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Editorial

End the pro-imperialist and antipeople economic system

The Filipino people gravely abhor their continuously deteriorating economic conditions under the US-Aquino regime. After a year and a half in power, Benigno Aquino III has clearly demonstrated that his regime is no different from the Arroyo regime and all other past regimes in terms of economic policy and its inability to address the people's poverty and hunger.

The problems of unemployment, low wages and rising costs of petroleum products, food and other basic commodities and services go on unabated. Landlessness, lack of housing for the urban poor and epidemics run rampant even as education and health services continue to deteriorate. Massive environmental destruction has moreover aggravated the people's economic hardship.

Social inequality has become increasingly stark, with the masses of workers, peasants, farm workers, minority peoples, ordinary employees, small professionals, students and other sectors living lives of growing wretchedness and big foreign capitalists and their big comprador capitalist, landlord and bureaucrat capitalist cohorts living ever more profligately by intensifying their exploitation and oppression of the toiling masses, plundering the nation's natural resources and wielding reactionary state power to favor and protect their businesses and properties.

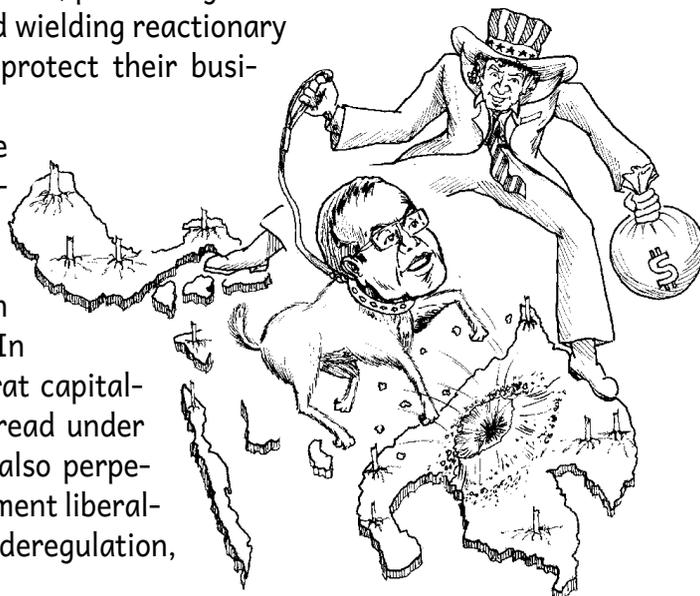
The Aquino regime would have the people believe that it is taking the righteous road in contrast to the rampant corruption of the previous regime. In fact, not only are bureaucrat capitalism and corruption widespread under the Aquino regime. It has also perpetrated the trade and investment liberalization policies as well as deregulation,

privatization and denationalization—the very same ones enforced by Arroyo during her time.

Laws on deregulation remain in effect and continue to be used by big foreign capitalists and their cohorts to raise the prices of oil, water, power, train fares, toll fees and medical and educational services with impunity. Deregulation also continues to serve as the framework for justifying state budgetary reductions in social services and giving free rein to the private sector of big capitalists and compradors to commercialize schools, hospitals and roads, among others.

Trade and investment liberalization policies that have provided the context for laws such as the Mining Act of 1995, the Foreign Investments Incentives Act, the Omnibus Investments Code and provisions of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) continue to cause great destruction to the local forces of production, especially the masses of Filipino workers. To attract foreign investments, wages have been frozen to provide cheap labor. Casualization, contractualization and other flexible labor systems continue without letup.

The Aquino regime



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continues to favor foreign big capitalists by granting them tax holidays and easing restrictions on profit and capital remittances and repatriation. It protects the operations of foreign big mining companies and allows the latter to plunder the country's mineral wealth, ostensibly to generate employment. The mining companies' less than 1% contribution to employment generation comes at the cost of depleted natural resources and irreversible environmental damage.

The liberalization of the agricultural sector has for decades been invoked by big capitalist countries to dump their agricultural products in the Philippines to the detriment of local agricultural production. The liberalization of this sector has allowed the entry of foreign big agro-corporations that have been propagating seeds, pesticides and other products that have eroded self-reliant production and tied local production to expensive foreign capital goods. Foreign big multinational corporations continue to seize vast tracts of land.

Big landlords, merchants and foreign big capitalists have intensified their exploitation and oppression of peasants and farm workers.

Aquino has allocated a huge portion of the government budget to serve the interests of foreign big capitalists through the Public-Private Partnership Program (PPP). Through the PPP, major infrastructure projects are ceded to foreign big capitalists and their local business partners. The projects are funded by government money and state-guaranteed loans contracted from foreign banks. As in the case of the Light Rail Transit, the South Luzon Expressway and similar projects, the private sector of big capitalists is eventually given full control to amass profits.

