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Editorial

End neoliberal policies!

It is right to confront the upcoming leaders' meeting of Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) members with the Filipino people's strongest protest. They must hold the APEC accountable for serving as an instrument since 1993 of US imperialism and other imperialist countries in railroading neoliberal policies.

The scourge and damage caused by three decades of neoliberal policies on the Philippine economy and the livelihood of the Filipino people are unprecedented. These are the policies pushed and upheld by APEC, in partnership with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, as well as with the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the World Trade Organization (WTO).

These policies aim to intensify the exploitation of the working class and the toiling masses, and the dismantling of measures that protect the national patrimony of backward semicolonial countries.

Neoliberal policies were carried out in the Philippines through governments that toed the US line since the early 1980s. Not a single regime stood contrary to US imperialist impositions; instead they have been outdoing each other in leaving a legacy as the most ardent advocate of neoliberalism.

All past governments implemented widespread liberalization in trade and investments; privatization of enterprises and public service; deregulation and giving capitalists

full-freedom to accumulate maximum profits; and denationalization policies that favor the entry and operation of foreign big capitalists.

Tariffs on imported commodities were reduced or completely eradicated, together with the removal of quantitative restrictions resulting in the dumping of surplus commodities in the country. Laws and orders that took advantage of loopholes in the reactionary 1987 constitution were passed to allow foreign investors to own up to 100% of enterprises that operate in the Philippines and plunder the country's mineral and other natural resources.

Policies to attract foreign investors were prioritized. Vast enclaves

were cleared as myriad incentives were offered to entice foreign investors to locate their factories there. Policies prohibiting unions and other restrictions were put into effect. Foreign capitalist investors could easily come and go.

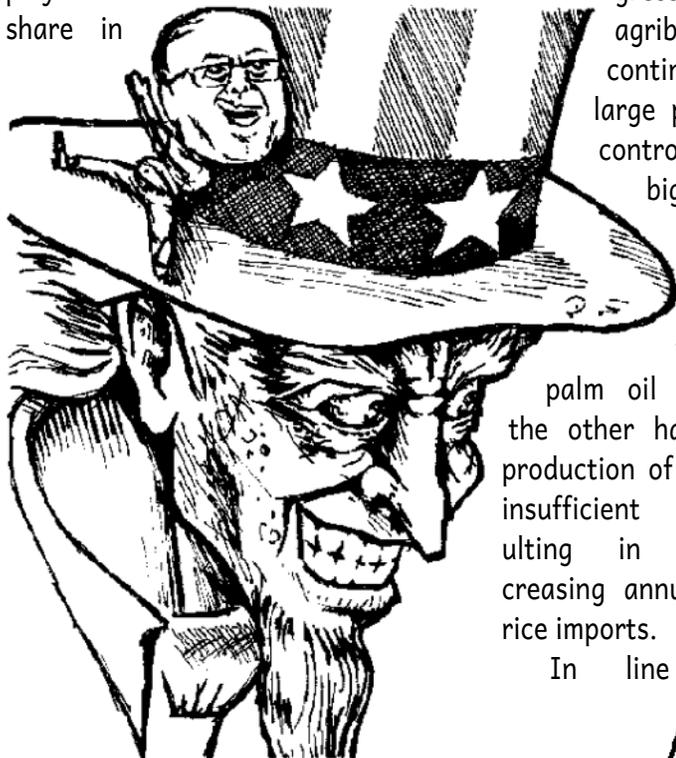
Under neoliberalism, exploitation of workers became more relentless. Various policies giving big capitalists all-out freedom to exploit cheap labor of Filipino workers were issued. The national minimum wage was dismantled and contractualization and other forms of flexible labor were promoted. The coercive instruments of the state were used to suppress the workers' organized strength.

Production inside the enclaves are part of the global chain of pro-



duction of multinational corporations. They bring in capital where labor is cheap. They push for neoliberal policies to allow the easy transfer of capital.

These are disjointed from and do not contribute to local manufacturing and industries. In fact, over the past three decades, the Philippine manufacturing sector has shrunk. Over this period, employment share in



the sector is stagnant at 15% even as its capacity to generate new employment remained weak.

The number of new jobs generated over the past five years is the lowest in the past four decades. Last year, more workers found jobs overseas than within the country. This proves the continuing stagnation of the local economy.

Foreign big capitalists are aggressively venturing into agribusiness. There is continued expansion of large plantations and land controlled by such foreign big companies as Dole and Del Monte. They are also pushing for the conversion of vast lands into palm oil plantations. On the other hand, local production of rice is insufficient resulting in increasing annual rice imports.

In line



with neoliberalism, the budget for social services such as education, health, public utilities and infrastructure were subjected to privatization. Instead of serving public welfare, water and electricity distribution, as well as hospitals and schools, roads and trains were operated in the interest of profits. These have become a heavier burden on the Filipino people.

Widespread unemployment, low wages, contractualization and other vicious forms of exploiting workers, skyrocketing prices of commodities, land grabbing, inadequate and deteriorating social services and other problems have worsened as direct consequences of these policies.

The Filipino people must hold US imperialism, all its hegemonic instruments such as the APEC and all puppet regimes accountable for carrying out liberalization, privatization, deregulation and denationalization under the neoliberal doctrine.

The three decades of neoliberal policies have plunged the Philippines deeper into the semi-colonial and semifeudal system. The people must repudiate all neoliberal policies and their advocates.

The poverty and sufferings these have brought the Filipino people further underscore the need to put an end to the rotten ruling system through revolutionary struggle. The Filipino people must continue to amplify their clamor for genuine land reform and national industrialization as key in lifting the country and the people from crisis and poverty. **AB**



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Manilakbayan 2015: Journey of the Lumad

The Manilakbayan continues to gain victories on the second week of its journey.

The struggle of the Lumad and peoples of Mindanao gained more support from various sectors in the National Capital Region and other parts of the country that they passed through.

About 700 peasants, youth, women, human rights advocates and other sectors from Mindanao traveled through Visayas and Luzon to amplify to the entire country their clamor for justice and for an end to the killings and plunder in Mindanao.

The journey started with a send-off rite called "Panubad-tubad", a Lumad ritual asking for guidance and protection. Their journey featured marches, caravans, programs and welcoming activities.

The people of Surigao City, Tacloban City, Gubat (Sorsogon), Tabugon (Camarines Norte), Lucena City, Los Baños and Calamba City in Laguna, Alabang and Baclaran welcomed them militantly. Wherever

they marched, they found solidarity with the people on such common issues as poverty brought about by landlessness, unjust wages, mass displacement and other social issues.

Students from different universities in the countries' capital warmly welcomed the Manilakbayan participants. Political prisoners in Camp Bagong Diwa, Bicutan, Taguig City also expressed their support.

The University of the Philippines campus in Diliman, Quezon City provided them accommodations for a week. UP students and teachers together with other sectors showed their support for the Lumad. Different activities were held to share their experiences, their plight and aspirations.

Many groups devoted their time to integrate with and listen to the Lumad people. Manilakbayan delegates shared stories of Lumads' courage in confronting intensifying militarization. They unmasked the real aim of state violence against them, which is to subject their ancestral land to plunder by big mining companies and plantations.

Intensified military violence has forced some 40,000 Lumads to leave their communities. As much as 63 Lumad leaders and activists have been persecuted. Close to 250 community leaders are facing trumped-up charges filed by the

Aquino regime. As many as 95 Lumad schools are under attack by military forces and paramilitary groups.

After a week's stay in the UP campus, Manilakbayan participants marched to Liwasang Bonifacio. They will be staying there in the next few days to share experiences with other sectors.

Manilakbayan will be joining the protest rally against the APEC meeting in Manila.

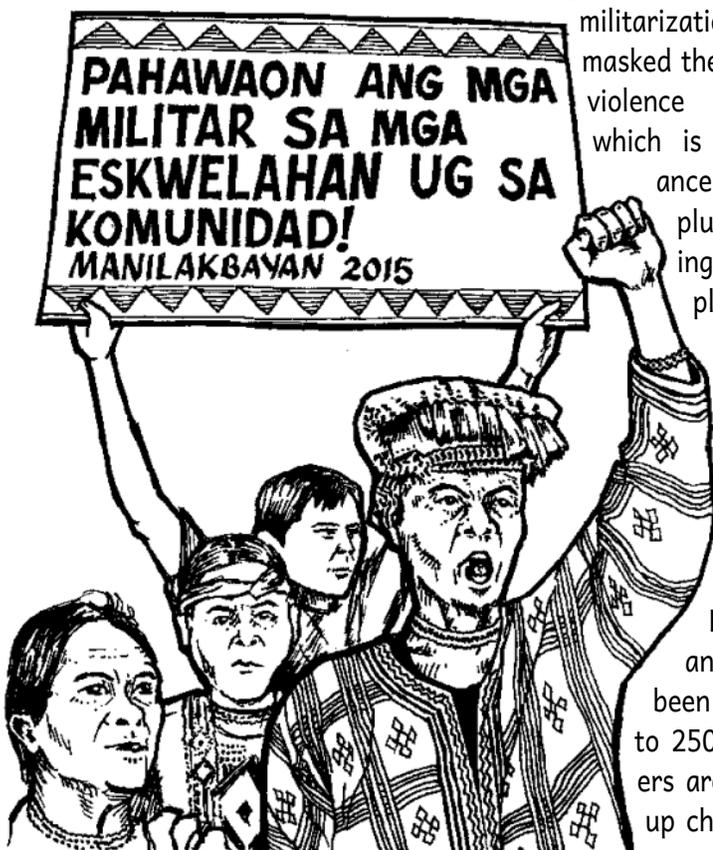
Suppressing anti-APEC protest actions

The Aquino regime is mobilizing a large number of its police force to suppress protest actions on the APEC leaders' meeting to be held on November 18-19. Aside from the 2,500 Metropolitan Manila Development Authority personnel, they will be assigning PNP personnel from Regions 3 and 4.

Major roads such as parts of EDSA, NAIA and Roxas Boulevard will be closed to the public for exclusive use of APEC delegates. These routes will also be closed for protest actions. There are also plans to clear the urban poor along the route. To hide the street-dwellers from the delegates, each family will be given P4,000 to look for temporary shelter.

The scheduled APEC meeting has drawn a lot of criticism. Last October 10, members of League of Filipino Students protested in front of the Mendiola Peace Arch in Manila, simultaneous to the APEC Transportation Ministerial Meetings in Cebu.

At the end of the APEC High Level Policy Dialogue on Food Security and the Blue Economy in Iloilo last October 5, fisherfolk under PAMALAKAYA gathered in a parallel activity to condemn policies on the liberalization and privatization of water resources.





Attacks on Lumad schools are war crimes

There have been no less than 95 cases of attacks on Lumad schools in the whole Mindanao since September 2014. All of these are violations of international rules of war that strictly prohibit targeting civilians and their property.

Forcible closure of Bukidnon school

Among the latest state attacks on Lumad schools is the forcible closure last October 23 of the Fr. Pops Tentorio Memorial School, a private elementary school established by the Mindanao Interfaith Services Foundation Inc. (MISFI) Academy in White Culaman, Kitaotao, Bukidnon. The closure was led by barangay captain Felipe Cabugnason. Under direct instructions of military overlords in the area, Cabugnason with several civilians under threat by the military, accompanied by soldiers in plain-clothes, attacked the school and destroyed its gate.

According to the residents, the soldiers and Cabugnason forced them at gunpoint to destroy the school to make it look like a “voluntary” act of the community. Cabugnason confiscated the cellphones and cameras of the teachers and students and prevented them from taking pictures and videos.

The confrontation traumatized the teachers and the 24 students inside the school at that time. Most of the students there are from the Pulangion and Matigsalug Manobo groups. According to a teacher, their fear of being hogtied and killed by the soldiers was so great that they evacuated the school and trekked more than three hours towards Arakan in North Cotabato to find shelter. The destroyed educational facility was a boarding-type school where students and teachers stayed during school days.

The attack was made despite the direct order of the Department of Education against the closure. The military denied involvement in the attack, but its spokesman himself announced the permanent closure of the school.

Last October 30, Kitaotao's mayor, vice-mayor and entire municipal council filed charges against Cabugnason. The 8th IB was also ordered to vacate and stop the occupation of the private school.

Earlier, on October 6, the military burned down four houses in the hilly portions of Malinao in White Culaman. It was feared that the school would be next.

According to Prof. Mae Fe Ancheta-Templa, convenor of the Save our Schools (SOS) Network in Mindanao, eight attacks are carried out monthly since 2014 against teachers and students in Lumad schools.

Guidelines to defend the schools

The attacks on the Lumad schools are being carried out in spite of the participation of the Philippine government (GPH) in the meetings to draft the “Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use During Armed Conflict.” While the final

document was not signed by the GPH, it was endorsed by the United Nations and international children's organizations such as the United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef) and other multilateral organizations. The guidelines treat attacks on schools as “war crimes” except in extreme cases where these become legitimate military targets. While the Aquino regime can justify that the GPH did not ratify the guidelines, and therefore is not obligated to follow these, the basis of these guidelines are international conventions long ratified by the GPH. Among these are the Law Studies of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

The guidelines contain the following:

1. Functioning schools and universities should not be used by the fighting forces of parties to the armed conflict in any way in support of the military effort;
2. Schools and universities that have been abandoned or evacuated because of the dangers presented by armed conflict should not be used by the fighting forces of parties to armed conflict for any purpose in support of their military effort;
3. Schools and universities must never be destroyed as a measure intended to deprive the opposing parties to the armed con-



flict of the ability to use them in the future;

4. While the use of a school or university by the fighting forces of parties to the armed conflict in support of their military effort may, depending on the circumstances, have the effect of turning it into a military objective subject to attack, parties to armed conflict should consider all feasible alternative measures before attacking them;

5. The fighting forces of parties to the armed conflict should not be employed to provide security for schools and universities;

6. All parties to the armed conflict should, as far as

possible and as appropriate, incorporate these into, for example, their doctrine, military manuals, rules of engagement, operational orders, and other means of dissemination, to encourage appropriate practice throughout the chain of command.

The Aquino government cannot use the excuse of not having any knowledge of these guidelines. Representatives of the AFP attended the first conference conducted to draft the guidelines in May 2012. The Office of the President of the GPH also attended a conference to finalize the guidelines in November 2012. AB

Cojuangco sugar mill contractualizes workers

When the milling season starts this November, only contractual workers will work at the Central Azucarera de Tarlac (CAT) after almost 700 regular workers were fired last May and required to sign “voluntary retirement” papers.

This came after Martin Lorenzo bought the CAT in 2014 and under whose management workers were dismissed en masse in the name of revitalizing the purportedly ailing sugar mill. Appearing to be under new ownership, CAT claimed the right to lay-off workers with the aim of destroying the trade union. But the fact is, the Aquino-Cojuangco family retains control of the sugar-mill through its president and Chief Operating Officer, Fernando

Cojuangco, Aquino's first cousin.

According to John Milton Lozande, Unyon ng mga Manggagawa sa Agrikultura (UMA) chairperson, Cojuangco used the CAT Resource and Asset Holdings Inc. to own shares of other Aquino-Cojuangco corporations within Hacienda Luisita, such as the Luisita Realty Corp. (LRC) and Luisita Industrial Park Co. Consequently, the Aquino-Cojuangco family remains the real owner of CAT and corporations within Hacienda Luisita, although they can now circumvent obligations required by the court. Meanwhile, the supposed beneficiaries who were previously workers in HLI will return to the old system of “kapatás” (labor contracting) and “pakyaw” (job contracting).

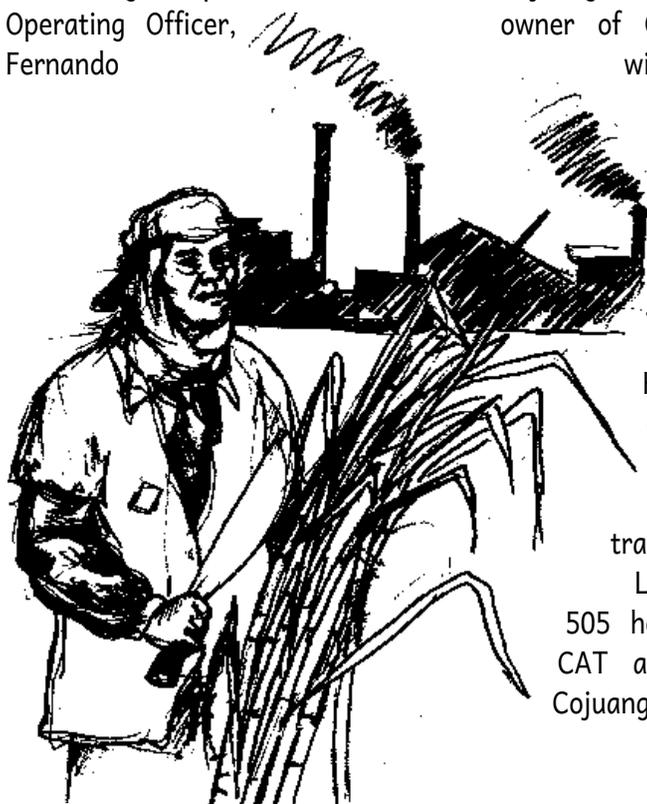
Lorenzo also plans to sell 505 hectares of land under CAT and LRC so that the Cojuangco-Aquino family can

evade paying its debts to the farmworkers.

On April 24, 2012 the Supreme Court ruled in favor of distributing the entire 6,453-hectare Hacienda Luisita to the farm workers. The ruling included paying the workers their share in the previous sale of 580 hectares to Rizal Commercial Banking Corporation, Centenary Holdings and land used by a portion of the SCTEX, an expressway passing through the hacienda, bringing to P1.33 billion the amount of the Cojuangco-Aquino family's debt to the farmworkers.

Up to now, none of these have been paid, and the land which the farmworkers have fought for are gradually being retaken through the leaseback system (aryendo).

Last February 2014, the LRC asked the Philippine Economic Zone Authority to declare the 260 hectare farmlands in Barangay Balete, Luisita to be part of the Luisita Industrial Park-Special Economic Zone. Since 2013 these lands have been tilled by the farmworkers and many have been hurt in the defense against the repeated attacks by armed goons of the Aquino-Cojuangcos. The crops of the farmworkers were bulldozed and their huts burned down. AB



Charges filed against patriotic scientist

Dr. Romeo Quijano, a toxicologist, faced harassment anew last October for a research he published 16 years ago about the dangerous effects of pesticides on community health and the environment. A previous case of "unprofessionalism", which the court dismissed in 2010, was resurrected by the same people who filed the case years ago.

According to Rafael Mariano of the Resistance and Solidarity Against Agrochem TNCs (RESIST), this case is "the fourth in a plethora of banana industry-orchestrated cases filed against Quijano ... The banana industry appears hell-bent on making sure that no one gets in the way of their hazardous practices."

Quijano is an expert witness in recent congressional hearings on House Bill 3857 seeking to ban aerial spraying of pesticides for its adverse effects on the residents of the community.

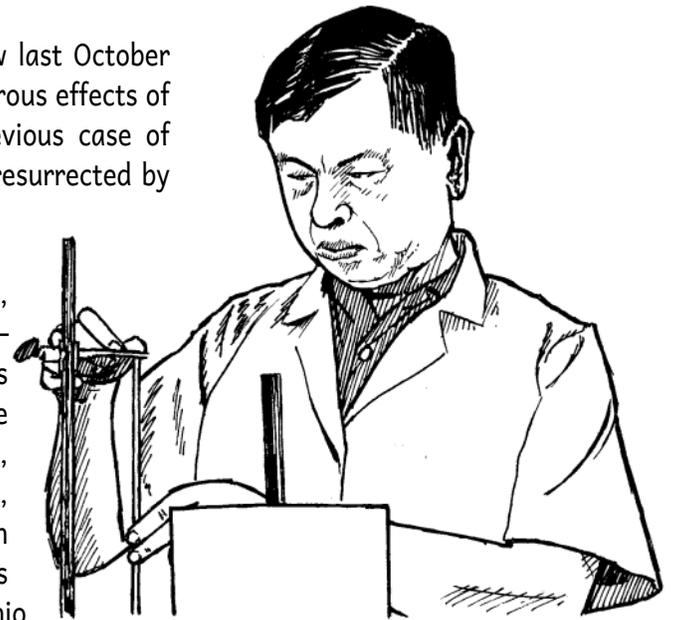
This is not the first case of harassment of scientists who hone and devote their scientific skills to serve the masses. It can be recalled that physicist Prof. Kim Gargar was arrested and detained by the 67th IB on October 1, 2013 in Sityo Spur Dos, Barangay Aliwagwag, Cateel, Davao Oriental, while doing research on a reforestation project for Balsa Mindanao and Panalipdan.

He was accused of being a member of the NPA and charged with illegal possession of explosives, firearms and ammunitions; murder and multiple attempted murder; and violation of the election gun ban based on fabricated evidence.

Prof. Leonard Co, botanist and ethnopharmacologist, was slain by soldiers of the 19th IB in Kananga, Leyte on November 15, 2010, together with forest guard Julius Borromeo and Sofronio Cortez, a farmer. The military alleged that they were members of the NPA. Instead of dispensing justice for the victims, the Department of Justice and National Bureau of Investigation cleared the killers of the three. The military officer who led the attack was even appointed head of the AFP office for human rights.

Meanwhile, Dr. Richard Heck, 84, chemist, expired from an acute illness on October 10 at the East Avenue Medical Center where he was brought after being denied admission by a private health care facility.

Heck was known for the Nobel Prize for Chemistry which he received in 2010, jointly with two Japanese scientists, for their breakthrough of a new chemical process. This process, known as the "Heck Reaction," had many applications. This had widespread application in



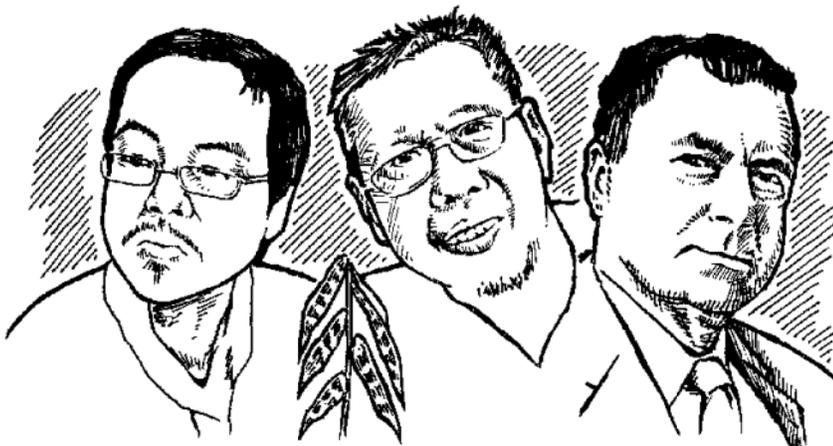
cancer treatment research and other medical questions; the creation of drugs such as naproxen, used to treat arthritis; industrial and technological processes such as thinner computer and cellphone screens. Heck has been a Philippine resident for almost a decade.

According to Rep. Emmi de Jesus of Gabriela Women's Party, Heck's tragic death exposes Aquino's "straight path" and illustrates why the Philippines was included in "the worst places to die," in the 2015 Quality of Death Index study. The Lien Foundation ranked the Philippines 78th in their study of 80 countries.

De Jesus added that it puts to shame the P128 billion government health budget for 2016 because "...Like in the past years' budgets, the biggest allotments are allocated to PhilHealth and the Health Facilities Enhancement Program, which do not address the poor patients' health needs."

Advocates of Science and Technology for the People (Agham) estimates that Philhealth covers only 27% of patients' expenses in public hospitals. The average cost of confinement in a public health facility is 43 times more than the minimum wage, while that in private facilities is 66 times.

AB





NPA launches armed actions against the 9th ID in Bicol

Red fighters in Bicol launched a series of coordinated armed actions from October 25 to November 2. This was reported by Comrade Maria Roja Banua, National Democratic Front (NDF)-Bicol spokesperson.

The NPA-Bicol seized four high-caliber firearms in 18 different tactical offensives by provincial commands under the Romulo Jallores Command against elements of the 9th ID in the region. Up to nine enemy soldiers were killed and nine others wounded.

These offensives are blows to the 9th ID's attempt to declare Masbate and Sorsogon as "conflict-manageable areas" before the 2016 elections, while keeping its focus on Albay's third district, Libmanan in Camarines Sur and Labo, Camarines Norte. These are also blows against the costly and extravagant show for the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation's foreign delegates in November 16-18. Above all, these serve as salute and tribute to brave comrades who were killed in a defensive battle in Juban, Sorsogon.

Masbate: At 8:00 p.m., a team of Red fighters harassed a 9th IB detachment in Barangay Danao, San

Jacinto in Ticao Island on October 31. On the same day, at 12:00 midnight, another NPA unit harassed the Division Recon Company's headquarters at Sitio Catindong, Barangay Maingaran, Masbate City. A soldier was killed and another wounded.

Meanwhile, at 2:30 a.m., the NPA threw a grenade at the temporary barracks of a military section in Barangay Dayao, Mandaon. The stationed soldiers serve as guards of Hitone Construction Company under contract to build a road. Two soldiers were killed and another wounded.

On November 1, a team from the Jose Rapsing Command detonated a bomb inside a safehouse of the 9th IB's 18-member unit in Barangay Poblacion, San Jacinto, Ticao Island. The NPA opened fire after the explosion. Four soldiers were reportedly killed and an undetermined number of soldiers wounded.

Sorsogon. On November 2, at 2:45 p.m., the Celso Minguez Command ambushed the Gubat PNP Patrol in Barangay Marinas while on their way to the municipal hall. Five police officers were wounded and two killed in the ambush.

Albay. At 8:30 a.m. on November 1, a team from the Santos Binamera Command harassed the 2nd IB's detachment in Barangay Bascaran, Daraga. Simultaneously, the NPA launched demolition operations in Barangay Villahermosa, Daraga against elements of the Provincial Public Safety Company based in the area.

Camarines Sur. At 9:00 p.m. on October 25, a team from the Edmundo Jacob Command harassed the 22nd IB's detachment in Barangay San Pedro, Iriga City which has long been a haven for abusers in the city.

At 8:00 a.m. on October 28, the Norben Gruta Command attacked the Charlie Company guarding the road project for a foreign mining company and the local government's eco-tourism project in Pag-oring, Libmanan. A soldier was killed and an M16 rifle was seized by the NPA. On the same day, the NPA launched harassment operations against a 42nd IB unit that was encamped at the barangay hall and within the premises of Bilwang, Lupi.

Red fighters from the Edmundo Jacob Command harassed patrolling forces from Barangay San Pedro, Iriga City on October 31. Simultaneously, another unit from the Norben Gruta Command harassed a unit of the 42nd IB encamped near the houses and barangay hall in Calabigan and Villa Socorro in Libmanan. The attack is in response to the people's complaints against operating troops who intrude on their

NPA releases 2 POWs in ComVal

THE New People's Army-Southern Mindanao Region released two prisoners-of-war from its custody last November 3 in the afternoon in Laak, Compostela Valley in accordance with the directive issued by the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP). The NPA captured Pfc. Marjon Añover and Pfc. Niño Alavaro, both of the 25th IB, last September 30 in Barangay Casoon, Monkayo, Compostela Valley.

According to Rubi del Mundo, NDFP representative in Mindanao, the soldiers were released because they expressed remorse for their crimes against the people and that "they voluntarily pledged not to commit anymore crimes against the people". The 25th IB is notorious for its long list of crimes against the residents in the province.

In an interview with a Davao-based newspaper, Pfc. Alavaro recounted that the Red fighters treated him well. He was amazed by the equal relations between officers and fighters, which is very different from the conduct of his superiors. He also said that he saw how Red fighters struggled not for themselves, but for the people.

Davao City Mayor Rodrigo Duterte, Regional Peace and Order Council head, together with the prisoners' families, received the POWs. The religious group Exodus for Justice and Peace served as a third party facilitator. **AB**

activities, disrupt production and raise fears of abuses with military presence in their barrio.

Camarines Norte. At 11:00 p.m. on October 31, a platoon under the Armando Catapia Command ambushed troopers from the 49th IB who were then guarding the EUS Construction in Barangay Daguit, Labo. Two M14 and an M16 were seized from the enemy during the battle. A soldier and a member of the Civilian Armed

Auxiliary of the 22nd IB were killed while another soldier was wounded.

Meanwhile, the NDF-Bicol and the revolutionary movement paid tribute to three Red fighters who were killed in an enemy raid in Barangay Tinago, Juban, Sorsogon on October 21. The NDF-Bicol identified them as Domingo Llantos (Ka Joel), Jaypee Matimtim (Ka Iresh) and Manuel Adol (Ka Jhony). AB

NPA punishes notorious counter-revolutionaries

The people of Davao del Norte and adjoining areas celebrated the New People's Army's punishment of Loreto Mayor Dario Otaza and his son Daryl Otaza in Barangay Baan, Butuan City last October 15

The Otazas are known as the organizers and leaders of the paramilitary "Bagani" groups which have sown terror among thousands of minority peoples in Loreto and nearby municipalities. Four Bushmaster rifles, two .45 caliber pistols and two 9mm pistols were seized from the Otaza house.

The punishment meted out by the NPA was in accordance with the order of the people's court and was implemented by operatives of the Comval-North Davao-South Agusan Subregional Command, in coordination with the Northern Mindanao Regional Operations Command.

The elder Otaza was proven to have masterminded numerous crimes perpetrated by the Task Force Gantangan, a major component of Oplan Bantay Laya 2. Otaza is behind the paramilitary group "Bagani", which the military supports and uses against the revolutionary movement.

He also led in the creation and maintenance of intelligence networks inside NPA base areas in Agusan del Sur which conducted infiltration, espionage and sabotage of NPA units. They forced the Lumad people to join paramilitary groups to serve as counter-revolutionary spies and used them to launch armed actions against the revolu-

tionary movement and civilians.

The younger Otaza led these operations. He is also known as a notorious drug lord in Loreto.

The Otazas went on with their counterrevolutionary activities and crimes against civilians after the elder Otaza was elected Loreto mayor. Over the last four years, they have displayed staunch support for the US-Aquino regime's Oplan Bayanihan. This is despite repeated warnings by the revolutionary movement and appeals by the suffering masses to cease their criminal activities.

They were remorseless and continued with their counter-revolutionary ways. They continued to be hostile towards the people, especially in the face of their collaboration with large mining and logging companies operating in the denuded forests of Agusan. They have enriched themselves by facilitating the sale of more

than 30,000 hectares of lands in Loreto to a foreign palm oil plantation company.

They continued to employ the "Bagani" and other paramilitary troops to remain in power, and refused to return to non-

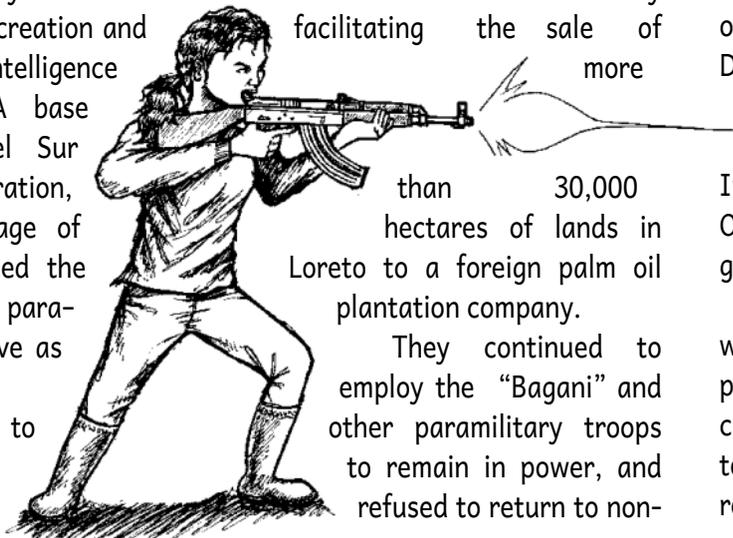
violent civilian governance. Hence, the NPA considered them as legitimate targets.

In Dario Otaza's trial, the people's court identified him as the mastermind of the brutal murder and torture of Benjie Planos, killed September 13, 2013; Gabriel Alindao killed October 10, 2013, both from Kauswagan; and Gerry Villamor of Datu Ampunan, killed September 10, 2014, all in Loreto, Agusan Del Sur.

It was also proven that Otaza planned and directed the operation to poison and murder five Red fighters and capture another on September 5, 2009. This was carried out by two intelligence operatives who were ordered to infiltrate the said unit. The said operatives shot the Red fighters when they had lost consciousness and were already *hors de combat*. Otaza committed this crime in cahoots with Captain Gusi, then head of the 4th ID's Military Intelligence Battalion under Task Force Gantangan.

Otaza was also responsible for the frustrated murder and robbery of residents in Km. 16, Barangay Datu Davao, Loreto on September 9, 2014 perpetrated by Bukakang Banggaan and certain Augit and Intoy who are members of the Otaza-created Taptap paramilitary group.

Aside from these crimes, Otaza was also identified as the main implementor of intense militarization carried out by his "Bagani" forces, together with the 26th IB which resulted into the following grie-



some rights abuses against civilians:

- a. Torture of four minors from Barangay San Isidro, Loreto, two of whom have also been subjected to illegal arrest and illegal detention;
- b. Hamletting and imposition of food and economic blockade in five villages in Barangay Kauswagan, Loreto.
- c. Forced evacuation, which also translated into the economic dislocation of at least 459 indigenous Manobo individuals from Barangay Kauswagan and other villages of Loreto. Many from among the evacuees have not reclaimed their land to this day as their villages continue to be Otaza's Bagani war zone.
- d. Divestment and destruction of not less than 100 hectares of agricultural land and farms which had been rehabilitated and tilled by the evacuees after typhoon Pablo;
- e. Attacks against and closure of two schools

Otaza's "Bagani" Force colluded with the 26th IB in committing human rights abuses against Lumad evacuees even after entering an agreement brokered by Davao City

Mayor Rodrigo Duterte with the evacuees that no retaliatory attacks will be waged against those who will return from evacuation. They also carried out forcible arrests, fake surrenders, arbitrary detention, psychological warfare, harassment and threats against the families of known NPA fighters.

Otaza also masterminded the arson and destruction of the homes of farmers in Barangay Kauswagan by Otaza's paramilitary men Mariel Dioganon, Aki Dioganon, Jordan Dioganon, Abdon Dioganon, Abdon Sinkok, Peping Maamib and Loloy Cedilla in 2013.

Meanwhile, the NPA-Western Agusan-Northern Agusan Subregional Command harassed pursuing troops from the 23rd IB in Buenavista, Agusan del Norte. In the morning of October 24, Red fighters fired on operating troops of the 23rd IB in Sitio Tabon-tabon, Barangay Olave. Another encounter in Sitio Calaitan, Barangay Sangay took place the following day. In both cases, the military sent a helicopter to retrieve their casualties.

In related news, a team under the NPA-North Central Mindanao Region shot and killed Sgt. Ricardo Sulhayan when he attempted to flee on October 7 in Barangay Camagong, Nasipit, Agusan del Norte. Sulhayan was a member of the Army Reserve Command with ID Number RES-A07-E-M 3064 and was always armed with a .45 calibre pistol. He was also an active member of the paramilitary group Bungkatol Liberation Front (BULIF)-Task Force Gantangan which has a long list of crimes filed in the people's court.

The AFP coddles and arms bandit Lumad groups like the BULIF to instill fear among Lumad communities, thwart their struggles for the right to self-determination and pave the way for local and foreign interests in logging, mining and plantations in their ancestral lands. According to Cesar Renerio, NPA-North Central Mindanao Region's spokesperson, BULIF members are criminal extensions of the reactionary armed forces, not ordinary civilians, and are thus legitimate targets of NPA actions. AB

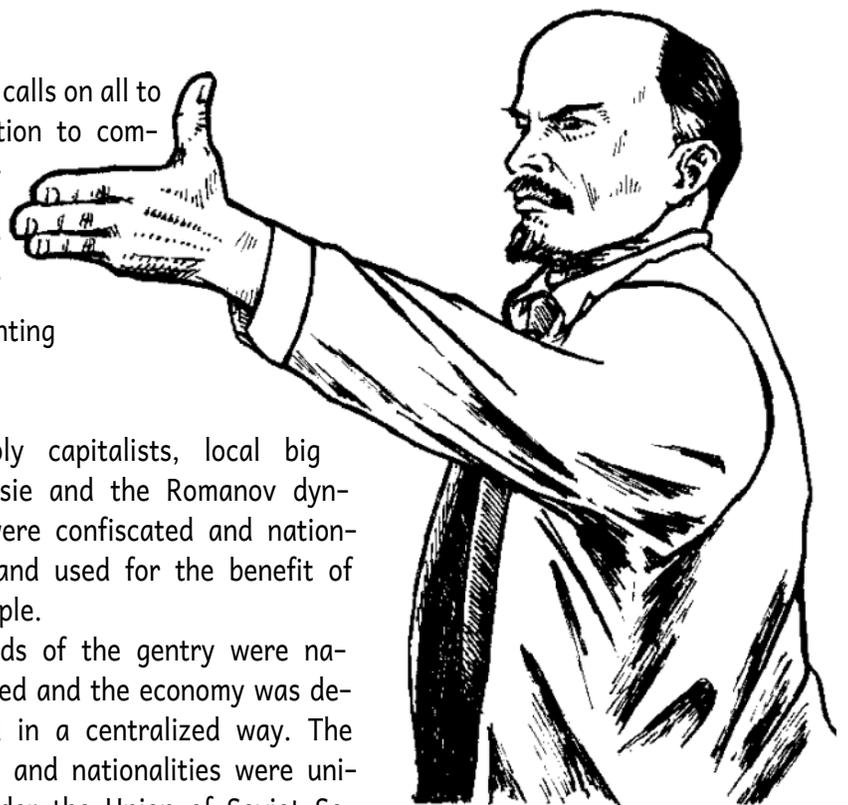
Celebrate the Centennial of the October Revolution!

The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) calls on all to begin on November 7 a two-year celebration to commemorate the centennial of the October Revolution in Russia. The CPP encourages the launching of seminars, the publication and propagation of Marxist-Leninist-Maoist writings, the creation of art works, the holding of assemblies and mounting cultural presentations.

On October 25, 1917, the October Revolution ended the oppressive rule of the bourgeoisie in Russia and gave birth to the first socialist nation in the world. October 25 of the old calendar falls on November 7 in the new Gregorian calendar used by most countries today, including the Philippines. Under the socialist state established, all properties of foreign

monopoly capitalists, local big bourgeoisie and the Romanov dynasty, were confiscated and nationalized and used for the benefit of the people.

Lands of the gentry were nationalized and the economy was developed in a centralized way. The peoples and nationalities were unified under the Union of Soviet So-



cialist Republics (USSR). In less than 30 years, the USSR rose from a backward capitalist country to one of the most powerful countries in the world and directly challenged the might of US imperialism. It surpassed the level of production of capitalist countries, which experienced repeated crises.

The USSR became a great rear of the socialist camp. Its Communist Party assisted in establishing the international unity of parties and the struggle of nations against imperialism.

The October Revolution proved that the workers, through their proletarian party, can lead and win the revolution and liberate more than a fourth of the people of the world against US imperialism even while the capitalist system still prevailed on the whole. Eventually, upon the victory of the Chinese and Vietnamese people, more than a third of the world's people would be liberated under the banner of socialism.

When Krushchev seized power in 1956, he dismantled the socialist government and all the benefits this institutionalized for the people. Revisionism was promoted, undermining the proletarian party from within. With generous help from the imperialist ideological offensive, the succeeding regimes concluded what Krushchev started until the final collapse of the USSR in the early part of the 1990s.

Although the USSR no longer exists, workers' movements and nationalist movements of different countries continue to struggle against US imperialism which is the main scourge in the world today. The far-reaching lessons of the October Revolution continue to guide and inspire people of different countries fighting imperialism. **AB**

Participation in elections for the Tsarist parliament

IN celebrating the centennial of the October Revolution, it is relevant for the Communist Party of the Philippines to study the Russian people's experience in participating in the elections up to 1912. Led by the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party, they participated in the election of the Duma, which was then the Russian Parliament.

Although their party was aware that the parliament was controlled by the ruling class, they opted to participate to prevent anti-people elements from taking the seats meant for workers' representatives. And despite strong repression and election fraud aimed at disenfranchising organized labor, they succeeded in securing six seats after a series of widespread protests against election fraud.

The tsar and the ruling class dominated the Duma. They used such organizations as the Union of the Russian People, and Union of the Archangel Michael, which represented the big landlords, and used lumpen elements and goons who employed violence such that the people called them the "Black Hundreds". There were also parties who posed as public servants and critics of the tsar but remained silent when striking workers were already being massacred.

But the representatives persevered to use the Duma to stage extensive education among the people on the evils of the tsarist government and to rouse them to act and organize themselves. Above all, they actively participated in mass actions outside the parliament, while they were approached by many workers, uni-

onized or not.

