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Editorial

On Corona's ouster

Renato Corona's ouster as chief justice of the Supreme Court on May 29 paved the way for the further consolidation of the Aquino regime's control over the reactionary state. This and the upcoming appointment of a new chief justice signal the ruling clique's more solid hold over political power.

Controlling all the branches of the reactionary government provides the ruling Aquino clique with the daringness to intensify the oppression, suffering and repression of the Filipino people, further use state power for the benefit of its cohorts' businesses and be more of a puppet to US imperialism.

In dropping Corona, the ruling Aquino faction was able to win over or neutralize the main reactionary factions. It was able to gain more strength and advantage that it could use not only against the Arroyo faction but against the people and their revolutionary and progressive forces. It also gained more leverage as it exploited the people's demand to prosecute Arroyo and all her co-conspirators in the former regime for their grave crimes against the people.

The Filipino people were gladdened by Corona's ouster because he was part of the rotten and oppressive Arroyo clique. Nonetheless, it was highly noticeable how Corona was convicted not for being Gloria Arroyo's man and

part of her corrupt machinery but due to technicalities regarding his failure to comply with the law requiring officials and personnel of the reactionary government to declare all of their wealth and property.

The people were disappointed with how Aquino's people avoided prosecuting Corona as an Arroyo stooge. They were also disappointed with the fact that as Corona stood trial, Aquino was granting one privilege after another to Arroyo who was under hospital arrest, instead of heeding the widespread clamor to incarcerate her in a regular prison.

Corona's ouster on the basis of a technicality is being arrogantly portrayed by the Aquino regime as a huge victory in eradicating government corrup-

tion. But after nailing Corona for failing to declare his hidden wealth, the Aquino faction is being such a big hypocrite for refusing and thoroughly opposing the challenge to sign a waiver that would allow the public to look into their bank accounts.

The Aquino clique's claims of having hooked the "biggest fish" in the judiciary or in the entire reactionary government is an empty boast. The Filipino people are aware that the biggest plunderers like Marcos have never stashed the bulk of their ill-gotten wealth under their real names.

The people know that corruption in the reactionary government is not the act of a few "lost souls" like Corona. Corruption—the use of the privileges of state power to amass wealth—is rampant in the reactionary government. It is intrinsic in a backward and rotten economic



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and political system for the ruling classes to rely on using the state to accumulate and expand their wealth and power.

The worst cases of corruption take the form of using government influence and power to favor the businesses or economic interests of the local and foreign ruling classes. The latter use their people in government to ensure that policies, laws and contracts are all in accordance with their interests.

Now that the Aquino clique has the Supreme Court in its pockets, it has more audacity to use state power to advance the interests of the big comprador bourgeoisie allied with Aquino such as Danding Cojuangco, Lucio Tan, Manuel Pangilinan, Lucio Co, Henry Sy and other big businessmen. Aquino will step up the use of state power to pave the way for the big infrastructure projects and operations of foreign big mining and other corporations. He will intensify his seizure of economic privileges previously enjoyed by the Arroyo camp through various contracts

entered into by government.

In this regard, the farm workers of Hacienda Luisita must further strengthen their struggles to have the vast Cojuangco-Aquino estate subjected to land reform. Aquino and the Cojuangco family are sure to use their newfound power in the Supreme Court to circumvent and oppose the court's earlier decision to distribute the Hacienda Luisita lands.

Aquino will likewise become bolder in using state power to suppress the people. Goaded and supported by US imperialism, Aquino has been using unbridled fascist violence under Oplan Bayanihan to suppress the people's struggles. The consolidation of Aquino's power makes him even more brutal in using the military, the police and the paramilitary and will worsen violations of human rights.

In consolidating his power, we can expect Aquino to be even more persistent in his obsequiousness to US imperialism and in complying with the latter's objective of continually

strengthening its military presence in the Philippines. Now that the reins of power in all three branches of government are in his hands, Aquino will grow bolder in trampling on existing laws that advance national sovereignty in order to allow the US military to use the Philippines as one big base for its interventionism in the country and its operations in the Asia-Pacific region.

Aquino will also become bolder in following the orders of the US, the International Monetary Fund and foreign big banks and capitalists and further expand the implementation of the liberalization, privatization, deregulation and denationalization policies. Aquino is now in a stronger position to advance the "cha-cha" or charter change being pushed by US imperialism and Aquino's people in the Liberal Party.

The Filipino people must respond to the steps taken by Aquino to consolidate his clique by further solidifying their ranks and thoroughly exposing and opposing corruption, plunder, repression and human rights violations and puppetry to US imperialism.

The progressive and revolutionary forces must become well-versed in exposing the Aquino regime's empty propaganda and the corruption of the ruling system and advance their democratic struggles for jobs, just wage increases, lower prices of oil, food and other basic commodities, bigger budgets for education and health care, and the right to housing and against demolition, among others. They must step up their courage to resist repression and fascist violence.

They must strengthen their struggle for genuine land reform and national industrialization and resist the Aquino regime's program to maintain the current semicolonial and semifeudal system. **AB**

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Still no punishment for Arroyo

On a vote of 20 to three, the Senate pronounced Chief Justice Renato Corona guilty of failing to declare in his Statement of Assets, Liabilities and Net Worth (SALN) the amount of \$2.4 million and more than ₱80 million deposited in various banks. With the Senate declaring that this constituted betrayal of public trust, Corona was removed from his post and permanently banned from holding public office.

A day after the popular acclaim over Corona's ouster, progressive organizations led by the Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU) held a protest action in Mendiola, Manila to demand that Gloria Arroyo and her cohorts be tried immediately for their grave crimes against the people.

Arroyo is currently detained in a hospital instead of a regular prison and has a pending motion to be allowed to seek medical treatment abroad ostensibly for a life-threatening condition. She also has a pending motion at the Pasay Regional Trial Court to be released on bail.

KMU chair Elmer Labog said Benigno Aquino III must stop giving excuses for his failure to prosecute Arroyo. His government must do so immediately, now that he has dispensed with Corona who he branded as a big obstruction to fulfilling this objective.

Pagbabago! spokespersons and Panagutin si Gloria Movement convenors Bibeth Orteza and Fr. Jose Dizon, on the other hand, explained that their calls for government transparency and justice for the people have not ended with Corona's removal from office. Progressive and democratic groups and individuals joined the movement to oust Corona from power because they believed that after his trial and conviction by the Senate, the next step would be the prosecution of Arroyo and her cohorts.

