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Editorial

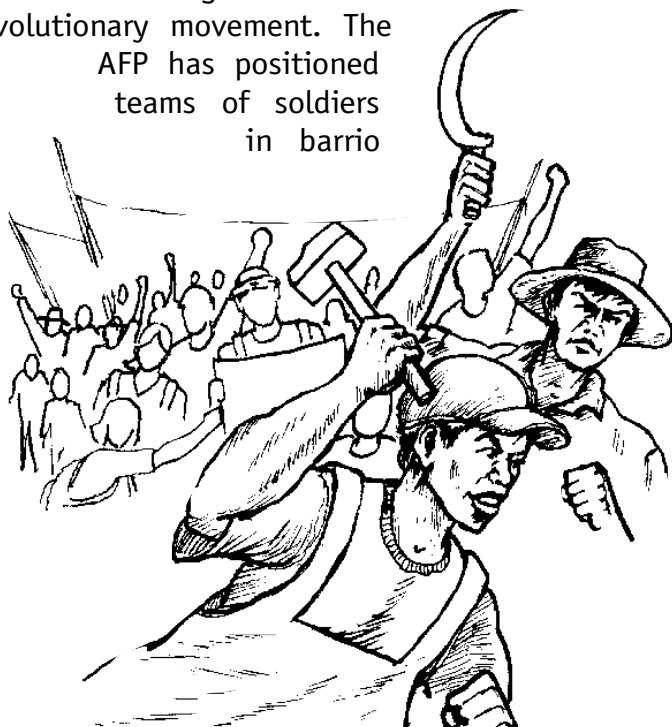
## Unite the people against the US-Aquino regime's war of suppression

**A**fter only a year and a half in power, the US-Aquino regime leaves behind a "road of righteousness" stained with the blood of victims of human rights violations committed in the course of the war of suppression being waged by the regime against the people. Benigno Aquino III's catchwords of "peace" and "respect for human rights" are not enough to cover up the brutality of his regime's armed minions against the Filipino people.

As soon as he came to power, Aquino gave marching orders to the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police to crush the New People's Army in three years. The AFP thus framed Oplan Bayanihan (OPB), a far more brutal war of suppression against the people.

Under OPB, military operations are being launched against villages suspected by the AFP and PNP of being active in the revolutionary movement. The

AFP has positioned  
teams of soldiers  
in barrio

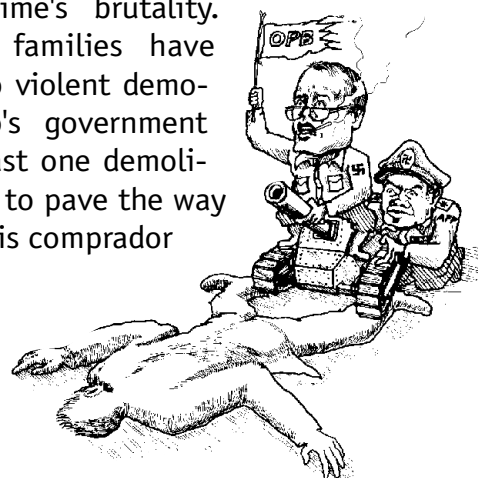


centers to wreak havoc, terrorize and attack people it considers as "enemies of the state." These vicious operations are patterned after those launched by the butcher Gen. Jovito Palparan from 2004-2010.

Wherever they operate, the AFP and PNP impose martial rule. They enforce curfews and conduct illegal searches. Persons suspected of involvement in the revolutionary movement are persecuted by the military through various means. Travel as well as work in the fields are restricted. Limits are imposed on the volume of food and other supplies that residents could purchase. Soldiers violate the people's domiciles. Military troops camp out within or beside campuses and other public places. Gambling and drunkenness among troopers are rampant.

This is the face of "people-centered" terrorism. The worst and most brutal of these AFP and PNP operations are conducted in areas where peasants wage intense struggles for land reform and minority peoples fight the incursion of foreign big plantations and mining companies on their ancestral lands.

In the cities, it is the urban poor communities that bear the brunt of the US-Aquino regime's brutality. Thousands of families have fallen victim to violent demolitions. Aquino's government conducts at least one demolition per month to pave the way for big bourgeois comprador



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projects. Workers' unions continue to suffer persecution, with not a few unionists becoming victims of extrajudicial killings.

The US-Aquino regime aims to suppress those who stand for the people's rights and interests. Just like the past regimes, the current government targets activists and leaders who are at the forefront of mass struggles. Illegal arrests, forced disappearances and extrajudicial killings are mounting. An activist or mass leader is killed almost every week by Aquino's armed minions. There are more than 350 political prisoners (including 78 arrested under the Aquino regime). But like Marcos, Aquino and his officials insist that there is not a single political prisoner in the country.

Among the political detainees who continue to languish in jail are 13 peace talks consultants of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP). The US-Aquino regime refuses to set them free despite having promised three times to release them. The consultants should long have been released in accordance with the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees (JASIG) which safeguards against the conduct of surveillance, arrest, imprisonment and other forms of persecu-

tion against personnel of both parties involved in the peace talks.

Aquino's refusal to comply with his obligations in the peace talks is proof of his lack of interest in negotiating with the NDFP. He gave off some soundbytes last year about the peace talks, but has since then put up one obstacle after another to prevent the talks from making any significant progress. With Aquino's rhetoric about "peace" and "respect for human rights" nothing but hot air, it has become evident that for him, the peace talks are nothing but an exercise in hypocrisy.

