



ANG

Bayan

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

English Edition
Vol. XLI No. 18
September 21, 2010
www.philippinerevolution.net

Editorial

Mobilize the people in their millions to advance the Philippine revolution!

Current conditions are exceedingly favorable to arouse, organize and mobilize the Filipino people in their millions to tread the path of militant struggle and revolutionary war. The key requirement for the further advance of people's war towards the stage of strategic stalemate in the next five years is the creation of an extensive mass movement nationwide.

Social conditions continue to deteriorate under the Aquino regime. The people are severely impoverished and gravely suffer in the face of massive unemployment, slave wages, intense feudal and semifeudal oppression, skyrocketing prices and transport fares, a growing tax burden, widespread corruption and scarce social services.

The intensity of the crisis has caused the hollowness of the US-Aquino regime's braggadocio to be rapidly exposed. Its pretensions of being an agent of change have quickly faded. Aquino has been in office for less than a hundred days, but disillusionment already abounds among many of those who supported or believed in him.

The US-Aquino regime is merely perpetuating imperialist economic policies (especially the furtherance of denationalization and privatization). Its handling of Hacienda Luisita provides a striking example of how land reform has been relegated to the sidelines. Factional strife, incompetence, corruption and in the latest incident, the involvement of a number of key officials in the illegal jueteng numbers game have all very quickly reared

their ugly heads. The intervention of foreign troops continues to be allowed. Human rights violations, terrorism and intense psywar go on without letup with the extension of Oplan Bantay Laya even as a new operational plan to suppress the people's resistance is in the works.

We must arouse, organize and mobilize the people in their numbers to enable them to defend and advance their interests in the face of the worsening crisis under the current rotten government and system. The Party's mobilization of millions of people in a broad mass movement is the single, most important political requisite in advancing the people's war.

The class line and mass line are the guiding principles of the revolutionary and



This issue's highlights...

Proposed 2011 budget stresses doleouts
PAGE 3

Military kills 3 farmers
PAGE 4

Bogus "pangayaw" in Paquibato

PAGE 7

progressive forces in mobilizing the people: they immerse themselves among the people, find out about and analyze their concrete conditions, arouse them on their most pressing issues as well as related national problems both current and long-term, organize and mobilize them in appropriate forms of organization and collective action.

We must reach out to the millions upon millions of people in the countryside and cities, in communities, factories, schools, offices and streets. We must identify their current problems and unite them both solidly and on a broad scale. The main issues in the countryside are land, exploitation by landlords and merchant-usurers, low production, calamities, militarization and lack of government support and social services. In the cities, the main issues faced by the people are low wages, unemployment, working conditions in the factories, rising prices of basic needs and the lack and high cost of public services.

Arouse, organize and mobilize the people to fight for their immediate and long-term needs and advance the people's strategic inter-

ests for revolutionary change.

Invigorate propaganda, education and cultural work. Sharply analyze the issues faced by the people by applying the class line and the pro-people and political line of the national-democratic revolution. Sharply expose the emptiness of the so-called reforms being bandied about by the regime.

Immediately counter the regime's psywar offensive. Go all out in exposing and assailing the military's fascist crimes. Expose the counterrevolutionary intervention of the US. Link all this to the general call against imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism and for revolutionary change.

Make sure that various ways of conducting propaganda and education work are utilized not only to reach out to the biggest number of people but also to effectively arouse and organize them.

Establish and mobilize on a broad scale the various types of mass organizations in order to address their problems. Form broad, open and solid underground mass organizations at the basic level while expanding their scope.

Ensure the establishment and


consolidation of revolutionary mass organizations and revolutionary cores in the different sectors and localities, until fullfledge mass organizations and organs of democratic political power are formed not only at the village or barrio cluster level but at the municipal, district and provincial level upwards. Link these mass organizations and movements through broad organizations and alliances.

