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Editorial

## Celebrate the 45th anniversary of the NPA

At high noon of March 29, 2014, on the occasion of the 45th anniversary of the New People's Army (NPA), the NPA commands in the regions, subregions and fronts will fall in formation to parade and salute the flags of the Communist Party of the Philippines, the NPA, the National Democratic Front of the Philippines and the People's Democratic Government.

As these flags wave high, and before the collective public singing of the Internationale, the Red fighters will give a 21-gun salute to pay the highest honors to all fallen Red commanders and fighters of the NPA and the heroes and martyrs of the national-democratic revolution of the Filipino people. This is likewise a salute to all its commanders and fighters and all revolutionaries who have long been in service to advance the people's war.

Their sacrifices serve as their contributions to the Filipino people's quest to achieve great victories in advancing the national-democratic revolutionary struggle. Let us hail them

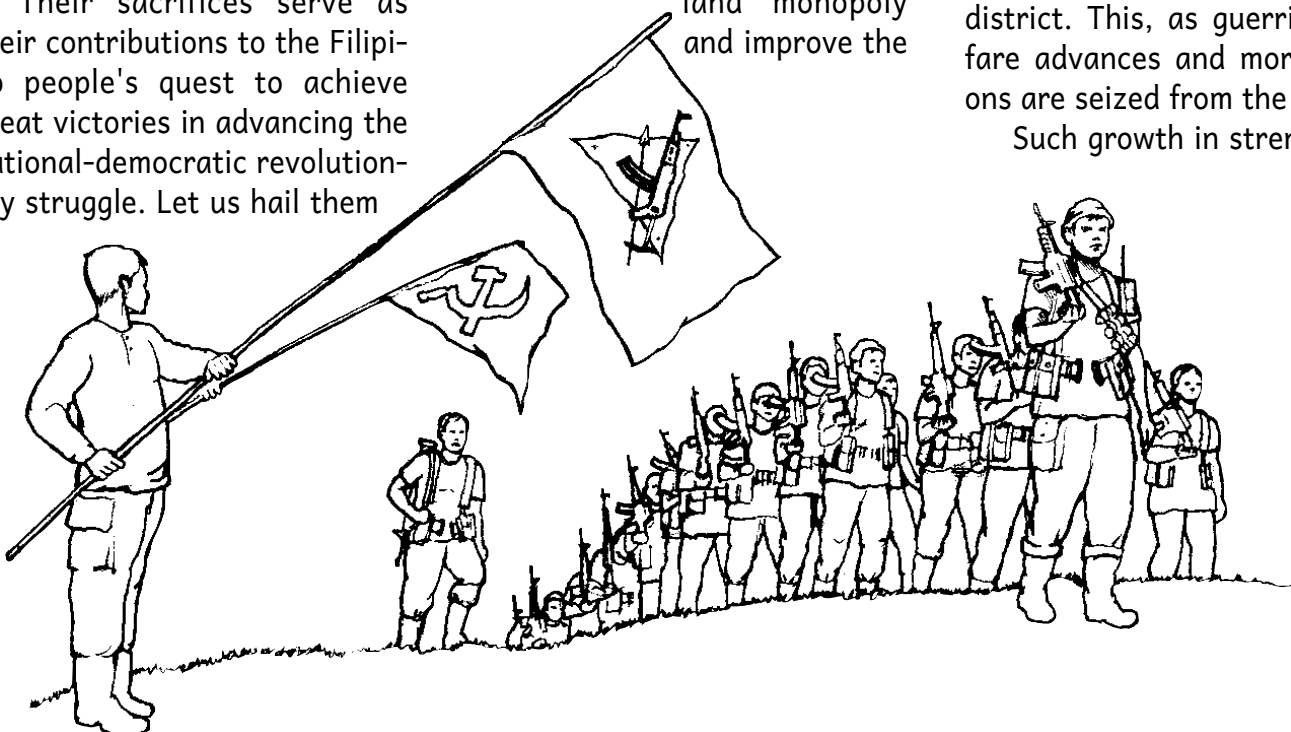
as exemplars of selfless service to the people for present and future generations of revolutionaries and fighters. Let us remember and etch their names onto the monument to be built by the Filipino people at the moment of victory of the people's democratic revolution.

Let us use the coming 45th anniversary of the NPA's founding to celebrate the people's victories in waging revolutionary armed struggle, in advancing agrarian revolution to dismantle land monopoly and improve the

conditions of the peasant masses and in building the organs of people's democratic government.

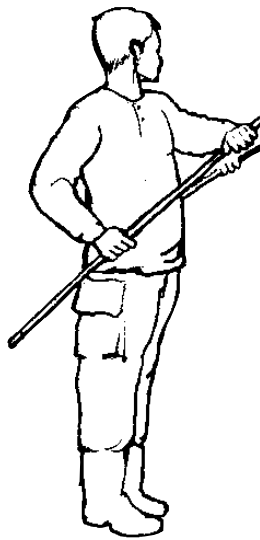
From nine automatic rifles upon its founding in 1969, the NPA is well on its way to having 10,000 high-powered firearms. The strength of thousands of NPA Red fighters spread out in more than 110 guerrilla fronts covering significant portions of 71 provinces is amplified several times over by tens of thousands of people's militias and hundreds of thousands of the masses' self-defense forces. The CPP looks forward to the NPA's rapid expansion to 25,000 fighters and the growth in the number of its guerrilla fronts to 200, covering every rural congressional district. This, as guerrilla warfare advances and more weapons are seized from the enemy.