Aquino's genuine interests lie in intensifying the war of suppression against the people, using the military, police, CAFGU and the other state armed forces as his instruments. It therefore comes as no surprise that not a single military officer or element responsible for past fascist crimes has been charged and punished. Aquino continues to implement measures that overwhelmingly favor soldiers and policemen. The US has been providing military assistance to further upgrade the AFP and PNP's weaponry and equipment.

In the face of the US-Aquino regime's relentlessly intensifying war of suppression, the people


must further amplify their courage and fighting spirit. They must be roused to collectively defy military abuses. Human rights education must be propagated among their ranks, as provided for in the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL). With their consciousness raised, the people will determinedly defend their homes, livelihoods and freedoms.

Every single fascist crime must be cause for outrage. Every human rights violation committed by abusive soldiers, policemen and paramilitary forces must be made known to the entire nation and the whole world. Venues for the quick dissemination of information from farflung villages to the mass media, social media and other information channels over the internet must be invigorated. Every grievance emanating from the remotest sitio must be made to resonate over the entire archipelago.

The struggle for justice is the struggle not just of a few individual victims against particular soldiers or military and police units. To trample on a person's human rights is to trample on everyone's human rights. One person's cry for justice must become the nation's cry for justice.

It is not only the state's officers and armed minions who should be held accountable. The masterminds of the fascist war of suppression against the people must also be held responsible. The struggle to make Gloria Arroyo and her fascist followers pay for implementing the brutal Oplan Bantay Laya must continue.

At the same time, Benigno Aquino III must also be held accountable for his implementation of the repressive Oplan Bayanihan and his refusal to confront and resolve the basic social issues that lie at the roots of the people's armed resistance. **AB**

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## US-Aquino regime no different from predecessor

The US-Aquino regime is no different from its predecessor. After almost a year and a half in power, rampant violations of human rights continue. The destruction of farms, the forced evacuation of Lumad and peasants from their lands and homes especially in the Surigao and Agusan provinces, in Compostela Valley and General Santos City are as commonplace as they were before. The same can be said for the forced evacuation of tribespeople, the Bangsamoro and peasants from Samar and Negros, said KARAPATAN in its 2011 report.

Aside from extrajudicial killings and forced disappearances, among the other striking human rights violations committed by the US-Aquino regime are torture, arbitrary arrests, illegal detention, demo-

litions of urban poor communities, forced evacuations of villagers, destruction of people's property, threats, harassment, indiscriminate firing, prohibiting and violently dispersing protests and other people's assemblies and gatherings and using schools and other public places as headquarters or for other military purposes.

Bicol topped the list of places with the biggest incidence of human rights violations due to the US-Aquino regime's implementation of Oplan Bayanihan, followed by Southern Mindanao Region, Southern Tagalog, Western Visayas, Central Visayas and Eastern Visayas. Another mark of the present regime is its arrogant statement denying the existence of political prisoners. There are, in fact, 356 political prisoners, 78 of them arrested under the Aquino regime, and 13 of whom are NDFP consultants. **AB**

<b>Violations (July 2010-Oct. 2011)</b>	<b>Victims</b>
Extrajudicial killing	64
Forced disappearance	9
Torture	51
Frustrated extrajudicial killing	27
Illegal arrest and detention	135
Illegal search and seizure	120
Physical assault and injury	62
Demolition	6,108
Violation of domicile	243
Destruction of property	5,403
Divestment of property	185
Forced evacuation	4,376
Threat/harassment/intimidation	11,593
Indiscriminate firing	5,052
Forced/fake surrender	32
Forced labor	112
Use of civilians in police and/or military operations as guides and/or shields	19
Use of schools, medical, religious and other public places for military purposes	10,577
Restriction or violent dispersal of mass actions, public assemblies and gatherings	842

## Violent dispersal of youth protest

**P**olicemen violently dispersed a youth protest action along Recto Avenue in Manila in the afternoon of December 6. Firetrucks were mobilized to bombard the protesters with water while policemen pushed back more than a thousand youth and students marching from Morayta Avenue.

The youth were planning to join the "Campout Mendiola" protest action where they would pitch tents along Mendiola bridge for three days. Government forces positioned several police trucks along Mendiola to prevent the campout. The protesters went instead to Plaza Miranda in Quiapo where they set up camp. Workers and other sectors will be joining the youth in the next few days in another attempt to reach Mendi-

ola bridge.

The youth protest is led by organizations like Anakbayan, Kabataan Partylist and the League of Filipino Students and is supported by almost 200 other youth and student groups.

In a manifesto, the youth protesters declared "We can no longer stand a twisted social setup that robs the majority of our people of a decent life and basic social services. We can no

longer stand a social system that produces immense wealth for foreign interests and a few as the people, who toil all their lives, are increasingly pushed deeper into hunger, poverty and injustice."

"Campout Mendiola" is inspired by the upheavals in the Middle East and North Africa to the European strikes and the Occupy movements. It plans to mobilize tens of thousands of people from campuses, communities and workplaces to camp out at Mendiola to rock the nation with days of outrage and protest. Similar actions are set to take place in other regions. **AB**

## Aquino's statistical sleight of hand

Instead of confronting and addressing the basic problem of poverty, the Aquino regime has been manipulating government statistics to make it appear that there has been a reduction in the number of poverty-stricken Filipinos.

