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Editorial

Take advantage of the conflicts within the ruling classes

The ruling system is currently being shaken by a political crisis wrought by a series of attacks and counter-attacks launched against each other by rival reactionary cliques. The people and the revolutionary forces must take advantage of such conflicts.

The latest maneuverings concern the impeachment of Supreme Court Chief Justice Renato Corona by allies of Benigno Aquino III in Congress. Corona is a lackey of Gloria Arroyo who she appointed as Supreme Court chief justice just days before the end of her term as president. This was to ensure that she would have a defender within the highest court should she be prosecuted for her grave crimes against the people.

The people and the progressive parties in Congress supported Corona's impeachment because it was one of the necessary steps that had to be taken to do away with obstacles to Arroyo's indictment, trial and punishment. Aquino's allies had the same avowed objective in pushing for Corona's impeachment. Nonetheless, the people are aware that the Aquino ruling clique has other objectives as well in its efforts to oust Corona as Supreme Court chief justice.

Corona's ouster forms part of the landlord presi-

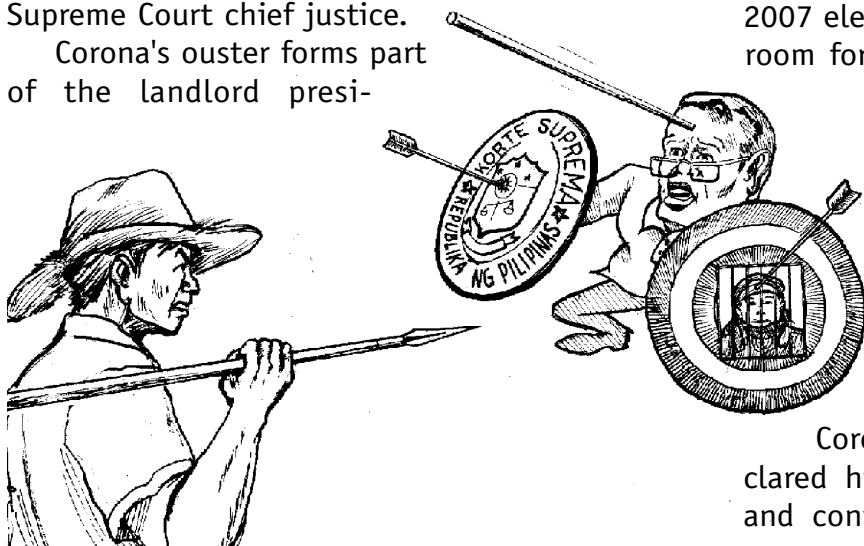
dent's counter-punch to the Supreme Court decision ordering the distribution of the lands within Hacienda Luisita. More important, Aquino wants to bring the entire Supreme Court to its knees and ensure its acquiescence to his regime's actions in the future.

The conflicts between the Aquino and Arroyo cliques reflect the difficulty of maintaining peaceful accommodation between the two rival factions. The Arroyo and Aquino camps had arrived at a US-brokered arrangement even before the 2010 elections where the Arroyo camp would allow an orderly transition of power in exchange for Aquino's leniency with respect to Arroyo.

But it has become quite untenable for Aquino to keep his end of the bargain in the face of the people's continuing demand to attain justice for Arroyo's crimes while she was president. By filing charges against Arroyo and detaining her, Aquino has been able to keep up appearances about his seriousness in prosecuting the Arroyos.

Of Arroyo's many grave transgressions, however, the Aquino regime chose to charge her for the relatively less serious crime of sabotaging the 2007 elections. It was a move calculated to make room for possible accommodations in the future between the two cliques. But the Arroyo camp's retaliatory blow—the Supreme Court decision on Hacienda Luisita—has gravely affected and piqued Aquino.

The Aquino clique's impeachment move against Corona has worsened the political crisis of the ruling system. Contrary to Aquino's design to force Corona into resigning, the latter has declared his readiness to lock horns with Aquino and confront the charges that have been filed



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against him. He has begun recruiting allies, especially among judges and lawyers. In attacking Aquino, Corona hopes to win the support of people disenchanted with the ruling regime.

Some elements of the ruling Liberal Party have been booted out for defying Aquino's orders to impeach Corona with dispatch. The fallout may even affect other branches of government such as the Senate. Aquino wants assurance that the person at the helm of the Upper House will be completely loyal to him, since it is the Senate which will serve as an impeachment court to try Corona,.

These maneuvers and counter-maneuvers by the rival cliques have deepened the fissures among the reactionary classes. These are positive developments for, and a matter that should be taken advantage of, by the people's revolutionary movement.

To benefit from all these troubles wrought on the ruling system by Corona's impeachment, we must use united front tactics to form alliances in order to isolate the ruling Aquino clique and make Arroyo pay for her crimes against the people.

The people's democratic and progressive forces must persevere in launching the broad movement to indict and punish

Arroyo. They must pursue the filing of cases against her for electoral fraud in the 2004 polls, violations of human rights and humanitarian law and grave cases of corruption and bribetaking. We must seize all opportunities to reach out to various groups and personalities, including those supportive of the Aquino regime but are not necessarily its rabid apologists. There must be concerted effort to be vigilant against possible accommodations between Aquino and Arroyo in the future.

