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Editorial

Expand and strengthen the protest movement against Aquino's corruption

The huge August 26 demonstration at the Luneta Park in Manila and various other places here and abroad was an indicator of the Filipino people's widespread anger at the pork barrel system. Through this protest, the people demonstrated their wrath at the bureaucratic plunder of public funds and their use by the ruling Aquino regime to dominate reactionary politics.

The pork barrel issue has further laid bare the ruling classes' greed and underscored their deliberate refusal to heed the people's grievances and

their apathy at the glaring gap between their affluence and the hard, deprived and wretched lives of the toiling masses.

Only at the middle of its six-year term, the Aquino regime is now severely isolated from

the broad masses of the people.

It now faces the widespread hatred of the middle strata of professionals, teachers and other employees, doctors, nurses and health workers, church people and lawyers. All of them were at the receiving end of Aquino's attempts to entice them with propaganda on reform and good governance.

The huge protest action and continually expanding movement against the pork barrel comprise an important leap in the widespread participation of ordinary folk in political action.

The people's burgeoning anger is rooted in the deepening and expanding socio-economic



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crisis. It demonstrates the limited capability of the Aquino regime's propaganda to deceive and lull the people into believing its promises of "righteous road" reform even as the system and the ruling reactionary state are putrefying.

Aquino's attempts to alleviate the crisis have only succeeded in further infuriating the people and stoking the fires of protest. His announcement that he would abolish the Priority Development Assistance Fund (PDAF) infuriated the people no end as he also declared that he would maintain and "reform" the system of giving pork barrel funds to congressmen.

Despite the people's urgent cry, Aquino insists on maintaining his own pork barrel that is estimated at more than a trillion pesos. The Aquino regime's special accommodation of Janet Lim-Napoles, widely believed to be one of the reactionary congressmen and senators' co-conspirators in corruption, has also fueled the people's ire.

The Filipino people must advance their national-democratic struggle against bureaucrat capitalist corruption. The expansion of the protest movement against the pork barrel and corruption must encourage the further expansion and intensification of the economic and political struggles of workers, peasants and other exploited and oppressed classes for their democratic rights and interests.

Alongside their cry against corruption, they must intensify the demand for social justice, for land, jobs and humane wages, for increasing funds allocated to public education, health services, subsidies for farmers, housing for the urban poor and subsidizing the prices of basic commodities, water, electricity and oil, among others.

They must thoroughly expose the Aquino regime's pretensions, assail its anomalous use of state power for the benefit of relatives and friends of the ruling clique, and hold it ac-

countable for defending the rotten system of corruption.

The united front of forces opposed to corruption and the pork barrel system must be further expanded. The progressive and revolutionary forces must march at the forefront of the struggle against the pork barrel and corruption. They must maintain their own initiative and standpoint even as they give their all in expanding links and cooperative relations with the democratic and positive forces generated by the broad protest movement.

The sharpest criticisms and blows must be trained at the ruling Aquino regime which has shrewdly benefited the most from this system and is now defending it to the fullest. The broad forces desirous of reform must be encouraged to take a stand and take action. Simultaneously, we must sharply expose and resist the reformists who cling to the coattails of the ruling Aquino regime and pretend to be anti-corruption, when their yellow leaders have, in fact, also benefited from corruption.

We must expose the systemic and deeply seated cancer of the country's social and political system. We must amplify the cry to end the pork barrel system of Congress and Malacañang for corruption and political patronage.

We must expose the roots of bureaucrat capitalism and advance the demand to end the ruling semifeudal and semicolonial system. We must raise the people's anger at the pork barrel to the level of widespread propaganda on the social and historical roots of rampant government corruption and link it to the anti-imperialist, antifeudal and antifascist struggle. **AB**

	
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Fight against pork barrel intensifies

Thousands of people in 34 cities and towns throughout the country launched protests on August 26 and expressed solidarity with what was dubbed as the Million People March to condemn corruption within the reactionary state.

In Metro Manila, around 75,000-100,000 people, peaking at 350,000, rallied in Luneta Park to show their contempt and begin the series of widespread protests against the pork barrel system perpetuated by the Aquino regime. The protest involved colorful scenes, banners, songs, slogans, and personalities. Sometime in the afternoon, more than 5,000 members of progressive organizations marched to Mendiola and continued their program there.

In Cebu City, up to 4,000 held a rally in Plaza Independencia. In Zamboanga City, 3,000 marched from Normal Road to Plaza Pershing. The crowd swelled when people started arriving to join what was dubbed as the "Nagkakaisa ang Syudad Laban sa mga Magnanakaw-Martsa ng mga Zamboangueños Laban sa Korapsyon."

In Bacolod City, around 2,000 people wearing black shirts launched a rally. Onstage, sixteen painters from Naghiliguyon sa Negros (Dihon) created a large mural (12x8 ft) depicting corruption and the people's poverty. In Davao City, around 2,000 people held a rally in Rizal Park. Hundreds of students and

other progressives continued the rally. Similar rallies were held in Cagayan de Oro, General Santos and Kidapawan.

In Balanga City, 2,000 people attended a mass condemning the pork barrel system. In Angeles City, 1,000 joined a people's mass and forum. In Olongapo City, 500 people marched from Columban College to Rizal Triangle. Around 500 members of the Siklistang Bulakenyo rode towards the provincial capitol before joining the rally in Luneta Park. Cyclists also gathered in Aritaon, Nueva Ecija. Protests by students and other sectors were also held in Dagupan City, Pangasinan.

In Southern Tagalog, mass actions were held in Lucena City; Dasmariñas, Bacoor and Rosario, Cavite. Up to 800 Palawenos marched toward the Baywalk in Puerto Princesa City. Palawenos took notice of the anomalies involving funds generated from the Malampaya natural gas field found in the province. Residents of Calapan City organized a convoy and gathered in the plaza.