The Aquino regime's economic policies are all geared towards the perpetuation of the current semicolonial and semifeudal system. These policies intensify the exploitation and oppression of the toiling masses and the Filipino people. They condemn the entire country to crisis. They

stunt local industries and prevent the emergence of an independent and self-reliant economy. They perpetuate monopoly control over land. They destroy local production and generate problems of mass unemployment. Instead, the regime contents itself with exporting labor to other countries and concocting short-term showcase programs that generate temporary employment.

The poverty and oppression of the Filipino people are bound to worsen in the face of plans by the Aquino regime to further open the Philippine economy to comply with US imperialist dictates.

The crisis is pushing the Filipino people towards the path of mass struggle to fight for their democratic interests. The worsening crisis that has been bludgeoning the Filipino people is creating conditions that rouse them to awareness of the basic problems that lie at the roots of their poverty and suffering.

It is the duty of the revolutionary forces to reach out to the people in their millions and rouse them to the need for national and democratic change. The revolutionary and progressive forces must thoroughly expose the roots of crisis and dispel counterrevolutionary and reformist ideas being propagated by the imperialists through schools, the mass media, the internet and other information channels.

The revolutionary forces must persevere in mobilizing millions upon millions of people to tread the path of people's war and advance it to the next higher stage. Growing numbers are becoming conscious of the fact that the Filipino people's welfare can best be ensured only under a government that truly serves their interests. **AB**

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Confront onerous policies with massive protests

The Communist Party of the Philippines stands in solidarity with the Filipino people in condemning foreign oil companies for raising the prices of petroleum products four times in merely 20 days. These oil price increases come on top of a hike in water rates of P2.335 per cubic meter starting January 1 and higher power rates imposed by companies owned big bourgeois compradors like the Lopez and Aboitiz families.

The CPP also condemns the US-Aquino regime for turning a deaf ear to the people's sufferings, its intransigence in imposing the 12% Value-Added Tax on petroleum products and its continuing implementation of privatization and deregulation which adds to the Filipino people's burdens. Particularly onerous to the people are the oil deregulation law, the Electric Power Industry Reform Act of 2001 (R.A. 9136) or EPIRA which has spurred hikes in power rates, and the law that privatizes water services.

In the face of these unceasing hardships imposed on the people, the CPP called on workers' unions and people's organizations to resist hikes in oil, water and power rates by launching huge protest actions. The CPP cited the mass actions launched by the Nigerian people who have recent-

ly been victimized by an oil price hike of close to 130% after the withdrawal of government oil subsidies. Nigerians in their numbers collectively waged strikes, work stoppages and demonstrations. After a week of protest actions, the Nigerian government effected a 35% reduction in fuel prices.

In the Philippines, the Pagkakaisa ng Samahan ng mga Tsuper at Operators Nationwide (PISTON) trooped to the Pilipinas Shell office in Makati City on January 11 to condemn the latest round of oil price hikes. Diesel prices rose by up to P1.50 per liter while gasoline prices were marked up by P1.75 per liter. Oil prices were earlier raised on January 3, with diesel prices hiked by 30 centavos per liter and gasoline, by 70 centavos per liter.

PISTON chair George San Mateo blasted the foreign oil cartel for exploiting conflicts in the Middle East to raise the prices of petroleum products artificially despite the absence of an actual war or a shortage in oil supplies. The regime has likewise been cashing in on the oil price hikes by collecting more taxes.

AB

Supreme Court: Tribunal of the ruling classes

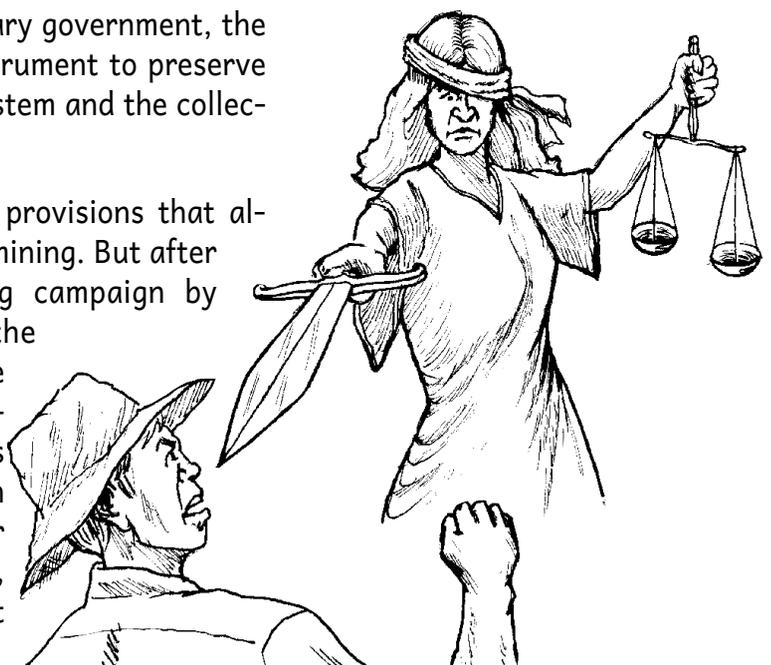
The Supreme Court has been placed at the center of factional struggles among the ruling classes with the ruling Aquino clique's attempts to oust Chief Justice Renato Corona. Nonetheless, like other branches of the reactionary government, the Supreme Court has historically served as an instrument to preserve the puppet, rotten and repressive reactionary system and the collective interest of the ruling classes.