Ensure and stress the emergence and development of tens of thousands of mass activists who will be responsible for leading and expanding their respective mass organizations and movements. In the countryside, the main responsibility for expanding revolutionary mass organizations to adjacent villages and towns rests on them. They serve as deep wellsprings for the further expansion and consolidation of the Party and the NPA.

Strengthen and expand alliance work at various levels and scopes. Expand the National Democratic Front and its allied organizations in all sectors and areas. Establish a broad united front of the oppressed and exploited people, divide the ranks of the enemy, isolate and concentrate our attacks on the current worst reactionary in the form of the ruling chief puppet of the reactionary state.

Expand and continually consolidate the Party. Assiduously establish it within the people's army and mass organizations, in alliances, schools, factories and offices. Ensure the propagation of Marxist-Leninist-Maoist education and training for its cadres in the various lines and fields of work on all levels.

Persevere in advancing people's war to a higher level. Let us leave no stone unturned in advancing guerrilla warfare towards the stage of strategic stalemate of people's war in the years to come. **AB**

| | |
|--|---|
|  <p>Vol. XLI No. 18 September 21, 2010</p> <p>Ang Bayan 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: www.philippinerevolution.net</p> <p>Ang Bayan 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: angbayan@yahoo.com</p> | <h2 style="text-align: center;">Contents</h2> <hr/> <p>Editorial</p> <p>Mobilize the people in their millions! 1</p> <p>Proposed budget stresses doleouts 3</p> <p>Fascist state on a rampage</p> <p>Military kills 3 farmers 4</p> <p>Violating children's rights in ICR 4</p> <p>Soldiers kicked out of Surigao village 5</p> <p>Trade union rights violated 6</p> <p>Abadilla 5 6</p> <p>Bogus "pangayaw" in Paquibato 7</p> <p>News 8</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">Ang Bayan is published fortnightly by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines</p> | |

Proposed 2011 budget stresses doleouts

The US-Aquino regime calls its proposed national budget for 2011 a "budget for social reform." Contrary to such claims, however, the US-Arroyo regime is obviously bereft of any serious and well-thought-of program to combat poverty, develop the economy and enhance social welfare. It is merely perpetuating the old tack of giving priority to debt service and strengthening the military. Despite growing needs, there are significant budget cuts for agriculture, land reform, education, health and other social services. (*See related article in previous issue*)

Aquino's main source of pride is the 123% hike in the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) budget, bringing it up to P34.4 billion. Up to P29.2 billion or almost 85% of this amount has been earmarked for the Programang Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino (4Ps or Program to Tide Over the Filipino Family), a doleout program pushed by the US government and imperialist agencies. This program will also be receiving infusions from a \$400-million loan from the Asian Development Bank and a \$434-million fund from the US Millennium Development Corporation (MDC).

4Ps has been cited as proof of the alleged "social reform" thrust of the US-Aquino regime's proposed budget. A large part of the program is geared towards maternal and infant health care and making sure that children attend school. It calls for up to P1,400 in monthly subsidies for every family (P400 for medicines for each pregnant woman and each infant and P300 for each child in school up to a maximum of three children) identified by the DSWD as belonging to the poorest of the poor, and whose numbers are expected to rise from one million to 2.3 million by the end of 2011.

These doleouts offered by the Aquino government are actually a huge insult to the very poor. First of all, the amount allotted for each

family is woefully inadequate. Secondly, these funds under 4Ps will be provided in conjunction with budget cuts for social services like health and education that will further undermine the capabilities of local hospitals, health centers and public schools. The National Food Authority's budget for subsidizing farmers' production and controlling rice prices in the market has moreover been eliminated.

4Ps is the local version of the Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT), a showcase program of US imperialism and its international financial agencies like the World Bank that was initiated in a number of poor countries in the 1990s. The MDC is encouraging this program as a condition for more financial aid to puppet states. Doling out money to the unemployed or underemployed or to the very poor is supposed to help stimulate the local market.

But the real reason behind providing doleouts to impoverished countries for their poorest people is to keep such countries mendicant and dependent on foreign assistance and prevent them from extricating themselves from the clutches of imperialism and developing their own industry and agriculture. The US government also uses such doleouts as leverage in order to further its economic, political and military intervention.