We must also take advantage of the growing disappointment with Aquino of people who are not necessarily pro-Arroyo but who have been repelled by the high-handed and brutal attacks against Corona. If Corona truly wants to win the people's support, he must distance himself from Arroyo and lead the Supreme Court in siding with the people's interests and reverse its previous decisions on so many cases.

The people must challenge the Supreme Court to abrogate policies and laws that are oppressive to the people such as the practice of labor-only contracting, budget cuts on social services, demolitions of urban poor communities, the Oil Deregulation Law, the Mining


Act of 1995, the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program Extension with Reforms (CARPER) and the Foreign Investments Incentives Act, among others,

In order for the people to effectively use united front tactics, they must strengthen their ranks and broaden their mass struggles for their basic interests.

They must not relent in struggling against CARPER and for genuine land reform. They must persevere in struggling for patriotic economic policies that give premium to creating local employment, granting living wages and reducing the prices of petroleum products and other basic commodities. They must further strengthen and expand their struggles against budget cuts for health care, education and other social services and expose and oppose the regime's Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) scheme as a counterinsurgency tool and a bogus poverty alleviation program.

The people's revolutionary movement is sure to benefit from the political crisis of the ruling system. The deepening rifts among rival factions of the ruling class will definitely spill over to the AFP and PNP. Based on previous experience, disenchanted junior officers and the rank and file within the military and police will seek out the revolutionary forces.

The New People's Army must consciously plan for this eventuality and touch base with these officers and elements in order to be able to conduct political education among their ranks and win them over to the side of revolution. Simultaneously, the NPA must launch more frequent and bigger tactical offensives to weaken the armed machinery of the state, defeat the campaign of suppression against the people, strengthen the people's army and advance to the next higher stage of people's war. **AB**

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Corona's impeachment

Under Malacañang's baton, Congress fast-tracked the impeachment of Supreme Court Justice Renato Corona on December 12.

After a meeting by the Liberal Party and other members of the majority bloc that lasted only a few hours, the impeachment resolution gathered 188 signatures or more than a third of the 285 congresspersons—enough to transmit the complaint forthwith from the Lower House to the Senate.

The next day, the Senate was immediately convened as an impeachment court. It set the first day of Corona's trial on January 16th.

Corona was Arroyo's chief of staff when she was vice president. When he became an associate justice of the Supreme Court, most of his decisions favored the Arroyo regime's illegal, antipeople and repressive measures. He was appointed chief justice just days before Arroyo stepped down as president, despite a constitutional provision barring presidents from appointing anyone to a govern-

ment post 60 days before the end of their term.

As chief justice, Corona sided with the legal maneuvers of the Arroyo family. Most striking of these was the Supreme Court decision allowing Arroyo and her husband to travel abroad ostensibly for medical treatment. The Supreme Court decision overruled a Department of Justice order for the Arroyos to remain in the country to face an ongoing investigation of crimes involving Gloria Arroyo. This decision was rendered moot when charges were finally filed against Arroyo and an arrest warrant issued against her.

Holding Arroyo accountable. The seven representatives belonging to the Makabayan alliance (Bayan Muna, Anakpawis, Gabriela Women's Party, ACT Teachers Party List and Kabataan Partylist) supported Corona's impeachment. Said

Bayan Muna Rep. Teodoro Casiño, Corona must be held accountable for a long list of decisions that are antipeople and favorable to his patron Arroyo. Corona's impeachment is part and parcel of the struggle to hold Arroyo accountable for her crimes against the people.

