

**ANG****Bayan**

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Editorial

The workers must lead the Filipino people's struggle

The longer it persists and deepens, the more the international capitalist crisis results in unprecedented havoc and poverty to the working class, the toiling masses and the entire people. On the other hand, it gives rise to favorable conditions for arousing and mobilizing them. Amid this crisis, the need to tread the path of militant struggle to protect the welfare of the oppressed and exploited and to take action to end the system that has condemned them to lives of poverty and anguish becomes ever clearer to the people.

The working class currently faces tremendous challenges. There is urgent need for the proletariat to fulfill its duty to fight for its class interests and to propagate and advance the revolutionary movement to a new and higher level.

The working class is the most advanced class ever created by history. The people pin their hopes on it to lead and advance the social revolution. It wields the ideology of Marxism-Leninism that serves as the advanced scientific and practical guide to their analyses and actions. It is the duty of the working class and its party to arouse and guide the Filipino people, unite them and take the lead in advancing and intensifying their revolutionary struggle.

The working class must be able to confront the tremendous historic challenges attendant to today's unprecedented crisis. This can be done by assiduously building the Party within its ranks. With the Party strong at its core, the working class can continuously and determinedly advance in all arenas of struggle.

The working class must massively, wholeheartedly and solidly take action against the US-Arroyo regime and the entire rotten system and advance the struggle for its own as well as the people's rights and interests. Historically, the working class has been able to achieve victories only through determined, daring and relentless conscious and organized struggle.

More than ever, now is the time for the clamor for a P125 raise in the daily wage to reverberate across the nation. We must raise the level of determination and perseverance of the workers to wage resistance and resoundingly air this demand in huge and unremitting mass actions in the streets and other venues of collective struggle. Without these mobilizations, the masses of workers and the toiling masses will achieve nothing.



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The struggle for higher wages must determinedly be advanced by the masses of workers along with the fight for the other urgent needs of the toiling masses: genuine land reform; reduced prices of petroleum and other basic necessities; employment for the unemployed; homes for the homeless and a stop to the demolition of houses of the urban poor; the abrogation of burdensome taxes; and social services for the poor and the needy. The struggle to attain these demands must be linked to the struggle for the people's democratic rights and for an end to the US-Arroyo regime and its plans to stay in power.

Workers' unions must be painstakingly organized to determinedly advance their economic and other rights. Even as the unions go allout to advance their struggles in the factories or enterprises, they must likewise persevere in mobilizing workers for political struggles, which are important for their class, the other toiling masses and the entire people.

The unions must massively train their members to be active in arousing and mobilizing work within and outside the factories. This likewise entails going into alliances with other democratic sectors, the most important of which is the basic alliance of workers and peasants, and advancing the interests and struggles

of the peasantry.

Most of all, the unions must serve as an organized contribution to the advancement of the proletarian revolution. The workers' unions must be transformed into revolutionary unions. The key to achieving this is to transform the unions into a school for the workers' political and revolutionary education. The unions must go allout in studying Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and the political line of the Communist Party of the Philippines and applying these to their general programs and day-to-day activities.

It is of utmost importance to mobilize the organized workers and entire revolutionary unions to provide clandestine widespread support for the armed revolution. This partly involves sending material support to the people's army and supporting partisans of the people's army who are in urban areas for particular missions.

The highest level of support they can give to the armed revolution is to go to the countryside en masse to join the NPA and participate in armed struggle. Thousands of new Red fighters from the workers' ranks are needed by the NPA annually to help in expanding and consolidating guerrilla fronts and bases in the countryside and advance people's war.

AB

Thousands of people commemorate Labor Day

Thousands of workers and people from other sectors staged rallies in various parts of the Philippines on May 1 to commemo-

rate International Workers' Day.

In Manila, 7,000 workers led by Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU) took to the streets and began their protest

action as early as 6:00 a.m. with a torch run from España towards Welcome Rotonda. They marched at 1:00 p.m. from España towards Liwasang Bonifacio in Manila, where KMU along with other progressive organizations denounced the widespread retrenchments in and out of the country. They also decried the rampant contractualization that began even before the severe global economic crisis erupted.

They also assailed the US-Arroyo regime for its gross neglect in the face of the workers' deplorable plight. Instead of attending to their needs, the regime has obsessed itself with various schemes to amend the constitution which is bound to worsen the people's miseries. The militant workers once again demanded the immediate passage into law of a bill calling for a ₱125 legislated wage hike



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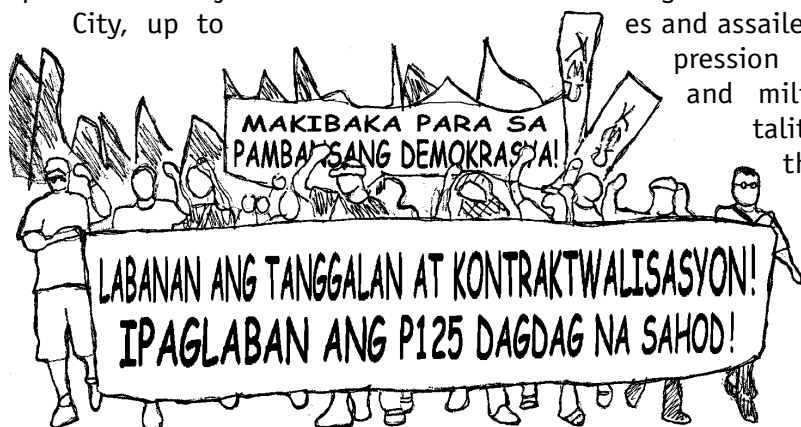
that progressive parties have also been pushing in Congress.

For its part, KMU-National Capital Region criticized the regime's job fair extravaganza on May 1, saying the activity is proof of the regime's campaign to export Filipino labor, which is a stopgap response to the raging crisis. The regime has done nothing to address the urgent need to develop industry and ensure adequate services and jobs for the people, added KMU-NCR.

In various provinces in Bicol, up to 22,300 people gathered despite the heavy rains. In Iloilo City, up to

2,000 people rallied while another thousand marched in Roxas City. In Negros Occidental, some 3,000 workers and peasants who joined a *lakbayan* (people's march) held a program at the Bacolod City Plaza where they assailed intense militarization in the countryside and demanded decent jobs and higher wages. In Tacloban City, workers and government employees staged a rally.

In Davao City, up to 3,000 people joined a protest action led by KMU-Southern Mindanao. They likewise demanded decent jobs, wages and basic services and assailed the suppression of unions and military brutality against the workers' movement. **AB**



Victorious workers' strike

Workers at Kowloon House chalked up another victory after the company management agreed to rehire 54 employees terminated after a labor strike in 2008. The decision was reached in April following negotiations between union members and the restaurant's management.

The company management and the workers agreed to the reinstatement of the illegally laid off workers but without backwages. The workers will, however, be granted P10,000 each as initial financial support. Management plans to transfer the rehired workers to the restaurant's branch in Teachers' Village, Quezon City. The transfer worries the Ecumenical Institute for Labor Education and Research or EILER, as the branch does not have a union and the workers will not be protected from various forms of repression such as contractualization.

It will be remembered that Kowloon House workers in West Avenue, Quezon City staged a strike to protest management's failure to comply with mandated wage increases and for terminating its union members. In January this year, the National Labor Relations Commission or NLRC ordered the company management to recall all retrenched workers and pay them full backwages. **AB**

May 1 rallies worldwide

Over a million people commemorating this year's International Workers' Day across the globe demanded workers' and people's rights and social benefits.

Hundreds of Americans and migrants joined the May Day Immigration Rally in New York Union Square. It was in 2006 when such protest actions began, led by the May 1st Coalition for Workers and Immigrants Rights. The rallyists asserted their right to decent wages, benefits and other migrant workers demands. A similar pro-migrant protest was also staged in Los Angeles, California. There are 12 million undocumented migrants in the United States to date.

In Cuba, Labor Day was celebrated along with the 50th anniversary of their revolution's victory.

In France, eight big workers' unions staged huge demonstrations in about 280 different venues. Organizers put the number of protesters at 1.2 million. They denounced the French government for its antipeople policies and widespread retrenchments. They also warned that continued government inaction over their demands will lead to even bigger protest actions. Meanwhile, hospital employees, fisherfolk, university employees and other sectors began staging strikes as a result of the crisis.

In Russia, thousands of workers rallied against reduced work hours, low wages and the Russian people's worsening plight. In Greece, thousands of workers demanded protection against the crisis, as several thousand from their ranks are expected to lose their jobs this year.

In Spain, thousands of people wore red to dramatize their discontent against their government. Close to four million workers lost their jobs in Spain in the first quarter of this year alone, a record high among European countries.

In Tokyo, Japan, about 36,000 protesters participated in simultaneous protest actions held in 350 places in the country, demanding an immediate stop to unemployment and poverty. Meanwhile, hundreds of workers rallied in front of Hongkong's local government office, demanding that local officials create jobs, raise workers' wages and provide benefits to laid off workers.

In Germany, a labor rally culminated in violence when police forces assaulted 200 demonstrators in Berlin. Security forces truncheoned and bombarded protesters with water cannons and arrested 12 of them.

In Turkey, the rally also turned violent as demonstrators attempted to proceed to Taksim Square in Istanbul. Police forces blocked them, fired tear gas grenades at the protesters and bombarded them with water cannons and arrested a number of them.

AB



Activists mark NDF's 36th anniversary in lightning rally

KASAMA (Katipunan ng mga Samahan ng Anakpawis)-NDF members boldly launched a lightning rally at a crowded area along Litex Road, Quezon City on April 23, the eve of the National Democratic Front's (NDF) 36th anniversary. Bearing placards and flags, KASAMA called for the intensification of people's war in response to the socio-economic crisis that has been battering the country. It said that only through people's war can the ruling system be defeated and a genuine democratic government representing the Filipino people be installed.

The NDF was formed on April 24, 1973, a few months after the dictator Ferdinand Marcos put the entire country under martial rule. KASAMA is a national democratic underground mass organization of the urban poor and semiproletariat and is one of the NDF's allied organizations.

AB

Bogus party-list groups worm their way into Congress

Most of the 32 additional party-list groups in Congress do not really represent marginalized sectors of society.