In Baguio City, people gathered in Burnham Park's Rose Garden, Malcolm Square and Igorot Park. In Santiago City, Isabela, protest-

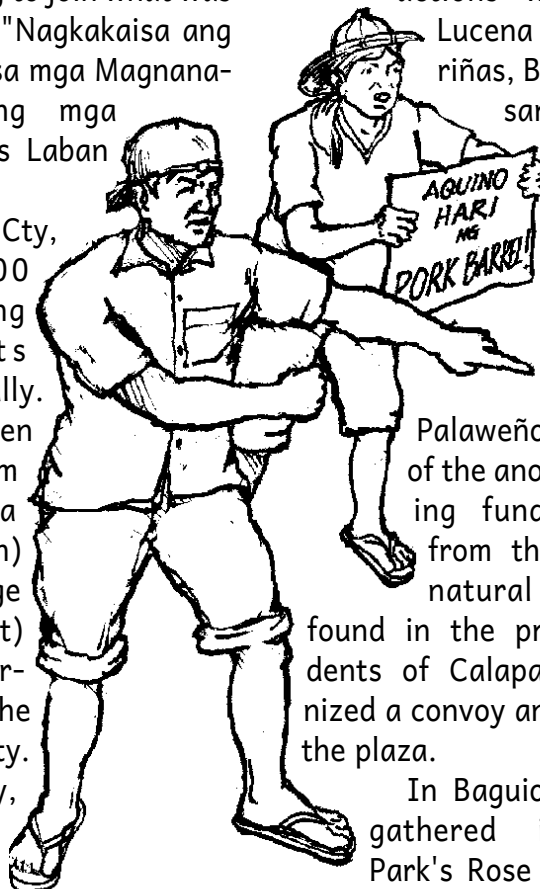
ers wearing red shirts attended mass. Later, progressive groups marched to Mabini Circle.

In Iloilo City, some 700 people gathered in front of the city's capitol. In a prayer rally in Roxas City, a poem entitled "Huya man Ta (We should be Ashamed)" was recited. It depicted the wide gap in lifestyles between corrupt politicians and ordinary citizens. The Makabayan Coalition led the picket-rally in Crossing Banga in Kalibo, Aklan.

In Bicol, heavy rains failed to stop students, farmers and other sectors from holding a rally in Legazpi City, Albay. Meanwhile, middle forces led protests in Naga City.

In Eastern Visayas, protests were held in Tacloban City at the Remedios Trinidad Romualdez (RTR) Plaza and in nearby towns, while in Biliran, a signed manifesto was issued against the pork barrel. In Catbalogan City, protesters joined the run organized by the Samar Runners Club. Meanwhile, young people held protests in front of the Center Mall in San Carlos Cigao City, members of progressive organizations gathered at Rizal Park.

The news regarding the squandering of pork barrel funds first broke out in July 12. On July 17, members of the Makabayan bloc were the first to take a position against it in Congress. This was followed by calls from progressive organizations such as PAMALAKAYA, KMU and Kalikasan. On August 2, Youth Act Now, an alliance of youth groups, called for a series of noise barrages until the pork barrel is abolished. The first noise barrage took place on August 16. On the same day, UP teachers and professors held anti-pork barrel activities. On August 23, a



youth march was launched in Liwasang Bonifacio. All these led to the colorful and creative protest action on August 26, with its marches, motorcades, singing, plays, petition-signing, group discussions, teach ins and more.

The activity was followed by a call for a coordinated and large-scale noise barrage on August 30 to be led by Youth Act Now. This was held in campuses and other participating areas: United

Church of Manila (UMC); CM Recto Avenue in Manila (in front of the University of the East-Recto); Pedro Gil corner Taft Avenue; Katipunan Avenue in Quezon City (near Miriam College and Ateneo de Manila University); University of the Philippines, in front of the Arts and Sciences Building; Taft corner Vito Cruz; and in Intramuros.

Noise barrages were also held in Cebu, Davao, Bacolod, Pangasinan and others. **AB**

Protest actions overseas

Outside the country, migrant Filipinos launched actions in support of the call to abolish the pork barrel system. Most notable was the rally of Filipino-Americans in front of the grand Ritz-Carlton Residences, where Jean Napoles, Janet Lim-Napoles' daughter, resides in her own unit. Jean Napoles created a scandal when she posted pictures on social networks like Facebook, flaunting a grandiose lifestyle of expensive jewelry, cars, parties and the like.

Anakbayan-Los Angeles led the rally and issued a statement calling for the Aquino regime to prioritize the people's needs and stop government officials from squandering and using public funds to support extravagant lifestyles. Members of the Filipino Migrant Center (FMC) joined the rally. According to the FMC, the Los Angeles rally is part of the International Day of Action for the Abolition of the Pork Barrel.

Not far from the Ritz-Carlton, more than 200 Filipino-Americans gathered in front of the Philippine Consulate to express their disgust at corruption in the Philippines. Meanwhile, more than 150 people protested in front of the Philippine Consulate in New York. They submitted petitions against the pork barrel. More than 200 Filipinos from France, Great Britain, the US, Canada, Hongkong, Japan, Thailand, Singapore, United Arab Emirates and Malaysia signed the petition.

In Australia, Filipino students held two separate rallies in Melbourne, one in front of the State Library in Victoria and another at the Australian National University in Canberra City.

In Abu Dhabi and Dubai, Filipino migrants wore white shirts to work as their form of protest. In Saudi Arabia, migrant Filipinos managed to express their

support by posting pictures on the internet, even though mass actions are prohibited in the country. In Geneva, Switzerland, migrant Filipino groups held what they called an "End the Pork Solidarity Picnic" in Lac Lemman.

Led by the Global Alliance of Overseas Filipinos, protests were simultaneously held in Washington DC, San Francisco, New York and Hawaii in the US; Montreal, Canada; London, UK; Rome, Italy; Bucharest, Romania; Riyadh and Jeddah in Saudi Arabia; Bangkok, Thailand; and in Taiwan, Hongkong and Vietnam. **AB**



Protests greet key US officials

Protests greeted Chuck Hagel, secretary of the US Department of Defense, in his visit to the country last August 29-30. Activists marched to the US embassy in Manila to express their objection to the new military agreement being crafted and to call for the immediate withdrawal of US troops from the country. The Philippines was the last leg in Hagel's Asian tour. His visit aimed to prepare Asian countries for what is dubbed as the US "pivot" to Asia.

