

Editorial

Oust the antipeople and antiworker Arroyo regime

The Filipino working class will observe the coming International Labor Day under one of the most antiworker regimes in Philippine history.

Not once has this regime granted an across-the-board wage increase. It has persistently turned a deaf ear to the longstanding demand for a P125-increase in the minimum daily wage. It is even pushing for “cha-cha” as an instrument to further oppress workers and suppress the labor movement.

This same regime systematically withholds funds for social services that should benefit workers and the poor. It instead prioritizes funding for foreign debt service and the military and police that protect its corrupt, fascist and illegitimate rule.

Arroyo is completely opening up the country’s economy, labor force and natural resources to imperi-

alist exploitation. The regime’s servility to imperialist-dictated globalization has ruined the country’s forces of production, condemning workers to the depths of misery.

Empty promises are all that Arroyo can offer the highly disgruntled workers. After two years, she has yet to deliver on her fantastic promise of creating a million and a half new jobs each year until 2010 to solve widespread unemployment in the country. Massive layoffs have become the norm instead. The Labor Force Survey in January 2006 listed job losses numbering 95,000 in the industrial sector; 75,000 in construction; 52,000 in communications; and 32,000 in the health and social service sectors.

Meanwhile, the regime manipulates labor statistics to gloss over the stark reality of worsening unemployment in the country. But it could not hide the fact that almost half the labor force is unemployed or underemployed due to continuing massive layoffs and a slump in production.

Ostensibly to lick unemployment, Arroyo is persuading foreign investors to set up call centers that do not at all bring long-term benefits to the local economy even as they severely exploit workers through low wages and widespread contractualization.

The regime is on a relentless drive to send Filipino workers abroad. While this may reduce the number of unemployed, it does not constitute a long-term solution. Arroyo is very keen on the influx of worker’s dollar remittances that she squanders on foreign debt payments and non-productive outlays.



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On top of all this, the regime even shows its utter contempt towards workers. No less than the secretary of the Department of Trade and Industry recently said that many Filipinos are unemployed because they are “too choosy about jobs” or “had no desire to work.” He practically accused Filipino workers of being too lazy to find employment.

Thousands of workers have thus stood up for their rights against regime’s continuing criminal abuse of the labor force.

And how has Malacañang responded?

With threats. Gloria Arroyo has called unionists “terrorists in factories” for launching actions demanding wage increases, benefits and better working conditions. The workers have been warned to stop their actions or be hunted down as terrorist enemies of the state.

With arrests. Arroyo recently made good on her

threat when she ordered the warrantless arrest last February of Crispin “Ka Bel” Beltran, noted labor leader and Anakpawis partylist representative.

With killings. Up to twenty-one labor leaders, unionists and advocates of labor rights were murdered by the regime’s butchers from September 2005 to March 2006. In November 2004, striking workers of Hacienda Luisita were massacred after the secretary of the Department of Labor and Employment ordered the dispersal of their picketline.

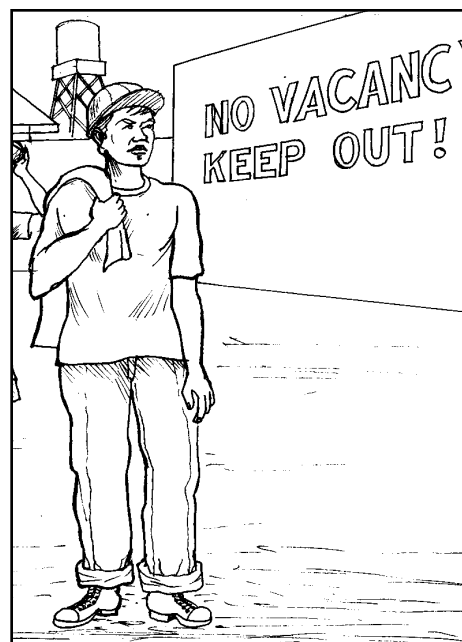
Arroyo’s grave crimes against the working class and the entire nation have stripped her of any right to remain in power. The exploited workers have no other recourse but to rely on their strength and take action alongside millions of people in the streets and countryside. The greatest honor we could bestow on Filipino workers this coming Labor Day is the ouster of the antiworker and antipeople regime. **AB**

Manipulating unemployment statistics

If there is one thing Gloria Arroyo is good at as an economist, it is the manipulation of employment statistics. No wonder, from April 2004 to January 2006 the number of unemployed Filipinos dropped by a staggering 2.149 million!