Under the past regime, the Supreme Court issued a series of decisions favoring Gloria Arroyo's pro-imperialist and anti-people policies, among them the Mining Act of 1995, the Expanded Value-Added Tax and the oil deregulation law.

The Supreme Court declared the Mining Act of 1995 unconstitutional in January 2004 be-

cause of its provisions that allow foreign mining. But after a pro-mining campaign by Arroyo, the Supreme Court reversed its own decision in December of that year, justifying it

by saying that it had no power to prevent the president and the cabinet from entering into contracts with foreign companies. Also in 2004, the Supreme Court declared constitutional Arroyo's order expanding the scope of





him associate justice in 2002. Before his appointment to the Supreme Court, Corona served as Arroyo's spokesperson when she was still vice president. When Arroyo became president, Corona served as her chief of staff, spokesperson and executive secretary.

the Value-Added Tax. (The Expanded VAT, a law that did not pass through Congress was strongly opposed by the people). The Supreme Court had also previously reversed its ruling on the oil deregulation law despite the continued existence of a monopoly in the oil industry. It had earlier struck down the law because of the prevailing oil cartel in the country.

Even in individual cases, the majority of Supreme Court decisions were on the side of foreign capitalists, big bourgeoisie and landlords favored by the president in power. One example involves the Supreme Court decision on September 7, 2011 declaring the termination by Philippine Airlines (PAL) of 1,400 stewards and stewardesses illegal. A month after, it reversed its decision on a mere technicality.

Corona and Arroyo's relationship. In the majority of cases, a Supreme Court justice's votes or decisions are in accordance with the interests of the appointing president and his or her patrons. This is apparent in the record of the current chief justice Renato Corona who has been impeached by the Lower House and is now facing trial at the Senate. Arroyo appointed

The Supreme Court decision overturning a November 2011 order of the Department of Justice banning the Arroyo couple from traveling abroad is but one of the many pro-Arroyo rulings issued by the high tribunal under Corona. The Supreme Court had earlier overruled Congress' impeachment of Merceditas Gutierrez, another Arroyo lackey.

In Corona's nine-year stint at the Supreme Court, up to 78% of his decisions on political cases favored the Arroyo camp. He upheld Presidential Proclamation 1017 issued in 2006 which imposed a martial law-like state of emergency nationwide. The majority of the Supreme Court declared PP 1017 unconstitutional but Corona issued a dissenting opinion. Corona also took Arroyo's side on Executive Order 464 which barred department heads and agency chiefs from attending and testifying in the series of Congressional and Senate investigations then being held on corruption in the Arroyo regime. He also upheld National Economic Development Authority director Romulo Neri's decision not to testify on the anomalous arrangements entered into by the Arroyo couple with the Chinese-owned ZTE company.

Corona had likewise defend-

ed the Arroyo camp when it launched the "People's Initiative" to introduce amendments to the 1987 Constitution that would have extended the terms of incumbent officials.

The control wielded by the ruling clique on the chief justice or the majority of Supreme Court justices is crucial. Arroyo had appointed up to 21 justices during her term. Even if the Supreme Court had gone maverick under Chief Justice Reynato Puno (2006-2010), it was never a threat to her rule. Thus, before Arroyo stepped down as president, she lost no time in putting Corona at the court's helm.

Aquino is himself aware of the Supreme Court's importance in his family and clique's rule. The Supreme Court decision ordering the distribution of Hacienda Luisita's lands to its farmers and farm workers was a big blow to him and his family. Earlier, the Supreme Court had also struck down the Truth Commission that Aquino had ostensibly formed to prosecute Arroyo. Aquino, has, from the very beginning, refused to recognize Corona as a legitimate chief justice.

