: The new face of counterrevolution

Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III is the new face of counterrevolution. Formally installed on June 30 as the new head of the puppet reactionary government, he is now the main advocate of US imperialist rule and that of the local big comprador bourgeoisie, bureaucrat capitalists and landlords.

On his shoulders rests the main responsibility of continuing the administration of the bankrupt semicolonial and semifeudal system, consolidating and running its state and suppressing any challenge to puppet reactionary power.

Just as US imperialism and the local ruling classes expected of him, Aquino focused his first few days on consolidating the puppet army. Aquino is well aware that the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) is the main pillar of reactionary rule in the Philippines. It will also serve as his main instrument in wielding power and fulfilling his duties. Thus, he has gone all out in providing it support, promising more troops, new equipment and housing for soldiers.

In his failure to castigate the AFP for its grave crimes against

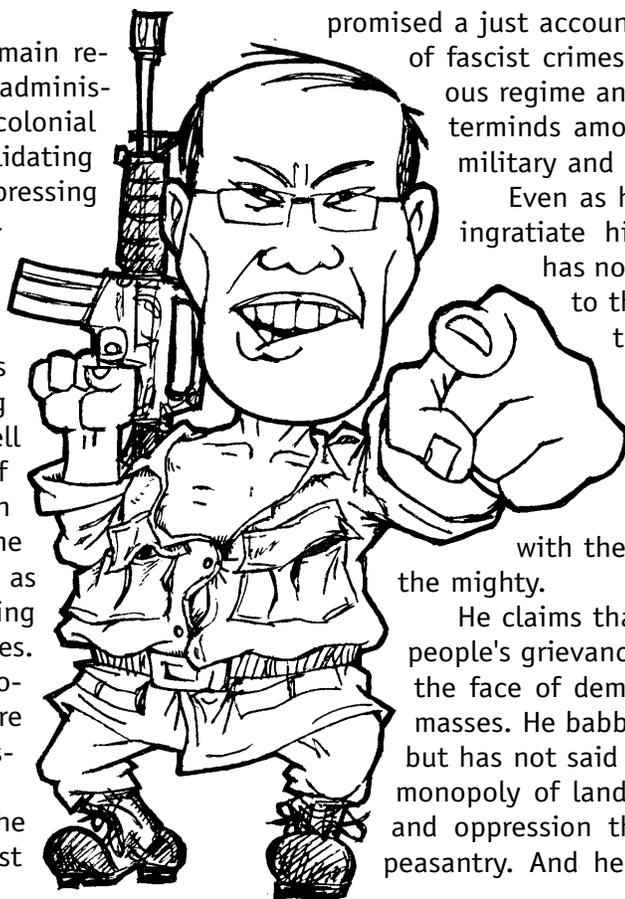
the people, Aquino signalled his support for the military's evil fascist campaign of suppression that has resulted in tens of thousands of human rights violations. He has been outrightly dismissive of the grievances of human rights advocates and tens of thousands of victims of military violence. He has not even promised a just accounting of the tens of thousands of fascist crimes perpetrated under the previous regime and the punishment of the masterminds among the officers of the puppet military and security forces.

Even as he has gone out of his way to ingratiate himself with the AFP, Aquino has not given the slightest attention to the people's basic problems and their cries for social justice.

His first days in power were devoted to sheer gimmickry such as his prohibition of sirens in the streets in order to make a show of being one

with the people against the abuses of the mighty.

He claims that he is not impervious to the people's grievances, but he feigns ignorance in the face of demands for land by the peasant masses. He babbles about agricultural services but has not said a word about dismantling the monopoly of land ownership and the suffering and oppression that this has wrought on the peasantry. And he definitely has not said any-



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thing about his clan's Hacienda Luisita.

Unemployment is glaringly obvious as is the severe inadequacy of workers' wages. But all he has had to offer is his showcase "emergency employment" scheme ostensibly for the benefit of millions of jobless workers. As before, this can only succeed in creating the illusion of employment. It will be of no real consequence because whatever jobs will be created will be very few and temporary in nature. It will only obscure the basic problem of economic backwardness, the absence of genuine national industry and the breakdown even of agriculture.

Aquino will not be able to resolve these issues just by parroting the old neoliberal shibboleth of the previous regime of "providing a level playing field for business and making the country attractive to foreign investors." This has reference to no other than providing big capitalist countries even more freedom to dump their surplus products in the country, pushing small local capitalists and the people to the wall, destroying the local forces of production, plundering the

country's national resources and exploiting its cheap labor force.

It is this same policy along with rampant corruption that are behind the reactionary government's severely bankrupt and debt-ridden state. Despite all this, Aquino does not have any plans of putting a stop to the practice of squandering the government's biggest budgetary allocation on debt service. It will not be long before Aquino ends up imposing more taxes, scrimping on essential social services, privatizing public assets and resorting to more debt.

Aquino has not turned his back on the policy dictates of US imperialism. The wanton trampling of Philippine sovereignty, the plunder of the country's economy and the exploitation and oppression of the people are all of no consequence to him. He has not declared any plans to review the unequal treaties, challenge or oppose the US' continued intervention in the country.

In fact, it is the US' designs that he has been hewing closely to in his counterrevolutionary line. His declaration of defeating "the enemy by wielding the tools of justice, social reform and equitable

governance leading to a better life" has been practically lifted word for word from the US Counter-insurgency Guide (USCG).

The USCG focuses on winning the people's trust through showcase gimmick-laden and public relations programs even as it relies on fascist force to suppress critical oppositionists. It feeds the people deceptive and empty propaganda while holding a gun to their heads. This is the core of Aquino's counterrevolutionary line.

The USCG does not value peace talks as a means of resolving the roots of civil war. Neither has Aquino shown any great interest in resuming the peace negotiations between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP).

