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Editorial

Resist the US imperialist charter change scheme

In collusion with the puppet officials of the Aquino government, US imperialism is now vigorously pushing for the amendment of the 1987 Philippine constitution. In another case of brazen US intervention in the country's internal affairs, the US is campaigning for the removal of provisions in the constitution that prohibit foreign corporations from having majority control over companies operating in the Philippines.

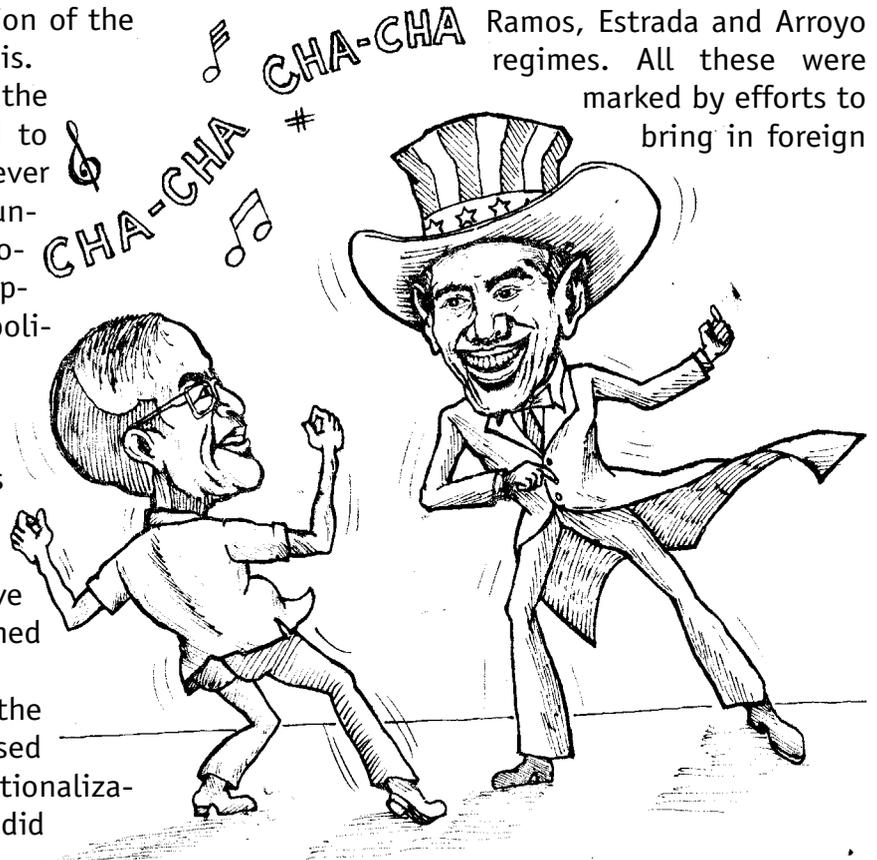
The Filipino people must strongly oppose these US imperialist maneuvers as they further trample on the Philippines' economic sovereignty which has already taken a severe beating in the last 25 years due to the policies of liberalization, deregulation, privatization and denationalization. The amendments being pushed by the US will complete the economic recolonization of the Philippines and lead to ever deeper crisis.

In reality, though, the provisions of the 1987 constitution which are supposed to protect economic sovereignty have never really stopped the imperialists from plundering the Philippines' national patrimony. Since the late 1980s, successive puppet regimes have strictly adhered to policies imposed by the International Monetary Fund in exchange for new credit. All of these policies sought to further open up the economy to the operations of foreign monopoly capitalists and dismantle tariffs on foreign trade. In line with these policies, numerous laws have been passed which directly contravened the reactionary constitution of 1987.

To "attract" foreign investments, the rights of Filipino workers were suppressed and wage hikes curtailed. The Wage Rationalization Act which was passed in 1989 did

away with national minimum wage standards. The Herrera Law also amended the Labor Code, paving the way for labor contractualization and additional restrictions on the right to strike. Capitalists made use of these laws to further depress wages and block workers from forming unions. For the past 20 years, workers' wages have been virtually at a standstill, falling way behind the rapid rise in the cost of living and condemning Filipino workers to ever worsening social conditions. Since then, the number of unions and unionized workers in the Philippines has dropped by almost 70%.

Successive IMF-approved Medium Term Philippine Development Plans (MTPDPs) were implemented by the Aquino, Ramos, Estrada and Arroyo regimes. All these were marked by efforts to bring in foreign



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investors to do business in the Philippines and take advantage of cheap Philippine labor. Foreign capital was invested in privatized and deregulated industries such as power generation, water and electricity distribution utilities, road infrastructure, transportation and in business process outsourcing to take advantage of the deregulated regime and generate assured profits for big foreign monopoly capitalists.

However, none of these programs was able to address the need to develop the local economy in the last 25 years. There has been a continuous decline in manufacturing, which is generally considered the engine of an economy that creates value. The number of manufacturing firms has fallen from 7,500 in 1999 to just 4,600 in 2008 with a concomitant drop in employment from 1.1 million to 860,000 or a decline of 4% percent in its share in total employment. Manufacturing contributes only around 23% of the total Gross Domestic Product—the same level it was in more than 50 years ago.

For several decades now, "attracting foreign investments" has been the key element in the economic programs designed by IMF-trained technocrats of all

past puppet regimes. However, for 65 years under the neocolonial republic, the Philippine economy has been in a constant state of crisis, unable to achieve self-reliance and always dependent on foreign loans and capital infusion. The wealth created by the Filipino peasantry and working class is constantly being siphoned out by big foreign capitalists and consumed by the parasitic local ruling classes.

Unemployment, landlessness, poverty, hunger, homelessness, disease and other social maladies have worsened from one decade to another. As the ruling puppet states constantly serve the interests of big foreign capital, they have been increasingly unable to address the people's economic needs and have constantly shifted the burden of crisis on the working people. Foreign capitalists have been provided with tax incentives and tax havens, but the broad masses have been burdened with more and more taxes. Foreign capitalists have been given full rein to raise prices, but workers' wages have been constantly held back. More and more funds have been allocated to partner with foreign big business but social services have suffered ever bigger budget

slashes.

In pushing for amendments to the 1987 constitution, the US imperialists and their local political henchmen aim to do away with all pretensions to economic sovereignty. They seek to break down all barriers and allow foreign big capital to plunder the local economy with impunity.

The US imperialist push to amend the Philippine constitution is closely linked to efforts of the US government to resolve the US economic recession. By seeking to shatter the economic boundaries of the Philippines and other semicolonies, it aims to open up the remaining economic frontiers for American capitalists to expand sources of raw materials and cheap labor. It seeks to subject the Filipino working class to ever disastrous working terms and conditions. It aims to further drown the Filipino peasantry in debt and bankruptcy as a result of the unmitigated dumping of foreign agricultural products.