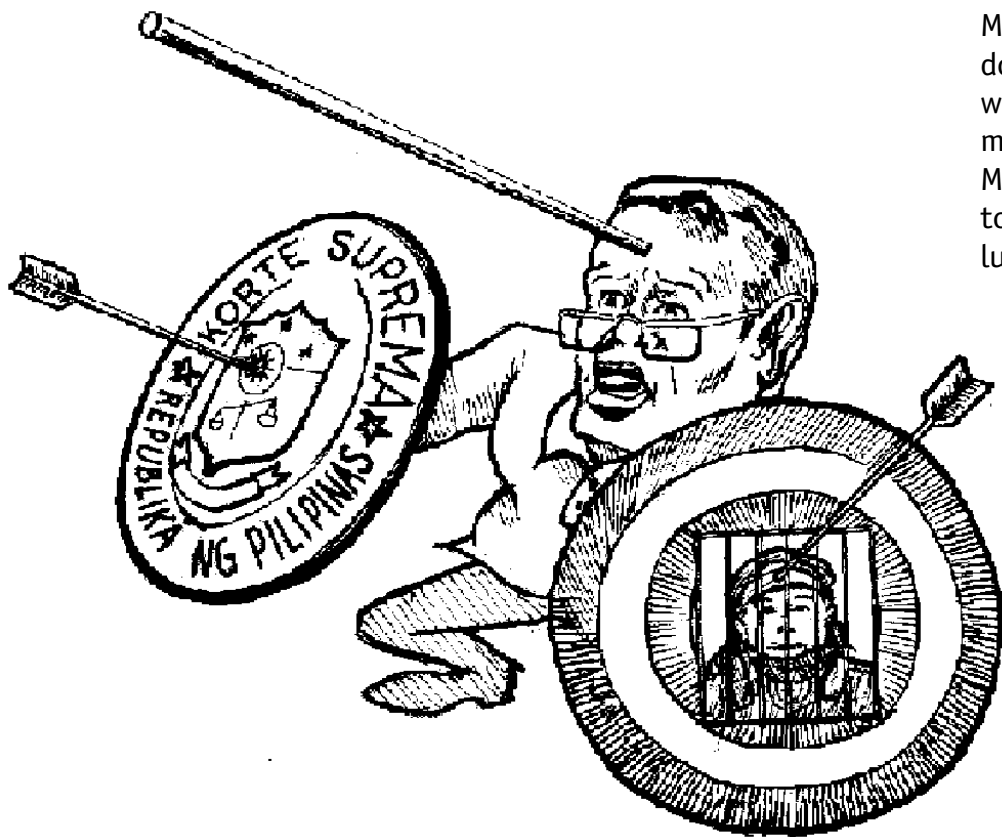
Corona has also been charged with betraying the public trust by voting in favor of repressive policies such as Executive Order 464 and Presidential Proclamation 1017. EO 464 was an Arroyo order barring members of the executive branch from attending Congressional and Senate investigations. Presidential Proclamation 1017 was Arroyo's declaration of a State of Emergency in 2006.

Corona was also against airing the wiretapped conversation of Arroyo and former COMELEC Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano in public. He also defended Romulo Neri's refusal to attend Senate hearings on the NBN-ZTE anomaly.

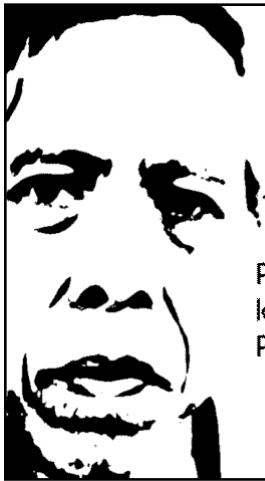
Not a few of the Aquino regime's allies have been disenchanted with the railroading of Corona's impeachment. Among them are Rep. Rodolfo Biazon of Muntinlupa and Rep. Hermilando Mandanas of Batangas who was forced to resign as chairman of the powerful Ways and Means Committee for his refusal to sign the impeachment resolution.

Meanwhile, contrary to Aquino's wishes, Corona has refused to resign. He declared this on December 14 before a gathering of his supporters from various courts in Metro Manila.

Corona describes his defense as a struggle against what he calls Aquino's "creeping" dictatorship whose aim is to make the Supreme Court his rubber stamp. **AB**



356 political prisoners go on hunger strike



KALAYAAN PARA KAY ALAN!

Palayain si Alan Jazmines at lahat ng konsultant ng NDF sa usapang pangkapayapaan!
Palayain ang lahat ng bilanggong pulitikal!

All of the 356 political prisoners held in various detention facilities nationwide staged a hunger strike from December 3 to December 10, the anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The coordinated hunger strike was held at the National Bilibid Prison, Camp Crame, Camp Bagong Diwa, Cebu, Calbayog, Tagum, Batangas, Laguna, Rizal and other detention centers in the country.

The hunger strike, the third to be conducted by political detainees this year was held to demand the immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners.

In Southern Tagalog, the region's 30 political detainees had their heads shaved before embarking on their hunger strike.

In Tagum, Davao del Norte, the 16 political prisoners being

held at the Mankilan detention center began their fast earlier, on November 27. They won the sympathy of the 500 regular inmates incarcerated at the same facility who joined them in their fast.

In solidarity with the political prisoners, various progressive musicians, theater artists and ex-detainees staged anew the multimedia presentation "Poldet: Panata

sa Kalayaan ng mga Detenido Pulitikal" (The Political Detainees' Ode to Freedom) on December 10.

Meanwhile, with the help of supporters, political prisoners Alan Jazmines and Eduardo Sarmiento held an exhibit of their paintings at the Sining Kamalig Gallery at Gateway Mall in Cubao, Quezon City. The exhibit called "Painting Freedom" featured works showing various scenes inside prison and expressing their thoughts, grievances and hopes.

Jazmines and Sarmiento are both NDFP consultants in the peace talks who were arrested by the military, in violation of the provisions of the JASIG.

Both Jazmines and Sarmiento consider painting as part of their struggle, especially while they are deprived of the opportunity to pursue their revolutionary tasks. Their series of works is entitled "Piitan, Loob at Labas." (Prison, Within and Without) The exhibit runs from December 18 to December 30.