In the two years that Aquino has been in power, Arroyo has yet to be charged with a major crime despite several cases filed by progressive groups and a number of individuals. Worse, the cases of plunder and other serious crimes filed at the Office of the Ombudsman have been downgraded to simple graft and corruption and electoral sabotage, which are both bailable.

The rallyists also demanded that the land at Hacienda Luisita be distributed immediately and that the growing problem of hunger be promptly addressed. To provide immediate relief to the majority of the people, the ₱125 across-the-board wage hike for private sector workers and the ₱6,000 salary increase for government employees must also be implemented. **AB**

K+12: A pro-imperialist program for education

The Department of Education (DepEd) began to implement this school year in selected public schools its new educational program called K+12.

Under the new program, a child must first spend a year in kindergarten before being accepted to elementary school. Elementary education will remain at six grade levels but changes will be made in the curriculum and instruction time. Two more years will be added to the high school curriculum to make four years of junior high school and two years of senior high school (the 11th and 12th year of basic education).

The additional two years of high school will be spent by students "specializing" in vocational courses (for direct employment) or academic, sports, music and the arts, among others.

Ever since the Aquino regime publicized K+12, it has garnered many criticisms from teachers, parents and students. K+12 does not solve the huge and apparent problems faced by the educational system.

The two additional years of high school will be an added burden to parents who have to shoulder the high costs of education. It is also an added burden to teachers who have long been suffering from low salaries, lack of facilities and long teaching hours. Classrooms, toilets, desks, books and other basic needs that could provide a better learning atmosphere for the children are severely lacking. (*see related article*)

The Aquino regime's implementation of K+12 is in compliance with the dictates of its imperialist master in the field of education. Through K+12, the educational system is being attuned to the needs defined by foreign multinational companies. It is framed within the policy of neoliberalism and imperialist globalization that have long been proven to be bankrupt and anti-development.

Education for cheap labor

The educational system in the Philippines is being used by the reactionary state to train Filipino children to become part of the cheap and docile labor force desired by foreign corporations. It also serves the labor export program which is a stop-gap solution to the widespread problem of unemployment. Thus, the stresses and trends in basic education are all captive to the needs and caprices of the international labor market.

No less than the K+12 primer states that one of the reasons for extending the length of basic education is for the youth to graduate at the age of 18—the minimum age for entering into a legitimate job contract. The last two years of basic education are geared towards "specialization" or technical/vocational education to train skilled and semi-skilled workers to meet the needs of foreign corporations and the foreign job market.

This means that high school graduates can be fed directly to the factories or go abroad as skilled workers. In implementing K+12, the Aquino regime will be able to lower the minimum age of qualified and skilled work-

ers, and thus pull down workers' wages.

Because students can start working as soon as they leave high school, the reactionary state can start claiming that tertiary education is a luxury or reserved only for advanced studies. This will further justify the reactionary state's abdication of its responsibility to provide opportunities for free and adequate college education. In this regard, K+12 reinforces the decades-long pattern of reducing the budgets of state universities and colleges (SUCs) in accordance with the Education Act of 1982.

The reactionary state will all the more abandon tertiary education to capitalist educators who even now are raking in millions of pesos in profits.

Not the solution to low-quality education

The quality of education in the Philippines is decidedly low. The DepEd's own records show that the vast majority of students fail the National Achievement Test (NAT), a yearly examination taken by Grade 6 and 2nd Year high school students. In 2009, only up to

68% passed the NAT given to elementary students. Less than half (46%) of the high school students who took it passed.

Filipino students also score low in international examinations. DepEd records show that the Philippines finished 43rd out of 46 countries that participated in the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) in 2003. In 2008, the Philippines finished last in the Advanced Mathematics category.

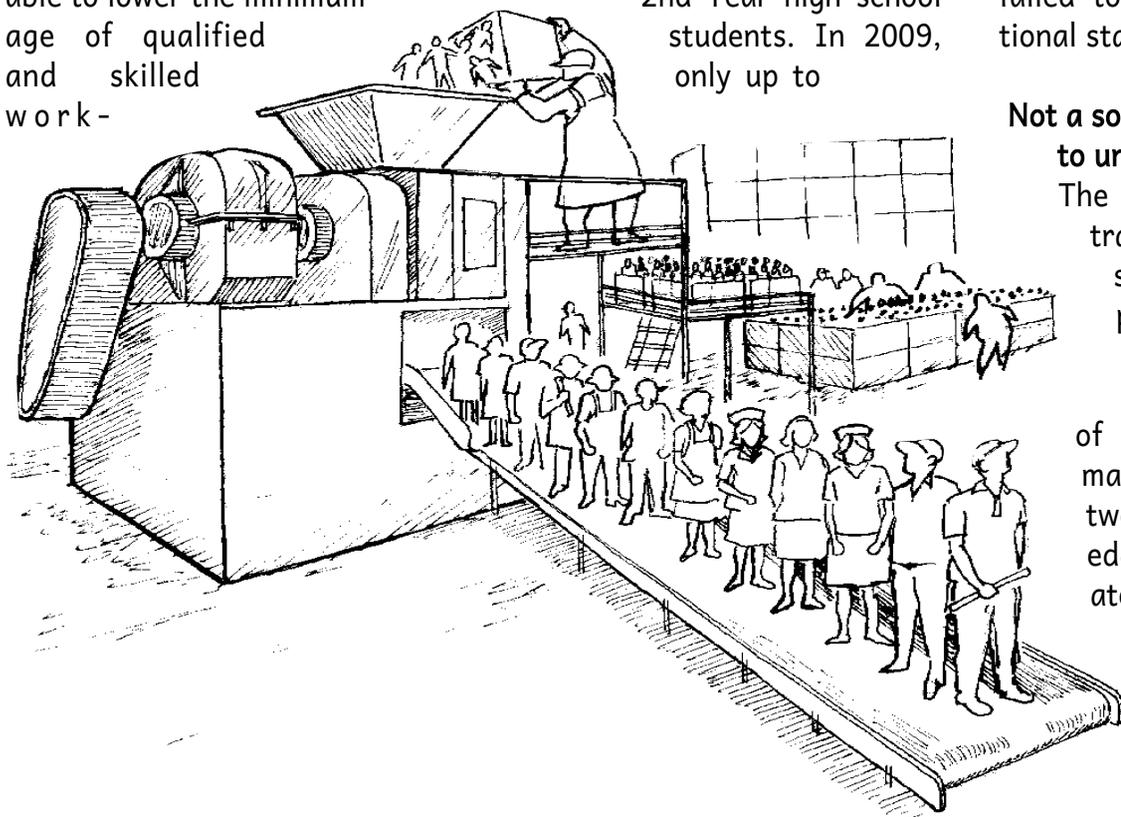
The DepEd claims that K+12 is the solution to the low quality of the country's education. Education experts aver that the length of elementary and high school education does not have any bearing on the quality of education. A study entitled "Length of School Cycle and the Quality of Education" cites that students from Singapore and South Korea where basic and secondary education last 13 years scored higher than students from the US whose school cycle lasts 15 years. On the other hand, both the Philippines (with a ten-year school cycle) and Thailand (with 12 years) failed to comply with international standards.

