

Editorial

Intensify people's war with Aquino exit and installation of new puppet regime

With the coming reactionary elections set to end the old puppet regime and start a new one, the task of intensifying the people's war across the country is clear to the New People's Army (NPA) and all revolutionary forces. Red fighters firmly wield the weapons of the revolutionary armed struggle.

Let us further intensify tactical offensives in Benigno Aquino III's remaining months in the reactionary government's seat of power. The people's wrath over the Aquino regime's six years of rotten, criminal, fascist and puppet rule is interminable. Drive the momentum of tactical offensives across the country to greet the new puppet regime to be installed and affirmed by US imperialism through the May elections.

Under the new puppet regime, the people are bound to confront efforts to pave the way for greater US military intervention (in collusion with rising militarism in Japan), changes to the 1987 constitution to make it more congruent with the interests of foreign big capitalists and put the Philippines under the US Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement and other issues of national freedom. The new regime will serve as implementor of policies that are set to cause further exploitation and greater hardship to the workers and peasants, youth and students, teachers and ordinary employees, small professionals and other exploited classes and sectors.

Whoever among the candidates wins, he or she will don the masks of "pro-poor", "anti-corruption", "anti-crime" and promoter of "clean government" and "service to the people". In fact, they all represent the interests of big foreign capitalists and big compradors and are involved in the criminal operation of bureaucrat-capitalists that employ state power to serve their businesses and interests.

Let us immediately rip the mask of the incoming regime and not allow it to deceive the people. In-

tensify the armed struggle together with strengthening the democratic mass struggle. Combine tactical offensives from all sides with rising street marches. Thus, the Filipino people can intensively advance their national-democratic struggles to rock and put an end to the oppressive and exploitative ruling semicolonial and semifeudal system.

The Oplan Bayanihan has been completely frustrated in its aim to render the NPA inconsequential by 2016. Instead of being beaten, the NPA further advanced in Southern Mindanao, North Central Mindanao and North Eastern Mindanao where the AFP concentrated its forces and armed strength with the support of the US. At the same time, other units of the NPA are also intensifying armed struggle in the entire country.



The AFP's declarations of "conflict manageable and ready for development" provinces are all empty claims to give the impression of weak or defeated NPA in the area. Such declarations are belied by NPA tactical offensives in various provinces. In the coming months, the AFP is bound to discard its "conflict-manageable" line as tactical offensives are launched left and right across the country.

Let us firmly take hold of our task to intensify the people's war. We must earnestly plan and launch mainly annihilative tactical offensives to rout the enemy and seize their weapons.

All levels of command of the NPA must critically analyze, assess and sum up the factors preventing the NPA from performing its main duty of launching tactical offensives to seize the enemy's arms in numbers. Let us identify and overcome various manifestations of military conservatism, guerrillaism and civilianization. Strengthen the local cadres of the Party in order to raise their capability to lead the peasant

movement and enhance the NPA's capacity for military work.

Strengthen and raise all-roundedly the capacity of the NPA. Undertake mass recruitment of new Red fighters. Set definite targets for bold expansion. Complete, implement and assess plans to reach the barrio and community level. Carry out recruitment campaigns consonant with antifeudal mass struggles and building mass organizations, people's militias and other organs of political power.

We must rapidly increase the weapons of the NPA in order to arm all Red fighters as well as all units of the people's militia. Hundreds of disarming operations must be carried out by regular forces of the NPA, as well as by the militia, self-defense units, and mass organizations. The AFP's US-supplied high-powered assault firearms such as the M4 rifle, K3 and the like must be put into the hands of the Red fighters.

All units and commands of the NPA must form and implement plans to launch tactical offensives that can surely be won towards seizing

big numbers of weapons from the enemy. Identify the weaker detachments, police stations, checkpoints and other military targets with armories or stocks of weapons.

Ambush the weak and isolated units of the enemy to take their arms. Set sights as well on the armories of private armies of warlords and politicians, as well as the security forces of big bourgeois comprador-foreign monopoly-capitalist enterprises.

Together with the big number of bodyblows, carry out timely headblows against the enemy.

Ensure politico-military training for all Red fighters in order to raise their capabilities in guerrilla operations and maneuvers, in marksmanship and firing weapons, the use of explosives and other practical and basic military skills. Regularly carry out training and retraining. Improve the health and physical fitness of Red fighters through regular organized exercises and encouraging reduction of cigarette consumption.

Continue to raise military discipline and adherence to the "three-eight" (three points of discipline and eight points to remember). Regularly assess the capability and militance of the Red fighters. Practice democracy in the three main fields of politics, economy and military. Ensure that cultural and education work thrives in every NPA unit. Units must daily discuss the burning issues of the people and regularly propagate, read and discuss *Ang Bayan*.