Nonetheless, in response to the NDFP's expression of its openness to continue the formal peace talks, the new regime has declared its readiness to resolve the armed conflict through negotiations. But the new Aquino regime must recognize and abide by previous agreements and seriously pursue the talks on the remaining agenda for the negotiations to prosper.

The revolutionary forces are aware that the new Aquino regime is but a continuation of the previous regimes. It may sport a new face, but nothing has changed in essence. The state led by Noynoy Aquino is the class dictatorship of the exploiters and oppressors that Gloria Arroyo and previous chief puppets of the US had led.

As in the time of previous puppets and reactionaries, the revolutionary movement stands ready to deal with the new US-Aquino regime to advance the people's national and democratic aspirations in all arenas of struggle—in the arena of armed struggle, of open struggle and peace negotiations. **AB**

	
Vol XLI No. 13 July 7, 2010	
<p><i>Ang Bayan</i> is published in Pilipino, Bisaya, Iloko, Hiligaynon, Waray and English editions.</p> <p>It is available for <i>downloading</i> at the Philippine Revolution Web Central located at:</p> <p>www.philippinerevolution.org.</p> <p><i>Ang Bayan</i> welcomes contributions in the form of articles and news. Readers are likewise enjoined to send in their comments and suggestions for the betterment of our publication. You can reach us by email at:</p> <p>angbayan@yahoo.com</p>	
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<p><i>Ang Bayan</i> is published fortnightly by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines</p>	

Is Aquino serious about the peace talks?

Based on his inaugural speech, Benigno Aquino III has a low regard for the peace talks with the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) as a way of resolving the roots of the armed conflict.

He did not even express any intention of talking with the NDFP and instead declared that he "shall defeat the enemy by wielding the tools of justice, social reform and equitable governance leading to a better life."

A few days after his inauguration, Aquino's Presidential Peace Adviser Teresita Deles said that she had already sent the NDFP a message saying that the stalled peace talks will be resumed and that the government was in the process of forming its peace panel. This was in response to the NDFP's earlier statement declaring its readiness to face the Aquino regime in negotiations to tackle the roots of the armed conflict.

The Communist Party of the

Philippines (CPP) welcomed the Aquino official's statement. Nonetheless, it reminded Aquino that for the formal peace talks to prosper, he must abide by all the previous agreements between the NDFP and the reactionary government.

Among these agreements are The Hague Joint Declaration of 1992 that laid down the principles, framework, agenda and methods for the talks; the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees (JASIG) and the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL).

The CPP also expects Aquino to rectify Arroyo's connivance with US imperialism and other imperialist countries to include the CPP, NPA

and NDFP chief political consultant Comrade Jose Ma. Sison on the list of "foreign terrorists."

The CPP also called on the Aquino government to be accountable for, and surface, NDFP consultants Leo Velasco, Prudencio Calubid and Rogelio Calubad as well as NDFP staff abducted by fascist agents in 2006 who have not been surfaced to date. Other NDFP consultants and staff as well as other activists and harsh critics of the puppet reactionary state and system who are illegally detained must also be released immediately.

The CPP also demanded that serious violations of human rights be given appropriate resolution. In this regard, CARHRIHL's provisions calling for compensation for victims of the fascist Marcos dictatorship who won their tort case filed in the US must be complied with.

All victims of the Arroyo regime's relentless terrorism must also be given justice. **AB**

Surface Calubid et al, CPP demands

The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) called on the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) on June 26 to surface Prudencio Calubid.

Calubid, a member of the CPP Central Committee, officer of the New People's Army (NPA) and a peace consultant of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) was abducted by military agents four years ago. He was seized along with his wife Celina Palma, niece Gloria Soco and staff Ariel Belo and Antonio Lacno along Quirino Highway in Sipocot, Camarines Sur on June 26, 2006. After two days of severe torture, Lacno was able to escape when they were brought to a farlung mountainous area to be killed. Calubid and his comrades' fate remains uncertain.

Calubid, Palma, Soco, Belo and

Lacno's abduction and torture remain one of the most heinous crimes perpetrated by the US-Arroyo regime's fascist agents, said the CPP. It was a blatant violation of human rights, of the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees (JASIG) and the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL) signed by both parties, the CPP added.

The revolutionary forces in the Philippines have declared that the responsibility to take the guilty parties to account and give justice to Calubid and other victims of human rights violations now rests with the

regime of Benigno Aquino III.

Meanwhile, relatives of desaparecidos took heart when the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) joined them on July 2 in calling on Aquino to sign the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons From Enforced Disappearance. The treaty must first be signed by at least 20 countries to take effect. It has so far been signed by 18 countries.

There were 1,206 cases of extrajudicial killings; 205 cases of abduction of activists, among them NDFP consultants in the peace talks; hundreds of arrests and illegal detention cases; and more than a thousand cases of torture under more than nine years of the Arroyo regime. All of these crimes were perpetrated by the government's armed instrumentalities. **AB**

Old faces in Noynoy Aquino's new cabinet

Part Hyatt 10, part big comprador and part Kamag-anak and Kaklase Inc. is how one might describe the US-Aquino regime 2's newly formed cabinet. It is a mixed bag of old bureaucrats and politicians who served the hated Arroyo regime; close relatives and friends of Aquino's; and the biggest contributors to his campaign. Only a handful may possibly be relied upon by the people.

The so-called Hyatt 10 refers to ten officials who were part of Gloria Arroyo's cabinet from 2001 to 2005 and were her co-conspirators in various shehanigans but who resigned after exposés of Arroyo's involvement in poll fraud in the 2004 elections. Members of the Hyatt 10 reappointed by Aquino are Cesar Purisima (reinstated at the Department of Finance); Florencio Abad (previously of the Department of Education and now with the Department of Budget and Management), Teresita Deles (reinstated as Adviser on the Peace Process)

and Corazon "Dinky" Soliman (reinstated at the Department of Social Welfare and Development).