The essentially reactionary and filthy character of the rival Aquino and Arroyo-Corona camps is increasingly being brought to the fore as the conflicts between the two cliques intensify.

Just a few days into the Corona trial, Hacienda Luisita Inc. (HLI) filed a motion of reconsideration and clarification before the Supreme Court on its decision to distribute the hacienda lands and abolish the SDO scheme. HLI also plans to file a motion to ban Corona from joining any of the court's deliberations on the hacienda. **AB**

Chief Justice Corona on trial

Chief Justice Renato Corona's trial at the Senate began on January 16.

The Filipino people have been focused on this trial because they consider it a part of the overall effort to hold Gloria Arroyo accountable for her crimes against the people. Arroyo raced to have Corona appointed as chief justice of the Supreme Court to ensure that things will go favorably for her in her time of need.

The congressman-prosecutors have begun to look into allegations on Corona's ill-gotten wealth. They said Corona has 45 pieces of property worth more than P200 million held in his wife and close relatives' names, and which he failed to declare in his Statement of Assets, Liabilities and Net Worth (SALN). As the trial runs, the prosecutors are also expected to demonstrate how Corona's decisions favored Arroyo.

The internal bickerings and range of political interests within the Supreme Court are becoming more and more public as the trial progresses. The justices and their patrons have been scrambling to have themselves appointed to the

powerful post in place of Corona.

Long before the trial began, the two camps had already been at each other's throats. Corona has openly said that the real reason behind his impeachment is Aquino's hurry to have him replaced as chief justice.

On the other hand, the Aquino regime's allies in the Lower House have been unstoppable in exposing Corona and his family's corruption and the other skeletons in their closets. Aside from extensive real estate properties, Corona is said to have large amounts deposited in several bank accounts.

Malacañang has also been quick to exploit a World Bank report complaining about how the Supreme Court has used a loan it extended in 2003 for purposes other than judicial reforms.

As far as the democratic organizations and the Filipino people are concerned, a major stumbling block to having Arroyo and her lackeys tried for their crimes will be removed should Corona be found guilty. **AB**

Progressives condemn Alan Jazmines' persecution

Ever since NDFP Consultant Alan Jazmines' illegal detention, officials of the PNP Custodial Center in Camp Crame have threatened several times to transfer him to another prison.

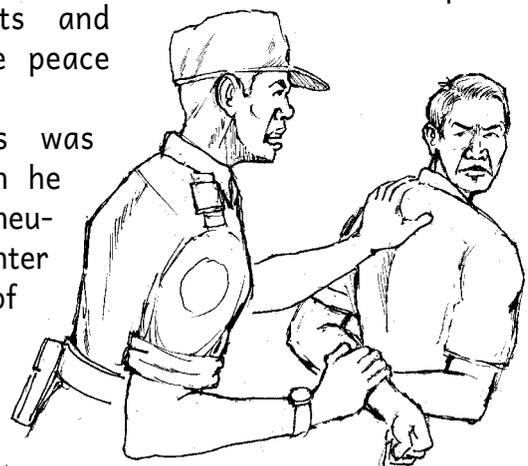
Jazmines first caught the ire of prison authorities when he began exposing the latter's violations of the detainees' human rights and the unjust restrictions and inhuman conditions of the prisoners. He led the detainees' struggles against repressive policies and inhuman conditions inside the detention center.

Jazmines was again threatened with transfer when he lodged a complaint after prison authorities banned the entry of postcards saying "Free All Polit-

ical Prisoners." He also slammed the police for opening his personal correspondence, including confidential documents and communication on the peace talks.

Of late, Jazmines was threatened anew when he complained against maneuvers of the custodial center to prevent the visit of more than 30 supporters of three detained NDFP consultants (himself, Eduardo Sarmiento, and Eduardo Serrano).

The police claimed that the camp was on heightened alert. Also barred were legitimate reading materials that were in the public domain and brought in by the visitors such as a document of the National Council of Churches in the Philippines entitled "Churches' Response as Human Rights Defenders," a KARA-PATAN primer on



Oplan Bayanihan and issues of *Pinoy Weekly*.

Jazmines belied claims by the PNP Custodial Center that he was being transferred because of his bad behavior inside the prison. He is being targeted for transfer to Bicutan, where conditions are more stringent and more repressive.

Free all political detainees. Meanwhile, 38 congressmen filed House Resolution 1956, which calls for the granting of general and unconditional amnesty to all political detainees who are victims of political persecution and charged with, or convicted of, political and/or common crimes done in pursuit of their political beliefs.