During his visit, Hagel sought to formalize the Framework for Increased Rotational Deployment and Enhanced Defense Cooperation, the most recent military treaty that would allow the basing of an increasingly large number of US troops in the Philippines in the name of "increased rotational presence." The US and the Aquino regime are using China's claim to several territories in the South China Sea to justify the agreement. The regime claims that US presence will bring stability to the country, although the US has always stated that its assistance to the Philippines during international altercations is "not automatic." Neither the US nor Aquino could deny that US presence in the region only serves to heighten tension between China and other Southeast

Asia nations.

The US has repeatedly stated, in tandem with officials -

officials of the Aquino regime, the lie that giving an increasing number of US troops access to Philippine waters, airspace and facilities does not equate to setting up foreign military bases. This is nothing but a flimsy excuse to skirt the issue of violating the country's sovereignty and national territorial integrity, and circumvent its own laws stating that any basing of foreign troops in the country requires Senate approval. With or without the agreement, the US already has troops regularly entering and staying in Philippine waters, even without informing and obtaining permission from the puppet Aquino regime.

The "Framework Agreement" that the US and the Aquino regime are currently pushing for is no different from agreements the US has had with other countries in the Asia-Pacific. In 2005, Singapore signed the Strategic Framework Agreement for a Closer Cooperation Partnership in Defence and Security which allowed the US to use the Changi Naval Base as a port and base for warship repair. Prior to the agreement, the US had already based one of their command posts in Singapore—the Commander, Logistics Group Western Pacific (COMLOG WESTPAC)—which coordinates all war-

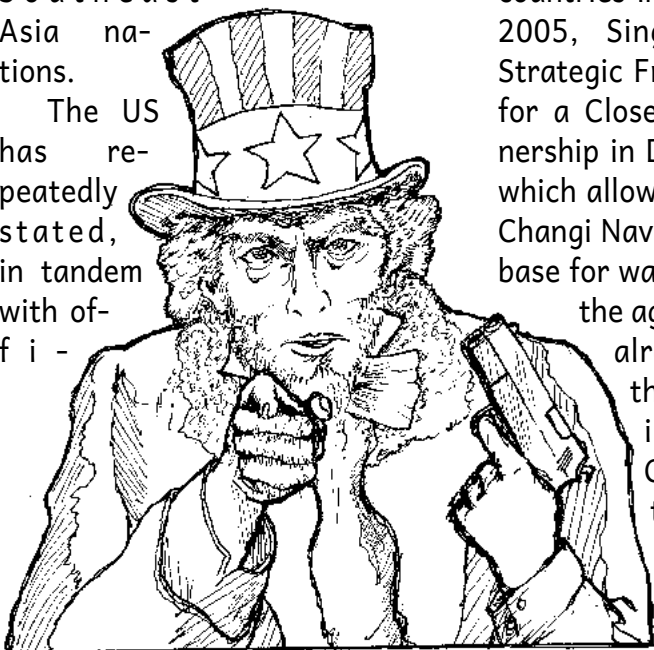
ship deployments not only in Asia, but even those in Africa and Afghanistan.

According to its website, the COMLOG WESTPAC is a service base for arming, providing repair and food to thousands of American troops permanently stationed in Asian waters. Starting in 2011, the US has already been rotating four large US warships in Changi Naval Base. Prior to this, the US already had permanent use of an airport in Singapore for its warplanes. Despite the permanence of its basing being obvious, the US still denies that it is keeping military bases in Singapore.

The US is also using "troop rotational presence" as cover for establishing military bases in Darwin, Australia in 2011. Currently, there are 600 US Marines on rotation for six-month periods stationed inside a local military base. The US seeks to increase its troops to 2,500 by 2015. As in the case of Singapore, the US is also denying that it has military bases in Australia.

Meanwhile, church people under the Initiatives for Peace (InPeace) and the Sisters Association in Mindanao (SAMIN) expressed opposition to proposals to base drones in Mindanao and to the US drone program in general. At the same time, Mayor Rodrigo Duterte refused the US' request to use the old Davao City airport for its drones and warned that Davao "will explode" if US troops maintained forces in the city.

In Zamboanga City, Mayor Maria Isabelle Climaco-Salazar expressed her objection to the US troops' continuing presence in her city. Since 2002, about 600-700 American troops have been permanently stationed in the city under the auspices of the Joint Special Operations-Task Force Philippines. AB



People's protests continue

For the past several weeks, workers, peasants, urban poor, fisherfolk and minorities have been holding protest actions.

Workers. Workers under the Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU) picketed in front of the National Capital Region Wage Board in Malate, Manila on August 16 to condemn the measly increase in wages the board is set to approve for the year. The workers demanded that House Bill 253, seeking a ₱125 across-the-board increase, be immediately approved.

On August 13, the KMU launched a protest to assail the 0.6% increase in Social Security System contributions and the change in the "sharing scheme" from 70-30 to 50-50. Contributions are set to increase by up to ₱30 a month for minimum wage earners in Metro Manila. The increase in contributions will not be used to raise members' benefits but will instead be used to pay the SSS' ₱1.1 trillion debt.

According to the workers, instead of increasing monthly contributions, the SSS should use its past years' earnings. In 2010, the institution earned ₱345 million from workers' contributions. The SSS earns an estimated ₱20 billion per year, not including the estimated ₱8.5 million that capitalists fail to remit to the institution.

The KMU added that the workers should not bear the burden of paying the SSS' debts that were incurred due to mismanagement, nonperforming investments, extravagance and corruption. They demanded that the practice of giving scandalous bonuses to the management be stopped.

Meanwhile, workers, along with ordinary commuters, continue to deplore the ban of provincial buses inside Metro Mani-

la since August by the Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) and Manila local government. According to the KMU, the ban doubles the workers' woes. It means an increase in fares for the commuters and less income for the drivers. To protest the ban, drivers and operators of more than 1,000 buses plying the Manila-Cavite route launched a strike and paralyzed the entire route for the whole morning of August 8.