Retained as secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs is Alberto Romulo. Also previously serving under the Arroyo regime

Rosalinda Baldoz (Department of Labor and Employment), Enrique Ona (Department of Health) and Ramon Paje (Department of Environment and Natural Resources). Kim Jacinto-Henares who used to supervise corporate tax collection has been promoted chief of the Bureau of Internal Revenue.

From big business, Aquino has appointed Makati Business Club president Alberto Lim to head the Department of Tourism; SM Investments and Belle Corp. executive Gregory Domingo to be secretary of the Department of Trade and Industry; Maynilad Water Services executive Rogelio Singson as chief of the Department of Public Works and Highways; and Manila Water president Jose Almendras to head the Department of Energy. They represent the big comprador bourgeoisie in general and the Sy, Ayala, Razon, Pangilinan and Lopez families in particular—all of them major bankrollers of Aquino's campaign.

Others served under Cory Aquino's regime



AFP recruits child combatants

One of the combatants arrested by the New People's Army (NPA) at a checkpoint it set up in Sitio Mabatatas, Barangay Upper Ulip, Monkayo, Compostela Valley on June 19 is a 17-year old element of the Citizens Armed Force Geographical Unit (CAFGU) under the 10th ID of the Philippine Army.

"Jomar" (not his real name) was arrested while on his way to their detachment in Mount Diwalwal. He was riding in tandem on a motorcycle driven by S/Sgt. Bienvenido Gentugao Arguelles Jr. of the 25th IB.

The NPA learned of "Jomar's" real age when he underwent investigation by the NPA Conrado Heredia Command of the Southern Mindanao Region. He was born in October 1992 and was not even 16 when he was recruited in October 2008 into the Philippine Army's paramilitary group. The military was aware that "Jomar" was a minor. In fact, there were 18 other minors with "Jomar's" batch who went through 45 days of military training at the headquarters of the 1001st Infantry Brigade in Barangay Tuburan, Mawab, Compostela Valley.

"Jomar" said that he was given a fake birth certificate stating that he was born in 1990 instead of 1992. The same was done to the other minors in his batch of trainees. On December 2, 2008, he officially became a CAFGU element in a ceremony held at the 72nd IB Company Post in Compostela Valley.

"Jomar" was a combatant when arrested by the NPA. Nonetheless, he is not being treated as a prisoner of war in deference to his age and out of respect for his rights. The NPA is ready to reunite him with his parents barring any obstacles to his immediate release.

AB

and have strong personal loyalties to the Aquino family. Among them are Voltaire Gazmin (who headed the Presidential Security Group [PSG] during the first US-Aquino regime and now heads the Department of Defense), Cayetano Paderanga Jr. (who has been reappointed as secretary of the Department of Socio-Economic Planning and director of the National Economic Development Authority) and Jose "Ping" de Jesus (Department of Transportation and Communication). De Jesus was president of Meralco before being reappointed to the cabinet. Even Lt. Gen. Ricardo David, the new AFP chief, used to be a PSG officer under the first Aquino regime.

Aquino has also appointed his close friend and personal legal counsel Paquito "Jojo" Ochoa Jr. as Executive Secretary. Another friend, La Salle president Bro. Armin Luistro has been designated secretary of the Department of Education. Others served under or are relatives of Aquino supporters such as Florencio Abad's daughter Julia who has been appointed chief of the Presidential Management Staff; and Col. Ramon Dizon, a former member of the PSG who now heads the unit.

Although they do not officially hold cabinet positions, Aquino's four sisters play significant roles in

his regime's decision-making processes. They sit in various committees, including the decisive search committee that recommended the people who are now in the cabinet as well as other positions. Aquino himself has said that he consults his sisters on all his decisions.

Perpetuating the old ways

A marked feature of Aquino's recycled cabinet is the appointment of rabid advocates of liberalization and the deregulation of the local economy. They are no different from the officials of the Arroyo regime who were responsible for bankrupting the economy and destroying the people's livelihoods. Foremost among them is Paderanga who has been pushing for liberalization since the first Aquino regime. Another one is Purisima (Finance) who pushed for the expanded Value Added Tax (VAT) in 2005. One of the Aquino regime's first plans is to privatize the government's shares in the Malampaya project, Sucat thermal power plant, Navotas gas turbine plant and Malaya thermal power plant.

Uniffors (an organization where many officers and staff of the Department of Foreign Affairs are affiliated with) has registered strong and widespread opposition to Ro-

mulo's retention at the DFA. Progressive groups have likewise roundly condemned it. Romulo's record is replete with instances of kowtowing to US imperialist interests. He paved the way for the release of Daniel Smith, the American soldier convicted of raping Nicole in Subic Bay in 2005. Romulo is also a zealous defender of the Visiting Forces Agreement and the permanent presence of US troops in the country.

Progressive workers' unions and migrants' organizations have also expressed their strong opposition to Baldoz's appointment as head of the Department of Labor and Employment. Baldoz has a very poor record and was inutile as chair of the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA).

Paje's appointment as DENR chief has likewise been condemned. Paje headed the Minerals Development Council, one of the strongest advocates of large-scale foreign mining interests in the country.

Ona's appointment as DOH secretary has been assailed by the Health Alliance for Democracy (HEAD). HEAD said that as former Executive Director of the National Kidney and Transplant Institute, Ona was involved in the illegal sale of kidneys to foreign transplant patients. **AB**

More taxes, debts and belt-tightening measures loom

The Arroyo regime has as its legacy to the Aquino regime the biggest budget deficit in the country's history. The deficit is expected to reach ₱340 billion for the whole of 2010, the equivalent of 4.2% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). A budget deficit emerges when government spending exceeds tax revenues.