Foremost among these is Bantay represented by Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan and the anti-communist Alliance for Nationalism and Democracy (ANAD) represented by Pastor Alcover Jr.

Palparan allegedly represents security guards, rebel returnees and elements of the Citizens' Armed Forces Geographical Unit (CAFGU). ANAD, on the other hand, is an offshoot of Alsa Masa, a notorious anti-communist paramilitary group that sowed terror among

the masses in the 1980s.

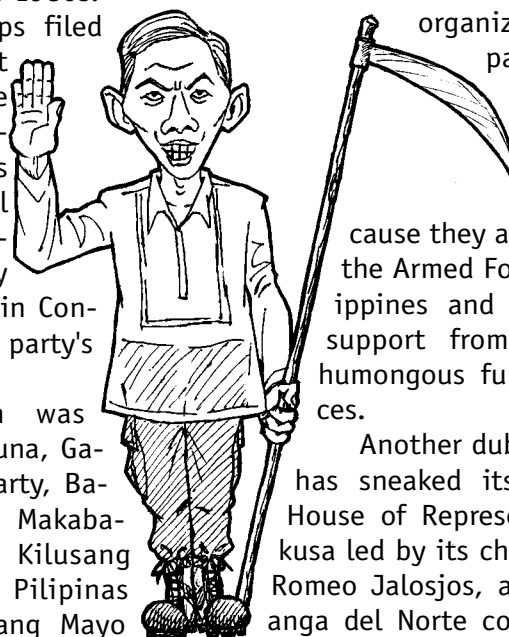
Militant groups filed a petition against Palparan before the House of Representatives Electoral Tribunal on April 28 seeking to disqualify him from sitting in Congress as Bantay party's representative.

The petition was filed by Bayan Muna, Gabriela Women's Party, Bagong Alyansang Makabayan, Hustisya, Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas and NAFLU-Kilusang Mayo

Uno. They questioned Palparan's qualifications, saying that he could not possibly belong to the impoverished and marginalized sectors. It is not true that the paramilitary organizations that Palparan and Alcover

represent are among the disadvantaged groups because they are in fact part of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and as such, enjoy support from the military's humongous funds and resources.

Another dubious group that has sneaked its way into the House of Representatives is Kakusa led by its chairman emeritus Romeo Jalosjos, a former Zamboanga del Norte congressman con-



victed of raping an 11-year old girl. According to Kakusa, it advocates reforms in the country's prisons. But this is merely a scheme to sneak into Congress the Partido Demokratikong Sosyalistang Pilipino (PDSP) party-list group, which lost repeatedly in previous elections. All of Kakusa's national officers are members of the rabidly anti-communist PDSP which is led by no less than Norberto Gonzales, Arroyo's National Security Adviser. A group led by someone at the center of power in the Arroyo regime could not possibly be classified as powerless and voiceless.

Another newly proclaimed representative who has managed to worm her way through the halls of Congress is Gloria Arroyo's sister-in-law Maria Lourdes Arroyo. Her party Ang Kasangga purportedly represents *balut* vendors and other small traders, but she actually hails from a family of big landlords and businessmen from Iloilo and Negros Occidental.

Ang Kasangga's president is former Assemblyman Jose Tumbokon who also served as Minister of Information and adviser of the late fascist dictator Ferdinand Marcos. Among its leaders are government officials, namely Cristeta Absolor, a Department of Social Welfare and Development regional director, and Elizabeth Manuel, Acting Executive Deputy Director of the Philippine Trade Training Center, a government agency. AB

3 additional seats for progressive solons

Three new progressive representatives—Neri Colmenares (Bayan Muna), Joel Maglunsod (Anakpawis) and Raymond Palatino (Kabataan) were sworn into office on April 28, following a Supreme Court decision on April 21 allowing 32 more party-list representatives in Congress.

This means there are now eight progressive solons in Congress—three from Bayan Muna, two from Gabriela Women's Party, two from Anakpawis and one from Kabataan. AB

Paramilitary group massacres family in Agusan del Norte

A family of six was massacred by paramilitary elements in Agusan del Norte while an antiminning activist in Davao Oriental was brutally killed in April.

April 29. Two motorcycle-riding men shot to death Ludinio "Mang Dos" Monson at around 2 p.m. while he was driving his motorcycle home in Sitio Cabak, Barangay Poblacion, Boston, Davao Oriental. Monson was the president of Nagkahiusa Koy Mag-uuma to Boston, a group opposed to commercial mining in Lumad ancestral lands in Boston. He was also a member of Bayan Muna.

Monson had reported last month to the Pasaka Confederation of Lumad Groups that he was being tailed by armed men. He had also found out that he was listed in the military's order of battle and could be killed any time.

April 28. Twenty-five leaders and members of various organizations under BAYAN-Eastern Visayas (EV) were illegally arrested and detained for 12 hours at the Tacloban City Police Station. The victims were among a group of demonstrators staging a protest action during Gloria Arroyo's visit to inaugurate the Palarang Pambansa held at the Leyte Sports Development Center in Tacloban.

The rally had just begun when SWAT elements seized the demonstrators' placards, streamers, flags and other belongings and dragged them to the precinct. A policeman ordered detainees to beat up some male activists who were put in the same jail cell as the common criminals.

Among those arrested were BAYAN-EV president Flor "Pong" Acbo; Atty. Kathrina Castillo, vice president of the National Union of People's Lawyers in the first district of Leyte; Kabataang Pinoy Party-EV secretary general Kenneth Tiu; Kabataang Pinoy Party-EV president Jebri Gil Sida; Katungod-Sinirangan Bisayas secretary general Flor Chantal Eco; Gabriela Women's Party regional coordinator Alphe Lim; and 19 others.

April 20. Police elements arrested Joseph Concepcion and Angelo de los Reyes, members of the College Editors' Guild of the Philippines in Naga City. The incident occurred at Plaza Quince Martires as CEGP-Bicol members prepared for a protest action in time for Gloria Arroyo's arrival at the inauguration of the Private Schools Athletic Association's national sports festival at the University of Nueva Caceres in Naga. CEGP-Bicol plans to file charges against the PNP operatives.

April 13. About 30 elements of the 19th IB have set up camp in several elementary schools in Barangay Tabangohay, Alang-Alang, Leyte. Katungod-Sinirangan Bisayas, a human



rights alliance in Eastern Visayas denounced the Reengineered Special Operations Team (RSOT) for forcing residents to attend village meetings and presenting them with a list of alleged NPA supporters. Those in the list who fail to surrender are automatically arrested, jailed and tortured.

April 9. Elements of the Bungkatol Liberation Front (BULIF) massacred Manuel and Jocelyn Suarez and their children Jan Mark, 6; Bebi, 5; Along, 2; and Niño, two months old in Sitio Kamanikan, Barangay Malinao, Gingoog City. Their neighbors witnessed how BULIF elements Manbuligan Pinakitob, Rene Domino, Oyong Alingatong, Bawang Ampeyawan, Atras Manhumusay and a certain Basbas—all residents of Sitio Mankilana—peppered the victims' house with bullets.

BULIF is a paramilitary group under the control of the 4th ID. The gruesome massacre of the Suarez family was carried out after combined forces of the 29th and 30th IB suffered casualties in previous clashes with a unit of the New People's Army on March 25 and 26. AB

Jun Lozada transferred to Senate custody

Political support for Rodolfo "Jun" Lozada grew even more widespread amid the Arroyo regime's relentless persecution of the NBN-ZTE whistleblower. This was after a court granted on May 7 a petition filed by the senators to transfer custody of Lozada to them.

Police forces took Lozada into custody on April 29 after a court issued a warrant for his arrest. Lozada is one of the main witnesses in the anomalous \$329-million NBN-ZTE project. He was arrested on charges of perjury filed by Michael Defensor, a rabid crony of Gloria Arroyo.

Lozada had disclosed in Senate hearings that Defensor had ordered him to deny his abduction by government agents upon his arrival in the Philippines in February 2008 and any knowledge about the NBN-ZTE project.

Lozada's exposés fueled the people's rage against the Arroyo regime's rampant corruption, which resulted in the ruling clique's further isolation.

Lozada's supporters lamented the irony that it is those who speak the truth who are put in prison even as plunderers and other criminals go strutting around scot-free.

Lozada refused to post bail as a sign of protest against his continued persecution in the hands of the Arroyo regime. Nuns and other anti-Arroyo personalities escorted him to the Manila Police District where he was imprisoned for more than a week before his transfer to the Senate's custody. AB

RP: Most notorious

The Arroyo regime's consistently rotten and fascist policies have earned the Philippines worldwide notoriety for a variety of reasons.

The Philippines is one of the most dangerous countries for trade unionists, as concluded in a study conducted by the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC). The country ranks second to Colombia in the list of countries where violations of trade union rights are prevalent. In 2007 alone, 33 labor leaders in the Philippines were killed, according to a survey by the Independent Centre for Trade Union and Human Rights. A total of 220 individuals were affected in 130 recorded inci-

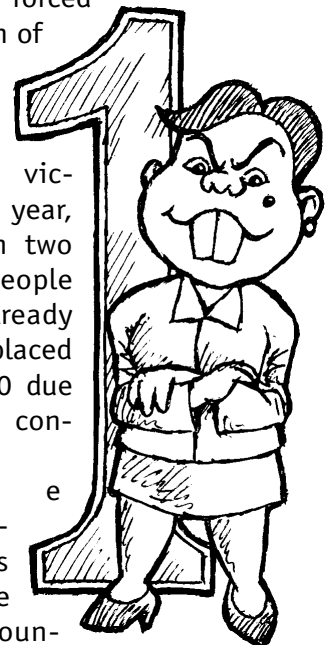
dents of trade union rights violations.

The Philippines also had the biggest number of internally displaced people last year largely as a result of the Philippine Army's operations against the New People's Army, Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), Moro National Liberation Front and the Abu Sayyaf bandit group. In a report, the Internal Displacement Monitoring Center of the Norwegian Refugee Council stated that even before the latest upsurge in fighting between the

military and the MILF in 2008 that led to the forced evacuation of

most of the estimated 600,000 victims that year, more than two million people had already been displaced since 2000 due to armed conflict.

The Philippines is also one of the coun-



tries with the most number of journalists killed whose murders remain scot-free. The latest report by the Global Impunity Index of the Committee to Protect Journalists showed that from 1999 to 2008, there were 24 murders of journalists that remain unsolved.