Build, expand and raise the organization and military capability of all units of the people's militia. Sustain people's militia trainings in planning and launching appropriate tactical offensives. The active participation of hundreds of militia forces in every guerrilla front is one of the aspects of the people's war that we need to develop in order to make it truly widespread and invincible.

Continue to build the company-sized guerrilla fronts and inter-front

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and subregional war theaters of military leadership or operational commands. The armed strength of the people's army must be properly combined with the invigoration and mass mobilization of the local Party branches and revolutionary mass organizations in order to broadly mobilize the masses for the people's war.

We must carry out the training of NPA officers in order to train Red commanders in military science and raise their capability in leading the war at both the tactical and strategic level. The NPA needs more officers with the capability to serve as commanders of platoons, companies and battalions.

Party activists and cadres from the working class and educated urban petty-bourgeois must be assigned to the NPA in their numbers.

They are needed to fill in the growing demand for Red commanders and officers and to serve the political departments (propaganda, education, culture), administration, medical, intelligence, ordnance and research.

The sustained, wave upon wave and solid advance of the revolutionary armed struggle can only be achieved by relentlessly advancing agrarian revolution and vitalizing the antifeudal mass struggles of the peasant masses. Active antifeudal mass struggles deepen and solidify the mass base for NPA recruitment.

Regularly sum up the implementation of the revolutionary program for land reform. Ensure that victories of antifeudal struggles are consolidated and that these continue to advance along the revolutionary path, that emerging petty-bourgeois influences are combatted, that poor peasant organizations are strengthened and that the basic alliance of workers and peasants is built up through the continuous recruitment of new Red fighters.

These tasks are among those that we should firmly take hold of in celebrating the 47th anniversary of the NPA. Let us firmly grasp these tasks in order to continue advancing the protracted people's war to the new strategic stage at the soonest possible time. AB

96 NPA tactical offensives since January

The New People's Army launched tactical offensives on a daily basis against the reactionary state's armed forces in different parts of the country in the first quarter of 2016.

Preliminary reports show that no less than 96 tactical offensives were carried out by the NPA from January to March 21. In these, the AFP-PNP-CAFGU and other paramilitary groups sustained more than 216 casualties. These numbers do not include other military actions such as defensive clashes where the NPA seized the initiative, meting out punishment on criminal elements, and penalizing companies that damage the environment and harm the people.

The initial reports were submitted by NPA commands in Northern Luzon, Bicol, Eastern Visayas, Negros, Panay, North Eastern Mindanao, North Central Mindanao, and Southern Mindanao. Among the highlights of the NPA's victories are the confiscation of 14 weapons from a raid of a police station in Eastern Samar, NEMR's one-day synchronized attacks, and the annihilation of 27 troops from the Cagayan Valley RPSB-2. These were complemented by at least one simultaneous additional tactical offensive, and many were carried out with a developed level of coordination.

These offensives are the NPA's response to Oplan Bayanihan's culmination and in opposition to the upcoming elections.

Eastern Visayas. Ten M16 rifles and four calibre .45 pistols were confiscated by Red fighters from a raid on the Balangkayan Municipal Police Station in Eastern Samar at around 7:30 p.m. last March 6. This victorious tactical offensive was carried out by the regional command of the NPA

in Eastern Visayas (Efren Martires Command) and the NPA's Eastern Samar provincial command (Sergio Lobino Command).

The Red fighters immediately took control of the police station by employing the elements of speed and surprise, thus immobilizing the six on-duty police officers. Not a single shot was fired and the raid was completed in around 30 minutes. All police officers who surrendered were treated humanely and were safely released by the NPA. Also confiscated were ammunitions, other war materiel, and two laptop computers.

National Democratic Front-Eastern Visayas spokesperson Fr. Santiago "Ka Sanny" Salas said that the offensive serves as punishment to the Balangkayan Municipal Police for its support for Oplan Bayanihan.

Bicol. Five elements of the 31st IB were casualties when the NPA-Sorsogon (Celso Minguez Command) set off a command-detonated explosive (CDX) and ambushed the soldiers in Barangay Sangat, Gubat at around 10 a.m. last March 19. Wounded in the ambush was 2Lt. Jonathan Baay, commander of the operating troops.

The 31st IB has been launching sustained military operations in East Sorsogon since the last week of January. It has put seven barangays of Barcelona under psywar operations of the Peace and Development Teams, while strike operations were being executed in some barangays of Gubat.

Meanwhile, three demolition operations were undertaken by the NPA-Masbate (Jose Rapsing Command) last March 3, 4, and 6 against AFP and PNP troops in the island.