The reactionary government has repeatedly resorted to imposing

ever bigger taxes on the people, reducing funds for basic social serv-

ices and local and external borrowing to manage the deficit.

In 2005, no less than Finance Secretary Cesar Purisima suggested the expanded coverage of the Value Added Tax (VAT) to alleviate the budget deficit. Newly appointed BIR commissioner Kim Henares was also among the supporters of this measure. The EVAT was passed into law despite the people's strong opposition. The Arroyo regime col-

lected billions of pesos from this scheme, especially when the prices of commodities and services skyrocketed.

Just last month, Arroyo's finance secretary Margarito Teves proposed raising the EVAT from 12% to 15%, also

at the behest of the World Bank and other imperialist institutions. Aquino has promised not to do so. Perhaps not at this time, interjected Purisima, but it is inevitable.

To alleviate the deficit, the Aquino regime reportedly plans to go after big companies who have been evading taxes and those involved in smuggling. The government loses an estimated P150 billion due to tax evasion and smuggling. But very few corporations have been charged with tax evasion in the past years and only P110 million has been collected by the BIR from such companies. There is even a proposal to reduce business taxes from 30% to 20%. The government loses much more revenue from the reduction or abolition of import tariffs which was done in accordance with deregulation and liberalization policies.

Whatever Aquino has promised, he cannot afford to dismiss the huge and mounting deficit and the enormous and still ever-growing government debt. After just a few days in office, the new BIR commissioner has already pushed for the collection of the Value Added Tax on toll fees in six major expressways in Luzon.

As before, the US-Aquino regime has nowhere else to turn to: more debts, more taxes and more scrimping on social expenditures. The people are being saddled with ever heavier burdens in the face of the government's bankruptcy. **AB**



Bayan Muna charges Arroyo with corruption

Bayan Muna (BM) charged Gloria Arroyo with corruption one day after her immunity from suit was lifted. The case was filed by BM's Teodoro Casiño and Atty. Neri Colmenares at the Department of Justice (DOJ) on July 1.

In particular, Arroyo was charged for her government's entry into the anomalous NBN-ZTE project. The project, which planned to link all government offices through the internet for the sum of \$329 million was called off after anomalies involving Arroyo and other government officials came to light. Also involved was Gloria Arroyo's husband Mike. The bill was reportedly overpriced by as much as \$130 million to accommodate huge kickbacks for the Arroyos and their close associates.

Casiño and Colmenares said they purposely filed the case with the DOJ because they had lost trust in the Office of the Ombudsman which is led by Merceditas Gutierrez, a close friend of the Arroyos. An earlier decision by the Ombudsman excluded Gloria and Mike Arroyo from the list of suspects to be charged before the Sandiganbayan, retaining only former COMELEC Commissioner Benjamin Abalos and then NEDA director Romulo Neri. Four officers of the Chinese-owned company ZTE who conspired with Arroyo in committing the irregularities were also absolved by the Ombudsman.

Neither did Casiño and Colmenares wait for the newly formed Truth Commission's investigation, saying that the NBN-ZTE case was well-documented in the Senate's hearings. The Truth Commission led by former Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. was set up by the Aquino regime to reinvestigate prominent cases under the Arroyo regime.

Casiño and Colmenares are also seeking to have the case filed against Arroyo treated as an administrative case so that she could be suspended from her post as representative in Congress while the case is being heard.

Bayan Muna's corruption case against Arroyo is but the first in a series of cases to be filed against her. BM said that once they are able to consolidate all complaints such as the fertilizer fund anomaly, the Hello Garci scandal, the Philhealth cards scam and the Venable contract anomaly, it will be filing plunder charges against Arroyo. **AB**





NPA military actions

Nine enemy elements were killed and 11 were wounded in seven separate military actions of the New People's Army (NPA) from June 18 to July 2.

July 2. Two soldiers were wounded in an encounter with NPA Red fighters in Sitio Lawaon, Barangay Baracatan, Toril District, Davao City.

June 30. Two soldiers of the 66th IB were wounded when NPA Red fighters attacked their detachment in Barangay Cambagang, Maragusan, Compostela Valley.

June 25. A sergeant from the 47th IB in charge of a patrol base in Barangay Sto. Rosario, Jamin-dan, Capiz was wounded when guerrillas under the NPA Jose Percival Estocada Jr. Command of Panay's Central Front harassed their base. The patrol base is located just a few kilometers from the headquarters of the Philippine Ar-

my's 3rd ID.

Earlier, the military attempted to raid an NPA encampment in Sitio Igpapatao, Barangay Tacpao, Guihulngan City, Negros Oriental but they took the beating instead. Four elements of the 11th IB and the 2nd Scout Ranger Company were killed when they encountered Red fighters under the Leonardo Panaligan Command.

Col. Maximo Caro, 303rd Bde commander denied their casualties and claimed that it was the NPA that suffered four fighters dead and nine wounded. However, the military cannot deny that the soldiers who had been killed were brought to the Riverside Medical Center in Bacolod City and the

wounded were brought for treatment to Cebu City, according to NPA Leonardo Panaligan Command spokesperson JB Regalado.

June 24. NPA Red fighters raided the office of Eldore Mining Corp. in Dumangmang, Labo, Camarines Norte and disarmed the Australian-owned mining company's private guards.

June 23. Two soldiers were killed and another was wounded in an ambush staged by the NPA against the 3rd Special Forces Company-1st Special Forces Battalion in Sitio Bigaan, Mamala, Sampaloc, Quezon. The soldiers were aboard a Lite Ace van en route to their headquarters when they were ambushed.

The Red fighters' advantageous position enabled them to effectively rout the fascist enemy troops. The NPA seized two M26 modular shotguns. The M26 is a 12-gauge

Corrupt to the very end

Up to their last moments in power, Gloria Arroyo's minions had only one thing in mind: how to skim funds from the public coffers.