Such growth in strength and



advance presents the clearest proof of the correctness of the general line of people's democratic revolution through protracted people's war. The revolutionary forces have overcome and achieved victories against the most brutal forms of reaction, including the latest campaigns of suppression and deception unleashed by US imperialism and its puppets.

The countryside continues to blaze with peasant struggles to implement the revolutionary movement's minimum and maximum programs of land reform. For the past four decades and a half, millions have benefited



from reduced land rent, higher wages for farm workers, just prices for agricultural products at the farmgate, higher production, land distribution, the adoption of various forms of cooperation and the establishment of communal farms. The NPA has also been able to expand the land available for agrarian revolution by causing the departure, neutralizing or preventing the expansion of

destructive mining and logging companies as well as plantations growing crops for export.

Thus, it has likewise mitigated destruction to the environment and to agriculture and the depletion of natural resources and preserved these for the people's future.


Hundreds of thousands of people are under the jurisdiction of organs of people's dem-

ocratic government at the barrio and inter-barrio or municipal level where economic, organizational, defense, educational and health programs are being implemented. The people are mobilized to maintain peace and order against repression and criminality and to prepare for and address natural disasters. The revolutionary mass base is continually being expanded and deepened until the ultimate objective of people's war to advance the people's democratic government wave upon wave is achieved and the people's democratic government becomes capable of supplanting and completely smashing the reactionary state.

The Filipino people have also achieved notable victories in advancing democratic mass struggles even as they advance the struggle for national and social liberation.

The relentlessly worsening crisis of the ruling system opens up excellent opportunities for the revolutionary movement's further advance. It will not be long before the conjured up illusion of economic development will be shattered and an even bigger crisis of widespread unemployment, soaring prices and more wretched economic conditions among the people will explode.

Let us use the celebration of the NPA's 45th anniversary to prepare for the launching of ever bigger struggles in the future. Let us steel the NPA's determination and raise its capability to intensify guerrilla warfare nationwide to advance people's war towards the strategic stalemate in a few years' time and aim for complete victory in the final stage of the strategic offensive. **AB**

	
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# NPA seizes 10 firearms in Davao del Sur

Red fighters under the Valentine Palamine Command (VPC) of the New People's Army in Far South Mindanao Region seized ten firearms in a tactical offensive in Matanao, Davao del Sur on March 10. Twelve elements of the Philippine National Police (PNP) and 39th IB were also killed and nine others wounded in a raid and ambush launched by the Red fighters.

Seven M16s, two .9 mm's and a cal .45 pistol, two VHF radios and rounds of ammunition were confiscated by the Red guerrillas in a ten-minute raid on the PNP headquarters in Matanao at exactly 4:50 a.m.

Three policemen were killed and two others wounded when they resisted after the Red fighters called for their surrender. Two comrades, on the other hand, were martyred in this firefight.

Four hours later, another unit under the VPC used command-detonated explosives (CDX) on a military truck loaded with reinforcement troops from the 39th IB in Sitio Lahak, Barangay Asbang of the same town. Nine soldiers were killed, including their commander 2Lt. Ludevico Alejo, and seven others were wounded.

The AFP/PNP units in Matanao deserved to be disarmed and punished because they are protectors of Xstrata (a brutal mining giant whose operations straddle more than 100,000 hectares in four provinces of Mindanao). They have already killed many people, mostly Lumad who oppose destructive mining operations and the seizure of their ancestral lands, said Ka Dencio Madrigal, VPC spokesperson.

Meanwhile, in Camarines Sur, Red fighters under the Norben Gruta Command thwarted an unexpected attack

tempt to encircle and subdue them. The enemy retreated after a 20-minute gunbattle, with four of them confirmed wounded. **AB**

by the Philippine Army 42nd IB on February 23 in Barangay Bagong Silang, Pasacao. At around 3 p.m., 15 troops under the 42nd IB Bravo Coy attacked the Red fighters but failed in their at-



## NPA punishes Palawan mining firm

Red fighters under the New People's Army (NPA) Bienvenido Valleber Command (BVC) burned two dumptrucks owned by Citinickel Corporation in Sofronio Española, Palawan on the night of March 9.

The BVC meted punishment on the company again after the latter refused to abide by its promise to compensate people living on land damaged by its operations.

On December 9, Red fighters had also burned a backhoe worth ₱12 million after receiving complaints that Citinickel was conducting quarrying activities on land without the owners' permission.

Citinickel workers also complained that their wages, already low as they are, are always delayed.

Earlier, a squad of Red fighters raided and disarmed US Army Col. (Ret) Robert "Bob" Violet and his men in Barangay Maasin, Brookes Point on January 26.

Confiscated from them were six cal .38 pistols, two cal .22 rifles, a cal .45 pistol, a shotgun, a pair of night vision goggles, a red dot telescope and 1,000 rounds of ammunition of various caliber.

The raid was conducted to comply with a directive from the people's court to act on complaints about indiscriminate firing emanating from Violet's house during parties, causing anxiety among residents of the area.

Violet also heads a gun-running syndicate.

In 2010, he was involved in the hazing death of a neophyte of the Tau Gamma Phi Fraternity in Puerto Princesa City. The reactionary court dismissed the case against him even if it had been proven that Violet owned the car used to dump the body. **AB**

# Double the number of guerrilla fronts in Bicol

**O**n March 13, the National Democratic Front (NDF)-Bicol introduced Comrade Maria Roja Banua as its new spokesperson. NDF-Bicol appointed Ka Maria to replace its former spokesperson Ka Greg Bañares who was martyred in a gunbattle on July 4 in Juban, Sorsogon.