Friends and relatives of political prisoners detained at the PNP Custodial Center in Camp Crame also picketed the detention facility on December 3 to support demands for their release. AB

Palparan-style terrorism persists under Aquino

The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) welcomed the Department of Justice's decision to file charges of kidnapping and serious illegal detention against Gen. Jovito Palparan on December 16, but noted that the move was a much belated one. General Palparan was charged in connection with the 2006 abduction of University of the Philippines students Karen Empeño and Sherlyn Cadapam and peasant activist Manuel Merino. The victims have not been surfaced to date.

Charged with General Palparan were Lt. Col. Felipe Anotado Jr., M/Sgt. Rizal Hilario

and S/Sgt. Edgardo Osorio. The Malolos Regional Trial Court Branch 14 issued an arrest war-

rant on December 20 for General Palparan, a day after he attempted to leave the country.

Although charging General Palparan and holding him accountable for abducting Empeño et al is a positive development, it is a small matter considering the long list of brutal acts committed by the butcher general and other key officials of the Arroyo regime. They must

be charged with widespread violations of human rights and humanitarian law.

The CPP pointed out that under Oplan Bayanihan, the AFP continues to resort to the same terror tactics utilized by General Palparan. The AFP's so-called civil-military operations involve, among others the imposition of curfews, food blockades and restrictions on people's movements. Extrajudi-

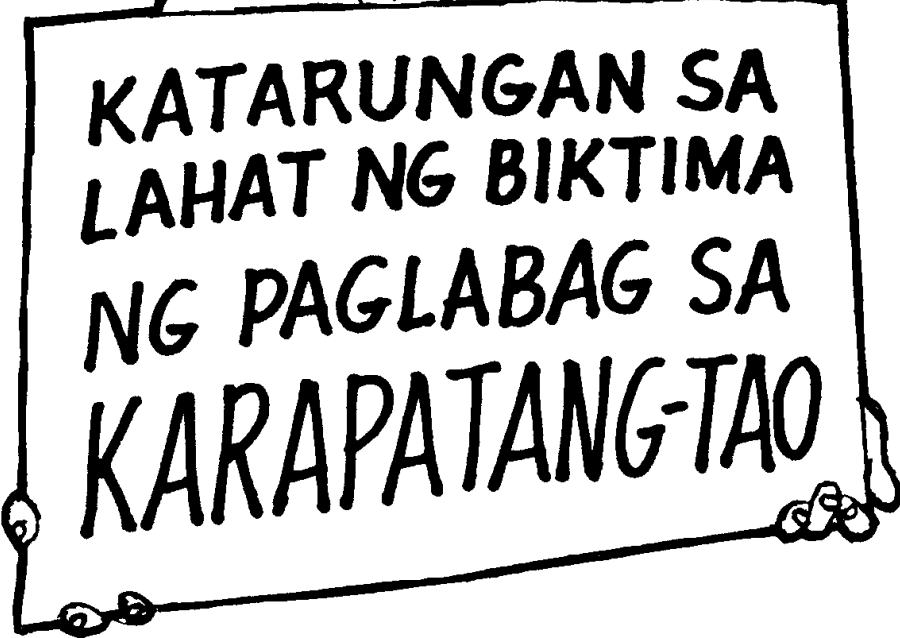
cial killings, abductions and illegal arrests also go on unabated.

The same sentiments were expressed by some 2,500 persons who gathered on December 10 at the foot of Mendiola Brudge to commemorate the 63rd anniversary of International Human Rights Day. They assailed the continuing human rights violations under

the Aquino regime and the terror being sown under Oplan Bayanihan. They also slammed the series of demolitions of urban poor communities. Similar rallies were held in the cities of Davao, Iloilo, Bacolod, Cagayan de Oro and Cotabato. Filipinos led by BAYAN-USA also rallied at Times Square in New York City.

The rally at Mendiola formed part of a five-day protest to occupy Mendiola that was begun on December 6 by youth groups. The protest action, which was to take the form of a campout was repeatedly and violently dispersed by the police to prevent the students from coming near Malacañang. On December 7, the police arrested four students but were compelled to release them the day after when UP officials and other progressive groups condemned the arrests.

Tensions eased on December 8 to 10, enabling the students to set up camp near Mendiola. They were joined by students from Southern Tagalog, the Kilusang Mayo Uno, Migrante International and peasants from Hacienda Luisita. AB



Peasant activist slain in Mindoro

Suspected elements of the 80th IB killed Guillermo Castillo, 46, in Sitio Tuguilan, Barangay Tayamaan, Mamburao, Occidental Mindoro on December 13. Castillo, a member of a local farmers' organization in Mamburao was shot in front of his wife in his house by a man wearing a ski mask. He is the brother of Eulogio "Eli" Castillo, one of the "Morong 43"—health workers illegally arrested and detained in February 2010.

The Castillo family had long been under military surveillance. Guillermo Castillo is the 66th victim of extrajudicial killing under the Aquino regime. AB

10-day rampage by 702nd Bde in Nueva Ecija and Aurora

Elements of the 48th, 81st and 56th IB and the 72nd Division Reconnaissance Company under the 702nd Bde wrought havoc on the lives of residents of Gabaldon, Bongabon and Laur towns in Nueva Ecija and areas along the Nueva Ecija-Aurora border on November 25-December 5.