Initially blasted with a CDX was a convoy of the PNP-Masbate in Barangay Badjang, Cataingan while the police vehicles were heading back to Masbate City from Pio V. Corpuz town. The operation was carried out at around 2 p.m. on March 3. Two elements of the PNP were killed and another was wounded. Traveling with the convoy was Police Superintendent Brian B. Castillo, PNP-Masbate's Deputy Provincial Director for Operations.

The following day at 2 a.m., a six-by-six military truck of the 9th IB, while heading towards its headquarters in Milagros town, was hit by a CDX set off by the JRC at Barangay Asid, Masbate City. The truck broke down after being hit by the explosive.

Another demolition operation was carried out by two JRC commando teams on March 6, at 10 p.m. against 9th IB troops who were temporarily stationed in Barangay Cabangalan, Placer. The Red fighters were able to set the CDXs next to the two stations being occupied by a platoon of the 9th IB. The explosion wrecked the enemy's stations which they cordoned off in order to hide the casualties.

This series of operations is part of no less than 20 tactical offensives launched by the NPA-Bicol (Romulo Jallores Command) from February 8 until March 6. Underscoring these are the partisan operations against Sgt. Rodel Rala of the 22nd IB and CAFGU element Nieto Arias in Barangay San Isidro, Libmanan, Camarines Sur on February 9, and the coordinated harassment operations by militia units on February 29 against three enemy formations stationed at the

barangays of Altavista, Talisay, and Buenavista in San Fernando, Ticao Island, Masbate.

Southern Tagalog. Red fighters successfully ambushed troops belonging to the 4th IB in Barangay Hagan, Bongabong, Oriental Mindoro at around 10:30 a.m. on March 15. No less than nine casualties were inflicted in this military action.

Likewise, this offensive belies the AFP's declaration that it has weakened the revolutionary movement in the island of Mindoro.

Northern Luzon. Two successive ambushes on February 28 and March 1 by the NPA-Central Isabela (Reynaldo Piñon Command or RPC) in San Mariano, Isabela dealt the 86th IB 17 casualties.

The RPC's first ambush was staged on February 28 in Barangay Buyasan, San Mariano against a platoon from the "A" Coy of the 86th IB. Three enemy soldiers were killed and one was wounded. According to the RPC, two helicopters and a bomber plane arrived to reinforce just a few minutes into the fighting.

Following this, another unit from the "A" Coy was ambushed by the NPA on March 1 at 4 a.m. while concluding their military operations in Barangay Tappa, San Mariano. In this encounter, two were killed while 11 were wounded on the side of the enemy. Among those wounded was "A" Coy Commanding Officer 1Lt. Randy Alog. The NPA was able to confiscate five military backpacks and a unit of night vision goggles.

Southern Mindanao. Thirty nine tactical offensives within the first two months of 2016 were recorded by the NPA in Southern Mindanao Region (SMR). According

to NPA-SMR spokesperson Rigoberto Sanchez, these tactical offensives underscore the failure of Oplan Bayanihan.

The NPA displayed skill in guerrilla warfare despite the sustained and vicious military operations in the region, undertaken by no less than 13 Philippine Army battalions, three Division Reconnaissance Companies, a number of Scout Ranger companies, PNP forces, and paramilitaries. The SMR is currently considered the most militarized region.

Moreover, Sanchez said that the enemy suffered 79 casualties, including 44 killed. All in all, the NPA-SMR was able to initiate around five tactical offensives per week against the fascist troops.

Northeastern Mindanao. The NPA-Northeastern Mindanao Region (NEMR) fought a valiant active defense to confront the Armed Forces of the Philippines' unrelenting and brutal attacks in the region. According to Ka Maria Malaya, National Democratic Front-NEMR spokesperson, a total of 40 clashes ensued between the NPA-NEMR and the fascist troops of the AFP and CAFGU this February 2016 alone.

Most notable among these were the NPA-NEMR's 19 coordinated attacks last February 25 against Army-CAFGU camps and AFP troops carrying out bombing and psywar operations. (Read *Ang Bayan*, March 7) These resulted in the killing of 19 and the wounding of 8 AFP-CAFGU troops, excluding the casualties which the military secretly retrieved.

Likewise, Ka Maria asserted that the 402nd Bde has been relentless in its operations in the mountains of Surigao del Sur, Surigao del Norte, and Agusan del Norte. NEMR has also been turned into a training ground for test missions of the Scout Rangers.

