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Editorial

"Cha-cha:" Arroyo's means of holding on to power

Arroyo has shamelessly been pushing to change the reactionary constitution at the earliest time possible, as only a new constitution can ensure that her regime would hold on to power until 2010 and even beyond. The regime hopes that a new constitution

would put an end to all threats against its rule, at least in the legal arena.

Using all means to hastily craft a new constitution, Arroyo initially sought to circumvent the law by immediately convening Congress as a constituent assembly. To get the congressmen

and senators to agree, the regime dangled the bait of excising provisions on their term limits from the draft constitution.

The regime, however, failed to gain the cooperation of the Senate that now acts like a huge stone wall blocking

Arroyo's ambitions. The administration is facing difficulties in recruiting 194 or $\frac{3}{4}$ of all congressmen because 51 of them have already opposed the proposal.

"People's initiative" is Arroyo's only remaining option and pushing it is what her minions are currently occupied with. Hundreds of millions of pesos are being allotted for this massive deception.

Despite the many legal obstacles to this measure, the Arroyo regime has no plans of observing even its own laws. The people are well aware of the regime's skill in twisting and outrightly ignoring laws to get what it wants. The country witnessed how the regime easily quashed the impeachment complaint through the superiority in numbers of its cohorts in Congress. The regime's questionable laws and edicts such as the calibrated preemptive response, Executive Order 464, Proclamation 1017 and even the Anti-terrorism Bill had easily been passed by Congress. Even old laws of the Marcos dictatorship are being used by the regime against its opponents. Arroyo is not bothered at all by the increasing number of petitions at the Supreme Court



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against her nefarious ploys. She is supremely confident that the Supreme Court will take her side because it was she who appointed 11 of its 15 justices.

The regime prevails as of now. But Arroyo wants lifetime immunity from her grave criminal accountabilities to the people. She believes she could achieve this through new policies, under the framework of a new constitution and new laws. It is her last-ditch effort in the final battle that will determine her fate.

Under Arroyo's desired constitution, the threat of new impeachment cases will finally be eradicated. Legal challenges to the repressive measures she implemented to protect her rule would likewise be erased.

The direction taken by the Arroyo regime is seemingly patterned after the Marcos dictatorship. The transitory provisions in the proposed constitution would give Arroyo autocratic powers

similar to those held by Marcos during the transition to a parliamentary system under the fascist 1973 constitution.

In an effort to gain the US government's support for charter change, the regime intends to remove the current constitution's provisions protecting national patrimony and to enshrine in the constitution the liberalization of the national economy.

Arroyo also intends to set restrictive limits on guarantees for civil and political liberties which she sees as threats to her government. She can then use state violence to quash any threat of uprising against her rule.

Arroyo seems to be drawing lessons from the deceased dictator Marcos on how to prolong her stay in power. She forgets the valuable lesson the country taught Marcos in 1986 at EDSA.

It will be the same lesson the country will be teaching Arroyo on the day of reckoning. **AB**

Sigaw ng bayan?

The Arroyo regime is obviously a Malacañang ploy. Advancing a bogus people's initiative to change the reactionary state's constitution through a phony NGO named Sigaw ng Bayan (people's clamor). It would be more fitting to call it a "Palace initiative" for it is

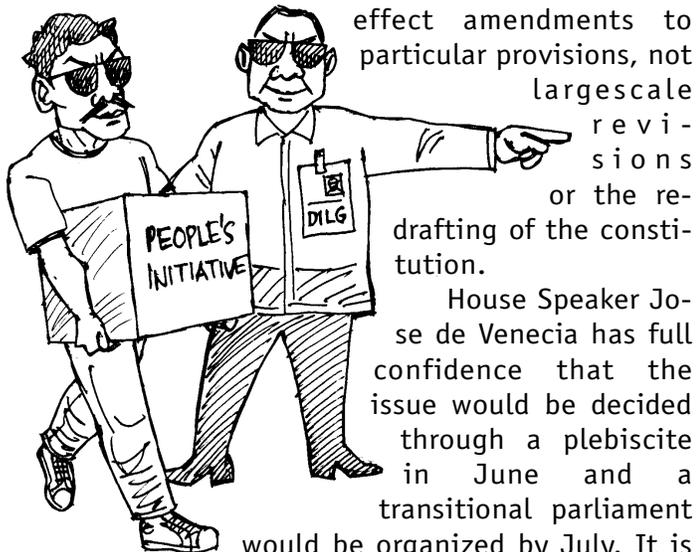
Public funds are shamelessly being squandered for the bogus people's initiative. Under orders from DILG Sec. Ronaldo Puno, millions of pesos have been allotted to bribe the required number of signatories. Local

governments are distributing money, rice and other foodstuff in barangay assemblies to entice people to sign up for the "people's initiative," regardless of whether they understand its objectives or not.

RA 6735 or the Initiative and Referendum Act requires five million signatures or 12% of the country's voting population and a minimum of 3% of voters in each district to amend the constitution through a "people's initiative." The opposition claims it would be impossible for the regime to comply with this requirement especially since local officials in opposition bailiwicks promised not to allow even 1% of voters in their areas to sign up in favor of the "people's initiative." The Supreme Court has a previous decision stating that RA 6735 is flawed and provides insufficient basis for conducting a "people's initiative."

But the Arroyo clique pays no attention to these arguments. Neither does it mind that a people's initiative could only

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effect amendments to particular provisions, not largescale revisions or the redrafting of the constitution.

House Speaker Jose de Venecia has full confidence that the issue would be decided through a plebiscite in June and a transitional parliament would be organized by July. It is tempting to think of this as one of de Venecia's many pipedreams. But administration minions are already busy concocting dirty tricks to make the ploy materialize.