Not a solution to unemployment

The US-Aquino regime portrays K+12 as among the solutions to the unemployment problem.

Aquino falsely pictures the problem of unemployment as a matter of mismatch between the skills or knowledge possessed by graduates and the jobs that are available to them.

The Aquino regime covers up the real roots of severe unemployment in the



country. The backward system of agriculture and the absence of even basic industries is the reason behind the Philippine economy's inability to create enough employment for the annually growing labor force. Engineers, technicians, computer scientists and other experts in the field of science have no place in an economy whose only opportunities for employment are working in call centers or taking overseas jobs.

The kinds of skills or knowledge that Aquino says are needed are actually meant for call centers or employment abroad. As in the past, it is these needs that Aquino wants education to focus on. A previous demand for nurses and caregivers prompted the government to encourage students to enroll in these courses. After a few years, however, the country now has a surfeit of nurses with no jobs in line.

Now, because of current demand, the government wants students to become bartenders and welders or call center agents. It is these skills that the Aquino government wants to teach in the last two years of K+12.

Aside from being pro-imperialist and an added burden, the K+12 program is a grandiose plan that is bound to fail. The DepEd and the Aquino regime's claims that K+12 will help prepare students for employment after finishing high school is a patent lie because nothing is being done by the regime to solve the basic problem of unemployment.

K+12 will bring no benefits, whether in the short or long term, to the youth and the Filipino people. It is just one of the regime's long list of pro-imperialist and antipeople programs that must be thoroughly exposed and opposed. AB

Worsening deprivation in education

The Aquino regime has allotted a grossly inadequate budget for education.

The DepEd's own statistics show that the country lacks more than 152,000 classrooms for 2012 but has provided only enough money to build 13,000. The figure does not include classrooms in need of repair. More than 13 million desks and 135,000 toilets are needed to address the needs of students who will be coming in this schoolyear. Up to 62% of schools do not have enough toilets. There is an average of only one toilet for every 143 students when the standard ratio in developed countries is one toilet for every 20 students.

There is also a deficit of 96 million textbooks.

To accommodate the students, many classrooms have been divided in two, where teachers have as many as 45-100 students per class. In Metro Manila, some schools have been forced to send many students home and ask them to come to school only three days a week under the Home Study Program. The schools have been compelled to resort to such a measure to avoid intense overcrowding. There are cases where teachers require students to bring their own chairs.

Despite the lack of more than 100,000 new teachers, the government is hiring only 13,000 new teachers this year. A single teacher is made to handle the workload of two or three teachers. Overall, there is an average of one teacher for every 74 students. This year, an estimated two million children will be taking the required Kindergarten course. For this alone, up to 25,700 new teachers are needed. The regime is resorting to the unacceptable and stop-gap solution of hiring contractual teachers to partially address this huge deficit.

For this year, the Aquino regime will be allotting P239 billion for the DepEd, equivalent to P7/day per student. This will only be enough to build 27% of the new classrooms, buy 20% of the new desks and hire 12% of the new teachers needed. The amount does not include the more than P100 billion additional funds needed for the K+12 program. AB



US to return to Subic and Clark

The Aquino regime underhandedly allowed the revival of US military bases in Central Luzon when it permitted the US military on June 4 to use their old facilities in Clark, Pampanga and Subic, Zambales once again.

Benigno Aquino III and Gen. Martin Dempsey, chair of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff signed an agreement for this purpose before Aquino left for a working visit to the United Kingdom.

The agreement supposedly calls for the US to secure the permission of the Philippine government first before sending in its combat ships and planes. But the caveat has no real significance, as seen in the nuclear-capable submarine USS North Carolina's recent surfacing at the Subic Bay Freeport with no prior clearance, and with the incident just shrugged off by officials of the puppet government. The surfacing of the USS North Carolina was actually in violation of the reactionary constitution.

Dempsey and Aquino's agreement signals the influx of big numbers of combat troops, warships, fighter planes, drones and other US military facilities in the Philippines on a level unprecedented since the junking of the Military Bases Agreement in 1991.

Permitting the US to use their former bases at Clark and Subic is tantamount to allowing the US to use the Philippines as a launching pad for its interventionist wars in the Asia-Pacific.

When Clark Air Base and Subic Naval Base were still in existence, they were used by the US as launching pads for its military operations in Vietnam in the 1970s and Iran in the 1980s. AB

AFP violence against children

There are growing and worsening violations of the rights of children in the course of the Armed Forces of the Philippines' (AFP) implementation of the US-Aquino regime's Oplan Bayanihan.

The growing number of cases against children is a result of the policy of militarizing civilian communities under the guise of the AFP's so-called "peace and development operations." The basing of armed troops in houses and population centers creates a situation where children and minors become extremely vulnerable to abuse by soldiers.

The following tally recounts outstanding cases of outright violence by the AFP against children in the past several months. These cases show how the AFP has been so indiscriminate in conducting its war of suppression against the people, with even children being targeted by the AFP butchers.

Opening fire at children. Troops of the 61st IB mercilessly shot at Donna Castor, 16, of Sitio Dawis, Barangay Garangan, Calinog, Iloilo on April 3. Donna was then cutting down some bamboo trees when a Community Organizing for Peace and Development (COPD) Team under a Sergeant Anden based in Barangay Acuña, Tapaz, Capiz opened fire at her. The incident has traumatized Donna, who now refuses to leave their house.

