

ANG

Pahayagan ng Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas
Pinapatnubayan ng Marxismo-Leninismo-Maoismo

Bayan

English Edition
Vol. XLIV No. 19
October 7, 2013
www.philippinerevolution.net

Editorial

Put Aquino in the crosshairs of the anti-pork barrel protests

Over the past several days, the Filipino people have continuously been expressing their disenchantment over widespread corruption in the use of pork barrel funds and the rottenness of the entire ruling system. They have launched protest actions nationwide, marking the breadth of their disgust and disappointment with Aquino's failed promises of "good governance."

Disclosures about the Aquino regime's creation and use of the so-called Disbursement Acceleration Program (DAP) have only succeeded in further stoking the fires of the Filipino people's anger. The DAP is a system of releasing public funds that is not in accordance with the approved budget and is dependent solely on the president's discretion.

Aquino used the DAP to provide hundreds of millions of pesos to senators who sided with him in convicting and ousting for-

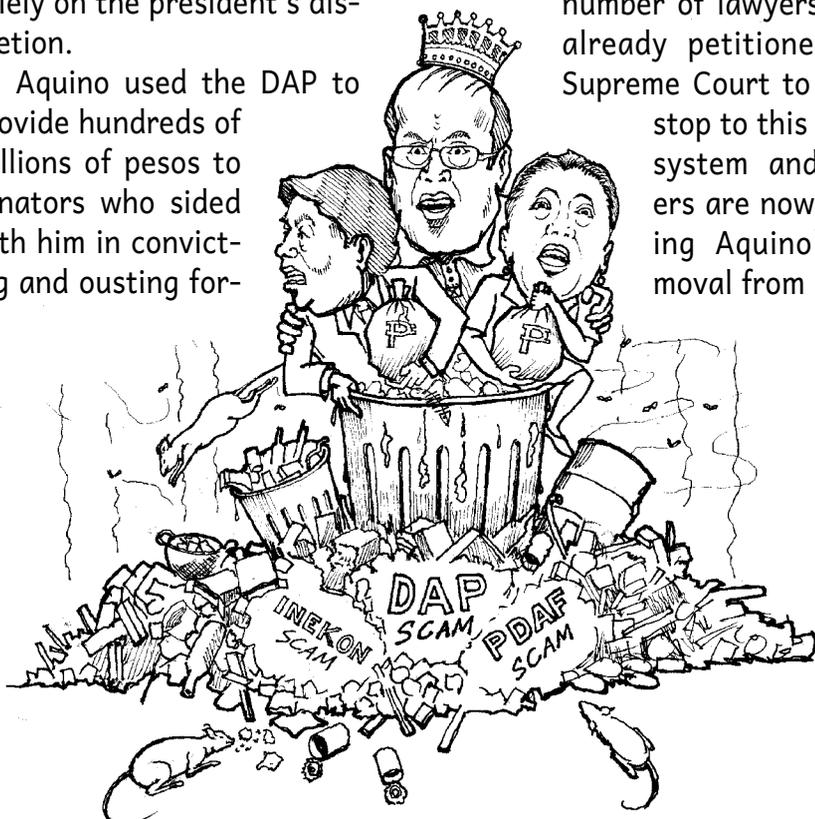
mer Supreme Court chief justice Renato Corona. The DAP was also used to accelerate the release of funds for congressmen and senators to secure their support for bills that Aquino personally campaigned for.

The DAP and Aquino's other pork barrel funds have been met with a swarm of criticism. A number of lawyers have already petitioned the Supreme Court to put a stop to this illegal system and others are now seeking Aquino's removal from power

either through impeachment or resignation.

All this proves that the people are no longer fooled by Aquino's "good governance" slogan, which so obviously serves as a thin veil for widespread corruption. His endless accusations and constant hoopla about the former Arroyo regime's corruption now rankles the people. These are all clearly aimed at shouting down criticisms of corruption against his own regime.

The Aquino government is now scrambling to deflect and stifle people's protests against the pork barrel even as it maintains the corrupt system of



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budgeting, which accommodates huge unprogrammed funds directly under Aquino's control. In the face of undying protests against the pork barrel and corruption, Aquino has been frenziedly maneuvering politically to cover up the fact that he is at the top of the totem pole of the rotten pork barrel system and corruption. Nonetheless, he could hardly conceal his annoyance at being aptly dubbed the "pork barrel king."