Arroyo’s statistical sleight of hand was made possible by the National Statistical Coordination Board (NCSB) in October 2004 which changed the definition for unemployment. The new definition excludes from the labor force those

who have not sought employment for six months—usually due to a lack of job opportunities. This fraudulent definition automatically excluded more than 1.285 million from the labor force, even though the number of Filipinos 15 years



and older, who comprise the labor force according to the standard definition, grew by 1.054 million. The rate of employment was thus misrepresented to have grown from 86.3% to 91.9%.

The change of definition in October 2004 is but the latest in the fraudulent manipulation of employment statistics. Prior to this, a huge chunk of the labor force classified as housewives was excluded from



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	15 years and older (million)	Labor Force (million/%)		Employed (million/%)		Unemployed (million/%)		Underemployed (million/%)	
April 2004	52.971	35.509	68.9%	31.520	86.3%	4.989	12.2%	4.733	18.5%
April 2005	54.194	35.126	64.8%	32.217	91.7%	2.909	8.3%	8.422	26.1%
January 2006	55.248	35.224	63.8%	32.384	91.9%	2.840	8.1%	6.895	21.3%

the labor force. Up to 15.3 million of the more than 20 million excluded from the labor force in January 2006 would work if given the opportunity. If they were taken into account in official unemployment statistics, there would be at least 18.14 million unemployed (or 36.8% and not 8.3%, as flaunted by the regime).

Government reduces further the number of unemployed by not classifying as jobless those without regular employment or a steady source of income. It in-

stead misrepresents these workers, numbering up to seven million as underemployed. Included in this category are those with small stores and shops and their relatives who work for little or no pay. "Barkers" at transport terminals, ambulant vendors and many others who barely survive are also classified as underemployed. Therefore, 25.059 million or close to 50% of the labor force are either unemployed or underemployed. **AB**

Regime suppresses complete Mayuga report

Malacañang recently came under fire when it released the summary of the AFP's investigation on the involvement of high-ranking military officers in electoral fraud in 2004.

No one was convinced by Vice Admiral Mateo Mayuga's report absolving Lt. Gen. Hermogenes Esperon, Lt. Gen. Gabriel Habacon and Lt. Gen. Roy Kyamko, all of whom were mentioned in the "Hello Garci" tapes as conspirators in massive electoral fraud that gave the presidency to Gloria Arroyo on a silver platter.

According to the report, not one of the accused was proven guilty. In fact, some of them have since been rewarded with promotions. Former Chief Supt. and now Dir. Gen. Arturo Lomibao now heads the Philippine National Police. General Esperon is now Philippine Army chief. Lieutenant General Habacon, despite being the last in line among 20 candidates was designated chief of the Philippine Army's Southern Com-

mand. Brig. Gen. Nelson Allaga is now Commandant of the Philippine Marines. Capt. Feliciano Angue is now operations chief of the Philippine Navy.

The investigation was begun in June 2005 and concluded last November. The Mayuga report was immediately submitted to Malacañang, but was kept under wraps by Arroyo, fearful that it may spark greater discontent within the AFP and PNP.

Invoking EO 464, Malacañang stopped Mayuga from submitting his report to Congress and the Senate which were then conducting separate inquiries into the issue. Malacañang also prevented AFP officers from appearing in the investigations. Many believe that the long delay bought the regime time to revise the report

in favor of the accused officers.

To avoid possible controversy, Malacañang released a sanitized summary of the Mayuga report on the afternoon of April 12, a day before media offices closed for the Holy Week. The report was announced on a government station without a single media person present to ask questions regarding its contents.

Malacañang, citing various reasons bans the disclosure of the full Mayuga Report and refuses to explain the parts of the report made public. Representatives of progressive parties in Congress have filed a resolution to compel Mayuga to submit the report in full to Congress. This can now be done after the Supreme Court declared illegal Arroyo's ban on officials appearing before Congressional investigations under EO 464.