US imperialism and its puppets are acutely aware of the political dangers of coming all-out for charter change. Under the past three regimes, attempts to push for charter change were widely opposed by the people as these have been invariably linked to the political ambitions of the ruling clique. In pushing for charter change, the tacticians of the US Embassy in Manila are trying to generate a pro-"chacha" groundswell by gathering the support of key officials of the judiciary and legislature. A number of them have issued statements in favor of amending the 1987 constitution, carefully avoiding the issue of extending the terms of office of government officials.

However, if the US and its puppets decisively push "chacha", they will ultimately have to contend with the Filipino people's determined re-

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<p><i>Ang Bayan</i> is published fortnightly by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines</p>	

sistance to further imperialist domination, oppression and exploitation. To resist the US-instigated "chacha" is to resist the neoliberal framework of imperialist globalization. The people oppose the complete breakdown of barriers that shield the people from oppression and exploitation by foreign capitalists.

After almost three decades of worsening con-

ditions resulting from the IMF-imposed policies of liberalization, deregulation, privatization and denationalization, the Filipino people clamor for national sovereignty and the need for nationalism in the field of economics. They demand an end to foreign economic domination and want an economic policy that puts the interests of the Filipino people above all else. AB

Legalized plunder

In the past 25 years, several laws were enacted to pave the way for the foreign plunder of the country. In 1987, the Omnibus Investments Code was passed which allowed 100% foreign ownership of local enterprises in so-called pioneer projects and priority areas of investment. Investment laws for foreign capitalists were further liberalized by the Foreign Investments Act of 1991, which also provided for more incentives to foreign investors.

In subsequent years, more laws were passed favoring foreign capitalists.

The Special Economic Zone Act of 1995 was passed, paving the way for the creation of special economic zones in Cagayan, Zamboanga City and the Calabarzon area where foreign investors were given full freedom to operate.

The Mining Act of 1995 was enacted, paving the way for foreign control over vast tracts of land for mining operations.

The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) which was ratified in 1994 served as the framework for the all-out liberalization of trade and investment laws.

Also approved were the Bank Liberalization Law of 1994, the Build-Operate-Transfer Law of 1994, the Mining Act of 1995, the Oil Deregulation Law of 1997 and the Investment House Liberalization Act of 1997. AB

4Ps: Burdening and deceiving the poor

The Aquino regime has been drumbeating the Programang Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino (4Ps) as the engine that will raise the poorest of the poor from their impoverished state. In reality, it is a grandiose program to deceive the people into believing that the regime has a genuine program to wipe out poverty when it in fact serves the interests of big foreign capitalists.

After years of implementation since Arroyo's time, the program has failed to cause any significant change in the living conditions of the millions of poor. The people do not want dole-outs. They demand jobs, higher wages, housing, education and health. Aquino's 4Ps has been nothing but a burden to the people.

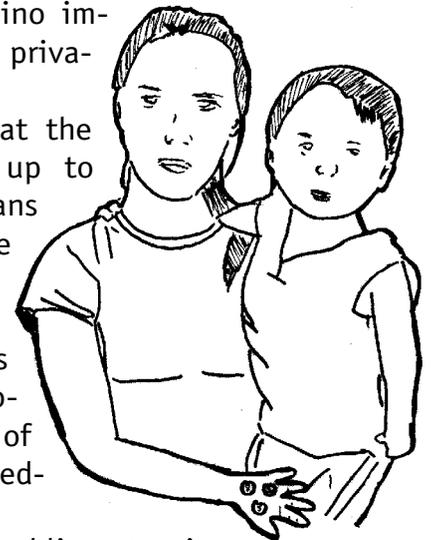
Deceiving the people. Aquino's 4Ps is in fact a program to cover up the ruling regime's failure to take measures to resolve widespread unemployment, landgrabbing and landlessness, low wages and rising prices that have caused the people untold suffering. Aquino implements 4Ps to pave the way for privatization and deregulation.

The Aquino regime boasts that the program has already benefited up to 100,000 families. He therefore plans to allot P39.5 billion for 4Ps in the 2012 budget (up from P21.2 billion this year) ostensibly to benefit as many as 700,000 families next year. The Aquino regime is doing this, however, at the expense of social services such as health and education.

Aquino has been deflecting public attention from the huge budget cuts in education, health and other social services. He gives out cash grants with one hand, but slashes more badly needed funds with the other.

He makes much of the funds being allocated to pregnant women, but has ordered the closure of several public hospitals. The regime doles out P15 for every child in school, but has slashed more than a billion pesos from the budgetary allotments of state colleges and universities. On the other hand, the Aquino regime continues to beef up funds for joint ventures with big foreign capitalists and to service the country's foreign debt.

Burden on the people. Proof of its lack of genuine concern



for the poor, the Aquino regime has been implementing 4Ps in a way that adds to the burdens of its supposed beneficiaries instead of providing them relief. It requires families enrolled in the program to go through bureaucratic wringers just to be able to receive a few measly pesos.

The poor are in a daze trying to comply with so many requisites in exchange for a pittance. There is an inescapable feeling of being treated like mendicants who have to grovel to prove their poverty in order to be covered by the program. Worse, beneficiaries are expected to comply uncomplainingly with the dictates of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) whether or not these are helpful to them.

Burden to the urban poor.

A study conducted by the Center for Women's Resources, an institution that advocates women's rights has revealed the big swindle that is 4Ps. Covering most of Metro Manila, some provinces in the Bicol region and the islands of Mindoro and Negros, the study notes the irony behind the fact that program applicants have to cough up P350 to obtain the documents required by the DSWD—a significant amount to the genuinely poor. Bereft of funds, they end up borrowing money to be able to comply.

The distribution of cash grants is chaotic, irregular and delayed. Many of the beneficiaries have to spend for transportation fare to be able to go to the offices or banks where the funds are deposited. In many instances, they leave empty-handed and have to borrow money for their fare home. They have to check daily whether the money has arrived. If the money comes and they fail to collect it in three days, it automatically disappears from the account.

4 soldiers killed in back to back NPA attacks in Aurora

Four soldiers from the 48th IB were killed in two successive offensives launched by Red fighters of the New People's Army (NPA) in Barangay Diteki, San Luis, Aurora.

An NPA unit closed in and opened fire on more than 20 soldiers using the Diteki barangay hall as a detachment at around 11:15 p.m. on August 12.

The day after, another NPA unit used command-detonated explosives and fired at reinforcement troops from the 48th IB at 9:10 a.m. The reinforcements were on their way home to their headquarters in Baler aboard two trucks and an armored personnel carrier when a CDX hit the lead truck, causing it to obstruct the road. AB

Parent-beneficiaries are obliged to attend meetings called by the DSWD. The higher the position attained by a beneficiary, the more meetings he has to attend. His absence results in a P500 deduction from his cash grant. Beneficiaries must comply with the DSWD's every dictate whether or not there is a need for it. For example, they are required to take their children for checkups in public health centers, rain or shine, in order to continue receiving their cash grants. The parents see this as a useless exercise, since they do not have any money to buy the medicines prescribed if their children do get sick.

