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Editorial

Reject con-ass! Overthrow the US-Arroyo regime!

Gloria Arroyo's minions in the Lower House have paved the way for her to extend her rule beyond 2010. Through a combination of coercion against the opposition and a bribe of P20 million in the form of additional "pork barrel" for every congressman who approves it, Arroyo's sinister plan to remain in power was railroaded.

Before midnight of June 2, Congress hurriedly passed House Resolution 1109 (HR 1109) transforming the Lower House into a constituent assembly (con-ass) with the powers to change the government's constitution even without the Senate's participation. Prior to this, Arroyo's minions had already received P1 million each during the merger of the two ruling parties Lakas and Kampi, where Arroyo led the way in applying the final touches to her brewing scheme. This puts the lie to constant claims by Malacañang that Arroyo has nothing at all to do with cha-cha and con-ass.

Next in line is convening the con-ass right after the State of the Nation Address during Congress' next session in July. As soon as it is convened, the con-ass can go

ahead and introduce whatever changes it wants to the constitution, whether or not the Senate accepts its invitation to join it.

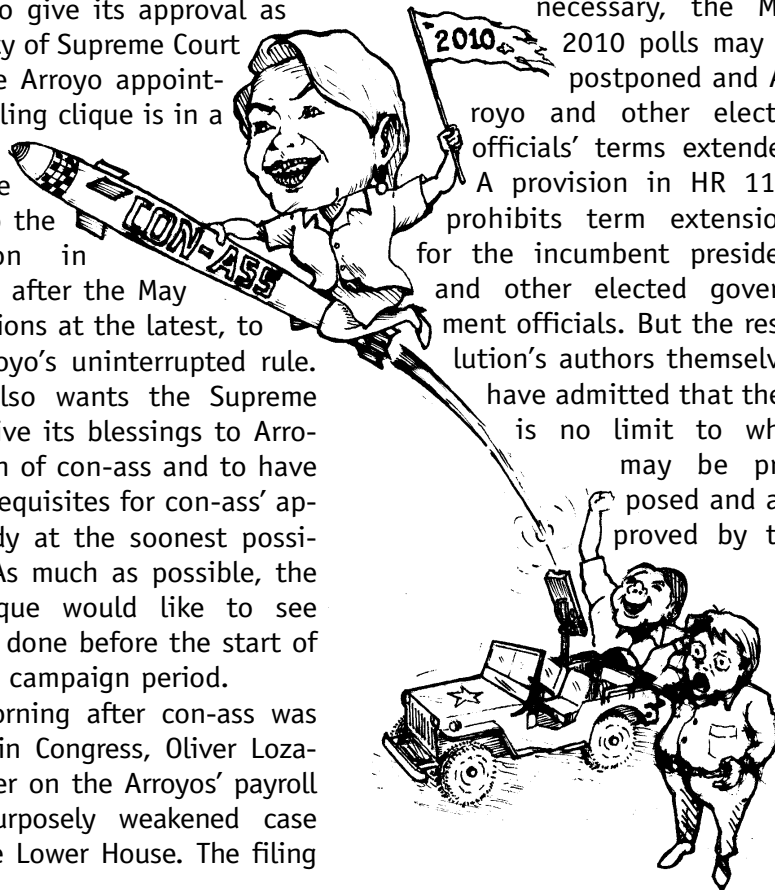
A plan to test the con-ass' legality before the Supreme Court is also in the works, with the high court expected to give its approval as the majority of Supreme Court justices are Arroyo appointees. The ruling clique is in a rush to have changes to the constitution in place right after the May 2010 elections at the latest, to ensure Arroyo's uninterrupted rule. Thus, it also wants the Supreme Court to give its blessings to Arroyo's version of con-ass and to have the other requisites for con-ass' approval ready at the soonest possible time. As much as possible, the Arroyo clique would like to see everything done before the start of the official campaign period.

The morning after con-ass was railroaded in Congress, Oliver Lozano, a lawyer on the Arroyos' payroll filed a purposely weakened case against the Lower House. The filing

was undoubtedly hatched by his bosses in Malacañang so that the Supreme Court can immediately discuss con-ass and decide in its favor.

The Supreme Court's expected ratification of con-ass will likewise serve as a go-signal for whatever changes Arroyo's minions want to introduce to the constitution. Foremost among them is a shift from a presidential form of government to a parliamentary one where Arroyo can once more become head of the puppet state as prime minister. If

necessary, the May 2010 polls may be postponed and Arroyo and other elected officials' terms extended. A provision in HR 1109 prohibits term extensions for the incumbent president and other elected government officials. But the resolution's authors themselves have admitted that there is no limit to what may be proposed and approved by the



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con-ass, including term extensions for those currently in power.

HR 1109 even hints at the possibility that House Speaker Prospero Nograles' own resolution, HR 737 may also be approved. This resolution calls for an end to the remaining provisions in the current constitution that give formal protection to national sovereignty and patrimony and prohibit foreigners from owning land and strategic industries in the country. US imperialism has long been pushing for such measures. The door is likewise open for the eradication of remaining provisions that protect civil rights.