As a result of US prodding, 4Ps was started by the Arroyo regime

with a P10 billion budget in 2008. Although without any basis in truth, the Arroyo regime has boasted that the program helped uplift one million Filipinos from poverty by the end of its term. On the other hand, DSWD Secretary Corazon "Dinky" Soliman has been crowing that 4Ps can be expected to reduce poverty incidence by 50% in the next five years, improve maternal and child health and ensure that every child will be able to go to school.

The reality, however, is that poverty is worsening and the poor and hungry continue to grow in number. Such doleout programs for the poor do not provide genuine or long-term solutions. In fact, a huge chunk of the funds meant for 4Ps was only gobbled up by corruption. More than anything else, the toiling masses cry for land, jobs and adequate wages, not insulting doleouts.

4Ps merely covers up the reactionary state's refusal to undertake the necessary steps to advance national industrial development and a self-reliant economy. It has no plans whatsoever to raise the measly minimum wage of workers which is less than a fourth of the minimum amount needed for workers' families to live decently. Neither does it have plans to resolve the longstanding problem of landlessness that lies at the root of rural poverty. We can expect poverty to worsen even more under the US-Aquino regime.

The regime has not offered any viable solution to the problem of poverty which is due to economic backwardness, absence of national industry, lack of genuine land reform, massive unemployment, low wages and endlessly skyrocketing prices of commodities and services.



Military men slay 3 peasants

The military is relentlessly wreaking havoc in the countryside. Soldiers killed three peasants in separate incidents in Camarines Sur, Davao City and Compostela Valley in the first half of September. A barangay councilor in Albay was tortured by military men and a former Red fighter was arrested by AFP operatives in Compostela Valley, claiming that he is a leader of the New People's Army (NPA).

September 12. A civilian was killed and four others were wounded when elements of the 9th ID opened fire on the residence of a family in Camarines Sur. National Democratic Front-Bicol spokesman Ka Greg Bañares identified the fatality as farmer Roderick Ballebar and those wounded as Francisco Bergado, his wife Amelita and daughters Rose and Margio. Bergado was wounded in the arm while his wife was wounded in the hands and feet. Their daughter Rose was wounded in one elbow while Margio was wounded in the back. The bloody shooting took place in Sitio Culpa, Barangay Lubgan in Bula town.

September 9. Soldiers killed Vicente Felisilda, a civilian, in Barangay Malinawon, Mawab, Compostela Valley. Before he was killed, Felisilda had received several threats from the military who accused him of supporting the NPA.

September 8. Military elements abducted and detained Elke Bacalso, 20, son of Julian Bacalso, a former political detainee and coordinator of Samahan ng mga Ex-Detainee Laban sa Detensyon at para sa Amnestiya (SELDA). He is a student of the Cebu Institute of Technology in Cebu City.

His abductors took him at around 4:00 p.m., blindfolded him and threw him into a van. He was brought to various safehouses where he was interrogated regarding his father's work in the organization. His abductors later left him

in Santander town. Before he was taken, Bacalso observed on August 23 that two men were following him. The men first attempted to abduct him on September 3. Bacalso was a volunteer for the Kabataan Party-list group in Cebu during the last elections.

September 6. Soldiers of the 10th ID arrested a former member of the NPA who left the movement in 2006 and presented him to the media as a high-ranking NPA leader. The 10th ID claims that Per-

cival Manimog was captured in a military operation in Monkayo, Compostela Valley. The NPA Magtanggol Roque Command denounced the capture as a desperate move of the military in the face of severe blows from the NPA. The NPA denied claims by 10th ID spokesman Lt. Col. Medel Aguilar that Manimog is a leader of the NPA.