The former chief accountant of the Department of Defense disclosed on July 1 that she was pressured by former DND Secretary Norberto Gonzales to approve the disbursement of P5 million in "intelligence funds." Leticia Obnimaga refused to accede to Gonzales' demands and was fired from her job as a result. "Intelligence funds" are a frequent source of corruption because they are not subject to audit.

Obnimaga also revealed that fund releases for trips taken by DND Undersecretary Arturo Lomibao and other department of-

officials to Singapore and other countries in late June were questionable because the officials were due to leave their posts in a matter of days.

Meanwhile, Annabelle Abaya who used to head the Office of the Presidential Assistant on the Peace Process (OPAPP) also exposed on June 14 the rampant corruption within this agency. She revealed that up to P170 million of a P500 million fund intended for the Social Integration Program (SIP or livelihood assistance for "rebel returnees") was used for unnecessary bonuses and al-

lowances for the agency's officials and staff.

The fund's first tranche was used up in a year. The second tranche, which was released upon Abaya's assumption as OPAPP head last November was used mainly for the unauthorized purchase of vehicles, the construction and beautification of offices, travels, supplies and other expenditures "still being figured out to this day." Only 36% of the SIP went to its intended beneficiaries.

Abaya's revelations merely confirmed what has been known as a long-time practice at the OPAPP of using the SIP as one of the biggest milch cows for high-ranking AFP officers and government bureaucrats. AB



shotgun that can be attached to an M4 or M16 in the same way as an M203 grenade launcher. Infantry and special operations forces of the US Army use the M26.

That same day, a Philippine Air Force (PAF) soldier was killed and two others were wounded in an NPA ambush in Barangay Calantas, Calaca, Batangas. The PAF soldiers were aboard a motorcycle.

June 18. Three troopers of the 1105th Police Mobile Group-Philippine National Police were killed and five others were wounded when Red fighters under the NPA Antonio Nerio Antao Command (ANAC)-Front 15 raided the police detachment in Sitio Dao, Barangay Poblacion, Cateel, Davao Oriental.

To cover up their embarrassment, propagandists of the PNP-Police Regional Office XI made up the story that they had frustrated an NPA attack and they had killed five Red fighters and wounded three others.

The military action was also a punitive action, according to ANAC spokesman Dyomabuk Kadyawan, as the policemen had committed numerous crimes. They were involved in last year's killing of Ludenio "Dos" Monson, a staunch critic of the abuses of the 1105th PMG-PNP in Boston town. They were also involved in the proliferation of illegal drugs and extortion of commercial trucks that pass by the detachment. Residents in the area have long been demanding the eviction of the police detachment.

After the ambush, the police troopers retaliated on defenseless civilians. They mauled four civilians and ransacked the homes of those they suspect of supporting the people's guerrillas, Dyomabok Kadyawan added. AB

Emulate the heroic life of Comrade Azad

Emulate the heroism of Comrade Azad (Cherukuri Rajkumar), said the Communist Party of the Philippines in a statement on July 5. The Party expressed sympathy for the Indian people over the police slay of one of the top Indian revolutionary leaders. Comrade Azad was abducted and summarily killed by members of the Andra Padesh Special Police Branch on July 2 in the forests of Adilabad near the Maharashtra-Andra Pradesh border. He was then with Comrade Hem Pandey (Jitender).

Ka Azad was a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Maoist) and served as its spokesman until his treacherous murder by fascist police. He dedicated three decades of his life to the revolutionary cause of the Indian people. AB

BM coordinator slain

A provincial coordinator of Bayan Muna became the first victim of extrajudicial killing under the regime of Benigno Aquino III. A journalist in Kalinga and a witness to the Maguindanao massacre were also killed, while an attempt was made on the life of a priest in Aurora.

July 5. Still unidentified assailants killed Fernando Baldomero, 61, provincial coordinator of Bayan Muna in Aklan. Baldomero was elected for a second term as councilor of Lezo town in the recent polls. He was in his house in Barangay Estancia, Kalibo, Aklan preparing to take his 12-year old son to school when the killers started shooting. An attempt on Baldomero's life was also made on March 19 when assailants lobbed grenades on his house.

July 3. Journalist Jose Daguio was shot dead in his home in Tuga, Tabuk, Kalinga. Daguio is a reporter of Radyo Natin Tabuk and a columnist for a local newspaper in Kalinga. Daguio had just finished supper when the still unidentified killer shot him.

June 26. Anticommunist elements opened fire on the sleeping quarters of Fr. Joefran Talaban in Casiguran, Aurora at 2 a.m. He survived the shooting. The assailants left a leaflet signed by a group that identified itself as the Aniban ng Ayaw sa Komunista. They want Fr. Talaban, whom they claim to have links to Communists, to leave the place. The perpetrators escaped in a car without a license plate.

Father Talaban has served as parish priest of Nuestra Señora de la Salvacion for nine years.

Meanwhile, the World Council of Churches (WCC) called on Benigno Aquino III to immediately give justice to two church people killed in June. The WCC made the call in solidarity with the National Council of Churches in the Philippines and the Iglesia Filipina Independi-

ente (IFI) in condemning the extrajudicial killing of Benjamin Bayles in Negros Occidental and Jovelito Agustin in Laoag City, Ilocos Norte. Bayles was killed on June 14, and Agustin the following day. Agustin was also a radio broadcaster in Ilocos Norte.

June 14. Suwaib Upham, known as Jesse, a key witness to the Maguindanao massacre was killed by gunmen believed to have

been hired by the Ampatuan clan. Upham had admitted that he was one of the seven gunmen who killed the 57 victims including 32 journalists on November 23, 2009. He pointed to the Ampatuan family as the brains behind the massacre.