Peasants. On August 20, more than 500 small coconut farmers marched from the Department of Agriculture (DA) office to the Aquino family's house in Quezon City to denounce the planned use of the ₱305 million coco levy fund to put up the agro-industrial estate project in five regions. The farmers belong to the Bicol Coconut Planters Association Inc. (BCPAI) and Pinag-isang Lakas ng mga Magsasaka sa Quezon (Piglas-Quezon). The protest coincided with the 40th founding anniversary of the Coconut Consumers Stabilization Fund (CCSF) which was founded on August 20, 1973. Through the CCSF, a fee of ₱15 per 100 kilos of copra was extorted from small coconut farmers.

The US-Aquino regime incorporated the coco levy fund into the national budget without the permission of coconut farmers. Within the ₱2.3 billion budget for the Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA) for 2014, the amount of ₱305 million was earmarked for the establishment of "agro-industrial hubs" in Region IV-CALABARZON, Region V-Bicol, Region VI-Western Visayas, Region VIII-Eastern Visayas

and Region IX-Zamboanga Peninsula.

In Quezon province, 225 members of the Ugnayan ng Magsasaka sa Gitnang Quezon expressed opposition to Exec. Sec. Paquito Ochoa Jr.'s decision to cancel the Certificate of Land Ownership Awards (CLO-As) to several farmers in Sampaloc II, Sariaya.

Last August, Ochoa sided with the Department of Agrarian Reform's 2008 decision to return a ten-hectare landholding to its previous owner. The decision is based on a 1982 ordinance categorizing the said land as "industrial," including the land of six farming families. A similar case involving more than 250 farmers from Sariaya has been filed with Ochoa's office.

According to the Quezon farmers, Ochoa's decision merely demonstrates that the land distribution in February in San Narciso, Buenavista and San Andres was nothing but a big show. According to the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas, the land distribution in Hacienda Luisita might end in CLOA cancellation just like what happened in Quezon.

Urban poor and fisherfolk.

On August 17, residents under the Close Petron Depot Movement demanded the immediate closure of the Petron Depot in Rosario, Cavite. This is in reaction to the destruction brought about by the oil spill from a Petron pipeline on August 9. The oil spill destroyed livelihoods and endangered the health of the urban poor and fisherfolk community. The residents are enraged that Petron refused to help and pay damages for the destruction and offered loans instead through the Petron Loan Assistance.

Meanwhile, on August 9, the Alyansa ng Nagkakaisang Pedit-

cab at Kuliglig Drivers and the Anti-Zero Vending Policy Alliance denounced the Manila local government's attacks on their livelihood. Since ex-president Joseph Estrada took power, he has treated as street trash vendors whose only crime is to try earning a decent living. Estrada plans to prohibit *kuliglig* (motorized pedicabs) from all thoroughfares and ban street vending.

Minority peoples. On August 7, more than 500 Agusan Manobo rallied in front of the Armed Forces of the Philippines-Eastern Mindanao Command camp to demand the withdrawal of the 26th IB from their community and an end to the food blockade the military has imposed. The Lumad who were then staying at an evacuation center in Davao City are from the town of Loreto, Agusan del Sur. Most of them have contracted diseases and some have been hospitalized due to the unhealthy conditions in the evacuation center. The provincial government is pressuring them to return to their community despite the intense militarization.

The entry of the New Britain Palm Oil Limited (NBOL) in Loreto has been identified as the reason for the militarization. The company's expansion plans in Asia involve 11 Loreto barangays. It intends to use Barangay Sta. Teresa as a pilot test area and demonstration farm. The Aquino government has also permitted a Chinese company, the Seng Hong Exploration, to explore for natural gas deposits on 750,000 hectares of the Agusan Marsh, including Loreto town.

Meanwhile, in the Ilocos-Cordillera Region (ICR), the Cordillera People's Alliance (CPA) continues to demand a complete stop to the use of the

Philex Mining Corporation Tailings Pond 3 (TP3). On August 1, 2012, the Philex TP3 collapsed, spilling over 30 million tons of mining waste into the Balog Creek, the Agno River, San Roque Dam and into the communities of San Manuel and San Nicolas in Pangasinan. This was the second time that waste spilled from the TP3. The mine tailings contain about 40% gold.

The PMC failed to completely clean up the mine wastes from the affected communities and compensate peasants who lost their livelihoods. The farmers could no longer plant on rice farms covered in sand and toxic chemicals. The PMC has been operating on 95 hectares of land in Benguet for 50 years and has destroyed the livelihoods of 14,000 Igorots.

In related news, minority peoples launched a protest on August 1 in front of the office of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to denounce the continued Philex operations, a year after the mine spill. The CPA criticized the DENR and its Mines and Geosciences Bureau for allowing Philex to once again use the TP3.

The Kalipunan ng mga Katutubong Mamamayan ng Pilipinas (KAMP) likewise criticized the US-Aquino regime for its continued use of public funds to finance the PMC. In 2009, the Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP) lent ₱660 million to Roberto V. Ongpin to purchase DBP shares in PMC. The Social Security System (SSS) and DBP previously owned 24% of PMC shares in 2009, with a combined value of ₱9.3 billion. The SSS remains one of Philex's main stockholders, holding 20.58% of company shares. **AB**

Struggles in oil palm plantation continues

The workers' union at the Filipinas Oil Palm Plantation (FPPI) succeeded in having 293 of its members reinstated. The workers were illegally terminated in October 2012.

The workers were fired after they gave testimony to inspectors from the Department of Labor and Employment regarding the widespread violations of labor laws in the plantation.

In November 2012, the union launched a strike to demand the reinstatement of their members and protest the company's low wages and unjust labor

practices. This included the company's refusal to release their benefits and the absence of protective gear for its 600 plantation workers.

The laid-off workers were rehired as casuals, and thus, lack job security. The union president said they would continue the fight to regularize all the plantation's workers.