September 5. Ten armed men in plain clothes tortured Warren Morilla, a councilor of Barangay Florista, Libon, Albay. He was resting when the assailants came to his house and started forcing him to identify the homes of supposed rebels in the village. The men dragged him out of his house at gunpoint after he denied having the information that they wanted. They slipped a plastic bag on his head and hit him with a rifle butt. Before the assail-



Violation of children's rights in Ilocos-Cordillera

Children are the most pitiful victims of human rights violations in the Ilocos-Cordillera Region (ICR).

According to the Children's Rehabilitation Center in ICR (CRC-ICR), the most striking violation of children's human rights in the region is the use of their schools as military detachments, with 134 cases recorded from 2005 to 2010.

From 2007 to 2009, more than 15 schools were used by the military for mass meetings where they tried to link democratic organizations like the Anakpawis party to the armed revolutionary movement.

During the same period, the CRC-ICR recorded one child victim of extrajudicial killing, 25 child victims of aerial bombings, 17 child victims of intimidation and harassment, 16 child victims of forced recruitment to the CAFGU, 14 orphaned by the extrajudicial killing of their parents and nine who lost their parents to arrests and detention.

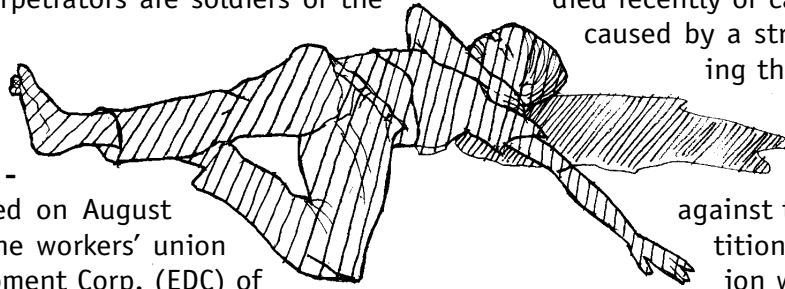
Two children were also made to appear as surrendered New People's Army guerrillas.

AB

ants left, they made Morilla sign a document stating that they did not hurt anybody and took nothing from his house. In fact, the men took his wallet containing ₱360, two bolos and even his slippers.

September 3. Military men killed peasant Reynaldo Labrador in front of his family. Labrador, a resident of Sitio Narra, Barangay Paquibato Proper in Davao City, is a member of the Paquibato District Farmers' Association (Padifa) and the Farmers Association in Davao City. The perpetrators are soldiers of the 69th IB and a paramilitary man identified as Roberto "Kulot" Repe.

August-September. A court sentenced on August 12 three leaders of the workers' union at the Energy Development Corp. (EDC) of the Philippine National Oil Corporation (PNOC) to two years in prison for false charges of grave and coercion and malicious mischief. The company filed these charges for the supposed damage of the ₱1,400-peso signal light of a company vehicle when soldiers and policemen attacked their picket line. Among those sentenced is Dante Senillo, vice president of the Leyte-A Geothermal Project Employees Union which has been fighting the different unfair labor practices



of the PNOC.

The incident occurred when more than 100 workers of the PNOC went on strike in October 2000 and set up a picket line. The picket lasted only a few days as policemen and soldiers violently dispersed them. The police and military opened fire on the picket line, driving the strikers to run for cover, with some of them jumping off a cliff to escape harm. Those caught were beaten and sustained injuries. One of the victims died recently of cancer believed to have been caused by a strong blow he sustained during the assault ten years ago.

The Lopez family has acquired the EDC and is now pursuing the case against the workers to counter a petition for review filed by the union with the Supreme Court.

Meanwhile, union leader and KMU National Council member Vincent "Bebot" Borja has been in jail for more than three years now at the Leyte Provincial Jail. He was imprisoned based on false charges of rebellion and murder. Not a single hearing of his case was held during the first two years. Since then, hearing schedules have always been postponed, deliberately, according to the KMU, to make Borja languish in jail. AB

Lumad drive out soldiers

Protesting Lumad have successfully driven out AFP soldiers operating in their communities in Marihatag, Surigao del Sur. The more than 230 Lumad families or 1,125 individuals returned to their village after evacuating and camping for several days at the Marihatag Municipal Gym.

