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Editorial

Oust the regime that reeks of corruption!

Benigno Aquino III and his regime reek of corruption. After close to four years of endless chatter about "clean governance," Aquino has shown that he is no different from past presidents in promoting, and benefiting from, bureaucrat capitalist corruption.

The Janus-faced Aquino rode on the people's anger at the corruption of the previous Arroyo regime and peddled the "righteous path" slogan. However, it was merely a means to cover up the breadth and depth of corruption in the Philippine government under his rule.

The use by government officials of state power and privilege for personal gain or to favor their families or patrons remains rampant under the Aquino regime.

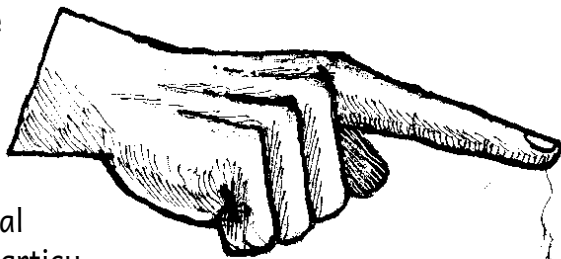
Aquino makes use of public funds to strengthen his hold on political power. In particular, he has used the Priority Development Assistance Fund (PDAF) and the Disbursement Acceleration Program (DAP) to force congressmen and senators, and even local government officials to toe the line. He likewise uses public funds to ensure the loyalty of Liberal Party members. These funds are transferred to private

bank accounts in the form of kickbacks for government officials.

Aquino has favored his cronies and other wealthy families in awarding infrastructure contracts under the Public-Private Partnership Program. The biggest beneficiaries of government contracts are also the biggest contributors to the Aquino's 2010 presidential campaign—Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco, Henry Sy, Manuel Pangilinan, the Ayalas, Consunjis and

other big comprador bourgeoisie. Bidding for such big-ticket projects as the MRT maintenance contract and the "modernization" of the Philippine Orthopedic Hospital have been invariably rigged. This clearly demonstrates that Aquino's PPP projects have actually already been negotiated and awarded among his closest big bourgeois comprador supporters. Such negotiations are handled directly by Aquino through his sisters, as in the case of the reported involvement of Ballsy Aquino in the government contract to purchase new train coaches for the MRT.

Aquino has stepped up smuggling through legal and ille-



gal channels. One year into the Aquino regime, it was established by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Direction of Trade that smuggling has worsened threefold compared to previous regimes and now amounts to \$19 billion per year. In 2013, Aquino made a big show of removing the chief of the customs bureau, making loud accusations that certain officials have not been following his "righteous path." Yet, not a single official has been charged or punished. This means that such drama was only meant to remove certain customs officials whose loyalty to the Aquino clique has been found wanting. Large amounts of smuggled goods, especially rice, onions, garlic, pork, poultry and other agricultural produce continue to be illegally dumped into the Philippine market, pulling down farmgate prices to the detriment of small peasants and rural producers.

Aquino has raised the people's tax burden, but provides tax exemptions and holidays to

big comprador companies. The Aquino regime's tax policies are heavily skewed in favor of big business. Up to 40% of the top 100 companies in the Philippines are not among the Bureau of Internal Revenue's list of top 500 corporate taxpayers. Many foreign big business operations, including oil and mining companies, are among the biggest beneficiaries of tax exemptions.

Aquino has been covering up the involvement of his key officials and pro-Aquino congressmen and senators in kickback scams or in facilitating the transfer of public funds to private accounts. Despite having been named in the pork barrel scam many times, Aquino's budget and agricultural secretaries "continue to enjoy the president's trust" and exercise the same power, authority and privilege they have been using for corruption.


The "anti-corruption" rhetoric has simply served as a weapon wielded by the ruling Aquino clique against its political oppo-

nents. Anti-Aquino senators have been charged, but none of the pro-Aquino officials accused of receiving kickbacks or bribe money. Meanwhile, it continues to bungle the corruption and plunder cases against former president Gloria Arroyo and provide her with privileges in detention.

There has been no fundamental change in the orientation of the ruling system. Government remains an instrument of the ruling classes of big compradors, landlords and big bureaucrat capitalists. Political power is wielded by the ruling Aquino clique to serve the interests of the Aquino family, its cronies, the pro-Aquino oligarchs and foreign big business.

The broad masses of workers and peasants and the middle class sectors are sick and tired of Aquino's "righteous path" rhetoric. They know that there has been no fundamental change in the way that the reactionary government is being run. To them, it remains the exclusive domain of the ruling classes, who pocket public funds that should accrue to public health, education, housing and other essential social services.

The Filipino people are utterly disgusted with the stench of corruption under the Aquino regime. They demand an end to Aquino's coverups of his officials involved in the pork barrel anomalies. Aquino himself must be held responsible for the use of pork barrel funds and his promotion of corruption through the discretionary disbursement of billions of pesos of public monies. They demand an end to Aquino's PPP program where big oligarchs connive with the Aquino regime to make use of public funds to burden the people with privatized transportation and other services.

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In the face of widespread corruption, the Filipino people intensify their demand for the ouster of the Aquino regime to put an end to its lies and pretensions to righteousness. They call for the establishment of a broad anti-corruption front to unite all democratic forces and isolate the corrupt ruling Aquino regime.

The ever worsening socio-economic conditions of the people underscore the need for them to struggle for the ouster of the Aquino regime. By putting forward the demands for higher wages, lower prices, larger budgetary allocations for public education and health services, employment, land reform and other democratic demands, they can belie the Aquino regime's claims that its "good governance" has resulted in a "Philippine miracle."