The day after, Ka Maria issued the region's statement on the Communist Party's 45th anniversary. Following are excerpts from her statement:

**The revolutionary movement in Bicol continues to advance.** It has overcome the grave deviations from the correct line in the 1980s that necessitated the rectification movement at the onset of the 1990s. The region has now surpassed its 1987 peak in terms of the revolutionary movement's strength and breadth. The correct conduct of guerrilla warfare has borne fruit in terms of stronger revolutionary forces and more guerrilla fronts that now serve as staging points for developing the sub-stage of the strategic defensive and aiming for the strategic stalemate.

There are now more than 10,000 Party members in the region who are diligent and unremitting in their study of the theory and practice of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. Hundreds of thousands of people comprise the mass base supporting the Party's leadership and contributing and improving on their capabilities in order to further advance the people's war.

They vigorously advance agrarian revolution and



various other forms of cooperation in production for their own needs and in support of the armed struggle. In many parts of mainland Bicol and in the island of Masbate, the maximum program of land distribution has been implemented, with the New People's Army, the mass base and the Party continually reaping more strength.

**The number of Red fighters continues to grow.** Currently, they operate in more than ten guerrilla fronts and are supported by thousands of members of militia and self-defense units in the barrios. The revolutionary movement in the region is confident that it can double the number of guerrilla fronts in a few years. The NPA is able to launch tactical offensives, attritive actions and punitive measures. Most notable were the ambushes conducted separately in Presentacion and Camalig towns in Albay in May 2013.

Although Oplan Bayanihan has caused some setbacks in a number of provinces and victimized some leading cadres due mainly to

weaknesses in the manner of operations and basing, it has, on the whole, failed in the region. Not a single guerrilla front has been destroyed in the last three years. The Red fighters have not retreated even from Albay where military camps and CAF-GU detachments dot the landscape and where the AFP's military operations have not stopped for a single moment. The NPA and the mass base have markedly expanded in Masbate and Catanduanes islands and guerrilla fronts have become more contiguous in Sorsogon and Camarines Sur.

The mass movement in the region has done well in confronting and assailing the US-RP Balikatan joint exercises, Oplan Bayanihan and various other national issues such as the rising prices of basic goods and services and corruption in the reactionary government. It has launched campaigns against the coco levy, genetically-modified crops and other antipeasant and antipeople policies. Legal and democratic struggles in the cities as well as open mass struggles of the peasantry in the plains are being vigorously advanced. More and more mass activists are being recruited and in turn, more Party members have emerged from their ranks.

The revolutionary movement in Bicol holds fast to its duty of going all-out in fulfilling its important tasks in response to calls from the national leadership to accelerate the pace of people's war with the utmost energy and determination.

AB

# 120% growth in the NPA in FSMR in 2013

Successful tactical offensives by the New People's Army (NPA) in North Cotabato in past few weeks signify the rapid and continuously growing strength of the NPA in Far South Mindanao Region (FSMR). FSMR covers the provinces of South Cotabato, Sarangani and Sultan Kudarat and parts of Davao del Sur and North Cotabato.

In a recent interview with *AB*, leading Party cadres in FSMR described how the number of Red fighters more than doubled (a net growth of 120%) in the region in 2013. This growth was accompanied by an increase in the number of basic tactical offensives and more arms seizures.

According to the Regional Committee (RC-FSMR), the rapid growth in the people's army was due mainly to deployment in the region's strategic areas that began in 2012 and which formed part of the leadership's response to calls to complete the requisites for the last substage of the strategic defensive. NPA platoons were directed to cover vast areas with favorable terrain and build guerrilla bases in these places. In January 2014, the NPA was able to position itself in a part of the region for the first time in the history of the revolutionary movement in FSMR.

National Democratic Front-FSMR spokesperson Ka

Efren explained how such strategic deployments provided respite to the NPA platoons, especially those that have experienced massive enemy attacks. For the past several years, enemy operations have been very frequent in areas suspected of being part of the NPA's area of operations. For instance, in one town in 2011, only two barangays were left without an enemy detachment. When the Framework Agreement with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) was forged in 2012, the AFP shifted the 72nd IB against the NPA. In June 2012, the AFP declared that the NPA had been wiped out in the area.

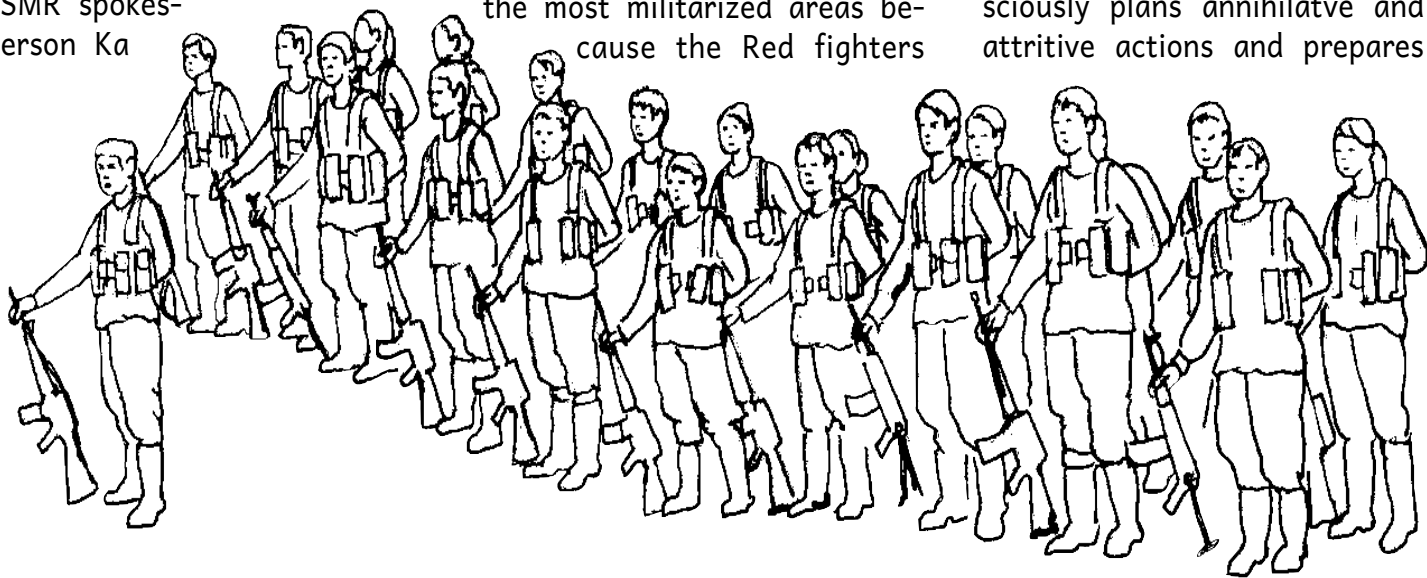
On the contrary, it was in 2012 when the Red fighters rapidly grew in number. In accordance with the Party's directives, NPA platoons aggressively expanded in nearby areas where enemy operations were relatively scant. The wider area of maneuver enabled the NPA to maintain the initiative even in the most militarized areas because the Red fighters