In the face of mounting pressure, officers of the 36th IB signed with village leaders an agreement for the troops to withdraw from the area. Church people, local government officials and other groups witnessed the signing of the agreement.

The human rights group Karapatan pledged to continue extending assistance to the residents and watching out for future violations of the agreement by the military. It called on Benigno Aquino III to stop the military operations in the area and to spare civilians from military actions.

As early as March, the soldiers started camping around the village and terrorizing the residents. They surveyed the people, showed films vilifying the revolutionary movement





and called meetings where they directly accused the residents of supporting the New People's Army (NPA). They also promised a reward of ₱500 for anybody who could point them to the rebel camp. They even bribed children with candies.

The soldiers routinely violated human rights. They threatened a woman because she supposedly has a son in the NPA. They bombed the community after failing to find the NPA and threatened to massacre the whole village if the people refused to point them to where the guerrillas were.

The civilians began evacuating to Marihatag on August 20. They returned after local government officials held a dialogue where they convinced the soldiers to withdraw from the village.

But another human rights violation pushed the residents to evacuate anew. Soldiers of the 36th IB tied up, dragged and beat up seven residents, including a 14-year old boy. The soldiers were forcing them to admit that they were supporters of the NPA. They separated the boy from the rest and offered him ₱20,000 in exchange for information on where the NPA was keeping its weapons. They also threatened to bury him alive or drop him from a helicopter if he refused to give information.

The residents tried to ask for help from the provincial government of Surigao del Sur but officers of the 36th IB and the police blocked their convoy on its way to the capitol, forcing them to return home. At the evacuation center, many children fell ill and food, medicines and sanitation supplies were running short, prompting the Marihatag Municipal Disaster Coordinating Council to declare a state of calamity in the area.

In 2009, some 3,000 people

were forced to evacuate from the neighboring town of Lianga due to successive military operations against the NPA.

Two soldiers have been killed

and three wounded in encounters with the NPA since the start of the military onslaught led by Lt. Col. Rene Cañete and Lt. Serihim Temperante. AB

Abuses against workers' rights

Gloria Arroyo's regime has left a bitter legacy for the working class. The last six months of her term were marked with stark violations of workers' rights.

According to the Center for Trade Union and Human Rights, there were 102 cases of human rights violations against workers. Forty-six (46) of these were violations against workers' civil rights and 56 were violations of their economic, social and cultural rights. The number also includes 40 cases of violations of trade union and collective bargaining rights.

The cases victimized 19,696 individuals—19,595 inside factories and 239 in their exercise of their union rights.

The number of cases of violence against workers rose from 27 in 2009 to 46 in the first half of 2010, an increase of 70.3%. The most prominent cases were the killing of Edward Panganiban, union secretary at Taketa Philippines, Inc. on June 2 in Sta. Rosa, Laguna and of Benjamin Bayles, an organizer of the National Federation of Sugar Workers on June 14 in Himamaylan, Negros Occidental. AB

Abadilla 5 court ruling assailed

The Supreme Court affirmed on September 7 the 2008 decision of the Court of Appeals imposing life terms on the so-called "Abadilla 5"—five men accused in the 1996 killing of the fascist Col. Rolando Abadilla. The five are Joel de Jesus, Lenido Lumanog, Rameses de Jesus, Cesar Fortuna and Augusto Santos.

The Supreme Court's decision is now under fire from human rights advocates who pointed out among others, the following defects of the ruling:

- The Supreme Court ignored the fact that the accused were arrested without warrants and were not given access to counsel during their investigation.

- The court disregarded the fact that the alleged confessions of the accused were extracted through torture.