House Resolution 1956 states that the first priority for release are ten political detainees who should have been freed as early as 2001 and 2004, in accordance with agreements arrived at in the peace

talks before the latter was sabotaged by the Arroyo government. They are Matricio Manuelito, Joshue Ungsod, Juanito Itaas, Rogelio Natividad and Darwin Rojas (2001); Ricardo Solangon, Galo Omar, Palili Jammang, Moner Taufic and Abibakar Bimbas (2004).

In the second priority are elderly political detainees, in particular Rolando Paniamigan, the Alegria family, Sandino Esquerro and Moahamadiya Hamja.

In the third priority are the remaining NDFP consultants who are protected by the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees (JASIG) and whose release is also in accordance with a promise by the GPH Negotiating Panel in February 2011 to free most, if not all, of the political detainees. These are Alan Jazmines, Tirso "Ka Bart" Alcantara, Randy Malayao, Edgardo Frignal, Eduardo Sarmiento,

Leopoldo Caloza, Eduardo Serrano, Emeterio Antalan, Ramon Patriarca, Danilo Badayos, Alfredo Mapano, Pedro Codaste and Edwin Brigano.

In the fourth priority is hors de combat Vanessa de los Reyes, an NPA fighter paralyzed from the waist down after sustaining a gunshot wound to her spine.

In the fifth priority are 35 women political detainees who remain vulnerable to sexual abuse while imprisoned, aside from the other hardships they have to bear while in detention.

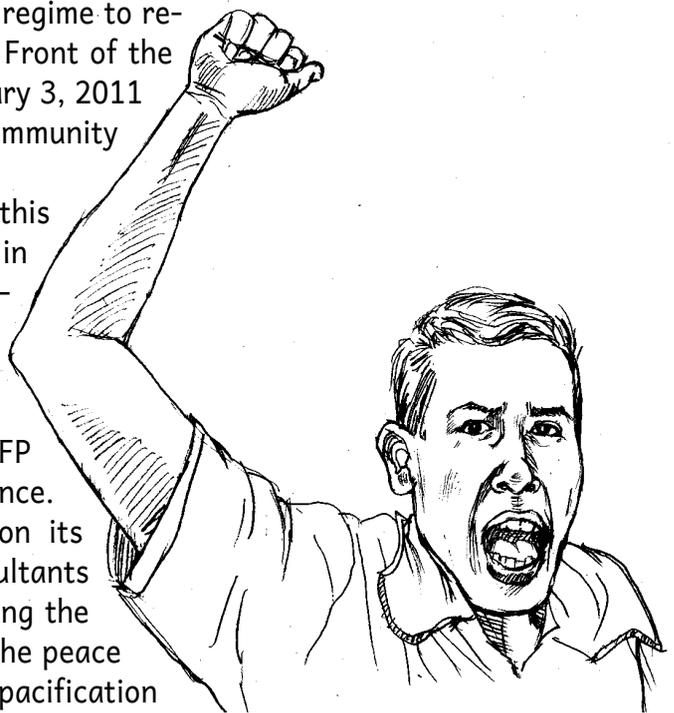
Ericson Acosta and Maricon Montajes, two cultural workers from the University of the Philippines-Diliman who were investigating the conditions of farmers and exposed their poverty through creative art should also be released. They were slapped with trumped-up charges of illegal possession of explosives and firearms. **AB**

Ka Bart still languishing in jail

Tirso "Ka Bart" Alcantara has been detained for more than a year now despite promises made by the US-Aquino regime to release the consultants of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP). Ka Bart was arrested on January 3, 2011 in violation of the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees (JASIG).

In the course of negotiations, the GPH made this promise three times, twice in signed agreements in January and February 2011, and once in a consultation in September 2011 with the Norwegian government which serves as the third party facilitator in the peace talks.

The GPH should first release Ka Bart and all NDFP consultants in order for the peace talks to advance. The US-Aquino regime's failure to make good on its promise to release Ka Bart and other NDFP consultants proves that the regime is not interested in pursuing the peace negotiations. It is only interested in using the peace talks as an instrument to effect the surrender and pacification of the revolutionary forces within the framework of the Oplan Bayanihan war of suppression. **AB**



PNP arrests 7 peasants in Pangasinan

Seven peasants were arrested in Pangasinan on January 12 after they prevented police from fencing off their farm lands in Bayambang, Pangasinan.

The farmers were identified as Rodolfo Natividad, Emeterio Paningbatan, Felipe Caro, Bernardito Dizon, Rudy Peralta, Rodrigo Asuncion and Ludivico Mejia—all members of Ulopan Na Umbale Ed Camp Gregg Military Reservation.