The Arroyo regime's refusal to reveal in full the contents of the Mayuga Report is certain to stoke further the seething discontent among soldiers and junior military officers. **AB**



NPA seizes 20 firearms in Misamis Occidental raid

THE New People's Army (NPA) seized 20 high-powered firearms in a raid on a Philippine Army-Citizens' Armed Forces Geographical Unit (CAFGU) detachment in Barangay Upper Bautista, Sapang Dalaga, Misamis Occidental at around 5:00 a.m. on April 11. Seized were an M60 light machine gun, three M14s, two M16s and 14 M1 Garand rifles.

Two soldiers from the 5th IB and 12 CAFGU elements were manning the detachment when it was raided. The Red fighters took advantage of a strong downpour to surprise the enemy. The NPA overran the detachment after 45 minutes of gunbattle. A CAFGU element and a soldier were killed, and five CAFGU elements were wounded. The remaining seven paramilitary forces eventually surrendered. The Red fighters did not suffer any casualty.

The guerrillas administered first aid to the wounded soldiers before withdrawing.

The 101st Philippine Army Brigade set up the detachment last year while conducting RSOT operations in the area. The 3rd Special Forces Battalion later took over the detachment which served as a launching pad for military campaigns in the towns along the boundaries of Misamis Occidental and Zamboanga del Norte.

The raid is the seventh NPA offensive in Sapang Dalaga since last year. On March 20, the NPA seized nine firearms in a raid on the town center's police station.

On October 9, 2005, the NPA ambushed the 15th Division Reconnaissance Coy, killing five soldiers, including the company commander 1Lt. Arthur Gelotin. **AB**

NPA seizes 9 firearms in Isabela raid

THE New People's Army seized nine firearms in a raid on a Philippine National Police station in Dinapigue town, Isabela on April 18. Seized were four M16s, two M14s and three shotguns, according to initial reports.

The 11 policemen at the station were unable to fight back when the Red fighters arrived aboard two trucks commandeered from a logging company. After disarming the Dinapigue PNP, the guerrillas withdrew aboard a motorboat.

Farflung Dinapigue town lies between the Pacific Ocean on the east and the Sierra Madre mountain range on the west. It takes 10 to 11 hours before the nearest military or police reinforcements could reach the area. **AB**

2 Scout Rangers killed, 2 wounded in Davao City firefight

TWO elements of the 5th Scout Ranger Company were killed and two others wounded in an encounter with the New People's Army-1st Pulang Bagani Company in Sitio Napaliko, Barangay Tapak, Paquibato District, Davao City on April 6. Contrary to claims by the 4th Infantry Division's Col. Francisco Simbajon, the Red fighters did not suffer any casualty.

The NPA outmaneuvered the Scout Rangers who then called for reinforcements from the 73rd IB. Helicopter gunships arrived and indiscriminately bombarded the area with no regard for civilian safety.

The Scout Ranger unit is part of a bigger military force deployed in the countryside of Davao City and Davao del Norte since last year, in preparation for foreign mining companies entering the area. **AB**

NPA victories in Southern Tagalog

THE revolutionary movement lauded the victories gained last year by the Party and the New People's Army in Southern Tagalog.

A regional Party statement on March 29 reported that the NPA in Southern Tagalog has been vigorously launching tactical offensives since the last quarter of 2005 to the present. In the past six months, various guerrilla fronts of the region launched 36 tactical offensives, or an average of six offensives monthly. The tactical offensives were most frequent in November and December. A huge number of firearms were seized and the equivalent of more than a company of enemy forces was killed.

The statement on the other hand cited the many other responsibilities and tasks that must be accomplished to completely overcome the problem of conservatism. Among such tasks are the establishing company-sized formations at the front level with a platoon as the basic formation; intensive war footing at the barrio level by establishing barrio defense units, among others; establishing and consolidating command structures and political organs at all levels; continuously strengthening NPA centers of gravity; seizing military initiative at all times and strengthening leadership at all levels. **AB**

Thousands benefit from agrarian revolution in Cagayan Valley

Tens of thousands of farmers in Cagayan Valley are reaping concrete benefits from their antifeudal struggles and other concerted actions. The revolutionary peasant movement in the region continues to grow especially after the successful conference on agrarian revolution held in the region in mid-2005. The conference reviewed the history, strengths and weaknesses of agrarian struggles in Cagayan Valley and drafted a three-year program for the peasant movement.