Recently, journalists rushed to the Horizon Hotel in Mandaluyong City upon learning that some persons were hauling boxes containing pre-signed forms for the bogus people's initiative. The culprits, who witnesses identified as officers and men of Secretary Puno, panicked and fled but left in a hotel trash bin the diagram of their dirty operation.

Puno has been the author of the dirtiest tricks in politics since the Marcos era. The hotel is a favorite lair of Puno's operators who use it as a safe house in their many "special operations." It was in the hotel that they falsified election returns to make Arroyo win the 2004 election.

Those behind the "people's initiative" claim they have gathered more than eight million signatures. In brazen connivance with the regime, and despite the many legal questions, the COMELEC has already ordered the immediate verification of the signatures, the first step towards endorsing a plebiscite for charter change.

About ₱6.5 billion will be needed for the plebiscite. The regime is intentionally delaying the approval of the national budget for 2006 to enable the government to have more leeway in accessing and disbursing funds for the plebiscite instead of being forced to conform to a specific budgetary allocation.

Arroyo and her Sigaw ng Bayan are so confident that nothing can block the speeding train of charter change. But the noise they are creating cannot drown out the people's real clamor—to oust the despised regime.

AB

A Marcos-type constitution

Gloria Arroyo's shamelessness, avarice, cruelty and treason know no bounds.

She has not even bothered to conceal her true intentions in pushing for charter change—to continue to rule, possess excessive power, intensify the people's oppression and completely cede to the imperialists the country's wealth and honor. The country is now witness to a plot to establish a Marcos-type government.

A puppet parliament. The first section of the proposed constitution's transitory provisions states that the current president and vice-president will hold office until 2010 unless they are impeached from office. To make the impeachment process more difficult, 2/3 the number of parliament, instead of the current 1/3 will be required to sign the complaint that would start the impeachment process. No parliamentary elections will be held until 2010. Instead, the current House of Representatives, a lair for Arroyo sycophants, and the Senate will form a transitional parliament with the terms of all members



automatically extended until 2010. Arroyo is determined to dissolve the Senate because of its continuing investigation and disclosure of her regime's corruption and the hindrance it poses to her fascist and cunning policies and schemes.

One-third of her cabinet appointees will automatically sit as members of parliament. Aside from them, she will also be appointing 30 other members of parliament.

The interim parliament will elect a prime minister. But unlike usual parliamentary systems, the elected prime minister will not be the most powerful government official and will instead be under the "incumbent president's direction and supervision." The president will thus have both executive and legislative powers.

The parliament Arroyo wants is no different from the Batasang Pambansa which was established in accordance with the martial law constitution of 1973 and had no other role than to obey the whims of the dictator Marcos.

Fascist dictatorship. The proposed constitution removes many of the 1987 constitution's provisions guaranteeing civil and political rights. The Bill of Rights has been traitorously revised to limit free speech and assembly. The proposed constitution cunningly states that only the responsible application of such rights is guaranteed. For Arroyo's minions, any criticism of the regime is irresponsible and can be suppressed under the new constitution.

Restrictions on the declaration of a state of emergency and martial law have been removed. Under the proposed constitution, an insurrection or even the threat of an insurrection is enough basis to declare martial law and



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suspend the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus. Under this constitution, mass actions like the past EDSA uprisings can be sufficient basis for a martial law declaration.

The current constitution mandates a Congressional review within 48 hours of any declaration of martial law or suspension of the writ of habeas corpus. Congress has the power to veto the declaration through majority vote. With these provisions absent in the proposed constitution, the president may impose martial law for an indefinite period. The Supreme Court will be deprived of its authority under the present constitution to review the legality of any declaration of martial law following a petition from any citizen.

Moreover, the constitution may be suspended by martial law. Civilian courts may also be suspended and their cases transferred to the jurisdiction of military courts, including cases unconnected to the martial law declaration.

The privilege of the writ of habeas corpus will be automatically suspended under martial law. Anyone can thus be detained for more than three days even without being charged of any crime.

An offering to imperialists.

US imperialist approval is the most important requisite in advancing charter change, or any other government endeavor for that matter. The Arroyo regime is making sure that its proposed constitution meets the approval of its master.

Under the proposed constitution, the economy will be completely liberalized within imperialist "globalization's" framework. Foreigners will be allowed to own Philippine land and strategic industries and exploit the country's natural resources. Under the 1987 constitution, foreigners are limited to a 40% share of stocks in strategic industries.

Filipinos will be deprived of the sole right to own public utilities, mass media enterprises and private educational institutions. Foreign corporations will be granted franchises to operate such businesses.

The proposed constitution is silent about restrictions on foreign military bases and the entry of foreign troops and nuclear weapons into the country. Foreign military intervention will thus be given free rein in line with the US' militarist defense of its worldwide domination. **AB**

Anti-Arroyo and anti-"cha-cha" protests

Elements of the Western Police District violently dispersed a peaceful march by thousands of members of progressive organizations in Mendiola, near Malacañang on April 6. This was after several attempts by police to stop the march that started from Sto. Domingo Church in Quezon City. The march was held to protest Gloria Arroyo's "cha-cha" plot and call for her ouster. The protesters said that unlike Thailand Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra who resigned April 4 after mass protests against his regime's corruption, Arroyo is using "cha-cha" to extend her stay in power.

Meanwhile, five senators launched the "Gloria Resign Movement" on April 5. Senators Franklin Drilon, Aquilino Pimentel, Francis Pangilinan, Consuelo "Jamby" Madrigal and Panfilo Lacson said they will be coordinating with people's institutions and organizations for a nationwide campaign to oust Arroyo. The senators are proposing a snap election in July to elect a new president.