- The ruling rested solely on the questionable testimony of a lone witness who first identified Joel de Jesus after being shown his picture six days after the killing of Abadilla. The witness further identified the rest of the accused only after they were presented to the media. The court took no notice of the admission made by the bandit group Alex Boncayao Brigade (ABB) and the fact that none of the convicted was in any way connected to the ABB. AB

Pangayaw in Paquibato, an AFP handiwork

A bogus "pangayaw" or tribal war is being instigated and used by the AFP 1003rd Brigade to wreak havoc and sow fear in Ata-Manobo and settler communities in Paquibato District, Davao City with the aim of evicting the residents from their lands.

Behind this "pangayaw" is Ruben Labawan, a fake Lumad leader who is actually a confidential military agent. Labawan is the head of the Supreme Tribal Council for Peace and Development, a group formed by the AFP. He was prodded by Brig. Gen. Eduardo del Rosario, chief of 1003rd Bde to declare a "pangayaw".

"Pangayaw" is now being used as a justification to kill Ata-Manobo and settlers accused of supporting the New People's Army (NPA).

According to documents confiscated from Labawan, he and his followers were issued Garand and M14 rifles, radio communication units and other military equipment by the 1003rd Bde.

Another death squad composed of 14 Lumad henchmen handpicked by Labawan is being funded and supplied with weapons and military equipment by the 1003rd Bde.

Labawan and his men also formed the Bagani Long Range Platoons, a 168-strong paramilitary force divided into 12 platoons from the 12 sitios and barangays of Paquibato District.

This force has been tagged as "Alsa Lumad" or Lumad who are allegedly up in arms against the NPA. They were organized and funded by the AFP to fight the revolution and destroy the unity of the Lumad in order to easily defeat them and pave the way for the onslaught of giant agrocorporations in their ancestral lands.

Successive human rights violations have been perpetrated by Labawan and his men. He has ordered that every time a soldier, CAFGU element or Alsa Masa member dies in a firefight with the NPA, the civilian community where the fighting took place must pay damages in the form of farm animals and cash. If the civilians fail to pay up, a "pangayaw" is declared against them. In its "education and information campaign" in Paquibato, the 1003rd Brigade also incites the Lumad to rise up against the NPA for the same reasons.

Labawan declared his present "pangayaw" after his brother and bodyguard PFC Kimpio Labawan of the 103rd Division Reconnaissance Company was killed on August 6 in a gunbattle with Red fighters who

held them at a checkpoint in Sitio Marugasan, Barangay Colosas, Paquibato District.

Labawan's "pangayaw" is the cause of the August 12 murder of farmer Julius Tamondes, who was killed in his farm in Colosas.

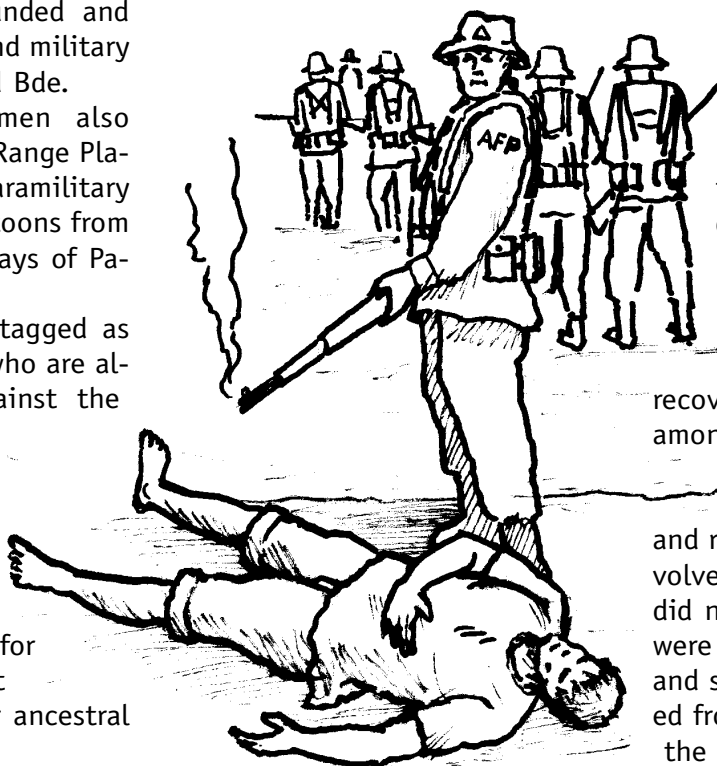
Aside from Tamondes, an attempt was also made on the life of another farmer, Angelino Gentoales that same day. Another civilian named Dodo Cabatuan was also targeted after this but he managed to escape.