Brothers Michael, 10, and Richard Mancera, 7, were killed when elements of the 49th IB rained bullets on the hut of the Mancera family in Sitio Pagurin, Barangay Malaya, Labo, Camarines Norte on February 25. Their sister Ella, 14, was wounded. Also killed was their father Benjamin and another victim. Officials of the Barangay Malaya village council attested that the elder Mancera was an ordinary

farmer and not a member of the New People's Army (NPA) as claimed by the military.

On February 16, fifteen-year old Christian Roy Noceta and his companion Jessie Perez, 31, were killed when a team from the Philippine Army Special Forces gunned them down while they were hunting in Barangay Ilayang Atingay, Magdalena, Laguna. Wounded in the incident was their companion, 18-year old Francis Abadilla and another 15-year old boy. Residents acquainted with the four hunters belied the military's accusations that the victims were NPA members.

Meanwhile, two cousins (aged 15 and 17 years) who were charcoal makers were wounded when soldiers conducting operations opened fire at them in Barangay Moriones, San Jose, Tarlac on February 7. Their 20-year old hearing-impaired cousin Boyet Ibarra was killed.

Fifteen-year old Charlie Bartolome was deeply traumatized when he and other youth from Barangay



Albay were indiscriminately fired upon by troops from the 2nd IB led by a Lieutenant Silis. The youth were on the way to a dance in Barangay Basicao-Interior of the same town when they were chanced upon by the 2nd IB troops.

Arrests. Three youth were illegally arrested by elements of the 74th IB in Sitio Tagbakan, Barangay Pansoy, San Andres, Quezon on March 28. The soldiers arrested minors Elmer Desuyo and Rey Rodrigo, both 17, and Reynaldo delos Reyes. They were accused of being NPA members collecting taxes from the residents. The three victims were only looking for work in a coconut plantation when they were arrested.

Minors Alfred Martinez, 17 and Meric Trinidad, 16, of Barangay Balite, Tarlac City were picked up and detained by soldiers on March 27. They were released through the intercession of the village council. Barangay Balite is one of the villages actively opposed to the oppression and exploitation of farm workers in Hacienda Luisita.

Arrests of entire families. Two minors, aged 8 and 12 years old from Barangay Pagsanjan, Paranas, Samar were arrested on March 19 along with their mother Aniceta Labong, after they visited their detained father Artemio and their two brothers Ruel, 21 and Jeffrey, 26. At midnight

of March 4, soldiers from the 87th IB raided their house and tortured Artemio, a village councilman, right in front of his 12-year old daughter. They were forcing him to confess to being an NPA supporter. He was arrested along with his son Ruel. Jeffrey was arrested on March 13 at the Paranas town center.

On January 29, an infant and a 2-year old child were arrested by soldiers of the 34th IB along with their parents, both residents of Barangay Hinagunuyan, Catubig, Northern Samar. They were forced aboard a helicopter and brought to Palapag town. The victims have been branded as rebels who have surrendered to the government. **AB**

"We were abused by the soldiers"

The Children's Rehabilitation Center-Panay (CRC-Panay) launched a children's camp in Barangay Manampunay, Leon, Iloilo on April 20-21 to help child victims overcome their grave fear wrought by the militarization of their areas in recent years.

A hundred children from Barangay Manampunay and other adjacent communities joined the drawing and drama session as a means of recounting their experiences. Through drawing and other art forms, the children were able to recall their bitter experiences in the hands of the military. The CRC documented violations of the rights of children and immediately provided psychological assistance to the child victims of militarization. The children all seemed to have the same description about what they experienced: "We were abused by the soldiers."

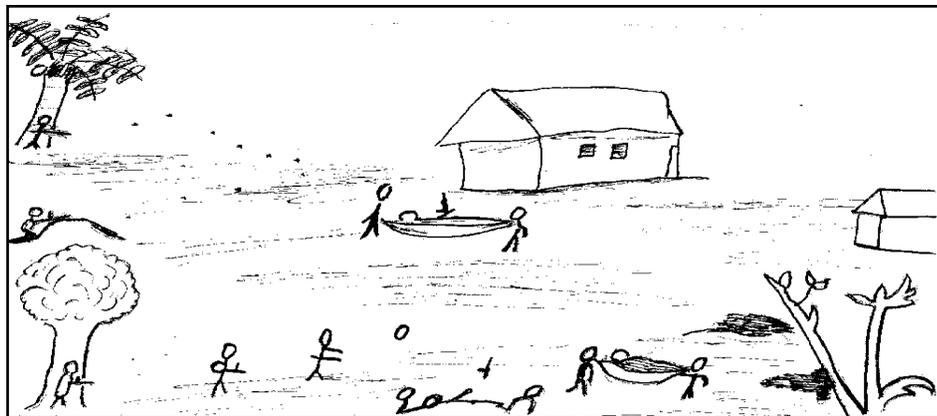
Mariel, 14-years old: At around 9 a.m. of December 11, 2009, a day after an encounter between the New People's Army

and the 82nd IB, a group of soldiers went to our house and asked if the rebels hid their firearms in our hut. A soldier strung an ammunition belt full of bullets around my neck, like a necklace, and forced me to speak. My brother, who was 14-years old then was ordered by a soldier to bring a pail from the encounter site to the barangay hall. When he arrived at the

barangay hall, a soldier pulled him and hit him in the chest.

Jemar, 9-years old: There was an encounter between the NPA and the 82nd IB in Barangay Manampunay on December 10, 2009. "We were in school then when we heard gunshots. Our teacher stopped teaching. We were all very scared." The 82nd IB was then launching a military operation ostensibly to flush out the NPA guerrillas from the area.

Mariel and Jemar were just some of the children who were bold enough to relay their experiences. The other children expressed their fear and the violence they experienced through art. **AB**



NPA rescues 6 CAFGU minors

Six minors aged 12 to 16 years were rescued by Red fighters of the New People's Army-Front 88 after being conscripted as elements of the Citizens Armed Forces Geographical Unit (CAFGU) in Sitio Tambo, Barangay Binikalan, San Luis, Agusan del Sur on May 30. (see related article on p. 11)

The Communist Party of the Philippines roundly condemned their recruitment into the CAFGU as a violation of the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL), the International Convention on the Rights of the Child and protocols of international humanitarian law.

In coordination with international and local child rights advocates, NDF-Mindanao may file complaints with the CARHRIHL Joint Monitoring Committee, corresponding international groups and other agencies against the AFP and the Aquino regime for their violations of the CARHRIHL and other international laws that prohibit the recruitment, training and arming of children as soldiers.