In related news, Bayan and the People's Movement against Arroyo's Charter Change (People's March) continued its signature campaign against "cha-cha" and for Arroyo's immediate resignation from the presidency. People's March was established in February and is led by former Vice President Teofisto Guingona.

Last April 3, Bayan gathered 2,000 signatures in two hours in a crowded place in Metro Manila, proof of the people's disgust over Arroyo and her machinations to remain in power. In many other parts of the country, more ordinary citizens have been signing Bayan

and People's March's petition. Many individuals and groups who used to be silent or even favored the regime are now expressing dissatisfaction over Arroyo's shameless maneuvers.

Anti-Arroyo congressmen moved to block the passage of "cha-cha" through Congress. They filed a case to declare Sigaw ng Bayan's signature campaign illegal.

Last March 29, up to 51 congressmen signed a proposal against merging Congress and the Senate to form a constituent assembly. The Senate passed on March 21 a resolution asserting separate voting by the upper and lower houses on charter change.

Arroyo and House Speaker Jose de Venecia have long been proposing to merge the Senate and Congress so that the pro-Arroyo majority in Congress could easily drown out any Senate protests over "cha-cha."

But with 51 congressmen now on the opposite side, Arroyo now has only 183 congressional allies on "cha-cha," well below the 195 votes (or 2/3 of the total number of congressmen and senators combined) needed to push amendments to the constitution. The Arroyo camp's plan to push for "cha-cha" via a constituent assembly may fail, unless it could bribe and convince some of the 51 congressmen to change sides. **AB**



"Dark days" for the Philippines

An editorial in the April 5 issue of the *New York Times*, a prestigious American newspaper castigated the Arroyo regime's fascist bent. The editorial said, "President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo has completely lost touch with the ideals that inspired [the] 1986 'people power' movement." On one level, the editorial entitled "Dark days for Philippine democracy" reflected US imperialism's view of its puppet regime. The newspaper further charged Arroyo with "reviving bad memories of crony corruption, presidential vote-rigging and intimidation of critical journalists." It warned that unless Congress and the courts find ways to rein in Arroyo's increasingly authoritarian tendencies, democracy itself may be in danger. Earlier, the *New York Times* had published an article featuring the Arroyo regime's campaigns of suppression and its intimidation of journalists.



NPA seizes machine gun, other firearms in Masbate ambush

RED fighters of the Jose Rapsing Command seized a cal .30 machine gun, an M16, an M14 and a cal .45 pistol in an ambush on a composite force composed of elements from the 506th Provincial Police Mobile Group, the Mandaon Municipal Police Station and CAFGU on April 1 in Milagros, Masbate. Two policemen were killed and another one wounded. One other policeman was captured and later released. Contrary to enemy reports, the NPA suffered no casualties.

Before the firefight, the Red fighters attacked Milagros mayor Bernardito Abapo's ranch in Sitio Kabuluan, Barangay San Juan. The caretaker escaped and reported the incident to the police in Mandaon town, 12 kilometers away from the ranch, prompting the tow. NPA guerrillas ambushed the responding enemy troops before they reached the ranch.

Meanwhile, a team of partisans in Barangay Malinta, Masbate City meted revolutionary justice on Edwin Corral, former Milagros police chief and notorious human rights violator.

5 CAFGU elements wounded, 4 firearms seized in Southern Mindanao

FIVE CAFGU elements were seriously wounded in an NPA ambush in New Corella, Davao del Norte on April 1. The Red fighters had previously destroyed mining equipment managed by a Ron Wilch in Purok 2, Barangay Maming, New Corella. The responding CAFGU elements were ambushed shortly after leaving their detachment.

Earlier, on March 23, the NPA seized four firearms from guards of Marsman, a banana-exporting company in Upper Gisok, Mawab, Compostela Valley. The raid was a punitive action against the company due to its long-standing record of abusing its workers, harassing communities around the plantation and active role in counterrevolutionary military operations. The guerrillas seized an M14, an M16, two shotguns, 10 rifle grenades, a VHF radio and ammunition during the three-minute raid.

4 soldiers killed, 2 wounded in NPA armed actions in ICR

FOUR soldiers were killed and two wounded in two separate armed actions by the NPA in Abra and Mt. Province this March.

In Abra, three soldiers were killed and one wounded in an ambush by a squad of Red fighters in Sitio Kinkinta, Bazar, Sallapadan on the morning of March 29. Before this, a soldier was killed and another wounded when NPA snipers fired upon enemy troops conducting operations in Lalangnan ridge, Bontoc, Mt. Province on the morning of March 19.

The NPA suffered no casualties in both firefights.

NPA launches military actions in Western Mindanao

A 14-MAN commando team from the 14th Division Reconnaissance Company (DRC) attacked an encamped NPA unit in Barangay Siolan, Kabasalan, Zamboanga Sibugay at about 11:00 a.m. last Marso 20. But it was the attacking enemy force that suffered casualties. According to a report from the NPA-Front Feliciano, three soldiers were killed and two wounded in the 30-minute firefight.

Before this, an NPA team harassed a 14-man composite team from the Philippine Army and CAFGU midnight of March 15 in Barangay Tiguha, Lapuyan, Zamboanga del Sur. Two CAFGU elements were killed, according to initial reports.

Meanwhile, latest reports from the NPA in Western Mindanao said that Red fighters seized nine firearms in a raid on the police station in Sapang Dalaga, Misamis Occidental on the afternoon of March 20. No shots were fired in the eight-minute raid. Four M16s, a shotgun, a .45 pistol, a super .38 pistol, a 9 mm pistol, a .38 revolver, ammunition and other military equipment were seized during the raid. It was previously reported in *AB's* March 21 issue that the NPA had seized five M16s during the raid.