Children are required to go to school every day in order to receive their P15 daily allotment. But in Metro Manila, elementary school children already have to spend P50-100 daily. Should a schoolchild's attendance drop below 85%, his P15 daily allowance is cancelled.

Burden to the peasantry. In Eastern Visayas, additional funds for 4Ps meant adding more names to the list of beneficiaries. Months have passed since the new beneficiaries were promised quarterly assistance. Most or all of the new names on

the list, however, remained just that. They have not received any benefits even if their papers have all been processed.

Among the old beneficiaries, some have stopped receiving their cash grants or have been receiving reduced amounts. There are families who are very poor but have not been included in the list of beneficiaries. There are well-off families such as landlords, merchants or rich peasants who are included because they are close to village officials.

In a town in Northern Samar, 4Ps has become a money-making venture. A businessman in cahoots with the governor and local DSWD officials collects the cash grants from a bank in the provincial capital using the beneficiaries' ATM cards. This is done allegedly to save the beneficiaries the trouble of spending for transportation and food in traveling to the capital. In exchange, he collects a 10% fee.

4Ps has also been used as leverage during elections. Last year, some candidates threatened voters that they would be dropped from the list of beneficiaries if they failed to vote for them. The program has also been used to divide the masses and foment discord among them. AB



Victorious tactical offensives in Masbate and other provinces

The New People's Army (NPA) in Bicol successfully meted blows on troops of the 9th Infantry Division of the Philippine Army and the Philippine National Police (PNP) that have been relentlessly launching the counterrevolutionary campaign Oplan Bayanihan (OPB).

Red fighters conducted a series of coordinated strikes in the provinces of Masbate, Sorsogon, Albay and Camarines Sur on August 14 that resulted in several casualties among the fascist Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the PNP.

A composite of NPA units undertook the victorious offensives.

The Red fighters attacked the Mobo Municipal Police Station at around 2:30 a.m., wounding three policemen. By 10 a.m., another guerrilla unit used command-detonated explosives on reinforcement troops from the 9th IB who were aboard a truck in Barangay Mayrangan, Masbate City. Four soldiers were killed and several others were wounded in this ambush.

Troops from the 506th PNP

Provincial Mobile Group coming from the adjacent city of Masbate attempted to reinforce the beleaguered policemen but were ambushed by Red fighters when they reached Barangay Tugbo in Mobo town. The policemen were forced to retreat to Masbate City with their wounded.

Troops from the PNP Special Action Force based in Barangay Lalaguna, Mobo and from the 9th IB Bravo Company based in Barangay Armenia, Uson town also failed to come to the rescue when they were blocked and met by a hail of bullets by Red fighters.

The NPA also harassed the detachments of the 22nd IB and CAFGU in Barangay Alanao, Lupi, Camarines Sur and Barangay Mayon, Castilla, Sorsogon.

Meanwhile, Red fighters from

the Santos Binamira Command (SBC) launched a series of military actions against AFP troops and CAFGU elements in Albay in the first half of August. This was in response to the Albayanos' demand that justice be meted on the military and CAFGU henchmen who wreaked havoc in their villages during their military operations.

SBC operatives ambushed Benedicto Lea, a rabid military asset, in Barangay Caguiba, Camalig on August 13. Another team from the SBC ambushed Pfc. Leo Salcedo of the 83rd IB along the boundary of Inarado and Alogo villages in Daraga on August 8. Seized from him was a cal .45 pistol.

An SBC team also rained bullets on the 22nd IB detachment in Barangay Francia, Ligao City on August 7. A few hours before, an SBC team sniped 2nd IB troops in Barangay Malobago, Guinobatan. That same day, a unit under the SBC ambushed Salvador Caneso, 23, an active informer of the 22nd IB.

SBC guerrilla units also harassed 22nd IB troops in Barangay Nagas in Oas town on August 6 and 2nd IB troops in Barangay Balolo, Guinobatan town on August 1. AB

NPA launches offensive against 8th ID in Samar

The New People's Army (NPA) launched a series of tactical offensives in Samar province against the 8th ID's search and destroy missions masquerading as peace and development operations under Oplan Bayanihan (OPB).

According to the Efen Martires Command (NPA-Eastern Visayas), tactical offensives have been intensifying in Samar since June to resist Oplan Bayanihan's rampage. OPB has been focus-

ing on the construction and repair of roads that will facilitate the massive deployment of troops launching search and destroy military operations in the entire island.

The following tactical offensives were launched.

July 20. According to the latest reports from the Arnulfo Ortiz Command, a K3 machine gun, two M16s, three .45 pistols, more than 2,000



rounds of ammunition of various caliber, a box of mortar shells and important documents, among others, were seized by Red fighters in an ambush on a five-vehicle convoy of the 34th IB along the boundary of Barangays Concepcion and Canligues in Paranas, Samar. *AB* had earlier reported in its August 7, 2011 issue that a sergeant was killed and six others were wounded when the NPA used command-detonated explosives on the convoy before opening fire.

July 13. The NPA confiscated a 9 mm pistol, a .38 revolver, a .38 pistol and two laptops in a raid on the Sub-provincial Jail in



Barangay Lagundi, Catbalogan, Samar.

June 26. NPA special operatives ambushed Balontoy Sosing, an important intelligence asset of the military.

June 6. Three soldiers were killed and another one was wounded when members of the Serafin Pacimos Command rained bullets on a unit of the 8th ID in Barangay Matuguinao. There were no casualties among the Red fighters. **AB**

NPA raids PSOG safehouse in Batangas

Partisan operatives under the Edgardo Dagli Command (NPA-Batangas) raided a safehouse of the Philippine National Police Provincial Special Operations Group (PSOG) in Barangay Talisay, Calatagan, Batangas on August 11, at around 7:15 p.m. The partisans encountered a PSOG officer named Rico Puno and two others who served as guards. Puno, the PSOG's intelligence chief in the province faces several criminal cases against the revolutionary movement and the people in western Batangas.

The PSOG safehouse was hidden behind a poultry farm also owned by Puno. But the NPA was able to launch the attack after receiving complaints from the people. The safehouse served as a meeting place for the PSOG's armed personnel and was also where syndicates run by Puno and the PSOG kept their firearms. Puno traded shots with the partisans for a few minutes. He was wounded but was able to escape. Seized from the safehouse was a carbine and a cal .45 pistol.

Meanwhile, in Negros Occidental, the Armando Sumayang Jr. Command of the Southwest Negros Front reported that two soldiers of the Philippine Army 47th IB and one of its intelligence assets were wounded in an NPA partisan operation in Sipalay City on August 5.

