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Editorial

Make Aquino pay for the massive unemployment and poverty

The Filipino people were angered no end when Benigno Aquino III claimed last week that he was surprised at the rising unemployment and poverty in the country.

He feigned innocence before the people when he made a show of demanding that his cabinet officials explain to him why his much-vaunted economic growth has not led to more jobs and better lives for ordinary Filipinos.

Even more execrable was the response given by Aquino officials who said that the unemployment problem was due to recent natural calamities.

In fact, Philippine unemployment rates have long been rising to unprecedented levels on a yearly basis. At the same time, hunger and poverty have been stalking Filipinos more and more.

Government agencies have bent over backwards to obscure the real extent of unemployment in the Philippines, claiming that only about three million Filipinos are without

jobs. But a sharp look at the government's doctored statistics would reveal that there are actually 12-13 million unemployed Filipinos at present, representing 30% of the country's labor force.

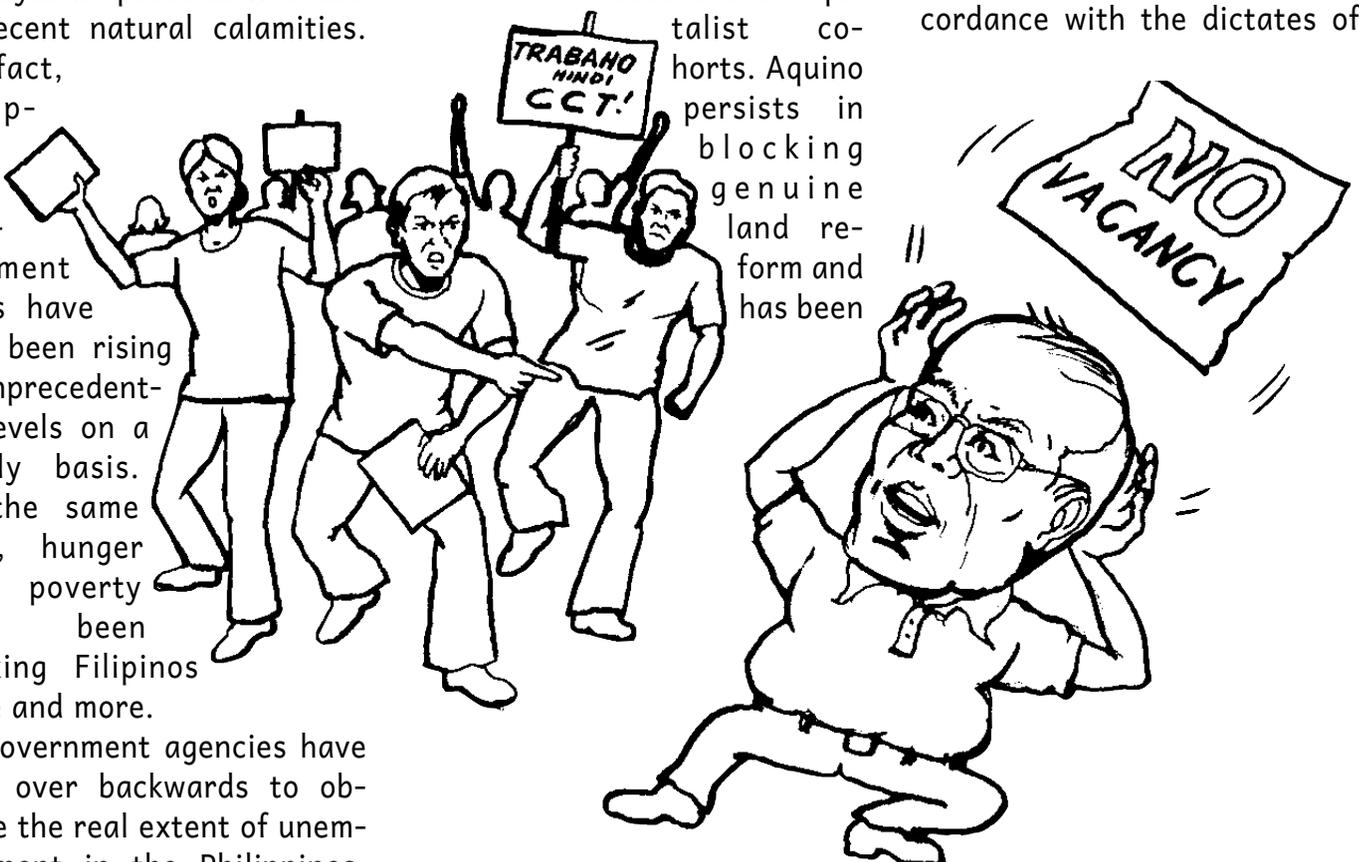
This is the general economic trend under the rule of big landlords like Aquino and his big comprador bourgeois and

bureaucrat capitalist cohorts. Aquino persists in blocking genuine land reform and has been

implementing neoliberal policies that have been devastating the livelihoods of Filipinos and crippling the economy for more than three decades now.

In putting up obstacles to genuine land reform, Aquino allows landlord monopoly power to dominate in the countryside. Feudalists like Aquino are not interested in developing the economy and enchain the vast majority of the population to an agrarian and backward system of production.

On the other hand, in accordance with the dictates of



foreign imperialist banks and big capitalists, Aquino has been enforcing the deregulation of the oil industry as well as power generation and distribution and the privatization of education, health and water services, roads and other critical social services. He has ceded the country's forests, mountains, rivers, seas and other elements of the national patrimony to foreign plunderers.

Daily wages are pegged at very low rates to attract foreign capital, to the detriment of the working class and nationalist industrialization. Minimum wages do not even represent half of what a typical family needs for its daily sustenance.