Every act to repress them within the Duma was answered by widespread protests and workers' strikes outside. They also worked with other political groups within the Duma to carry out various protest actions inside the parliament, such as interrupting the speeches of the prime minister and the budget chairman and staging a walk-out against the discussion of the war budget.

The Duma obstructed the approval of any of the representatives' bills such as the eight-hour working day and land reform. The workers' representatives were frequently stopped in the middle of their speeches, especially when these were about the repression and massacres of striking workers. Before the end of their term, they were imprisoned for opposing the tsar's policies.

The courageous and persistent efforts of the workers' representatives in the Duma aided the expansion and consolidation of the workers' movement which later led and became the main force that toppled the tsar in February 1917. The people's and workers' genuine representatives gained freedom with the tsar's overthrow.

Two aspects of the US: Strength and crisis

[This is the last of a series of five articles on the National Security Strategy (NSS) document released by the Obama government of the US last February 2015.]



There are two prevailing aspects of the US. On the one hand, it remains as the most powerful imperialist in the world. On the other hand, it continues to suffer from a prolonged crisis and is in a stage of general decline.

The Obama regime declared in the NSS: "We will lead with strength. After a difficult decade, America is growing stronger every day. The U.S. economy remains the most dynamic and resilient on Earth. We have rebounded from a global recession by creating more jobs in the United States than in all other advanced economies combined. Our military might is unrivalled."

The US remains the most powerful military force. Its annual defense budget of more than \$700 billion is equal to the combined military budget of the next 14 countries. The US maintains military presence around the world through a network of almost 1,000 military bases, warships and around half a million American troops spread in more than 148 countries. It controls major trade sea routes.

US imperialism imposes neoliberal economic policies in the entire world. It uses its overwhelming influence over the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, the World Trade Organization (WTO), the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation and other major financial institutions or "free trade agreements" to push for policies of the Washington Consensus and the strength of the

dollar in trade and investment.

The US continues to accumulate superprofits through the exploitation of workers and toiling people both in the US and in other parts of the world. It continues to push for the dismantling of all hindrances to pull down the cost of labor-power in China, in the Philippines and other countries; to be able to plunder mineral and other natural resource; and to freely bring in capital and rapidly transfer capital wherever advantageous to extract maximum profit.

Strategic decline

While US imperialism remains the most powerful, it has been on a strategic decline since the 1970s with the onset of stagflation followed by a series of worsening and prolonging economic crises. It lavishly spent on military expenses while suffering big losses in its war of aggression in Vietnam.



The US' general trend of decline was eclipsed for a while by the severe crisis and social turmoil in the countries under revisionist governments since the 1980s. Furthermore, the US seemed to be on the rise as it became the sole superpower with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Together with the restoration of capitalism in China since the end of the 1970s, the American monopoly-capitalists were given a breathing space by the expansion of its markets, sources of raw materials and exploitation of cheap labor. The US further pushed neoliberal globalization, together with China, as well as with the GATT/WTO. The US also intensified its wars of aggression since the 1990s against Iraq, Afghanistan and Yugoslavia especially since the 2000s.

However, all these have failed in preventing continued US decline as a capitalist power. Over the past three decades, the US economy has failed to substantially expand and has confronted more frequent and bigger crises. Each worse crisis is preceded by a financial bubble such as the "dotcom boom" towards the end of the 1990s and the "housing bubble" from the early part of 2000s. The decline of the financial markets in 2008 following the mortgage crisis has resulted in prolonged recession, the worst since the end of the 1930s.

In 2014, US debt was more than \$18 trillion, more than its annual Gross Domestic Product. The last time that the US debt surpassed GDP was in the recession after World War II. The US owes Japan and China the

biggest in the form of US Treasury Bills.

Social crisis in the US

Obama's claims in the NSS of a vibrant US economy and improving conditions for the American people are all bluster. The US is caught in a deep social crisis. The masses of workers and toiling people in the US are experiencing severe problems of unemployment, low income and rising costs of commodities, lack of housing, racism, suppression, surveillance and fascist state restrictions. They are also the ones who primarily shoulder the social effects of the US wars of aggression.

From 4.62% in 2007, the official unemployment rate in the US has reached 7.35% in 2013. However, a large number of American workers who are unemployed are no longer counted. The so-called "labor force participation rate" or the number of workers who have jobs or are actively looking for work stands at a mere 63.2%, the lowest over the past 35 years. If workers who are no longer actively seeking employment will be included, independent

analysts estimate that the actual rate of unemployment in the US in July 2015 stood at 23%, the highest over the past four decades.

The official poverty rate in the US stands at 16.1% (50 million Americans). One out of every seven American children lives in poverty. Around 1.65 million families (including three million children) live on less than \$2 a day (the UN poverty threshold). Among those suffering from poverty are American workers who receive minimum wages. Majority of American workers earn only \$10 an hour, lower than the poverty threshold for a family of four.

There are cuts in social benefits (health, education and retirement pension). In 2012, 80 million Americans or 43% of the US population, were not given medical attention because they could not afford it. Yearly, more than a million students drop out of high school. From 25% in 2003, 25-year old youths who are deep in debt over student loans have reached 43%. In 2000-2011, the debt of ordinary American families increased by 50%.

The prisons system is being used against the American people. There are now 2.2 million prisoners in the US. This is the country with the biggest number of prisoners. It comprises 20% of the global prison population. This is beside the 4.5 million people who are on parole or probation. One in every 35 American adults have experienced prison.

The laws and prisons are systematically used against the toiling masses, especially against the blacks and the Latinos. In New York, as in many other places, 80% of people accosted by the police in the streets (even if there is no indication of involvement in a crime) are blacks and other minorities.

Inequality has worsened. While poverty is widespread, wealth is more concentrated in the hands of the ruling classes. The wealth of the richest 400 individuals in the US increased by 30%, from \$1.7 to \$2.2 trillion in 2012-2013. The wealth of the top 1% is equal to the property of the bottom 100 million. As much as 95% of the increased income during 2009-2014 was pocketed by the top 1%. **AB**