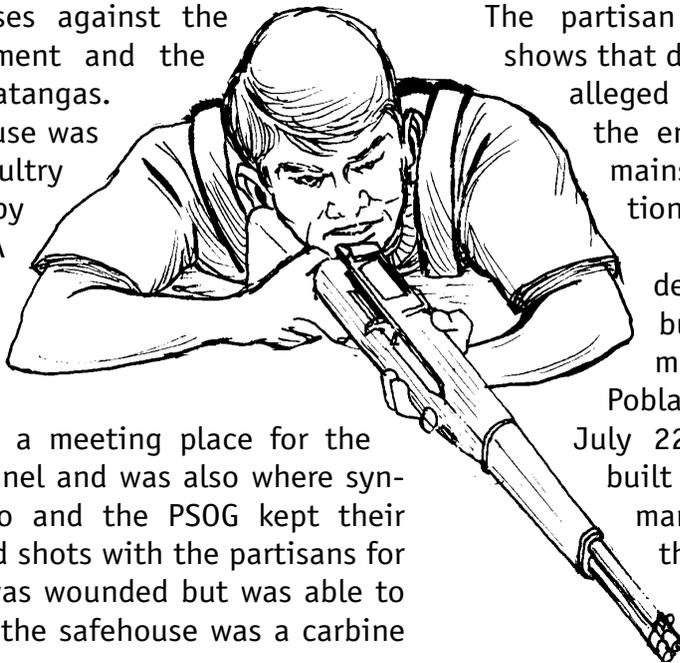
The soldiers and their asset were having a drinking spree at a videoke house in Sitio Bactolon, Barangay Camindangan when they were at-

tacked by Red fighters. Wounded were 2Lt. Rigor Borja and Cpl. Juanito Fernando of the 47th IB Peace and Development Team and Roderick "Eric" Samulde, a notorious intelligence asset. Other soldiers who were in another house and a nearby basketball court scampered towards their detachment half a kilometer away when the shooting began. They did not even bother to help their wounded, including their commanding officer.

The partisan operation in Sitio Bactolon shows that despite the military's lies and the alleged surrender of local mass leaders, the enemy's intelligence network remains a failure and the armed revolution continues to advance.

In Mountain Province, residents angered by military abuses burned down a CAFGU detachment in Sitio Opucan, Barangay Poblacion, Sadanga on the night of July 22. The detachment which was built by the 77th and 54th IB was manned by ten paramilitaries and the AFP cadreman assigned to them. The residents entered the detachment while the paramilitary forces were conducting operations.

The residents reportedly burned the detachment to drive out the CAFGU elements who have been endangering their village. The detachment is located at the entrance to the village center. The soldiers are building a bigger detachment to accommodate more troops from the 54th Engineering Brigade, despite opposition from the residents. **AB**



4 BJMP officials declared as POWs

Four officers of the Ozamiz City Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP) who have been in the custody of the New People's Army (NPA) since July 21 were formally recognized as prisoners of war (POW). They were captured in the course of an NPA operation to rescue prisoner Dennis Rodanes who was being transported to the Davao Penal Colony.

In a statement issued August 9, Ka Rigoberto F. Sanchez, spokesperson of the Merardo Arce Command of the Southern Mindanao Region said granting the BJMP personnel POW status formally guarantees recognition and respect for their basic rights. The captives are P/Insp. Murphy Todyog, BJMP-Ozamiz City Jail Warden; P/Insp. Eric Llamanzares; Special Jail Officer 2 Rogelio Begontes; and Jail Officer 1 Rolando Bajuyo Jr. They are now in the custody of Guerrilla Front 53 of the Herminio Alfonso Command.

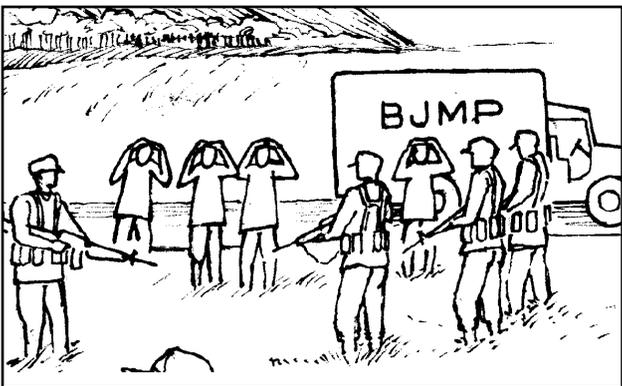
Nonetheless, Sanchez explained that investigations are underway on the four captives' possible involvement in criminal acts. Their POW status may be revoked if criminal cases are filed against them before the people's court. Sanchez gave assurances that their rights will be respected for as long as they are under NPA custody. The investigative processes have only been delayed because of military operations being launched by the 8th, 57th and 61st IB in the towns of Kitao-tao and Kibawe in Bukidnon and in Arakan Valley in North Cotabato.

Also under investigation by the people's court are Lingig mayor Henry Dano and two military men serving as his escorts. Dano and his two military bodyguards were arrested and disarmed by the NPA after a raid on his house in Barangay Sabangan, Lingig on the morning of August 6.

Investigations are ongoing to determine Dano's involvement in the military's armed operations against the people, among them gathering intelligence information, recruiting and enlisting civilians into paramilitary groups like the CAFGU and maintaining a private army.

His bodyguards Cpl. Alrey Villasis Desamparado and Pfc. Allan Palino, both from the Intelligence Section of the 75th IB which is under the Philippine Army 4th Infantry Division are also being investigated. The MAC said that serving as Mayor Dano's military escorts was a cover for their work as intelligence operatives. Documents proving that they are S-2 elements of the 4th ID were recovered from their persons upon

their arrest. Sanchez said the decision on whether or not they would be granted POW status will depend on the results of the investigation. **AB**



Peasant offensives in Southern Tagalog

This is the second part of an article on the peasant movement in Southern Tagalog that first appeared in the July 21, 2011 issue of Ang Bayan.

The impoverished masses in the Southern Tagalog (ST) countryside are now organized under a peasant movement with a strong regional center. Provincial chapters have begun to rise anew from the surviving 54 chapters in various levels found in areas with existing cases of agrarian disputes and where the peasant masses are being threatened with eviction. Chapters continue to expand and new ones built on varying levels.

Chapters in the region's island province are gradually recovering from the blows dealt by militarization and state terrorism the previous year.

Peasant associations are able to hold regular meetings and consultations and provide mass and political education in countryside communities with growing frequency. From its wealth of experience, the peasant movement has identified the main issues and peasant campaigns that must be launched in order to mobilize the peasantry in their numbers.