Foreign investments, including Aquino's much vaunted capital infusions into mining and construction, do not create growing and quality employment. Even the biggest infrastructure projects under the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) program have been able

to provide only 1.3% at most of the number of jobs needed annually.

Worse, much of the employment available in the country is not permanent and do not afford workers any security. The usual five-month employment contracts are fraught with threats to workers who are vulnerable to extreme exploitation in the form of measly wages and overly oppressive working conditions. In the case of construction workers of condominium, mall and other large infrastructure projects, they find themselves jobless once the building projects are over in a year or two.

Exporting labor remains Aquino's only solution to the Philippines' growing unemployment problem. The fact that there are less jobs created in the country compared to the number of workers who go abroad every year shows just to what lows the local economy has fallen.

The Filipino people must call to account the US-Aquino

regime for its perpetuation of neoliberal policies and its refusal to implement genuine land reform and nationalist economic policies. Aquino must pay for betraying the people because of his failure to put in force policies that would enable the economy to stand on its own two feet.

Aquino must likewise be held accountable for refusing to heed the people's cry for national industrialization. He perpetuates the current Philippine economic system which is incapable of generating growing employment. The local economy is tied to the importation of commodities. Local manufacturing has plummeted, confined as it is to semiprocessing imported spare parts and oriented to the needs of foreign capitalists and not to those of the people and local production.

In the same vein, the Filipino people must resist the scheme being hatched by Aquino's minions in Congress to amend the 1987 constitution. Aquino's factotums claim that the key to economic development is to give free rein to foreign big capitalists to own land in the country. This can only worsen further the unbridled plunder by foreign big companies of the country's resources.

The struggle for jobs, just wages, lower prices for rice and other food, and for oil, power and water rates, the demand for sufficient education and health budgets and a stop to demolitions are all interrelated. They are likewise intertwined with the struggle for genuine land reform and to dismantle the monopoly rule in the countryside of landlords and compradors and foreign capitalist plantation owners.

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All these democratic demands are linked to the struggle to end the semifeudal and semi-colonial social system that is managed and defended by the ruling classes currently embodied by the Aquino regime. Even as the Filipino people call Aquino to account and assert their demands, their strategic goal is to put an end to the existing system through revolutionary struggle. AB

3 compradors favored in PPP projects

Big comprador Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco Jr., Benigno Aquino III's uncle, has cornered more than 60% (P112.73 billion out of the total P180.35 billion) of approved projects under the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) program.

After Cojuangco, the next biggest share has gone to Manny Pangilinan (16.69%) and Henry Sy (14.3%). Up to 93.58% of the total amount of these projects has been bagged by these three leading compradors. On the other hand, the Ayalas, Consunjis and others handle 6.42% of the projects.

In the past few days, construction began almost simultaneously on the Skyway 3 (connecting the North Luzon and South Luzon Expressways) and NAIA Expressway (connecting the airports to the various highways) projects. Cojuangco was able to gain control over both, on top of the Tarlac-La Union Expressway deal and the Batangas Expressway expansion.

Pangilinan, meanwhile, copped the road construction projects around Manila's pier, in addition to the NLEX-SLEX connecting roads passing through the eastern part of the National Capital Region. Sy, on the other hand, cornered the bulk of school construction projects (which the government would be leasing from him) and the privatization of the Philippine Orthopedic Center.

Aquino lost no time in initiating these projects which are expected to be finished before his term ends in 2016. This way, he could be sure that the projects could no longer be cancelled the same way he rescinded contracts entered into by the former regime.

Aquino has gone full throttle with these projects despite the brickbats he has been receiving due to the resulting traffic snarls and disruptions in the flow of commerce in Metro Manila and the overall annoyances suffered by the people.

The projects will also result in bigger blows to the livelihoods of Filipinos. With Aquino ceding control over infrastructure projects to big compradors, these profit-greedy elements will be in a stronger position to bleed the people by charging very huge fees for the use of public infrastructure. AB

Number and share in employment of sectors (in millions)				
	1997	%	2013	%
Whole	27.355	100	37.733	100
Agriculture	11.407	41.7	11.843	31.39
Industry	4.466	16.33	5.75	15.24
<i>Mining</i>	<i>0.128</i>	<i>0.47</i>	<i>0.222</i>	<i>0.59</i>
<i>Manufacturing</i>	<i>2.683</i>	<i>9.81</i>	<i>3.108</i>	<i>8.24</i>
<i>Electricity, Gas, Water</i>	<i>0.125</i>	<i>0.46</i>	<i>0.152</i>	<i>0.4</i>
<i>Construction</i>	<i>1.53</i>	<i>5.59</i>	<i>2.268</i>	<i>6.01</i>
Services	11.461	41.89	20.14	53.38

15 YEARS OF MANUFACTURING'S DWINDLING SHARE. If the reactionary government's employment statistics in the last 15 years are critically examined, one can see the continually dwindling share of manufacturing in the entire economy, proof that the Philippine economy is not on the road to development. Manufacturing's share in the entire economy fell by 16.02%. At the same time, agriculture's share also plummeted by 24.7%, showing its inability to create enough employment. The biggest number of unemployed in the Philippines can be found in the countryside.

On the other hand, employment grew in the services sector, which includes those working in call centers, malls and other unproductive sectors. Growth was likewise seen in construction, which merely creates temporary employment for the duration of the projects. The 25.7% growth in mining contributed less than 0.6% to overall employment.

Aquino to face mounting anger in Eastern Visayas and Panay

The Aquino government is now reaping the growing anger of people both in Eastern Visayas (EV) and Panay due to his failure to uplift them from their misery after the devastation wrought by supertyphoon Yolanda more than three months ago.