According to the Alyansa ng mga Magbubukid sa Gitnang Luzon (AMGL), the seven peasants were arrested after they stopped authorities from fencing off close to 300 hectares of farm lands that they had long been tilling in Barangay Bical Sur in Bayambang, Pangasinan Gov. Amado Espino ordered the farm lands fenced off to give way to the construction of a private resort in the area. The AMGL added that since the Department of Environment and Natural Resources had declared this part of the Camp Gregg Military Reservation public land, no one had the right to claim it. The Cojuangco-Aquino family has reportedly shown interest in the land.

Four of the farmers were released the same day but the remaining three were held at the police station and charged with attempted murder.

Meanwhile, the Rizal Commercial Banking Corporation has demanded the arrest of 22 peasant leaders and farm workers of Hacienda Luisita for allegedly occupying illegally a lot owned by RCBC. The Alyansa ng mga Manggagawang Bukid sa Hacienda Luisita (AMBALA) said that the occupation was legitimate since the more than 500-hectare lot owned by RCBC had been idle for a long time. AMBALA added that it had also filed a petition with the Department of Agrarian Reform to revoke the land-use conversion and distribute the land instead to AMBALA members. **AB**

Violent demolition in San Juan

The homes of several families living in an urban poor community in Corazon de Jesus (CDJ) in San Juan City were violently demolished on January 12. Up to 20 residents were illegally arrested and 31 wounded (two seriously) after a composite group of more than 600 elements of the Philippine National Police (PNP) and members of a demolition team forced their way into Narciso Street where the urban poor had put up a barricade.

The residents were unarmed and used whatever items were available in their communities to actively defend their homes. Even before the demolition, state forces had long been assaulting and intimidating the residents. Military forces were deployed within the community.

Members of progressive youth organizations were placed under surveillance. Community leaders were slapped with trumped-up charges and arbitrarily arrested.

Up to 400 families had already been evicted in 2010 and more than a hundred other fam-

Media man killed in GenSan

Christopher Guarin, 41, editor and publisher of *Tatak News*, a newspaper based in General Santos City, was shot dead by two gunmen on January 6 while he was on his way home in Barangay Lagao of the same city.

The wounded Guarin managed to get out of his car in a bid to spare his wife and child. He sustained five gunshot wound to the body and one in the head. His wife was also wounded in the attack.

Guarin is the first media personality killed in 2012 and the tenth since Benigno Aquino III came to power. One-hundred and fifty (150) Filipino media practitioners have been killed since 1986 and have not been given justice.

The victim was a former radio commentator and reporter of Bombo Radyo. He also served as station manger of DXBB Super Radyo GenSan. He had been receiving many death threats before he was killed. **AB**

ilies are now affected. The attackers used water cannons and tear gas against the barricaders to forcibly evict them. Through sheer police brutality, the demolition team was able to force its way into the community and tear down the houses. Most of the residents are now temporarily housed in makeshift shelters within Corazon de Jesus through the help of church workers. They have remained in the area and are ready to fight the local government's next move. In the face of intensified oppression, they are asserting their dignity through allout and militant resistance.

The residents had twice been awarded the land under the past

regime. When the local government of San Juan refused to acknowledge this, the residents asked not to be brought to farflung relocation sites and be transferred within the city and their living conditions improved. But the San Juan government led by Mayor Guia Gomez and the Estrada clan likewise refused this compromise.

The Estradas plan to put up a posh City Hall on the more than one-hectare lot that once hosted the demolished houses. Other construction projects include a condominium, commercial shopping areas and a parking lot. The Estradas have partnered with a big bureaucrat involved in the mall construction business. The entire plan falls under the Aquino regime's Public-Private Partnership Program. Like others of its kind in Metro Manila, this project also serves as payment for Aquino's debt of gratitude to big bureaucrat capitalists and political allies who put him in power. The same story is behind other pending demolitions in communities in North Triangle, Pangarap Village, Welfareville and Freedom Island, to name a few.

In just over a year, the Aquino regime has become notorious for its violent and inhumane demolitions that have caused suffering to the urban poor. They are no different from the Aquino family's brutal treatment of peasants struggling for genuine agrarian reform in the countryside.