Relying on their own strength, the peasants have not only been able to thwart the most brutal attacks on their rights and welfare, they have also succeeded in advancing their interests. They have been able to do so by launching militant campaigns and expanding and consolidating their ranks in the process. Among these were the courageous battles against militarization and human rights abuses as well as psywar emanating from special state agents—all waged

amid all-out struggles to advance genuine agrarian reform.

For genuine agrarian reform. The militant peasant movement in the region with its rich history and tradition has proven that the advancement of the struggle for genuine land reform lies in its hands.

The peasant movement in Southern Tagalog advocates an agrarian reform program that will truly liberate the peasant class from poverty and landlessness through its active advancement in the region's countryside. The peasants keep agricultural lands productive and strengthen cooperativism in communal farms to enable them to physically defend lands that are being seized by landlords or subjected by real estate developers to land-use conversion.

The inutility, loophole-ridden and bogus CARP has failed to make a dent even among the first batch of peasants who had earlier been deceived into reposing their hope in the state's fake agrarian reform scheme. The peasants systematically reoccupied landholdings that had been subjected to CARP and were inevitably reconcentrated in the hands of landlords and real estate developers. Collectively, they continued to till these lands to maintain their productivity and agricultural character.

These notable peasant struggles spread from the Quezon and Batangas uplands to the plains of Cavite even if the agricultural lands involved were located in the middle of commercial centers.

Many peasant communities have benefited from these collective actions that resulted in reduced land rent, more rational systems of harvest sharing, higher wages for agricultural workers and other economic benefits.

Anti-militarization. Land-

grabbing is accompanied by violence against those being deprived of their rights, be this in the form of simple threats and harassment or outright terrorism. Various state agencies and institutions are utilized to enforce fascist and anti-people schemes.

It comes as no surprise that military troops maintain a heavy presence in the region's provinces. There are at least seven Philippine Army and Philippine Air Force battalions stationed in Batangas, which also has the most number of agrarian cases on record. Similarly, there has been no reduction in the number of military forces in Quezon and Mindoro in a long time. These provinces are perceived by the state as areas where the rural poor wage the strongest revolutionary and armed resistance. The military forces stationed in these provinces are the leading implementors of pro-landlord programs.

The number of military troops deployed in the region has even increased after December 2010, when the AFP's latest counterinsurgency program Oplan Bayanihan was declared operational.

Contrary to the regime's claims that military abuses have waned under Oplan Bayanihan, violations of human and civil rights have risen in the region. Southern Tagalog has had 12 victims of extrajudicial killing under Benigno Aquino III. The trumped-up murder charges against 72 of the region's mass leaders and activists (the "ST-72") has also been revived under Aquino's watch after being thrown out of court for lack of merit and due to a technicality.

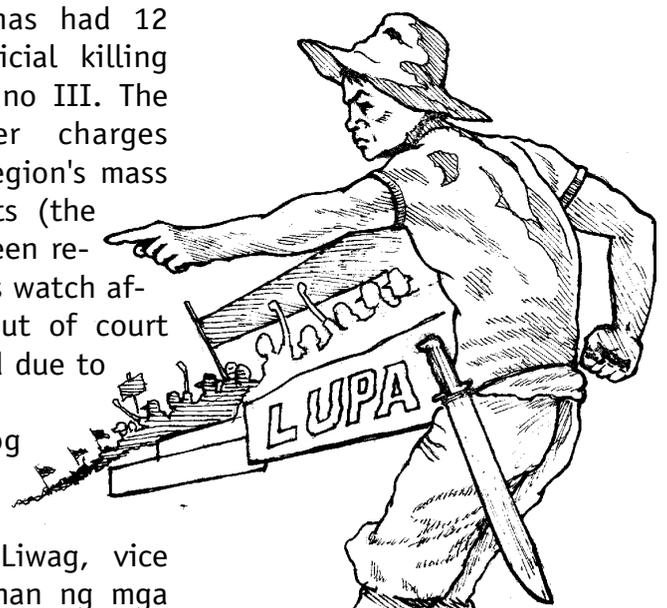
Southern Tagalog has 55 political prisoners. One of them is Darwin "Tatso" Liwag, vice chair of the Katipunan ng mga

Samahang Magbubukid sa Timog Katagalugan. Most of the region's political prisoners are peasant leaders or hail from farming communities.

Heightened deception. The region's peasantry does not only have to contend with outright violence. Brute force is always accompanied by deception. For this, the state organizes or mobilizes bogus peasant associations that sow deceptive ideas.

Some of these groups that pretend to be pro-peasant are AKBAYAN, UNORKA, PAKISAMA, PARRDS, PARAGOS, PAMM-BUKID-KA, KASAKA-TK, KMBP, CARET, AR NOW, CENTRO-SAKA and PEACE Foundation (Araro PL). These organizations serve as special psywar agents of the government and the AFP to derail the peasant masses from pursuing their goal of liberation and to maintain feudal and semifeudal rule in the countryside.

Around 20 small reformist and bogus peasant organizations have been documented in the region. They have been attempting to ensnare the peasantry into treading the path of reformism by destroying the base of the militant peasant movement and the solidarity of the rural poor to enable the landlords and their co-conspirators to continue exploiting and ruling the countryside. **AB**



Opposition to mining in Jiabong, Samar

Residents of Jiabong, Samar are currently up in arms against threats of large-scale mining operations. Jiabong is a fifth-class coastal municipality near the provincial capital of Catbalogan. It is included in a 16,397-hectare area that had been approved for mining operations as far back as 2004. Bauxite mining alone is expected to bring in an estimated \$24 billion, a very attractive prospect for foreign companies.

The government has already granted permission to open a mining concession in up to 2,000 hectares or almost a third of Jiabong's 6,700-hectare land area. The Manganese Mineral Belt Mining and Development Corporation (MMBMDC) has already begun exploration activities for aluminum, bauxite and manganese. MMBMDC is owned by South Korean businessmen. It also plans to expand its operations towards Catbalogan City and Motiong town which are adjacent to Jiabong.

According to JINGYAP (Jiabongnon Nagkakaurusa nga Parag-uma Hingyap Kauswagan), an alliance of Jiabong residents, poor peasants and fisherfolk are seriously concerned about the impending mining operations. The town's farmers who lack land or do not have any land at all are severely impoverished and victimized by feudal and semifeudal exploitation.