Because of its severe isolation from the people, the AFP has been finding it difficult to recruit more personnel to use in its antipeople Oplan Bayanihan. In its desperation to find recruits, it has resorted to conscripting minors into the CAFGU.



Military abuses in South Quezon

Military abuses are relentless in South Quezon and Bondoc Peninsula where eight AFP, paramilitary and police battalions are currently concentrated.

In Catanauan town, soldiers created a disturbance at the funeral wake being held for Manilyn Caribot, a 17-year old civilian killed in the crossfire between the 85th IB and the New People's Army (NPA) on April 29 in Lopez, Quezon. The teenage girl was then visiting a relative when the gunbattle occurred. Despite proof that she was a student, the military accused her of being an NPA Red fighter. The AFP withdrew its accusations after receiving brickbats and later sent two soldiers to offer P150,000 to the slain student's aunt Genelyn Dichoso in exchange for her silence and desistance in filing charges against the military.

On May 5, two truckloads of armed soldiers parked at the gates of the cemetery where Caribot was to be buried. They surrounded the victim's grave, showing no respect at all for the dead and no concern for the security of the civilians attending the burial. Simultaneously, other soldiers were ransacking Dichoso's and five other houses. Witnesses said the military troops trained their guns at the children who had been left behind by their parents who attended the burial.

There are many other cases where the military threatened and physically and verbally abused the residents. One of the victims is fisherman Dondon Perez from San Andres, Quezon. Troops of the 74th IB went to his house to take his food, boat and fishing equipment. On March 22, drunken soldiers from the 74th IB accosted and threatened with bodily harm Rey Rodrigo, 16; Reynaldo de los Santos, 18; and Elmer Desuyo. The victims are also residents of San Andres town.

These cases belie the AFP's claims that it now has a clean human rights record. KARAPATAN-Southern Tagalog secretary-general Glen Malabanan said the AFP is swimming in the blood of the victims of human rights violations in the region and the rest of the Philippines. The reactionary state has been "shielding" South Quezon and Bondoc Peninsula against mass struggles and armed struggle because it is a center of agricultural production where products like coconut, corn and rice are abundant and where there is a huge potential for natural resources like gold and petroleum.



AFP human rights violations in Mountain Province and Ifugao

Stealing pigs, goats, chickens and other livestock is rampant in areas around the CAFGU detachment in Barangay Ubao, Aguinaldo, Ifugao. Residents point to no other than the military troops encamped at the detachment who are always drinking, gambling, playing loud music and often shooting their guns indiscriminately.

In April, a five-man team of soldiers masquerading as members of the New People's Army (NPA) extorted P1,500 from civilian Eusebio dela Cruz, a resident of Barangay Ubao. Aside from taking his money, they also forcibly took his pig.

Students at the Ubao National High School are also often disturbed in their studies because troops from the 54th IB would go there after their military operations.

Troops of the 5th ID trampled on the corn crops in swidden farms in Sitio Dalanao, Barangay Bantay, Paracelis, Mountain Province while conducting military operations last May 31. The complainant was a resident named Kimpee, one of the owners of the swidden farms. Instead of being given an apology and receiving payment for the damaged crops, however, all the hapless peasant got were insults from the AFP troops.

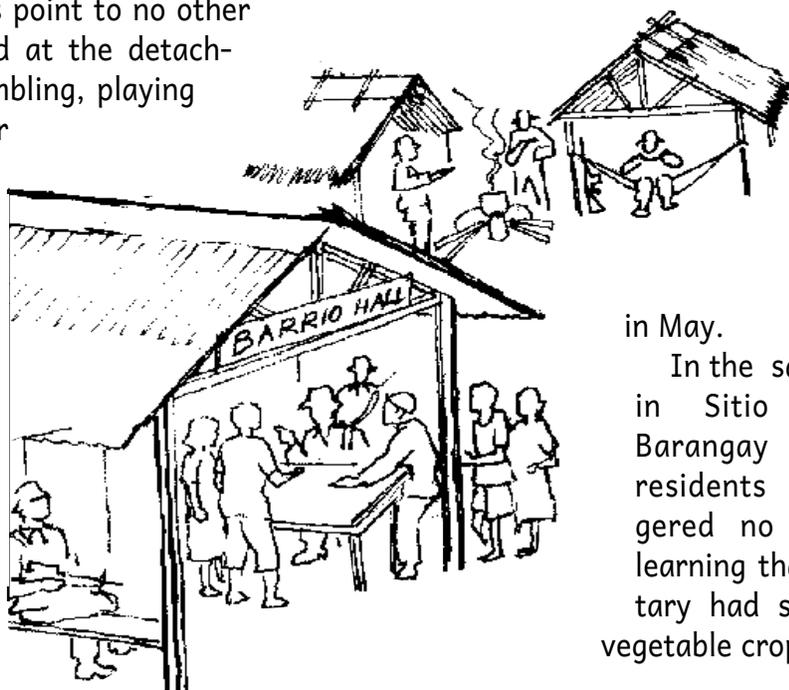
In another incident, military troops accosted a civilian named Sabado and his companion who were aboard a motorcycle in Sitio Dagawe, Barangay Poblacion, Paracelis, Mountain Province. They were suspected of being NPA members allegedly because they sported long hair. The soldiers laughed at and insulted them when the victims told them they were members of the Baptist church.

In the same village, soldiers

cocked their guns at the passengers of a van for no apparent reason in Sitio Tanufong, Barangay Poblacion, Paracelis

in May.

In the same month, in Sitio Amulong, Barangay Poblacion, residents were angered no end upon learning that the military had stolen their vegetable crops. **AB**



Malabon urban poor leader slain

Two gunmen killed Ernesto "Ka Erning" Gulfo, 52, leader of an urban poor community in Catmon, Malabon. The victim, who was shot at close range sustained gunshot wounds to his chest and died on the way to the hospital.

The assailants posed as junk dealers and were asking Gulfo what the going price for brass scraps was before gunning him down. They had reportedly already gone to his house the day before.

Gulfo was the president of the Alyansa ng Nagkakaisang Samahan ng Maralita sa Malabon and the newly elected chairman of the Alyansa Kontra Demolisyon in the same city. He led a barricade in Catmon on May 21 against the threatened demolition of the houses of up to 1,500 families to give way to the government's Community Mortgage Program (CMP).