In Sitio Baong, Barangay Labi, Bongabon, the masses were forced to stop their wood-gathering activities out of fear after the military forbade them from going up the mountains. Wood-gathering is their only source of income.

Failing to find any Red fighters in the area, the military burned three of the woodmen's huts and stole the masses' food, clothes and blankets. AB

CPP declares 6-day ceasefire

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and its Military Commission ordered all units and commands of the New People's Army (NPA) and people's militia to implement a ceasefire from 12:00 a.m. of December 24 to 11:59 p.m. of December 26 and from 12 a.m. of December 31 to 11:59 p.m. of January 2, 2012.

The ceasefire has been called to express solidarity with the Filipino people's traditional celebration of the Christmas and New Year holidays. It will also provide opportunity for comrades and the masses to commemorate the 43rd founding anniversary of the CPP on December 26.

The ceasefire is particularly significant in that it paves the way for Red fighters and other revolutionary forces in calamity-stricken areas to mobilize the masses and help in their rehabilitation.

On the aforesaid periods, all units and commands of the NPA and people's militia will cease and desist from launching of-

fensive operations against armed units and personnel of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), Philippine National Police (PNP) and paramilitary forces of the Government of the Philippines (GPH).

Officers and personnel of the AFP and PNP who do not have serious crimes against the people will be allowed to enter territories of the people's democratic government to visit relatives and friends.

During the unilateral ceasefire, all units and commands of the NPA and people's militia should assume a defensive posture on both the tactical and strategic levels.

They must remain vigilant against any attempt by the armed commands and units of the GPH to attack the territory of the people's democratic government, put it under surveillance or subject it to offensive operations. They must go on active defense only when there is clear and present danger.

All units and commands of the NPA and people's militia are also reminded of the fact that despite an earlier ceasefire declaration by the Government of the Philippines, the armed units of the military and police continue their surveillance and other operations to control the people in accordance with the Oplan Bayanihan war of suppression. All revolutionary forces are enjoined to be on maximum alert against hostile enemy acts and report them to the appropriate NPA command and to the leadership of the CPP and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines. **AB**

CPP condoles with victims of typhoon Sendong

The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) extended its condolences to the estimated hundred thousand people of Mindanao and the Visayas afflicted by typhoon Sendong which struck their areas on December 17-18. In a statement dated December 18, the CPP also slammed officials of the Aquino regime for blaming the people for allegedly failing to heed storm warnings. Close to a thousand people were killed and more than 400 remain missing, as of the latest tally. Most of those killed drowned in rampaging flood waters that hit the cities of Cagayan de Oro and Iligan. More than 30 people likewise perished in Negros Oriental.

Also struck by the storm were the rural, urban and coastal areas of Northern Mindanao, including the Surigao and Agusan provinces as well as the Zamboanga and Lanao provinces, Bukidnon and Davao del Norte, Davao Oriental and Compostela Valley and the islands of Siargao, Dinagat and

Camiguin. The cities of Dumatague, Valencia and Tanjay in Negros Oriental were also inundated.

Sendong's casualties far surpassed those of typhoon Ondoy, showing poor disaster-preparedness on the part of government despite lessons from previous calamities. Said

the CPP, the government cannot cover up its own negligence by heaping blame on the people.

Typhoon Sendong's tragic aftermath is the result of the widespread denudation of mountains and severe siltation of rivers, all leading to flash floods. The situation demands renewed calls for an immediate stop to the environmentally destructive activities of real estate developers and huge plantations, mining and logging companies.

The CPP added that concerned regional commands of the New People's Army may declare a temporary cessation of tactical offensives in order to concentrate efforts on mobilizing the masses in rehabilitating themselves from the losses incurred in this huge disaster. **AB**



Ambush in Antique, harassment in Leyte

The New People's Army (NPA) launched an ambush in Antique and a harassment operation in Leyte in the second week of December.

The Red fighters under the Napoleon Tugmagtang Command (NPA-Southern Front-Panay) seized three high-powered firearms in an ambush on military and paramilitary forces in Sitio Igbaklag, Barangay Aningalan, San Remigio, Antique on December 9.

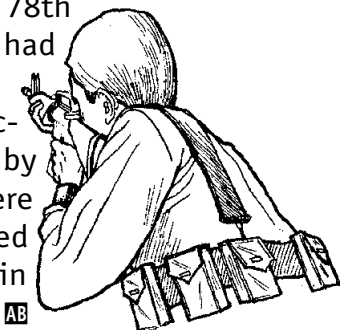
According to initial reports, a seven-man unit from the Philippine Army 12th IB "Cadre Battalion" was conducting clearing operations in the mountainous areas of San Remigio when they were ambushed. Confiscated by the NPA were an M14, an M16, a carbine and rounds of ammunition. Also seized was the enemy's communications radio.