Upham first came out as a witness on March 19. He was brought to Manila to apply for the Witness Protection Program of the Depart-

ment of Justice (DOJ). Upham returned to Mindanao when the DOJ dragged its feet on his application. Upham refused to meet with officials of the DOJ in its own turf due to information that some department officials were collaborating with the Ampatuans.

Many groups and organizations, including the US-based Human Rights Watch condemned Upham's murder. AB

Workers assail union busting at ABS-CBN

A labor group at ABS-CBN denounced the management's busting of the Internal Job Market (IJM) Workers Union and illegal dismissal of 25 unionists.

The management of ABS-CBN, one of the biggest radio and television networks in the country dismissed the workers after they refused to sign documents perpetuating their contractual status and prohibiting them from filing cases against the company.

The contract also stipulates that they will receive lower wages (less than a third of their previous pay), and will not be paid for overtime and holidays or vacations. It also states that the company will not recognize their previous service, thus barring them from receiving backpay for the period when they should have been eligible for regular status. They will also lose their job security because they are not guaranteed employment when the network cancels the television program that they work for.

According to Antonio Perez, union president, station video editor and one of those dismissed, the company should treat them as regular employees because most of them have worked for the station for

years. He dismissed the company's excuse that they are not real employees but just contractual talents enlisted in the ABS-CBN Internal Job Market (IJM). On the contrary, the workers' payslips, identification cards, income tax returns and other documents state that they are employees of ABS-CBN and not of IJM.

Some 1,400 of ABS-CBN's 2,700 employees are under the IJM which is actually also being run by the company. Only 100 of the 1,400 were regularized after ABS-CBN called for contract signing purportedly to regularize those under the IJM. The workers have questioned the IJM with the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE). They said ABS-CBN is only using the IJM as a pool of casual employees. But the DOLE sided with ABS-CBN and said the IJM complies with the Labor Code.

The workers denounced ABS-CBN's refusal to recognize their union. The DOLE did not approve their application for a Certification Election (CE) in November 2009 claiming that workers under the IJM were not regular employees. It is clear, according to Perez, that ABS-CBN and the DOLE are colluding to destroy their union. The union was formed in March 2009.

Members of the union continue to experience harassment. Their work schedules are either often changed, canceled or postponed. A hundred more employees and other workers are also in danger of being dismissed.

The company has also hired the services of HRH Agency Personnel to replace the IJM and reject the union. The company also plans to get more employees from its regional branches to replace the dismissed workers.

ABS-CBN is one of the top 1,000 corporations in the country. It is under the Lopez Group of Companies and earned a total of P1.9 billion in the first quarter of the year.

The Lopezes were among the biggest contributors to the electoral campaign of Benigno Aquino III. AB



42 activists arrested in Mendiola

Police arrested 42 farmers and activists after dispersing their protest action at the Mendiola Bridge in Manila on July 3.

Most of those arrested are 6,000 hectares in Hacienda Luisita and 7,000 hectares in Hacienda Yulo. But instead of getting their demands, their picket line was dispersed by elements of the Manila Police District (MPD) Station 8.

The activists had camped at the bridge since June 30, a day before Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III assumed the presidency.

The farmers were mainly demanding the implementation of genuine land reform. They were demanding the distribution of



6,000 hectares in Hacienda Luisita and 7,000 hectares in Hacienda Yulo. But instead of getting their demands, their picket line was dispersed by elements of the Manila Police District (MPD) Station 8.

The Anakpawis Party immediately denounced the violent dispersal. Anakpawis Rep. Rafael "Ka Paeng" Mariano said the 42 protesters arrested were the first casualties under the Aquino regime and their arrest indicates that the state's violation of human rights will continue.

The following day, the police

was compelled to release the detainees and drop the charges against them.

Meanwhile, soldiers continue to threaten farmers from Hacienda Luisita and Hacienda Yulo. According to the Alyansa ng Manggagawang Bukid sa Asyenda Luisita (AMBALA), armed soldiers follow hacienda peasant leaders wherever they go. Hacienda residents are also being told to stop their struggle for land.

Citizens Armed Force Geographical Unit (CAFGU) elements were sent to the hacienda and recruitment continues for the Barangay Intelligence Network (BIN). A peasant picket line in Hacienda Yulo was likewise dispersed on May 21, resulting in injuries to about a hundred farmers and the detention of ten of the protesters. **AB**

Cardeño's death up for reinvestigation

US military intervention in the Philippines once again reared its ugly head when the Supreme Court approved on June 24 the petition for habeas data filed by the family of a civilian who died mysteriously in a US military facility in Marawi City. The court granted the victim's family protection and access to official documents and information that may help in solving the case.

Gregan Cardeño, 33, was reported to have hanged himself in his room inside the Joint Special Operation Task Force-Philippines (JSOTFP) camp in Marawi City on February 2, just two days after he arrived at the camp. He had applied for a job as a security guard at the Skylink employment agency and was officially deployed to Camp Siongco in Awang, Datu Odin Sinsuat, Maguindanao. But instead of taking him there, he was brought to the headquarters of the JSOTFP inside the camp of the Philippine Army's 103rd Infantry Brigade. He was employed as an interpreter when the US soldiers learned that he was fluent

in Bisaya, Tagalog, English, Tausug and Bahasa Indonesia.

Before his death, Cardeño was able to call and send a text message to his family. He said that he did not like the job that he was given and that he wanted to resign. He also said that he was the only Filipino in the US facility aside from the cook.

Cardeño is said to have committed suicide but his family refuses to believe this especially since he bore many wounds that the police did not include in its autopsy report. There was no death certificate nor was any permit issued when US soldiers brought his body to Zamboanga City.

On March 3-4, various groups investigated the death of Cardeño but were not allowed to inspect the room where his body was found and were not shown the bedsheet which he allegedly used to hang himself.