The Arroyo clique has resorted to all these filthy maneuvers so that it could continue ruling, plundering and serving as US imperialism's lackey and persist in oppressing and repressing the people.

Various sectors of society have strongly objected to cha-cha and con-ass ever since the Arroyo regime began scheming to have them done. HR 1109 has now fueled the people's anger and protests. The widespread and relentless protests that the railroading of con-ass is sure to ignite will also be definitely suppressed with brute force by a regime that desperately clings to power due to its morbid fear of facing people's justice once it no longer wields authority.

The Filipino people are sick and tired of Gloria Arroyo's rule. They have suffered so much under close to a decade of corruption, puppetry and repression. They are fully determined to muster their strength to overthrow her and her clique from power. All anti-Arroyo forces must strengthen their unity to intensify the protest movement by launching street actions and to support the armed revolutionary struggle to overthrow the hated regime and the rotten system it serves.

Alongside the people's intensified struggles against the US-Arroyo regime and its schemes to keep a tight grip on power, the New People's Army will likewise intensify its tactical offensives to weaken the Arroyo regime and derail its maneuverings to remain in power.

AB

FASCIST STATE ON A RAMPAGE 

Distorting the truth

The Arroyo regime strains to overcome its shame after the United Nations Committee on Torture assailed its report alleging the ruling regime's compliance with the provisions of the international treaty against torture.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita is now distorting the truth beyond recognition in saying that it is the New People's Army (NPA) that is responsible for the growing number of human rights violations, with an alleged 63 cases in the first five months of 2009. The accusation is ridiculous as the supposed 63 cases refer to armed actions by the NPA against legitimate military targets.

In a statement issued June 4, National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) negotiating panel spokesperson Ka Fidel Agcaoili slammed the Arroyo regime for its shamelessly mendacious assertions that it abides by human rights and has nothing to do with the continuing extrajudicial killings and abductions of civilians and political activists. Only recently, the country was shocked by the abduction and torture of Filipino-American activist Melissa Roxas. (*see related article*)

Prior to this, an NDFP study revealed that the Arroyo regime had surpassed the Marcos dictatorship in the perpetration of various human rights violations that have followed distinct trends, patterns and practices.

Under the Arroyo regime's National Internal Security Plan (NISP) and the AFP's Oplan Bantay Laya, unarmed leaders and activists of progressive organizations have been marked as targets of assassination, torture and enforced disappearance. Up to 1,015 have become victims of extrajudicial killings since 2001, on top



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of the 202 disappeared, 1,016 tortured and 223 political prisoners.

It is also the practice of the Arroyo regime to include the family members of NPA fighters in their brutal operations against the revolutionary forces.

In perpetuating a deplorable culture of impunity, the Arroyo regime has adopted and carried out the policy of passing off the blame in cases of extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances to the revolutionary forces or blaming the victims themselves. The real perpetrators of these crimes are commended, heaped with honors and amply rewarded, while revolutionaries and progressives are slapped with manufactured nuisance complaints and their reputations maligned.

Malacañang's Inter-Agency Legal Action Group (IALAG) has been used to systematically fabricate charges and to cover up the criminal responsibility of military and police officers involved in abductions, torture and extrajudicial killings. IALAG was purposely set up by the Arroyo regime to launch a "legal offensive" against suspected members, sympathizers or supporters of the revolutionary movement as well as all other vocal critics of the regime. Public prosecutors and judges are pressured and threatened to cooperate in the filing of false charges against the victims themselves. There is also a noticeable continuing practice of criminalizing political acts and offenses.

There is likewise a new vicious practice of filing false charges en masse for common crimes against leaders and activists of progressive organizations in one region to cripple dissent in that area.

The dictator Marcos, even under martial law, did not resort to this kind of systematic and wholesale legal persecution.

Another alarming trend is the killing of witnesses of human rights violations committed by state security forces. Even religious leaders, human rights workers, lawyers and journalists are no longer insulated from attack. It is only under the Arroyo regime that open attacks against these persons are committed with impunity.

Agcaoili said that Ermita should come to terms with his and the GRP's culpability for war crimes committed against civilians and hors de combats under the Arroyo regime's Oplan Bantay Laya. If liars could be struck by lightning, said Agcaoili, then Ermita and his ilk would have been reduced to cinders long ago. **AB**

Military abducts, tortures Filipino-American activist

Blindfolded, handcuffed, smothered with a plastic bag over the head and punched with blows to the jaw and body for six days by persons who identified themselves as elements of the Special Operations Group (SOG). These, among others, were contained in a sworn statement by Filipino-American activist Melissa Roxas, 31, in her petition for a writ of amparo filed with the Supreme Court on June 2.

Roxas, a member of the Habi Arts cultural group based in Los Angeles, California, and Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (BAYAN)-USA Chapter, has been in the Philippines for about two years assisting human rights advocacy groups as a volunteer health worker.