In 2005, more than 71,000 peasants in 52 barangays of eight towns benefited from agrarian struggles despite military harassment.

The peasants achieved through their struggles the abrogation of loan interests during calamities. They successfully lobbied for a reduction of interest rates from 50 kilos to 20 kilos of corn for every P1,000 they owed. Interest rates of 7% per month were reduced to 2.5% per month. Three confrontations and a dialogue were launched to lobby for the reduction of interest rates in 26 barangays of three towns that benefited 1,930 peasants. The peasant organizations secured their agreements in writing,

having learned from the past that merchant-usurers easily ignored verbal agreements. Prominent personalities from the church and local government witnessed the signing of the agreements.

In Cagayan last July, 52 peasants confronted a landlord to demand a reduction in land rent. Consequently, land rent was reduced to 1/4 of net production from a previous 1/3 of gross production. Three hundred tenants benefited from this action.

In other barangays last May, 350 tenants working on land claimed by a landlord decided to stop paying land rent.

In Isabela, peasants in four barangays prevented the implementation of the Socialized Integrated Forest Management Agreement (SIFMA) in their area. The SIFMA is one of government's many land grabbing schemes. The peasants confronted a former politician who introduced the project.

Through a public assembly, peasants in a barangay in Isabela last July succeeded in their

struggle for higher wages. Wages were increased from P70-80 a day to P12 an hour. The action benefited 400 farmworkers.

In Cagayan, 1,000 peasants from 16 barangays acted to gain control over a local cooperative. Upon gaining control, the peasants reduced loan interests and abolished the cooperative's anti-peasant policies and programs. The move benefited 10,000 peasants.

The peasants also fought for better working conditions. Nine-hundred and twenty-one peasants from 22 barangays in four towns took action and won concessions for better work conditions that benefited 21,790 other peasants.

Peasant associations helped each other to establish and manage an irrigation system that benefited 5,000 peasants in four barangays in Isabela.

Peasant associations in two other barangays of Isabela successfully built irrigation systems during a dry spell that lasted from January to April 2005, benefiting 2,790 peasants.

Peasant associations negotiated with local jeepney drivers for a reduction in transport costs for their products. Subsequently, fare was reduced from P40 to P30.

In the aftermath of a disastrous typhoon, peasants from three Isabela barangays solicited and distributed relief goods from various organizations to more than 2,000 peasant beneficiaries.

In Cagayan last November, peasants solicited seedstock from various organizations after their crops were destroyed by successive calamities. The seedstock was distributed to more than 2,000 beneficiaries. Fifty-five peasants in a Cagayan barangay repaired their road. In the same barangay, 100 peasants successfully lobbied the municipal officials for community electrification.



*Women in China*

Restoration of exploitation and oppression

With the triumph of modern revisionism and capitalist restoration in China came the return of the exploitation and oppression of the majority of the people. The system threw back the women of China to their status before the revolution—as second-class citizens.

The old policy depriving women of the right to the land they till, which was abolished by the Chinese revolution, is now back in place. For instance, it is now common practice that women marrying men from outside their home village lose their right to the land they till. Only men have the right to land and their wives are mere dependents. It has become commonplace for women to file charges against the authorities for having been deprived of their right to land.

The old detestable ideas regarding marriage are again the order of the day. Whereas the revolution had liberated women from the confines of the home and nurtured their role in production, the current dispensation returned them to domestic bondage. Husbands have divorced themselves from their roles in homekeeping and communities have withdrawn from their collective responsibility in child rearing by dismantling daycare centers and nurseries. Chinese women today carry the dual burden of making a living and caring for their families.

The situation is made worse by the migration of men to the cities in search of alternative employment. Their wives are left alone to do farm work and manage the home, including caring for their children and elderly family mem-

bers.