Aquino continues to exploit the big scandal involving Janet Lim-Napoles to selectively persecute political rivals, especially those who are set to challenge the ruling clique in the 2016 elections. To further infuriate the people about Napoles, Aquino has exposed her transactions with anti-Aquino politicians even as he closely controls her to prevent her from disclosing her dealings with politicians within the Aquino clique.

After the Department of Justice's much-publicized move to file plunder cases against key opposition politicians failed to

silence the people's protests, the Aquino regime slapped Gloria Arroyo and Napoles with an additional complaint for squandering the Malampaya funds. But this is all a grand publicity gimmick. The ruling Aquino clique has yet to prove that it is capable of seriously subjecting members of its own class to criminal prosecution and punishment.

The Filipino people, however, are keenly aware that corruption involving the pork barrel funds goes beyond the Napoles scandal. Politicians from the reactionary ruling classes have been routinely engaged in bribery, kickbacks and other pork barrel-related corruption long before Napoles came into the picture. Aquino himself received pork barrel funds in 2005, when his clan was still in good terms with the Arroyo regime. Since 2010, it has been Aquino's turn to use the pork barrel as an instrument to ensure political support for his regime. His use of these funds emboldens Aquino to immediately preempt any

move by Congress to impeach him.

The Filipino people have clearly expressed the conviction that the Priority Development Assistance Fund (the congressional pork barrel), the Presidential Social Fund, the DAP and all other unprogrammed funds whose disposition is entirely in the hands of the ruling clique in Malacañang must be abolished.

They have spurned the so-called new budgeting system which still grants congressmen the privilege of identifying infrastructure projects to be implemented by the Department of Public Works and Highways—a system long ridden with corruption in the form of kickbacks and manipulated bidding. As before, it is a system that promotes patronage politics.

In advancing their struggle against the pork barrel and corruption by the ruling state, the Filipino people must train their sights on Benigno Aquino III. Not only does he sit at the top of the rotten state, he is first and foremost its main beneficiary and apologist. Aquino uses his control over billions upon billions of pesos worth of funds to buy the support of politicians and secure his rule. After three years of corruption under Aquino, it has become clear that he merely rode on the people's rage against the rottenness of the former Arroyo regime in order to conceal his own filthiness.

The Aquino regime's corruption must be exposed in more detail. We must show how Aquino used the pork barrel funds to obtain political support in the last elections. Aside from the pork barrel, we must likewise expose how Aquino has been using his power as president to cancel contracts en-

	
Vol. XLIV No. 19 October 7, 2013	
<p><i>Ang Bayan</i> is published in Pilipino, Bisaya, Iloko, Hiligaynon, Waray and English editions.</p> <p>It is available for <i>downloading</i> at the Philippine Revolution Web Central located at:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">www.philippinerevolution.org.</p> <p><i>Ang Bayan</i> welcomes contributions in the form of articles and news. Readers are likewise enjoined to send in their comments and suggestions for the betterment of our publication. You can reach us by email at:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">angbayan@yahoo.com</p>	
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tered into by the Philippine government under the past regime, only to create new contracts favoring his close relatives, family members and cronies.

We must expose information regarding the clinching of big public infrastructure contracts, tax incentives and other privileges to the detriment of the people. A striking example is the demolition of urban poor communities to give way to projects of Aquino's big businessman-cohorts.

The ruling system presided over by Aquino, his fellow big landlords and the comprador bourgeoisie is inherently corrupt and rotten to the core. The socio-economic system is backward and de-

caying. It is unproductive and incapable of sustaining itself except through capital infusions from foreign debt and investments. The ruling classes are anti-progress and parasitical and rely merely on their political power to sustain their profligate lifestyles.

The Filipino people must put a stop to the pork barrel system. They must likewise demand the end of the bureaucrat capitalist corruption of the ruling classes of big landlords and big compradors. The Filipino people must overthrow the rotten semicolonial and semifeudal system that is at the foundation of this system of corruption. **AB**

Corruption and anomalies everywhere under the Aquino regime

The series of disclosures on the Aquino regime's involvement in various cases of corruption has led it to engage in a rage of coverups to deflect the public's attention from the emerging scandals and anomalies.