Most of the residents of the area are contractual workers, garbage collectors and scavengers who are incapable of shouldering the CMP because of their very small incomes.

Gulfo is the fifth urban poor activist killed under the Aquino regime. The others are Antonio Homo, a local leader in Kadiwa, Navotas; Rommel Fortades and Soliman Gomez of Pangarap Village, Caloocan; and Arnel Leonor of Silverio Compound, Parañaque. **AB**



Oplan Bayanihan, the people's calvary

About 200 peasants from the militarized villages of San Miguel, San Francisco, Perez, Quirino and Imelda launched a march-rally on Good Friday, April 6 in Las Navas, Northern Samar. Holding a streamer saying "OPLAN BAYANIHAN, KALBARYO NG MAMAMAYAN" (Oplan Bayanihan, the people's calvary), the peasants under the Alyansa ng mga Magsasaka Laban sa Kahirapan ng Las Navas (APKLAS) aired their grievances and opposition to the added hardships wrought by the militarization of their communities and its effects on their livelihood. They also demanded a rollback in the prices of gasoline, basic commodities and services so they could have some relief from their intolerable poverty.

In 2010, the 63rd IB began basing itself in the village centers. Now, it is the 34th IB that has taken over. The soldiers have called for public meetings several times to trumpet their "peace and development operations," malign the New People's Army and terrorize the people by saying that they had a list of all the members of revolutionary organizations in the area, and so it would be better for them to surrender. After these meetings, the soldiers would go to the houses of suspected mass leaders and repeatedly interrogate them to instill fear and pressure them into doing what the military wants. The peasants are also constrained from frequently going to their farms, fearing that they might be chanced upon by the soldiers and be victimized, as what often happens. They bewailed the fact that they felt like thieves in their own coconut lands whenever they made copra because they had to do so in a hurry and take advantage of days when they knew the soldiers would be staying in the village instead of going on patrol.

From their barrios, the peasants secretly left and marched to the town. They went around the municipality and later held a brief program. The farmers were

prohibited from entering the auditorium and given only an hour and a half for their activity on the pretext that the police and military were on alert because of alleged reports of an NPA attack.

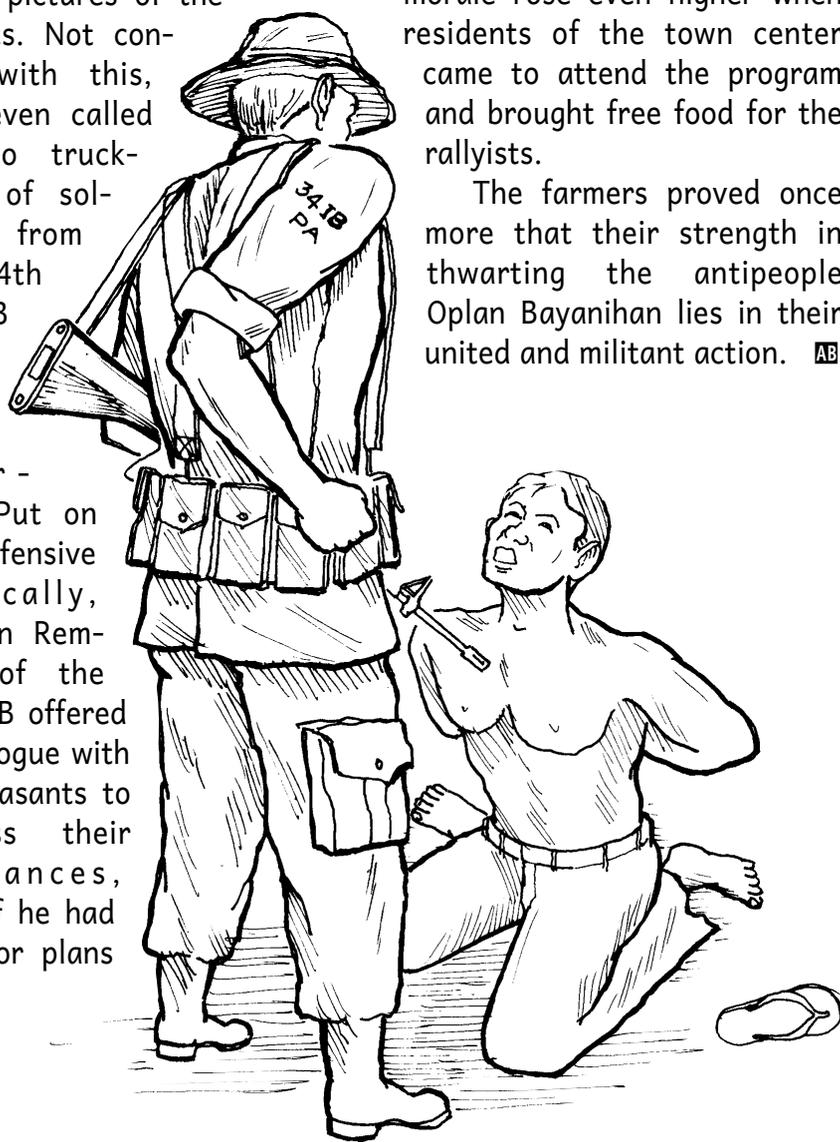
As the program was going on, the military tried to sabotage the activity by relentlessly taking pictures of the rallyists. Not content with this, they even called in two truckloads of soldiers from the 34th I B head-

quarters. Put on the defensive politically, Captain Rempillo of the 63rd IB offered to dialogue with the peasants to address their grievances, even if he had no prior plans of doing

so. Lt. Col. William Penafiel, 34th IB commander, got angry at the peasants for repeatedly incriminating his unit in the summary execution of farmer Jovito "Boyboy" Pajanustan of Barangay San Miguel, Las Navas. But all the military's efforts to downplay the grievances were in vain. Instead, the soldiers were stripped of their masks of respecting human rights and the rules of war. They were also forced to admit that it was wrong for them to require the villagers to sign in logbooks every time they entered or left the barrio. They also fell silent when Barangay Imelda officials complained about forcing the masses to serve as human shields and accompany the soldiers in leaving the villages.

The soldiers and the policemen failed to intimidate the protesters. In fact, the marchers' morale rose even higher when residents of the town center came to attend the program and brought free food for the rallyists.