Progressive organizations, patriotic sectors and the church have assailed the violent demolition and have asked Congress to investigate. The Kabataang Makabayan and the National Democratic Front in the National Capital Region hailed the residents, especially the youth who stood up and defended their homes and their rights in Corazon de Jesus. The Communist Party of the Philippines praised the CDJ residents' resistance and their courage and determination in collectively confronting the Aquino regime's schemes to drive them away from their homes. Said the CPP, there will be many other attacks by the regime on the urban poor because of continuing projects under the PPP. Nonetheless, the people will not relent in organizing and mobilizing to resist the regime. **AB**

US-Aquino regime favors big mining companies

The Communist Party of the Philippines strongly condemned the US-Aquino regime for exploiting the January 5 tragedy in Pantukan, Compostela Valley to forcibly evict poor and small miners and mining workers from their community. The regime is blaming small miners for the series of landslides in the area. In fact, the landslides are due to exploration activities by big mining companies and past logging operations.

Since the 1950s, big logging and mining companies have been feasting on the bounties of Compostela Valley's mountains. Maintaining one of the biggest operations is Aguinaldo Development Corporation (ADECOR) which exports logs and plywood to Japan. Since 1969, mining exploration has been conducted in Pantukan municipality by the Nationwide Development Corp. (NADECOR) and the Mitsubishi Metals Mining Corporation of Japan. In the 1990s, Benguet Corporation and its American partner entered the picture. More foreign mining companies poured in with the passage of the

Mining Act of 1995. In 1995-97 came Kingking Mines Inc., a partner of EchoBay Mines Inc. and Toronto Ventures Inc., both Canadian-owned companies.

The widespread denudation of the forests and excavations by foreign companies in the area have resulted in many tragedies, the most striking of which was the landslide that occurred at the Apex Mining Corporation mining site in Barangay Masara, Maco town in 2008 that killed 27 residents.

Even before the January 5 tragedy, the US-Aquino regime and the mining companies had already wanted the workers and

small miners out of the area. Russell Mining and Minerals Inc. (RMMI) posted an armed security force to ensure its control. The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) also deployed the 71st IB in Barangay Tibagon, Pantukan. These armed forces sow terror in the mining communities and have committed many human rights violations.

On April 12, 2011, elements of the 71st IB killed Santos "Ricky" Manrique, 49, president of the Federation of Miners' Associations in Pantukan (FED-MAP). Manrique, who was killed in his house in Napnapan, Pantukan was active in the struggle against the entry of foreign big mining companies in the area. The entire area is now under Oplan Bayanihan.

Kingking Gold-Copper Project. The small miners, their families, church people and antimining activists are mainly opposed to the Kingking Gold-Copper Project (KG-CP) which aims to extract gold and copper from the villages of Kingking and Napna-

pan in Pantukan. The KG-CP is likewise linked to the biggest gold and copper deposits in Mt. Diwalwal which is in Monkayo town, Compostela Valley.

The mountains of Pantukan are rich in gold and copper deposits. Based on the latest studies, it is estimated that 13 out of the town's 15 barangays possess such mineral deposits. But the most concentrated deposits are in the mountainous areas of Kingking and Napnapan that cover 1,650 hectares.

The KG-CP will be able to extract an estimated 791.5 million tons of gold and copper worth \$70 billion or more than P3 trillion. Its target area is therefore known to have one of the biggest untapped gold and copper reserves worldwide. It will

reportedly take 23 years before these deposits are depleted. This explains why several big foreign mining companies have been coveting the area's mineral wealth so much.

With its potential revenues, the KG-CP has been cited as one of the lead projects of the US-Aquino regime and forms part of the Mindanao 2020 Program.

Thirteen companies applied with and vied for a place under the KG-CP in 2009, but RMMI, an American company in joint venture with NADECOR was favored above the rest and granted a 1,650-hectare concession. It began operations in 2011. RMMI simultaneously expanded its concession to 4,000 hectares.

In June 2010, the Aquino

regime also granted Napnapan Mineral Resources Inc. (NMRI) a 4,500-hectare concession through a Mineral Production Sharing Agreement (MPSA).

The KG-CP utilizes open-pit mining, thus making the destruction of the environment and the people's livelihoods a foregone conclusion.

More than 8,000 families or 40,000 residents are set to be evicted from their farms once the RMMI begins its operations. Among the areas to be covered by the foreign-owned companies' operations are the Mansaka tribe's more than 8,000-hectare ancestral lands.

In 2011, the residents of Pantukan began their struggle against the giant foreign mining companies. AB

6 soldiers killed, 16 wounded in Bukidnon

Six soldiers of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) were killed and 16 were wounded in two separate ambushes launched by Red fighters of the New People's Army (NPA) on January 18 in Barangays Sinuda and Palakapan in Kitaotao, Bukidnon.

In a statement, Ka Rigoberto Sanchez, spokesperson of the Merardo Arce Command (NPA-Southern Mindanao) said the inter-front operation was aimed at raising the fighting spirit of the peasantry against the brutality of the 23rd IB.