were no longer confined to confronting and/or avoiding enemy attacks.

"We used to be the object of pursuit operations. But now, we can easily do the pursuing," said a Red fighter. The NPA forces did not suffer a single defensive battle in 2013—they were not beaten to the draw and neither did they lose any firearms or suffer any casualties. "This was a major leap," said Ka Efren, "considering that in 2012, the comrades suffered up to eight major defensives."

Another key to the growth of the platoons was firepower. The NPA regional command makes sure that each platoon has a minimum of 18-20 high-powered firearms. Aside from those seized during tactical offensives, weapons are sourced from local MILF leaders and forces with whom the revolutionary movement has formed alliances. Most of them have held on to their weapons despite the capitulation of the MILF leaders in the peace talks.

Still another factor in the growth of the people's army is its active resistance to enemy attacks in a situation where AFP military operations continue without letup. The NPA consciously plans annihilative and attritive actions and prepares



the political and military requisites for these. Among the biggest offensives launched in FSMR last year were the disarming operation by the Mt. Alip Command against the Baclid brothers in Makilala, North Cotabato and the ambush on the 38th IB in Tulunan, North Cotabato. Twenty-three firearms were seized in these offensives. All in all, more than 70 tactical offensives were launched, resulting in 62 enemy elements killed aside from the wounded and where the number of weapons seized was enough to arm a platoon. The conduct of basic tactical offensives in the new areas was also begun in 2013.

The deployment from neighboring Southern Mindanao Region of additional forces for expansion helped FSMR in fulfilling the task of strategic deployment, as did the aggressive expansion of the first batch of Red fighters sent to the strategic areas. They actively recruited local fighters, waged initial agrarian revolution campaigns and began building mass organizations.

Despite these victories, the FSMR leadership nonetheless recognizes the great challenges that lie ahead. They are fully aware that enemy attacks are bound to escalate in the coming years. For a region that is relatively small compared to its neighbors, it is supremely important to sustain the momentum of growth to enable it to cover the most crucial terrain and reach the biggest number of people. To do this, the leadership has determined that its main task is to double the number of villages in the NPA's area of operations in two years and consolidate the organized communities to the level of barrio revolutionary committees and eventually, municipal revolutionary committees. This will ensure the continuing rapid expansion of the people's army and the expansion and intensification of guerrilla warfare in the region. **AB**

## More vigorous antifeudal struggles in Caraga

**M**ore peasants were mobilized in antifeudal struggles in 2013 in the entire Caraga region (comprising the provinces of Surigao del Norte, Surigao del Sur, Agusan del Norte and Agusan del Sur). These struggles were the key to the revitalization of peasant organizations.

More than 8,200 families benefited from successful struggles launched by peasant organizations in the region. Up to 6,000 persons directly participated in a series of consultations and negotiations. Among the issues raised by the peasants were usury or "lending," land rent, copra prices, fraud in the weighing of copra and farm workers' wages.

On the issue of usury, the peasants were up in arms against the exorbitant interest rates on loans and the unjust fees being charged by two banks—the Cantilan Bank Inc. and People's Bank of Caraga. (see Ang Bayan's *March 7 issue*)

They also assailed the "cash-to-palay" scheme, another form of usury marked by the payment of interest on funds borrowed in the form of palay. The amount borrowed during the planting season is paid three months later, during the harvest season. From an interest rate of 85% (equivalent to 50 kilos of palay) for every ₱1,000 borrowed, the peasants succeeded in bringing this down to only 30% (or 18 kilos of palay). Their adversaries also agreed to the peasants' demand that if a borrower pays as much as 100 kilos of palay

in interest, he should no longer be required to pay the principal of ₱1,000. In other cases, interest on cash-to-cash loans were reduced from 15% to 8%.

Coconut farmers, on the other hand, were able to eliminate fraud in the weighing of copra when merchants agreed to their demand to pay for the odd weight. Disregarding the odd weight (45.8 kilos of copra, for instance, is counted as only 45 kilos) is outright cheating and is one of the ways merchants have been raking in huge profits.