The farmers proved once more that their strength in thwarting the antipeople Oplan Bayanihan lies in their united and militant action. **AB**



Plans afoot to scuttle GPH-NDFP peace talks

There are clear indications that the US-Aquino regime is planning to scuttle the peace talks between the Government of the Philippines (GPH) and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP).

NDFP chief political consultant Jose Maria Sison said that the plan may be implemented next year or even earlier if Aquino succeeds in controlling the three branches of government—the executive, legislature and judiciary—and a peace agreement is forged between the GPH and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). Aquino has so far succeeded with the first requisite with his ouster of Renato Corona as chief justice of the Supreme Court and his impending appointment of a member of his own clique as the new chief.

Sison added that Benigno Aquino III himself has been blocking both regular and special documents that offer the possibility of a ceasefire should both parties agree on a general "declaration of intent" that would be of benefit to the Fil-

ipino people.

Among others, the "declaration of intent" contains principles that protect the country's sovereignty and advance the people's economic welfare.

Meanwhile, NDFP spokesperson Fidel Agcaoili lambasted Aquino for claiming that the NDFP was not serious with the peace talks. Agcaoili called Aquino a hypocrite for constantly talking about peace when all he really wants is to wage a brutal war against the revolutionary forces and the Filipino people.

One of the main reasons for the impasse in the peace negotiations is the continued detention of more than 350 political prisoners, including 13 NDFP consultants in various prisons nationwide. They have been slapped with criminal charges despite their being revolutionar-



ies. Another political prisoner has been recently added to the list, with the rearrest in May of Jaime Soledad, one of the NDFP consultants earlier released.

Meanwhile, Ramon Patriarca, an NDFP consultant currently being held at Camp Lapu-Lapu in Cebu City (headquarters of the AFP Central Command) began his hunger strike on June 1 to press for his transfer to a civilian facility.

Patriarca was picked up by combined elements of the police and the 78th IB on February 5, 2009 in Consolacion, Cebu. He was previously detained at the Danao City Jail and suddenly transferred to the Cebu Provincial Detention Reformatory Center (CPDRC) in January, where he was held incommunicado. Even visiting Amnesty International-Minneapolis representative Dr. Gary King was not allowed to see him. After a few days, Patriarca was transferred to Camp Lapu-Lapu.

The court issued an order on January 30 for Patriarca to be transferred back to the CPDRC, but four months later, the military still refuses to comply with the order.

Eighteen of Patriarca's former co-detainees at the Danao City Jail will launch a sympathy fast on June 9-11 to support him.

NPA seizes 18 firearms in raid

Red fighters of the Front 88 Operations Command of the New People's Army (NPA) in Northeastern Mindanao Region seized 18 firearms in a simultaneous raid on three detachments of the 23rd IB in Sitio Tambo, Barangay Binikalan, San Luis, Agusan del Sur on May 30.

The arms haul consisted of an M16, three M14s, twelve Garands, a carbine and a 9 mm pistol. Several magazines and rounds of ammunition were also seized by the people's guerrillas. The people have long been complaining to the NPA about the abuses of the 23rd IB and the CAFGU in the area.

The CAFGU deputy commanding officer and a CAFGU element of minor age were wounded in the fighting. The raid likewise resulted in the rescue of six other minors aged 12 to 16 years recruited by the Armed Forces of the Philippines to the paramilitary organization. (see related article on p. 8) **AB**

40 years of service by the CNL

Various revolutionary organizations expressed their solidarity with the Christians for National Liberation (CNL) as it commemorated in May its 40th founding anniversary. Since its founding, the CNL has achieved so many victories in serving the Filipino people in conjunction with its exercise of the Christian faith.

The church people belonging to the CNL played a very important and historic role in serving the Filipino people and advancing their struggle for national liberation and democracy. In a congratulatory message, Communist Party of the Philippines founding chair Comrade Jose Ma. Sison said that the Party and the New People's Army are fortunate to have the CNL among their comrades in the context of cooperation and service to the oppressed and exploited masses.

Since the beginning, the CNL has aligned itself with the patriotic and progressive forces. It courageously and assiduously joined the resistance movement against the Marcos fascist dictatorship and persevered in winning over ordinary church people, nuns, priests, pastors and bishops to defend human rights and prevent the reactionaries from using the church institution as a tool of imperialism and the exploiting classes against the toiling masses.

The CNL has played a big role within the National Democratic Front. After the fall of the fascist Marcos dictatorship, the CNL continued to act within the NDF framework and along the path of revolution against the entire

system and succeeding reactionary regimes.

The Christians for National Liberation was founded on February 17, 1972, the 100th anniversary of the martyrdom of the patriotic priests Mariano Gomez, Jose Burgos and Jacinto Zamora who were executed by the Spanish colonialists for leading the Cavite Mutiny.