In related news, the Center for Trade Union and Human Rights (CTHUR) condemned the US-Aquino regime's anti-child labor program for failing to stop the use of child labor in oil palm plantations. According to the CTUHR, in 2012, twenty-four percent of workers in FPPI were minors. The child workers, whose ages range from 5 to 17 years, receive wages lower than the minimum and endure long-term contractualization, even as they take on the same jobs as

regular workers.

This situation persists up to the present. For example, for hauling and harvesting, children carry palm oil bunches of up to 15 kilos. They work for up to 8-10 hours a day carrying up to 50 fruit bunches for ₱150 or ₱3/bunch.

Due to their hard working conditions, the children suffer from wounds, sunburn and sprains. They also develop eye and respiratory problems. The CTUHR demanded that the hiring of minors be stopped and that the children be given the opportunity to go to school.

Child labor is prevalent in the agricultural sector in general. Last year, the International Labor Organization reported that children make up half of the sector's workers. **AB**

Peace advocates push for resumption of NDFP-GPH talks

Hundreds proceeded to Plaza Miranda from the Quezon Memorial Circle on September 2 to push for the resumption of peace talks between the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) and the Government of the Philippines (GPH). The activity was conducted to support calls for a just and lasting peace in the country. It was led by the newly established Citizens Alliance for Peace (CALL for JUST PEACE), an alliance of peace advocates from different parts of the country. The NDFP negotiating panel fully supported the activity and its calls.

The NDFP is still open to resume peace talks with the US-Aquino regime despite the GPH's contempt for key agreements, including the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees (JASIG). There are 15 NDFP peace talks consultants who have been illegally arrested and are currently detained in various prisons nationwide. Among the newest detainees is Loida Magpatoc, 52, NDFP consultant from Far South Mindanao. Magpatoc is currently detained at Camp Bagong Diwa in Bicutan, Taguig City.

In related news, the NDFP celebrated the 21st anniversary of The Hague Joint Declaration which was signed on September 1, 1992. The declaration set the framework for the peace talks, including the talks' substantive agenda and its proper sequencing. **AB**

Raid and ambush in Comval and Agusan del Sur

Red fighters successfully launched a series of military actions in Mabini, Monkayo and Laak in Compostela Valley and Loreto, Agusan del Sur from July 24 to August 27, killing 23 soldiers and wounding 17.

Mabini, Compostela Valley. Six troops from the 71st IB of the 1001st Bde were killed and five wounded after operatives from the Comval-Davao Gulf Subregional Command of the New People's Army detonated explosives inside the soldiers' camp in Barangay Pangibiran, Mabini, Compostela Valley on August 5. The action was carried out to obtain justice for the victims of gross human rights violations in the province and the extrajudicial killings of civilians. These civilians include Eddie Cayon, Anakpawis

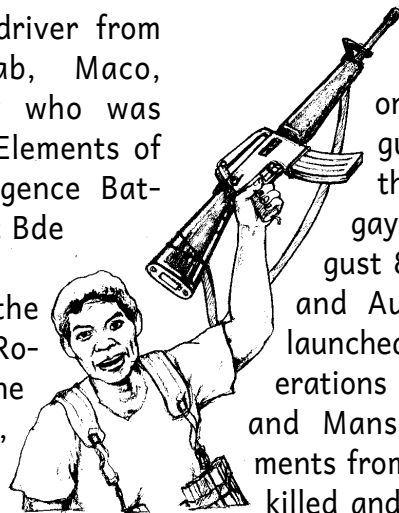
Party municipal coordinator for Barangay San Isidro, Mawab, Compostela Valley who was killed on May 25 and Ramil Lintas, a motorcycle driver from Barangay Calabcab, Maco, Compostela Valley who was killed on July 25. Elements of the Military Intelligence Battalion of the 1001st Bde killed both men.

Meanwhile, the NPA released PFC Rodolfo Arigonan of the 71st IB in Purok 1, Barangay Panganan, Maco on Au-

gust 24 for humanitarian reasons. Arigonan was captured on August 2 in Barangay Mapaang of the said town.

Loreto, Agusan del Sur. Elements of the 26th IB and 71st IB suffered 27 casualties from the military actions launched in Loreto by the ComVal-North Davao-South Agusan Subregional Command of the NPA from July 27 to August 8.

Five soldiers from the 26th IB were killed and one wounded when guerrillas ambushed their unit in Barangay Kauswagan on August 8. Between July 28 and August 7, the NPA launched seven sniping operations in Barangay Sabud and Mansanitas. Four elements from the 26th IB were killed and two more wound-



ed. On August 1, another four were killed and eight wounded after Red fighters set-off a command-detonated explosive under a military truck carrying elements of the 26th IB in Barangay Pangat.

Two soldiers and an element of the paramilitary Bagani Force were killed after the NPA launched three harassment operations against a team of the 76th IB in Sityo Onion, Barangay Binucayan on July 27.

Monkayo, Compostela Valley. Red fighters launched successive harassment operations against a detachment of the 72nd IB in Barangay Casoon, Monkayo on August 27 and another detachment of the 60th IB in Barangay Katipunan, Laak on August 26. A CAFGU element was killed and a soldier from the 72nd IB in charge of the CAFGU was wounded.

The military actions were part of the continuing campaign against large-scale and destructive biofuel and palm oil projects, as well as mining operations along the border Agusan del Sur-Compostela Valley border. AB

NPA ambushes abusive soldiers in Kalinga

Two soldiers were killed and three wounded in an ambush launched by Red fighters belonging to the Abrahan Bannawagan Front of the New People's Army (ABF-NPA) around 2 p.m. of August 30 in Barangay Dupag, Lubuagan, Kalinga.

Killed were Cpl. Dominador Concordia and Pfc. Rey Ragas and wounded were 2Lt. Czar Carsido, Pfc Marnel Laganga and Kennedy Sallaya. They were ambushed near Sitio Tumiangan, Barangay Dupag.

According to Ka Tipon Gil-ayab, Leo Cawilan Provincial Command spokesperson, the ambush was carried out as punishment against the 17th IB for forcing the residents of Dupag to enlist in the CAFGU. The unit also incited a tribal war between Lubuagan and Mabongtot.