Female infanticide is once again rearing its ugly head in China due to the traditional regard for female children as being less useful than male ones. The high incidence of female infanticide has prompted the Chinese government to ban the use of ultrasound machines to determine the sex of unborn children to prevent the abortion of female fetuses. Other parents abandon female infants right after birth, filling orphanages with mostly abandoned girls.

World male-female population ratio is at 101:100. But in China, there are 118 males to every 100 females due to the prevalence of female infanticide. Consequently, the abduction of women to be sold as brides is very common in China today. The practice of parents selling their daughters to men seeking wives has likewise come back with a vengeance. Many Chinese women are forced to marry men they do not love to feed their starving families.

Reports say that some 110,000 women victims of abduction in China were rescued in 2000. They had been forced into prostitution or slavery or sold as brides. Some had been raped before being sold.

Prostitution is back and thriving in China. The number of victims of prostitution was estimated at six million in 2005 and continues to grow. Most of them are young

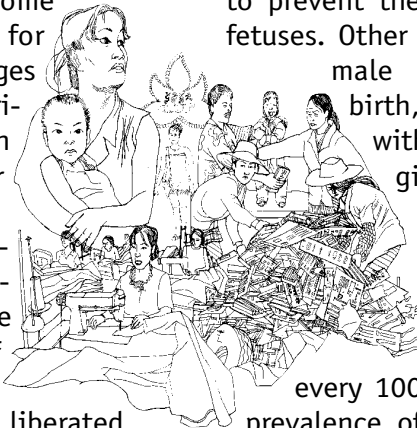
women and girls. Brothels, unheard of under the revolutionary people's government, have sprung like mushrooms in many parts of China. Many Chinese women are even forced to sell themselves abroad.

Poverty and the lack of job opportunities are forcing women into prostitution. Many of these women lost their jobs due to the closure of state enterprises. Many women from the countryside go to the cities looking for jobs, only to fall victim to prostitution.

Opportunities for women to acquire an education is limited by the commercialization of education as opposed to the previous revolutionary policy of launching literacy and education campaigns for both men and women. The measly budget for education is keeping many young Chinese in poor and national minority areas from getting education. There is hardly any female student in schools in depressed areas. The old feudal culture depreciative of women is again the norm, with parents often preferring to send their sons to school over their daughters.

Over 70% of those who drop out of schools in China are female. More than 70% of the 220 million literate and semiliterate are likewise female.

Millions of women, mostly youth, are severely exploited in factories, especially in assembly lines manufacturing products for export. Due to the lack of livelihood opportunities in backward communities, there is a trend for young women to migrate to industrial areas and special economic zones. The young women migrants, known as *dagongmei* often find employment in labor-intensive light manufacturing



and in the lower rungs of the service sector which offer low wages especially to women. Factory workers are often employed under inhuman working conditions. Many work for more ten hours a day without even a bathroom break.

Women in many factories receive lower wages. For instance, a study by the Institute of Sociology of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences reveals that in Guangdong, *dagongmei* are paid monthly wages of RMB300-RMB500 (\$37-\$62). Male workers, on the other hand, are paid a minimum of RMB500 monthly.

Employers routinely violate laws that guarantee maternity leaves, protection of women's reproductive health, overtime pay and so on.

There are many cases where women are employed without contracts. Many are not paid for working overtime. Factory managers can readily deny workers their rightful benefits and threaten with dismissal those who assert their rights as high unemployment rates assures a supply of replacements.

Women are likewise prone to sexual exploitation by factory owners and managers. Many women workers suffer sexual abuse in exchange for favors. There is no law in China against sexual harassment.

Discrimination against women is likewise prevalent among professionals. Employers often prefer male applicants to females. Many professional women who do land jobs are forced to sign contracts barring them from getting pregnant for five years. Promotion within the company is also slow for them especially when they are married and have children. **AB**

For more information, refer to "Revolution liberates the women of China" in AB's March 7, 2006 issue.

Human right violations continue unabated

NATIONAL Federation of Sugar Workers-Camarines Sur chair Nicenor Briones, 42, was seriously wounded after being shot six times by an unidentified man aboard a motorcycle April 6. Briones was shot at the bus terminal in Trianggulo, Naga City while leading the BAYAN Caravan Against Cha-Cha and Political Repression.