The Filipino people seek the ouster of the Aquino regime before its term expires in 2016. There is urgency to their struggle to oust the Aquino regime as the Aquino clique is currently seeking to consolidate its political power precisely by controlling the purse strings in order to ensure the outcome of the 2016 elections and perpetuate its power, its lies and corruption.

The CPP and all revolutionary forces support the Filipino people's clamor to oust the corrupt and mendacious Aquino regime. They call on all democratic forces to unite under the banner of anti-corruption and tear down Aquino's false flags of "good government" and "righteous path." The CPP calls on the New People's Army (NPA) to further intensify revolutionary armed struggle as their contribution to the Filipino people's mass struggles to oust the Aquino regime. AB

Scrambling to cover up Aquino's involvement in the pork barrel scam

Malacañang's minions are currently in a mad scramble to cover up the involvement of Benigno Aquino III no less in the P10-billion pork barrel scandal.

First, Aquino sought to discredit and belittled Janet Lim Napoles' two sworn affidavits incriminating his regime's key officials in the pork barrel anomaly. Napoles claimed that it was Budget Sec. Florencio "Butch" Abad who taught her how to navigate the complexities of the pork barrel fund.

This time around, Malacañang wants to put a lid on news that Aquino's name was among the list of politicians found in digital records maintained by Benhur Luy, one of the whistleblowers in the pork barrel scandal.

Computer forensics experts have discovered that a number of files had been deleted from Luy's computer. This piece of information was among those divulged by the Senate after Luy's files had been submitted to the Blue Ribbon Committee.

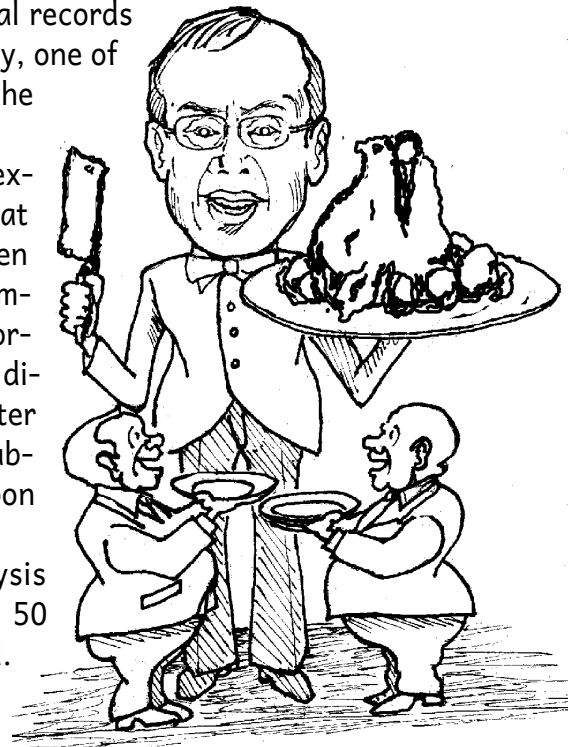
The forensics analysis revealed that more than 50 files had been deleted. Among the deleted documents were letters addressed to "PI-

NOY" (Aquino) requesting financial assistance amounting to millions of pesos. Also deleted were the names of Executive Sec. Paquito N. Ochoa Jr., Sec. Butch Abad and the name "BIGBOY." Senate Pres. Franklin Drilon used the nickname "Big Boy" in his 2001 election campaign.

Malacañang lackeys are hard-pressed deflecting news of their boss' involvement towards other issues, especially since a few days before the deletion of Aquino and his cronies' names was discovered, information about the so-called "Three Marias" emerged.

The "Three Marias" have been identified as Rochelle Ahoro, Odette Ong and Mary Antoinette Lucile Ortile, all Malacañang employees within Aquino's inner circle. Ahoro is Aquino's appointments secretary, while Ong is an undersecretary and currently manages Malacañang, the Mansion House in Baguio and Malacañang sa Sugbo. Ortile, on the other hand, used to be connected to Ochoa's office and is now under Abad. The "Three Marias" reportedly handle the pork barrel funds being brought to Malacañang.

The Congress minority bloc, including Makabayan is demanding Aquino's suspension of the "Three Marias" and has roundly criticized the president for defending his staff and allies by being judgmental regarding the pork barrel scam disclosures. AB



WEF in the Philippines is Aquino's grand show

The Communist Party of the Philippines condemned the grandiose show staged by the US-Aquino regime when it hosted the World Economic Forum (WEF) for East Asia on May 21-23. The WEF is a private conglomeration of imperialist companies and their big comprador partners in the client states.

The WEF's objective is to aggressively push the various neoliberal policies favoring monopoly companies. The Aquino regime spent ₱71 billion to entertain the biggest capitalists in the few days they spent in the country.

Holding the WEF in the Philippines was part of the Aquino regime's grand plan to promote the lie of the "Philippine miracle" and boast that the country has "taken the lead" in East Asia in terms of development. Its much-vaunted claims that it is "Asia's rising star" and "the next Asian miracle" are empty promotional gimmicks to attract additional foreign capital. Conniving with the Aquino regime in this scheme are

international credit agencies, multinational companies and the local comprador bourgeoisie who never seemed to run out of accolades about the country's so-called positive economic situation and Aquino's role in the latter.

Nonetheless, Aquino is unable to conceal the fact that his much-vaunted "miracle" is nothing more than an illusion conjured by the large inflow of foreign portfolio capital into the local financial market and speculation in the construction of condominiums and office space. In particular, the construction boom was spurred by low interest rates on loans, which artificially de-

pressed production expenses and the financial costs of buying new condominium and residential units.

The CPP likewise condemned the violent dispersal by the Philippine National Police of a protest action launched by progressive groups in front of the Shangri-la Hotel in Makati City where the WEF was meeting and the illegal arrest of four demonstrators on May 22. The four were detained up to May 26.

The progressive groups expressed their disgust at Aquino's so-called "Philippine miracle" as growing numbers of people suffer from poverty and hunger, soaring unemployment rates and low wages and sky-rocketing prices of goods and services.

On May 23, progressive groups launched an alternative gathering called "World Epic Fail: The Folly of Public-Private Partnership." The gathering mainly tackled the WEF's endorsement of privatization programs in public service, health, education and labor. **AB**

NPA punishes 2 mining giants

Red fighters under the New People's Army (NPA) Mt. Alip Command of Far South Mindanao Region burned 48 container vans belonging to Glencore-Xstrata SMI Mining Company and seized 13 shotguns from guards of the South Davao Development Company Inc. (SDDCI) in coordinated offensives in Davao del Sur and Sultan Kudarat on May 19. The Swiss-owned Glencore-Xstrata SMI and the Consunji-owned SDDCI are both engaged in gold mining.

The Red fighters burned 48 container vans being used as offices and sleeping quarters by SMI at its camp in Sitio Gumatuka, Kimlawis, Kiblawan, Davao del Sur at 5:30 p.m. After an hour, another NPA unit raided the SDDCI camp in Sitio Salnang, Barangay Datal Blau, Columbio, Sultan Kudarat. Columbio and Kiblawan towns are ad-

acent to each other. Aside from the firearms, the NPA also seized four VHF radios, a GPS radio and a laptop computer.

These tactical offensives were not merely punitive actions against the plunderous and environmentally destructive mines. They also formed part of the NPA's program of intensifying armed struggle to defeat the

AFP's stepped-up military campaign in the region.

Meanwhile, three Scout Rangers were killed and several others wounded after Red fighters under the NPA Comval-North Davao-South Agusan Subregional Command used command-detonated explosives on a military platoon in Sitio Quarry, Barangay Dagohoy, Talaingod, Davao del Norte on May 22.

The attack came three days after the NPA released its prisoner of war Cpl. Rogelio Rosales of the 60th IB in Sitio Paiton of the same barangay. The enemy immediately launched pursuit operations after the release, which eventually led to the ambush. **AB**

NPA-SMR denies assassinating Navarro

Psywar experts of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) spewed black propaganda once again when they accused the New People's Army (NPA) of assassinating Mayor Reynaldo Navarro of Laak, Compostela Valley. Navarro was ambushed and killed by five motorcycle-riding gunmen in Asuncion, Davao del Norte on May 28.

The 10th ID's objective in accusing the NPA of the crime is to enrage and recruit Navarro's Lumad supporters as the military's newest instruments and bandits in its Oplan Bayanihan counterrevolutionary campaign.

In a statement, Ka Rigoberto Sanchez, spokesperson of the Merardo Arce Command (NPA-Southern Mindanao Region) condemned Navarro's killing and condoled with his family and friends. He said that the People's Democratic Government had no basis to impose the maximum penalty of death on Navarro.

Sanchez explained that although Navarro was among the biggest loggers operating in the forests of Agusan del Sur, Compostela Valley and Davao del Norte, he was not a legitimate military target.

As a veteran politician in an area encompassed by the territory of the People's Democratic Government, Mayor Navarro linked up with the revolutionary movement. On many occasions, his actions showed his recognition of the revolution's aspirations.

But in the past years, Navarro's logging and agribusiness operations kept on expanding, prompting the revolutionary movement to send him warnings several times. Because he ignored them, the Comval-North Davao-South Agusan Subregional Command was compelled to go public with its warnings against his rampant logging activities and the attendant militarization which has led to violations of the people's human rights.

Sanchez advised the masses in Laak, in particular, and in Mindanao, in general, to be vigilant and see through the military's dirty tactics. Recently, the AFP also spread the lie that the NPA uses human shields. **AB**

US intervention in "Zamboanga Siege"

The US intervened military in the AFP's bloody attacks on Moro National Liberation Front forces in Zamboanga City's communities. The assault, known as the "Zamboanga Siege" took place in September-October last year and resulted in the destruction of civilian communities and the dislocation of more than 120,000 residents, many of whom are still languishing in evacuation centers.

The US admitted that its troops had a hand in the fighting, as boasted by self-styled "silent hero" Col. Robert McDowell, chief of the US Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines based in Zamboanga City.

The US said it supported Filipino troops by providing important information and communications services during combat. Both US and Philippine military officials had earlier vehemently denied any US involvement despite frequent reports on the presence of unmanned aerial vehicles at the height of AFP bomb attacks on civilian communities.

In related news, the US' massive surveillance of the Philippine telecommunications system was disclosed in mid-May through an article published in an American newspaper. The

"US....," continued on page 6

NPA stops mining survey in ComVal

The Comval-Davao Gulf Subregional Command of the New People's Army (NPA) detained four personnel of Sky Eye UAV Services for promoting the interests of large-scale and environmentally destructive mining. The Sky Eye personnel arrived in Barangay New Leyte, Maco, Compostela Valley on May 28, and its surveyors were arrested on May 31. Their driver had earlier been arrested on May 30. The Red fighters confiscated a sky surfer drone, two multi-rotor drones, two laptops and a GPS radio from Sky Eye.

The company was hired by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ostensibly to pinpoint illegal logging activities in the area through the use of unmanned aerial vehicles (more commonly known as drones). The NPA found this incredible since illegal logging is no longer rampant in Maco due to its heavily denuded forests.

Maco is not rich in forest resources but in minerals like gold, said Ka Daniel Ibarra, spokesperson of the Comval-Davao Gulf Subregional Command. Thus, it is the interests of Apex Mining and St. Augustine Mining Corp. which have vast concessions in Maco and the mountainous borders of Pantukan and Mabini towns that the DENR is likely protecting when it hired Sky Eye.

The NPA released the four Sky Eye personnel on June 2 on the condition that they stop defending large-scale mining and environmentally destructive activities. **AB**

US National Security Agency (NSA) reportedly collects all text messages, telephone and cell-phone calls, particularly in the Philippines and four other countries. Through a program dubbed MYSTIC, the NSA gathers not just all text messages but accompanying data such as dates and times the messages were sent and the location of the sender. The four other countries subjected to surveillance were Kenya, Mexico, a country in the Caribbean and a still unidentified country.

Obviously, the MYSTIC program's operations in the Philippines are supported not only by the Aquino regime but by the country's telecommunications companies, making it very easy for the NSA and its local intelligence agencies to conduct real-time surveillance on individuals or groups that they want to spy on.

At the same time, another newspaper reported that the US had read and listened to all text messages and calls made by Jejomar Binay and Mar Roxas last year. This piece of information was part of the revelations made by Edward Snowden, a former employee of a company contracted by the NSA.

As expected of US imperialism's local puppets, both Binay and Roxas saw nothing wrong with being subjected to surveillance by their master. **AB**

AFP operations in Sorsogon victimize 4 civilians

Four civilians, including a baby, have been added to the list of victims of a military operation conducted by the 903rd Brigade which has been ravaging Sorsogon since April. Under the 903rd Brigade are the 31st IB, the 5th Scout Ranger Company and other military forces.

In Matnog. The 31st IB had a family in its crosshairs when it attacked a New People's Army squad in Sitio Hukdong, Barangay Balocaua on May 23.

At 5:45 a.m., the military encircled a group of Red fighters resting temporarily near the house of the Garduque family. Minutes after shots rang out, Elias Garduque lay dead, and his wife Cynthia and their year-old baby seriously wounded.

The soldiers ignored the mother and child for more than nine hours and brought them to hospital only at 3 p.m. They stopped other villagers who rushed to the site after hearing the shots and offered to help the victims.

Brig. Gen. Joselito Kakilala, 903rd Bde chief, automatically branded the Garduque couple as NPA guerrillas. Worse, he declared that the military operation was conducted without any collateral damage, even if the Garduques' baby was seriously wounded in the gunbattle.

In Casiguran. The 31st IB Alpha Coy shot and killed Joseph Benson, a resident of Barangay Inlagadian, in the early hours of May 9. Benson was ambushed in Barangay Escuela while walking home from a funeral wake that was being held near the 31st IB Alpha Coy headquarters in Barangay Casay of the same town. The soldiers who killed Benson admitted to some local residents that they suspected the victim to be among the NPA operatives who ambushed their troops in Barangay San Juan last April.

The military had threatened residents of Barangay San Juan on April 29 that they would "wipe out" all suspected NPA supporters in Casiguran town after a successful ambush

in the area by a unit under the Celso Minguez Command (NPA-Sorsogon). Killed in the ambush was Cpl. Edison Capital. A cal .45 pistol was likewise seized. The NPA is currently contacting Benson's family for appropriate action.

In Bulan. Troopers of the 31st IB conducting operations in the interior villages of Bulan and Matnog shamelessly stole a motorized boat at 10:30 p.m. on May 5. The victim was the Masujer family of Barangay Sagrada. The soldiers had gone to the Masujers on the morning of May 5 to seize the family's boat, claiming it was owned by the NPA. Mrs. Marife Masujer was able to stop the soldier-thieves from taking the boat. But the troopers returned that night to take it and use it to ferry 30 soldiers of the 31st IB towards Bulan town.

Out of fear, the Masujer family has temporarily transferred to a relative's house in another village. They have since been unable to earn a living because their livelihood depends solely on fishing.

In Sorsogon City. Village chair Eddie Albor of Barangay Cococabitan was accused of being an NPA member on April 27 after an encounter between an NPA team and a composite force of 31st IB and 5th SR Coy troopers that resulted in the death of a Red fighter. Albor was illegally detained at the Sorsogon City District Jail on trumped-up charges to coerce him into signing a sworn statement falsely identifying the NPA casualty as a high-ranking NPA cadre to enable the military to collect a ₱2.5 million bounty on the cadre's head. Albor was promised his freedom in exchange for his signature, but he remains in detention. **AB**

Justice for 8 women workers

The Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU) and GABRIELA demanded justice for eight women workers who died in a fire that gutted a warehouse storing electronic products in Pasay City on May 29.

They picketed the main office of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) in Intramuros on June 4 to assail the Aquino regime for its failure to protect the health and welfare of workers in the workplace. The KMU said the government should order all companies to provide two exits on every floor and basement that workers could access in five minutes.

The KMU and GABRIELA workers also lit candles at the DOLE office to demonstrate their protest and to sympathize with the families of the eight victims of the terrible tragedy. They unfurled a streamer stating "Justice for the 8 workers killed in the Asia Metro Tech fire!"

The workers failed to exit the premises because their employer had locked them inside their sleeping quarters. AB

100 families driven out of Sierra Madre

A HUNDRED peasant families were forced to flee the UP Sierra Madre Land Grant due to harassment by armed guards of the University of the Philippines-Los Baños (UPLB). The UPLB is taking over the peasants' land to pave the way for its "eco-tourism and bio-fuel production" project which covers 5,279 hectares along an area straddling the borders of Real town in Quezon and Siniloan town in Laguna.

The farmers, who are members of the Integrated Social Forest Development Organization (ISFDO) have been tilling up to 1,400 hectares of the UP Sierra Madre Land Grant since the 1980s. The UPLB armed guards confiscated their farm tools and seedlings, uprooted their crops and demolished their houses to drive them out of the area. AB

RPA: Butchers still

On May 28, Stephen Paduano (alias Carapali Lualhati) was sworn in as the representative of Abang Lingkod, the partylist group of the Revolutionary Proletarian Army (RPA).

The counterrevolutionary group's image-change in Congress, however, fails muster among those who know its true character. On the same day Paduano was sworn in, the RPA carried on with being fascist butchers.

RPA elements brutally killed Dionesio Garete, 57, a farmer and resident of Barangay Aquino, Nobleza West, Janiuay, Iloilo at around 9:15 a.m. of May 28. Garete was a member of the Janiuay-Badiangan Farmers Association (JABAFA) which supplies muscovado to the Panay Fair Trade Center (PFTC).

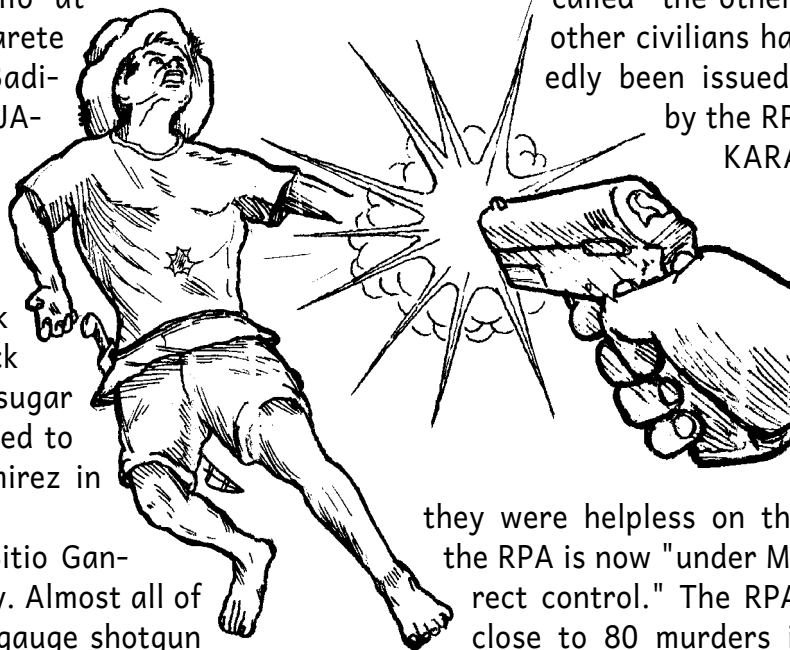
The victim was then driving a Toyota Hilux pickup truck trailing a JABAFA cargo truck loaded with newly harvested sugar cane that was being transported to a sugar mill in Barangay Damirez in the same town.

Garete was ambushed in Sitio Gantong, Barangay Danao, Janiuay. Almost all of the 24 cal .45 bullets and 12-gauge shotgun

pellets discharged by his assailants penetrated his chest and the back and front sides of the pickup truck he was driving.

A four-day investigation conducted by a fact-finding team from KARAPATAN-Panay, PAMANGGAS, GABRIELA and PFTC concluded that the RPA perpetrated the crime. Before he was killed, Garete had been threatened by an RPA element going by the alias "Jorek" that he would be taught a lesson if he persisted in actively supporting what he called "the other group." Three other civilians have also reportedly been issued death threats by the RPA.

KARAPATAN-Panay submitted the fact-finding results to the Janiuay Police Office, but some policemen told them that they were helpless on the matter since the RPA is now "under Malacañang's direct control." The RPA is involved in close to 80 murders in Iloilo alone.



Mabaca tribe demands 77th IB pullout

The Mabaca tribe, through the Cordillera People's Alliance, expressed its opposition to the 77th IB's construction of a military camp in their community in Tanap, Mabaca in Balbalan, Kalinga. A platoon under the military unit arrived in the area on the second week of May to build a detachment.

The tribespeople said they were against the camp's construction due to the long list of abuses and other human rights violations they have suffered in the hands of military troops since 1993, which includes coercion, beatings and surveillance.

The tribespeople were also aware of the soldiers' antisocial practices, such as drunkenness, gambling, illegal drug use and theft, and said that their negative influence would only bring discord to their tribe. They also demanded justice for the extrajudicial killing of Jeff "Openg" Daoayan, a member of their tribe who was killed by soldiers in 2006.

The local residents immediately opposed the detachment's construction. To appease them, the 77th IB called for a consultation but refused to stop building the camp. Instead, the military just scheduled another round of consultations when it failed to convince the locals. AB

Peasants reject proposed CARP extension

Progressive peasant groups condemned proposals to extend the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) by two more years. House Bill (HB) 4296 which calls for a two-year extension of the CARP has been approved by Congress at the committee level. CARP is scheduled to end on June 30.

The bill, which has been certified "urgent" by Malacañang, is being pushed by Rep. Noel Villanueva, a landlord and *arriendador* (or mortgagee) involved in the revocation of Certificates of Land Ownership Award (CLOA) covering 1,000 hectares in Hacienda Luisita.

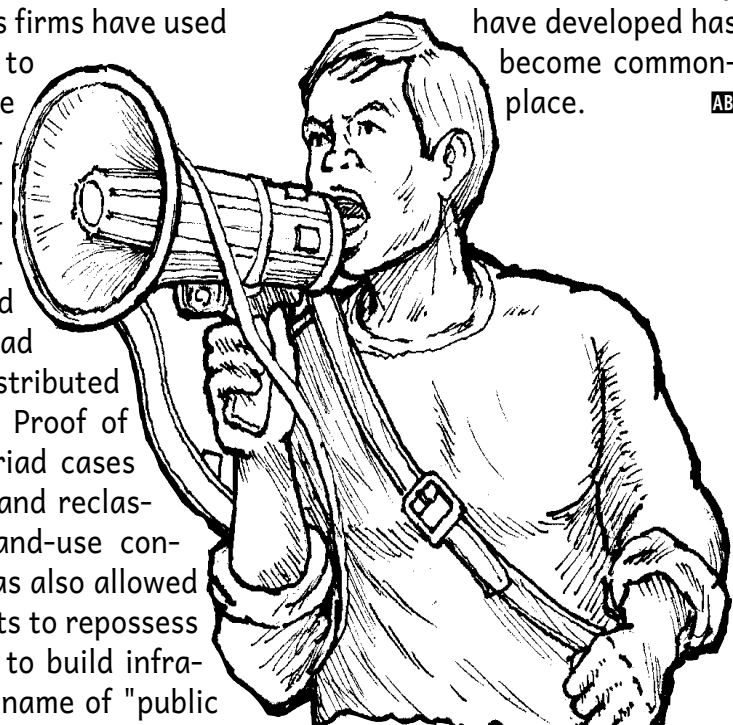
The bill calls for granting the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) the power to issue "notices of coverage" for another two years. The Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) has denounced the bill as a "worthless piece of paper." The peasant organization cited the NOC for Hacienda Luisita, whose land has yet to be distributed to its farm workers. The peasants demanded the junking of CARP.

Twenty-six years of CARP have worsened landlessness among peasants and farm workers. Landlords, real estate companies as well as local and foreign agribusiness firms have used its provisions to circumvent the actual land distribution of hundreds of hectares of agricultural land and seize land that had already been distributed to beneficiaries. Proof of this are the myriad cases of exemptions, land reclassification and land-use conversion. CARP has also allowed local governments to repossess distributed land to build infrastructure in the name of "public

interest" or "development."

The DAR is lying through its teeth in claiming that it has met 84% of its target of distributing 5,360,000 hectares to beneficiaries. Many of the CLOA have already been revoked through landlords' shenanigans. In other cases, landlords have brazenly connived with the DAR to retain ownership of the land. Just a few of the more notorious cases are those of the Cojuangco-Aquino-owned Hacienda Luisita; Hacienda Looc, Coral ni Lopez, Hacienda Zobel and Hacienda Roxas (all in Batangas); Hacienda Yulo (in Laguna); and Hacienda Araneta (in Bulacan).

Alongside the rampant CARP-sanctioned land seizures is the mounting violence accompanying agrarian cases. Harassment, filing of trumped-up charges and extrajudicial killings of peasants defending their right to till and reside in the land they have developed has become commonplace. AB



Massive landgrabbing in Negros

Landgrabbing in Negros island is massive and aggressive, with big landlords, multinational corporations, reactionary government agencies and the military colluding to seize vast tracts of land to build plantations.

According to Fr. Frank Fernandez, spokesperson of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines-Negros Island, Negros is now one of the main targets in the expansion of oil palm, rubber tree, pineapple and banana plantations, aside from other export crops.

He cited as an example the Yanson family's seizure of land tilled by peasants and members of the Tumandok tribe in Basay, Negros Oriental and Hinobaan, Negros Occidental. The Yansons are now occupying 200 hectares in Malinao, Basay which they have planted to export crops.

On top of this, they want to expand towards the adjacent area in Barangay Damutan, Hinobaan by seizing or controlling 8,064 hectares of land from which the Tumandok and peasants source their livelihood. This is aside from another area extending from Barangay Pinggot, Ilog, Negros Occidental to the upland areas of Magballo, Kabankalan City.

Another notorious landgrabbing case is that in Murcia, Negros Occidental where Dole Philippines plans to open a banana plantation. The land covers 55 hectares of Hacienda Arloc and 155 hectares of Hacienda Ilimnan, both owned by the Arguelles family. Con-

niving with Dole is Negros Occidental Gov. Alfredo Marañon who used P150 million in public funds to build the Negros First Ranch in a small portion of the land. The bigger portion will be rented out to Dole.

The disputed land was issued a Notice of Coverage in 2003. By 2010, the Arguelleses had stopped planting sugar cane, and since then, the estate's farm workers have been tilling a portion of the idle land, planting it to corn and root crops to feed their families. They further developed their farms in the succeeding years. Also in 2010, however, the peasants learned that the provincial government had transacted with the Arguelleses to buy the land in the two haciendas.

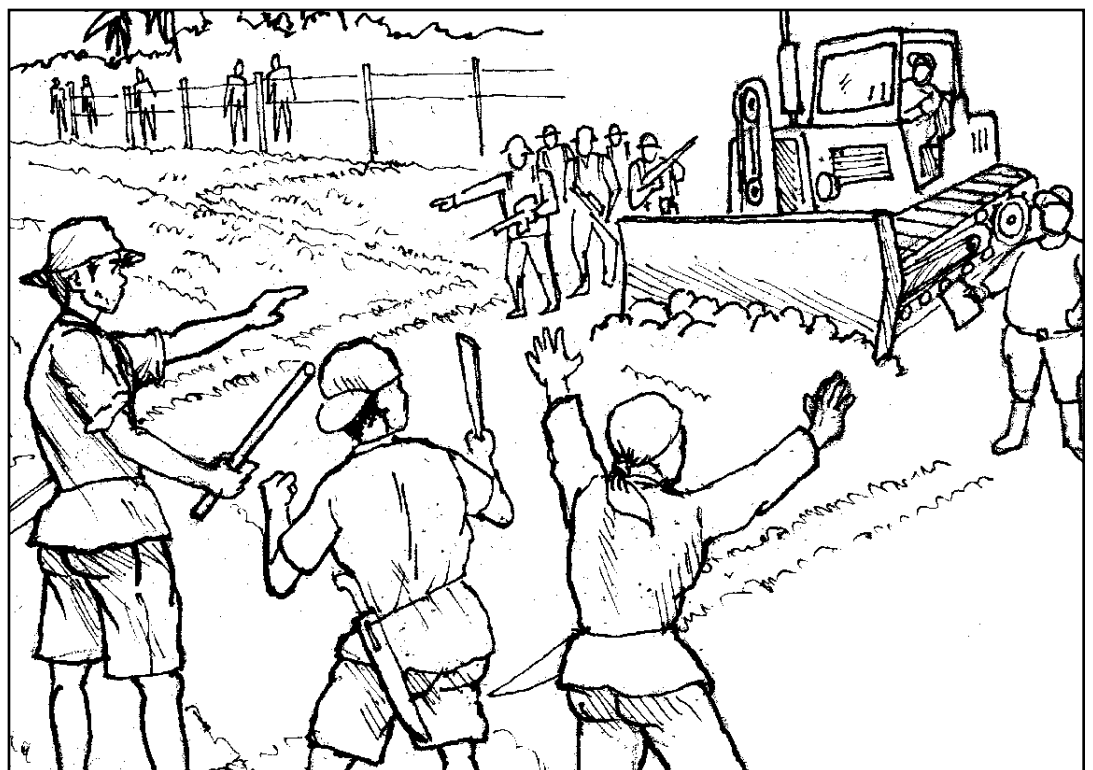
The peasants are strongly against plans to build a banana

plantation in Murcia. Led by the National Federation of Sugar Workers (NFSW), they camped out in March outside of the capitol grounds to assail the provincial government's seizure of the land they had been tilling.

Earlier, farm workers from 16 haciendas in Murcia had also camped out in front of the DAR's provincial office to demand that the land in the two haciendas be distributed to the beneficiaries. Farm workers from the cities of Bago and Talisay also joined the camp-out.

The peasants' protest actions began after tractors owned by the provincial government arrived in February escorted by soldiers and policemen to mow down their farms. The armed men destroyed their farms in a matter of days and fenced the land off with barbed wire.

Militarization has also intensified in the area, simultaneous to offers to each family of P15,000 and a carabao in exchange for abandoning their right to the land. The bribes are being offered by Col. Jon Aying of the 303rd Brigade through the Kasanag Foundation. **AB**



NDFP pays tribute to Bishop Millamena

The National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) rendered highest honors to Supreme Bishop Tomas A. Millamena of the Iglesia Filipina Independiente (IFI) for his staunch advocacy for a just and lasting peace in the Philippines.

He also heroically took a pro-people stand against the anti-people and antinational policies of the US-Aquino regime and earlier reactionary regimes.

The NDFP and the entire revolutionary movement in the Philippines expressed their deep sadness over Bishop Millamena's death on June 1 after a lingering illness.

According to Ka Luis Jalandoni who chairs the NDFP Negotiating Panel, Millamena played a significant role in the NDFP-GPH peace negotiations.

He was the mutually accepted Third Party Depository for de-

positing the photos for the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees (JASIG). He was also an NDFP Nominated Independent Observer in the Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC) under the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL).

Together with the other NDFP Nominated Independent Observers to the JMC, such as Marie Hilao-Enriquez of KARAPATAN, he steadfastly advocated the independent investigation of the numerous extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances and oth-

er human rights violations under the Gloria Arroyo regime.

The NDFP also expressed its gratefulness to Millamena for firmly standing up in support of Prof. Jose Maria Sison in September 2002 when the US imperialists included him in its list of terrorists. He spoke out on Dutch TV and other international media against this.

One of Millamena's latest activities was to participate in mass protest actions to condemn the pork barrel scandal and in support of the victims of the super typhoon Yolanda. The NDFP said he was clearly happy to be with the struggling people fighting for justice.

Later, despite his failing health and inability to attend the peace talks abroad, he would still send text messages to the NDFP Negotiating Panel expressing his wish and desire for the advance of the peace talks. **AB**

Teachers protest as school opens

Hundreds of teachers rallied in Mendiola as school opened on June 2 to air their disappointment at the US-Aquino regime's declaration that the government did not have the funds to raise their salaries this year. Thousands of members and supporters of ACT Teachers likewise rallied in the cities of Baguio, Bacolod and Davao and in Bataan and Pangasinan provinces.

Teachers who taught class wore arm bands signifying their demand for higher wages. The teachers had also rallied on May 19 to condemn Aquino and Department of Budget and Management Sec. Florencio Abad for their role in the pork barrel corruption scandal, where funds for badly needed services like education had been diverted.

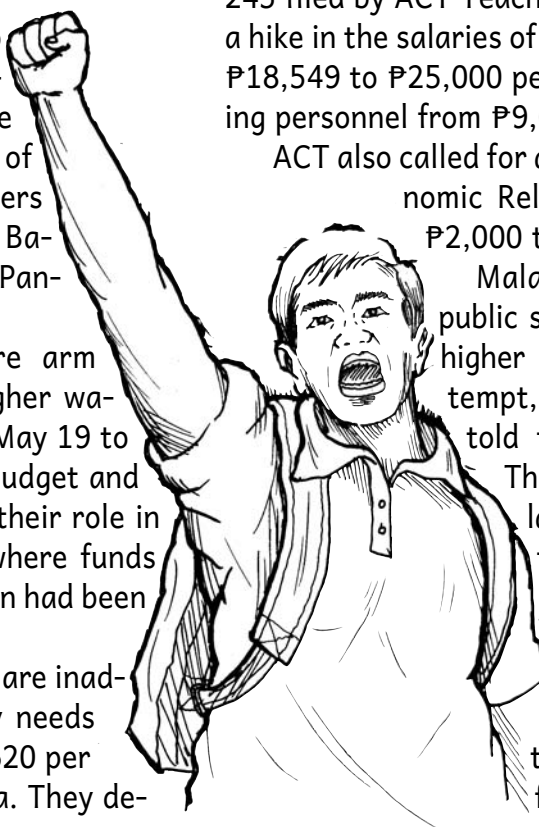
The teachers said that their wages are inadequate, citing statistics that a family needs an estimated ₱1,054 per day or ₱31,620 per month to live decently in Metro Manila. They de-

manded the immediate approval of House Bill (HB) 245 filed by ACT Teachers Partylist which calls for a hike in the salaries of public school teachers from ₱18,549 to ₱25,000 per month, and of non-teaching personnel from ₱9,000 to ₱15,000 per month.