The last week of September saw the exposé of the Disbursement Acceleration Program (DAP), where Malacañang allots billions of pesos to favored senators and congressmen.

Sen. Jose "Jinggoy" Estrada revealed how Malacañang gave ₱50 million to each senator who sided with former Chief Justice Renato Corona's impeachment in 2012. Senate President Franklin Drilon who then led the Senate's finance committee received ₱100 million and Sen. Francis Escudero, a loyal Aquino ally, got ₱96 million.

Malacañang gave away an estimated ₱85 billion worth of funds to congressmen under the DAP in 2011 and ₱1.27 billion to senators in 2012 to ensure Corona's ouster. The fund was likewise used to push for the enactment of the Sin Tax Law and the Reproductive Health Law which Aquino zealously campaigned for.

Revelations about the DAP

have led anti-pork barrel forces to assert that Aquino is indeed the Pork Barrel King, a monicker that has piqued the president. Aside from the DAP, Aquino has likewise used as pork barrel the Presidential Social Fund and other monies beyond the Congress' scrutiny.

Meanwhile, Bayan Muna Rep. Neri Colmenares has also exposed how the Aquino regime has used the Malampaya fund for programs unrelated to energy—which is contrary to what the reactionary law stipulates. The reactionary government's own reports

state that the foremost beneficiary of the Malampaya fund is the Armed Forces of the Philippines which received up to ₱13 billion. The money used to purchase the second-hand vessel BRP Gregorio del Pilar was sourced from the fund.

Among the other agencies that benefited from the fund are the Department of Finance-National Power Corporation (₱4.9 billion); Department of National Defense and National Electrification Program (₱1.9 billion); and Department of Public Works and Highways (₱3.5 billion).

The Department of Budget and Management (DBM) Office of the Secretary also received ₱62 million, ₱6.9 million



of which allegedly went to housing projects and ₱4 million to the Department of Agriculture-Agriculture Guarantee Fund Pool.

Colmenares added that Benigno Aquino III clearly used the Malampaya monies as personal funds without due process and accountability. The people of Palawan have also been angered by the fact that they did not benefit from the ₱900 million fund. Forty percent of the gross income from the Malampaya natural gas deposits, which are found off the coast of Palawan should have accrued to them in a span of four years.

To cover up the Aquino regime's anomalous use of the Malampaya fund, it hurriedly filed a complaint against Gloria Arroyo and her cohorts for their anomalous use of the same fund.

Meanwhile, the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipi-

nas (KMP) filed plunder charges against Aquino, Budget Sec. Florencio "Butch" Abad and Agriculture Sec. Proceso Alcala for their dealings with bogus non-governmental organizations funded by the Priority Development Assistance Fund (PDAF). Among the NGOs that Alcala transacted with are those that have already been linked to anomalous practices for years.

In a related development, two representatives of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) resigned to protest corruption in the said office. The CHED has reportedly provided ₱500 million to a university in the United States for a science-related project that should have been granted to a Philippine institution. The CHED has in the past been accused of stealing and squandering education funds. AB

Golden pig at the center of anti-corruption rally in Ayala

Up to 10,000 people joined a demonstration in Ayala Avenue, Makati City to rail against the Aquino regime's pork barrel and corruption. The protest action was organized by the #Abolishporkbarrel Alliance, a broad formation calling for an end to the pork barrels of both Congress and Malacañang.

The rallyists assailed Benigno Aquino III as the "Pork Barrel King" for his insistence on holding on to his ₱1.3 trillion "presidential pork," which is the biggest of all.

The rallyists paraded an eight-foot tall effigy of a golden pig, which symbolizes greed and corruption. The pig was adorned with flowers to show how it was worshipped by big bureaucrat capitalists in government.

Among the famous personalities who joined the rally were Mae Paner (Juana Change), former Archbishop Oscar Cruz, NBN-ZTE scandal whistleblower Jun Lozada, former National Treasurer Leonor Briones, lawyer Harry Roque and National Artist Bienvenido Lumbera.

Before the rally began at 3 p.m., members of the #ScrapThePork Alliance and call center agents under the BPO Industry Employees Network (BIEN) gathered in front of the Philippine Stock Exchange where they launched the "Tax Holiday vs Pork Barrel" campaign.

The call center agents called on everyone to take a stand against the pork barrel system by refusing to pay their taxes. They said they despised the fact

that the bulk of their \$13 billion income, which comprises their contribution to the national economy, has merely been ending up in the pockets of big bureaucrats. In a statement, the BIEN rued that despite their late nights and their sacrifice of being away from their families,



the government run by Aquino and his politician-cohorts have done nothing but quickly squander this amount.

The Bishop-Businessmen's Conference for Human Development (BBC), an alliance of church leaders and businessmen likewise expressed their opposition to the pork barrel system, saying that it gives the president of the country a means of controlling Congress and making it a rubber stamp of Malacañang.

Aside from the mass actions at the Luneta Park, EDSA Shrine in Quezon City and Mendiola, Manila from August 26 to September 21, there have been other protests elsewhere in the country. On September 29, some 5,000 teachers, students, church people, businessmen and members of civic organizations joined a prayer rally in Cebu City. Meanwhile, in Laoag City, a hundred people gathered for another prayer rally led by the Catholic Church, the Iglesia Filipina Independiente (IFI) and the United Church of Christ in the Philippines.

In Panay, the IFI launched a "Caravan for Truth" in the island's four provinces. They held discussions at every stop in the provinces of Antique, Aklan, Capiz and Iloilo.

Even the Agta tribe in the Sierra Madre mountains have also been joining protests against the pork barrel. Said Agta leader Ramcy Astoveza, no one but the Aquino regime is to blame for continuing corruption in the country. AB

NPA seizes 12 HPRs in Misamis Oriental



Red fighters under the Eastern Misamis Oriental-Northeastern Bukidnon Subregional Command of the New People's Army (NPA) seized 12 high-powered rifles in a raid on the CAA-Philippine Army Detachment in Sitio Lantad, Barangay Kibanban, Balingasag, Misamis Oriental in the early morning of September 22. Aside from the firearms, the guerrillas were also able to seize other military equipment. The military suffered five killed and four wounded, while the Red fighters were able to make a safe retreat.

It was 1 a.m. when an NPA assault team scaled the fence behind the detachment, which was unguarded. The startled military men could do nothing but lie flat on the ground. After a few minutes, however, some of them tried to fight it out. Killed in the ensuing gunbattle was the detachment commander Sergeant Laong and four CAFGU elements. The assistant cadre man Corporal Bacus was wounded along with three other paramilitaries.

At daybreak, the Red fighters asked nearby residents to help bring the wounded to the hospital.

The detachment protects the operations of foreign and local mining companies in the area. AB

NPA-Sorsogon thwarts siege

Red fighters under the Celso Minguez Command (CMC) of the New People's Army (NPA) successfully thwarted an attempt by a company-size troop from the 31st IB to encircle them in Barangay Dolos, Bulan, Sorsogon on September 21, at around 4 p.m.

Two soldiers from the 31st IB were killed on the spot after being hit by command-detonated explosives as they neared the temporarily encamped CMC unit. By 8 p.m., four other soldiers were killed in a grenade attack by the CMC on a platoon sent to reinforce the battalion in Barangay Lapinig, Magallanes in the same province. The NPA suffered zero casualties.

The 31st IB has been conducting continuous battalion-size operations since September 15 in the interior villages of Juban, Magallanes and Bulan towns. AB

PNP suffers 6 casualties in Masbate firefights

Two policemen were killed and four others were wounded in gunbattles between Red fighters of the NPA Jose Rapsing Command (JRC) and the Philippine National Police (PNP) in Masbate on September 18 and 20.

A policeman was killed and another one wounded when a composite force from the PNP-Claveria and the PNP-Public Safety Battalion (PSB) attempted to encircle a unit under the JRC in Sitio Cambuto, Barangay Boyo, Claveria on September 20. The Red fighters opened fire on the enemy even before the government troopers could close in on them.

Two days before this gunbattle, a policeman was killed and three others were wounded in two successive sniping operations launched by a unit under the JRC on Ticao island against patrolling elements of the PSB.

At noon of the same day, a policeman was wounded when NPA snipers took shots at a PSB platoon in Barangay Salvacion, San Fernando town. This was followed by another firefight at around 3 p.m. with another PSB platoon in Barangay Bagacay, San Jacinto, where a policeman was killed and two others were wounded. **AB**

Soldier killed in NPA harassment operation in Abra

A team under the Procopio Tauro Front conducted a successful harassment operation against a detachment of the 41st IB Bravo Coy in Mataragan, Malibcong, Abra on September 29. According to initial reports from the Agustin Begnalen Command (NPA-Abra), a soldier was killed on the spot, whereas the Red fighters safely retreated.

This military action was taken in response to the Malibcong residents' long-term demand to expel the detachment and punish the soldiers of the 41st IB for their continuing violations of human rights.

The soldiers assigned to the detachment have caused fear and restiveness among the people because they steal crops and farm animals, indiscriminately fire their weapons, go on drinking sprees and abuse the women. In addition, the soldiers conducted aerial bombings of places close to residential areas in the villages of Gacab and Bangilo, both in Malibcong. This has terrorized the people, especially two young girls who were almost hit by the bombs. **AB**

Hacienda Dolores farmers launch protest

More than 200 farmers and residents of Hacienda Dolores, Porac, Pampanga protested on September 16 to condemn Triple L and FL Development Corporation's continuing attempts to seize their land. The protest was led by the Aniban ng Nagkakaisang Mamamayan ng Hacienda Dolores (ANMHD) and supported by the Aguman Dareng Maglalautang Capampangan (AMC), Alyansa ng Magbubukid sa Gitnang Luzon (AMGL) and various sectors in Pampanga province. More than 300 farmers and residents are set to be expelled from the hacienda.

The farmers stand on firm ground in their claim to Hacienda Dolores. Their forebears have been clearing, farming and developing the land since 1835. The farmers themselves have long been planting rice and fruit trees on the land. It was only in 2004 that Triple L and FL Development Corporation began claiming the 700-hectare agricultural land, simultaneous with the construction of the Subic-Clark-Tarlac Expressway (SCTEx).

The farmers and residents questioned the Department of Agrarian Reform's (DAR) issuance of an Exemption Order to prevent the

land from being covered by the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP). This order paved the way for the two corporations to have the land titled in 2005.

The farmers and residents said that Triple L and FL Development Corporation are currently waiting for the Land Use Conversion Order from the DAR. A "certification" issued by the barangay captain of Hacienda Dolores and a "Municipal Ordinance for Land Reclassification" enacted by the local government of Porac played a big role in the land's reclassifica-

tion. No public consultation was conducted before the ordinance was approved by the municipal council and mayor. The certifications issued by the DAR, Department of Agriculture and National Irrigation Administration do not likewise meet the necessary requirements.

The Hacienda Dolores farmers and residents' resistance has been met with violence. The corporations have deployed more than 700 armed guards along with goons to terrorize and deceive the farmers. In 2011, they fenced off the peasants' farms, destroyed their huts, banana and other fruit trees and vegetable plots and have charged the farmers with grave threats to boot. In July 2013, a farmer was illegally arrested and detained and charged with illegal possession of firearms and malicious mischief.

In a related development, the Tarlac Development Corporation (Tadeco) is expelling 134 farm workers from Barangay Cutcut and Barangay Balete in Tarlac City, which are both part of Hacienda Luisita. The farm workers were accused of illegally entering the land they have been tilling. Tadeco owns Hacienda Luisita and 70% of the shares of Hacienda Luisita Inc. (HLI),

the company that runs the deceptive stock distribution program.

The 134 farm workers are among the 6,212 HLI beneficiaries scheduled to receive 6,600 square meters of land each. They have begun planting rice as part of the "bungkalan" or collective tilling program implemented by the farm workers since the end of a bloody strike in 2004. It has been their source of food as they conduct their continuing struggle for land distribution.

HLI does not intend to distribute the land for free. The beneficiaries are required to pay P60,000-P70,000 for a period of 30 years for every 6,600 square meter-lot distributed to them. **AB**



Union leader abducted in Cavite

The Aquino regime has become more brutal in the face of the people's intensifying resistance. The most striking human rights violation in the past few weeks was the abduction by military agents of a labor leader in Southern Tagalog on August 27.

October 1. Elements of the 67th IB illegally arrested former physics professor Kim Gargar at Spur Dos, Barangay Aliwagwag, Cateel, Davao Oriental. Gargar used to teach at the University of the Philippines, Polytechnic University of the Philippines and other schools. He has been charged by the military with illegal possession of explosives, attempted murder and violation of the "election gun ban." He is currently the Local and International Networking Officer of the Center for Environmental Con-

cerns. Gargar was in Davao Oriental to assess the impact of typhoon Pablo on the area's biodiversity.

September 14. Soldiers of the 62nd IB used civilian residents of Sitio Magtuod, Barangay Bug-ang, Toboso, Negros Occidental as human shields during pursuit operations against members of the New People's Army that they had encountered. This, despite the fact that the area was a long way from the scene of the encounter.

August 27. Suspected military agents abducted labor leader Benjamin Villeno.

While on his way to a relative's house in Dasmariñas City, Cavite, Villeno reportedly sent a text message to a fellow worker saying that he was being tailed by men he suspected of being military agents. This was the last they heard from him.

Villeno, 43, was president of the Lakas Manggagawang Nagkakaisa sa Honda from 1998 to 2000. He also chaired the Pagkakaisa ng Manggagawa sa Timog Katagalugan (PAMANTIK)-KMU and was national president of the Organized Labor Association in Line Industries and Agriculture (OLALIA)-KMU. **AB**

21st IB's rampage in West Cagayan assailed

At least seven barangays in the towns of Rizal, Sto. Niño and Lasam in the western part of Cagayan province have become virtual military garrisons due to the permanent basing of armed troops under the 21st IB. The soldiers have been using the civilians' houses, the barangay hall and the schools as bases.

Since July, the armed soldiers have maintained a continuing presence, terrorizing and intimidating the people. A platoon of soldiers has been based in civilians' houses in Barangay Sicalao, Lasam; another platoon at the barangay hall and the people's houses in Barangay Bural, Rizal; and two platoons at the school and the residents' houses in Barangay San Juan, Rizal. The barangay halls of Illuro and Gagabutan villages in Rizal are both occupied by soldiers. In Sto. Niño town, a platoon has entrenched itself at Zone 1 of Barangay Lipatan; and another platoon at a cluster of houses in Zone 6, Barangay

Balanni.

Contrary to the AFP's claims that it is for peace and order, the 21st IB's Peace and Development Teams and combat troops have been a source of anxiety and a bane and a danger to the people. In between daylong drinking and gambling sprees, the soldiers have been deceiving and forcibly recruiting villagers to join the CAF-GU. They have also been summoning peasant leaders one by one to terrorize them, offer them dirty money and intimidate them into stopping their struggle against exploitation.

The people are justified in demanding the pullout from their villages of the 21st IB troops. They want the 21st IB command to be held accountable for glaring violations of human rights, especially beatings and intimidation, endangerment of the people's lives and livelihoods and use of public facilities such as schools and village halls as detachments. AB

19th IB's relentless human rights violations in Eastern Visayas

Soldiers of the 19th IB have been wantonly violating International Humanitarian Law and the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law.

On September 14, the military based itself right at the center of Barangay Robas in Jaro, Leyte. The soldiers harassed and threatened residents that they would be answerable to them should something bad happen to them while implementing Oplan Bayanihan.

Prior to this, the New People's Army (NPA) ambushed the soldiers outside Barangay Robas. In reprisal, the 19th IB troops strafed a civilian's house, which happened to be unoccupied at the time. The soldiers also destroyed the nearby street lights and used the civilians as human shields, even if they were in a place

that was far from the scene of the fighting.

The residents reported this at a radio station on September 22. They added that the military had also summarily executed a *habal-habal* (passenger motorcycle) driver after clashing with an NPA unit in December 2012. The military suspected him of involvement in the NPA's tactical offensive.

As a consequence, the residents have been demanding the expulsion of the soldiers, who have placed their community under martial law. The 19th IB has imposed a curfew and limited the movements of peasants working their farms. The sol-

diers claim to bring in socio-economic projects to the village but in fact, they are armed to the teeth and ready to launch military offensives. They have also been forcing civilians to pay a P20 "membership fee" allegedly for the "development" of their barrio.

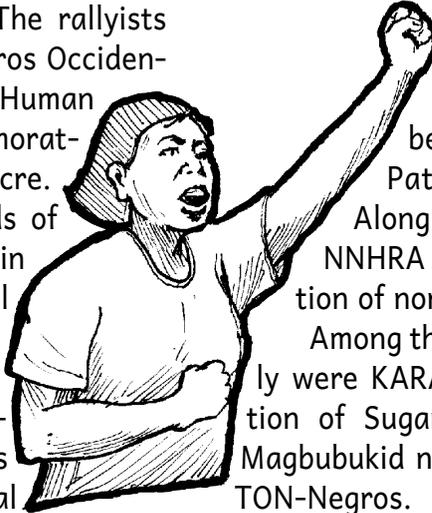
In Carigara, Leyte, Lt. Col. Joel Nacnac, 19th IB chief has been personally visiting the houses of civilian activists to accuse them of being NPA sympathizers and threaten them by saying that they are military targets. Residents of Barangay Victory in Las Navas, Northern Samar and upland villages of Matuguinao, San Jose de Buan, Paranas, Motiong, Jiabong and Villareal in Samar province have also been airing the same complaints. AB

Justice continues to elude victims of Escalante Massacre

Some 5,000 demonstrators assailed on September 20 the continued absence of justice for the victims of the Escalante Massacre. The rallyists who gathered in Escalante town, Negros Occidental were led by the Northern Negros Human Rights Advocates (NNHRA) in commemorating the 28th anniversary of the massacre.

On September 20, 1985, hundreds of people from various municipalities in the 1st district of Negros Occidental who rallied at the Escalante town plaza were shot by troops of the Philippine Constabulary-Integrated National Police (PC-INP). Up to 21 farmers and fisherfolk were killed and several

others wounded.



After 28 years, none of the masterminds of one of the bloodiest incidents before the downfall of the US-Marcos dictatorship has been held to account, said Bernardo Patigas, NNHRA secretary-general. Alongside their demand for justice, the NNHRA assailed the continuing militarization of northern Negros towns.

Among the organizations that joined the rally were KARAPATAN-Negros, National Federation of Sugarcane Workers (NFSW), Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP)-Negros and PISTON-Negros. AB

Peasants score breakthrough in raising prices of banana

In northern Negros Occidental, farmers have succeeded in raising the price of banana in the local market after a series of organized actions and negotiations with merchants. They were led by the Pambansang Katipunan ng mga Magbubukid (PKM) and the revolutionary mass organizations of women and youth.

From a low of ₱150 to ₱300, the price of every *pingkit* or large basket of bananas was raised from ₱250 to ₱350. The price of every bunch of bananas was raised by ₱50 to ₱100. The farmers used to earn only ₱900 to ₱1,000 per month. Now they earn from ₱1,500 to ₱2,100 monthly. In particular, in a barangay with 25 sub-villages, 284 families or 1,420 individuals benefited.

This breakthrough served as a learning experience that enabled the organized farmers to muster their collective knowledge in advancing anti-feudal struggles. They know that it is the key to advancing their objective interests and

the entire revolutionary cause.

The areas covered by the mass organizations became more vibrant and dynamic and expanded in the course of launching the campaign to raise the price of banana.

Members of the Local Party Branch became consolidated and more deeply rooted in the masses.

They also gained the support of middle and rich peasants, other strata

and sectors in the locality and even village councilors.

The movement to study the Revolutionary Guide to Land Reform and other mass courses expanded.

New organizers emerged and more Red fighters were recruited for the New People's Army. AB



Obama visit cancelled

US Pres. Barack Obama's scheduled visit to the Philippines on October 11-12 has been cancelled due to the partial shutdown of the American government that began October 1. The Philippines was to be one of four Southeast Asian countries to be visited by Obama. Aside from the Philippines, he was supposed to go to Malaysia and attend multilateral conferences like the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation in Indonesia and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in Brunei. The partial shutdown is due to the failure of the two ruling US political parties to agree on the national health budget.

Obama's unrealized visit to the Philippines was part of his regime's campaign for a new agreement that would formalize the presence of a growing number of American troops and a broader range of activities for them in the country. Even before the agreement has been finalized, however, US troops and warships have already been entering and leaving the country at will. The Aquino regime openly supports the US' moves, even if they violate the country's sovereignty and its reactionary laws.

In more than three years of Aquino's rule, he has repeatedly shown his subservience to his imperialist master. For one, his regime has allowed the US to construct and maintain secret military facilities in the Philippines. The Department of For-

ign Affairs (DFA) was recently compelled to admit in a Senate hearing that since 2002, the US has been able to construct three facilities in the country without seeking the permission of the Filipino people. These are in Camp Bautista in Sulu, Camp Sioco in Cotabato and Camp Navarro in Zamboanga City. Also stationed within Camp Navarro since 2002 are about 700 American troops belonging to the Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines. There have also been reports of another secret US military base in Tawi-tawi. These facilities are not covered by any regulation or law and are prohibited even by the reactionary constitution.

Earlier, in 2009, former LSG Nancy Gadian of the Philippine

Navy also disclosed that the US has been maintaining a training camp in Camp Malagutay and an airstrip at the Andrews Air Base, both in Zamboanga City; and that the US Navy Seals had a facility at the Philippine Navy Station in Tawi-Tawi.

More recently, authorities revealed that American troops were not required to obtain visas or present their passports in order to enter the country. Thus, the government is unaware how many US troops are in the Philippines at any given time.

Aside from personnel, warships not only of the US but also its Asian allies like Japan have been frequenting the country. On September 17, two US warships docked at Subic Bay to join war games along with AFP troops at the South China Sea. They docked in the Philippines for two days for supplies, rest and recreation.

In a related development, up to 2,300 Philippine and US marines are participating in the Philippine-US Amphibious Landing Exercises at the so-called Bajo de Masinloc in Zambales. The war games, which began on September 18 and end on October 9, has been condemned by various sectors. **AB**

CPP pays tribute to General Giap

The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) paid tribute to Gen. Vo Nguyen Giap who died on October 4 at the age of 102 in a hospital in the Vietnamese capital of Hanoi. Giap led the Vietnamese guerrillas who defeated both the elite French forces in Dien Bien Phu in 1954 and the US forces on April 30, 1975. Aside from being Defence Minister, he was appointed Deputy Prime Minister of Vietnam in 1976.

Giap was born in Quang Binh province in Central Vietnam on August 25, 1911. He became active in the patriotic movement at the age of 14 and

was a teacher and a journalist before joining the Communist Party of Indochina led by Ho Chi Minh.

In 1940, Giap went to southern China to evade the French police. He returned to northern Vietnam in 1944 with Ho Chi Minh to commence the armed struggle in the area. He successfully led the very first fulltime guerrilla platoon in Vietnam against the Japanese occupation forces.

Because he kept in mind Ho Chi Minh's admonition that nothing was more important than the liberation of Vietnam, they continued the struggle in 1946 against the French colonialists. They

launched one of the greatest wars in modern history that is still being studied in military schools worldwide.

At Dien Bien Phu, they laid siege to the French elite troops then led by Gen. Henri Navarre. With the help of thousands of people, they built secret passages, dug several kilometers of trenches, brought their cannons and other artillery up steep mountains piece by piece and slowly besieged the overconfident French soldiers. Caught by surprise, the French soldiers were forced to surrender to the Vietnamese guerrillas on May 7, 1954, after 55 days of bloody battles. Some 4,000 French troops were killed and 11,000 captured by the Vietnamese revolutionaries.

Due to their defeat at Dien Bien Phu, the French colonialists were forced to withdraw and in line with the Geneva Accords of 1956, Vietnam was temporarily divided into the socialist North Vietnam and South Vietnam which was occupied by the US after the departure of the French forces.

Despite the US' B-52 bombers and other modern military hardware, the guerrilla forces led by Giap still prevailed over the American occupation troops. Said Giap, we had to use small weapons against big ones; and old weapons against modern arms. In the end, it was the people who proved valuable and decisive in winning the so-called "American War" (1961-75). AB