Due to fears created by the "pangayaw," farmers have sought refuge in the town center. The 1003rd Bde has been pushing for the eviction of the Lumad and settlers so it could offer their lands to banana plantations which continue to expand in various parts of Southern Mindanao.

The AFP has long been using bogus programs to divide the Lumad and distance them from the revolutionary movement. In the first half of 2000, the military also formed the Alamara as part of its counterrevolutionary campaign among the Lumad.

The military manipulated the Ata-Manobo and Matigsalog tribes to sow violence in the communities of Paquibato District and neighboring areas. A number of residents and comrades were killed.

However, the NPA was able to stop such manipulation by launching a recovery and education campaign among the Lumad. A *tampuda* (traditional peace pact) was forged among the datus and residents who were actively involved in the Alamara. However, it did not take long before close ties were restored between comrades and some Lumad who were alienated from the revolution and used by the military in its dirty war. **AB**



Political prisoners launch hunger strike

ONE hundred forty-eight political prisoners in the country simultaneously launched a hunger strike last September 17 to demand their immediate release under the administration of Benigno Aquino III which has been claiming respect for human rights.

The "Morong 43," health workers who were arrested in Morong, Rizal last February led the the fasting in the National Capital Region and other prison camps like the New Bilibid Prison, Camp Crame, Camp Karingal, Correctional Institute for Women and in Camp Bagong Diwa in Bicutan; Isabela; Tuguegarao City; Ifugao; Bohol; Cebu City; Danao City; Bacolod City; Tacloban City; Leyte Provincial Jail; Compostela Val-

ley; Bukidnon; and Cagayan de Oro City. Bishop Deogracias Iñiguez of St. Peter the Apostle Parish Church also officiated a mass for the hunger strikers.

The protest fast was joined by relatives and supporters of the "Morong 43" who put up a tent in Quezon Avenue fronting the Ninoy Aquino monument. Personalities who also took part included Sen. Loren Legarda, Commissioner Jose Mamaug of the Commission on Human Rights, former Gabriela Rep. Liza Maza, Bayan Muna Rep. Teodoro "Teddy" Casiño and ACT Teachers Rep. Antonio Tinio. A ceremony also took place in Canada and solidarity messages were sent in from New Zealand and Germany.

Chevron and Shell are tax evaders

THE Commission on Audit (COA) has disclosed that the government was deprived of over P53 billion in taxes in 2003-2009 on the profits of Shell and Chevron, private operators of the Malampaya Gas Project.

According to an agreement between the government and Shell and Chevron, 60% of the profits on the sale of natural gas mined from Malampaya should go to the government. Aside from this, the operators should also pay the appropriate taxes on their 40% share of the profits.

In 2004, Shell and Chevron paid taxes from their 40% share, but the Department of Energy (DOE) put a stop to this, saying that the taxes of the private operators were already incorporated in the 60% share of the government from the profits of the project.

In a review this March, the COA clarified that the government's 60% share and the tax liabilities of the private operators on their 40% share of the profits were not identical.

The \$4.5 billion Malampaya Gas Project is one of the biggest mining projects extracting the country's natural wealth. It is involved in mining natural gas from the Palawan seas. The gas is processed in a Batangas plant before it is sent to three power generating stations.

Residents have long been opposing the project which gives giant foreign oil companies an opportunity to plunder the country's natural resources. In a situation where the country is almost completely dependent on petroleum products imported from the international oil cartel, it would be of great advantage to the country if it could be self-reliant on the gas being mined from Malampaya and other related projects.