In Surigao del Sur, the AFP continues to attack the towns of Lianga, San Agustin, Mari-



hatag, Cagwait, Tago, San Miguel, Cantilan, Cortes, and Tandag City. Since the second week of February, another series of attacks was executed by the AFP in the towns of Alegria, Claver, and Gigaquit in Surigao del Norte, and also in Kitcharao, Agusan del Norte. In these areas,

communities were bombed for more than a week. Malaya said further that around 20 large bombs were dropped by Philippine Air Force planes, and 13 cannon projectiles were fired by the 29th IB.

AB

Radyo Pakikibaka: delivering news and analysis while waging war

Across the country, one of the tasks performed by revolutionary forces is the sustained monitoring of burning national issues, their analyses and propagation of the revolutionary stand and calls among the people. In various regions, “balitaan” (sharing news) and discussions within units of the New People’s Army are carried out to ensure this task. Red fighters meticulously monitor news from the radio and television and share these with fellow fighters and the people.

In Southern Tagalog, Red fighters have systematized the practice by presenting Radyo Pakikibaka (Radio Struggle) to propagate the analyses and calls of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP).

The Political Section of the NPA leads in monitoring and gathering economic, political, military, international, local and other news. These are written down and supplied with the appropriate analyses.

Radyo Pakikibaka is a live broadcasting type of program with news broadcasters, reporters called Ronda Gerilya who share their analysis of some particular news items, and the Tinig ng Rebolusyon (TNR, or Voice of the Revolution) which expounds on a featured news item or sums up the program. The TNR pays tribute to Radyo Pakikibaka’s first broadcaster, Gregorio

“Ka Roger” Rosal, the late CPP spokesperson.



In some guerilla fronts, Radyo Pakikibaka usually “airs” Monday through Friday with a special edition on Saturday that features the summed up news of the week or a discussion of *Ang Bayan*, *Kalatas*, and the local revolutionary newspaper. Sundays feature special performances of various cultural works such as revolutionary songs, poems and skits. This becomes the venue for the popularization of songs and revolutionary literature.

News sharing such as Radyo Pakikibaka is an effective propaganda and education tool because it broadcasts the concerns of the masses of workers, peasants and other oppressed sectors of society. This is part of the invigoration of propaganda and cultural work where Red fighters are also trained to write, analyze and discuss the news from the viewpoint of the revolutionary movement.

AB

Struggle inside and outside prison

AS AQUINO exits the presidency, he will leave behind a heavy pile of debt, oppressive poverty, rampant cases of corruption and a grim record of human rights abuses. Among these are numerous cases of illegal arrests and detention, filing of trumped-up charges and indefinite detention.

According to Karapatan, 2,326 were illegally arrested and 911 were detained for political reasons by the US-Aquino regime since it came into power up to September 2015. Of the present 560 political detainees, 290 were arrested under the regime. Among these are 102 of the 136 youth detainees.

In Oplan Bayanihan, criminalizing political offenses falls under “security sector reform” (SSR). John Does and Jane Does (used to count unnamed suspects) in charge sheets of criminal cases are waiting to be replaced with the names of newly arrested political offenders. SSR employs the “whole-of-nation

initiative,” wherein the judiciary, as a “stakeholder” of Oplan Bay-anihan, is urged to assist the military.

Political arrests and detentions are common under all US puppet regimes. These aim to break the revolutionaries’ fighting spirit through prolonged incarceration and “rehabilitation.”

Trumped-up criminal charges are used to prolong the imprisonment of detainees. The fascists intend to make them rot in prison, destroy their standpoint and weaken their bodies. If this happens, they will be soon be considered “neutralized” and losses of the revolutionary movement.

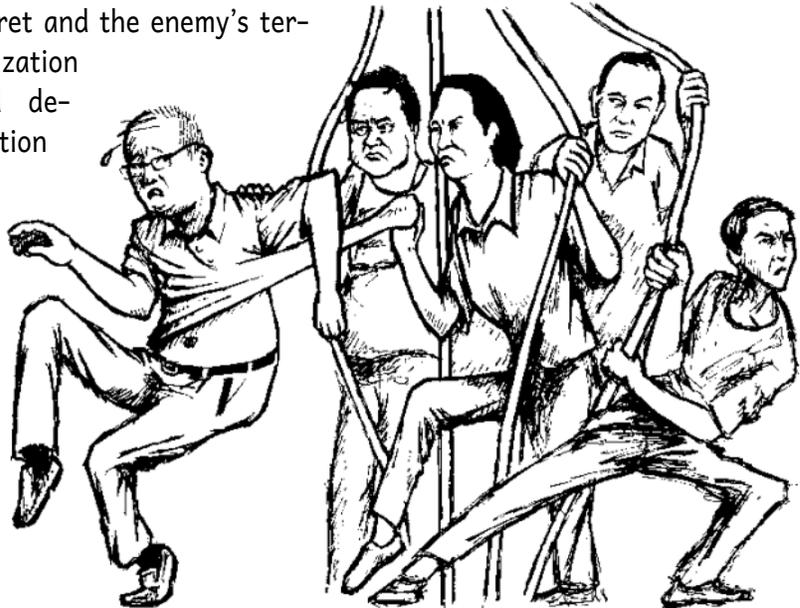
Therefore, while avoiding arrest and detention, every revolutionary must be prepared for this possibility. If it does happen, they must thoroughly carry on the struggle inside prison to defeat the enemy’s objectives.

Foremost among the tasks of detained revolutionaries is to attain freedom through legal or illegal means, primarily illegal, and thus rejoin the mainstream of the revolutionary movement. They should not be content with waiting for the bourgeois state’s judgement or promises of amnesty. At the soonest, find ways for the most effective and speediest methods of self-release. Even under the worst repression of martial law, many comrades were freed through collective, organized and planned escapes and some through escapes exploiting opportune moments.

Second, keep lofty the superior integrity and prestige of the Party and the revolution while in prison and in the face of the enemy. The discipline and high level of collectivity while working outside should not be abandoned while in the hands of the enemy. Membership in revolutionary organizations are not invalidated upon arrest, so returning to decadent and exploitative behavior must be avoided within prison. The enemy purposely

baits detainees with rotten practices to corrupt them. These must be guarded against.

Third, maintain revolutionary steadfastness and develop the revolutionary standpoint. Party groups are secretly organized inside prison and political and ideological studies can be undertaken. What is secret remains secret and the enemy’s terrorization and deception



are rendered ineffective. Party members are recruited from detained activists or sympathizers. Singular strength of conviction is needed to overcome the physical and psychological torture commonly inflicted by police and military personnel to get information for arresting other revolutionaries. Detainees must also develop their health and wellness with the perspective of returning to the armed struggle in the countryside or to the challenges of underground work.

The fourth task is to fight for the rights and welfare of detainees inside the prisons. The revolutionary movement’s long experience has seen successful struggles for additional food budgets, better accommodations, visitation rights, conjugal quarters, exercise, sunning and others. Medical treatment or release of elderly or ailing detainees, pregnant or new mothers have been asserted.

Fifth, raise the political awareness of visiting relatives and friends and correctly handle non-

political prisoners. Detainees who have not been able to visit their family or friends for a long time due to enemy surveillance have the opportunity to explain to them the country’s situation and the roots of revolutionary struggle. It is best to encourage them to join democratic or nationalist organizations.

It is important to deal with or even raise political awareness of other prisoners to achieve relative relief in the situation of detainees in prison, more so in provincial or city jails. This will help blunt the enemy’s scheme to use lumpen elements in prison to make the detainees’ lives difficult or even harm them bodily.

The sixth task is to support mass struggles outside prison. Various forms of struggle can be done by detainees to show their support for the issues of the toiling masses’ struggles. Just recently, hunger strikes, singing of progressive songs, and open statements of support coinciding with mobilizations and other mass actions on general issues have been launched.

Struggles inside prison forge the revolutionary standpoint and strengthen the detainees’ aspirations to return at the soonest time to the mainstream of revolutionary action. These create a clamor that pierces the enemy’s ears even within their own prisons. AB

2,000 barricade Eastmincom HQ

Around 2,000 farmers, Lumads, and small-scale miners barricaded the headquarters of the Philippine Army's Eastern Mindanao Command in Davao City on March 18 to reiterate their demand for the pullout of military troops from their communities and schools.

Kerlan Fanagel, chairperson of Pasaka Confederation of Lumads, said that they have had enough of dialogues with so many government agencies. According to him, these agencies have "remained blind and deaf to the demands of the people."

Likewise, the protesters demanded that the government put a stop to the harassment of farmers and Lumads, disband and disarm paramilitary groups, rehabilitate Lumad schools, arrest and prosecute the perpetrators of human

rights violations, drop all trumped-up charges against leaders and members of progressive organizations, and ensure the safe return of evacuees to their communities. Primarily, Lumad evacuees come from Compostela Valley, Davao del Norte, Bukidnon, and Surigao del Sur.

The barricade paralyzed a por-



tion of the Davao-Agusan Highway in Panacan for almost a day, with the protesters unfazed even when the Davao City LGU representative met for a dialogue. Fanagel further said that they will not give in until their demands are addressed. **AB**

Women commemorate Working Women's Day

Thousands of women and their male supporters marched on the streets last March 8 to commemorate the International Day of Working Women. Led by the Gabriela Nationalist Alliance, they denounced Benigno Aquino's six-year rule under which women's plight worsened. Invited candidates of the coming elections took part in the rallies and promised to uphold the women's agenda if they get elected.

In Manila, rallyists marched from Liwasang Bonifacio to the Mendiola Bridge. Similar actions were also held in Baguio, Cebu, Cagayan de Oro and Davao, as well as in cities and town centers in Southern Tagalog and Bicol.

Foremost among the women's demands were regular work and decent wages, as well as equality in the workplace and better working conditions.

According to the Center for Women Resources, there are at least a million unemployed women, and another 2.5 million underemployed. Only 55% of the employed 15 million women are wage and salary earners. The majority (2.64

million) work in low-skilled jobs and earn only an average of P150/day.

Since 2010, the lack of regular jobs among women has worsened. The number of women working as casuals rose 16% while those employed by the day or week rose 73%.

With wages as low as they already are, women earn even less compared to men. Women commonly receive P163/day, compared to men's P230/day for the same number of working hours. In rural areas, women farm workers earn P243/day, compared to P257/day for men.

Aside from these, women also make up the majority of victims of work-related accidents in the past

six years. These include fires in Kentex, Asia Micro Tech and Novo Jeans.

Meanwhile, Kadamay women members brought 500 empty pails to Mendiola to symbolize the lack of water and other basic services in their communities. They denounced the 4Ps program, which they discern as the reactionary state's way of manipulating and controlling women in urban poor communities.

During the rallies, Gabriela also pointed out the rising violence against women and children under the US-Aquino regime. According to the group's statistics, the number of cases of abuse and violence against women rose 200% from 2010 to 2014. The number of rape victims rose by 92%, wherein seven out of ten victims were minors.

In the meantime, Makibaka recently held a lighting rally in Manila to commemorate the NPA's forthcoming 47th anniversary. **AB**

3 farmers strafed in Surigao del Sur

THREE farmers became victims of indiscriminate firing by the 2nd Special Forces Battalion in Surigao del Sur. Farmers Benjie dela Peña, Saldy Maca and Pampias Ventura suffered shock and damages from the fascists' strafing.

Dela Peña, 25 years old, and Maca, 34, were in their respective farms in Barangay Carromata, San Miguel on March 18 when they were fired upon at 10 am. Dela Peña was wounded in the left thigh. His delivery to the hospital by barrio folk was extremely delayed because their group was blocked at several checkpoints. This, despite the presence of an ambulance waiting for him. Dela Peña was subjected to severe interrogation and intimidation, and was forced to admit that he was a member of the NPA.

The third victim, Ventura, 48, was earlier shot by the 2nd SFB in the same barrio on January 22. The strafing was done three days after the AFP declared the province as "conflict-manageable and ready for further development". The 2nd SFB is illegally encamped at the Surigao del Sur National Agricultural School.

Meanwhile, Karapatan-SMR condemned the 10th ID for absolving high-ranking military officers in the torture case of father-and-son farmers on February 19.

Orlano Engo, 52, and his 15-year old son suffered severe cruelty in the hands of Cpl. Sandy Batolbatol of the 72nd IB and four elements of the CAFGU at their camp in Barangay Demoloc, Malita, Davao Occidental. Engo and his son were brought to the camp's gate and were subjected to inhumane hardships. The torture was caught on video and was uploaded to Facebook. This earned the AFP in Mindanao severe condemnation. AB

Groups condemn K+12's approval

Students, parents and teachers condemned the Supreme Court's decision last March 26 that paves the way for K+12 program's implementation in the coming school year. Because of this decision, more than a million students who can not be absorbed by the public education system will be milked for profit by private schools.

Relatedly, the Aquino regime has increased its General Assistance for Students in Private Education or GATSPE by 300% for 2016. From P8.34 billion last year, Aquino allocated P21.19 billion to fund private schools. More than half of the country's 5,400 private high schools will benefit from the program.

The decision also removed all obstacles for the full implementation of the program's objective to align the Philippine educational system to the needs of big businesses in the country and abroad.

The K+12's implementation is in line with the Aquino regime's compliance to "integrate" the local economy to the international market under the framework of neoliberal globalization. Its agencies even boast of its objective of subsuming the local curriculum to European and US technical and academic standards to fit the Filipino students' knowledge to their technical and professional needs.

Its touted "quality educa-

tion" is nothing but the production of graduates for the labor market. It prepares the Filipino youth for low-paying and vulnerable jobs inside and outside the country. It merely strengthens the state's previous anti-worker and anti-people policies such as the exportation and flexibilization of labor.