They are also worried over the effects of mining on *tahong* (seawater mussel) cultivation, a P32 million a year business on which the town relies. Jiabong is the biggest supplier of *tahong* in Eastern Visayas and one of the biggest nationwide. Derivative products are sold to places as far as Davao, Bicol and Manila. The town has already experienced the dire ef-

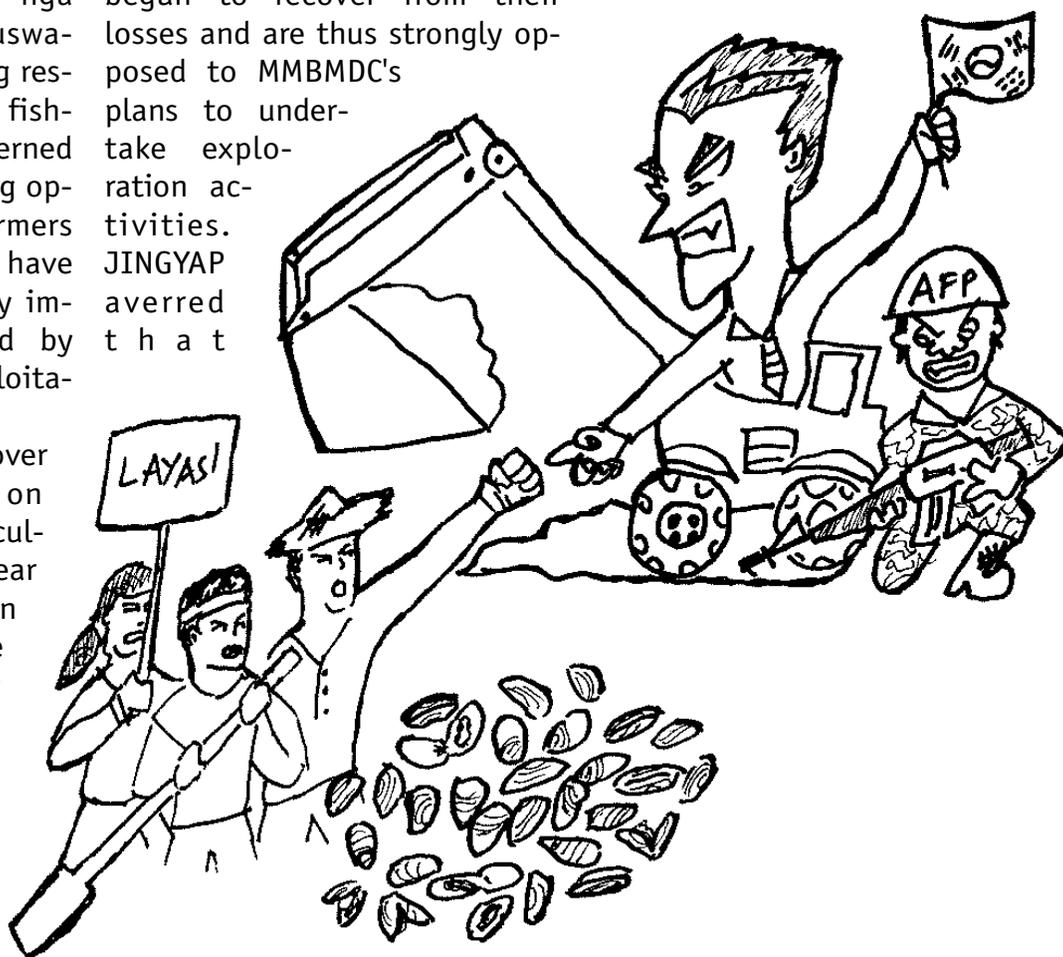
fects of mining on *tahong* cultivation.

The year 2009 saw a drastic fall in *tahong* production due to widespread pollution. In a cleanup drive sponsored by the local government, 37 trucks of garbage and pollutants were extracted from 67 hectares allotted to *tahong* cultivation. The main culprit was the Philippine Alumina Mining Corp. whose waste products from its carbon exploration activities were responsible for the widespread marine contamination.

Tahong cultivators have just begun to recover from their losses and are thus strongly opposed to MMBMDC's plans to undertake exploration activities. JINGYAP averred t h a t

mining is destructive to the town's livelihood, health and environment. Mining is not a long-term solution to the poverty of poor peasants and fisherfolk amid the absence of genuine agrarian reform and national industrialization. It is not only the town's marine resources that are in danger of being poisoned but Jiabong's ricefields and watersheds here and in Catbalogan. Mining could even cause disasters like floods and landslides. JINGYAP has also assailed militarization for protecting the interests of foreign mining companies and corrupt officials.

JINGYAP has challenged Samar province's local government to make good on the 50-year moratorium on large-scale mining it had declared in 2003. Meanwhile, JINGYAP continues to organize, mobilize and call on the people to unite and resist threats of large-scale mining. AB





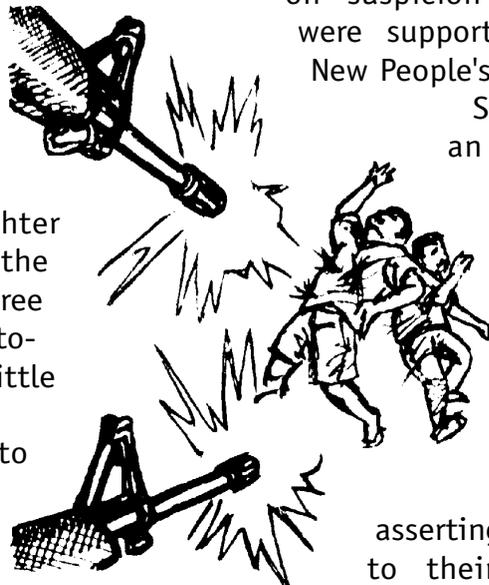
Minority activist killed in Davao del Sur

Three suspected military agents killed Dioquino Scuardo, 49, a member of the Tagakaolo tribe. Scuardo was slain on August 4 inside his own home in Sitio Sulok Talaod, Barangay Ticulon, Malita, Davao del Sur.

A man had knocked on his door at around 10:15 p.m. When Scuardo refused to let him in, three armed men forced their way into his room and shot him, killing him on the spot.

Scuardo's daughter Jinky witnessed the killing and the three assailants' retreat towards Barangay Little Baguio.

According to Barugkatungod, a human rights advocacy group,



Scuardo and his relatives had been included in a watchlist maintained by the 39th IB on suspicion that they were supporters of the New People's Army.

Scuardo was an active member of P i g u - n a w a n (Unity), an organization of national minorities asserting their right to their ancestral

lands and to self-determination. He was also active in anti-mining and anti-landgrabbing campaigns.

Barugkatungod added that the 39th IB has been imposing a food blockade in the villages of Pangaleon, Manuel Peralta, Little Baguio and Datu Danwata, all in Malita town. Residents of these areas are only allowed to bring or purchase three to five kilos of rice.

The military has clearly been terrorizing the people and causing them suffering, said Barugkatungod. It belied the Aquino administration's claims that Oplan Bayanihan has brought peace and prosperity to the people.