The family's suspicions and concern grew when unidentified men killed Maj. Javier Ignacio on March 25 in Zamboanga City. Ignacio was set to face the media to reveal important information on the case.

Ignacio, who was Military Police chief of the Western Mindanao Command was a friend of the Cardeños and was the one who recommended the victim to work for US troops as the salary offer was high.

Ignacio had been helping in the investigation of Cardeño's death when he himself was killed. He earlier claimed that many people were offering him bribes to keep quiet and later threatened to kill him if he did not stop his investigation.

The mysterious deaths of Cardeño and Javier have brought many

issues to the fore. One of these is the futility of the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) in protecting Filipino victims of crimes committed by US troops. Instead, the VFA is being used to cover up such crimes and let the perpetrators get away.

The case also reveals the depth and breadth of US military intervention in the Philippines. Skylink, the local employment agency that gave Cardeño the job at the US facility, was hired by DynCorp. International, a US-based company looking for contractual employees to perform sensitive tasks for the Pentagon and the US State Department.

When Cardeño was killed, it was revealed that he was actually assigned to the Liaison Coordination Elements (LCE), a US military unit composed of elements from the special operations forces of the different services. It is tasked to advise and assist select units of the AFP in planning and integrating intelligence to support operations against so-called "terrorists" and "insurgents." The operations of the LCE cover the armed revolutionary movement in the Philippines, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front and the Abu Sayyaf.

The presence of such a unit in an AFP camp was unintentionally revealed when Cardeño was killed. It is not farfetched that Cardeño and Ignacio were killed because they came to know of clandestine and dirty jobs being done jointly by US and AFP troops.

Cardeño and Ignacio's heinous killing once again highlights the importance of waging a vigorous mass movement to fight military intervention by US imperialism in the Philippines and exact justice for the victims of imperialist violence. AB

The worsening crisis in the European Union

Stock trading in the world market once again suffered a drastic drop on July 2. It is the fourth such downturn since the outbreak of the crisis in Greece two months ago.

Investors are having a hard time coping with the crisis gripping the European Union which started in Greece in May. Because the EU's economy represents 30% of the entire world economy, there are fears that the situation will worsen the crisis of the world capitalist system which started way back in 2007.

Stock markets the world over became shaky and sales of stocks tumbled when the newly elected Greek president revealed in November 2009 the longstanding problem of mounting budget deficits and public external debt. The country's economic crisis erupted in May when the desperate Greek government was forced to beg for a bailout



from the EU and the International Monetary Fund.

Since the formation of the 16-member Eurozone (composed of countries using the euro as their common currency), they have adopted the regulation that each member-country's debt should not exceed 60% of their respective Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and budget deficits, 3% of GDP. The

regulation aims to control spending and borrowing in order to sustain the economic growth of each member country.

Except for Finland and Luxembourg, no country complies with this regulation. Greece registered the highest rate of borrowing which is now

Obama relieves US commander in Afghanistan

US Pres. Barack Obama relieved Gen. Stanley McChrystal of his duty as commander of US and NATO military forces in Afghanistan on June 23.

General McChrystal's removal was the result of his and his aides' comments in an interview with *Rolling Stone* magazine which were unfavorable to Obama.

According to *Rolling Stone*, McChrystal was disappointed with his first conversation with Obama last year. The magazine also published several other comments made by close aides of the general which did not make the administration happy.

In their comments, General McChrystal's team alleged the existence of a rift between the military and Obama advisers at a time when the Pentagon's strategy in Afghanistan was parrying numerous criticisms.

McChrystal was replaced by Gen. David Petraeus, current commander of the US forces in Iraq. AB



at 124.9% of its GDP. Its deficit is at 13.6% of the GDP, second only to Ireland which has the biggest budget deficit.

Almost all of the 27 countries of the European Union are suffering high budget deficits and large external debts. Like Greece, several other EU countries are now incapable of paying their external debts and have become ineligible to seek new loans. Next to Greece, Italy has the second highest rate of borrowing at 118.2% of its GDP. The rest are Portugal, 85.6%; Germany, 78.8%; and Ireland, 77.3%. Ireland's budget deficit is now at 14.7%; the United Kingdom, 10.4%; Spain, 10.1%; Latvia, 9.9%; and Portugal, 8%.

One reason there is so much concern about the economic down-

turn in Greece is the possibility that the country might declare bankruptcy or deliberately default on its debts. That would certainly mean big losses for German, British, French, Japanese and American banks since they provided 80% of Greece's external debt.

To be able to stem the crisis in Greece and prevent its spread to other EU countries and the whole world, the EU and the IMF agreed in May to bail out the country with loans of 45 billion euros (\$54.2 billion) initially, and up to 110 billion euros (\$1.322 trillion) if needed. The loans require Greece to undertake austerity measures, including salary cutbacks or a freeze on wages of government employees as well as cutbacks on pensions and children's benefits.

These conditions caused outrage among the Greeks and sparked a national strike by 50,000 workers from May 4 to 5.

As majority of EU countries are experiencing similar situations, the EU and the IMF decided on May 10 to allocate 750 billion euros or almost \$1 trillion in aid to countries needing immediate assistance. In exchange, each government is required to impose austerity measures in order to avoid a situation such as that in Greece. The EU and IMF are likewise pushing for new taxes.