Aside from the K+12, the US-Aquino regime has also implemented other neoliberal measures in education. These include the abolition of Filipino, literature and other courses related to Philippine society and system in collegiate curricula.

Neoliberalism also pushes for greater commercialization in education. Many capitalists have long "invested" in educational institutions to train workers specific to their businesses. They also directly benefit from academic analyses and researches. Due to these "investments," education is now more and more turning into a commodity which students and their parents need to pay for. AB

UP's further commercialization

Students denounced the University of the Philippines' (UP) naming of its main building for Henry Sy Sr., the namesake of his son, the big comprador and SM's Henry Sy, Jr.. The building was built for UP's new campus in Bonifacio Global City, Taguig City.

UP's tribute to a comprador notorious for being anti-worker and an implementor of contractualization is nothing short of crass commercialization. The Sy family owns the SM malls and Banco de Oro, the country's biggest bank.

The building was named as

such after the Sy family "donated" a 9-story building worth P400 million to the university. It will act as the UP Professional School, where graduate studies and doctorate classes on engineering, business, statistics, urban and regional planning and

labor and industrial relations will be held. The Sy family formally turned over the building to UP last March 1. This is not the first time UP entered into an agreement with big compradors and foreign companies due to budget constraints.

Meanwhile, thousands of students walked out of their classes last February 24 to protest tuition fee increases for the coming school year.

Students from the Polytechnic University of the Philippines, UP-Manila, UP-Diliman and the University of Santo Tomas held protests in their respective campuses before marching to Mendiola in Manila. Similar activities were also held in UP-Los Baños and UP-Cebu.

In Baguio City, students from UP-Baguio, University of the Cordilleras, and Saint Louis University also walked out of their classes. In

Davao, students held a rally in front of the Commission on Higher Education Regional Office.

Tuition fees in private schools have doubled from P30,000-50,000 in 2010 to P60,000-P100,000 in 2015. Universities and colleges being run as corporations raked in hundreds of thousands in profits. Five of these schools make it to the country's Top 1000 corporations every year. **AB**

TV5 workers launch protests

TV5 workers held a picket in front of their office at Reliance St., Mandaluyong last March 4 against low wages, the withholding of their benefits and contractualization. The protest is the latest in the series of protests in big television networks in the past six years.

Struggles in TV5

TV5 workers under the ABC Employees Union (ABCEU) launched a series of protests after negotiations for a new collective bargaining agreement hit a snag last September 2015. According to the ABCEU, negotiations deadlocked after the company refused to significantly raise their wages and regularize hundreds of contractual workers.

The workers refused the management's offer to raise wages by P3,000, to be implemented within two years. This was way lower than the negotiated P9,500 additional wages in 2010. Worse, the additional wages will depend on company earnings and performances of individual workers under the two-tier wage system.

According to the union, the company earns millions from candidates' advertisements during elections. A 30-second advertisement costs P444,000, they say. Meanwhile, a TV5 rank-and-file worker in its Metro Manila station earns P11,500, as workers in the provinces receive only P8,000.

The union likewise condemned the management's unilateral rules which it arbitrarily implements.

Heavy penalties, including dismissals, are often imposed even for light violations. The workers know that the management will use the rules for swift dismissal of union members.

The union also called for the regularization of the station's hundreds of contractual workers. TV5 Media Center is being run by Manuel Pangilinan, one of the country's biggest compradors.

Victories in GMA Network and ABS-CBN

At GMA and ABS-CBN, workers won against contractualization, arbitrary dismissals and various repressive measures.

Last January 16, the National Labor Relations Commission upheld for the third time its decision to declare GMA Network's "talents" as regular workers. Therefore, they should be afforded job security and other benefits. The company calls its workers "talents" to obscure their contractual nature. Their contracts run from three months to five years.

The struggle in GMA started after the company arbitrarily dismissed talents after they demanded



regularization in 2015. Under the leadership of Talents Association of GMA (TAG), the dismissed workers and their supporters persevered despite company repression. TAG members act as crew to television programs Brigada, Jessica Soho Reports, Reporter's Notebook and others.

In ABS-CBN, workers who are members of the Internal Job Market Employees Union were victorious in asserting their status as ABS-CBN workers and not of its labor agency. In 2012, the Court of Appeals issued its final decision recognizing the ABS-CBN Internal Job Market Employees Union as a legitimate union and ordered the company to pay its dismissed workers their backpay, separation pay and damages.