Meanwhile, the United Nations has cast doubt on the government's sincerity in protecting human rights largely as a result of the latter's failure to submit even a single report to the Committee Against Torture since it took power. Before Arroyo was installed in power, the Philippines had for 12 years also failed to submit reports to the said committee, according to UN rapporteurs during a meeting on April 28 in Geneva, Switzerland by the UN Committee Against Torture. The committee conducts periodic reviews of the human rights situation in 146 member states that are signatories to the UN Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, among them the Philippines.

Among the participants at the UN meeting were representatives from KARAPATAN, which reported 1,026 torture cases in the Philippines from 2001 to March 2009. Raymond Manalo, one of the victims of abduction and torture by thugs led by Gen. Jovito Palparan was also at the meeting to testify on military brutalities.

All these criticisms have driven Gloria Arroyo to announce on May 5 the allocation of a P25-million fund to reward witnesses of extrajudicial killings. The move is another one of the Arroyo regime's futile schemes as it is state policy to kill and persecute the regime's critics. **AB**

Revolutionary movement and people mount successful resistance to Balikatan in Bicol

Raging people's protests have defeated the RP-US Balikatan exercises in Bicol. Even before the actual arrival in the region of participating US and AFP forces, the people and the revolutionary movement had already been relentlessly opposing the war exercises.

In Sorsogon province, the NPA Celso Minguez Command (CMC) conducted resounding tactical offensives simultaneous to huge protest actions by the people. The NPA was able to launch an ambush, 12 harassment and three sniping operations. The people's army was also able to seize the initiative in battle from soldiers who attempted to encircle and attack a group of Red fighters conducting political education, thereby inflicting casualties on the enemy. The enemy suffered a total of 24 dead and 19 wounded during clearing operations to pave the way for the Balikatan exercises. Among those that suffered casualties were the 3rd Scout Ranger Battalion, 901st IBde, 49th IB and Special Forces of various AFP units. On the part of the CMC, a Red fighter, Conrado "Ka Ruben" Jesalva was martyred. Ka Ruben was arrested unarmed by Scout Rangers conducting operations in Gubat town. A week later, his decomposing body was found bearing torture marks and buried in a shallow grave.

Phony humanitarian mission. The US and the Arroyo regime have consistently claimed that the sole objective of the RP-US Balikatan exercises is the conduct of humanitarian missions. Participants

launched bogus medical missions and construction projects in the towns of Juban and Irosin.

No less than the people who availed of the medical services were able to attest to the bogusness of the Balikatan-sponsored clinics. Not enough medicines were distributed and many barriofolk went hungry waiting for long hours for services that turned out to be inadequate.

Balikatan security forces obliged the barangay officials in host barrios to herd in villagers to attend these fake medical missions.

The so-called road building project in Barangay Guruyan, Juban merely involved the pouring of gravel over an existing road. The school that was constructed in the same barangay was left unfinished.

Militarization is the true face of Balikatan. Even before the actual exercises, the AFP had conducted massive clearing operations in the region. The enemy soldiers utilized high-tech surveillance equipment, helicopters and tanks in their operations which were conducted wave upon wave. The military fielded company-strength forces at the minimum in every town.

The Balikatan forces were more focused on their direct involvement in military operations where they scoured territory and familiarized themselves with the province's terrain. Outside the areas chosen for the conduct of "humanitarian missions," American troops directly participated in AFP combat operations.



These military operations caused gross human rights violations. Among the victims were Jason Francisco and Joseph Laguerta of Magallanes who were threatened and mauled by government soldiers. In Irosin, military elements stole farm animals from residents.

After the Scout Rangers' failed attempt to overpower a Red school in Gubat town, the frustrated soldiers wantonly ransacked the houses of residents near the area.

Military death squads went on a rampage anew, mercilessly killing civilians Eden Jerus, Noe Gumba and Noel Encinares. Eden Jerus was the widow of Willy Jerus, a peasant leader who had also fallen victim to a death squad.

The enemy soldiers also intensified psywar operations against villagers, particularly relatives of

suspected revolutionaries. In the towns of Juban, Irosin, Casiguran and Gubat, the military showed anti-communist films and conducted mass meetings to sway the residents' views in favor of Balikatan. Soldiers made the rounds of barangay high schools to demonize the revolutionary movement.

Despite all these efforts, the Balikatan forces miserably failed to gain the support of the Sorsoganons.

Instead, the Sorsoganons kept the streets of the province ablaze with their relentless militant actions calling for the expulsion of the RP-US Balikatan forces. At the same time, the NPA was able to launch victorious tactical offensives against Balikatan because of the masses' allout support for their Red army. **AB**

US troops involved in Bicol military operations

The revolutionary movement was able to monitor the direct involvement of American troops in AFP military operations in areas where the Balikatan exercises in Bicol were being held. In April, there were American troops with the AFP forces encountered by the NPA in Sorsogon and Masbate.

At dawn of April 15, an American soldier was wounded and three troopers from the Philippine Army 9th Infantry Division were killed when they attempted to encircle and attack an NPA platoon in Barangay Baras, Esperanza, Masbate. The NPA guerrillas valiantly fought back, with one Red fighter martyred in the clash. On the other hand, the military hid their casualties and the wounded American soldier was subsequently flown to the Bicol mainland.

The following day, the military conducted another operation with at least 12 American soldiers who were flown in by helicopter to Barangay Nauco, Placer, Masbate.

On April 22, two American soldiers were with 26 elements of the 3rd Scout Ranger Battalion when Red fighters fired at them in Barangay Lourdes, Barcelona, Sorsogon. Two Scout Ranger elements were wounded in the clash.

The US obviously uses so-called humanitarian missions as a cover to conceal its surveillance operations and direct participation in AFP combat operations against the revolution and the people. **AB**

Bountiful harvest of the revolution in Barrio Lagda

Deep in the Cordillera, in the bosom of towering mountains can be found Barrio Lagda. It is a cluster of houses surrounded by vast forests, swidden farms and rice terraces. Farming is the principal livelihood of the barriofolk. The rice and vegetables they harvest are supplemented by their catch from hunting and fishing. But no matter how hard they work their farms, their rice harvest is never enough.

Usually, four months out of the year, they buy rice from nearby barrios or in the town center. It is several hours walk because there are no roads in Lagda, just like thousands of other poverty-stricken barrios in the country that are victims of government neglect. Lagda is denied basic social services in health, education and agriculture, among others.

But in 2007, despite the rice crisis that brought hardship to the Filipino masses, the long history of rice shortages in Lagda changed. The rice harvest was bountiful and the masses no longer needed to leave the barrio to buy rice. Behind this is the story of the brilliant victory of a creative, courageous and industrious people determined to attain a bright future.

Planting the seeds of revolution anew. The revolutionary strength of the people of Barrio Lagda was built and consolidated in the 1980s. But it was shaken by disorientation and a long period of brutal militarization. The military built a detachment in the barrio

and forcibly recruited villagers into the CAFGU. Many *payaw* (small rice paddies) and swidden farms were neglected and destroyed because of militarization. The revolutionary progress already attained in the barrio was in ruins.

In 1997, the NPA started recovery work in Lagda. Three former members of the Party branch in the barrio served as their contacts and starting point in reestablishing revolutionary power in the area.

Recovery work was difficult. There were a lot of questions, criticisms and issues that needed to be dealt with and resolved by the Red army. The old Party members and new mass activists were a big help in rekindling the revolutionary movement inside the barrio.

Within a few years, the peasants, women and youth in the barrio were organized. Party membership grew and a Party branch was formed in the barrio. The members initiated a series of educational studies. They persistently launched campaigns against militarization and violations of human rights. They denounced the establishment of a military detachment in their village and the forced recruitment of barriofolk into the CAFGU.

The Party, NPA and mass organizations also started a campaign for agrarian revolution to solve the low levels of food production in the barrio. They propagated the planting of various vegetables and fruits. The people helped each other build new *payaw*. They repaired damaged irrigation canals and made new ones for the newly built *payaw* and those that did not have access to irrigation before.

It was difficult to implement the programs of agrarian revolution in Barrio Lagda due to the presence of the enemy detachment. The enemy spread numerous lies, threats and rumors in an attempt to destroy unity within the barrio but

the people bravely faced and thwarted all this. Led by the Party branch, the people convinced their relatives in the CAFGU to leave the paramilitary group. At the same time, the NPA intensified its tactical offensives. Not long after, the CAFGU elements quit and the detachment was kicked out of the barrio.

Even though CAFGU wages were meager and always late, it was still a big deal for those living in the interior where money is hard to come by. In order to help those that left the CAFGU, the people included them in the campaign of agrarian revolution. Since joining the agrarian revolution, those that left the CAFGU no longer had to borrow rice, which they always did when they were still in service.

From 2001-2005, more than 70 new *payaw* were built by the mass organizations. Almost 70-90 sacks of rice were added to each harvest, aside from the harvest coming from the swidden farms. Besides increasing food production, the agrarian revolution campaign dealt with many other basic needs such as raising the number of carabaos which were a big help in farming. The mass organizations began with three carabaos, bred them and later had more than ten. They were also able to buy a few horses. In 2007, they began planting sugar cane and producing their own sugar.

The mass organizations then founded a cooperative rice mill to lessen the many hours spent pounding rice. They built a smithy to make basic tools of production. They developed suitable policies so that the

mill and smithy would be well-managed. They launched trainings on blacksmithing.

There were also trainings on basic and advanced health courses. After the health trainings, members of the health committee practiced what they learned by providing free clinics.

Little by little they were also able to eradicate the feudal and semifeudal relations of production. Daily wages for farm labor were raised from P50 to P100. Sharecroppers began to have a bigger share in the harvest, from 50-50 to 30-70 in favor of the poor peasants. Interest on loans was reduced from 20% to just 5%. Interest was waived altogether for those who borrowed cash, especially if the money was to be used for educational or medical purposes. Since establishing the cooperative mill, the costs of milling has gone down. The people now only have to pay two *gatang* (equivalent to the contents of a 370 ml milk can) of rice for every six *salop* (three liters dry measure) of unhusked rice to be milled compared to the ten cans demanded by the private mills.

Foundation of development.

Like a stout wall built on a firm foundation, the development of Lagda is founded on the depth and



strength of the unity and cooperation of the revolutionary people, Party and NPA. Lagda has reached a high level of organization and consolidation. There are leading committees of peasants, youth and women; a people's militia; a health committee and a committee of the Cordillera People's Democratic Front. In 2008, the formation of a chapter of the Pambansang Katipunan ng mga Magbubukid (PKM) in the barrio further strengthened people's revolutionary power in the village. At present, 92% of the people in the barrio are either organized or influenced.

The people of Lagda firmly embrace armed struggle and continuously contribute food, clothes and whatever else is needed by the NPA. They also give ammunition and other military equipment. Many youth have joined the NPA and participated in various victorious tactical offensives.

There are many more barrios like Lagda in the Cordillera and other parts of the Philippines that steadily advance revolutionary social change and progress. These are the targets of Oplan Bantay Laya 2, a brutal plan of the Arroyo regime to destroy the revolutionary movement before the end of 2010. In the face of the regime's vicious onslaught, the people are further strengthening their revolutionary unity to defend their hard-won victories. AB

(Excerpted from the March 2009 issue of Dangadang, the revolutionary mass paper of Ilocos-Cordillera.)

OBL worsens oppression of the Cordillera people

Oplan Bantay Laya 2 (OBL 2) has worsened the national oppression of the Cordillera people. In a message for the Cordillera Day celebration last April 24, Cordillera People's Democratic Front spokesperson Simon "Ka Filiw" Naogsan exposed military abuses caused by counterrevolutionary operations in the Cordillera.

OBL2 has intensified the seizure of ancestral lands. One of the objectives of the AFP's operations is to ensure the free entry of foreign mining companies. OBL2 is contemptuous of the indigenous political institutions in the Cordillera and disregards even the authority of local government officials.

The Cordillera people are further denied urgently needed social services because of OBL2. They are unable to use their daycare centers, health centers, multipurpose halls and schools because soldiers have set up camp in these facilities. The AFP desecrates the culture of the Cordillerans, deceives tribal leaders and destroys their unity.

Since OBL1 started in 2002, more than 30 Cordillerans have been killed by the Arroyo regime. James Balao of the Cordillera People's Alliance has been missing since he was seized by military elements on September 17, 2008.

In the face of all this, Ka Filiw called on the Cordillera people to unite and fight and strengthen the council of elders, *dap-ay*, *ator* and other forms of traditional governance. He also called for an end to tribal wars in order to consolidate the Cordillerans' strength and have them focus instead on the struggle for their land, dignity, rights and welfare. AB

Leadership steeled in the furnace of time

It was getting dark when Ka Andres, Ka Victor and Ka Dandy, officers of the Party branch in their barrio, gathered in a small hut. They were waiting for two more officers before convening a special meeting of the branch's executive committee, when *Ang Bayan* was able to interview them in October 2008.

This branch is just one of the many local Party branches in a guerrilla front in Southern Mindanao. Ka Victor's village was one of the first barrios organized by the NPA in Southern Mindanao. Thus, the barriofolk have had a wealth of experience in waging revolution. Even though there were times when the people's army had neglected or abandoned



them because of brutal military operations and political errors, overall, the villagers had remained steadfast in their revolutionary standpoint and recovery work in the village has always been quick.

With no interruption in recovery work in the barrio since 1998, the revolutionary movement in the village continues to expand and consolidate.

"We just started with eight members of the Party when the present branch was established in 1998," said Ka Victor. "In heeding the call of the section committee to expand our ranks, there were 30 of us by 2004. Currently, we have 40 members," Ka Andres explained.

The branch is conscious of its responsibility to address the need to advance people's war to a higher level by recommending the best mass leaders and activists from the mass organizations in the barrio for service in the NPA. "Since 1998, we've already recommended nine villagers who joined various units of the NPA. But before we recommended them, we first ensured that we conducted a thorough background check. For example, we got to know their parents and their personal record and we observed their actions," explained Ka Andres. "We also tried to determine if they were sincere or if they had what it takes to persevere in service," added Ka Victor.

"The branch is also active in raising financial and material support for the people's army. We talk and plan within the executive committee about different ways of helping the NPA and we present this at the branch meeting," they said. "Whatever we agree on, we let fellow villagers know even if they're not members of the branch. For example, we gather monthly financial support from members of mass organizations in order to help the people's army. Aside from this, we also gather material support like root crops and vegetables every time the NPA is based in our barrio. We immediately call a meeting of the members of the mass organizations to talk about this and strongly urge everyone to work hard to raise and contribute whatever they can."

The barriofolk have sustained their revolutionary spirit despite intense violence from the military. Ka Andres said, "Many peasants here have experienced various forms of fascist brutality. Soldiers routinely train their guns at villagers to terrorize them. Others have had it worse and have been victims of massacres, beatings, extortion, psywar and economic blockades." However, instead of frightening them to submission, these atrocities have only served to fan the flames of anger towards the enemy and fired up the villagers' fighting spirit.