Gabriela Women's Party member Inday Estorba, 31 and her husband Gerry were shot at close range in front of their home in Tagbilaran, Bohol April 3. Mrs. Estorba was killed instantly and her

husband was seriously wounded.

Eight miners were abducted by the military April 17 in Barangay Camachin, Doña Remedios Trinidad in eastern Bulacan after a firefight between NPA guerillas and troops of the 56th IB. The miners, who all work for the Metal Ore Company, were accused of being Red fighters. They remain missing to this day.

In Cagayan, troops of the 17th IB arbitrarily arrested, detained and filed rebellion charges last April 6 against Michael Sibbaluca and Reynaldo Peñalver, both of Gattaran town.

Downgrading of charges against American rapists assailed

A HOWL of protest hounded Justice Secretary Raul Gonzales's decision on April 18 to downgrade the charges faced by three of four American soldiers accused of raping a Filipina in Subic, Zambales in November 2005 from being principals to being mere accessories in committing the crime.

Only one of the soldiers, Lance Corporal Daniel Smith, is now accused of rape, thereby paving the way for the probable acquittal of the others. Only Smith faces a possible death sentence or life imprisonment if proven guilty. His companions Lance Corporals Keith Silkwood and Dominic Duplantis and Staff Sgt. Chad Carpentier now face a maximum of 20 years imprisonment if proven guilty.

The victim's lawyers denounced Gonzales for "lawyering for the accused" instead of assisting in prosecuting the case. Olongapo City Prosecutor Prudencio Jalandoni has resigned as lead prosecutor in protest of Gonzales' decision.

The regime had earlier waived its right to take custody of the accused, and has instead left them in the charge of the US Embassy. The court also quashed a motion from the victims' counselors questioning VFA provisions violative of Philippine laws. They said that the US' refusal to turn over the suspects to Philippine authorities was in direct contempt of the local judicial system.

Gonzales himself claimed that the victim's family has already been paid to withdraw charges, prompting the family to strongly deny such claim.

GABRIELA called for Gonzales' resignation, demanded the issuance of arrest orders for all the accused and called for the declaration of the VFA as unconstitutional and antipeople.

No American trooper guilty of abusing the rights of Filipinos has ever been punished because the US has always spirited them out of the country and consigned the cases to oblivion.

Supreme Court declares EO 464 illegal

THE Supreme Court declared as unconstitutional certain provisions of Executive Order 464, including its main provision banning government officials, military and police personnel from testifying before Senate and Congressional hearings without prior presidential approval.

The decision penned on April 20 repudiates Arroyo's adoption of dictatorial powers. Arroyo signed EO 464 last year to thwart Senate and Congressional inquiries on the issues of jueteng, the fertilizer fund scam and election-rigging. Arroyo wanted to curtail the release of information which she feared would engender the people's wrath. With the court's decision, investigations are expected to regain momentum especially in the Senate.

Video of ballot box theft shown

SIX Congress employees were caught redhanded on video entering a Batasang Pambansa room to steal and replace ballot boxes containing election returns of the 2004 polls. They did this six times from January to February 2005 before the ballot boxes were turned over to the Presidential Electoral Tribunal which hears election protest cases. Heavily armed police personnel stood guard outside the Batasan to provide security to the ballot box thieves.

The video tapes which were shown on ABS-CBN in April were taken by a group of soldiers, policemen and civilians. The tapes confirm the widespread doctoring of election returns which ensured Gloria Arroyo's victory in the 2004 polls.

Majority oppose "cha-cha"—Ibon

SEVENTY-six percent (76%) of Filipinos oppose charter change, according to the Ibon Foundation's latest survey conducted March 16-25.

This is higher than the survey results in January showing 65% of Filipinos not in favor of changing the constitution, Ibon said. The survey also shows that 75% of Filipinos believe that Gloria Arroyo is guilty

of fraud and vote-rigging in the 2004 elections.

Ibon research director Antonio Tujan said that one reason for this widespread belief is the Arroyo regime's refusal to disclose the full contents of Vice Admiral Mateo Mayuga's investigation on the complicity of military officers in election-rigging in 2004.