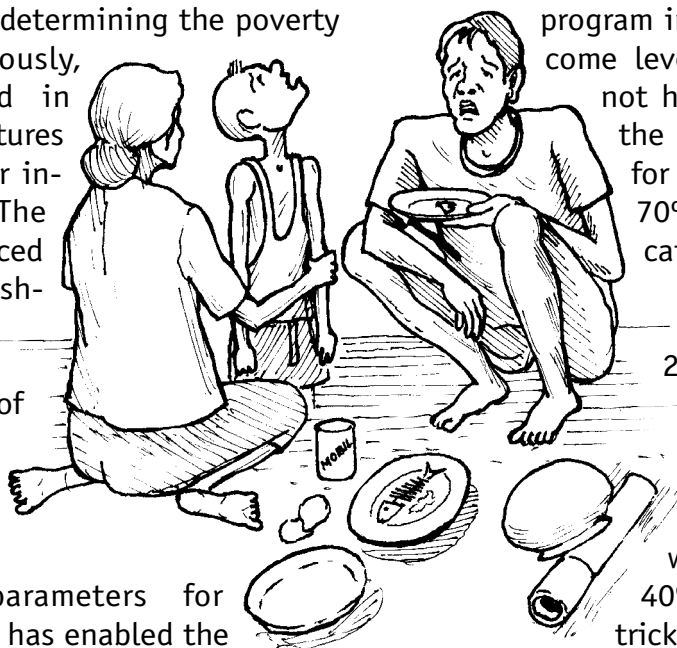
Kabataan Partylist Rep. Raymond Palatino recently exposed the changes made by the National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB) on the parameters for determining the poverty threshold. Previously, poverty was defined in terms of food expenditures not exceeding ₱52 per individual per day. The NSCB has since reduced the poverty food threshold to ₱46 per person per day by eliminating a number of items from the average person's estimated typical daily food consumption.

Changing the parameters for poverty determination has enabled the

Aquino government to fake a reduction in the poverty incidence from 26.3% to 20.9%. Maintaining the same parameters would have resulted in a rise in the poverty incidence to 32%.

The Aquino government has been engaging in such statistical sleight of hand in a desperate attempt to demonstrate the "success" of its Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) program in raising the people's income levels. Otherwise, it would not have been able to justify the ₱39.5 billion CCT budget for 2012, which reflects a 70% increase over the allocation for 2011.

The NSCB last manipulated its parameters in 2003 under the Arroyo regime to effect an imaginary reduction in the poverty incidence, which would have come close to 40% without the statistical trickery. **AB**



## Bogus peace zones assailed in Mountain Province

The Leonardo Pacsi Command (New People's Army-Mountain Province) strongly condemned the bogus consultations and referenda being conducted by the Provincial Peace and Order Council in the province's various municipalities. The Philippine National Police has been brazenly manipulating the referenda on whether to declare a "peace zone" in Mountain Province by packing consultations with police officers and personnel who favor the measure. The referendum question "Do you want peace?" is also highly loaded and patently deceptive.

The "peace zone" concept is being peddled by reformist forces ostensibly to achieve peace and allow the implementation of development projects and programs. Accordingly, both the AFP and the NPA will not be allowed inside the "peace zone." Instead, "local" armed forces like the CAFGU-CAA and the Cordillera People's Liberation Army along with the PNP will be positioned in the

area. Nonetheless, the military may be allowed inside the "peace zone" on any pretext and whenever it wants to get in. In essence, the "peace zone" concept does not really rid the area of the AFP. Worse, it prevents the people from defending themselves, whether through their collective action or through their army, the NPA.

Actually, the "peace zone's" real objective is to drive away

the NPA and isolate the people from armed struggle and their real army. Once the NPA is out of the "peace zone," the people will lose their defender, leaving the military and the ruling classes free to ravage the area and let in destructive and plunderous projects such as large-scale mining.

Then and now, localized "peace zones" have run contrary to the national level peace talks between the GPH and the NDFP. Under the framework of "local peace accords," previous agreements between the GPH and NDFP like the CARHRIHL may be disregarded within the "peace zones."

The "peace zone" concept first emerged in the Philippines under Corazon Aquino's regime. Social democrats (SocDem) who were highly influential in Malacañang pushed the concept through the Coalition for Peace

(COPE).

From the Aquino to the Ramos regimes, there were 11 "peace zones" established nationwide. They were set up in, among others, Carmen and Tuluhan, North Cotabato; Naga City, Camarines Sur; Tabuk, Kalinga; Matagaragan, Abra; and Sagada in Mountain Province.

The Sagada "peace zone" has often been bandied about by the concept's promoters as a successful example. Nothing could be farther from the truth.

Sagada was a highly militarized town from the late 1980s until the 1990s. There were grave human rights violations. Military detachments were set up within schools and even inside the municipal hall. Places sacred to the people, such as the *dap-ay* (meeting places of the elders) were violated by soldiers who urinated and defecated in them. Two minors were killed by drunken soldiers in October 1988 right in front of the municipal hall in the Sagada town center. Another minor was killed in the crossfire in a gun-battle between the military and the NPA at the Sagada Central School in November 1988.

These incidents strengthened calls by Sagada residents for the demilitarization of their town. They demanded the pullout of the fascist AFP troops, justice for the victims of military violence and the dismantling of paramilitary forces and the rest of the AFP's intelligence infrastructure. Said the residents, it was true that the people were being caught in the middle of the AFP-NPA conflict, especially those suspected by the military of supporting the revolutionary movement.