There were no NPA casualties in these military actions.

NPA seizes M16 in Northern Samar

A TEAM from the NPA Rodante Urtal Command in Northern Samar seized an M16 in a sniping operation against elements of the 20th IB in Sitio Danao, Barangay Dawo, Oquindo District, Calbayog City February 23. The guerrillas also confiscated 250 rounds of ammunition, a cellphone and a backpack. One soldier was killed and another wounded.

The troops were conducting operations along the boundaries of Calbayog City, Samar and Catarman and Bobon towns in Northern Samar and when they were sniped at by the Red fighters. The NPA withdrew safely without casualties.



NPA foils AFP offensive in ICR

The fascist AFP failed in its all-out offensive against the NPA in the Ilocos-Cordillera Region (ICR) this March. At least 14 soldiers were killed and eight wounded in three firefights along the Abra - Mt. Province - Ilocos Sur boundaries last March 15, 18 and 24. On the other hand, five NPA guerrillas were slightly wounded. A brigade-size operation was launched by the 5th ID from March 11-28 in the towns of Tubo, Abra; Besao, Mountain Province; and Quirino and Cervantes in Ilocos Sur. Other enemy operations were also simultaneously conducted in the towns of Sagada, Bauko, Bontoc and Sadanga in Mountain Province. Involved in this large-scale operation were the entire 41st, 50th and 54th IBs and a company from the 21st IB. The firefights were concentrated in the mountainous areas of Tubo in southern Abra where the NPA's Agustin Bagnalen Command operates.

The first firefight on March 15 took place on Mt. Mogao along the of Tubo-Besao-Quirino boundary. A few days before this, the NPA guerrillas were already aware of the presence and direction of the fascist troops through the help of the masses. The guerrillas learned of the enemy's plan to climb Mt. Mogao and nearby Mt. Tabbak.

On March 14, an NPA team closed in on the soldiers and observed the enemy troops at the foot of Mt. Mogao. The rest of the NPA force lay in wait all day and all night along the trail going up Mt. Tabbak.

The guerrillas maneuvered and set area ambushes along trails at the foot of Mt. Mogao. At 8:30

a.m. of March 15, a four-man NPA team hurriedly scaled Mt. Mogao's peak to head off enemy troops who intended to position there. The NPA teams at the peak and foot of Mt. Mogao simultaneously fired upon the line of troops making its ascent. Five AFP troopers were felled in the first volley of gunfire. A Red fighter positioned at the peak of Mt. Mogao was slightly wounded. The NPA team immediately withdrew.

Meanwhile, NPA teams at the foot of Mt. Mogao closed in on the climbing troops. An NPA team inched its way from the right where the enemy commander was located while a four-man team closed in from the left. The first team shot and killed the enemy troops' commander. The NPA team closing in from the left was detected and fired upon by the enemy. Two guerrillas were slightly wounded, causing the team to break off contact with the enemy.

Snipers positioned at the foot of Mt. Mogao provided cover fire for the NPA's maneuvering teams. The maneuvers and firing lasted until 1:30 p.m. Eight AFP troops were killed and five wounded in the firefight. Around 3:00 p.m., NPA teams positioned at the foot of Mt. Mogao withdrew. Wounded comrades were safely evacuated under cover of night. At 7:00 p.m., two NPA squads lay in wait at the foot of Mt. Tabbak to ambush a platoon of enemy troops who were attempting to climb the mountain.

Meanwhile, enemy troops positioned themselves on top of Mt. Mogao. From morning of March 16, enemy troops continuously fired their mortars. At around 1:30 p.m., two Huey helicopters and

two MG520 helicopters started strafing and bombing runs that lasted until 4:00 p.m. The helicopters were fired upon by the Red fighters. Until the next day, the Huey helicopters made many trips to haul the enemy dead and wounded from Mt. Mogao.

The helicopters conducted continuous strafing and bombing runs around Mt. Mogao as soldiers atop the mountain fired their mortars. While the enemy was busy with its bombing, the guerrillas set up an ambush along the route they estimated the enemy would use to retreat. Enemy troops retreated from the peak of Mt. Mogao on the morning of March 17, but stopped 100 meters short of the NPA position and stayed put until nighttime.

At dawn of March 18, the NPA encountered soldiers climbing Mt. Tabbak. The firefight lasted for more than an hour. Four soldiers were killed and more than two were wounded in the firefight. Two comrades were wounded and safely withdrew. Once again, the soldiers relied on their mortars for protective fire. The helicopters returned for more strafing and bombing runs on March 20 and 21.

The third firefight happened at 9:00 a.m. on March 24 when an NPA team closed in on a 50-man group of enemy soldiers resting on the ridge between Mt. Tabbak and nearby Tawang hill. The NPA immediately fired upon the troops. Two soldiers were instantly killed and another wounded.

The soldiers retreated up the hill. They never stopped retreating until they reached Tubo on March 28.

AB

Comrade Wilfredo Valencia

Comrades and the Filipino people will never forget Ka Wilfredo Valencia, esteemed New People's Army commander and Communist Party of the Philippines leader. Comrade Wilfredo, also known as Ka Vox, Ka Bomi, Ka Moi or Ka Loli served the people for almost three decades. He died on March 27, 2003, yet he continues to serve as an inspiration in the revolutionary struggle's advance.

Ka Bomi devoted his strength and intellect, his blood, sweat and tears in the service of the people and the revolution. He hailed from a peasant family in Amulong, Cagayan. Highly intelligent, he was able to get a scholarship and graduated cum laude from the Philippine Women's University where he took up social work. He became an activist in 1975 and a Party member in 1977. He joined the NPA in Cagayan Valley in 1980 where he served for 23 years.

The revolutionary movement in Cagayan was in dire straits when Ka Bomi first worked there. In the early 1980s, the enemy dismantled consolidated barrios in eastern Cagayan. In 1983, the East Cagayan Front under Ka Bomi's leadership endured intense enemy attacks and death squads unleashed by the fascist mercenary Col. Rodolfo Aguinaldo against the revolutionary masses.

To rectify the erroneous trend

of self-constriction in eastern Cagayan and evade the enemy's intensifying military operations, comrades expanded to western Cagayan up to Ilocos Norte where they established new guerrilla fronts in many towns. The Red army swiftly expanded and waged many victorious battles. Ka Bomi was instrumental in expanding the army to battalion-size notwithstanding the problems it met as a result of the errors of premature regularization and military adventurism which were then ravaging the revolutionary movement.

From Cagayan, Ka Bomi became political commissar of the Northern Luzon Operational Command from 1987, member of the Party's Northern Luzon Commission from 1988 and secretary of the Northern Luzon Operational Command-Area Party Committee from 1989 to 1992.

When the Second Great Rectification Movement (SGRM) was launched in 1992, Ka Bomi was among those who promptly heeded the call for rectification and criticized himself for his past role in advocating premature regularization and military adventurism. His faith in the Party and the revolution did not waver. "I realize that I committed mistakes and I stand ready to rectify them," he said. He identified the tendencies resulting from, and aggravated by, his adherence to the erroneous line, such as a defective leadership style, aversion to collective work, unprincipled struggle of ideas, shallow analysis, unorganized work methods, recklessness and liberalism. As part of his rectification, he helped in summing up

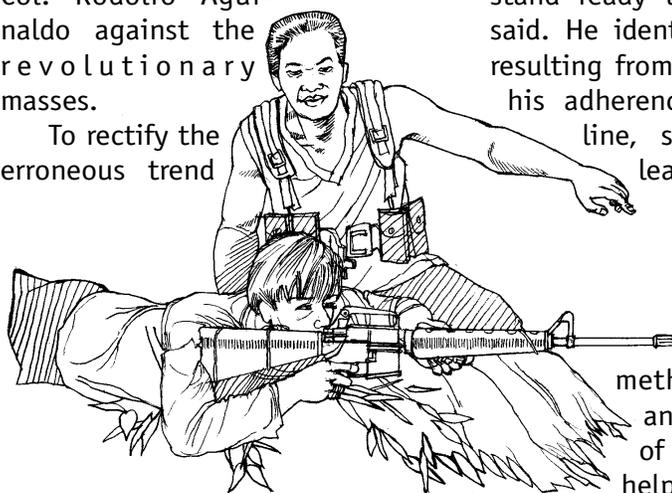
the work of various units and in explaining the errors to Party members, the people's army and the mass base.

He became secretary of the Nueva Vizcaya - Isabela - Quirino (VIQ) Regional Committee from 1993 to 1995. When the VIQ and Cagayan-Apayao regions were merged into the Northeast Luzon Regional Committee in 1995, he became its deputy secretary. He was also commander of the Regional Operational Command from 1999 till his death. He was elected alternate member of the CPP Central Committee in its 11th Plenum in 2002.

He returned to Cagayan in 2002-2003, and under his leadership bolstered the NPA's unity and recovered the eastern towns which had been sidestepped for a long time, including the first areas of the province to be consolidated in the 1980s. The masses were so grateful for the NPA's return and for the subsequent advances achieved in agrarian revolution and mass campaigns. They reaped concrete gains from these campaigns—usury was reduced, merchant-usurer exploitation alleviated, widespread landgrabbing halted and struggles against militarization and military atrocities advanced.

Ka Bomi led in overcoming conservatist tendencies, advancing and ensuring the victories of tactical offensives and revitalizing armed struggle in the region. These contributed greatly toward increasing the number of Red fighters severalfold and accelerating the pace of the revolutionary movement in the region. The people's organs of Red political power in the region's guerrilla zones and fronts grew in unprecedented strength and number.

"Ka Willy"...go to page 9





Widespread protests take France by storm

Gigantic protest actions and strikes have been wracking France in the past three weeks. Millions of youth and workers joined up to protest the Contrat Premièr Embauché (CPE), or first-job contract enacted in France by Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin's government.

The CPE gives employers the right to dismiss workers under the age of 26 anytime without due explanation within the first two years of their employment.

The CPE reverses a French law recognizing the right of workers to permanent employment after one to three months at work. It erodes the rights achieved by the labor movement not only in France but in Europe and worldwide, including the European Social Charter that prohibits the unjust dismissal of workers and protections enshrined in the International Labour Convention.

De Villepin adamantly claims that the CPE will solve France's burgeoning unemployment problem especially among the youth. Unemployment has reached 23% in France and comes to 40% in its poorest municipalities. The CPE, however, does not solve un-

employment as it does not add any employment opportunities. It merely makes layoffs and workers' turnovers more frequent, further abusing and exploiting the workers.

The De Villepin government is also pushing antiworker and antiyouth laws, including the apprenticeship of children as young as 14, night jobs for youth as young as 15 and suspension of social welfare benefits for families with more than three children when the latter stop schooling.

About 3.1 million people launched more than 200 demonstrations nationwide on April 4 and 5, including 700,000 who rallied in Paris.

Earlier, three million trooped to the streets in a 36-hour general strike that began on March 28. Protest actions exploded in more than 250 cities and towns nationwide. Trains throughout France ground to a halt when transport workers joined the strike. Many schools closed down. Public service companies, banks, gov-



ernment offices, and even radio and television stations shut down as their workers and employees joined the massive demonstrations. The police arrested more than 400 demonstrators.

In a desperate bid to quell the French people's mounting rage, Pres. Jacques Chirac promised to amend the law—instead of two years, the CPE will be applicable only within the first year of employment and oblige the employer to give due explanation for layoffs. The protesting youth and workers, however, have rebuffed this and pushed for the CPE's scrapping. They gave the government until April 15 to withdraw the CPE. **AB**

"Ka Willy"...from page 8

Ka Bomi was short in stature. But because of the tales of his valor in battle which even the military narrated, he was a giant in the enemy's reckoning. He was renowned for his prowess in warfare and in martial arts. Thus, even when the enemy had already cornered him in a crowded area in Baguio City in 2001, the company of soldiers and policemen that surrounded him timorously approached. It took them half an hour before actually capturing him. His fighting will, refusal to remain in the enemy's hands and meticulous planning enabled him to escape twice from the enemy's prisons.

When he passed away in 2003, one could hardly

count the number of tributes held for him by the peasant masses in various barrios where he worked. The masses and comrades will never forget his dedication and steadfastness in the revolutionary struggle and his exemplary proletarian attitude: his patience in teaching, his depth in analyzing issues and his tirelessness in learning and taking on tasks. In all corners of the region and other places where he worked, comrades and the masses who knew him will always happily remember the warm camaraderie and merry laughter he shared with his fellow leaders, Red fighters and all revolutionaries and masses whom he met and served totally and selflessly. **AB**



Millions rally in the US against unjust law oppressing immigrant workers

Massive demonstrations recently shook the US against a vicious bill called the "Border Protection, Antiterrorism and Illegal Immigration Control Act" (House Resolution 4437). The bill, which is detrimental to millions of immigrants¹ has already been approved by the US Congress. The US Senate is currently debating its own proposed legislation on immigrants.

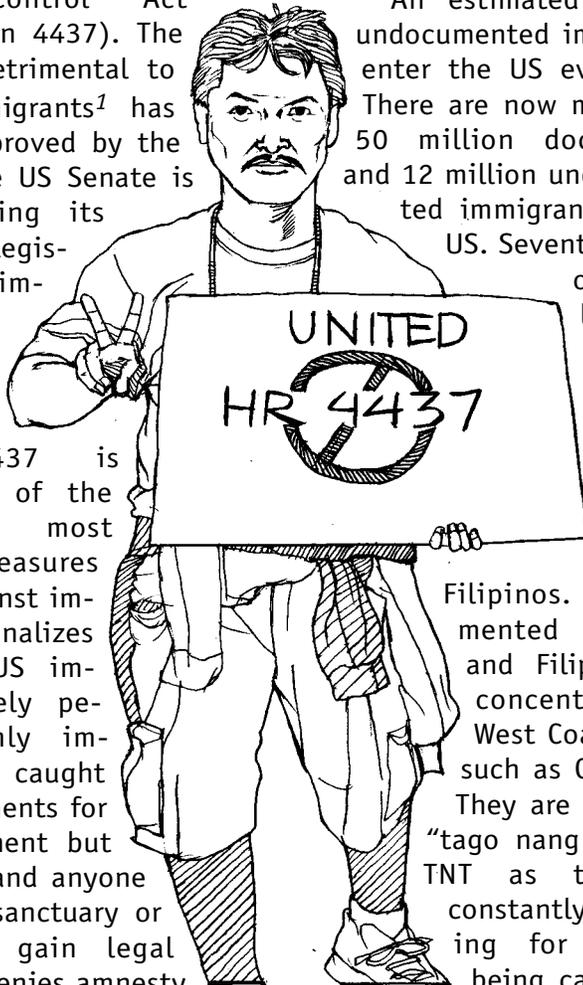
Antiimmigrant law. House Resolution 4437 is considered one of the cruelest and most oppressive measures ever drafted against immigrants. It criminalizes undocumented US immigrants, severely penalizes not only immigrant workers caught using fake documents for gaining employment but their employers and anyone providing them sanctuary or assisting them gain legal status. The law denies amnesty for illegal immigrants and requires their immediate deportation.

Together with a separate proposal to set up a 3,200-kilometer fence along the US-Mexican border, HR 4437 will intensify militarization along US borders. Since 1994, more than 4,000 people attempting to cross US borders have been killed by US troopers. The proposed law

intends to imprison all immigrants caught without documents and keep them in jail pending the resolution of their cases.

An estimated 500,000 undocumented immigrants enter the US every year. There are now more than 50 million documented and 12 million undocumented immigrants in the US. Seventy percent

of the latter are Mexicans and about 500,000 to a million are Filipinos. Undocumented Mexicans and Filipinos are concentrated in West Coast states such as California. They are known as "tago nang tago" or TNT as they are constantly in hiding for fear of being caught and punished by immigration police.



Immigrants launch mass actions. The biggest of a series of protest actions against HR 4437 was a massive march-rally on March 25 in Los Angeles, California where more than a million people from northern and southern areas of the state marched for five hours along the city's major thoroughfares and converged at the center of the city. Mexicans and other Latin Americans, Filipinos, Koreans and other Asian-Americans joined the protest.

Among the organizations that joined the rally were Act Now to Stop War and End Racism (ANSWER), Alliance for a Just and Lasting Peace in the Philippines (AJLPP), Bayan-USA, Pesante-USA, Central Los Angeles Farmers' Coalition and other progressive organizations.

Huge demonstrations were also launched in the states of Georgia, Arizona and Minnesota that same day.

On April 2, hundreds of thousands rallied in the center of New York City to denounce HR 4437. Demonstrators bearing their countries' flags filled nearly a kilometer and a half of New York's City's streets. AB

¹Immigrants are resident aliens who live permanently or wish to live permanently in another country, as opposed to migrants who temporarily live abroad, usually for employment purposes. US labor history has largely been a history of immigration, from the time the plantations were opened to the time the railroads were constructed and modern industry was built. At present, there is a section of immigrants composed of professionals who perform middle-level jobs. The vast majority, however, work in factories. A relatively big number work in illegal factories or as household help and receive slave wages.

Rampant human rights violations

Death squads have been relentless in targeting leaders and members of progressive organizations.

At dawn on April 5, Bayan Muna member Lorenzo Cervantes was gunned down in his home in Anoling, Rosario, Agusan del Sur.

Earlier, on April 3, 70th IB elements abducted Ronald Intal in Barangay Balete, Tarlac City. Intal is the leader of the Samahan ng mga Kabataang Demokratiko sa Asyenda Luisita. He remains missing to date.

On April 2, the military arrested and interrogated for several hours Anakpawis member Marcial Pilar, also a resident of Barangay Balete.

In Northern Samar and Isabela, three progressive leaders were nearly killed when death squads rained bullets on them.

On the night of March 22, Walter Pahimnayan, Bayan Muna municipal coordinator in Mondragon, Northern Samar, was gunned down in his home. He sustained gunshot wounds on his back and abdomen and is currently in a hospital.

Earlier, death squads fired on but failed to kill Dr. Bartolome Resuello, former Bayan Muna vice chairman in Northern Samar. He was riding his motorcycle home to Catarman, Northern Samar's capital, when he was fired upon in Barangay Doña Lucia, Mondragon.

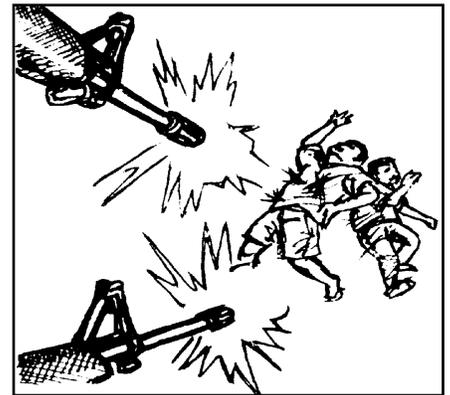
On March 11, an attempt was

made on the life of Isabela Bayan Muna secretary-general Elena Mendiola. She was clearing her backyard for a vegetable patch in Barangay Narra, Echague when two men riding a motorcycle fired on her. Thirteen bullets hit the wall behind her.

In Cagayan, there is widespread harassment and arrest of civilians accused as members or supporters of the revolutionary movement.

Combined forces of the 17th IB and PNP-Baggao fired on and arrested Barangay Kagawad Camilo Jacquias and Edgar Jacquias Antolin on March 18 in Barangay Sta. Margarita, Baggao, Cagayan. The military and police accused them of being Red fighters. They accused Antolin of participating in an NPA raid on the police station in Baybayog, Alcala, Cagayan on March 9 on the flimsy grounds that his van resembled the vehicle used by the Red fighters. The soldiers and police seized Antolin's van including its stereo, three spare tires, his wallet, ATM card, and his family's various personal belongings. Jacquias and Antolin are now in prison and charged with rebellion.

A few days earlier, the PNP-Baggao filed charges of robbery in band against six peasants from Barangay Caruppian, Baggao on



suspicion that they were involved in a raid on the 17th IB's safehouse located in a merchant-usurer's compound in San Jose, Baggao in January.

Meanwhile, more and more workers, unionists and union supporters are being killed.

The Center for Trade Union and Human Rights has reported 21 workers murdered between September 21, 2005 and March 21, 2006. None of these cases has been solved to date.

Aside from the cases already reported in *AB*, also killed were Armando Leabres of the National Electrification Administration-Nueva Ecija who was found dead on January 11; Roberto de la Cruz, board member of the Workers of Tritran Union (WTU); Crisanto Teodoro, board member of United Luisita Workers Union; and Jensen Cristobal, a labor supporter killed on February 18. **AB**

CPP publishes Marxist-Leninist works in Pilipino

The National Translation Bureau under the Communist Party of the Philippines National Education Department announced the publication of classic Marxist-Leninist works translated from English to Pilipino. Among them are *A Critique of Soviet Economics*, *Fundamental Principles of Political*

Economy, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, and *State and Revolution*. Digital copies of the translations are currently being distributed, to be followed soon with printed editions. The translations can be downloaded at www.philippinerevolution.org.

Arroyo vote-rigging bared anew

COMELEC Commissioner Resurreccion Borra confirmed before the Senate investigations on April 3 that widespread cheating occurred during the 2004 presidential elections. This tallies with evidence earlier submitted to the Senate, including official copies of election returns and certificates of canvass from Mindanao precincts. Experts proved the existence of many anomalies in the documents and confirmed public knowledge that Arroyo stole close to 1.2 million votes from

Fernando Poe Jr.

Meanwhile, 16 House representatives filed charges of falsification of public documents, violation of the Passport Act and perjury against Comelec Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano. Contrary to his sworn statement before the congressional hearing that he did not leave the country during the height of the Gloria-Garci tapes exposé, it was proven that Garcillano traveled to Singapore, the Middle East and South Africa.