COA confirms fertilizer scam

OFFICIAL reports of the Commission on Audit (COA) confirmed the prevalence of irregularities in the Ginintuang Masaganang Ani (GMA) program of the Department of Agriculture that purportedly distributed fertilizer to local officials and private organizations in 2004. The COA report was written on March 31 and submitted to the Senate on April 4.

The report said that most of those who received fertilizer or fertilizer funds were local officials favored by the Arroyo regime, including officials in non-agricultural areas with no actual need for fertilizer.

Included in the list of fund recipients were bogus or dummy non-governmental organizations,

names of deceased persons and non-farmers. The report also cited cases of duplicate beneficiaries and unclear identification of recipients.

In the Ilocos, Central Visayas and Northern Mindanao regions, farmers or barangay officials failed to receive as much as 42% of the fertilizer. Fertilizer prices were also overpriced by as much as 682% or ₱128 million.

The COA averred that no clear system of fertilizer or fund distribution was set up for the GMA program so as to deliberately obscure the trail of fund flows and actual recipients.

A total of ₱728 million was ripped off in this anomalous program.

Arroyo orders National ID implementation

THE Arroyo regime ordered on April 21 the immediate implementation of the National ID System, a day after the Supreme Court validated its legality.

Progressive organizations immediately condemned the move. They said that the regime will use it to intensify its fascist rule and establish a police state which would have no qualms in violating the privacy of citizens.

The National ID System is the

regime's instrument for centralizing crucial private information on citizens to facilitate their monitoring. Particularly targeted by this policy are forces fighting the government, especially revolutionaries.

While only the GSIS, SSS and Philhealth IDs are to be consolidated into one multipurpose ID, Malacañang plans to eventually include private individuals in its coverage.

NPA returns policeman's personal items

THE New People's Army (NPA) returned personal items belonging to PO3 Antonio Bravo, former detachment commander of the First Provincial Mobile Group (PMG) of the Philippine National Police (PNP) in Sitio Malasibog, Barangay Binubohan, Escalante City, Negros Occidental. The NPA seized the items when it raided the detachment on March 19.

The Boy Gatmaitan Operational Command of the NPA-Negros turned over the items to the Diocese of San Carlos. The items included, among others, three bankbooks in the Armed Forces of the Philippines Savings and Loan Association Inc. (AFPSLAI), personal PNP records and a cellphone. They were re-

turned as a goodwill gesture, according to an attached letter from the Boy Gatmaitan Command to Fr. Edwin Laure, Social Action Center director in San Carlos. The command said that this is in contrast with the conduct of most top-ranking AFP and PNP officers who are decidedly corrupt and would claim what does not belong to them.

Bravo, who thanked the NPA, was due for retirement from the PNP, but was booted out of his position after the NPA raided his detachment. Seized in the raid were an M60 machine gun, an M16, an M14, two Garand rifles, a cal. 45 pistol, seven rifle grenades and Bravo's personal effects.

France lifts antiworker law

WORKERS and youth rejoiced in France after the government rescinded a labor law that sparked widespread protests some months ago.

Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin's government announced April 10 the withdrawal of a law allowing employers to summarily dismiss workers aged 26 years and below in the first two years of employ-

ment.

The French government's acceptance of defeat was a great embarrassment after several weeks of taking a hardline stance in the face of widespread opposition. On the other hand, this was a great victory for the working class against the attempt to deprive them of their basic rights.

Protests vs Nepal king spreads

MASSIVE protest actions led by revolutionary and democratic forces in Nepal to oust King Gyanendra have been intensifying since April 6.

The Nepali people trooped to the streets on April 9 and 12, defying the daylong curfew decreed by the king and the shoot-to-kill order of security forces against curfew violators. The king's decree intensified clashes between the police and demonstrators, resulting in the death of civilians.

At least ten protesters have been killed since April

12, when police fired at the rallyists. The police also arrested about 500 people.

The demand for the king's ouster and the establishment of a democratic government spread when the king disbanded parliament and established absolute rule a year ago.

The current upsurge of protest actions is the result of a campaign launched by a united front that includes legal opposition parties and the revolutionary forces under the leadership of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist).