

ANG

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

# Bayan

English Edition  
Vol XLVI No. 2  
January 21, 2015  
www.philippinerevolution.net

Editorial

## Dismantle and end privatization!

The Filipino people suffer from ever heavier burdens due to the series of hikes in fees and expenses. The huge MRT and LRT fare hikes, the water rate hike and the impending power rate hike are but the latest burdens to be heaped anew by the US-Aquino regime on the Filipino people's shoulders. They come on top of the already spiraling costs of education, medical care, communications, housing and other social services and infrastructure.

The higher fees and costs now confronting the people are the result of close to three decades of the privatization and deregulation of key social infrastructure. Enterprises that used to be state-owned and run by the government, funded by public funds and declared to be serving the "social interest" are now run by a handful of big comprador bourgeoisie and their foreign big capitalist partners in the name of profit without any obligation whatsoever to protect the people's interests.

In exchange for credit, the

International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other imperialist agencies imposed on the Philippines at the close of the 1980s the policies of privatization and deregulation—meaning the removal of state controls on services and utilities to give way to big foreign capitalist and bourgeois comprador investment and management. They took advantage of the Filipino people's anger at the bureaucrat capitalist Marcos dictatorship and its minions who enriched themselves by running state enterprises in order to make privatization palatable to the public.

The lofty promise of privatization's apologists was to create a "lev-

el playing field" to attract investments, promote competition and reduce prices for the people. Through the "build-operate-transfer," "public-private partnership" and various other schemes, privatization and deregulation were enforced in almost all fields of social and economic life.

Water distribution, power generation and distribution, roads, hospitals and universities or parts thereof were privatized, as were vast public landholdings, telecommunications and postal services, and the companies Petron, Philippine National Bank, Philippine Airlines and other enterprises established, owned or run by the state. The biggest enterprises fell into the hands of the biggest bourgeois compradors in the Philippines, among them Lucio Tan, the Ayalas, Lopezes, Cojuangcos, Sys and eventually the Pangilinan group and their foreign big capitalist partners.

The privatization process in the Philippines is fraught with corruption. High-ranking government officials always line their pockets full whenever state properties are put on the auction block and government enters into private investment contracts. Sometimes, such corruption is exposed when the rival political party takes power—not to get rid of corruption but to forge new contracts, fa-



vor other businessmen and pocket their own share of the loot.

No less than the Filipino people's close to 30 years' experience with unbridled privatization puts to the lie the claims and promises of privatization. Wherever privatization reigned, social services and public infrastructure became commercial ventures whose main goal was to rake in profits for big capitalists. Services that used to be affordable are now practically beyond the reach of the Filipino toiling masses who comprise the majority.

Many of such public infrastructure were built and funded by the ruling state in order to facilitate the flow of commerce and production for the local ruling classes and foreign big capitalists.

Because they were funded by public monies, these formerly state-owned enterprises were categorized as "publicly owned" and their operations deemed as "public service." During the US-Marcos dictatorship, a number of private enterprises were "na-

tionalized" and controlled by Marcos and his cronies using public funds. To conceal the corruption, they were hailed as enterprises run "in the public interest." On the other hand, because they were run "in the public interest" and with the use of public monies, they were obliged by the people to operate and provide services affordable to ordinary folk.

Within the framework of nationalizing public enterprises, infrastructure and services, the democratic forces are fighting for the allocation of bigger public funds to enable these entities to provide quality and affordable services to the people. They resist commercialization, or running these entities in order for the state to earn profits, and regard operating at a loss as necessary investment for the greater social good. They likewise expose and resist bureaucrat capitalist management and fight for more democratic means of managing enterprises, infrastructure and public services.

Privatization has done away


with the "public interest" aspect. Because they are funded by private capital (although mainly through state-guaranteed loans), there is a demand to run privatized entities "efficiently and profitably." The so-called "user-pay" principle has been forced into the picture to justify all-out commercial operations and wanton hikes in fees and expenditures.

It is right and just for the Filipino people to demand the renewed nationalization or state control of infrastructure and services being utilized by, and of benefit to, the people and that facilitate the flow of commerce and production. It is right for the people to demand an end to contracts with private companies that have been granted concessions for water and power distribution, telecommunications, hospitals and universities or granted contracts to use public land or extract mineral or oil resources.

The people can fight for the renationalization of transport, energy and petroleum companies and others that play a significant role in economic affairs and people's livelihoods.

They must likewise resist policies that call for national budgetary cuts in much-needed social services such as health and education. Year after year, the reactionary government has been allotting woefully inadequate funds for public universities and hospitals. In accordance with the principle that the bulk of public funds must be allocated to the majority, the people must thoroughly resist the allotment of more than a third of the government's annual budget to service debts to foreign banks.

In the particular case of the LRT, MRT and other public transport systems, the people

 <p>Vol XLVI No. 2 January 21, 2015</p> <p><i>Ang Bayan</i> is published in Pilipino, Bisaya, Iloko, Hiligaynon, Waray and English editions.</p> <p>It is available for downloading at the Philippine Revolution Web Central located at:</p> <p><a href="http://www.philippinerevolution.org">www.philippinerevolution.org</a>.</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><a href="mailto:angbayan@yahoo.com">angbayan@yahoo.com</a></p>	<p><b>Contents</b></p> <p><b>Editorial:</b> Dismantle and end privatization <b>1</b></p> <p>"User-pay" is contrary to public service <b>3</b></p> <p>Cancel the water privatization contracts <b>4</b></p> <p>Suppressing the truth <b>5</b></p> <p>Filipino people welcome Pope's support <b>6</b></p> <p>NDF-NEMR cancels release of 3 POWs <b>6</b></p> <p>Advances in Mindoro in 2014 <b>6</b></p> <p>NDFP consultant illegally arrested <b>7</b></p> <p>The US war of aggression in Mindanao <b>7</b></p> <p>.45 caliber pistol: Anti-Moro weapon <b>8</b></p> <p>Contractualization at Franklin Baker <b>8</b></p> <p>Racist and religious repression in Europe <b>9</b></p>
<p><i>Ang Bayan</i> is published fortnightly by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines</p>	

would do right by demanding that these be placed under full state control. It is to the Filipino people's interest to cancel the contracts with the Ayalas and Pangilins that grant them the right to control the operations of the metrotrains for 50 years—and this includes the right to hike fares on an annual basis. They must also demand an end to contracts privatizing water distribution in various parts of the country.

The nationalization of public services and utilities must be demanded by the Filipino people in the face of the ever worsening social and economic crisis. It is just for the people to fight for the nationalization of these entities to ensure decent standards of living for everyone. Under the present ruling semicolonial and semifeudal system, they must likewise fight for the democratic management of these enterprises to prevent them from becoming instruments of bureaucrat capitalist enrichment.

These people's democratic demands are part of the agenda in the peace talks between the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) and the Government of the Republic of the Philippines.

State ownership and control over the biggest and key industries, land and natural resources, infrastructure and services are critical aspects of the social and economic programs of the Party and the NDFP. Through all this, the proletariat and the democratic government would have the power to plan the production and distribution of wealth for the benefit of all and ensure that everyone has work and is provided free education and health services within the frame of a dynamic, progressive and modern society. **AB**

## "User-pay" scheme contrary to public service

An order issued by the Department of Transportation and Communications (DOTC) on January 4 invoked the "user-pay" scheme to justify the LRT-1, LRT-2 and MRT fare hikes. The "user-pay" scheme which involves direct payment by consumers for social services availed of, instead of the people collectively paying through the state, is contrary to the principle of the state providing services to the people. The "user-pay principle" lies at the core of privatization and is now being enforced in other services that have been privatized, like water, power and highways (through toll fees).

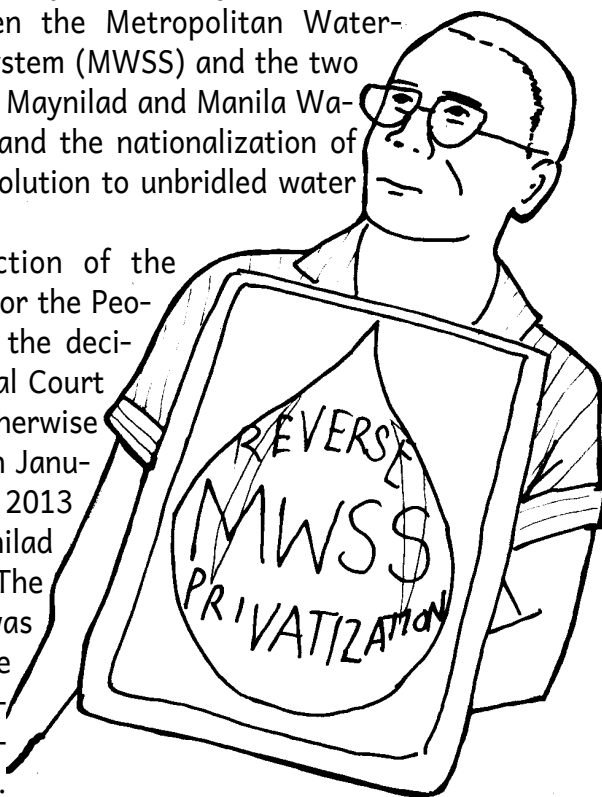
In the case of the MRT/LRT and other infrastructure under the Aquino regime's Public-Private Partnership program, "user-pay" brazenly enjoys guarantees under the lopsided contracts entered into by the regime with favored local and foreign capitalists.

The Aquino regime does not conceal the fact that it is this scheme that is behind the removal of "subsidies" to the LRT/MRT that used to cover the shortfalls in the incomes of private concessionaires and managers under the Build-Operate-Transfer and Build-Lease-Transfer schemes of previous regimes. The Aquino government's aim is to completely pass on to consumers the burden of defraying the cost of running the trains and the private companies managing them, with the bulk going to debt service. In the MRT's case, an estimated 81% of the company's total expenses goes to debt service. In the case of the LRT-1 and LRT-2, debt service comprises up to 47% of expenditures. **AB**

## Cancel the water privatization contracts!

The people are urgently demanding an end to the Concession Agreement between the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) and the two private concessionaires Maynilad and Manila Water. Instead, they demand the nationalization of water services as the solution to unbridled water rate hikes.

This was the reaction of the broad coalition Water for the People Network (WPN) to the decision of the International Court of Arbitration (ICA) [otherwise known as The Court] on January 5 rescinding MWSS' 2013 ruling that barred Maynilad from raising its rates. The WPN charged that it was useless to propose amendments to the contracts with the two private concessionaires.



The privatization contracts have completely done away with public control and regulation of water services.

The ICA's arbitration proceedings were all for show. Long before the ruling came out, Maynilad was sure that by petitioning the ICA, it would be able to go through with its water rate hike. This is because the ICA is nothing but an instrument to resolve contractual obstacles in favor of big business and make sure that arbitration decisions are carried out.

In the case of Maynilad's petition at the ICA, two out of three of the committee members who issued the decision came from the ranks of big business—the representatives of Maynilad and the ICA.

There was no representative from the consumers' sector.

Maynilad's newest water rate hike comes to ₱3.06 per cubic meter, equivalent to a 9.8% increase. The ICA is likewise expected to rule in favor of Manila Water which has a similar petition pending with The Court.

Due to the ICA decision, a previous order by the MWSS directing the two companies to reduce their water tariffs by ₱0.29 per cubic meter for Maynilad and ₱1.45 per cubic meter for Manila Water up to 2017 can no longer be enforced. These increases stem from anomalous charges imposed on the consumers, such as income taxes, advertising costs, donations and other company expenses. **AB**

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## Suppressing the truth during Pope Francis' visit

**T**he US-Aquino regime attempted to obscure the real conditions of Philippine society during the January 15-19 visit to the country of Pope Francis, the highest-ranking leader of the Roman Catholic Church.

The Aquino regime abused its power in the name of "security." Since January 16, the regime imposed restrictions on telecommunications and the right to assembly. It also barred various sectors from speaking about important issues confronting the Filipino people.

On January 15, military forces in Leyte detained a number of nuns belonging to the Sisters Association of Mindanao (Samin) involved in relief work in Tanauan, Leyte. The military branded them as members of the New People's Army despite their coordination with the archbishop of Palo regarding their relief work among survivors of super typhoon Yolanda.

Numerous police forces were also deployed to Samar and Leyte and Philippine Army troops from the AFP Southern Luzon Command likewise beefed

up forces of the 8th Infantry Division. Clearly, the objective was to stop organized gatherings by people wanting to air their grievances regarding the incompetence, criminal negligence and widespread corruption surrounding relief and rehabilitation work for Yolanda victims. Days before the Roman Catholic pontiff's arrival in Leyte, the military set up checkpoints to restrict vehicles bearing Yolanda victims affiliated with the People Surge Alliance going to Tacloban.

Earlier, the Aquino regime had already been suppressing human rights advocacy groups, relatives and friends of 491 political prisoners detained at the PNP jail in Bicutan, Taguig City and more than 40 other detention facilities nationwide. The sinister objective was to prevent the political prisoners who

were on hunger strike and have long been victims of injustice from catching Pope Francis' attention.

Organized groups, including priests, nuns and other church people were unable to attend the mass held at the Manila Cathedral on January 16 after being blocked, with some of them detained by the police. Their simple wish was to make known to Pope Francis the burning social and economic issues distressing the workers, peasants, the unemployed, the youth, women and other oppressed sectors of Philippine society.

The Aquino regime's policies and measures to suppress the truth were desperate attempts to show a positive but false image of the Philippines. In fact, after close to five years of the Aquino regime, the people's poverty, oppression and exploitation have worsened. State forces continue to violate civil and political rights with impunity. The country's semicolonial status is likewise deepening. **AB**

# The Filipino people welcome Pope Francis' support for their struggle

The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) hailed Pope Francis' statements supportive of the Filipino people's struggles for social change.

The CPP took note of the Pope's call to "break the bonds of injustice and oppression" that give rise to "scandalous social inequalities" and the maintenance of structures that "perpetuate poverty and the exclusion of the poor."

The CPP said that these aspirations lie at the core of the Filipino people's revolutionary struggle. Semicolonial and semi-feudal social structures continue to subject the broad masses of the Filipino people to grave exploitation and oppression and suppress their democratic rights and liberties.

Pope Francis' calls to address the structural roots of the crisis pose a challenge to advocates of peace and justice to more vigorously push the Aquino regime to engage in serious peace negotiations that address the socio-economic roots of the armed conflict.

In a meeting with Pope Fran-

cis on January 18, leaders of different religions asked for his support for the resumption of peace talks between the NDFP and the Government of the Philippines. The CPP said that the revolutionary forces are always ready to engage in peace negotiations as a means of attaining just and lasting peace.

The people likewise welcomed Pope Francis' call to fight corruption and put an end to policies that create widespread unemployment and push the people to leave their loved ones behind and work overseas.

His concern for victims of natural calamities and condemnation of the snail-paced and corruption-ridden delivery of relief and emergency services struck a deep chord among Filipinos in the face of the Aquino regime's criminal negligence and corruption.

Meanwhile, Supreme Bishop Ephraim Fajutagana of the Iglesia Filipina Independiente and other religious leaders passed on to Pope Francis a letter of

appeal from political prisoners who have been on hunger strike in various detention centers nationwide since January 10. The Aquino regime had imposed a news blackout and barred lawyers, doctors, the media and others from visiting them.

**Challenge to Filipino church people.** The

CPP said that long before the Pope's challenge for the religious to go to the poor and the oppressed, many Filipino church people have already been working with the oppressed and downtrodden masses and helping strengthen their spirits as they advance their cause for national and social liberation.

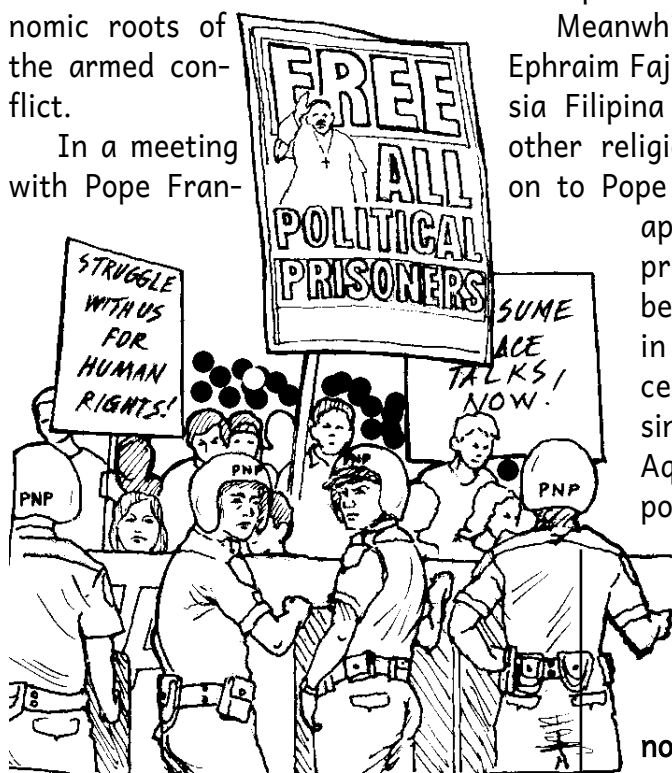
In a statement, the Christians for National Liberation (CNL), the underground national-democratic mass organization of church people and one of the NDFP's allied organizations, hailed Pope Francis' call to Catholics to lead lives of simplicity and service to the poor.

The CNL called for greater efforts in arousing, organizing and mobilizing church people to heed the urgent demand to oust the landlord president.

Amid the grave sufferings of the Filipino people, more and more young priests, nuns and other church workers are seeking to integrate themselves with the peasants in their struggle for land, with the national minorities in defending their ancestral land and with the mass of workers in their struggle for higher wages and job security.

The CPP, the NPA and the people's revolutionary forces welcome young church people in their quest to work with the Filipino people to attain justice and peace.

They boldly continue the revolutionary tradition of the Filipino clergy set forth by the Gomburza martyrs. They draw inspiration from the courageous struggle of the Filipino masses as well as from the martyrdom of Fr. Pops Tentorio, Fr. Frank Navarro, Fr. Zacarias Agatep, Fr. Nilo Valerio and scores of other church people who made the ultimate sacrifice in choosing a life of service to the people.



# NDF-NEMR cancels release of 3 POWs

The National Democratic Front in Northeastern Mindanao Region (NDF-NEMR) was forced to postpone the scheduled release on January 17 of three prisoners of war being held by the New People's Army (NPA) due to the Armed Forces of the Philippines' (AFP) refusal to temporarily put a stop to military operations in two villages.

In an open letter to the relatives and friends of PO3 Democrito B. Polvorosa, PO1 Jorie M. Amper and PO3 Marichel U. Contemplo, to the Third Party Facilitator and to the people, the NDF-NEMR explained that it had requested the AFP for a suspension of military operations in Barangays Sico-sico and Caman-anan in Gigaquit town, Surigao del Norte for the safe and orderly release of the three prisoners and to avoid possible clashes between the NPA and the soldiers, but this was refused by Brig. Gen. Jonathan Ponce, 402nd Infantry Brigade chief.

Earlier, the revolutionary movement in Mindanao had released four prisoners of war in December. Cpl. Benjamin Samano and Pfc. Alvin Ricarte were released in Montevista, Compostela Valley on December 21 while Pfc. Marnel Cinches and Pfc. Jerrel Yorong were released in Malaybalay, Bukidnon on December 26 (not in Marihatag, Surigao del Sur, as was previously reported in *AB*).

Meanwhile, Jose Mervin Coquilla, jail warden of the Compostela Valley Provincial Rehabilitation Center was released on humanitarian grounds. Coquilla, who was arrested on December 23, was released in a remote area of Compostela Valley on January 19. The NDF-Southern Mindanao said it suspended judicial proceedings against Coquilla in response to calls from his family and out of consideration for Pope Francis' visit to the Philippines. The NPA transferred custody over Coquilla to Mayor Rodrigo Duterte of Davao City. AB

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## Advances in Mindoro in 2014

The Party leadership and the entire revolutionary movement in Mindoro island are confident of achieving greater victories as they enter 2015 and heed the call to contribute to completing the requisites for reaching the stage of strategic stalemate. In this regard, they are marking the 46th anniversary of the Communist Party of the Philippines' reestablishment by summing up experiences and revolutionary work to use these as bases for their programs, tasks and rectification.

In the previous year, the Party, people's army and all the revolutionary forces in the island fervently fulfilled their tasks of advancing the armed struggle, building the mass base and advancing agrarian revolution amid the worsening political and economic crisis in the country.

A number of successful tactical offensives were launched in Mindoro, the most striking of which was the victorious raid on the Paluan, Occidental Mindoro municipal hall on November 7 that yielded 20 high-powered firearms—enough to arm an additional platoon of Red fighters.

Attritive military actions were likewise launched against operating troops of the 4th and 76th IB, 21st Division Reconnaissance Company and the PNP Regional Public Safety Battalion, inflicting major damage to their operations. The NPA makes sure that every time the enemy penetrates the revolutionary bases, they are fired upon by sniper and sapper teams. A number of enemy intelligence agents who served as obstacles to revolutionary work and were banes to the masses were likewise meted punishment, as were bad elements repudiated by the people and class enemies violating the

people's rights and destroying the environment.

Breakthroughs in consolidating the mass base were achieved in Mindoro, such as the conduct of a conference of additional full-fledged mass organizations, building branch groups as well as Party Branches. Experiences in waging agrarian revolution were summed up to ensure that victories are continually protected and preserved. The Basic Party Course was given and supplemented with other studies. Groups and committees of the peasantry, women, youth and national minorities were further consolidated through their participation in various economic, political and cultural tasks. The enemy's military and psywar operations failed to prevent the conduct of these activities.

There are continuing struggles in Mindoro to defend both the ancestral land of national

minorities and land long occupied and developed by settlers. About a thousand peasant and minority families till about a thousand hectares of land, exercising self-management in developing the land and addressing their needs. New forms and tactics of land-grabbing such as the National Greening Program and energy projects such as mines, hydrothermal, geothermal and wind projects are clearly threats to the people's security, livelihoods and rights. They do not resolve the masses' basic problems but cause greater suffering and poverty. The people are duty-bound to fight for the land being seized from them due to these pretexts.

Said the Party committee in Mindoro, they achieved their gains due to the Party's correct leadership and adherence to basic revolutionary principles. AB

## NDFP consultant illegally arrested

State security forces illegally arrested Rogelio Posadas, a peace talks consultant of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP). Posadas was arrested by elements of the 67th IB in Barangay Punao, San Carlos City, Negros Occidental. He is currently held at the Philippine National Police detention center in Cadiz City, in the same province.

In a statement, NDFP chief negotiator Ka Luis Jalandoni roundly assailed the illegal arrest. Posadas was issued NDFP Document Identification No. ND978313 under the name Angel Jose. A Letter of Acknowledgment had also been issued by Silvestre H. Bello III, who chaired the GPH Negotiation Panel during the Ramos regime. Posadas is therefore covered by the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees (JASIG).

Jalandoni demanded that the Aquino government release Posadas and 14 other NDFP consultants who are likewise being illegally detained. He said this was the GPH's obligation under the JASIG, the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL) and other existing bilateral peace agreements. AB

## The US war of aggression in Mindanao (1899-1913)

*Ang Bayan is reprinting this article, which first appeared in its March 2002 issue. It is the fourth in a series of articles reminding readers of the heinous crimes perpetrated by US troops in the Philippines. The first three articles were about US crimes under the Military Bases Agreement and the Visiting Forces Agreement, and in Luzon and the Visayas during the US war of aggression.*

To be able to concentrate their forces on Luzon and the Visayas, the American colonialists deceived the Sultan of Sulu into signing the Bates Agreement of 1899 that declared US sovereignty over the island of Jolo. With the defeat of major sections of revolutionary resistance in Luzon, the US unilaterally scrapped the agreement in 1904 and declared total war on Mindanao.

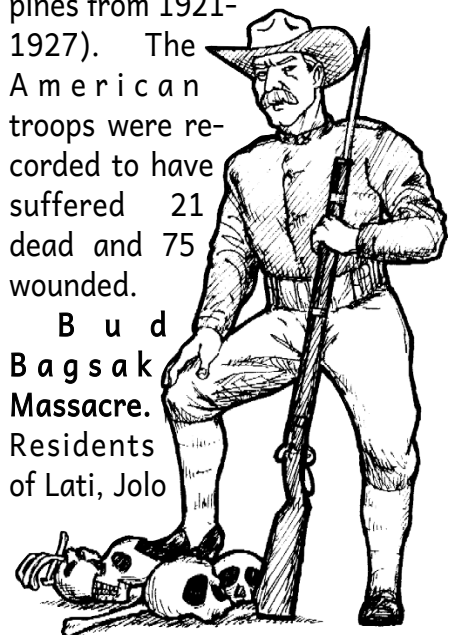
Moro warriors and the people of Mindanao gallantly resisted the American troops. Because of their superiority in both the number and quality of their weaponry, the American soldiers

were able to put down the resistance, but not before suffering major losses themselves. In retaliation, entire communities were massacred by US troops. Among the most infamous of these incidents are the following:

**Bud Dajo Massacre.** Up to 900 persons died in a three-day attack by the Americans on the entrance to Bud Dajo volcano in Jolo where Tausug resistance fighters had entrenched themselves from March 5-7, 1906. Most of the dead, including children and women, were riddled with bullets. According to someone who saw the bodies, many of them were hit more than 50

times. The Tausug, who were armed only with kris, spears and a few rifles, were no match to the US troops who were supported by cannons from their navy. Gen. Leonard Wood instructed the two battalions under his command to kill or capture the Tausug. (General Wood became governor-general of the Philippines from 1921-1927). The American troops were recorded to have suffered 21 dead and 75 wounded.

**Bud Bagsak Massacre.** Residents of Lati, Jolo



entrenched themselves from January to June 1913 in formidable fortresses in the mountains of Jolo. US troops launched a series of attacks on the fortresses until they reached the entrenchment at Mt. Bagsak. On June 11, 1913, Gen. John Pershing ordered an attack on the fortress. Up to 2,000 persons died, including 196 women and 340 children. Although the incident was exposed in the media and assailed by the American people, Pershing was never punished.

**Massacre in Talipao.** Residents of Talipao, Jolo opposed paying taxes (such as the *cedula* tax and toll fees for the use of roads) to the US. They entrenched themselves at Mt. Talipao and on August 13, 1913, were attacked and defeated by American troops. This being the last major act of resistance by the Moro, the US declared an end to its war on Mindanao. AB

## .45 caliber pistol: Anti-Moro weapon



The .45 caliber semi-automatic pistol was created in 1911 because American soldiers needed a more powerful assault weapon against the so-called "huramentado." "Huramentado" was the pejorative term given to Moro who, armed only with knives, would attack American soldiers. They were ready to give up their lives rather than be enslaved by the imperialists. The Moro warriors would bind their joints to prevent bleeding should they be hit in the arm or leg. Thus, they would not weaken and could continue attacking the persons shooting at them. With such determination shown by the Moro warriors, they could not be felled by lower caliber Springfield and Krag rifles and revolvers, which were the standard issue then for American soldiers. Consequently, many American officers and men died in the hands of the valiant Moro. AB

## Workers resist contractualization at Franklin Baker

Workers of Franklin Baker Company picketed on January 8 to condemn the contractualization being enforced by the company on its more than 1,000 workers, many of whom have been working at the company factory in Sta. Cruz, Davao del Sur for more than ten years.

The factory exclusively supplied desiccated coconut to Franklin Baker before it was formally purchased by the company in May 2014. Prior to this, it was run by B/L Investment Inc., Golden White Coco Traders and Mactan. To evade its responsibility to confer regular status to its workers, Franklin Baker transformed the three exclusive suppliers into manpower agencies, retaining their status as "employers" while ownership of the factory was transferred to Franklin Baker.

According to the Samahan ng Manggagawang Kontraktwal (SAMA-AKO), an association of workers within the factory, Franklin Baker and its three "suppliers" connived to evade

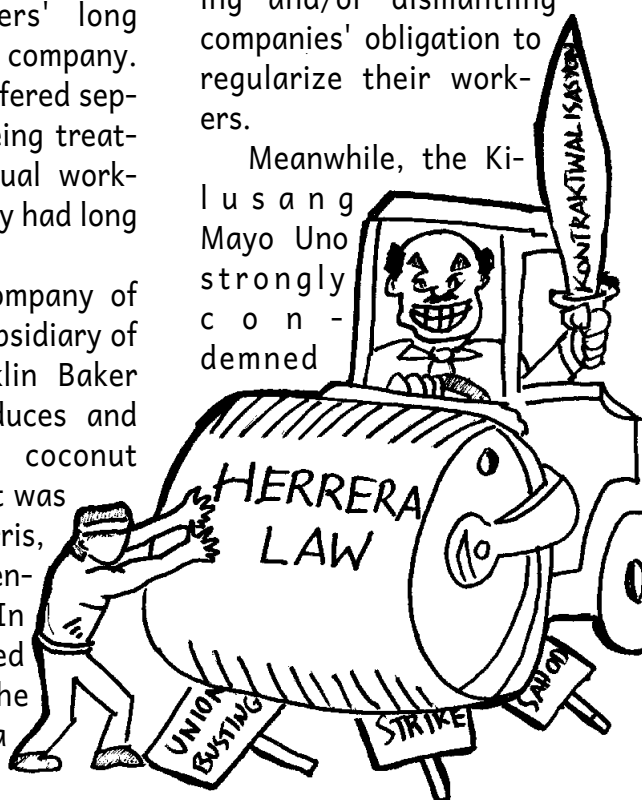
their obligation to regularize the factory workers. SAMA-AKO charged that Franklin Baker disregarded the workers' long years of service to the company. They were not even offered separation pay before being treated as "new contractual workers" in the factory they had long been working in.

Franklin Baker Company of the Philippines is a subsidiary of the US-owned Franklin Baker Company which produces and exports desiccated coconut worldwide. In 1987, it was acquired by Phillip Morris, which then owned General Foods and Kraft. In 2005, Kraft transferred management of the company to Andorra

Investments Corporation.

Franklin Baker's underhanded maneuvers were made easy due to Department Order 18-A issued by the Department of Labor and Employment which allows the use of labor and manpower agencies in circumventing and/or dismantling companies' obligation to regularize their workers.

Meanwhile, the Kilusang Mayo Uno strongly condemned





a statement by PMFTC Inc., a cigarette manufacturing company owned by Lucio Tan announcing the mass termination of 640 workers at its plant in Parang, Marikina City allegedly due to its shrinking share of the market. PMFTC Inc. was formed after the 2010 merger of Fortune Tobacco

Corporation and Phillip Morris International's subsidiary in the country. It manufactures more than three billion cigarette sticks annually under famous brand names like Marlboro, L&M, Fortune, Champion and Hope, and controls 90% of the cigarette market. AB

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## Racist and religious repression imposed in Europe

**R**enewed repression is sweeping France and the neighboring countries of Belgium and Germany, all in the name of "anti-terrorism" and with the governments of these countries invoking the heinous killing of journalists at *Charlie Hebdo*, a publication based in Paris, France.

On January 7, brothers Chérif and Saïd Kouachi attacked the press office of *Charlie Hebdo*. Among the 12 people killed were the magazine's editor and cartoonist. Scores were likewise wounded. After three days, the Kouachi brothers were cornered and killed. They both claimed to be "Islamic fighters" and members of Islamic State, an Islamic group based mainly along the Syrian-Iraqi-Turkish border areas.

*Charlie Hebdo* is a weekly satirical magazine that specializes in ridiculing religion, politics and other public figures. For the past few years, it has been publishing articles and cartoons ridiculing and insulting Islam and other religions as well as minorities and other colored peoples in France. *Charlie Hebdo* provoked widespread anger, especially from Muslims in France and other areas of the globe.

The Communist Party of the

Philippines joined the widespread condemnation of the killing of the journalists of *Charlie Hebdo*. On the one hand, the magazine deserves criticism and must be taken to task for fueling chauvinism and insulting religions and entire communities. But making it a target of armed attacks can never be acceptable.

After the killings, the US, Germany, the UK and other imperialist countries hypocritically condemned them, even if their own armed forces are involved in systematic killings and violence against civilians in Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, Pakistan and Nigeria. Concomitant to these attacks are racist and religious profiling of Muslims as targets of the "war against terror." It is US imperialism that is at the forefront of the tide of reactionary racist and religious fanaticism which justifies the use of violence against unarmed people.

Worse, France and other European states are currently exploiting the killings and the people's widespread condemnation for them by further suppressing Muslim minorities in their respective countries. Thousands of armed forces have been deployed to the streets of Paris, France, and even in Belgium and Germany to conduct wave upon wave of attacks against Islamic groups allegedly connected to Islamic State. The "war against terror," racism and discrimination have attained renewed frenzy in an attempt to justify the use of force and deflect the people's attention from the crisis of capitalism in their respective countries. AB