EV residents grew even angrier after finding out that Benigno Aquino III chose to prioritize a courtesy call from a visiting Miss Tourism International on the afternoon of February 17 instead of meeting with a delegation led by Sr. Edita Eslopör, spokesperson of People Surge, the alliance of Yolanda victims. The delegates brought with them a petition signed by 17,585 typhoon survivors demanding ₱40,000 in immediate financial assistance for every family and an end to the "no-build zone" (NBZ) policy affecting the coastal areas of Eastern Visayas. They were made to wait for two hours before Malacañang officials received the petition.

Insults from a condescending Aquino. Instead of apologizing and offering an explanation for his failure to grant the victims an audience, Aquino even fuelled their anger when he said on February 19 that the Yolanda victims could fend for themselves, since they were able to afford the transport fare to Manila. Sec. Dinky Soliman of the Department of Social Welfare and Development added to the insult by saying that the victims should have used the money for their fare to eke a living.

Outside the palace, thousands of Yo-

landa victims, their relatives and members of various progressive organizations rallied at Mendiola Bridge. A simultaneous protest action was likewise being held then in Tacloban City.

Looming hunger. Widespread hunger looms, especially in the vast Eastern Visayas countryside due to the Aquino government's failure to help the victims of devastation resume their livelihoods.

Before Yolanda struck, families in the interior villages were usually able to eat rice once or twice a day, interspersed with root crops like sweet potato. But with the storm having ruined their root crops which they also sold for cash, they have been forced to consume or sell their rice stocks which had been set aside as seed stock for the next planting season. When the stocks run out in a few months, the affected families will no longer have any food to eat.

More than two million farm-

ers and fisherfolk in the region were devastated by typhoon Yolanda. Agriculture sustained damage totalling more than ₱64 billion. Coconut production lost ₱41.958 billion, the fishing industry ₱6.428 billion, banana production ₱5.695 billion and rice production ₱3.462 billion. Poultry and hog farms, and root crop, abaca and vegetable production likewise suffered ₱6.5 billion in losses.

Up to 80% of the population of Eastern Visayas relies on agriculture. In spite of this, the Aquino government has chosen to pour in capital to rehabilitate infrastructure for the entry of foreign and comprador bourgeois businesses instead of supporting the region's agriculture.

Mass actions in Panay. Meanwhile, more than 3,000 victims of supertyphoon Yolanda called the Aquino government "Liar!" as they gathered in front of the Capiz Provincial Capitol in Roxas City on February 14. They roundly assailed the callous government for its ineffective disaster response and incompetence in distributing aid to calamity victims in the province.

After Eastern Visayas, Panay island (northern Iloilo, Capiz, northern Antique and Aklan) sustained the greatest damage from supertyphoon Yolanda's onslaught.

The national government has given nothing but false promises to the suffering victims. A hundred days after being struck by the typhoon, they have not received the ₱30,000 financial assistance promised for each family that lost its home and ₱10,000 for those whose homes were damaged. In Aklan, the only assistance being received by residents is 2.5 kilos of rice on the average per day.



2014: The year of building people's government in Southern Mindanao Region

Build broader and more solid people's governments! This was the Party's call in Southern Mindanao Region at the start of the new year, after initial victories in building people's government in 2013. The CPP-SMR stressed that the main task is to "operate and strengthen the revolutionary government until revolutionary victory."

The barrio revolutionary committees (BRC) and municipal revolutionary committees (MRC) that have been built attest to the level that the revolutionary movement in the region has attained. These achievements were the result of efforts to consolidate and empower their mass base. As an organ of the revolution, the BRC and MRC constantly aim to address the people's fundamental and legitimate interests until they are able to completely break free from their shackles.

These committees also serve as training grounds for the people to become self-reliant. In these committees, the poor run the government themselves in accordance with the principles of democratic centralism.

Rules and policies

The ordinances passed and enforced by the BRC and MRC are based on the Revolutionary Local Government Code drafted by the region, which reflects the people's interests and aspirations. They contain laws to preserve and defend ancestral lands, develop agricultural production, build cooperatives and continue the education already begun by the youth as well as ordinances on defense. To en-

sure that these are complied with, the BRC and MRC structure provides for the establishment of committees on organization, economy, education, health and defense and for building the people's court.

For instance, the organization committee is responsible for continuing links with the mass organizations for the implementation of the BRC and MRC's policies and tasks. From experience, all plans, programs and policies pertaining to production that had been agreed upon are energetically implemented due to the vibrant participation of the mass organizations. Also among the other social services provided are water, schools for the youth and health. Thus, the organization committee has become an instrument to