AFP troops often vented their ire on the people whenever they suffered losses in the battlefield.

SocDem like Teresita "Ging" Deles (then a member of the Malacañang staff and currently the head of the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process or OPAPP) seized on the demilitarization call, but supplanted it with their "peace zone" concept.

Despite the "peace zone's" establishment, however, the enemy attacked Mt. Sisipitan in Sagada in June 1991, bombing it and sending in ground troops. To make an improvised landing field for its helicopters, the military razed an entire

hectare of forest land on top of the mountain, which serves as the main watershed of Sagada and the adjoining town of Besao. The people's economic activities were also disrupted by the AFP's constant mortar attacks on Mt. Sisipitan.

The thousands of troops under the 702nd Brigade that were poured into the area in November 1991 stayed until 1999. Armored personnel carriers and other combat vehicles regularly scoured the roads leading to the Sagada town center. Compared to the time of the Marcos dictatorship when no one from Sagada or Besao joined the CAFGU, the AFP was able to form 14 CAFGU companies all over the province when the "peace zone" existed.

Three battalions of the 702nd Brigade were concentrated at the center and other areas of Mountain Province: the 24th IB in Sagada-Besao; the 68th IB in Bontoc-Sadanga; and the 69th IB in Radian-Bauko-Sabangan. The military dug trenches at the top of the mountain overlooking Poblacion, Sagada. Foxholes encircled the church, leading all the way to the altar where the soldiers cooked their meals. The same was done to the churches in Aguid, Sagada and Bagnen, Bauko.

Contrary to the SocDems' claims, there was no peace inside Sagada's "peace zone." This bitter history will only repeat itself if another "peace zone" scheme is allowed in Mountain Province.



## GABRIELA slams violence against women

**G**ABRIELA and other progressive groups rallied at Mendiola in Manila on November 25 to commemorate the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women.

The commemorative day was declared by the United Nations in 1999.

The rallyists reminded the Aquino government that it should hold Gloria Arroyo accountable for violating women's human rights. GABRIELA noted that 153 women were killed, 11 forcibly disappeared and 290 illegally arrested under the Arroyo regime. They are among the 1,208 victims of extrajudicial killings, 206 victims of forced disappearance and 1,099 victims of torture during the Arroyo regime.

GABRIELA secretary general Lana Linaban said that Arroyo's electoral sabotage case was just a drop in the bucket. If criminal cases were filed for every human rights violation under her regime, they would be enough to keep her in prison for hundreds of years.

The rallyists also assailed the continuing rights abuses under Oplan Bayanihan. Six women have been summarily killed and there are 35 women political detainees currently being held in various prisons nationwide.

Linaban added that the military frequently uses sexual violence to trample on women's dignity and fighting spirit.

She cited the case of Charity Diño, a 31-year old schoolteacher who was interrogated by the military wearing only her undergarments. Diño is accused of being a rebel along with Billie Batrina and Sonny Rogelio. Together, they have come to be known as the "Talisay 3." They were, in fact, volunteer organizers of the Samahan ng mga Magsasaka sa Batangas. They have been detained at the Batangal City Jail since 2009.

GABRIELA demanded that Benigno Aquino III order the immediate release of the 35 women political detainees. **AB**

## Victory and bigger battles ahead in Hacienda Luisita

**F**armers and farm workers of Hacienda Luisita celebrated as the Supreme Court issued a decision in their favor on November 22. After a decades-long legal battle, the Court finally ordered the distribution of the 4,500-hectare hacienda to its farmers and farm workers. Nonetheless, the latter and their broad supporters know full well that the fight is far from over and that there are many more obstacles to be hurdled before they could gain possession of the land.

The Supreme Court also ordered Hacienda Luisita Inc. (HLI) to compensate the farmers and farm workers in the amount of ₱1 billion, equivalent to the value of the land HLI had already sold to other entities in the past several years, including portions that had been converted to residential enclaves and on which part of the Subic-Clark Expressway had been constructed. The Supreme Court nullified the HLI's Stock Distribution Option (SDO) which the Cojuangcos had used since the 1980s to avoid land distribution. The Court recognized that the powerful landlord clan had been able to maintain its control over the vast estate through the SDO.

Nonetheless, the Court has also ordered that the Cojuangco-Aquino family be given "just compensation" for its alleged role in developing the land. Following the Court's valuation of ₱170,000/hectare, the clan would have to be compensated to the tune of ₱836 million. The amount would initially be shouldered by the government, using public funds. The farmers would then amortize the amount, depositing payments at a government

bank over a period of up to 30 years. If the Cojuangcos had their way, they would like to be compensated in the amount of ₱1 million per hectare, meaning the peasants would be owing them almost ₱5 billion.

Paying off debts is a huge



burden to farmers, who eventually fall victim to loan sharks and big businessmen. In many instances, they are forced to sell back the land that had been distributed to them to landlords and corporations.

The Cojuangco-Aquinos, including their number one representative Benigno Aquino III, have been invoking CARPER as the legal basis for demanding "just compensation." The peasants' response: They do not owe the land to the Cojuangco-Aquinos, especially since the clan gained possession of it by using public funds. More than this, they who have been toiling on the land for decades without having received enough wages and compensation are the ones who have enriched the land and not the Cojuangco-Aquinos who have been living off their sweat and blood.

Moreover, although the Supreme Court recognized the SDO as an obstacle to land reform within Hacienda Luisita, it has not outrightly declared it unconstitutional. The Cojuangco-Aquinos can still invoke it in the next court battles. Neither has the Court decision covered the many other haciendas nationwide that are under the SDO scheme.

The legal victory at Hacienda Luisita brings to the fore the need to advance the enactment in Congress of the Genuine Agrarian Reform Bill (GARB) which provides for the free distribution of land to agrarian reform beneficiaries. It also underscores the reactionary character of CARPER, which is the legal framework now being invoked by Aquino to bleed the peasants dry and revoke their legal victory.

It is correct for the farmers and farm workers of Hacienda Luisita to demand the free distribution of land and oppose any scheme that would oblige them to amortize the land that was unjustly seized from them by the Cojuangcos.

It is also correct for the farmers and farm workers of the vast estate to persevere in their campaign to collectively manage and till the lands at Hacienda Luisita. For the past several months, they have been planting vegetables and raising livestock in order to enjoy the fruits of the land even in the absence of a decision from the Supreme Court. They have thus been able to raise their incomes, improve their living conditions and sustain their ongoing struggle. They did not rely on the Court's decision then. They should not do so now. AB

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## Hacienda Luisita victory inspires other struggles

The effects of the Supreme Court's historic November 22 decision to revoke the Stock Distribution Option scheme and begin distributing the lands in Hacienda Luisita to the farmers and farm workers of the vast estate have reverberated beyond the hacienda's boundaries.

The Court decision has spurred the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilpinas (KMP) on November 25 to call for agrarian reform coverage for the 12 other haciendas nationwide that are under the SDO scheme. Nine of these are in Negros Occidental, two in Iloilo and one in Davao del Sur. They have a combined area of 2,787 hectares.

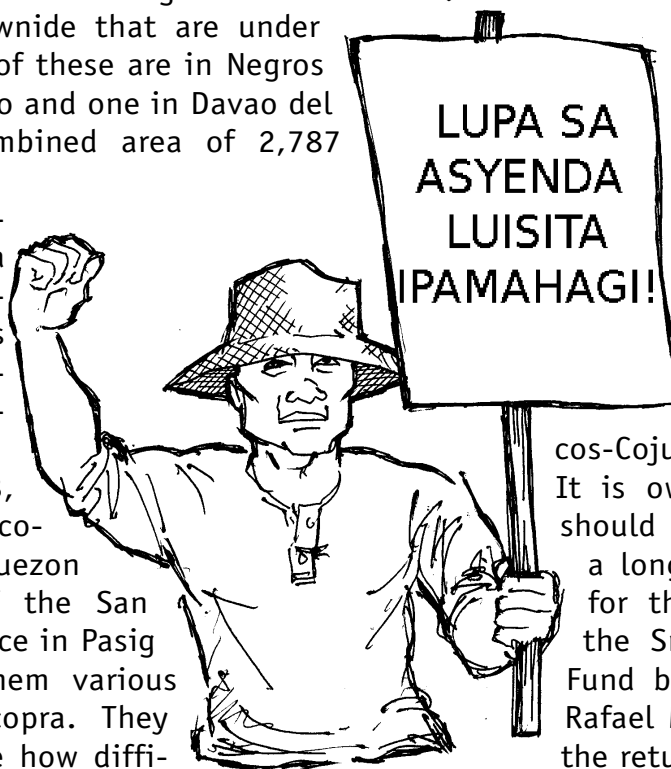
Meanwhile, the latest victory in Hacienda Luisita has also inspired coconut farmers to demand anew the return to them of the coco levy fund.

On November 28, more than 200 small coconut farmers from Quezon protested in front of the San Miguel Corp. (SMC) office in Pasig City, bringing with them various tools for producing copra. They wanted to demonstrate how diffi-

cult copra making is.

Said the Pinag-isang Lakas ng Magbubukid sa Quezon and KMP, the coco levy fund was derived from a tax on the sale of copra imposed during martial law. In 1983, the fund which was then worth P2 billion was used by Danding Cojuangco to buy the majority shares at SMC. The shares are now valued at P200 billion.

The coco levy fund was forcibly exacted by the Marcos-Cojuangco clique, said the KMP. It is owned by small farmers and should have been returned to them a long time ago. The KMP called for the immediate enactment of the Small Coconut Farmers Trust Fund bill filed by Anakpawis Rep. Rafael Mariano to pave the way for the return of the coco levy fund. AB



## Arroyo's gimmickry

Gloria Arroyo's camp has been cooking up one gimmick after another in an effort to prevent the former president's detention in a regular jail during her trial. The latest is a hilarious claim that an assassination plot codenamed "Put the Little Girl to Sleep" has been hatched against her. As the plot goes, Benigno Aquino III's government is allegedly out to poison Arroyo or use other means to kill the former president and now Pampanga representative.

No one took the Arroyo camp's statements seriously, with several sectors still demanding that Arroyo be detained in an ordinary prison. After all, her own doctors have said that she is well enough to leave the hospital. The court had already ruled earlier that Arroyo remain under hospital arrest, but no longer at the pricey St. Luke's. Arroyo has been remanded to the Veterans Memorial Medical Center (VMMC), a public hospital where former president Joseph Estrada had also been detained.

The Arroyo camp has also

been trying to secure a house arrest order so Arroyo could stay in her palatial house in La Vista, Quezon City. Or, should she remain at the VMMC, her lawyers have asked that she be allowed to use her laptop and cellphone, a privilege denied detainees.

Because practically no one sympathizes with Arroyo in the Philippines, her camp is trying to muster some sympathy abroad. One of her lawyers, Atty. Raul Lambino left the country for Europe on December 1 to meet with the Christian Democratic Party. Lambino is set to report on the Aquino regime's al-

leged political persecution of Arroyo in hopes of garnering international support for her.

Arroyo's accusations of political persecution in the hands of the Aquino government are meant not only to court public sympathy but to cover up the Aquino government's special treatment of Arroyo.

Even before the 2010 presidential elections, the Arroyo and Aquino camps had already come to an arrangement that Aquino would tread softly on the Arroyos once he becomes president. This explains why it took 505 days (or more than a year) for Arroyo to be charged criminally and arrested.

The Filipino people must exercise the utmost vigilance and monitor every twist and turn in the Arroyo-Aquino conspiracy in order to expose every accommodation granted by the Aquino government to the Arroyo camp and make sure that Arroyo is punished for her grave crimes against the people. **AB**

## Red pangayaw

At least eight firearms were confiscated by a group of Lumad from security guards of Sagittarius Mines Inc. (SMI) in Barangay Tablu, Tampakan, South Cotabato on November 27.

The Lumad belong to a group called Red Pangayaw.

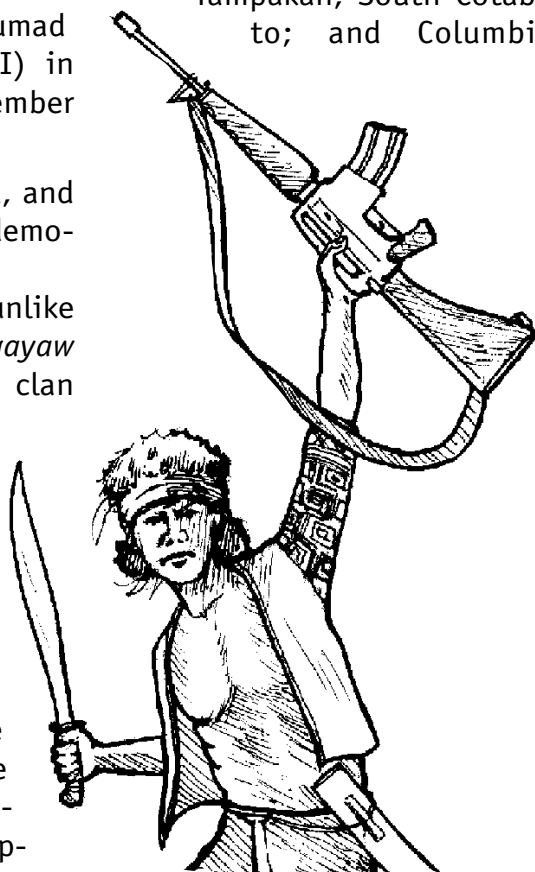
The National Democratic Front in Far South Mindanao Region (NDF-FSMR) hailed the Red Pangayaw as an armed mass movement of the Lumad for courageously and determinedly taking on a powerful enemy such as the giant Xstrata-SMI mining company.

NDF-FSMR spokesperson Ka Efren explained that although the group used the term "pangayaw," its objective is not simple personal vendetta. Red Pangayaw is a mass movement fighting for the legitimate and

just demands of the Lumad, and is part of the national-democratic movement.

Their struggle is also unlike that of the ordinary pangayaw which targets personal or clan enemies. Pulang Pangayaw targets the armed and fascist instruments of SMI such as the 27th and 39th IB of the Philippine Army, the special CAFGU, private goons and security guards of Xstrata-SMI and Task Force Kitaco and its intelligence operatives. Task Force Kitaco was formed by the Philip-

pine Army 10th ID to focus on Kiblawan, Davao del Sur; Tampakan, South Cotabato; and Columbio,







Sultan Kudarat, municipalities where Xstrata-SMI has its main operations.

Said Red Pangayaw: "For the past five years since Xstrata started its exploration of our lands, we have tried to tell them peacefully that we do not want the mines. We do not want to destroy our mountains, our rivers and our hunting grounds. We do not want the meager income they give us in exchange for our livelihood. But they have been adamant in their desire to extract the gold and copper from our lands.

"So there has been trouble. They deployed the 27th IB, the 39th IB, Task Force Kitaco and several companies of security guards to pacify us, silence us, and later drive us away. We tried to negotiate, we tried to barricade, we tried to petition. But everything has come to naught. So now there is no other recourse but to fight back."

## Ambush in Paquibato

Three soldiers from the 69th IB were killed in an ambush by the 1st Pulang Bagani Company on November 29 in Sitio Guinobatan, Barangay Paradise Embac, Paquibato District, Davao City. The Red fighters were also able to seize an M203 grenade launcher. The soldiers were part of a Community Peace and Development (COPD) team conducting military operations in the area.

Meanwhile, the Merardo Arce Command of the New People's Army in Southern Mindanao Region strongly assailed Davao City mayor Sara Duterte after the latter called for the surrender of Ka Parago and Ka Oda, both leaders of the 1st Pulang Bagani Company. Duterte had also earlier defended a soldiers' encampment near a school in Paradise Embac despite complaints from residents. She has also consistently assailed NPA tactical offensives against the 69th IB which is notorious for its serious human rights abuses against Paquibato residents.

Thousands of residents of Paquibato and Panabo have fallen victim to the 69th IB. To name a few, the abusive battalion is guilty of forcible surrenders and recruitment into the CAFGU; attempted rape; molestation of women and harassment of youth and schoolchildren; fomenting *pangayaw* to instigate conflicts between Lumad and non-Lumad settlers; drunkenness; threats and intimidation; and using civilian facilities such as schools, residents' homes and barangay halls for military purposes. **AB**

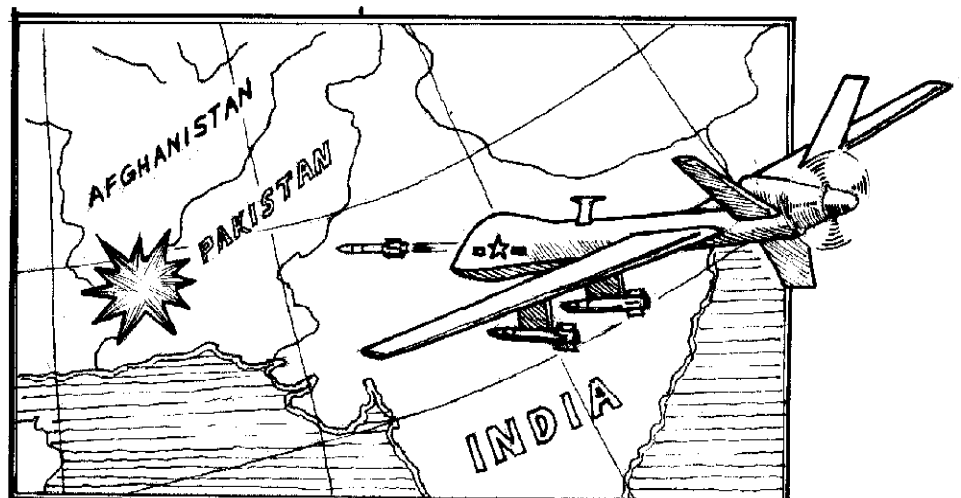
## US using drones against civilians

Up to 2,912 persons—including 160 children—have been killed by the US government through indiscriminate bombing attacks by drones in Pakistan, Yemen, Somalia, Libya, Iraq and Afghanistan. This estimate was made in a study issued in October by independent media persons belonging to the Bureau of Investigative Journalism. The actual number is likely higher since some areas that have been bombed by drones have been off limits to investigators.

The US has been using drones extensively in bombing Pakistan and Afghanistan. At least 300 drone bombing raids have been conducted in the tribal areas of Pakistan alone. Most of them (248) were undertaken under Barack Obama's government. The US claims that the drones have been targeting "terrorists."

Drones or unmanned aerial vehicles are among the US'

newest military weapons. Drones are controlled by more than 2,000 Combat Systems Officers stationed in the Central Intelligence Agency's Counterterrorism Centers scattered in over 60 clandestine locations around the globe.





The drones used in the Philippines and elsewhere in Asia are controlled from the Anderson Air Force Base in Guam.

The use of drones has become an important part of the US' terrorist war. This year, it allocated \$4.8 billion more for this purpose. In 2010, the US only had 50 drones. In the next few years, it plans to add 700 more.

Most drones are used for reconnaissance, surveillance and gathering electronic information against anti-US individuals, groups or movements. But there are others like the Predator drones that are armed with missiles or bombs.

Human rights advocacy groups the world over strongly oppose the use of drones because most of their victims are civilians.

Drone attacks also violate international humanitarian law which strictly prohibits US intervention in the internal affairs of other countries and violations of sovereignty. The US is accountable for all the extrajudicial attacks launched by drones from its various military bases worldwide. AB

## 2 million strike in UK

**M**ore than two million public sector workers in the United Kingdom waged a successful strike on November 30 to oppose added reforms in the pension system. It was biggest strike in the UK in 30 years.

The mobilization was led by 24 unions representing 2.6 million workers. More than a million joined the strike in England; 300,000 in Scotland; 200,000 in Northern Ireland; and 170,000 in Wales. Different sectors also had deep and extensive participation in the strike.

The unions were angered after the government required all members to pay additional pension contributions, raised the retirement age and made revisions in the pension system that would result in reduced wages.

The people were angered even more when Finance Minister George Osborne announced a two-year extension of the existing wage freeze. Seven-hundred thousand (700,000) public sector workers will also be fired after renewed budget cuts allegedly spurred by the rapidly worsening economic crisis.

Public services were practically paralyzed for 24 hours after thousands of teachers and students; doctors, nurses and even patients; policemen, lawyers, drivers; airport, immigration and customs workers and officials; library, museum and art gallery employees; and even garbage collectors, cooks and others walked out.

More than 70% (16,000) of the UK's 21,700 government-run schools were closed. In Northern Ireland, train and bus services were 100% paralyzed while subways in Glasgow and Merseyside were closed. More than 200 pickets; 34 big demonstrations; and 15 big marches were launched nationwide. The biggest march-demonstrations took place in the cities of London, Bristol, Manchester, Belfast, Birmingham, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Brighton and Dundee with each mobilization joined by 10,000 to 30,000 strikers.

The government used thousands of policemen to suppress the mass actions. At the center of London, police put up steel cordons to block the marchers. Ninety-six (96) strikers were arrested, beaten up and detained in a march towards the Parliament building. This occurred when some 60 members of Occupy London were able to enter the Xstrata Mining Company building and control it for six hours. From the top of the building, the protesters unfurled a streamer with the slogan "All power to the 99%." AB

### Mounting civilian casualties in Afghanistan

**M**ore than 1,500 civilians have been killed in night raids by North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) forces in Afghanistan. NATO has adamantly defended these raids, saying they are an important weapon against the Taliban. But the figures now point to the night raids as the single biggest cause of civilian deaths in Afghanistan since US-led forces invaded the country in 2001.