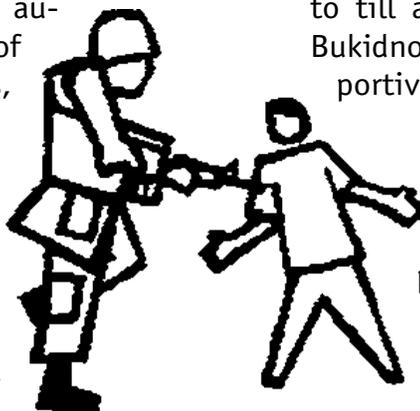
Barugkatungod called on local government units in Davao del Sur to take steps to alleviate the deteriorating human rights situation in Malita. It also asked assistance from churchpeople, lawyers and other human rights advocates. **AB**

CMU officials charged before Ombudsman

Administrative and criminal charges were filed before the Mindanao Regional Office of the Ombudsman in Cagayan de Oro City on August 8 against officials of Central Mindanao University (CMU) and the latter's armed guards. The charges stem from the shooting attack by CMU's security guards on peasants affiliated with Buffalo-Tamaraw-Limus (BTL) last July.

The peasant members of BTL filed cases of grave abuse of authority, conduct unbecoming of a public official, grave threats, coercion and assault.

The peasants had been camping outside the CMU gates for a number of weeks when they were attacked on July 14 by 15 of the university's armed guards. The peasant activity was part of "Operation Tikad" (tilling) led



by KASAMA-Mindanao.

The armed guards arbitrarily opened fire and beat up the peasants and their supporters at the camp. Seven peasants were wounded in the assault, said Amihan-Northern Mindanao Region, a peasant women's group.

The BTL members have been waging a decades-long struggle for land. Eight hundred peasant families have been asserting their right to till an idle 400-hectare lot within CMU. The Bukidnon provincial government has been supportive of their right to till the land.

Since early 2011, however, the farmers of BTL have stepped up their struggle as the CMU administration decided to evict them from the land. The CMU plans to lease out the land to multinational corporations, among them the Davao Agri-Ventures Corporation (DAVCO) which has begun to conduct land surveys in BTL communities. **AB**

RPA thugs abduct 3 peasants in Negros

Suspected military agents and elements of the bandit Revolutionary Proletarian Army (RPA) abducted three peasants in E.B. Magalona town in Negros Occidental on July 19. The victims have been identified as Michael Celeste, Gerald Abale and Jully Devero.

The armed men who wore ski masks took the victims one by one from their houses in Barangay Calusong. Some of the abductors wore camouflage uniforms, said KARAPATAN-Negros.

First to be abducted was Devero, 56. The armed men barged into his house in Sitio Manaque and seized the farmer in front of his wife and child without explanation.

After an hour, 32-year old Gerald Abale was taken. According to his wife Clemencia, she tightly embraced her husband when the men attempted to take Gerald at gunpoint. But she was forced to let go when the armed men told her, "do you

want us to kill your husband right here and now?"

Almost at the same time Abale was seized, eight to ten armed men surrounded the house of Danilo, Michael Celeste's father. They asked Danilo where they could find his son. The men later went to Michael's house which was only 50 meters away from his father's. As they led him away, the armed men warned Michael's family against following them.

Celeste is a member of the National Federation of Sugar Workers who was tortured by suspected RPA elements in July 2007. On May 26, he was threatened anew by Raul Casiple, an RPA leader.

The families of the three victims believe that the perpetrators are soldiers of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and RPA members. The assailants want to sow terror among the Negrenses, said Rodel Mesa, secretary general of the Unyon ng mga Manggagawa sa Agrikultura (UMA). **AB**

Palparan's bodyguard tagged in abduction

A witness positively identified a bodyguard of Gen. Jovito Palparan as one of the soldiers who abducted three activists in Hagonoy, Bulacan in June 2006.

S/Sgt. Edgardo Osorio of the 24th Intelligence Security Unit of the Philippine Army was positively identified by Wildredo Ramos, a farmer who witnessed the abduction of University of the Philippines students Karen Empeño

and Sherlyn Cadapan and peasant Manuel Merino. Ramos said Osorio even pointed his gun at him during the incident. He has identified four other military officers as among the abductors of Empeño and her companions.

The victims were detained in various military camps in Central Luzon and were severely tortured by Palparan's men, said another witness. The military has not surfaced them to date.

Ramos pointed out Osorio when the latter accompanied Palparan last August 19 to the preliminary investigation of the kidnapping, illegal detention and rape cases filed by the mothers of Empeño and Cadapan against the butcher general. Osorio's name was immediately added to the list of the accused. He was ordered to submit his counter-affidavit and attend the next hearing on August 31.

Meanwhile, due to the cases that have been filed against him, Sec. Leila de Lima of the Department of Justice has ordered Palparan's inclusion in the immigration watchlist.

National minorities rally in Mendiola

REPRESENTATIVES of various tribes like the Igorot, Aeta and Dumagat as well as Lumad from Mindanao rallied in Mendiola, Manila on August 9 as part of the commemoration of International Indigenous People's Day.

The rallyists assailed the continuing seizure of the national minorities' ancestral lands and the violation of their human rights. Said the Kalipunan ng mga Katutubong Mamamayan ng Pilipinas (KAMP), 50% of ancestral lands nationwide are affected by mining activities. In the Cordillera, there are mining operations in up to 60% of the region's land area. Meanwhile, in Surigao del Sur and Agusan del Norte, mining applications already cover 93,740 hectares.

The national minorities are also victims of violence. In fact, said KAMP, they are among the targets of Oplan Bayanihan. Eight minorities have become victims of extrajudicial killing under the Aquino regime. The latest victim is Dioquino Scuadro (see related article on page 11). Military and paramilitary elements have also been terrorizing Lumad communities in various parts of Mindanao, especially in the Far South Mindanao Region.



Worsening US debt crisis

The US is facing a huge debt crisis caused by its gigantic war expenditures and bailouts of big finance capitalists. The government is now passing on the burden of crisis to the American people.

The US' overall debt hit the \$14.3 trillion threshold in the last few months. To be able to seek more credit to fund government operations, the US Congress was compelled to pass a new law raising the debt ceiling.

Before the law's passage, the Republicans and Democrats made a grand show of debating the bill's merits and demerits. In the end, the two parties agreed to raise the debt ceiling and undertake massive budgetary cuts in social services in the next ten years. Among the items that suffered reduced budgets were those for Medicare, Social Security and retirement benefits.

US Pres. Barack Obama and the Democrats even made noises about raising taxes on big corporations as well. In the end, they posed no objections to a year's cutbacks on public services worth more than a trillion dollars, the biggest in the country's history. Studies are underway on how to slash an additional \$1.5 trillion in social spending.

Debt crisis

The US debt ballooned in recent years, with its current debt of \$14.3 trillion almost at par with the country's Gross Domestic Product.