One of the most intense struggles led by the branch was a campaign against a giant mining company that planned to operate in the area. The mining company had the support of the military and the local ruling class. "In spite of this, we persisted in protesting its entry because we knew that the mining company's operations would cause great harm to the people. The branch worked hard to explain the issues to the peasants and urged them to fight in order to block the mining company's attempted entry."

The masses' militant struggle in the affected areas as well as the support of neighboring barrios thwarted the mining company's plans to begin operations in the area.

AB

Ka Pasyo, people's militiaman

"The problems we face as peasants is a big reason why we wage revolution. We need to arm ourselves against the exploitation, oppression and brutality of the landlords, concessioners and their armed forces and in order to launch agrarian revolution and defend the victories won by our movement."

Thus said Ka Pasyo of the people's militia in a barrio located in a mountainous area of Agusan del Sur. The people's militia is the NPA's local formation in the barrio composed of villagers who continue to engage in production work on a daily basis. It strictly abides by and adheres to the policies and discipline of the NPA.

Ka Pasyo has been in the people's militia for more than ten years and has had a rich revolutionary experience. "In the face of the US-Arroyo regime's vicious attempts to defeat the revolutionary movement, we in the people's militia stand as a defensive force in the community."

"The people's militia actively takes steps to thwart Oplan Bantay Laya 2. If there is a huge military operation by the enemy, we start harassment operations right here in the barrio. When we attack the enemy, we have the advantage especially if the soldiers set up camp in the barrio, because we are familiar with the terrain of our community. We are also able to give detailed information to the NPA regarding the enemy's movements. Sometimes, we directly partic-



ipate in raids and ambushes launched by the guerrilla platoons of the NPA."

Ka Pasyo and many others have already proven how important it is to have the revolutionary movement in the barrio. "There's a big difference between the places that have a revolutionary movement and those that don't," added Ka Pasyo. "Since the revolutionary movement took root in our barrio, mutual understanding and cooperation have prevailed among the villagers. We now live peaceful lives compared to the past when we were always scared of bandits and other bad elements who would just come into our barrio."

The people's militia's responsibilities are not confined to the military realm. It also actively takes part in developing farm production using various methods like organizing *hunglos* (teams engaged in mutual exchange of labor) in order to reduce production

expenses. Whenever agrarian revolution is launched, the people's militia ensures security while the peasants hold confrontations and press their demands against the landlords, usurers or merchants.

"We are very grateful to the CPP and our people's army for taking care of us and providing guidance, which has resulted in peace and development in our area."

"The farmers' landlessness and the violence that the Filipino people suffer at the hands of the ruling class are clear bases for our continuing support of armed struggle. The revolutionary movement is the answer to our grievances. Therefore, I strongly urge my fellow peasants, especially those in the people's militia, to continue to actively support the armed struggle and assist the NPA in its tasks until victory." **AB**

(Excerpted from Lingkawas, the revolutionary mass paper in North-eastern Mindanao)

Peasants oppose eviction from Hacienda Luisita

MORE than a hundred peasants from Hacienda Luisita in Tarlac descended upon the House of Representatives on April 27 to protest the latest threat of eviction by the Cojuangco family of more than 500 peasants in the hacienda. They joined the camp out being held by the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas which is demanding the abrogation of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) and the passage into law of the Genuine Agrarian Reform Bill.

According to Rene Galang, president of the United Luisita Workers' Union, the peasants received a memorandum from the Cojuangcos a day after Congress passed a resolution extending the bogus CARP on December 1, 2008.

The Cojuangcos demanded that the peasants cease tilling an area of 2,000 hectares within HLI by October 30, 2009. They also demanded the destruction of previously planted crops which are the peasants' sole means of living. HLI, a 6,000-hectare landholding, was the site of a massacre in November 2005 that claimed the lives of seven farmers and wounded many others.

Anakpawis Rep. Rafael "Ka Paeng" Mariano said that it is the farmers who are the genuine owners of the land because the government had already cancelled the Stock Distribution Option (SDO) under CARP in 2006 and ordered the return of the land to the farmers. Galang added that it is they and not the Cojuangcos who have the right and reason to till and develop the hacienda.

Bangit, the next AFP chief?

Gen. Alexander Yano was replaced as AFP chief on May 1, a month and a half too early. It was a maneuver to speed up the promotion of Lt. Gen. Delfin Bangit who, many believe, will be playing a big role in Gloria Arroyo's future sinister schemes.

Lt. Gen. Victor Ibrado succeeded Yano who was in turn replaced by Bangit as Philippine Army chief. Critics of the Arroyo regime foresee Ibrado's early retirement to give way to Bangit's appointment as AFP chief after June. This is Arroyo's insurance that just in case the charter change ploy once again fails before Congress ends its current session, the sitting AFP chief would be one who is loyal to her and would not hesitate to implement martial law or enforce a state of emergency.

In the event that the martial law scheme falls through, Bangit's role will still be important in the electoral fraud that will be perpetrated during the 2010 polls. Arroyo may likewise exploit the anarchy consequent to the elections to declare martial law.

Bangit served as the head of the Presidential Security Group and is said to be extremely loyal to Arroyo, more so than any other officer of the AFP.

Meanwhile, the appointment of Dir. Roberto Rosales as PNP chief is also in the works, in time for 2010. He is also a loyal disciple of the Arroyo clique. **AB**