Meanwhile, radio workers of the RMN Broadcasting Network-Davao were successful in 2012. After going on strike for several weeks, the union effectively fought the illegal dismissal of their union leaders and members and for other benefits. **AB**

Grace Poe and Danding Cojuangco

Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) recently criticized presidential candidate Grace Poe in her statement absolving Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco on the multi-billion peso coco levy fund issue. According to Poe, Cojuangco no longer controls the fund and the Supreme Court has already made a decision to distribute the coco levy fund among coconut farmers and utilize funds to develop the coconut industry since 2014.

The coco levy fund came from the tax imposed by the US-Marcos dictatorship upon coconut farmers. After the EDSA uprising, Corazon Aquino's regime used the Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) to recover ill-gotten wealth of the Marcoses, including properties controlled by their cronies like Cojuangco through the coco levy fund such as the United Coconut Planters' Bank (UCPB) and San Miguel Corporation (SMC) in 1983.

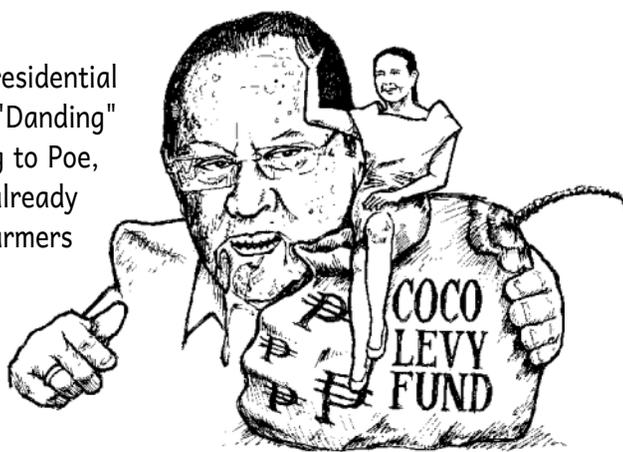
Despite the coconut farmers' struggle for the coco levy fund's return, PCGG blocked its actual distribution among farmers. The fund currently amounts to P83 billion – P73 billion from sequestered shares of SMC stocks, more than P10 billion worth of shares from UCPB and oil mills controlled by the Coconut Industry Investment Fund. The coconut farmers have waited so long that P56-58 billion have already been lost.

Despite the Supreme Court's decision to distribute the fund, Cojuangco was able to retain 20% of SMC's shares which was bought through coco levy funds. The Supreme Court, Cojuangco and his nephew, President Benigno Aquino III schemed to further exploit the coconut farmers.

Instead of giving justice to almost 3.5 million coconut farmers by holding Cojuangco and his cohorts accountable, Poe is quick to absolve one of the largest plunderers of the coco levy fund. It is an insult to the farmers who have endured poverty since the Marcos dictatorship up to present. It appears that after Poe secured endorsement from

Cojuangco's party, Nationalist Peoples' Coalition, she is now becoming Cojuangco's mouthpiece and apologist.

Poe also earned criticism after she announced in a campaign sortie in Roxas City, Capiz her plan to assign Benigno Aquino III as her anti-graft czar should she win the presidency.



This is a lot of drivel as Aquino and his allies masterminded the pork barrel and Disbursement Acceleration Program, which was created to manipulate government funds for expenditures not included in the national budget. AB

Basque leader released

SPAIN released political detainee Arnaldo Otegi on March 1 after over six years of unjust imprisonment.

Otegi is the secretary general of Surto, an organization fighting for secession or independence of the Basque region from Spain and France. He was a member of the Basque parliament under Spain. He was also a member of the Herri Batasuna and Euskal Herritarok, both parties declared illegal by Spain for their alleged links to the armed group Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (Fatherland and Freedom for Basque or ETA) that is struggling for secession.

Otegi was arrested in October 2009 for allegedly attempting to reestablish Batasuna, and was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment. His sentence was shortened to six and a half years in 2012. Upon his release, Otegi declared to hundreds of supporters gathered in front of the prison that he and his fellow detainees entered and departed from jail without any change in their conviction to struggle for independence and as advocates of socialism.

The National Democratic Front of the Philippines joins the Basque people in celebrating the release of Otegi and hails them for their fight for the release of their leader and other political detainees. Last January 9, more than 70,000 joined a rally in Bilbao in Basque to demand the return of 400 political prisoners accused of ETA membership and imprisoned in distant and far-flung jails in and out of Spain. Simultaneously, 10,000 residents held a march in Bayonne, the largest Basque city in France.

The ETA was established in 1959 to wage armed struggle for the independence of the Basque people divided between Spain and France. Basque people's nationalism advanced especially when the fascist General Franco brutally suppressed this region due to its support to the Republicans during the civil war. It was then that the city of Guernica in Basque was devastated by German bomber planes. At present, a ceasefire declared by the ETA since September 5, 2010 is in effect and holding. AB