Charges for electricity bills could also be significantly reduced if the country and its people could totally utilize the profits from the project's extraction of natural gas.

Youth oppose looming MRT-LRT fare hikes

MEMBERS of Anakbayan launched a protest action at a Metro Rail Transit (MRT) station on September 10 to oppose impending MRT and Light Rail Transit (LRT) fare increases. They asked passengers to sign a petition signifying their opposition. The signature campaign aims to gather one million signatures.

The protest action has compelled the Aquino administration to study the possibility of granting

fare discounts to students.

The looming fare hikes by the Aquino regime were planned in order to put an end to government subsidies for train services. It justifies such increases by claiming that government funds will instead be allocated for education and livelihood and for poverty alleviation.

Another protest action will be launched on September 24.

Jueteng scandal explodes anew

NO sooner had Pres. Benigno Aquino III declared that stamping out jueteng was not part of his priorities when his self-proclaimed clean government was rocked by a major scandal involving his high-ranking officials' embroilment in the illegal numbers game.

Retired Archbishop Oscar Cruz divulged that two officials close to Aquino have been allegedly receiving ₱2 million to ₱5 million a month from jueteng lords.

One of them is Usec. Rico Puno of the Department of the Interior and Local Government who admitted to having been approached by jueteng lords but purportedly refused to accept their offer. A document released by junior PNP officers also revealed that recently appointed Philippine National Police (PNP) chief Raul Bacalzo was similarly engaged in the numbers game. The accusation, however, is not

new. In 2005, witnesses had testified that he was involved in illegal gambling.

Aquino said that he would order an investigation on this matter. But he was inclined to absolve his men, saying that the circumstances surrounding the revelation were dubious and that the amounts cited were very small.

Archbishop Cruz said that the country's entire police institution from the lowest to the highest ranks is up to its neck in jueteng payola money. He said he is willing to expose ten more Aquino government officials in the September 21 hearing of the Senate Blue Ribbon Committee chaired by Sen. Teofisto Guingona III. He also accepted the invitation of Rep. Teodoro Casiño, member of the Committee on Good Government and Public Accountability which will also conduct a hearing on the latest jueteng scandal.

KMU slams meager wage hikes

THE Kilusang Mayo (KMU) labor center conducted a protest program in front of the Department of Labor and Employment office in Intramuros, Manila to denounce Pres. Benigno Aquino III's approval of meager wage hikes for workers in different regions.

The KMU said the wage hikes are a big insult to the workers who have long been receiving niggardly wages.

The approved increases to the minimum daily wages are ₱22 in NCR, ₱15 in Region VI, ₱18 in Region VII, ₱12 COLA integration and ₱13 in Region X, ₱21 in Region XI, ₱10 COLA integration and ₱10 in Region XII and ₱12 in the ARMM.

The minimum daily wage in NCR is ₱404 but a family of six should at least earn more than four times this amount in order to live decently.

Over 2 million workers launch protest action in France

OVER two million workers staged march rallies in different cities in France last September 7 to oppose "reforms" in the pension system planned by the government of Pres. Nicolas Sarkozy. The protest action was led by the Confederation Generale du Travail (CGT or General Confederation of Labor), the biggest union in France.

The 24-hour protest action paralyzed 50% of train services and 25% of air travel in the entire country. It also resulted in widespread dislocation in the postal system.

The workers opposed government plans to raise to 62 years the minimum retirement age. The government has taken a hard stance on the issue and has in fact warned that it could raise the retirement age from

65 to 67 years, similar to what Germany has done. In many countries in Europe, the retirement age is set at 65 years, with the United Kingdom and other European governments mulling to have it raised to 67 years.

The recent protest action was the most widespread and strongest ever since workers started manifesting their opposition last May to the government's belt-tightening schemes. The bill on pension "reforms" is currently under debate in parliament.

Workers in the United Kingdom also launched last September a 24-hour protest action against plans by the London government to retrench 800 workers as a cost reduction measure. Sixty percent of the city's train services were paralyzed.