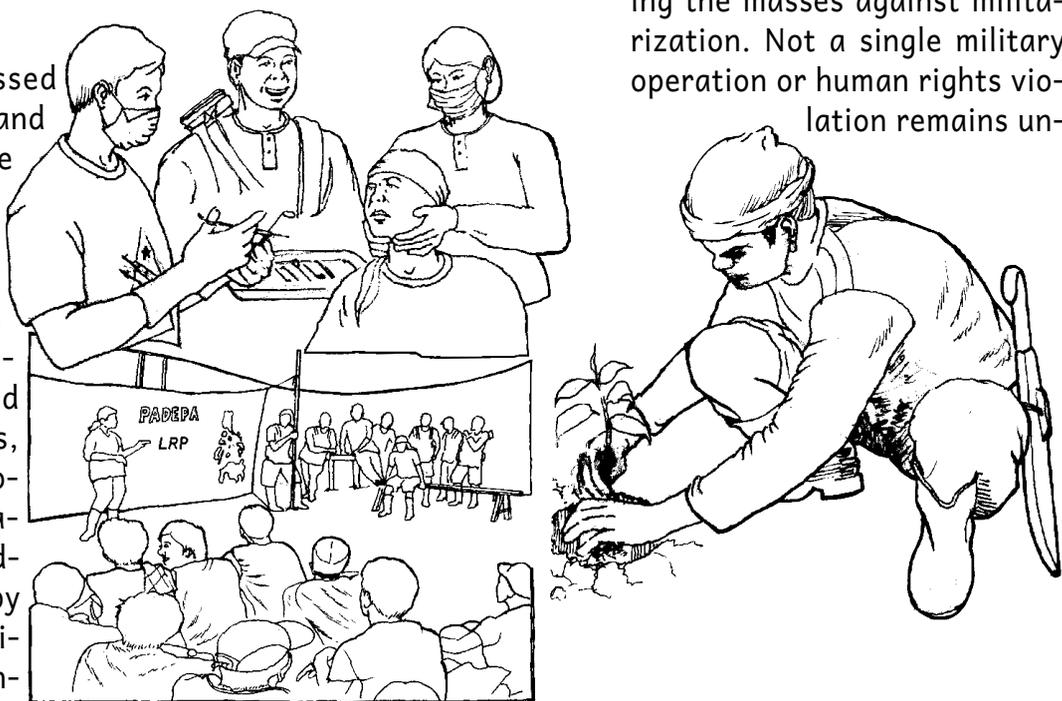
ensure that the BRC and MRC serve as centers for social services.

In the economic field, mass campaigns for production take center stage. Communal farms are extensive and so are the fruits of mutual exchanges of labor which could address the entire community's food needs, even during times of intense militarization. The BRCs prepare for long-term enemy military operations, including the possibility of food blockades. They make sure to strike a balance between food crop production and cash crop production to cover other expenses. Cooperatives are also being built.

Education is divided into political education (under the Padepa framework) and general education which includes literacy-numeracy for those who do not know how to read and write.

Confronting enemy attacks

As an organ of the revolution, the BRC leads in mobilizing the masses against militarization. Not a single military operation or human rights violation remains un-



exposed and unopposed by the masses. In a number of militarized areas, strong mass movements have confronted enemy military operations through organized evacuations as a form of protest.

Above all, the BRCs have played a major role in the series of victorious tactical offensives launched in the region. The militia can be relied upon for intelligence gathering and providing information on the enemy. They are also able to conduct harassment operations against the enemy and can be mobilized to join the people's army's tactical offensives.

Justice system

The people's court is at the heart of the justice system in the BRC and MRC. It is composed of representatives of the Party, people's army and BRC. It is the court that hears cases that could not be resolved through simple arbitration, handling crimes like murder, robbery and rape. Contradictions among the people are addressed in a democratic manner, through consensus and just agreements between parties in conflict.

Concrete practice has proven that the people's own strength is able to emerge through local organs of political power. BRCs and MRCs are expected to be built on a wider scale in the region and become further consolidated this year. **AB**

This article was sourced from the editorial of the January 2014 issue of Pasa Bilis, the mass newspaper of the NDF-SMR.

Building the MRC in Malig-on town

The Committee in Subregion 4 actively responded to the call issued by the Party Committee in Southern Mindanao Region (CPP-SMR-RC) last year to build local organs of political power. Barrio revolutionary committees (BRC) were formed in two barangay clusters and soon after, the Municipal Revolutionary Committee (MRC) was formed in Malig-on town in December 2013. The campaign was joined by cadres and mass activists from the locality, the subregional Peasant Bureau, the Party School, the front committee and the subregion's guerrilla unit.

Ripe conditions

Conditions have long been ripe for building the BRC. The local Party branch had been established. Full-fledged mass organizations of the peasantry, women and youth had been formed in adjacent villages whose fortitude had been proven in confronting enemy military campaigns. The militia and self-defense units are in place. The villagers have a wealth of experience in launching mass movements. Political education in the form of basic mass courses is vibrant and units of the people's army continually operate in the area.

From this, the subregion drafted a comprehensive plan that included rapid compliance with the requisites and ironing out kinks in the process as well as boosting the activities of every revolutionary organization. The comrades focused on a cluster of barrios in order to achieve a breakthrough in the run-up towards the establishment of the MRC.

In June 2013, the production platoon was formed, which led the masses' production campaign and helped build a school for Lumad children. The platoon mobilized

130 peasants and Lumad to build a demonstration farm. Next to be built were the PKM, MAKIBAKA, people's militia and Kabataang Makabayan (KM) communal farms in another village. Mutual exchange of labor in individual farms became brisk and backyard vegetable patches widespread.

Meanwhile, led by the Party School (or the Instructor's Bureau in the subregion), the Basic Party Course was launched twice for Party members in the village and some Red fighters as well. Up to 72 attended, with most coming from the locality. The Party branch conference was later launched, where the subsection committee in the village cluster was formed.

To further invigorate political education among the masses, advanced KM cultural activists were mobilized to provide education under the Pambansang Demokratikong Paaralan (Padepa). Prior to this, a cultural training was launched and attended by activists and Red fighters. Part of the lessons were discussions on a primer on cooperatives building, revolutionary justice and the OPP orientation, all supervised by the

Party School.

Along with the mass movements for production, education and health, the membership of the full-fledged mass organizations was expanded and their structures streamlined, especially the chapters, in order to further rev up mutual exchange of labor. At the same time, recruitment in the people's militia and the barrio defense committee was stepped up. By November, organizing had been raised to the level of building PKM, MAKIBAKA and KM municipal chapters.

In three months, seven BRCs were established in quick succession in this particular village cluster. In an assessment conducted on the status of the OPP machinery in November, the comrades saw that the MRC in Malig-on could be established by December. The only thing that had to be accomplished before then was forming the People's Militia Municipal Command (PMMC).

Conference to build the MRC

The MRC was formally established through a conference attended by delegates from the local Party branch, full-fledged municipal mass organizations and the BRC and the PMMC in seven villages. Led by the sub-section committee, preparatory meetings were first held by the mass organizations and local Party branch to determine who among them would comprise their representatives. One-third of the MRC council members would come from the Party and one-third from the mass organizations. The other third would come from the middle forces. To

ensure that the women's and youth sector are adequately represented, they were guaranteed one seat each.

The conference opened with a discussion on the national and local socio-economic situation, the revolutionary situation and the tasks at hand. Next, the delegates discussed the OPP orientation and the Revolutionary Local Government Code.

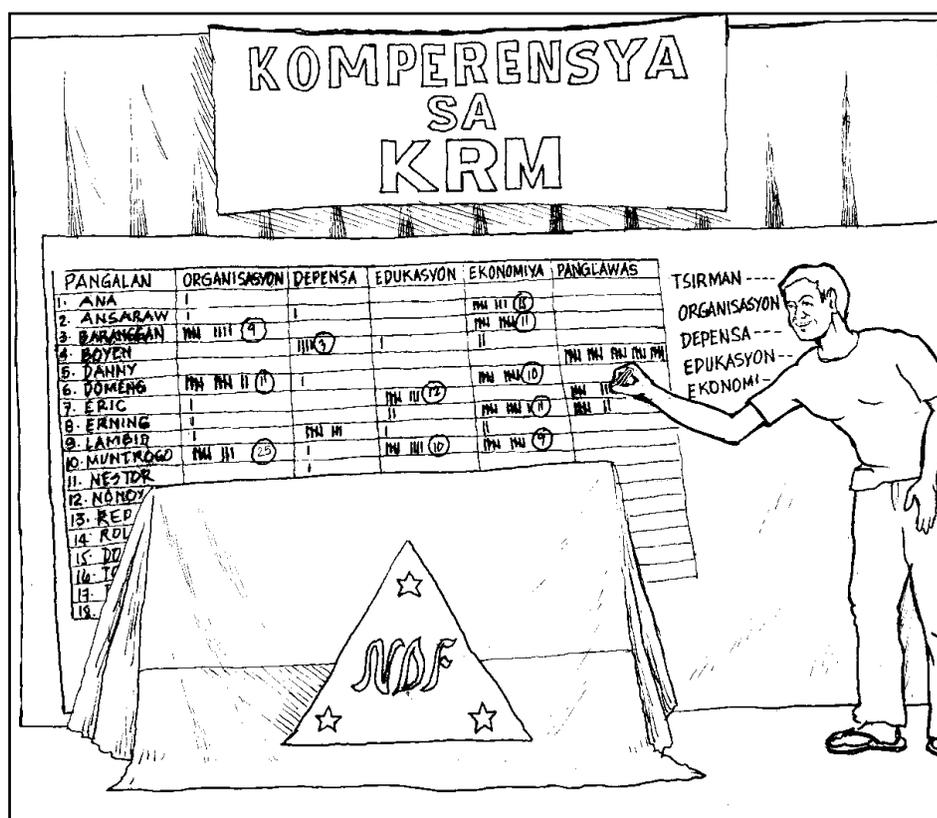
From the newly established council, the conference elected five vice chairpersons who will head the committees on organization, education, economy, health and defense. They and the chair will comprise the Executive Committee (EC). The EC was given the responsibility of assigning the various committee heads. The election was done by secret balloting and handled by comrades from the people's army.

The program was drafted through workshops in order to encourage democratic discussion. Ideas emerged from the various groups on how to further develop production

and on where new schools should be built and the like.

Discussions were particularly animated on traditions that tend to block the people's further unity and advance. It was pointed out that for the BRC and MRC, it is not the preservation of culture but its revolutionization that is the correct method of dealing with traditions, among them *pangayaw* (tribal war), relations between the sexes as well as feudal practices like polygamy and arranged marriages. Ordinances were likewise passed against the use of poison while fishing in streams and rivers, and against gambling, among others. Before the plenary meeting, the workshop results were consolidated and the conference approved the newly drafted program.

A number of cultural presentations lightened up the hectic daylong schedule. The conference ended with speeches from the newly elected members of the MRC council's executive committee. AB



NPA ambushes 41st IB; burns down detachment in Abra

Red fighters of the New People's Army (NPA) launched two successive tactical offensives against the 41st IB in Abra province this February.

According to the latest field reports from the Agustin Begnalen Command (ABC-NPA-Abra), two soldiers from the 41st IB Alpha Company were killed and five others wounded in an ambush by Red guerrillas who were positioned a mere two meters away from the patrolling troopers at exactly 9:15 p.m. of February 16 in Barangay Lenneng, Baay-Licuan town. The first two elements in the soldiers' formation were killed instantly in the first volley. The successful ambush was launched by Red guerrillas under the Procopio Tauro Front (PTF).

On the other hand, 15 camp structures were reduced to ashes on the night of February 8 when Red fighters under the PTF burned the 41st IB Bravo Company Command Post in Barangay Mataragan in the neighboring town of Malibcong. This was after the people of Mataragan demanded punishment for the military unit because of its relentless human rights violations.

The villagers had earlier expelled the 41st IB Bravo Company after a local indigenous court found the military unit guilty of several violations, such as camping less than 500 meters away from a civilian community, forcibly using barriofolk as guides during military operations, violating women sexually, stealing the masses' beasts of

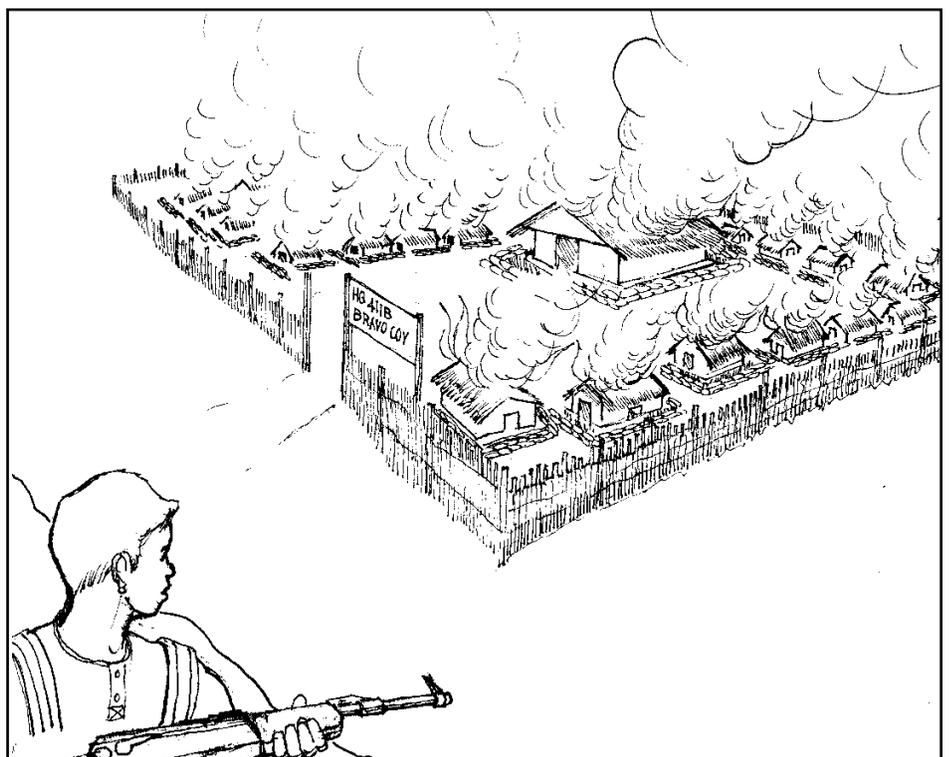
burden, chickens, fruits and vegetable crops, trampling on the culture of national minorities in the area and defending destructive large-scale mining. No less than the village women who were fed up with the soldiers' sexual abuses led the way in expelling the military troops. They were eventually supported by the entire community, including the barangay council.

Aside from expelling the troops, the tribe also ordered the soldiers to pay a fine of ₱100,000. But the troopers merely left ₱6,000 in compensation and furtively left the camp on the night of February 8 to evade their accountabilities. The NPA seized the opportunity to burn down the military de-

tachment amid the Mataragan villagers' cheers and clapping.

After this, the NPA called on the people to strengthen their bond with the revolutionary movement in order to dismantle all detachments and military camps of the fascist AFP, CAFGU and PNP. The NPA urged the people to continue exposing and opposing all human rights violations and advance all forms of antifascist struggle, from filing cases, collective and militant actions, metalegal actions and armed revolutionary struggle, including joining the New People's Army.

These victorious NPA tactical offensives in Abra likewise belie the 41st IB's ridiculous propaganda that the revolutionary movement in the province is already a spent force and that only remnants of the NPA are left operating in Abra. **AB**



NPA raids despotic landlord's hacienda in Negros

The New People's Army (NPA) raided a hacienda owned by a big and despotic landlord in Barangay Camansi, Kabankalan City, Negros Occidental on the afternoon of January 22. The Red fighters confiscated several head of sheep and burned a tractor and guard houses at the estate.

The NPA also disarmed the armed guards of the E and R Security Agency of five shotguns, a cal .38 revolver, a grenade and monocular night vision goggles.

The punitive action was implemented by a platoon of Red fighters under the NPA Armando Sumayang Command in the Southwest Negros Guerrilla Front (ASC-SNGF) against Pablo "Jin" Sola, son of the brutal former Kabankalan mayor Pablo Sola Sr. The NPA had also meted revolutionary punishment on the elder Sola in 1986.

Said Ka Andrea Guerrero, spokesperson of the ASC-SNGF, the property that had been burnt, and the firearms and heads of sheep confiscated are still not enough to compensate for the younger Sola's acts of cruelty against the hacienda workers, which included training his guns at the farm workers and damaging and burning down their houses. The Sola family's hacienda spans up to 133 hectares.

Guerrero likewise assailed the deployment to the hacienda of more soldiers under the 303rd Infantry Brigade led by Col. Jon Aying because of the climate of fear created among the locals.

AB

Unrelenting violence in Hacienda Luisita

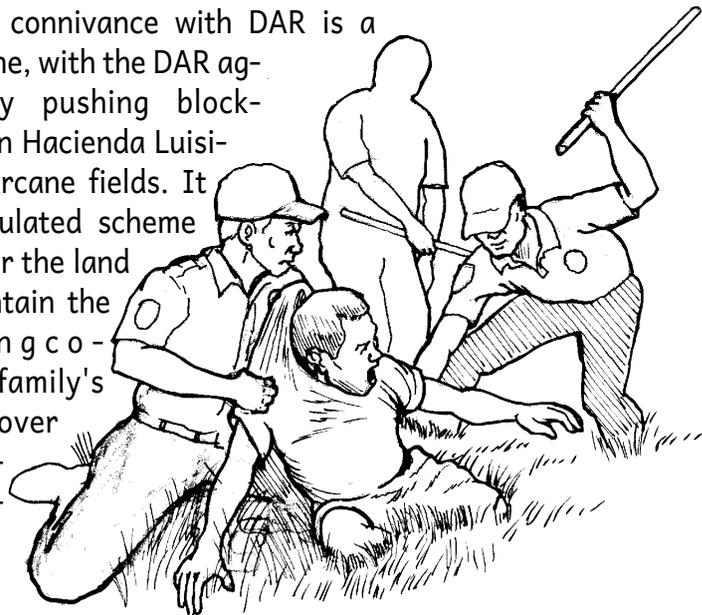
A series of violent acts has been perpetrated by the PNP-Tarlac and paid goons of the Tarlac Development Corporation (Tadeco), especially in the *bungkalan* areas, or plots collectively tilled by farm workers. Successive attacks occurred on February 2, 8, 9 and 11. Repressive acts against the Hacienda Luisita farmers had entered a new phase since November when militant peasants were forcibly evicted after the bogus land distribution in October.

The farmers' huts were torn down and burned, their crops bulldozed and their 81-hectare collective farm fenced off with barbed wire, iron sheets and concrete. They have been forbidden from coming back with their farm tools and bringing gasoline to fuel their irrigation pumps. Peasants who resist the destruction of their huts and crops are threatened that they would be shot.

Tadeco claims that 300 hectares in Barangay Balete and Cutcut is privately owned and is not agricultural land. This is contrary to the Notice of Coverage, a public document issued by the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) on December 17, 2013 which shows that the disputed area forms part of the 4,000 hectares of Hacienda Luisita that should be distributed. The Alyansa ng mga Manggagawang Bukid sa Asyenda Luisita (Ambala) assailed the conspiracy between the Cojuangco-Aquino family and DAR to protect Tadeco's interests.

A campaign of deception has also begun, with farmer-beneficiaries being enjoined to submit to the "aryendo system" by leasing the land they had received for ₱7,000 per hectare annually. Serving as financier is Virgie Torres, a dummy of the Cojuangco-Aquino family. One of Benigno Aquino III's cronies and a fellow gun enthusiast, Torres was appointed by Aquino to head the Land Transportation Office before a scandal forced her early retirement.

Their connivance with DAR is a brazen one, with the DAR aggressively pushing block-farming in Hacienda Luisita's sugarcane fields. It is a calculated scheme to recover the land and maintain the Cojuangco-Aquino family's control over the entire hacienda.



NDFP peace talks consultant arrested in Bicol

The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) assailed the successive arrests of Comrades George Villacorta Geluz, NDFP consultant for Bicol, and NDFP Bicol peace talks staff Silvestre Layones. Geluz was arrested in Gumaca, Quezon on the night of February 8, while Layones was captured outside Naga City early morning of February 9.

They were busy with a series of consultations on the severe poverty of the people of Bicol to underscore the need to include this in the agenda of the peace negotiations.

The CPP asserted that Geluz and Layones' arrests were in violation of the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees (JASIG) which provides guarantees to persons involved in the peace talks against surveillance, arrest, imprisonment, trial

and other forms of persecution. The JASIG was signed both by the Government of the Philippines (GPH) and the NDFP in 1996 to create favorable conditions for the talks.

According to CPP records, Geluz and Layones both hold documents of identification under JASIG. The CPP called for the immediate withdrawal of the trumped-up cases filed against Geluz and for Layones' immediate release. Layones has not yet been

charged.

In arresting and incarcerating Geluz, there are now 12 NDFP peace consultants detained as political prisoners. Most of them were arrested under the US-Aquino regime, which belies its claims that it is pro-peace.

Meanwhile, Eduardo Sarmiento, NDFP consultant for Eastern Visayas was transferred to the New Bilibid Prisons in Muntinlupa City on January 15, after being meted a life sentence.

On February 4, NDFP-Central Visayas consultant Ramon Patriarca was released after the court dismissed the rebellion case filed against him. He was illegally detained for five years. **AB**

Case vs Satur Ocampo et al revived

The Supreme Court has revived a case filed under the US-Arroyo regime against Satur Ocampo and about 50 other leaders of democratic organizations, including peace talks consultants of the National Democratic Front.

Ocampo was slapped with multiple murder charges in relation to an alleged purge by the New

People's Army in Leyte in 1984-85. The so-called evidence consists of skeletons allegedly dug up from a mass grave in Inopacan, Leyte. The manufactured case was filed by the US-Arroyo regime's Inter-Agency Legal Action Group (IALAG) under Oplan Bantay Laya. The IALAG concentrated on inventing cases against personalities of the armed revolutionary movement and the open democratic movement.

Ocampo has denied the charges, saying he was in detention at the time the alleged crime was committed. The CPP has denied that mass murders ever took place in Inopacan, Leyte, saying that the skeletons being presented by the military were likely dug up from other burial places.

The revival of the case against Ka Satur et al threatens leaders of national-democratic organizations who are currently at the forefront of the growing movement calling for Aquino's ouster. **AB**



Deaths in Zamboanga evacuation centers mounting

Up to 87 evacuees have already died in Zamboanga City. Almost 120,000 evacuees continue to suffer in evacuation centers that are very poorly equipped.

The evacuees were forced by the Aquino government to leave their villages to give way to the relentless shooting and bombings by the AFP in September when soldiers attacked forces of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) who were then in Zamboanga City for a rally. The evacuees have been prevented from returning to their homes for the past five months.

Due to the subhuman conditions, many of the evacuees at the Don Joaquin Enriquez Memorial Complex have been falling ill, with deaths mounting due to diseases such as tuberculosis and diarrhea. This is the biggest evacuation center, housing almost 119,000 people.

The national and local governments have forbidden the evacuees from returning to their communities, especially those not native to Zamboanga, in order to force most of the evacuees to transfer to Barrio Tulungatung, a relocation site that is far from the sea. Most of the evacuees are Moros and members of the Badjao tribe whose main livelihood is fishing. Because they refuse to be relocated, most of them are still staying at the evacuation centers and cramped bunkhouses. Authorities have threatened to stop the distribution of relief goods if they continue refusing to comply with the regime's relocation plan.

The evacuees are unemployed. The only jobs offered them by the government are under the Department of Social Welfare and Development's food-for-work program, which can only accommodate a few people. AB

Bukidnon peasant leader killed

A peasant leader was killed and another wounded when motorcycle-riding men shot them at Crossing Hindangon, Hagkol, Valencia City, Bukidnon on February 5. Killed on the spot was Julieto Lauron, who chaired the Kahugpungan sa mga Mag-uuma (Kasama-Bukidnon), a sister-organization of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas.

His companion, Kasama secretary-general Nermie Lapatis was wounded in the leg. Both of them were also aboard a motorcycle. Lapatis survived after playing dead.

Two weeks before the incident, the AFP 1st Special Battalion began military operations in the area. Among the AFP commanders in the locality is Maj. Gen. Ricardo Visaya, a known follower of Jovito Palparan. He is currently the commander of the 4th ID, which covers Misamis Oriental, Bukidnon and the Caraga Region. He used to be assigned in Bicol and the National Capital Region. He was also the troop commander responsible for the Hacienda Luisita Massacre in 2004. AB

PKM honors Ka Greg Ratin

The Pambansang Katipunan ng mga Magbubukid (PKM) saluted Comrade Gregorio "Ka Greg" Ratin, a proletarian revolutionary from the poor peasantry in Negros Occidental. Ka Greg passed away on February 5 at the age of 48 while undergoing heart surgery. He was declared a hero and martyr of the peasantry.

Ka Greg led successful peasant campaigns and struggles in Negros island, the most striking of which were organized assertions, *bungkalan* (collective tilling) and land occupation in Bago City in 2008. This inspired the *bungkalan* campaign throughout

the island. At present, there are at least 86 parcels of land managed by peasant and farm workers' organizations covering more than 2,100 hectares. The parcels are planted to food crops like rice and corn and provide food for more than 2,500 peasant families in Negros.

Ka Greg also exposed the land monopoly of Aquino's uncle Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco Jr. and landgrabbing by local and foreign mining companies in Negros island. He also fearlessly confronted and fought fascist violence by the state and landlords' hired goons. AB

Ex-general's appointment to HRVCB denounced

Progressive organizations roundly condemned the appointment of ret. Gen. Lina Sarmiento as head of the Human Rights Victims Claims Board (HRVCB), which is expected to oversee the ₱10-billion compensation for victims of martial law. Sarmiento is not qualified to be part of the HRVCB because she came from an agency responsible for many human rights violations.

Sarmiento was part of the Philippine Constabulary which perpetrated serious and heinous violations of human rights during the Marcos dictatorship. As PNP human rights officer under Arroyo, she was part of the mechanism by which officials accused of

extrajudicial killings and other acts of violence against several citizens could evade responsibility.

This runs counter to the minimum standards put forth by Republic Act No. 10368 which states that members of the board should have a deep and thorough understanding of human rights and a commitment to human rights protection, promotion and advocacy.

The Samahan ng mga Ex-Detainees Laban sa Detensyon at Aresto (Selda) was among those who early on submitted its nominees in accordance with the law's requirements, but none of them was chosen. **AB**

New collected works by Ka Joma published

A third book of collected works by Comrade Jose Maria Sison, or Ka Joma as he is better known by generations of Filipino revolutionaries, was published on February 8 in The Netherlands and the Philippines. The book launching was timed to coincide with his 75th birthday and 55th year of revolutionary service to the people.

The third book entitled *Building Strength through Struggle* contains documents on the reestablishment of the Communist Party of the Philippines and other works written by Ka Joma as Ka Amado Guerrero covering the period from the declaration of martial law on September 21, 1972 up to November 10, 1977. The first two books were the *Foundation for Resuming the Philippine Revolution* and *Defeating Revisionism, Reformism and Opportunism*.

Ka Joma's birthday also served as an occasion to announce the revitalization and expansion of the Center for Social Studies (CSS). The CSS is an institution established in 1991 to provide training and education to activists in their struggle against the imperialist offensive in culture and politics.

In a speech, Ka Joma thanked everyone who greeted him and attended the celebration, saying it reminded him that there is no sitting back and no retirement for revolutionaries. **AB**

TRO vs. power rate hike extended

THE Supreme Court granted a petition by the Makabayan Bloc of Congress for a 60-day extension of the Temporary Restraining Order (TRO) against Meralco's ₱4.15 per kWh power rate increase. The second TRO won by Makabayan postpones the power rate hike to April 22.

The TRO is but one of the protests that shook Meralco and the Aquino regime in the past few weeks. On February 17, residents in selected communities of Manila turned off their lights for an hour to protest the power rate hike. On February 10, youth and students staged a lightning rally in front of Malacañang's Gate 7 to assail the Aquino regime for its inaction on the power rate hike and other issues.

The protest was launched a day before the Supreme Court began hearing anew petitions against the power rate increase.

In a study, progressive think tank IBON Foundation revealed that Meralco's income swelled by 60%, reaching ₱16.3 billion in 2012. A number of power producers have also raked in bigger profits due to the EPIRA Law and other antipeople policies. **AB**