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Editorial

Resist Oplan Bayanihan in South Quezon-Bondoc Peninsula

A massive and brutal terror campaign is currently ravaging the people of South Qezon-Bondoc Peninsula (SQ-BP) as part of the intensification of the US-Aquino regime's Oplan Bayanihan war of suppression.

It is marked by one of the most concentrated deployments of fascist forces in the history of the enemy's suppression and encirclement campaigns. Up to eight strike battalions are positioned in 22 towns, or an average of 200 fascist forces per municipality. They include the entire 74th IB, the 85th IB, the 76th IB and Special Forces Battalion, the 416th and 417th Public Safety Management Companies and three and a half battalions of CAFGU under the 59th IB. This is aside from forces of the Philippine National Police assigned to the various towns of SQ-BP.

The presence of these fascist forces are a major disruption in the normal course of the masses' lives. They impose martial rule. They utilize their so-called "people-centered" tactics under Oplan Baya-

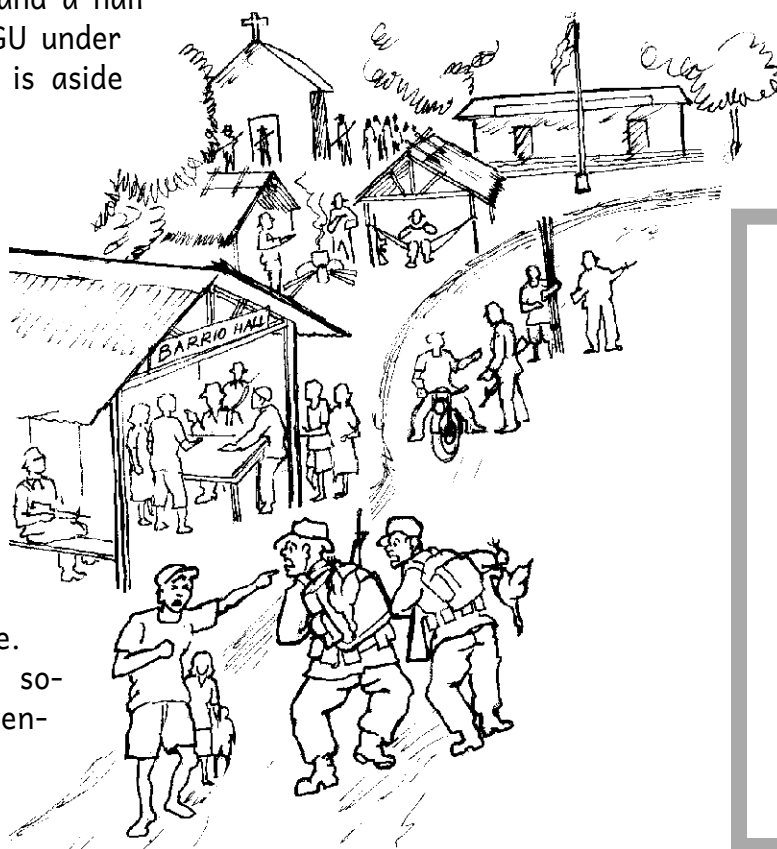
nihan but commit wanton violations of human rights.

Squad-size groups of armed soldiers comprising "peace and development teams" stay for long periods in villages. For up to six months, they live like fatted pigs in peasants' houses in over 50 barrios, spending their days getting drunk, gambling and texting. They also use barangay centers and other public

structures are bases. They are a bane to the masses' livelihood.

The soldiers oblige everyone to attend their public meetings. They subject the locals to interrogation in the guise of conducting a "census." They summon anyone they would like to investigate and harass those who have been active in mass struggles, accusing them of being members of revolutionary mass organizations or of being supporters of the armed revolution. They are then subjected to relentless intimidation to coerce them to cooperate with the military and "clear their record."

Those who refuse to cooperate feel compelled to leave the area to avoid threats to their lives.



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The fascist brutality of Oplan Bayanihan in SQ-BP cannot be concealed. Since Oplan Bayanihan began ravaging the area, more than a hundred human rights violations have been documented, including violations of the rights of children, killings and abductions. Cases of illegal searches and arrests abound.

Oplan Bayanihan is being stepped up in SQ-BP in accordance with the US-Aquino regime and the AFP's objective of clearing the area of the NPA by the end of 2012. Aquino wants to turn SQ-BP into his "trophy" for its long history of peasant struggles and armed revolution.

Nonetheless, the US-Aquino regime is inadvertently creating a contradiction. In intensifying its campaign of suppression, it drives the people toward the path of mass struggle to resist oppression and assert their demands for genuine land reform and an end to feudal exploitation. The US-Aquino regime's mounting brutality only convinces the people all the more of

the need to bear arms and fight.

In the face of the regime's stepped up violence, the Communist Party of the Philippines calls on the people of SQ-BP, the concerned NPA units in the guerrilla front and in the entire Southern Tagalog region, and all local Party branches and revolutionary mass organizations to promptly and with all their might expose, assail, resist and frustrate Oplan Bayanihan. In the coming months, they must act with all courage and with utmost skill and invigorate mass struggles and intensify tactical offensives.

The massive militarization of SQ-BP opens many opportunities for accumulating big victories and advancing the revolutionary movement in a major way.

The local NPA units must launch more extensive, more numerous and more intensive tactical offensives in the coming months. They must punish the fascists who have been brutalizing the masses. They must steel their determination and further raise the capabilities of the NPA units in SQ-BP. They must develop expertise in taking advantage


of the favorable terrain, the superiority of guerrilla tactics and the depth of mass support in order to inflict casualties on the enemy, seize their weapons and arm the growing number of Red fighters.

There are so many opportunities for launching tactical offensives that they are sure to win. The NPA must closely monitor the enemy's movements to determine the poorly manned and scattered units of the AFP, their supply lines and other weak targets. The NPA must raise its offensive posture and its capability for quick and clandestine action in order to take advantage of the many opportunities that have opened to launch armed attacks on the fascist enemy.

NPA units in other parts of Southern Tagalog must launch timely tactical offensives in accordance with their reading and monitoring of the AFP's deployment and movements. The NPA in the neighboring region of Bicol must also launch tactical offensives to force the enemy to shift its units currently concentrated in SQ-BP. Thus, local NPA units in SQ-BP will be further able to maneuver and inflict ever bigger blows on the enemy.

We must enhance the people's courage to resist the US-Aquino regime's campaign of suppression. We must forge their militancy to resist the rampage, terrorism, deception and brutality being inflicted on them by the fascist soldiers and other armed personnel of the reactionary regime. The people must launch various kinds of mass actions including organized evacuations and other protests in the town centers to denounce the presence and basing of soldiers in their homes and villages.

Simultaneously, we must propagate the demand for gen-

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uine land reform and agrarian reform and make it resonate throughout. The antifascist struggle will be deepened and strengthened through the invigoration of mass struggles to reduce land rent, raise the wages of farm workers, eliminate usury and have the peasants' agricultural produce sold at the correct prices.

The revolutionary mass organizations and local Party groups and branches in SQ-BP must act firmly against the ravages of Oplan Bayanihan. They must strengthen mass struggles and quickly expand defense committees and people's militias. They must strengthen the underground movement. They must unleash the masses' initiative and creativity in using various tactics in order to seize weapons and launch various attacks on the enemy. NPA recruitment must be stepped up.

We must form a broad united front to support the people in SQ-BP against Oplan Bayanihan. We must strengthen the movement against militarization and for human rights advocacy. Let us call for myriad investigations on the growing number of human rights violations, especially violations of the rights and welfare of children. We must expose the criminal officers and personnel of the AFP and file cases against them.

Let the cry for justice of the people of SQ-BP resonate worldwide. Let us win the sympathy of

Filipinos and other nationalities abroad and encourage them to launch protests. Let us strengthen the call to hold accountable the officers and men of the AFP responsible for violations of human rights and international humanitarian law.

Let us learn from the experiences of the people and the revolutionary forces from other regions in order to achieve major victories in the coming months against Oplan Bayanihan in SQ-BP and pave the way for the advance of the peasant masses' democratic struggles and the strengthening of the armed revolution.

As the brutality in South Quezon-Bondoc Peninsula has shown, Aquino has proven that Oplan Bayanihan is no different from, but even more violent than past oplans. It has been clearly demonstrated in SQ-BP that the AFP catchphrases "defending human rights" and "advancing peace" are worthless.

The Filipino people are acutely aware that the US-Aquino regime's Oplan Bayanihan war of suppression is a war being waged in defense of the rotten oppressive and exploitative system. But no matter how brutal, it will surely be defeated in the face of the courage and militancy of the people and their determination to advance along the path of mass struggle and armed revolution. **AB**

Military abuses in South Quezon

Human rights advocacy groups strongly condemn the grave military abuses accompanying the massive and intense militarization in Quezon. Eight combat battalions concentrated in the province's first and second districts are sowing terror in civilian communities under the US-Aquino regime's Oplan Bayanihan.

The soldiers maliciously accuse the residents of being members of the New People's Army to justify the saturation drives in their communities.

One of the latest victims of AFP violence is the 17-year old niece of Genelyn Dichoso, a resident of Barangay 10, Poblacion, Catanauan. The girl was killed in the crossfire between soldiers and Red fighters on April 29 in Lopez, Quezon. Martyred in the encounter was Pamela Jane Lapiz, a Party cadre. (*see related article*) The military claimed that Dichoso's niece was also a Red fighter despite proof that she was a student who was just visiting a relative when the encounter took place. The AFP sent in two six-by-six truckloads of soldiers to harass the people attending the wake of the slain girl. On the day of her burial, soldiers forced their way into the family's house where a 7-year old girl was alone sleeping. The child was traumatized by the experience.

In the early morning of May 9, soldiers from the 74th IB harassed Christopher Prieto and his family. They were then fast asleep when the soldiers suddenly entered their house ostensibly looking for firearms. Prieto was then with his wife, their four-month old baby and four oth-

er children. The soldiers left when they could not find any guns. That same day, Prieto was forced to leave his house to avoid another bout of harassment from the military.

The Prieto family is but one of the many civilians victimized by the intensified militarization of 22 villages in the province.

The military has long been sowing terror in Quezon. Last year, the military abducted Felix Balaton from his farm. His relatives said they saw him being brought to Camp San Miguel Dao in Lopez. But the military continues to deny having custody of Balaton.

Aside from Balaton who is considered desaparecido, human rights organizations have documented four cases of torture, 15 cases of illegal arrest and detention and five cases of illegal searches in the province. **AB**

Martyrs of South Quezon

Ka Sol, Ka Minda and Ka Agum are three of nine Red fighters and Party cadres slain in a series of gunbattles in South Quezon in April.

Ka Sol. Pamela Jane “Ka Sol” Lapiz, a revolutionary Party leader and Red fighter was killed in Barangay Sta. Catalina, Lopez, Quezon in the morning of April 29.

Ka Sol was formerly a student activist at the University of the Philippines-Los Baños (UP-LB) in the latter part of the 1980s. She was known to her fellow students and activists as a good comrade and friend and a compassionate leader. She was also famous for the songs she composed and her skill in playing the guitar.

Ka Sol joined the New People's Army (NPA) in 1995.

Many of those who attended the tribute held for her at the UPLB were her friends, relatives and former comrades. The tribute became an opportunity to review her life as she tread the path of revolutionary struggle. A video was presented documenting Ka Sol's life as a revolutionary NPA cadre and teacher to her fellow comrades and the masses.

Tributes from the New People's Army-Apolonio Mendoza Command (Quezon), Kabataang Makabayan, Revolutionary Council of Trade Unions, National Democratic Front and other revolutionary organizations were read.

In a courageous speech, Ka Sol's mother told the audience how she fully supported her daughter in the path she chose as a revolutionary. She said that although she had lost a beloved child, she had no regrets about what her daughter had done for, and contributed to, the people.

Ka Sol's second child thanked those who attended the tribute.

Ka Minda. Rechel “Ka Minda” Tenteo was a worker who hailed from Catanduanes. Because of her family's poverty, she was forced to leave for Manila to find work after graduating from high school in 1995. At first, she took a computer secretarial course at AMA in Diliman, Quezon City but did not finish it when she had to look for a job at once to support herself.

She became a contractual worker in various factories from 1996 to 2009.

During the 2010 elections, she became a volunteer organizer-campaigner for a progressive partylist group. Her positive attitude in integrating with the impoverished masses shone through as she worked in the urban poor communities of Laguna. In the same year, she became a member of the Revolutionary Council of Trade Unions, and eventually, the Communist Party of the Philippines.

In August 2010, Ka Minda personally decided to work in the Quezon countryside. For six months, she lived with the pasant masses and organized them alongside the NPA. She decided to become a full-time Red fighter in December 2011.

Ka Agum. Rodel “Ka Agum” Peñamente, a national minority, came from Infanta, Quezon. As a poor peasant, Ka Agum experienced hardship early in life and suffered from the chauvinism spawned by a semifeudal

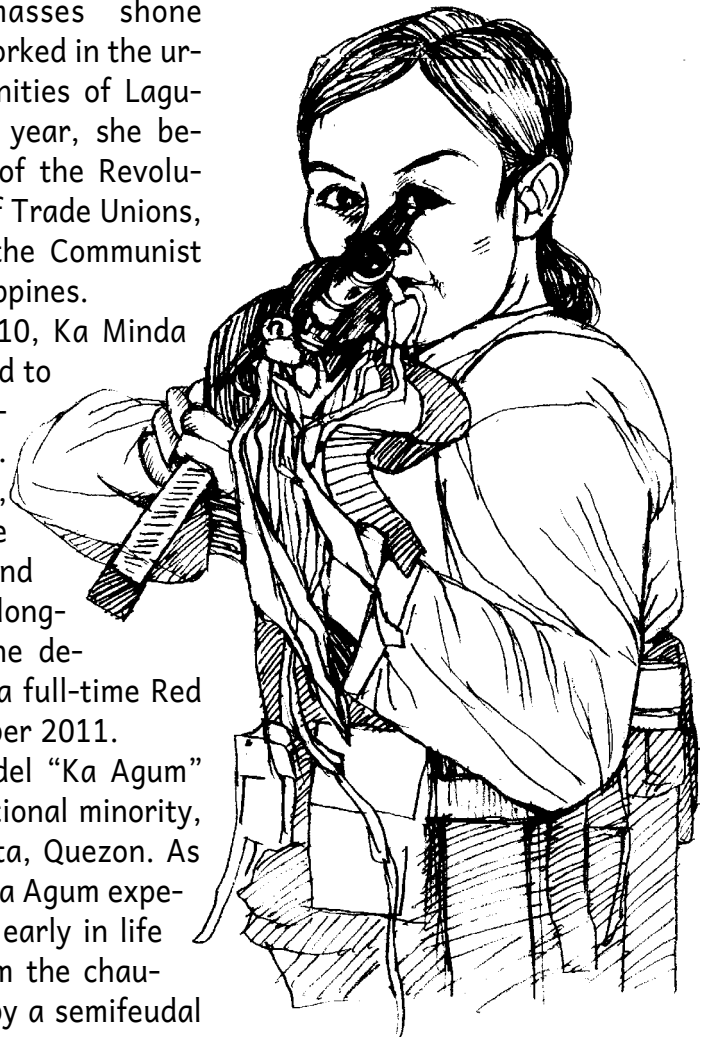
and semicolonial society. Thus, at a young age, he had embraced the correctness of armed revolution as the main means of struggle to achieve genuine change that would advance the welfare of poor people like himself.

Ka Agum and Ka Minda were engaged to each other. Ka Agum had never had any formal schooling, but this was not a barrier to their relationship, as Ka Minda took the effort to teach him how to read and write.

They both decided to become full-time Red fighters in December 2011 and were scheduled to marry in May.

At around 10 a.m. of April 20, more than 60 elements of the 85th IB encircled the house where Ka Minda and Ka Agum were staying in Barangay Peñafrancia, Lopez, Quezon.

They were among four NPA fighters killed by the butcher soldiers. AB



AFP bombings in Mindanao



The US-Aquino regime bears grave responsibility for the destruction to the lives and livelihoods of civilians as a direct result of its brutal and aggressive militarization campaign that has been marked by bombings of the upland communities of Mindanao.

The most intense bombings are taking place in areas where the people's armed and unarmed resistance to foreign mining companies, commercial plantations and other plunderous businesses is strongest. Part and parcel of this militarization campaign are the indiscriminate bombing raids of civilian communities and widespread violations of human rights.

Under Oplan Bayanihan, the US-Aquino regime has deployed two of its area commands and most of its battalions in the five regions of Mindanao. These troops have been conducting massive bombings in at least ten communities in various parts of the island.

The latest victims of these bombings are 83 families who were forced to evacuate from Barangay New Visayas, Trento, Agusan del Sur due to the intensity of the attacks and the

widespread militarization of combined forces



of the 25th and 75th IB in their areas. The military bombed the village seven times on May 7 as part of the clearing operations being conducted to pave the way for the entry of Oz Metal Corporation and Monkayo Consolidated Mining Corporation. Sixteen-year old Jhon Mark Malimbasa was wounded in the bombing, arrested by the military and branded as a child soldier. He is currently detained in a hospital in Cagayan de Oro City. (see related article)

According to a report by the National Democratic Front-Mindanao, the bombings have been concentrated in areas where multinational mining companies are operating. These are along the South Cotabato-Sultan Kudarat-Davao del Sur-Sarangani quadri-boundary; the Surigao del Sur-Surigao del Norte-Agusan del Norte tri-boundary; the vast plains of North and South Cotabato; the Davao Oriental-Compostela Valley boundary; the Zamboanga Peninsula; and Bukidnon. Entire communities have been forced to go to the town centers to have some respite.

(see related article in the April 7, 2012 issue of

Ang Bayan)

In violation of international humanitarian law

Bombing civilian communities is a violation of international law. There are at least ten formal international agreements that patently prohibit the harming of civilians or anyone not directly involved in the armed conflict. Among these are the Geneva Convention IV of August 12, 1949 which guarantees the safety of civilians during war and prohibits attacks on the general population regardless of race, nationality, religion or political belief.

The Laws and Customs of War on Land is even more forthright in prohibiting any kind of attack and bombing on towns, villages, houses and buildings without defenses.

Also prohibited are aerial bombings whose only objective is to sow terror or destroy the properties of civilians or any action that would cause harm to any non-combatant. Parties to the conflict may only bomb legitimate military targets—forces, equipment, camps or detachments, known arms factories or centers, communication and supply lines, vehicles and other modes of transport that are undoubtedly being used in military operations.

Any violation of these rules constitutes a crime against humanity and may therefore be the subject of proceedings in international courts. Any damage caused by bombings must be paid for by the fascist criminals.

International law is strict about protecting the safety of civilians, the sick, the wounded and others who are incapable of defending themselves. It is binding on all parties involved in the armed conflict.

AB

Environmental activist slain



Among the latest victims of the US-Aquino regime's Oplan Bayanihan are an environmental activist, a civilian, a brother of the principal witness against the butcher general Jovito Palparan and a nun.

May 16. Roland Manalo, 41, was killed in San Rafael, Bulacan, succumbing to six gunshot wounds to the body. It is as yet unclear who the assailants were but Manalo's body was brought to the Baliwag District Hospital by elements of the 306th PNP Provincial Mobile Group. Manalo is a brother of Raymond Manalo, the principal witness against Ret. Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan, Jr., for the 2006 abduction and torture of University of the Philippines students Karen Empeño and Sherlyn Cadapan and farmer Manuel Meriño.

In his sworn statement, Raymond Manalo testified that his abductors asked him about the whereabouts of his brother Rolando because he was allegedly a Red fighter.

May 8. Task Force Save Pu-

langi leader Margarito Cabal was shot to death in Barangay Palma, Kibawe, Bukidnon. Task Force Save Pulangi is an organization campaigning against the construction of a hydroelectric dam in Pulangi River. An estimated 6,000 families are expected to lose their land and livelihoods if the project pushes through. Members of the Manobo tribe will also be displaced from their ancestral lands.

Before he was killed, the military had branded Cabal as a member of the New People's Army. Cabal is the 13th environmental activist killed under the Aquino regime. Nine of the 13 killings took place in Mindanao.

May 8. A civilian was killed by soldiers in Barangay Pinaanaan, Donsol, Sorsogon. Jocelyn Trinidad, 37, was in the com-

pany of Red fighters at around 5 a.m. when soldiers opened fire. Trinidad was severely wounded and rushed to a hospital by the comrades but she died on the way. Three Red fighters were martyred in the fighting, including Trinidad's husband Leopoldo "Ka Jig" Nebres, 43.

March 2. 1Lt. Hermie Montelibano of the 28th IB openly accused Sr. Stella Matutina of being an NPA member and of masquerading as a nun. The accusations were hurled during a public meeting called by the military in Barangay Lantawan, Lupon, Davao Oriental. Sr. Matutina, a Benedictine nun, is secretary-general of Panalipdan (Defenders and Advocates of Environment, Creation and Patrimony).

She has already filed complaints about the harassment with the Commission on Human Rights and at the United Nations Human Rights council meeting in Geneva, Switzerland last March that she attended as a representative of Panalipdan and the Sisters Association in Mindanao. AB

CPP assails docking of USS North Carolina submarine in Subic

The Communist Party of the Philippines condemned the sudden docking of the USS North Carolina, a US attack submarine, at the Subic Bay Freeport in Olongapo City, Zambales on May 15.

The USS North Carolina is among the US military's most advanced submarines and is likely capable of launching nuclear weapons. Its presence in Philippine waters is violative of even the reactionary constitution which prohibits the entry of nuclear weapons in the Philippines.

As a mark of its arrogance and contempt for Philippine sovereignty, the US did not even bother to seek permission from the puppet government's agencies for the submarine to surface. But the local reactionary government also amply demonstrated its puppetry by just shrugging off the incident.

The entry and presence of the US attack sub-

marine is a direct provocation against China since the USS North Carolina was docked only 200 kilometers away from Scarborough Shoal. The Philippines and China have been at a standoff for more than a month over the disputed territory.

The USS North Carolina, one of the US' most modern assault vessels, is a "fast attack submarine" that has been deployed ostensibly to ensure freedom of navigation in the international waters of the Western Pacific. It came from a US military base in Hawaii.

Its deployment to the Western Pacific and its mandate of projecting US power in Philippine waters is part of US strategy regarding the so-called "American Pacific Century" whose objective is to strengthen and maintain US military control and power in the region. AB

Oplan Bayanihan intensifies violence against minors

Beginning with this issue, Ang Bayan will feature and highlight violations of children's rights by the Armed Forces of the Philippines in the course of Oplan Bayanihan. This is part of efforts by the Communist Party of the Philippines and the entire revolutionary movement to promote the rights and welfare of children.

Violations of the rights of children by the Armed Forces of the Philippines continue to grow in number and intensity. Filipino children and their parents suffer greater brutality under Oplan Bayanihan. There are mounting cases of killings, intimidation, mandhandling and sexual crimes by soldiers against children. Soldiers routinely base themselves within or beside schools, aside from staying in village centers and insisting on sleeping in the masses' houses.

Reports collated by *Ang Bayan* indicate growing cases of heinous violations of the human rights of minors. Among them are killings, rape, attacks on schools and the malicious branding of minors as "child soldiers."

Invoking Oplan Bayanihan's "people-centered" tactics, the AFP has strengthened its presence in communities with strong democratic struggles by the people and that are suspected of supporting the armed revolutionary movement. In the name of "peace and development," armed soldiers maintain their presence in the middle of population centers to control the people's movements, instill a climate of fear, derail organizing efforts and resistance, encourage antisocial activities and create suspicion and disunity.

Children or minors are among the most vulnerable to the AFP's fascist violence during the military's repressive operations in the communities. The very presence of armed soldiers in their schools and houses results in deep psychological trauma among children.

Their young age and simple interests are exploited by the armed soldiers to entice them. Intimidating children is among the terror tactics employed against families involved in mass struggles.

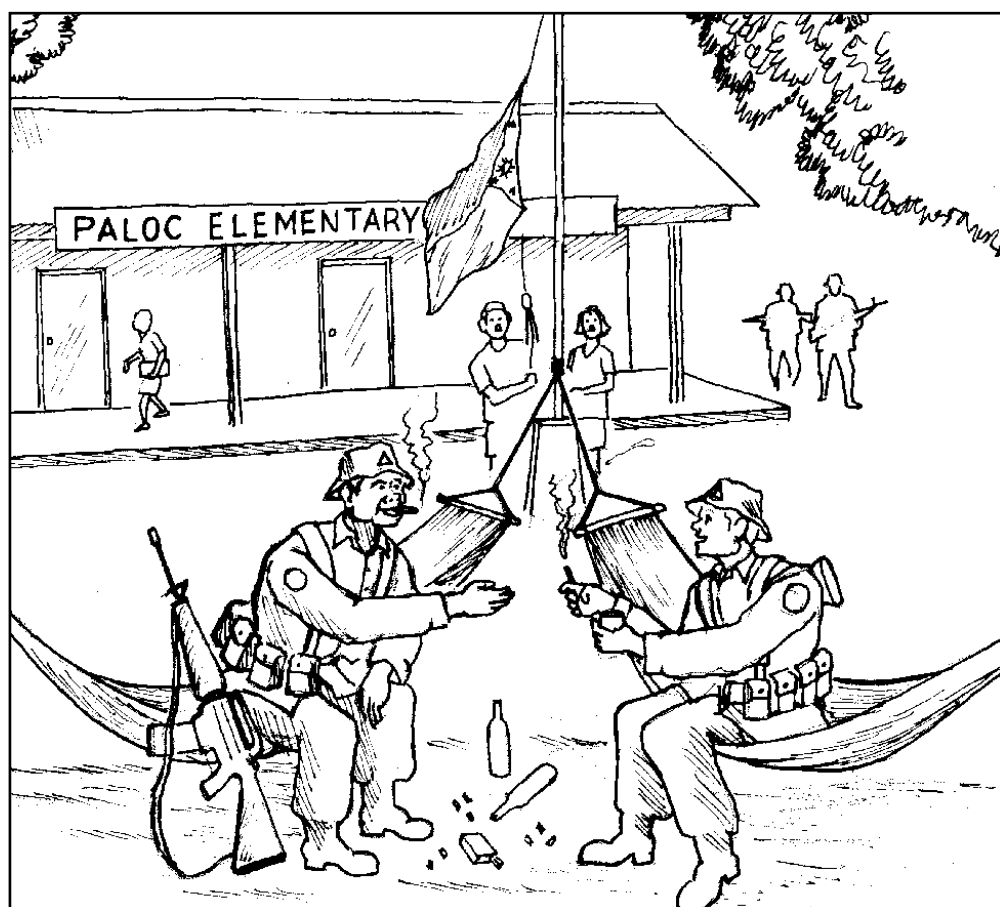
Militarization of schools and communities

The AFP systematically tramples on the rights and wel-

fare of civilians in enforcing its Oplan Bayanihan war of suppression. It maintains armed soldiers in civilian population centers who use public facilities such as daycare centers, barangay halls, chapels and clinics as their detachments. They thus use the people as "human shields" against armed attacks—a flagrant violation of international humanitarian law.

Setting up detachments or maintaining armed soldiers within or adjacent to schools is a violation of the rights of children. In not a few cases, classrooms are used as sleeping quarters by the soldiers, disrupting classes and other school activities. The very presence of armed soldiers and the fear and unease this generates creates a poor learning climate for the children.

The military's use of public schools and other population centers for basing is widespread in Southern Mindanao. The AFP has used or continues to use the following schools in Compostela



Valley as detachments: Paloc Elementary School, Tandik Elementary School, Parasanon Elementary School and Cambagang Elementary School, all in Maragusan town; and New Leyte Elementary School and Sangab Elementary School, both in Maco town.

In Compostela Valley, the 72nd IB maintains a patrol base near the population centers of the villages of Anitapan, Panamin and Cabuyuan in Mabini; in the villages of New Visayas, New Asturias, Libay-libay, Kinuban and Mapaang in Maco; and in the sub-villages of Palo, Bukobuko sa Anay and Gumayan in Barangay Napnapan in Pantukan. Meanwhile, the headquarters of the 71st IB is located right behind the Pantukan municipal hall.

In Northeastern Mindanao, the military camped at the day-care and health center in Barangay Mahaba, Marihatag, Surigao del Sur from June to July 2011. A hundred and fourteen families were forced to evacuate out of fear.

In Paquibato District, Davao City, residents have long been complaining about the 69th IB's encampment near the Paradise Embac Annex School and in houses of civilians due to the danger this poses to the people. The military insists on staying despite the residents' strong opposition. Those who oppose the soldiers' presence are automatically branded as supporters of the New People's Army and threatened with death.

In Far South Mindanao Region, 73rd IB troops relentlessly harassed teachers and pupils of the B'laan Literacy School and Learning Center (BLSLC) in Sitio D'Lumay, Upper Suyan, Malapatan, Sarangani until the teachers and staff were forced to

leave the area for their own safety.

The BLSLC had been in existence for four years and run by the Center for Lumad Advocacy and Services (CLANS).

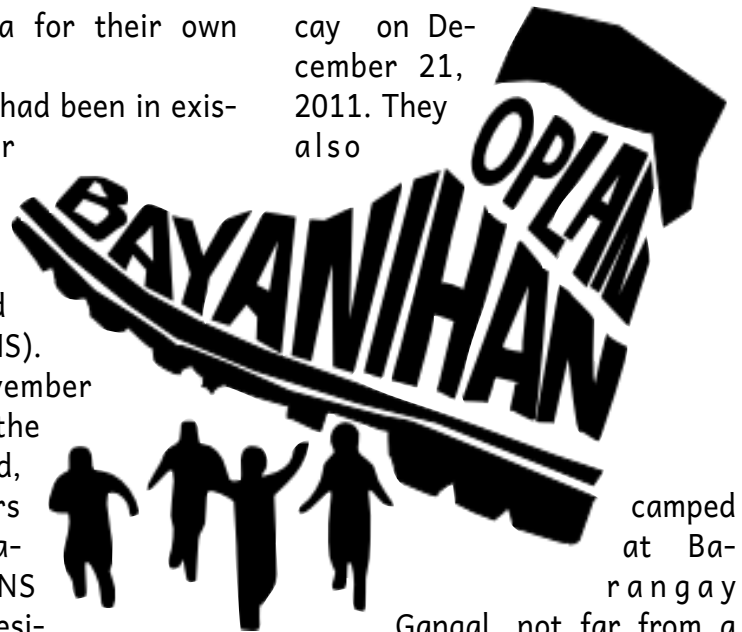
Since November 2010, when the 73rd IB arrived, the soldiers have been harassing CLANS projects and residents of the area. The BLSLC teachers were interrogated and photographed without their consent. They were branded as "communist teachers" and "anti-government" and threatened with death because of an antimining poster the soldiers saw at the school. The teachers were forced to close down the school by March.

In Bukidnon, soldiers also reportedly camped at a CLANS branch in one of the province's towns. As a result, the residents were forced to stop their children's schooling.

In Pantukan, Compostela Valley, a seven-year old pupil at Biasong Elementary School was shot by a drunken soldier on September 3, 2011. Sunshine Jabinez was sleeping when Pfc Baltazar Ramos strafed several houses near a videoke bar. One of the houses hit was that of the Jabinezes. Ramos was part of an AFP Peace and Development Team that was camped out in the area.

Meanwhile, in Luzon, the NPA Saulo Lumadao Front in Abra reported that troops of the 50th IB violated the military's own suspension of offensive military operations when they camped out at the elementary school in Barangay Tabiog, Bu-

cay on December 21, 2011. They also



camped at Barangay

Gangal, not far from a school.

In Mankayan, Benguet, soldiers posted themselves in houses at the village center. This was where a military officer was reported to have raped two high school students "Isabel" and "Katrina." The incidents happened in December 2011 and February 17-20. The perpetrator, Army Capt. Danilo Lalin was not relieved from his post but merely transferred to another unit.

In Metro Manila, policemen camped at the San Juan Municipal High School on January 13 to implement the violent demolition of an urban poor community in Barangay Corazon de Jesus.

In Barangay Libertad, Ormoc City, five truckloads of soldiers of the 19th IB swooped down on the village and occupied the barangay hall and daycare center. As a result, classes in the daycare center were suspended from March 9 to 12.

In Barangay San Miguel, Las Navas, Northern Samar and in a number of villages in Paranas and Motiong, Samar, soldiers camped at the schools and other public facilities. The soldiers also occupied the houses of residents at the barrio center itself.

AB

AFP suffers 12 casualties in SMR and Bicol

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) suffered a total of 12 casualties from blows meted by the New People's Army (NPA) in separate gunbattles in Agusan del Sur, Sorsogon and Catanduanes from March to May.

In Agusan del Sur. The enemy suffered nine casualties in two successive firefights between forces of the 1002nd Division Reconnaissance Company and Red fighters of the Conrado Heredia Command (Guerrilla Front 20 of the NPA in the Southern Mindanao Region) in Trento, Agusan del Sur on May 7.

The first gunbattle occurred at around 9 a.m. when guerrillas ambushed a Scout Rangers unit in Upper New Visayas that was conducting clearing operations along the Agusan del Sur-Compostela Valley boundary.

Three soldiers were killed in this ambush. Four soldiers were also wounded, including Lieutenant Masumpad, the commanding officer. On the other hand, three Red fighters were wounded.

Three hours later, an encounter ensued between Red fighters and another enemy unit

in Barangay Suba sa Bahayan, also in Trento. Two more soldiers were wounded in this gunbattle, including their leader Captain Braganza.

The AFP concealed the real extent of its casualties and claimed that only four soldiers were wounded in these firefights. The military also immediately sent war planes to bomb the area. (*see related article*)

The operations are meant to pave the way for the entry of big foreign mining corporations.

In Sorsogon. The NPA Celso Minguez Command thwarted an attack by the 31st IB in Barangay Salvacion, Magallanes town in the morning of April 8. The Red fighters were then resting when villagers tipped them

off that 24 soldiers of the 31st IB were approaching their position.

The NPA valiantly fought the troopers and were able to retreat unscathed. On the other hand, a soldier was killed in this gunbattle but battalion officers concealed this from the public.

In Catanduanes. An NPA team under the Nerissa San Juan Command harassed 83rd IB troops in the early morning of March 26 in Barangay Kilikilian, San Miguel town, killing a soldier and wounding another. The troopers were aboard a truck on the way back to their camp after several days of military operations when they were fired upon by the Red fighters. **AB**

People's clinic in Masbate

A people's clinic was conducted by medical officers of the Jose Rapsing Command (NPA-Masbate) on April 25. It was held in a farflung barangay along the Uson-Milagros-Mobo tri-boundary. The area has not received any medical services from the reactionary government and from corrupt politicians in a long time.

According to the NDF-Bicol Information Office, more than a hundred people benefited from the New People's Army's free clinic. They received dental services, free checkups and medicines and were treated with minor surgery and acupuncture. **AB**

Ka Ramon: Communist, hero of the peasantry

Not a few mourned when Ka Ramon passed away on September 1, 2011 at the age of 46. Hundreds of peasants, Red fighters and Party cadres wept in their village and nearby barrios. Everyone stopped what they were doing during his burial to give him a revolutionary salute.

Ka Ramon was one of the leaders of a branch of the Communist Party of the Philippines in a village in Northern Samar. He was one of the trees luxuriant in growth that sprung as the Party took root in the fertile soil of the countryside.

Although he came from a rich peasant family, Ka Ramon was not

a stranger to working hard in the fields. When he became a Party member, he remolded himself and wholeheartedly embraced the principles of the Communist Party. He was known for his humble but determined and militant style and standpoint. He had compassion for the oppressed and exploited.

It was the Party's principles that Ka Ramon always placed first in whatever issue he faced.

He starkly demonstrated his selflessness. Although reducing land rent in the rice fields and coconut lands and raising the wages of farm workers ran counter to his family's interests, he never hesitated to advance the campaign and serve as a model in implementing the policies that had been agreed upon. He patiently explained and convinced his wife and relatives about the justness and correctness of the policies.

Ka Ramon was not able to go to school when he was young. He was already an adult when he learned to read and write in the literacy school the NPA led. Despite these limitations, he quickly grasped the Party's basic principles and tightly embraced them. He had a deep understanding of the principles of the mass line and the class line.

He began his political involvement in their village when he was a teenager. At the age of 15, he joined the *Kabataang Makabayan*. Since then, the revolutionary movement had become Ka Ramon's life. He joined antifeudal struggles and became one of the leading activists in their *barrio*.

He eventually became a Party member and seriously participated in studies and persevered in raising his consciousness and knowledge in waging revolution. It did not take long for him to become one



of the leaders of the Party branch in their village. He was also elected as one of the leaders of the Party section committee covering a cluster of *barrios*. Whenever soldiers were in their area, he would temporarily join the NPA and serve as a Red fighter.

Ka Ramon's dedication to the Party never wavered, even when his health began to fail in 2009 because of cancer. The interest of the movement, the state of their revolutionary tasks, the welfare of comrades in their Party branch were always foremost in his thoughts. Even when he had just been operated on, he insisted on calling up his collective to inform them about his condition and ease their worries. He wanted to make sure that the collective continued to run and that the tasks entrusted to them by the Party were being accomplished well.

When Ka Ramon was near death, he repeatedly told his wife and five children and etched into their consciousness the constant need to unite and trust in the revolutionary movement. He reminded everyone to continue fulfilling their revolutionary tasks.

Ka Ramon's life, which was lived for others, and not just for his own family will remain an inspiration to the peasants he served. His memory will serve as a beacon to all the oppressed and exploited. **AB**

Revolution spreads to an urban poor community

Maligaya (not its real name) is like other urban poor communities in Metro Manila. Most of the people living here are semi-proletariat who are either unemployed or without regular sources of livelihood. Many of them earn subsistence income as tricycle and jeepney drivers or as construction workers or odd jobbers. Others eke out a living as scavengers. A few small *sarisari* store owners or families that happen to have relatives working abroad already count as among the better off.

More than five decades have passed since the first families settled in the area. They built houses on public lands that were then part of Metro Manila's sprawling idle grasslands. Most, if not all of the early settlers were peasants displaced from their lands in the Visayas and Mindanao.

The community further expanded in the 1960s and 1970s when

the first industrial factories were built. Like other areas in Metro Manila, the community continued to grow despite the lack of employment opportunities. But along with the massive factory closures in the 1980s up to the 1990s came the widespread crash in the residents' economic conditions.

Poverty and other threats to the livelihoods of the residents of Maligaya made them open to the Party and the other revolutionary forces' first attempts to take root in the community in the 1980s. Nonetheless, organizational expansion was spo-

radic.

It was in 2010 that organizing and mobilizing efforts were invigorated in the area. Since then, Party work has been fruitful in Maligaya. The revolutionary forces in the community expanded due to all-out struggles and continuing education on revolutionary practice and theory. The lessons and victories of Maligaya have since guided the struggle of residents in other urban poor communities as well.

Mass movement against demolition. For years, Maligaya has been threatened with demolition to give way to government infrastructure projects. The threats waned only during elections, when politicians promise to defend the residents' rights in order to win their trust and their votes.

But as before, after the 2010 elections, the residents once more faced the threat of having their houses razed to the ground. The entire community rallied around the call to resist the demolition and forced relocation in an area that was far from their sources of livelihood.

They systematically prepared for the attack by the local government's armed goons and actively defended their homes during the demolition. They dialogued with the local government to present alternative solutions that would allow them to remain in the area. The local government responded with threats and further violence but the residents stood their ground and refused to leave.

In the face of repeated demolitions, the residents have raised the level of their cooperation. They have won broad support among students, the church, progressive organizations and even from international advocates of the rights of the



urban poor.

They have confronted attempted demolitions with all their courage and demonstrated a high level of militancy. They have consciously and systematically assessed their struggles, risen above their weaknesses and rectified their errors. They collectively look for solutions to the residents' problems, especially those who have lost their homes. Win or lose, the community was prepared for the next stage of struggle.

Studying society and revolution. These struggles have steeled and consolidated the political consciousness of the masses. The Party has roused the masses to revolution and expanded and consolidated the revolutionary forces and mass activists in the community. It has guided the masses in assessing and understanding their past struggles.

A systematic and widespread education campaign on political and social issues has been launched. Here, they discuss not only the issues of the urban poor but the people's issues as a whole. Studies on Philippine society and revolution are launched in alleys, vacant lots, waiting sheds, watering holes, classrooms of nearby schools and other areas where residents

can gather. Studies have also been launched on Mao's writings, documents of the National Democratic Front and the CARHRIHL, among others. Mass courses are taken up collectively in various parts of the community. There are days set aside for regular education work.

An education committee has been formed in the community and several instructors have been trained. Cultural activists have also been trained, which further raised the residents' fighting spirit, especially among the community youth.

Widespread organizing and Party building. Organizations are being painstakingly and systematically built, starting with contact building and setting up organizing groups and committees, on to creating fullpledged mass organizations. Democratic organizations have rapidly expanded amid the intensity of the residents' struggles. The association of the semiproletariat has been built and consolidated in the area. It has a council composed of the most consolidated elements with the readiness to work full-time for the organization.

Sectoral organizations have also been built and traditional

organizations transformed for militant struggle. Everyone in the community—the young, the old, the women, the employed and the unemployed—has been organized into groups and mobilized. Everyone—including the children—is actively engaged in various organizing tasks. A counter-intelligence unit has also been created to ensure the security of the community, especially the local leaders. A “warning system” has been put in place to make sure that residents could gather as quickly as possible to defend the community against threats such as “surprise demolitions.”

Activists who are ready to swear to the Party constitution and those recommended by their respective organizations are recruited into the Party. In a matter of months, the Party has experienced a 700% expansion in its membership in Maligaya.

The most determined members of the revolutionary mass organizations have been appointed as Party leaders. Those chosen have the readiness to work full-time to lead the organization. Through these leaders' perseverance, CPP members have completed the Basic and Intermediate Party Courses. Political consciousness is continually raised through struggle and further education.

Because of their vigorous and dynamic study of society and revolution, many youth have expressed the desire to join the NPA and the revolutionary armed struggle. Not a few of them have already been deployed as full-time Red fighters.

Challenge of bigger struggles. The victories attained in arousing, organizing and mobilizing the residents of Maligaya are a valuable resource in confronting the bigger struggles that lie ahead. The rapid descent to crisis of the semifeudal and semicolonial system poses a huge challenge to the residents to step up their struggle to face bigger social issues.

They are challenged to unite with the rest of the toiling masses in struggling against the ruling system that has kept them in the morass of crisis, poverty, oppression and severe exploitation. They are challenged to unite in struggle against the rising prices of oil and other commodities, for higher wages, better education and health services, for jobs and against contractualization, for genuine land reform and national industrialization. The broad ranks of the urban poor are challenged to rise against the oppressive and exploitative ruling system and against the reactionary Aquino regime.

The residents of Maligaya are challenged to deepen their participation in people's war. With the further systematization of recruitment into the NPA, tens of thousands of youth will surely respond as they look forward to a brighter future wrought by the revolutionary movement. Revolutionary families may likewise consider transferring their homes to the countryside where they could participate in agrarian revolution and armed struggle and in building the new people's democratic government. **AB**

Arson as a demolition tactic

Five thousand families lost their homes when fire razed more than a thousand houses in three subvillages of Isla Puting Bato, Tondo, Manila on May 16. Residents strongly believe that their community was purposely put to the torch to evict them from the area. Some of them even received warnings that their houses would be burned.

As far back as the Estrada regime, the government has wanted to pursue the “modernization” of Manila North Harbor. The Aquino regime now considers this a priority under its Public-Private Partnership program. The project will be managed by a group of companies led by Eduardo Cojuangco, Benigno Aquino III's

uncle.

A 15-meter area between the shoreline and the community had earlier already been designated a “danger zone” where the building of shanties is prohibited.

Thousands of residents are now cramped at the Del Pan Stadium which serves as an evacuation center. Armed

guards prevent them from leaving the stadium and constructing their houses anew at Isla Puting Bato.

There is nothing new about arson as a demolition tactic especially in organized communities. It is done to force the urban poor to transfer to relocation sites. Aside from arson, the reactionary government also uses “road widening” as a pretext to slowly demolish houses and prohibit residents from building new infrastructure. Another tactic is “pocket demolitions” where houses are torn down only in one area at a time until the entire area is eventually demolished. **AB**

Urban poor community in Davao fights back

The Katipunan ng Samahang Manggagawa (KASAMA) strongly condemned the landgrabbing and other violations of human rights against the semi-proletariat of Purok 13, Bugac, Maa, Davao City perpetrated by the Villa Abrilles, one of the oldest landlord families in the city.

The Villa Abrilles have long been oppressing the residents of Purok 13. In 2004, the family brandished a fake land title to claim the land currently occupied and tilled by 19 families. The Villa Abrilles fenced off 11 hectares of the land and forced the families living there to sell the land to them for only P3,000 to P15,000.

In May 2011, the landlord family went ahead with the construction of a high-end subdivision called Le Jardin de Villa Abrille. Their guards bulldozed the residents' vegetable gardens and orchards, paved the roads with cement and prohibit-

ed the residents from returning to the area. On the same day, Nanay Silay, a 71-year old resident, threw a stone at the backhoe that was used to mow down her crops. She was charged and jailed for four days.

The Villa Abrilles tried to evict the residents three times from August to September 2011. At each instance, the guards indiscriminately fired their weapons at the barricading residents. Eleven guards have been charged and jailed for the shootings, but were soon released.

Last March 20, private guards once again opened fire at the residents, hitting 44-year old Merceditas Dagoc in the stomach. Several children were traumatized at the incident, especially after witnessing the guards arrest a minor as he tried to defend his family's home and vegetable garden. **AB**

Workers win strike at Co Ban Kiat Hardware

On May 13, after a ten-day strike at Co Ban Kiat Hardware, Inc., 103 workers who had been illegally dismissed by the company won the right to be reinstated at work.

The workers' collective action was spurred by the layoff of 103 regular and contractual workers. Said Regie Lumaug, president of Co Ban Kiat Hardware Workers Union, management timed the mass layoff on May 3—the same day the Department of Labor and Employment recognized

the legitimacy of their union. Aside from demanding the reinstatement of the laid off workers, the strikers also complained about their illegal dismissal, their illegal lockout and the company's attempts to bust their union.

Management has long been oppressing the workers, who are mostly contractuels. They are often dismissed arbitrarily



or transferred to other departments to avoid the obligation of upgrading their status to regular

workers after six months' work. Lumaug said that more than 100 out of the Tambo, Parañaque-based warehouse's 300 workers are contractual. The workers are on five-month contracts, after which they are made to "rest" for two weeks before signing another five-month contract.

The company pays low wages. Regular workers receive only P426 daily, and contractuels even less. Moreover, the warehouse workers labor under subhuman conditions. For instance, ventilation is poor at the Tambo warehouse, which causes illness and other physical difficulties to workers.

Co Ban Kiat Hardware, Inc. which is owned by Johnny Cobankiat was embroiled in a smuggling case in 2009. Cobankiat is a business partner of SM owner Henry Sy. The company is a supplier of Ace Hardware of SM Malls, DIY Hardware of Robinson's Malls and other hardware stores in Sta. Cruz and Bimondo, Manila. **AB**

Justice for the victims of the Novo Dept. Store fire

Relatives and co-workers of the victims of the fire that razed the Novo Jeans and Shirts Department Store at Montilla Boulevard, Butuan City in the early morning of May 9 are crying for justice.

They have asked the Aquino government to conduct an immediate investigation and make sure that the owner of Novo is held accountable for the deaths of at least 17 persons in the fire. One worker remains missing while three others were injured in the blaze. Most of the fatalities were women, one of them five months pregnant, said the Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU), where the

workers' union is affiliated. Initial reports indicate that the doors were locked both in and from the outside allegedly to prevent pilfering. The store also did not have enough emergency exits.

Novo has up to 40 employees, half of whom live in the company dormitory, said KMU-Caraga secretary-general Jacinto Tanduyan. They work for 12-14 hours and earn only P160 per day. They do not receive overtime pay or any other benefits. All of the workers are under six-month contracts.

The fire has underscored the dismal conditions of workers in the region. AB