Inciting tribal wars to sow discord among the people is one of the sinister schemes of the AFP and its mercenaries in the local government, added Gil-ayab. The military carries out this scheme as the minority peoples forge stronger ties against destructive power and mining companies, and as militarization intensifies in their communities.

Elements of the 17th IB immediately launched indiscriminate attacks against barangays near Dupag. They fired shots from M203 grenade launchers and destroyed houses and other possessions of the Mabongtot people.

Meanwhile, two elements of the Public Safety Mobile Battalion of the Cordillera Police were wounded in an encounter with an NPA unit under the Leonardo Pacci Command in Barangay Aguid, Sagada, Mountain Province on the morning of August 29.

To offset their defeat, soldiers and police from the Cordillera Police Office launched clearing operations and dropped bombs on Barangay Aguid's forested and watershed areas using helicopter gunships. AB

People's war advances in Leyte, Samar

Guerrilla warfare in Leyte and Samar province continues to rage and lead the US-Aquino regime's Oplan Bayanihan to failure. Red fighters under the Mt. Amandewin Command (NPA-Leyte) and Arnulfo Ortiz Command (NPA-Samar province) consistently launched tactical offensives.

In Samar province. Twenty-four soldiers were killed and 13 were wounded in encounters between the NPA and AFP troops from November 2012 to May 2013.

Last April 22, seven soldiers

belonging to the 87th IB were wounded when Red fighters ambushed them in Barangay Agbalati, Catbalogan City.

Last May 30, the Red fighters ambushed Chief Insp. Douglas Eloja, PNP chief of Paranas

and three of his men. There have been numerous complaints against abusive and corrupt Paranas policemen. Another NPA unit executed the decision of the people's court against Sr. Insp Severino Solis last March 16 in Catbalogan City.

Eleven soldiers were killed and one wounded in successive firefights between the NPA and 87th IB in Barangays San Andres and Hagbay in San Jose de

Buan last March 11 and 13.

Another seven soldiers were killed when the NPA ambushed combined elements of the 87th IB and 81st CMO Company between Barangays Canvais and Sto. Niño, Motiong. Last March 5, four troopers were killed and another four wounded when the Red fighters harassed the said unit in Barangay Canvais.

Two soldiers were killed and another wounded when the NPA ambushed 43rd IB troops in Barangay Bagacay, Matuguinao. Last November 27, 2012, the NPA executed the death penalty against a spy, Laguyo dela Cruz and confiscated his M2 carbine rifle and .45 cal pistol.

In Leyte. The 8th ID suffered a total of 51 ca-

sualties—28 killed and 23 wounded—in five NPA tactical offensives from October 2012 to March 2013.

Last October 17, twelve soldiers belonging to the 78th IB were slain and 15 wounded when the NPA ambushed them in Barangay Antipolo, Albuera. Last December 6, 2012, twelve soldiers were likewise killed and another three were wounded in simultaneous NPA attacks against the 78th IB in Barangay Antipolo and against the 19th IB Alpha Company in Barangay Rubas, Jaro.

Five soldiers were killed and four wounded in successive gunbattles between the NPA and the 19th IB Charlie Company in Barangay Liberty, Ormoc. AB

Antifeudal struggles in Southwest Negros

Antifeudal struggles were launched in different parts of Southwest Negros last 2012 as part of the campaign to thwart and frustrate the onslaught of the Aquino regime's Oplan Bayanihan. An estimated 1,500 families or about 15,000 individuals in the guerrilla front directly benefited.

A propaganda-education campaign, petition-signing and mass mobilization were first implemented to drive out the destructive big foreign mining companies. Later, the New People's Army launched tactical offensives against Philex Mining Corp. and Maricalum Mining Corp.

A mass campaign was also launched to raise the wages of farm workers as well as sugar cane plantation workers, to raise prices of agricultural produce like coffee, banana and charcoal and to reduce the *resikada* and *tarha* in copra. *Resikada* refers to the percentage of the weight of copra corresponding to the moisture content. *Tarha* refers to the weight of the jute sack which is deducted from the overall weight of the copra. In most cases, *resikada* and *tarha* are arbitrarily deter-

mined by merchants and are ways of underbuying the farmers' produce.

Particularly in the case of the charcoal makers in several barangays in Southwest Negros, middle men frequently buy their products for ₱30 up to ₱35 per sack. They then impose a ₱5-₱10 markup per sack when they sell the charcoal to merchants. The price per sack of charcoal in the city comes to ₱150-₱300. The charcoal makers earn only around ₱20 to ₱70 per day while the merchants amass around ₱1,000 to ₱1,500 per day.

Through their collective action, the farmers were able to demand from the middle men and merchants a ₱5 to ₱25 increase in the price per

sack of charcoal. A ₱5 per sack interest on loans was also abolished. More than 2,000 families or around 8,000 individuals in nine barangays benefited from this campaign. They were also able to influence other barangays to launch their own struggles.

Meanwhile, in banana-planting areas, compradors buy each *bahig* of bananas (eight to nine bunches of first class bananas comprising around 100 pieces) at ₱20 to ₱25. Selling bananas is the source of income of almost 80% of families in three barangays.

After negotiations, the farmers were able to gain a ₱5-in-



crease in the price of every *bahig*, with the volume of each *bahig* reduced from eight to nine bunches to only three to four bunches. Three barangays directly gained from this campaign.

On the other hand, coconut merchants reduce from 10% to 12% *resikada* from the total weight of the copra, dried or otherwise. However, they do not use moisture meters. Aside from this, weighing scales are rigged. There are also cases where the weight in kilograms of bananas is counted by multiples of five, and where the odd weight of bananas is still taken by the merchants but not paid for.

All this has changed. After negotiating with 15 small and big banana merchants and with the Local Government Unit (LGU), a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) was drawn up explicitly indicating that *resikada* and *tarha* would be pegged at 3%. Rigged weighing scales were prohibited. The *waki* (the odd bananas) should also be paid for. Around 1,500 families or 15,000 individuals within the guerrilla zone directly benefited.