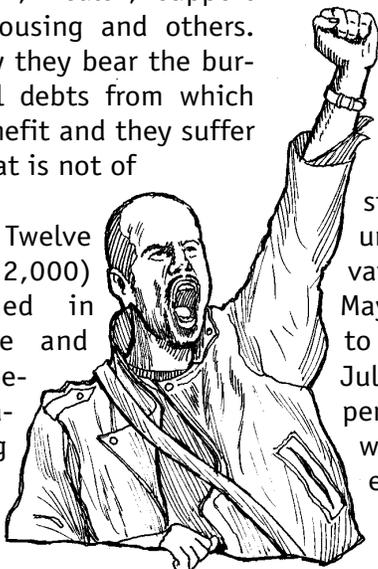
Workers and their families are angered by the austerity measures being imposed by EU governments because they deprive the people of their rights to basic benefits and social services. AB

Protests shaking the European Union

Protest actions are spreading in European Union (EU) countries due to the people's vehement opposition to proposed austerity measures.

Workers foresee that such measures will cause extreme suffering. They will mean big cuts in budget allocations for basic benefits and social services like pensions, education, health, support for children, housing and others. The workers say they bear the burden of colossal debts from which they do not benefit and they suffer from a crisis that is not of their doing.

June 29. Twelve thousand (12,000) people marched in Athens, Greece and held a rally before the parliament building where lawmakers were debating the



pension cuts being imposed by the EU and IMF as part of the government's austerity measures. They are opposing the government's plan to reduce pensions and raise the retirement age. The march-rally brought about dislocations in the tourism industry and public transportation.

This is the fifth major strike launched by workers' unions in the public and private sectors in Greece since May 1. The unions threatened to launch a 24-hour strike in July to protest the proposed pension cuts. Earlier, 50,000 workers held a two-day general strike on May 4 and 5. It was followed by a march-rally on May 20 in Athens

and by protest actions on June 5 and 23 led by communist groups.

June 29. Workers in Spain also held a march-rally which paralyzed the entire transport system in the cities. The strikers were angered by government measures to reduce by 5% the salaries of workers in the public sector. On May 27, the austerity measure won by one vote in parliament. The workers earlier launched a one-day strike on June 8 which was joined by 75% of the 2.3 million members of the biggest unions in the public sector in Spain.

June 25. Workers held a march-rally in Rome, Milan and other cities in Italy to demand the restoration of 25 billion euros (\$30.1 billion) that had been cut from the budget. Members of the CIGL, the largest union in Italy with six million members, took part in the protest action. The workers threatened to launch another protest action on September 29 if the government

does not give in to their demand.

June 24. In France, two million workers carried out 200 protest actions in various parts of the country. They are opposing the government's move to raise the retirement age from 60 to 62 years. The protest action was led by CGT, the biggest union in France.

June 12. In Germany, thousands of workers protested the government's move to cut 80 billion euros (\$96.3 billion) from the budget. This is the biggest budget cut in Germany since World War II. They are also opposing new taxes that are going to be imposed within four years starting 2010.

May 27. In Portugal, thousands of workers marched in the city of Lisbon to oppose the government's austerity measures which includes a 5% cut in salaries for private sector employees. The rally was the first protest action in the country since the austerity measures were adopted on May 13. AB

50,000 workers strike in Bangladesh

MORE than 50,000 workers in garments factories in the Bangladeshi capital Dhaka held a series of strikes from June 19 to 22 to demand wage increases. Police violently dispersed the strikes.

The workers demanded the increase of their monthly minimum wage from 1,662 *taka* (almost \$24.00 or ₱1,145.00) to 5,000 *taka* (\$71.00 or ₱3,270.00) in accordance with an agreement by their union, the government and the owners of the factories way back in 2006.

On June 19, the workers poured out of the factories, picketed and barricaded roads leading to the manufacturing zone in Ashulia and Kanchpur, 30 kilometers north of Dhaka. The two zones host factories supplying garments to big foreign companies like Wal-Mart, Tesco, Zara, Carefour and H&M.

The police attempted to break their barricade with water cannons, rubber bullets and teargas. The strikers fought back by throwing stones at the police. They destroyed some 200 factories. More than 100 strikers were injured.

On June 22, the strikers' anger

mounted when the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters' Association (BGMEA) decided to close down 250 factories indefinitely. They again took to the streets and burned the tires of vehicles that insisted on breaching the barricades.

The textile and garment industry accounts for 80% of Bangladesh's exports, earning \$15 billion annually.

The first general strike in Dhaka was also held on June 27 under the leadership of the opposition Bangladesh National Party (BNP). The protesters denounced the failures and excesses of the administration of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wazed since her assumption to power in 2009. They demanded the holding of early elections before 2013. In a sign of popular support for the strike, public transportation was paralyzed and businesses closed for a day. AB

Protests at G8 and G20 meeting

A week of protests greeted the three-day summit of the Group of 8 (G8) and Group of 20 (G20) on June 25 to 27 in Ontario, Canada. The G8 and G20 are groups of the wealthiest countries in the world. The summit discussed the topic of recovery from the global financial crisis and the problem of mounting deficits and debts facing the European Union.

The protesters denounced the futility of the summit that cost the Canadian people over a billion dollars in taxes. They criticized the policies pushed by the summit such as measures cutting back on workers' benefits and social services.

More than 10,000 activists from different groups opposing globalization marched on June 26 in Toronto, the biggest city in Canada. The march, which was the culmination

of various smaller protest actions, resulted in a day-long paralyzation of transportation and the shutting down of hospitals and other establishments in Toronto.

The march started with a rally in front of the Parliament building in Ontario. The marchers were two kilometers away from the Metro Toronto Convention Centre, the summit venue, when riot police started to block and attack them.

One group fought back with stones, bottles and other hard objects. The police retaliated with teargas, smoke grenades and rubber bullets. The police then proceeded with searching the protesters' belongings and mauling them. More than 400 rallyists were arrested.

The police raided a university where activists were staying the following day. Some 200 were arrested and detained in a facility prepared by the police four kilometers from the summit venue. Activists soon held a rally before the detention facility to demand the release of the detainees. Plainclothes policemen violently dispersed the rally and detained suspected leaders. AB