The main reason

behind the US' swollen debt are the huge sums spent by the government since 2008 in bailing out major banks, finance companies and other big businesses that had gone bankrupt. A study by the Federal Reserve (which serves as the US' central bank) shows that the US spent up to \$16 trillion for this in the form of secret loans that led to a growth in debt from \$9.2 trillion in 2007 to the current \$14.3 trillion.

Another reason is the government's burgeoning war expenditures and greater military spending, which shot up from \$259 billion in 2000 to \$560 billion in 2011. The latest studies from Brown University's Watson Institute for International Studies estimate the amount spent by the US on its military adventures in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan to be between \$3.2 trillion and \$4 trillion.

Still another major contributory factor were the huge tax breaks granted by the Bush regime to corporations in the red. One agency has put the amount spent for this at \$2.5 billion from 2008-2010.

Effects on the people

The brunt of the debt crisis is being

borne by none other than the American people. The debate on raising the debt ceiling was all sound and fury. In actual fact, however, not once did the political representatives of the big monopoly capitalists put to question the policies that led them so deep into this debt quagmire.

They never tried to recoup the multi-trillion dollar bailout funds given to imperialist corporations even if company presidents and other executives merely pocketed the amounts. They have not withdrawn their troops from the countries that they had attacked and are currently occupying.

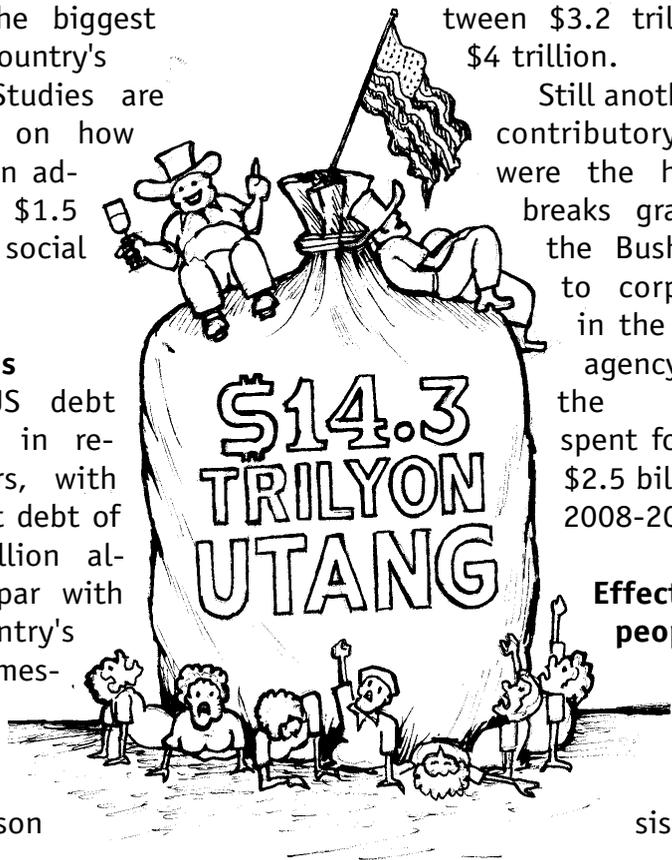
Instead, the Obama government has focused on budgetary slashes on social services like health care, education, housing, transportation and others that have already been suffering from inadequate funding. Social spending now accounts for only 15% of the country's total budget.

Under Obama's plan, American pensioners will be suffering an annual \$1,300 cut in benefits. Spending for Medicare will be slashed by \$300-500 billion. Another \$70 billion will be taken off the education budget.

Futile moves

Sooner or later, the futility of the Obama government's moves to resolve the country's swelling debt will become apparent. The growing US debt merely mirrors the fact that the entire economy continues to suffer from one of the worst recessions in the history of the international capitalist system.

The Obama government's actions have only exposed to the American people the bankruptcy of the entire capitalist system. This will surely push the American masses to launch big struggles in times to come. AB



Urban poor storm Ayala office

THE Kalipunan ng Damayang Mahihirap (KADAMAY) and the Alyansa Kontra-Demolisyon (AKD) launched a protest action on August 12 at the University of the Philippines-Ayala Techno Hub in Quezon City. They pelted mud at the gates of the Ayala office at the UP-Techno Hub and demanded a stop to the demolition of Sitio San Roque, Barangay North Triangle in Quezon City.

AKD chair Estrelita Bagasbas said that the community's poor residents are ready to defend their homes once more the same way they did in September 2010. Bagasbas taunted the Aquino regime against making another mistake of seizing the land in Sitio San Roque from the urban poor. KADAMAY accused Ayala of landgrabbing because of its insistence on taking over the lands in North Triangle at the expense of thousands of families who will lose their homes and livelihoods.

They likewise assailed the government for its failed relocation project in Montalban, Rizal, saying half of those who were brought there ended up returning to North Triangle because of the lack of livelihood opportunities in Montalban.

The urban poor groups declared that they would not relent until the government responds to their grievances.

UK government clamps down on people's uprising

BRITISH police arrested 1,103 persons, charged 654 of them and killed five protesters in a clampdown on the uprising launched by workers, youth and migrants this August in the United Kingdom (UK).

The uprising was triggered by a youth protest against the August 4 killing of Mark Duggan, a 29-year old Briton. Duggan's relatives and friends staged a protest on August 6 at the Tottenham Police Station to demand justice for his death. Policemen dispersed the protesters, firing up anger and discontent among the British youth. The protests surged, with the demonstrators demanding justice not only for Duggan but for all.

The protesters threw petrol bombs and bottles at the police who responded with gunfire, water cannons, tear gas and truncheons. The protesters likewise occupied a number of train stations and buildings. Classes were suspended and work places closed, and even a scheduled football game was cancelled. The uprising spread to other areas within London as well as to the nearby cities of Birmingham, Bristol, Liverpool and Manchester. On August 9, UK Prime Minister David Cameron ordered 16,000 policemen to put an end to the uprising which he disparagingly called "rioting." The police conducted house to house searches to arrest the people involved in the uprising.

The uprising, which was the biggest since 1980 was the people's response to their grinding poverty. The severe crisis that has gripped the UK for the past several years has spiked unemployment rates and spurred major budget cuts for social services. This was accompanied by upwardly spiralling prices of goods and services. A million youth from the age of 25 and younger or almost 20.3% of the UK's entire youth population are jobless.

Hundreds of thousands protest in Chile

UP to 100,000 students from various schools in Chile rallied on August 6 to demand government reforms in education. They called for a higher education budget and lower tuition fees in private schools. The Chilean government allots only the equivalent of 4.4% of the country's Gross National Product on education. This is lower than the 7.7% standard set by the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

Clashes erupted in Santiago as policemen dispersed the students using water cannons and tear gas bombs. Up to 874 students were arrested after the police broke up the more than weeklong protest action.

The series of protests began in May when students from a number of schools set up barricades. Hundreds of thousands of students had also joined a rally on June 30 on related issues.