ACT also called for a raise in the Personnel Economic Relief Allowance (PERA) from ₱2,000 to ₱4,000.

Malacañang disregarded the public school teachers' demand for higher salaries. Reeking with contempt, Aquino's officials merely told them to "wait next year."

The government claims that it lacks funds, but the teachers found this unacceptable. They said that the proposed salary increases would only cost the government ₱3.2 billion a year, a far cry from the amount of pork barrel funds held by Aquino. **AB**



Political crisis in Thailand culminates in martial law

The political crisis in Thailand took a turn for the worse when the military seized political power on May 22 through a coup d'etat. Thai Army chief Gen. Prayuth Chan-ocha imposed martial law, resulting in the suspension of civil and political rights.

The military junta used soldiers to suppress demonstrations, arrest protest leaders and ordinary citizens and imprison political leaders and government officials. Television, radio and print media have either been shut down or controlled. The military is also targeting social media users criticizing the ruling junta.

The coup came on the heels of intense protest actions that have been shaking Thailand since November.

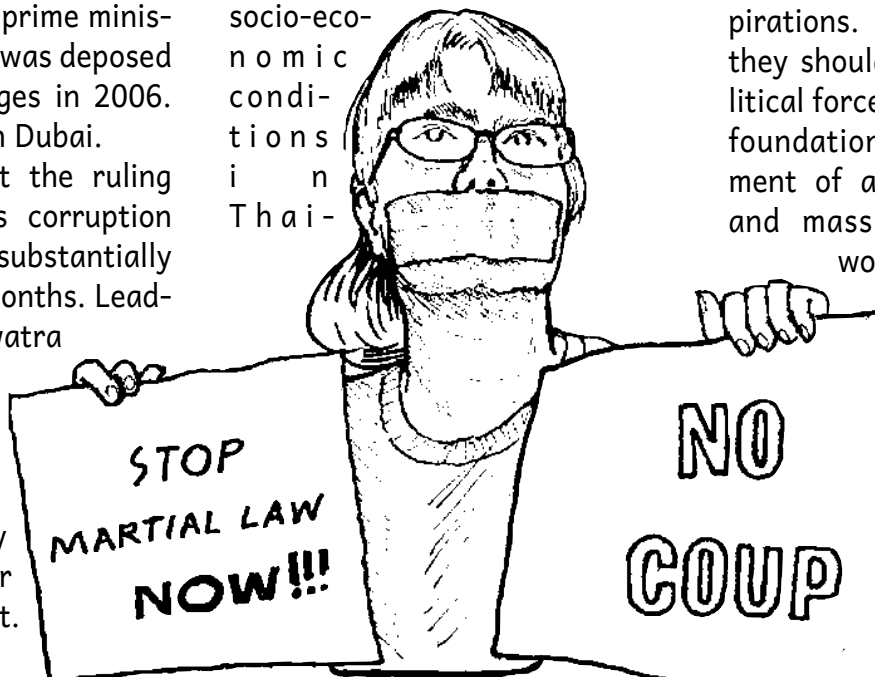
The protests erupted when Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra's government attempted to pass an amnesty law that would have enabled Yingluck's brother Thaksin to come home and be rehabilitated politically. Thaksin is a former prime minister of Thailand who was deposed on corruption charges in 2006. He currently lives in Dubai.

Protests against the ruling Shinawatra clique's corruption and nepotism grew substantially over the next few months. Leaders of anti-Shinawatra factions exploited the crisis by calling for the establishment of a national council where they could play a bigger role in government. The Thai government in turn organized counter-demonstra-

tions. Violent attacks by either side resulted in the deaths of scores of demonstrators.

In a statement, the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) condemned the coup in Thailand, saying that the intense factional rivalries among the ruling classes merely reflected the continuing crisis of the ruling semicolonial and semifeudal system.

From a cursory view, it would seem that the rivalries are confined between anti-Shinawatra ("Yellow Shirts") and pro-Shinawatra ("Red Shirts") forces. In reality, however, the huge protests reflect the disappointment of the broad masses of the people on the prevailing political and socio-economic conditions in Thai-



land.

The toiling masses of Thailand have long been protesting against corruption, low wages, suppression of workers' rights, the rising cost of living, landlessness and rural poverty, among others. The ruling classes have been raising one or a number of these issues to advance their own political agenda, but not the overall democratic aspirations of the Thai people.

The leaders of the military junta describe their rule as a means of resolving the political crisis in Thailand. In fact, the imposition of martial law merely forms part of the worsening crisis of the country's ruling political system. Eventually, military rule will only succeed in pushing the people to launch mass struggles to advance their democratic aspirations.

The CPP urged the people of Thailand to launch mass struggles to resist military rule and advance their democratic, progressive and anti-imperialist aspirations. The CPP added that they should form their own political forces that would serve as foundation for the establishment of a revolutionary party and mass organizations that would advance the genuine interests of the Thai people.

Thailand is a country in Southeast Asia that lies more than 2,000 kilometers northwest of the Philippines. It has a land area of 530,000 square kilometers and a population of 66 million. AB