Killed were Cpl. Absalom Labitan, commander of the 12th IB detachment in Barangay Aningalan and two elements of the Civilian Armed Auxiliary (CAA).

Meanwhile, Red fighters under the Mt. Amandewin Command (NPA-Leyte) rained bullets on operating troops from the 78th IB in Burauen town, Leyte in the morning of December 11. The harassment action against the military was launched along the boundary of Barangay Villa Aurora and Barangay Roxas, according to a report from the Efren Martires Command (NPA-Eastern Visayas). It was part of the people's army's support for the struggle of Barangay Roxas villagers against military operations that have been endangering them and disrupting their livelihood.

The villagers had already complained to the Burauen town mayor about the militarization of their areas which was begun by the 4th Special Forces Company at the end of November and continued by the 78th IB, but no action had been taken.

The harassment action belied claims by the AFP that there were no longer any armed revolutionary forces in Leyte.



Successful antifeudal struggles in Cagayan Valley

A successful region-wide campaign was held in Cagayan Valley to alleviate the difficulties of people who had been affected by a series of calamities. The successes were achieved by the people acting in concert to assert their demands. Through this, they were able to improve their income and attain some measure of relief.

On October 2, peasants confronted local merchant-usurers in Lasam, Cagayan to demand that they be granted a reprieve from paying their debts since their crops had been damaged by a series of typhoons.

The confrontation-dialogue culminated in a signed agreement witnessed by representatives of the Lasam local government, merchants from Lasam, members of Kagimongan and Anakpawis-Cagayan and representatives of Alyansa Dagiti Mannalon ti Ili Ti Piat, Rizal, Sto. Niño ken Lasam, along with about 500 farmers. They agreed on the following:

The peasants will have a reprieve from paying interest for the second cropping of 2009, the first and second croppings of 2010 and the first and second croppings of 2011 because of the damage wrought by typhoons Ondoy, Pepeng and Juan. The palay they planted during the first cropping of 2011 also failed to flower because of the rain and cold brought about by typhoon Mina. The farmers will pay the principal, however. But those who suffered 50% or more damage to their crops or products will be exempted. They will start paying back their debts once they recover.

As for how much interest to pay, they agreed that only 16% will be imposed per cropping on debts in kind such as fertilizer and pesticides, while ₱15 for every ₱1,000.00 cash loan will be charged per cropping. The practice of charging compounded interest will be stopped.

The confrontation-dialogue was part of a region-wide Calamity Demand campaign.

Merchants will be allowed a profit of only ₱1.00 per kilo of rice or corn, with the price based on the prevailing market price at the time. In particular, corn should be sold for only ₱11.50 per kilo in Isabela and ₱10.50 per kilo in Lasam town.

In classifying products, only two categories

will be allowed during the main cropping—dry and fresh weight. During the rainy season, however, there may be several classifications of palay and corn, depending on the variety. Merchants from other areas should not be prevented from coming in to buy the farmers' products, especially if they offer higher prices.

The farmers conscientiously prepared for the confrontation. They embarked on a widespread campaign to inform and explain to others from as far as Rizal, Sto. Niño and other areas of Lasam what their demands were. They distributed flyers and leaflets with the help of other farmers. They also made placards and banners, some of which they set afloat in the river on improvised rafts. They held small mass actions in several warehouses to make the merchants aware of their grievances and invite them to attend the confrontation-dialogue. A day before the dialogue, they spoke over the radio to present their demands, explain their struggle and invite even more people to attend the activity.

During the dialogue, the farmers also demanded the implementation of a 2004 agreement which the merchants failed to comply with. They agreed, among others, that sacks should be provided for free by the merchants and not be charged against the price paid for their produce. Farm produce should also be weighed first before holes are punched in the sacks to collect samples for classification. Hauling produce towards the highway (from Abariongan Uneg, Intic, Sicalao up to Centro Lasam) should also be free of charge. There should be a stop to the practice of requiring collateral (in the form of land titles, carabaos or hous-

es) and confiscating these from farmers or filing cases in court against them when they default on their debts.

The campaign for relief and rehabilitation after the storms includes efforts to ensure that farmers who are victims of calamities do receive the appropriate supplies and funds from government agencies. Up to 4,223 families from Isabela and Nueva Vizcaya benefited from this campaign.