Wages of farm workers and sugarcane workers were also increased. Small landlords, loan sharks and rich peasants agreed to pay an additional ₱3 to ₱20 in the daily wages (₱100-₱120 per day) of men, women and children. When the price of sugar goes up, their wages would also automatically be raised to ₱130 to ₱150 per day.

They used to receive an ₱80 to ₱100 daily wage, with women and children earning even less. Some were being paid only ₱15 per day for weeding in peanut or corn fields. More than 250 families or 1,250 individuals benefited. AB

Antimining datu in Davao del Sur slain

Two antimining mass leaders and a lawyer became victims of human rights violations while a student leader was harassed by soldiers. These were the more striking violations this August.

August 31. A human rights lawyer was slain by a policeman. Atty. John Mark Espera, 39, was shot by PO3 Jose Suarez in Barangay Pu-ao, Hamtic, Antique. The lawyer was declared dead on arrival at a hospital. Atty Edre Olalia, secretary-general of the National Union of Peoples' Lawyers (NUPL) and its Iloilo chapter condemned Espera's killing.

Suarez, who is assigned to the Tobias Fornier police station, is currently detained at the Antique Provincial Police Office.

August 23. Elements of Task Force Kitaco (a group of soldiers under the 39th IB guarding mining companies) killed Datu Anting Freay, 60, and his son Victor Freay, 16, in the upland area of Kiblawan, Davao del Sur. Task Force Kitaco guards the mining firm Glencore-SMI-Xstrata which operates in the municipalities of Kiblawan, Davao del Sur; Tampakan, South Cotabato; and Columbio, Sultan Kudarat.

According to Kiit, Datu Anting's wife, it was early morning when their house in Sitio Bulol, Barangay Kimlawis of the said town was strafed. The soldiers were just three meters away from their house when they started shooting. When Kiit saw that her husband was dead, she immediately fled with her two other children. But their other son,

Victor went back to the house and was shot to death by the soldiers. Anting sustained 17 bullet wounds and Victor, 18. Datu Anting fought fiercely against the destructive mining operations of Glencore-SMI-Xstrata.

Task Force Kitaco is also responsible for the killing of antimining activist Juvy Capi-on and two of her children last October 2012 and the death of Kitari and Diyo Capion last January. Also in July 28, Datu Anting's eldest son Eking and his son-in-law survived an attempted ambush. The culprits were CAFGU elements under Task Force Kitaco.

August 23. A student leader of the Polytechnic University of the Philippines (PUP) in Lopez, Quezon was harassed by the military. Mark Anda, Supreme Student Council member of PUP-Lopez and an organizer of the Kabataan Party was maliciously accused by the Philippine Army 85th IB of conspiring with the revolutionary movement. In a forum launched by soldiers in the campus, Anda was directly accused in front of the students of being a recruiter for the New People's Army.

The alliance of student councils in PUP strongly condemned Anda's harassment and denounced the entry of soldiers in PUP-Lopez, which is a clear violation of the Prudente-Ramos agreement and the LFS-DND Accord prohibit-

ing the presence of any element of the Armed Forces of the Philippines in any university. The soldiers also violated RA 7610 prohibiting the military from building outposts, barracks or any other military facility inside campuses.

August 21. A member of the Katribu Party was abducted by police in Nueva Vizcaya. Bryan Epa, 34, was forcibly taken by six policemen at around 9 a.m. in Barangay Salvacion Dumlao Boulevard in Bayombong. According to witnesses, Epa was arbitrarily arrested because he was allegedly acting suspiciously. When Epa resisted, a policeman punched him and began dragging him. Epa was able to grab the post of a sarisari store, but was

beaten with truncheons and forcibly thrown into a police patrol car.

When Epa's lawyer and relatives went to the police station the day after, they were told that Epa had already left. A different name, however, was listed in the police blotter. He remains missing to date.

Epa actively fought against destructive mining. In fact, he joined a barricade in 2007 to prevent the entry of vehicles belonging to a mining firm in their area. He is also active in the fight against the operations of Buena Suerte Mining Co. and Royalco Philippines Inc., an Australian mining firm operating in Nueva Vizcaya and Quirino. **AB**

Civilians suffer from Sagada bombings

It is the civilians who suffered the most due to the extensive bombings and military operations in the northern barangays of Sagada and Bontoc, Mountain Province last August 29-30. Combined forces of the Philippine National Police in Mountain Province, Benguet and Abra and Task Force Tadian under the 5th ID are responsible for the onslaught.

The children were also traumatized after two helicopter gunships continuously dropped bombs in northern Sagada, Dalican and Mainit in Bontoc.

Proof of the military operation's antipeople objective is the targeting of the local irrigation system. Parts of the communal irrigation system had already been destroyed in Mabileng because of the recent typhoons and torrential rains. It suffered further damage when it was targeted by the bombings and when civilians who were repairing the damage were strafed. Even the smaller water systems in Ambuchaaw and Demang in Aguid, Sagada; Pakanan, Mainit, Bontoc; and in Matbo and Mapagpag in Dalican, Bontoc were bombed. Even streams that served as sources of potable water for

Sagada's villages were not spared from the bombings.

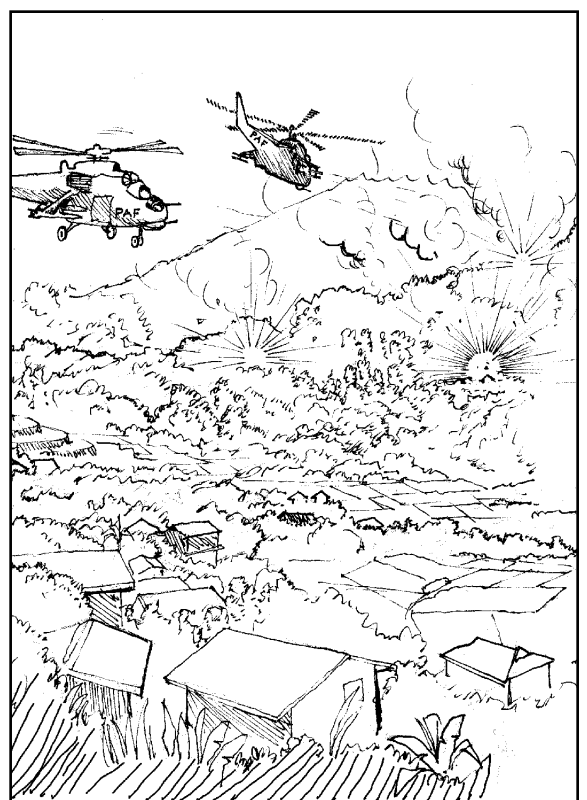
Aside from this, farm animals grazing at the slope of Mount Demang have gone missing. Hunters have also been prevented from inspecting the traps they had set for wild boar.

Nevertheless, the military operations failed to wipe out the Red fighters of the New People's Army who were temporarily based in the area while other units were dispersed to assist the peasants in rehabilitating their farms and water system.

The Leonardo Pacsi Command (NPA-Mountain Province) strongly condemned the bombings and the extensive military operations. The command

said all AFP and PNP officials involved in violating the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law should be held responsible for the wanton bombings and strafing of civilians and the destruction of the people's crops and properties.

It called on the Red fighters and people's militia to mete more blows on the fascist troops of the reactionary government in order to defend the ancestral lands and the rights and resources of the Cordilleran people. **AB**



Marking the International Day of the Disappeared

THE Families of the Desaparecidos for Justice commemorated the International Day of the Disappeared last August 30 by holding discussion programs at Palma Hall of the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City. Photos narrating the lives and struggles of the desaparecidos and their families were again exhibited, and the call to end extrajudicial killings and other forms of human rights violations aired.

"How long are we going to search?" This is the question constantly on the minds of relatives of desaparecidos who continue in their search and fight for justice. They said that several regimes have come and gone, but up to the current Aquino regime, disappearances and killings persist and their missing loved ones have yet to be surfaced.

They are disappointed over the fact that although there is now a law criminalizing enforced disappearances, the law has failed to put an end to disappearances or surface their abducted relatives.

The persistence of abduction and killings, the culture of impunity and the protection enjoyed by perpetrators like Gen. Jovito Palparan are concrete indications that human rights will continue to be trampled upon. Under the Aquino regime, there have been 17 victims of forced disappearances and killings. The latest case was the abduction of activist Bryan Epa of Nueva Vizcaya last August 21.

Behn Cervantes, people's artist

Different sectors paid tribute to Ka Behn Cervantes, people's artist. He dedicated his art to the advancement of the rights and welfare of the workers and the entire people, and to national freedom and democracy. He passed away last August 15 at the age of 74 due to pneumonia and diabetes.

In the 1970s, Ka Behn was an active member of Samahan ng Demokratikong Kabataan (SDK). He was one of the founders of Gintong Silahis, SDK's theater group and actively engaged in friendly competition with KM's cultural group. He created, wrote and directed the musical *Barikada* that depicted the Diliman Commune in 1971. He supported the comradely and militant collaboration of SDK and KM. When the Cultural Bureau of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) was established to consolidate in a single program the national democratic movement's cultural groups, Ka Behn became an active member of the revolutionary party of the proletariat.

The most prominent among his works of art is the film *Sakada* that depict-

ed the deplorable conditions of farm workers in Negros. Those who paid tribute recalled the extensive help Ka Behn gave in shattering the terror caused by the widespread arrest and incarceration of KMU leaders and organizers on August 13, 1982. In 1983, *Sigaw ng Bayan*, a play written by Bonifacio Ilagan was staged at the Araneta Coliseum under his direction. Around 25,000 workers and urban poor watched it, breaking the climate of fear created by the US-Marcos dictatorship. This provided the KMU with significant momentum to further expand its ranks and fight.

Ka Behn joined various mass actions against the US-Marcos dictatorship. After the latter's fall, he persistently took part in mass struggles.

3 generals criminally charged

SECURITY guard Rolly Mira Panesa, 48, filed criminal charges at the Department of Justice against 11 military and civilian personnel in the first week of September. The respondents include three high-ranking AFP officials: Chief of Staff Gen. Emmanuel Bautista; Maj. Gen Alan Luga, former chief of the Southern Luzon Command and currently AFP's Vice Chief of Staff; and Maj. Gen. Eduardo del Rosario, chief of the Philippine Army 2nd ID.

According to Panesa, who was recently ordered released by the Court of Appeals, the respondent

officials were involved in his illegal arrest and torture and his 11-month incarceration. He was presented to the public as Benjamin Mendoza, allegedly the secretary of the Southern Tagalog Regional Party Committee with a P5.6 million bounty for his capture. His rights were violated. Before the court issued its release order on August 27, General Bautista had given out up to P19 million in reward monies to informants who had helped in the capture of alleged communist leaders, including Mendoza.

RPA-ABB reinvents itself

THE counterrevolutionary renegade group Revolutionary Proletarian Army-Alex Boncayao Brigade (RPA-ABB)-Veronica Tabara-Stephen Paduano Faction now has a new name. According to Ka Amos Sierra of the Media Bureau of NPA-Negros' Apolinario Gatmaitan Command, the renegade group now calls itself KAPATIRAN (Kapatiran para sa Progresong Panlipunan) or "Brotherhood for Social Progress."

To make itself appear legal and unarmed, its party, the Abang Lingkod Partylist, participated in the elections last May. However, its first nominee, Stephen Paduano a.k.a. Carapali Lualhati, allegedly the RPA's national commander has been prevented from holding office because of an electoral

protest.

Despite its reinvention, RPA members still freely move around armed purportedly for security reasons. The name change is just a cover to conceal its role as hired killers and as rabid dogs of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and Philippine National Police (AFP-PNP) in its campaign against the revolutionary movement.

In 2012, the RPA assassinated Judge Henry Arles of the Regional Trial Court-Kabankalan City at the behest of John Paul Alvarez, then mayor and currently vice mayor of Ilog, Negros Occidental. The Arles and Alvares families are bitter political rivals.