Journalists denounce mass media repression

MASS media practitioners strongly denounced the US-Arroyo fascist regime's continuing suppression of their rights. A "Writers' Manifesto of Unity on Freedom of Expression" was drafted by the Amado V. Hernandez Resource Center (AVHRC) and signed by writers and journalists from various organizations, publications, academic institutions, artist associations and personalities advocating the inalienable right to free expression. The manifesto reads, "we fight all forms of harassment, surveillance, confiscation of materials, arrests, detention and killings done in the name of protecting whatever interests that run opposed to the writer's freedom to express."

The manifesto was released in response to the closure by DzRJ on March 26 of "Ang Buhay Manggawa," a weekly radio program aired by the station for 11 years. Earlier, DzRJ had also pulled out the prize-winning program "Ngayon na, Bayan". Both are critical of the Arroyo regime and advocate the interests of the toiling masses and the broad masses of the Filipino people.

Meanwhile, Col. Jerry Jalandoni, new 303rd IBde chief, accused the defunct *Visayan Daily Courier* of conniving with the communist movement. Jalandoni claimed that plans are afoot to revive the paper as an outlet for revolutionary propaganda. Colonel Jalandoni aired these claims a few days after the Western Visayas mass media condemned the AFP Central Command for including in its "order of battle" the name of Julius Mariveles, news director of MBC's dyEZ-Aksyon Radyo-Bacolod. Mass media practitioners

Congress passes Anti-Terror Bill

CONGRESS passed on the night of April 4 the Anti-Terror Bill (ATB), one of the bills Gloria Arroyo had certified urgent. Various sectors swiftly condemned the bill, fearing it would serve as an additional instrument for suppressing the people.

The ATB's erroneous and sweeping definition of terrorism categorizes as terrorist even mass organizations, protesters, opposition forces and mass media critical of Arroyo. If the ATB is enacted, anything critical of Arroyo, especially calls for her ouster would be considered terrorist acts.

Once the ATB is approved, Arroyo will use the anti-terrorism law to bolster her exercise of martial law powers which she began with Proclamation 1017 and General Order No. 5 and 6 and continue suppressing the people and ensure her hold on power.

fear that this signals their inclusion as enemy targets of the military and other armed minions of the regime.

Among those who united in opposing the current suppression of the freedom of expression in Western Visayas are "Article 3" Alliance, Negros Press Club, Negros Media Council for Press Freedom, Correspondents, Broadcasters and Reporters Association-Action News Service (COBRA-ANS), Liga Journalista, Congress of Active Media Practitioners, NUJP-Panay and militant organizations.

48% want to oust Arroyo through "people power"—SWS

FORTY eight percent (48%) of Filipinos want to oust Gloria Arroyo through "people power," according to a Social Weather Station (SWS) survey from March 8-14. The proportion of those favoring resignation subsequently declined from 58% in December to 44% in March, indicating that "people power" has overtaken resignation as the people's most favored option for removing Arroyo from power.

Meanwhile, 45% disagree with the Arroyo regime's prohibition of rallies on February 24, the SWS added.

Senate condemns PP 1017

THE Senate condemned the Arroyo regime's brazen human rights violations and virtual declaration of martial law through Presidential Proclamation 1017. The combined report of the Senate Committees on Justice, Human Rights, and Social Services declared as illegal and unconstitutional the regime's arrest of its political enemies such as the Batasan 5 and Rep. Crispin Beltran. The report also deemed as illegal the violent dispersal of demonstrations and prohibition of rallies.

In related news, the Senate also condemned the regime's attempts to muzzle free expression, branding the regime's filing of trumped-up charges and its harassment of media practitioners critical of the Arroyo regime as "arrogance." The regime has slapped inciting to sedition charges against *The Daily Tribune's* editor in chief and the Philippine Council for Investigative Journalism's executive director.

Thailand's Thaksin resigns

THE Thai people rejoiced over Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra's declaration on April 4 to step down from power after almost two months of protest actions and calls for his resignation.

Thaksin's resignation came two days after he called for snap elections on April 2. Thaksin failed to use the elections to affirm his leadership after his Thai Rak Thai party garnered three million votes less compared to the 19 million votes it got a year ago. Because of widespread calls for a boycott, 38 of Thaksin's parliamentary candidates failed to get the required 20% of the votes. In Bangkok, Thailand's capital, 51% of those who voted went to the polls but voted for no one, reflecting the extent of Thaksin's unpopularity.

The protests in Thailand erupted upon discovery of the sale of \$1.9 billion worth of stocks of the Shin Corp. Conglomerate held by the Thaksin family to the Singaporean government in end-January. Thaksin was accused of amassing wealth and selling Thailand's economic interests to foreigners.

Workers launch widespread strikes in UK

MORE than 1.5 million workers in the United Kingdom launched a daylong strike on March 28 to assert their right to receive the amount of pensions due them. The workers were reacting to the Blair government's plan to reduce by 1/3 the pension of certain workers' sectors upon retirement. Public sector workers in schools, streets, homes, canals, libraries, and buses (dubbed as support staff) were also being required to retire at the age of 60. Meanwhile, other sectors will receive higher pensions and be allowed to retire at the age of 65. The strike was led by nine big unions in UK, including government employees' unions.

Rallies commemorate 3rd anniversary of Iraq occupation

Thousands of people all over the world launched protest actions on March 18 on the third anniversary of the US imperialist war on Iraq. In the US, more than 500 protest actions were launched in almost all states, with 25,000 people joining the biggest rally. Meanwhile, President George W. Bush's popularity rating in the US has plunged.

Similar protest actions were also launched in Canada and the United Kingdom and in various countries of Latin America, the Middle East, Asia and Eastern Europe.