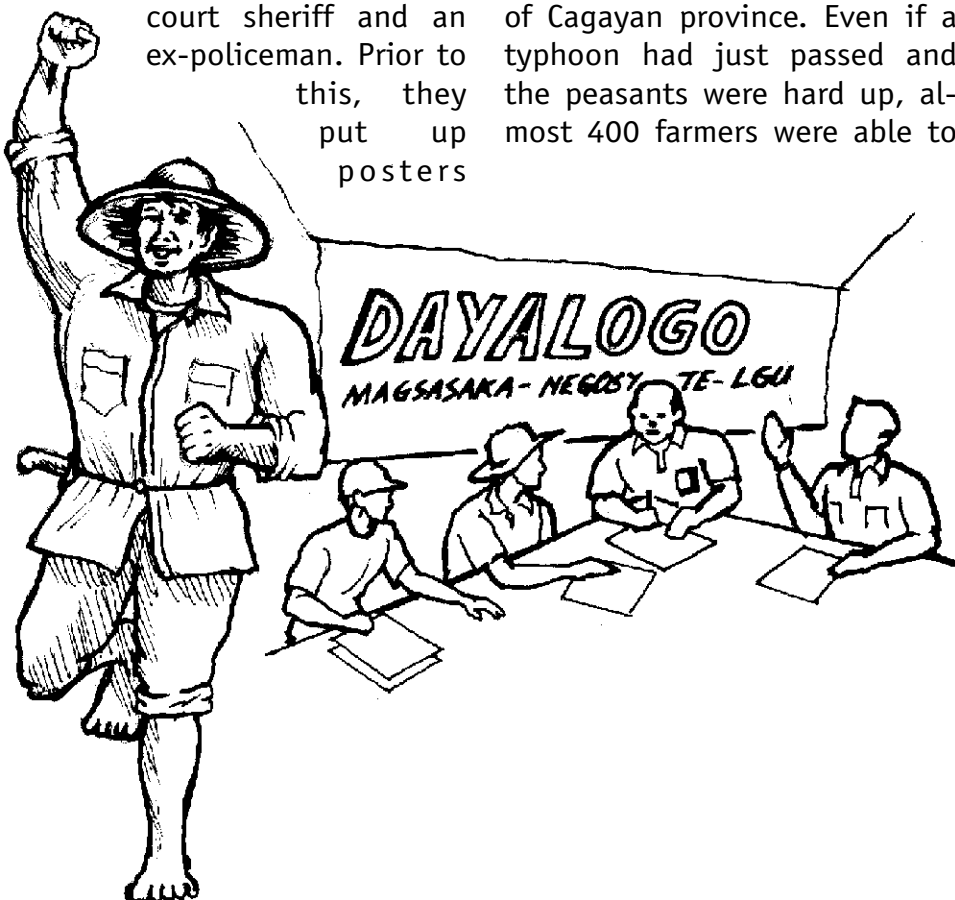
Other mass actions in Cagayan Valley. In the last quarter of 2011, farmers from Isabela launched continuing mass actions through their provincial organizations such as the Danggayan dagiti Mannalon ti Isabela (DAGAMI) and AMADA (Alyansa dagiti Mannalon a Maapaidaman ti Daga or Alliance of Peasants Deprived of Land). They conducted the following:

"Bungkalan" or collectively tilling land. Farmers from Alicia, Isabela gathered on November 10 to reclaim and till lands that had been seized by a usurer and barricaded by the court sheriff and an ex-policeman. Prior to this, they put up posters

all over the Alicia town center to support the "bungkalan" campaign.

Caravan for peace and agrarian reform. Farmers launched a caravan on September 10 to call for peace and a stop to the widespread seizure of farmers' lands. Peasants from Cordon, San Mateo and Alicia, Isabela as well as church workers joined the caravan. A Peasant-Lawyers-Church Forum for Genuine Agrarian Reform held on September 13 was attended by attorneys and church people supportive of the peasant movement.

Participation in big mobilizations. Farmers from the towns of Dupax, Bagabag and Solano in Nueva Vizcaya; Nagtipunan, Maddela and Saguday in Quirino; and Cordon, San Mateo, Echague, Jones and Alicia in Isabela launched a caravan on October 15. They gathered in Cordon and marched towards Santiago City, Isabela's capital where they held a picket-rally. After this, they joined the caravan and campout/rally in Tuguegarao City, the capital of Cagayan province. Even if a typhoon had just passed and the peasants were hard up, almost 400 farmers were able to



make it to this activity.

Close to a hundred farmers joined the Peasants' Week mobilization from October 15-22 in Mendiola from various towns in Isabela, Nueva Vizcaya and Quirino. During the mass action, the farmers accosted three intelligence agents who wanted to disrupt the activity and intimidate the peasants. The farmers took the agents' firearms and cellphones.

Women's mass action. On October 28, almost 700 women activists were able to launch a march-rally in the center of Santiago. Most of the participants who joined the commemoration of the International Day of Rural Women were members of GABRIELA chapters in the province. New and impressive women leaders from the semiproletariat also joined the activity. **AB**

NDF-Cagayan assails Dy dynasty

The National Democratic Front in Cagayan strongly assailed a decision by the Sangguniang Panlalawigan ng Cagayan to purchase weapons worth P30 million. Said NDF-Cagayan spokesperson Salvador del Pueblo, the weapons will be used for Gov. Faustino "Bodjie" Dy III's private army and other repressive forces to bolster the rule of his political dynasty over Isabela.

To cover up the formation of a private army, Dy outrageously claimed that the weapons were needed to protect key installations and offices in Isabela. In fact, the firearms were acquired to realize the Aquino regime's plans of stepping up surveillance and repressive operations against Filipinos opposed to the current regime's oppressive practices.

The weapons will be used to arm so-called force multipliers in the cities and countryside—for instance, the Police Auxiliary Forces in the barrios and the Public Order and Safety Units in the towns. All these will be used by the Dy dynasty to suppress the people, prepare for the next election

against its political enemies and reinforce its repressive rule.

Del Pueblo said that arms purchases cannot solve the problems of hunger, lack of decent housing, health services and other needs, especially with the onslaught of typhoons Pedring and Quiel on the people. Many farmers suffered damage to their crops, houses, schools, bridges and other infrastructure as a result of calamities. Thousands of overseas Filipino workers from the Middle East had lost their jobs and are in need of training and capital to start anew. These are the things that are more deserving of funding, and not the beefing up of private armies, Del Pueblo concluded.

Strikes paralyze US, Canadian ports

Activists of the Occupy movement succeeded in halting the operations of more than ten major ports in the US and Canadian West Coast on December 12 despite intense suppression by the police and the government's attempts to divide the protesters' ranks.

The coordinated strike was led by more than 12 groups of Occupy Wall Street (OWS) based in the US West Coast with strong backing from dock workers and teamsters. The strike was accompanied by other forms of protest like blockades, pickets, marches and rallies launched by more than 40 groups supporting the Occupy movements in the US, Canada and Tokyo, Japan.

The strike was launched to condemn the police's continuing violent attacks on activists and the demolition of more than 60 camps of the Occupy movement across the country.

The port of Oakland, California was paralyzed for 24 hours

when more than 10,000 protesters blocked its terminal gates. Port operations were also paralyzed for half a day in Portland, Oregon; Longview, Seattle; Houston, Texas; and Vancouver, Canada. There was partial paralysis for two to three hours in the ports in Long Beach, Los Angeles and San Diego, California. In Anchorage, Alaska, dock worker activists staged a rally.

The ports in Los Angeles, Long Beach and Oakland are among the five busiest ports in the US while that in Vancouver is the biggest port in Canada and the entire West Coast of North America. **AB**

Iran downs US' most modern drone

The armed forces of Iran downed the US' most advanced unmanned aerial vehicle (or drone) in Kashmar, eastern Iran on December 4. The drone was being used by the US to conduct aerial surveillance on Iran.

The downed drone is an RQ-170 Sentinel, known as a stealth drone because it is difficult to detect by radar. It has practically no metal parts and uses a special kind of paint that makes it invisible to radar. It is effective in surveilling targets that are as much as 50,000 feet away because it utilizes high-tech sensors, video cameras and the like. Its wings are designed to mimic bat's wings for flexibility and maneuverability through narrow paths during low altitude flights.

The US was doubly embarrassed when Iranian authorities disclosed that they were able to capture the drone via "electronic ambush" or by overriding the US' electronic control over it. The Iranians were thus able to get hold of the drone without inflicting too much damage.

The Central Intelligence Agency still refuses to acknowledge responsibility despite US Pres. Barack Obama's formal appeal to Iran to return the downed drone. Iran has refused to do so, and has instead filed a complaint with the United Nations, accusing the US of launching provocative and clandestine actions that violate international law.

The US has stepped up its aerial surveillance of the country since it branded Iran in 2003 of being part of the "axis of evil".

This is the third time Iran has downed a US drone this year. The first was in January and the second in July.

Workers picket DOLE office vs contractualization

MEMBERS of the Kilusang Mayo Uno picketed the main office of the Department of Labor and Employment in Manila on December 16 to assail the agency's latest order bolstering widespread contractualization in the country. Contrary to the DOLE's claims that DO 2008-A Series of 2011 would put a stop to contractualization, the new order merely identifies "legitimate" contractors and sub-contractors and is clearly a scheme by DOLE and the Aquino regime to make contractualization palatable.

The KMU said that the latest DOLE order is in accordance with the Aquino regime's antiworker policy. Contractualization has become more widespread this year after the Supreme Court issued a decision upholding a scheme by the Philippine Airlines management to terminate its workers and hire contractuels instead.

In a related development, the KMU called on the government to give justice and grant compensation to five workers of SM who were seriously injured in an accident on December 15 in Davao City. The workers were repairing a part of the SM building when the canopy they were standing on collapsed. The KMU fears that they would suffer the same fate as the workers who died in an accident at the Eton Properties construction site in January. Eton Properties continues to refuse to pay damages to the families of the victims on the pretext that the casualties were not regular employees of the company.

Most of the workers of the Henry Sy-owned SM are contractual. Sy is one of the Aquino regime's closest cronies.

Meanwhile, overseas Filipino workers (OFW) led by Migrante International declared December 18 "Zero Remittance Day" (ZRD).

The local economy relies on OFW remittances to keep afloat. Thus, any disruption in their flow is sure to have an effect on the operations of big businessmen, banks and even the reactionary government.

Migrante said depriving the Aquino regime of their remittances for a day was a form of protest against the government's disregard for their situation abroad. ZRD is also the migrants' reaction to the regime's inutility to come to the aid of endangered workers, such as the migrant who was executed in China on December 8.