Night raids by NATO have been increasing in number and frequency as the 2014 deadline for the withdrawal of most of its forces nears. Every night, an average of ten raids are conducted. In some instances, up to 40 raids have been conducted in a single night. AB

## Retail businessmen strike in India

The Indian government was forced to withdraw plans to open the retail sector to foreigners after the country's small retailers launched a big protest on November 30.

The strike was led by the Confederation of All India Traders representing 10,000 retail business organizations. Clashes erupted between the police and protesters in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh. As a result, stores were abandoned in Agra and Chhattisgarh and garage operations and school activities were disrupted.

The government-sponsored business reforms will allow giant international supermarket chains to penetrate the local market. Although their operations would be confined to the cities, the foreign retail giants will be allowed to own 51% of shares of retail corporations.

International companies have been keen on penetrating India because its population of one billion makes it the second biggest market worldwide. AB

## Workers celebrate Bonifacio Day

MILITANT workers' organizations and other progressive groups launched a protest action on November 30 at the foot of Mendiola Bridge to commemorate the 148th birth anniversary of Andres Bonifacio.

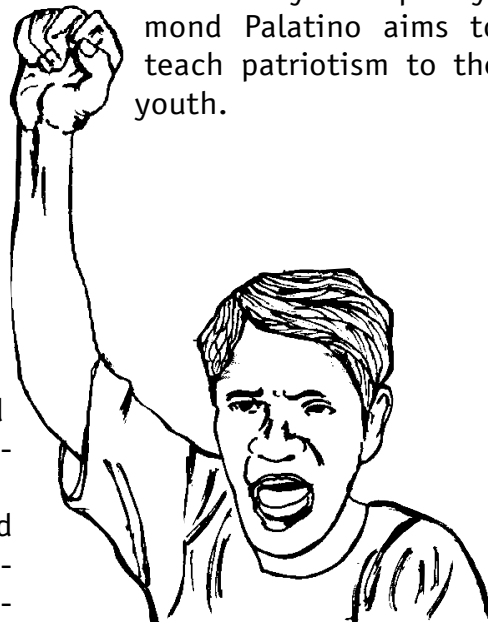
Wearing Katipunero costumes, some 3,000 rallyists led by the Kilusang Mayo Uno, Partidong Anakpawis, GABRIELA and Kalipunan ng Damayang Mahihirap called on the people to emulate Bonifacio and carry on his struggle for genuine social change.

The protesters also demanded a ₱125 increase in the daily wage and an end to contractualization. They demanded that the Hacienda Luisita lands be distributed unconditionally and called for genuine agrarian reform and genuine independence from imperialism.

KMU chair Elmer Labog said that if Bonifacio were alive today, he would be waging a revolution for social change. Labog called on workers and

other impoverished sectors to study the real conditions prevailing in the country and the roots of poverty and join or organize unions and other groups that would advance their rights.

Meanwhile, a bill has been filed in Congress making the study of Bonifacio's life and principles a required subject in college. The bill filed by Kabataan Partylist Rep. Raymond Palatino aims to teach patriotism to the youth.



## QC government orders 2 demolitions

TWO violent demolitions were conducted by the local government of Quezon City and the Philippine National Police on November 28.

A resident was arrested and another was wounded after some 30 policemen and members of a demolition team attacked an urban poor community of more than a hundred families along BIR Road, East Triangle in Barangay Central. The residents first tried to fend off the demolition by putting up a barricade. They also tried to negotiate for a reprieve. When the urban poor began to actively defend their homes, the police attacked, destroying a number of shanties. An out of uniform policeman was seen firing his weapon. Recovered from the scene were six spent M16 shells.

The residents are firmly opposed to the demolition that would pave the way for the construction of the Quezon City Central Business District which is part of the Aquino regime's Public-Private Partnership program.

Meanwhile, in Sitio Looban, Barangay Kaligayahan, Novaliches, elements of Task Force Illegal Structures and Task Force Nova tried to force their way into an urban poor community in the area by ramming a truck into a barricade that had been set up by the residents. Several of the protesters were injured and arrested.

The residents are against a housing project planned in the area by the local government, saying that they would be forced to relocate to places without decent services and livelihood opportunities.

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## Fascists kill Indian communist leader

The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) strongly condemned the reactionary Indian government for the brutal torture and murder of Comrade Malloujula Koteswara Rao, spokesperson and member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of India (CPI-Maoist).

In a statement, the Indian government claimed that Rao, who was more popularly known in India as Comrade Kihenji

was killed in an encounter in the Burishol Forest Area in West Midnapore District, Jangalmahal, West Bengal on November 24. But based on the CPI-Maoist's information, Comrade Kishenji was negotiating with West Bengal officials when he was treacherously captured and killed by fascist soldiers.

Said the CPP, the imperialists and reactionaries and their fascist lapdogs in India have

succeeded in satiating their bloodlust in torturing and murdering Comrade Kishenji. But they will pay for this brutal crime. The Indian people will continue to advance along the revolutionary path of armed resistance and mass struggle until the reactionary state is overthrown and national and social liberation are achieved. Thus will justice be attained for the oppressed and exploited people of India.

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