It was 6 a.m. when a platoon of Red fighters from Front Guerilla Units 55 and 56 ambushed 23rd IB troops aboard a private vehicle, killing two soldiers and wounding four others.

After three hours, a commando unit from Front 53 ambushed a convoy composed of a six-by-six truck and an amphibian vehicle bearing 10th ID

troops in Barangay Palakapan, Kitaotao, killing four soldiers and wounding 12 others. The NPA used a command-detonated explosive.

These two successful tactical offensives belied previous claims by Maj. Jacob Thaddeus Obligado, chief of the 10th ID Civil Military Operations Battalion that the NPA had been suffering mounting setbacks. The CMO chief had bragged that in 2011, an estimated 315 rebels had been neutralized by the AFP, even if the military's scheme of forcing civilians and former NPA members to surrender had already been exposed to the public.

Meanwhile, the NPA Nueva Vizcaya Provincial Operational Command reported an ambush by one of its partisan units on SPO4 Isabelo Carpio, a retired officer of the Philippine National Police (PNP). Carpio, who was ambushed in Bambang town in the afternoon of January 17 has

been nicknamed "butcher" for his involvement in several extrajudicial killings and other human rights violations and for his long-time active service as an enemy intelligence agent against the revolutionary movement.

In fact, Carpio was one of three persons charged in the reactionary court for the killing of Marlon "Ka Pepsi" Fernandez. Ka Pepsi was slain in Barangay Belance, Dupax del Norte town in 1997. Carpio and his co-accused were detained for nine months but were released on bail, and their case relegated to the sidelines.

After his release, Carpio persisted in being a paid agent of the ruling classes. He became an active recruiter for the CAFGU and commander of the demolition team sent to tear down the barricades set up by peasants against the entry of foreign mining companies in Nueva Vizcaya in 2007. AB

Gen. Mario Chan is a liar!

The Efren Martirez Command (NPA-Eastern Visayas) belied claims by 8th ID chief Gen. Mario Chan that the revolutionary movement has been wiped out in Leyte. In fact, said Ka Karlos Manuel, the NPA command's spokesperson, 500 peasant, women and youth activists were added to the ranks of NPA supporters in Leyte last December. The NPA has also been able to operate in more villages despite the intensification of Oplan Bayanihan in the island.

Leyte residents have been able to see through the military's pretense and attempts at bribery. They generally ignore meetings or sports events sponsored by the military, even if the soldiers serve lechon (roasted pig) to entice them.

The NPA also belied accusations by General Chan that Red guerrillas were sowing terror in Matuguinao town in Samar province. The NPA was allegedly responsible for the suspension of classes in five elementary schools in the area and bullying the town's local officials. In fact, classes were suspended in the schools because of the terror wrought by the 14th IB's intense military operations. The military deployed the entire 14th IB in Matuguinao, a town of only 5,000 residents.

Meanwhile, the Efren Martirez Command also condemned the military's violations of its own ceasefire called from December 15, 2011 to January 2, 2012. On December 20, the 34th IB continued its operations, thus providing the NPA the opportunity to ambush it in Las Navas, Northern Samar. The ambush was a punitive measure for the 34th IB's many human rights violations and failure to comply with its own ceasefire.

On the other hand, the 14th IB launched repeated operations in the villages of Lincoro, Cabugao, Buenavista, Matalud and Gaondato, all in San Jorge,

Samar from December 16, 2011 to the month of January. The troopers mingled with the barrio folk, slept in the masses' houses and positioned themselves in the barangay halls, terrorizing civilians. They also used the civilians as human shields against NPA attacks much-dreaded by the soldiers.



General strike rages in Nigeria

Political and economic activities have been paralyzed for close to two weeks in Nigeria due to the Nigerian people's strong opposition to the hike in oil prices. The people's general strike erupted when Pres. Goodluck Jonathan's government withdrew oil subsidies on January 1. The government had provided up to \$8 billion in subsidies to keep the prices of petroleum products stable. The move has already caused two oil price hikes followed by increases in transport fares and food prices.

The strike was launched by the two biggest unions of workers in the oil industry. Tens of thousands of people supported the strike and launched general protests. They called for the immediate reduction of oil prices and the resignation of President Jonathan.

The Nigerian government justified its acts, saying it needed funds for other government uses such as maintaining infrastructure. In fact, the move formed part of a scheme to fully deregulate the country's oil industry. Imperialist institutions, neoliberals and the oil giants have long been pushing for deregulation.

Nigeria is a country in western Africa. As a mark of crisis, oil prices rose 130% in the country, which is among the world's leading producers of petroleum products. Nigeria is Africa's biggest and the world's 12th largest oil producer.

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