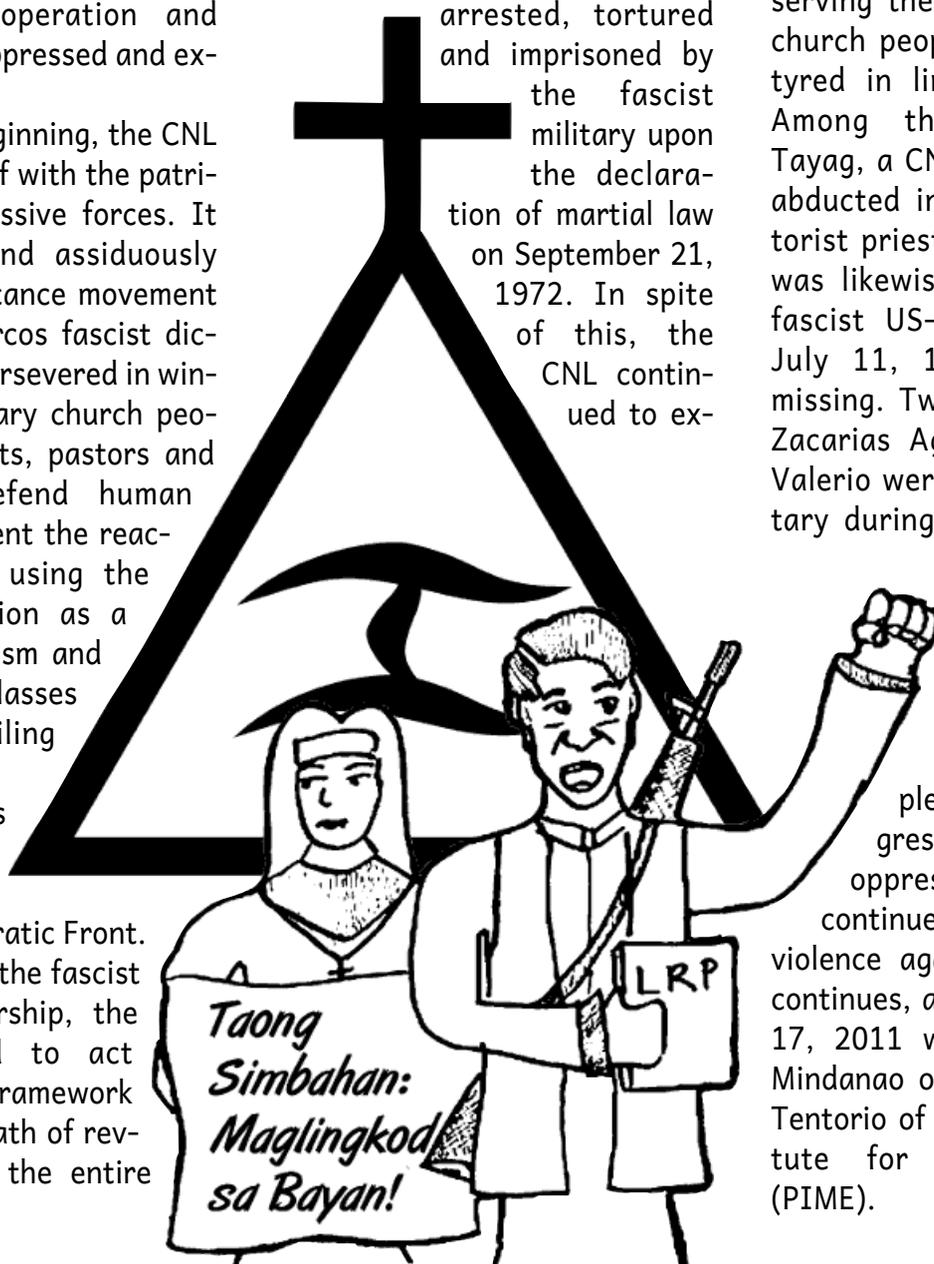
Several CNL members count among the thousands who were arrested, tortured and imprisoned by the fascist military upon the declaration of martial law on September 21, 1972. In spite of this, the CNL continued to ex-

pand and contribute to the revolutionary struggle. It was one of the organizations that cooperated with the Communist Party of the Philippines in putting up the Preparatory Commission for the National Democratic Front in April 1973.

During the first years of martial law, the CNL took on the task of helping other national democratic mass organizations send personnel to the countryside, taking care of wounded Red fighters and helping in the movement's communications system. It also contributed in a big way to preparing areas become guerrilla zones of the New People's Army.

Hundreds of priests and other church workers have chosen to take the path of serving the people. Not a few church people have been martyred in line with this duty. Among them were Carlos Tayag, a CNL activist who was abducted in 1976. A Redemptorist priest, Fr. Rudy Romano was likewise abducted by the fascist US-Marcos regime on July 11, 1985 and remains missing. Two other priests Fr. Zacarias Agatep and Fr. Nilo Valerio were killed by the military during the Marcos dictatorship. Fr. Frank Navarro was slain under the Corazon Aquino regime.

The church people's movement of progressive service to the oppressed and exploited continues to expand. State violence against them likewise continues, as shown on October 17, 2011 with the murder in Mindanao of Fr. Fausto "Pops" Tentorio of the Pontifical Institute for Foreign Missions (PIME). AB



UN rights advocates call for Palparan arrest

Several countries that attended the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) in Geneva, Switzerland on May 29 called for the arrest of Ret. Gen. Jovito Palparan Jr. and other military and police officials with notorious records of human rights abuses in the country.

Australia led the other countries in demanding that the butcher general Palparan and other culpable officers and personnel of the military and other armed agencies of the Philippine government be hunted and brought to court.

Twenty-two countries likewise expressed concern about the continuing cases of extrajudicial killings, abduction and torture involving the military and police under the Aquino regime. Among these countries are Canada, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, France, Ireland, The Netherlands, Spain, Austria and Australia.

Palparan is currently facing charges of illegally detaining and kidnapping University of the Philippines students Karen Empeño and Sherlyn Cadapan and farmer Manuel Meriño. The three victims were abducted in 2006 in Hagonoy, Bulacan. The Regional Trial Court of Malolos, Bulacan issued an arrest warrant in December 2011 for Palparan. He has since gone into hiding.

The UNHRC conducts the UPR every four years. This year, 69 countries attended the review of the human rights situation of various countries, including the Philippines.

In 2008, the Philippine government pledged to improve its dismal human rights record. Under the current Aquino government, however, serious violations of human rights continue. **AB**

Human rights violations under Aquino

(July 2010-March 31, 2012)

Extrajudicial killings: **76** cases

Frustrated extrajudicial killings: **49** cases

Torture: **62** cases

Forced evacuation due to militarization: **6,556** cases

Intimidation/harassment/threats in the course
of military operations: **15,862** cases

Abduction: **9** cases

Co Ban Kiat workers strike anew



WORKERS of the Co Ban Kiat Hardware in Barangay Tambob, Parañaque City struck anew on May 27

after management reneged on an agreement arrived at after the previous strike to reinstate 103 workers who had been illegally terminated.

On top of this, the Co Ban Kiat management likewise fired 14 workers who had recently been promoted to regular status. Workers who had long been working for the company as contractuales were also not regularized, despite an agreement arrived at between management and the workers' union on May 11, after a ten-day strike. Contractual workers who had finished their contract were likewise booted out and those who had signed agreements prohibiting them from joining unions were harassed.

The Co Ban Kiat management claimed that its latest moves were spurred by the termination of the company's contract with the service agency that supplied the workers. The Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU), however, said that the union and the company's management had a written agreement which had nothing to do with the service agency. The workers therefore had the right to strike to assert their interests and counter the capitalist's abuses.

During a program held at the workers' picket line, the KMU assailed the Department of Labor and Employment (DoLE) and its secretary Rosalinda Baldoz for encouraging the expanded implementation of contractual employment. The KMU said that job layoffs every four to five months have become a regular occurrence because of Department Order No. 18-A, Series of 2011 signed by Baldoz, which tolerates contractualization. **AB**