Meanwhile, the daily wage of farm workers was raised from ₱200 to ₱250. This is in addition to being provided free food (breakfast, lunch and afternoon snacks). In other villages, wages grew to ₱300 on top of free food. **AB**



# Conditions of the toiling masses in Cavite

Caviteños are experiencing unprecedented poverty and suffering. This was how National Democratic Front-Cavite spokesperson Ka Simeon Magdiwang described the conditions of the people in the province. In an interview with *Ang Bayan* this March, he railed against the giant capitalists who have been raking in profits by exploiting the labor power of workers in the province.

## Workers' situation

Because of Cavite's proximity to the National Capital Region (NCR), many capitalists choose to locate their operations here. They take advantage of the so-called industrial enclaves, erstwhile known as "economic processing zones" (EPZ). The most brutal policies to suppress the workers are being implemented within these vast walled estates.

There are 37 EPZs with more than 700 foreign companies employing relatively skilled workers. The intensity of the worldwide crisis of overproduction has exacerbated antiworker and subhuman working conditions due to the capitalists' desire to further exploit the Cavite workers' cheap labor.

The workers' conditions have deteriorated as a result of widespread contractualization, the implementation of the "two-tier wage system" and labor flexibilization.

At the same time, the reactionary local government has pulled all stops to implement antiworker policies with the aim of attracting more foreign investments. Among these are the "no union-no strike policy," the enforcement of "labor peace zones" and other forms of suppressing workers' democratic rights. Extrajudicial killings and political harassment also go on unabated.

To further bleed the people, the local government, in connivance with foreign capitalists and capitalist educators has begun

the system of "dual training." In the guise of "training," factories hire students of minor age who are paid substandard wages. This form of child labor is becoming widespread.

Compared to other provinces, Cavite has a relatively large worker population. Nonetheless, there is no real industrialization in the EPZs, where production is dependent on the importation of raw materials and is mainly geared towards the export market. This does not contribute anything to the local economy, and instead only leads to the exploitation of the province's pool of cheap labor.

## Landgrabbing and evictions

On the whole, Cavite remains agricultural and backward. Fifty-five percent (55%) of its land area is agricultural. This is nonetheless dwindling due to the widespread land-use conversion of rice lands into more EPZs, subdivisions and tourist businesses (such as resorts and golf courses).

Landgrabbing and peasant evictions are done violently and without restraint, as shown by the brutal suppression in the farmlands of Silang, Dasmariñas, Maragondon, Naic, Tanza and Alfonso. In most cases filed in court, the judges rule in favor of the big developers against the farmers.

## Urban poor and other sectors

The urban poor in Cavite suf-

fer dislocation several times over. Most of them ended up in Cavite after becoming victims of demolitions and eviction in NCR and being relocated by the government to the province's hinterlands.

Now, they are again being targeted for eviction from their relocation sites. More than 40 urban poor communities in the province's seven towns and three cities are in danger of being demolished. Residents are set to be evicted from their communities because of the impending construction of the LRT extension and other infrastructure projects under the Aquino regime's Public-Private Partnership program.

Also among those to be demolished are communities in ten barangays within the 97-hectare Cuenca Lands in Bacoor City because of plans to convert the area into a commercial center like Makati and Pasay.

## Situation and tasks of the revolutionary movement

On the whole, the revolutionary forces in the province persevere in advancing the revolutionary movement. Last year, the mass movements of the urban poor and other semi-proletariat, fisherfolk and youth-students expanded. One factor in their advance is the invigoration of local struggles and contextualizing them in terms of national issues. Although they have yet to match the peak they achieved in the past, the worker and peasant movement continue to advance.

Thus, at present, the main task of the revolutionary movement in the region is to further expand and strengthen worker and peasant organizations. It is also paying due attention to

the urban poor, who are mostly semi-proletarians, as well as small fisherfolk. They comprise the dense population of the toiling masses in the province.

Cavite plays a significant role in the overall conduct of people's war in the Southern Tagalog region. Because it is home to three million exploited and oppressed people, it is second to NCR in

terms of the concentration of toiling masses. It is also one of the gateways to the nation's capital and center of important foreign investments.

Aside from strengthening the mass movement, the biggest contribution of the revolutionary movement in the province is its ability to supply growing numbers of Red fighters, especially from the ranks of the worker masses. AB

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## 3 peasants massacred in Abra

**E**xtrajudicial killings and other human rights violations remain rampant under the US-Aquino regime. From January 1 to March 2, ten cases of extrajudicial killings have been documented. The number excludes the latest massacre of three small-scale miners belonging to a minority group in Abra and the killing of Romeo Capalla in Iloilo.

**Abra.** The bodies of Licuben Ligiw, 68 and his sons Freddie, 35 and Eddie, 30 were found buried in a cramped and shallow grave in Sitio Sukaw, Dumenglay, Baay-Licuan on March 7. They were last seen alive by their fellow villagers in their *pacalso* o makeshift hut on the afternoon of March 2.

The victims were members of KASTAN (Kakailian Salakniban Tay Amin ti Nagtaudan), the provincial chapter of the Cordillera Peoples Alliance (CPA). Freddie was also a member of Sikadan, a progressive youth organization.

The residents believe that the Ligiws were abducted and killed by soldiers of the 41st IB led by Lt. Col. Danilo Domingo. On February 22, soldiers from the same battalion had captured Freddie and forced him to serve as a guide in their military operations. (*For more details, see AB's March 7 issue*)

Freddie was scheduled to give a report to the Abra Human Rights Movement (AHRM) on March 3 regarding his forcible

use by the military as a guide. But he went missing the day before along with his father and younger brother. Residents informed the AHRM about the Ligiws' disappearance and later found their bodies on March 7.

Their remains were dug up on the afternoon of March 8. At the burial site, the residents saw Freddie's body piled on top of his father's, and Eddie's body at the bottom. The victims were bound at the wrists and gagged.

In an attempt to cover up their crime, the military announced that the burial site was a mass grave for people killed by the NPA.

**Iloilo.** Two motorcycle-riding assassins killed Romeo Capalla in Oton town at 6:30 p.m. of March 15. Capalla, 65, chaired the board of the Panay Fair Trade Center (PFTC) and was the younger brother of retired Archbishop Fernando Capalla of Davao City.

He was gunned down by men believed to be elements of a military-led death squad in front of the Oton Public Market. His as-

sailants made a rapid get-away aboard two motorcycles in the direction of Tigbauan town. Capalla was brought to the Western Visayas Medical Center but failed to reach the hospital alive. He had been shot in the head.

The military had long been harassing Capalla, a former political detainee during the Marcos dictatorship. Although he had long been working at the PFTC, soldiers and policemen arrested him in August 2005 in Barangay San Antonio, Oton, accusing him of having been part of a group NPA Red fighters who had attacked a construction company in Guimbal, Iloilo in 2004. After 32 days in detention, however, he was ordered released on September 5 by the Regional Trial Court-Branch 67 due to lack of evidence.

The PFTC assists farmers' and women's organizations in making and selling natural and organic products for the local, European and US markets.

Meanwhile, an hour after Capalla's murder, four men burned down a sugar mill in Barangay Dabong, Janiuay town. The sugar mill is run by the Katingalan sang mga Mangu nguma sa Dabong (KAMADA) and is among those being serv-



iced by the PFTC. The fire destroyed a truck and portions of the sugar mill building.

**Davao del Sur.** Matanao police arrested nine civilians at 7 a.m. of March 10, hours after an NPA raid on the Matanao PNP headquarters. The civilians, who were accused of being NPA mem-

bers were identified as Renante Urot, Joey Alberca, Rufoboy Gama, Laudemer Gama, Noel Morangit, Roger Natonton, Julio Sales, John Rey Pabillo and Christopher Sales. They were on the way to a fiesta at Barangay Savoy when accosted by the police. **AB**

## Thousands mark International Working Women's Day

Up to 15,000 women and their male advocates from various sectors of society gathered at the Liwasang Bonifacio in Manila and marched towards the foot of Mendiola Bridge to condemn the US-Aquino regime for neglecting the people.

Similar protests were also waged by progressive organizations led by GABRIELA chapters in the cities of Legazpi, Masbate, Naga, Calamba, Bacolod, Iloilo, Roxas, Tacloban, Baguio, Davao and Tagum.

In Tacloban, protesters roundly held the Aquino regime accountable for its criminal negligence of women and children. Members of People Surge had earlier trooped to the Aquino clan's house in Quezon City at the start of the campaign to assail the Aquino government's responsibility for typhoon Yolanda's dead, missing and surviving victims and its failure to address their needs.

Meanwhile, the teachers' sector, 80% of whom comprise women, scored the Aquino regime's lack of concern for education, as shown by its low priority in the national budget during Aquino's four years in power. The teachers also condemned the policy of privatizing state universities, which has worsened the commercialization of education.

Another issue tackled prominently at the rally was the condition of farm workers at Hacienda Luisita, which underscored the inutility of bogus land reform and landlord president Aquino's use of the state machinery to serve big landlord interests.

Workers and urban poor representatives, on the other hand, exposed the manipulation of surveys to depress poverty incidence statistics. The latest surveys claim a poverty incidence of 55% instead of the more accurate 80%. In addition, unemployment statistics are also being understated in the face of growing joblessness due to labor flexibilization and company shutdowns.

A newly formed group, the Samahan ng Manggagawang Kontraktwal or SAMA-AKO, called for regular employment and an end to contractualization.



At Mendiola, rallyists tore through a giant mural depicting Aquino and his cohorts as imperialist puppets driven by greed and the desire to wallow in the wealth and privilege accorded by state power. **AB**

## Paralyzed political detainee is free

Twenty-nine-year old Vanessa delos Reyes was granted temporary liberty by a Davao City court after posting P800,000 in bail. After leaving the Southern Philippines Medical Center where she had been under hospital arrest for close to three years, Delos Reyes thanked her supporters from the Free Vanessa Movement and others who worked hard to raise the funds needed for her release.

She was among the group of ailing, elderly and disabled political detainees whose release human rights advocates had been demanding on humanitarian grounds and as part of the Aquino regime's compliance with the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law.

Delos Reyes was a Red fighter of the New People's Army who had been shot in the spine in an encounter between the NPA and the Armed Forces of the Philippines on May 29, 2011 in an upland area of Davao Oriental. Due to the severity of her injuries, she had become hors de combat. Delos Reyes is unable to walk and was in a wheelchair when she met the media after her release.

Delos Reyes promised that even if she could no longer return to the mountains, she would continue to serve the Filipino people as a human rights advocate. **AB**

## Farmers condemn CARP extension

More than 200 peasants from Bulacan, Batangas and Rizal camped out in front of the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) on March 1 to protest moves by the Aquino regime to extend by another five years the bogus Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP). The Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) led the mass action.

The KMP slammed the proponents of the extension, including the reformist and pseudo-progressive representatives of Akbayan in Congress.

Among those who joined the camp-out were CARP beneficiaries from a 120-hectare landholding in Barangay Coral ni Lopez, Calaca, Batangas whose Certificates of Land Ownership Award (CLOA) had been cancelled in 2007. Now scheduled for eviction, the peasants said that Luis Lopez, their former landlord, wants to regain ownership of their farms and convert the land into a ranch. The CLOAs of 50 beneficiaries were rescinded in connivance with the Department of Agrarian Reform even if the farmers had been paying amortization and Lopez had already been compensated by the Land Bank. The Samahan ng mga Magsasaka sa Coral ni Lopez (Samacolo) and the Samahan ng mga Magsasaka sa Batangas (Sambat) had launched a picket earlier after a sheriff from the Provincial Agrarian Reform Office approached them on

February 12 to give them notice about the cancellation of their CLOA.

Also at the camp-out were farmer-beneficiaries from a 435-hectare estate in Barangay Macabud, Rodriguez, Rizal. They called on the House of Representatives Committee on Agrarian Reform to conduct an immediate investigation into Exec. Sec. Paquito Ochoa's order to exempt the estate from land reform. The land is set to be used for a joint solar energy project under the Department of Energy and ATN Philippines Solar Energy Group, Inc., a private company specializing in renewable energy.

Using "renewable energy" as a pretext, Ochoa's order will result in the eviction and loss of livelihood of 4,000 farmers and their families in Barangay Macabud. A contract has already been signed by Palladian Land Development Inc. and ATN Solar for the use of the land for the 30-megawatt project.

Another group at the camp-out was composed of peasants evicted by DILG Sec. Mar Roxas' family from the 2,000-hectare Hacienda Araneta in Tungkong Mangga, San Jose del Monte, Bulacan.

The farmers demanded the junking of the CARP law because it has instigated and caused the eviction, loss of livelihood and brutalization of millions of peasants and preserved the land monopoly of hacenderos like the Cojuangco-Aquinos. **AB**

## Rotting food donations buried in Leyte

The Aquino government has allowed food donations to rot in warehouses of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and buried them in Leyte dumpsites despite the widespread hunger stalking hundreds of thousands of victims of typhoon Yolanda in the Visayas.

The startling discovery was made by locals who actually witnessed the dumping. On March 8 at around 10 a.m., Benjamin Campos, a resident of Palompon, Leyte saw trucks loaded with sacks of rice and canned goods enter Eco Park. He could see things clearly because the trucks were uncovered. Campos was able to take pictures and videos of a backhoe owned by the municipal government digging a hole into which the rotting food was dumped.

He tried to enter Eco Park, but was barred from doing so by security guards. The guards likewise drove away scavengers looking for scrap while the dumping was going on. The public and the media are also prohibited from entering Eco Park, ostensibly because it is undergoing rehabilitation.

Campos added that relief goods had also been dumped in another barangay, some 30 minutes uphill from Eco Park.

Officials from the Municipal Welfare and Development Office in Palo town have admitted to burying rotting relief goods in a dumpsite in Barangay San Jose on February 5 and March 6.

In the face of these latest exposés, Sr. Edita Eslopör, spokesperson of the Yolanda victims' alliance People Surge called on Benigno Aquino III to fire DSWD Sec. Dinky Soliman, calling her a shrewd manipulator and an expert at concocting dirty tactics to cover up the anomalies and corruption emanating from the Yolanda crisis.

Sr. Edita had earlier walked out on a dialogue called by Soliman on March 12, after the DSWD secretary denied re-

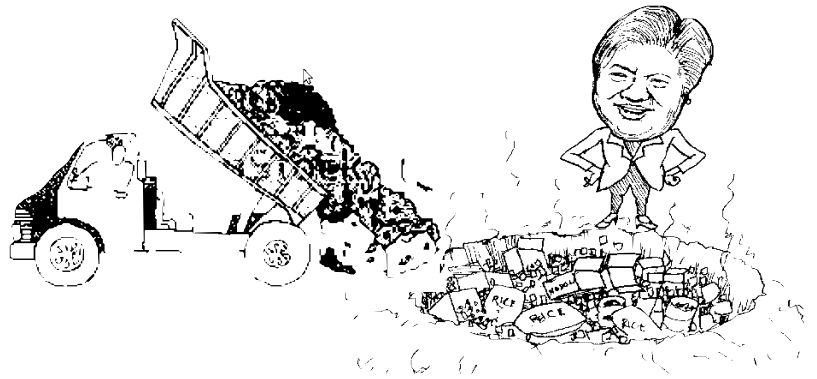
sponsibility for the dumping of rotting food donations. Soliman claimed that only a few items had been dumped, and that in any case, this was beyond the DSWD's jurisdiction because the goods had already been passed on to the local government units.

After leaving the dialogue, Sr. Edita joined some 100 protesters who were picketing outside the DSWD office. One of the picketers held a placard saying "*Gubyernong Aquino, waray pulos!*" (The Aquino government is useless)

Prior to this, Aquino had apologized for the delayed government response in the face of continuing brickbats about his government's criminal negligence. Sr. Edita retorted that apologies were useless without concrete measures. She stressed that the victims needed food, shelter and sustainable livelihood.

Before the unsuccessful dialogue, People Surge had discovered some of Soliman's tactics to conceal the severity of the crisis wrought by the calamity. The DSWD had reportedly coerced people into signing documents expressing satisfaction with how the DSWD and the Aquino government were handling the Yolanda humanitarian crisis. In some cases, the DSWD had even bribed survivors with ₱1,200 each in exchange for their signatures.

Meanwhile, Gabriela Women's Party Rep. Luz Ilagan filed a resolution in Congress calling on Aquino to approve the release of ₱40,000 in emergency assistance to every family affected by ty-



phoon Yolanda. Ilagan said the monies could be sourced from the balance of the 2013 Quick Response Fund, the ₱14.6-billion supplemental budget, the Presidential Social Fund and monetary donations from other countries.

At the same time, Ilagan denounced the Aquino government for prioritizing projects under the Public-Private Partnership Program instead of the Yolanda victims' rehabilitation. She said that Aquino keeps on claiming that the government lacks funds, and yet, it has spent ₱200 million for the construction of substandard bunkhouses that have benefited a mere 100 families, at the overpriced cost of ₱1 million per unit.

Meanwhile, Yolanda victims in Panay complained that they have been forced to borrow money from loan sharks and small lending companies to have their houses repaired. Almost four months since the storm hit, they have yet to receive any help from the government. This has compelled them to borrow money at exorbitant interest rates, which they have to pay back in three months. **AB**

## New US basing agreement in the works

Plans are afoot for the signing of a new agreement between the Aquino regime and the Obama government that would formally allow US military forces to build facilities within AFP military bases or camps. The signing will likely take place during US Pres. Barack Obama's visit to the Philippines in the last week of April.

The accord, previously called the Framework Agreement for Increased Rotational Presence has reportedly been renamed Agreement for Enhanced Defense Cooperation.

This is but the latest in a series of shrewd mechanisms cooked up by US imperialism and its puppet regimes to cloak

with legality the growing presence of US troops in the country and circumvent the 1987 constitution's ban on foreign military bases.

The old pretexts for the continuing US military presence were the frequent joint military exercises, disaster response, civic action and medi-

cal missions. Nowadays, the justifications include China's alleged bullying of the Philippines regarding disputed islets and other territories in the South China Sea.

In reality, the continued arrival of US troops, warships and warplanes in the Philippines forms part of the US' major pivot of its forces towards East Asia. The plan calls for the US' deployment of 50% of its ground troops and 60% of its naval forces to the region.

The new agreement is a throwback to the era of US mil-

itary bases, where thousands of US combat troops, their warships, jetfighters, communication facilities, nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction were stationed within the country, and the bases used as launching pads for US wars of aggression.

Worse, the so-called enhanced military cooperation will allow US military presence in AFP military facilities all over the country. Wherever the AFP is, the US military can be also.

In a related development, the Aquino regime has forked out P1 billion to rush the construction and expansion of facilities within and around the AFP naval bases in Oyster and Ulugan Bays, both in Palawan. Improving facilities for US military use has become a major target of AFP "modernization spending."

Aquino's officials claim that Philippine sovereignty can still be asserted because AFP officers will be given access to the US facilities. However, based on the country's experience with the 600-strong Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines (JSOTF-P), which has long been maintaining its own facilities within Camp Navarro in Zamboanga City, AFP base commanders are barred from entering the JSOTF-P area.

Negotiations have been going on for months between the US military and the Aquino regime, but hardly any information has been provided to the public about the draft agreement. The negotiators have also asserted that the agreement need not be ratified by the Senate, in a bid to avoid subjecting it to debate. This early, a number of senators have already expressed anger at being disregarded. AB

## US imperialist intervention in Ukraine

Since November, there has been widespread turmoil in Ukraine instigated by US imperialism and its big capitalist allies in the European Union (EU). Ukraine is one of the centers of imperialist rivalry. It has been targeted for rule by the US to use it against Russia by controlling its rich oil resources and the oil pipelines from Russia to Europe that are mainly found in southern Ukraine.

Ukraine is Europe's largest country. It is bounded on the east and northeast by Russia and on the northwest and west by Belarus, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Moldova. To its south and southeast lie the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov. A peninsula juts out of southern Ukraine—Crimea, an autonomous country under Ukraine until March 16.

Since the end of 2013, protest actions have erupted in Ukraine demanding integration with the European Union. Armed attacks had also been waged against the Ukrainian government. The protest actions were led by neofascists and Right-wing forces enjoying US and EU support. These protests have had pro-Russian counterparts, especially in southern Ukraine.

On February 21, after a bloody attempt to suppress

pro-US and pro-EU protests, the Ukrainian parliament unseated Victor Yanukovich as president, forcing him to flee to Russia. New elections have been set on May 25.

To stop pro-US forces from taking over in Ukraine and controlling the oil industry in the Black Sea, Russia immediately moved to gain control over the autonomous Crimean territory. After Yanukovich's ouster, protests erupted in Crimea, where demonstrators assailed what they called the illegal government in Ukraine. The Crimean government declared its secession from Ukraine.

Despite US threats, Russia quickly mobilized 30,000 armed soldiers to occupy Crimea. On March 16, under Russian power, a referendum was held where 97% voted to integrate Crimea with Russia. (Majority of the Crimean population are ethnic Russians).



Crimea immediately nationalized two Ukrainian companies, Chernomorneftegaz and Ukrtransgaz, which both extract oil from the Black Sea, and placed them under the newly formed Ministry of Fuel and Energy

Meanwhile, the US and EU continue to lock horns with Russia. They refuse to recognize the Crimean referendum results which favored integration with Russia. In a related development, the US and EU have announced their readiness to impose more sanctions on Russia if it does not relieve tensions in Ukraine even as they stressed that there are diplomatic measures that can be taken to resolve the crisis.

The US has also attempted to sabotage the Russian stock market. It has likewise continued to

strengthen its military presence in the area. The US and NATO recently conducted reconnaissance flights called AWACS (Airborne Warning and Control System) along the Polish, Romanian and Russian borders, ostensibly to monitor the crisis in Ukraine. This was followed by wargames consisting of air and naval drills in Romania on March 11-14 joined by Poland, Romania and Bulgaria.

There is danger that the current political turmoil will escalate towards all-out civil war or a region-wide armed conflict. These developments form part of the unrelenting and continually worsening crisis of the international capitalist system and reflect the dwindling room for accommodation among the imperialists for control over markets and raw materials. AB

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