On May 19, at around 1:30 p.m., and just as Roxas and fellow health workers Juanito Carabeo and John Edward Jandoc concluded a survey of the town of La Paz, Tarlac for a medical mission, armed men barged into the house they were staying at in Si-



tio Kapanikian, Bagong Sikat. At least eight persons whose faces were covered with ski masks trained their guns at Roxas and her group. Roxas struggled to free herself as the men gagged her with tape, but she was punched in her right rib cage. The three health workers were forced into a waiting blue van.

After almost an hour, the van stopped and Roxas was brought inside a room with iron bars. All throughout her detention, she could hear blow-torching and other construction-related activities. She heard gun firing as though in a firing range, and planes taking off and landing. With all the sounds she heard, she was likely brought to Fort Magsaysay, Laur, Nueva Ecija where the 7th ID-PA is based, said Roxas' lawyer.

Roxas hardly slept the first night of her abduction. The next day, she was subjected to non-stop interrogation and was not given any food. She was denied her right to counsel. She was slapped, punched,



and her head covered with a plastic bag to suffocate her. She was being forced to admit to being a member of the New People's Army (NPA) but she refused. She was also being forced to sign a document, which she also refused. On not a few occasions, her military abductors asked her if she was ready to die. They also said they were God's instruments to convince people like Roxas to return to the mainstream. All throughout her detention, she was blindfolded and handcuffed, except when bathing.

After six days, the military freed Roxas after she told them what they wanted to hear about her readiness to "return to the fold of the law." But her abductors did not return her camera equipped with a memory card, her laptop computer, iPod, stethoscope, sphygmomanometer, medicines and ₱15,000 cash.

Carabeo was freed the following day. Jandoc remains missing.

Upon freeing Roxas, the military gave her a cell-phone SIM card, saying it was to enable them to monitor her movements. She was also given an email address and password that she could use to contact the military, who left with her the handcuffs they used on her. She and a cousin who came to fetch her threw away the SIM card but kept the piece of paper where the military listed down the email address and password for use as evidence against her abductors and torturers.

Malacañang denied the abduction before Roxas was surfaced, claiming that it was nothing but malicious intrigue by militant groups because there was not a single report of the incident. Roxas' abduction, however, was on the blotter of the La Paz police. Now that the government and military could no longer deny the incident, the AFP has resorted to accusing the NPA of abducting and torturing Roxas and her companions. AB

Brutal dispersal at the Batasan

A camp-out by militant farmers in front of the Batasang Pambansa was brutally demolished on May 22 on orders of House Speaker Prospero Nograles. This was even after the protesters agreed to the Batasan authorities' request to vacate one side of the Batasan gates.

Policemen and security guards tore down the farmers' tents and bombarded the protesters with water cannons despite appeals from Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo, Anakpawis Rep. Rafael "Paeng" Mariano and Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) secretary-general Danilo "Ka Daning" Ramos who all personally negotiated with Nograles.

The violent dispersal has

prompted the KMP to file a complaint with the Office of the Ombudsman against Nograles and other Batasang Pambansa officials on May 28. Three days before, they also filed a complaint with the Commission on Human Rights (CHR).

The CHR condemned the brutal dispersal, accusing House leaders of "indifference... to the plight of the farmers whose toil feeds our congressmen and the

rest of the Filipino people."

Joining KMP in filing the complaint was the Kalipunan ng mga Samahang Magbubukid sa Timog Katagalugan (KASAMA-TK) and the fisherfolk group Pambansang Lakas ng Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (PAMALAKAYA).

Aside from Nograles, the other respondents were House secretary-general Marilyn Yap, House sergeant-at-arms Brig. Gen. Hortacio Lactao, Legislative Security Bureau executive director Col. Isabelito Flores, private security guards and elements of the Special Action Force and PNP Station 6 in Quezon City.

They were charged with prohibiting and dispersing a peaceful assembly of farmers; causing injuries to ten farmers including an elderly woman and two minors; and maliciously damaging the farmers' personal belongings.

The farmers were then on the 40th day of their camp-out to oppose the passage in Congress of HB No. 4077 or the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program with Extension and Reform Law (CARPER).





The bill calls for a five-year extension of the government's bogus land reform program. The militants strongly assailed CARPER, saying it remains anchored on methods stipulated in the fake Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) which has been proven inutile in distributing land to landless farmers or those needing more land. They charged that HB 4077 would only bring false hopes to farmers that they would be given land.

In place of CARPER, the militant farmers are pressing for the passage of GARB or the Genuine Agrarian Reform Bill which calls for the free distribution of land to landless farmers or those who need more of it.

On the night of June 3, the landlord-dominated Congress passed CARPER, knowing full well that the inutile law poses no threat to their class interests. Instead, it will serve as an instrument for landlords to avoid distributing their lands to the peasants.

CARPER's House and Senate versions will be consolidated when Congress resumes in July before it becomes law. **AB**

Ocampo bares military "order of battle" in Southern Mindanao

Up to 110 persons in the Southern Mindanao Region are listed in the military's "order of battle" (OB), said Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo on May 18. Ocampo revealed the OB's existence as the International Solidarity Mission (ISM) presented the results of its five-day fact-finding journey in the last week of May on human rights violations in Southern Mindanao.

Ocampo said their copy of the "Order of Battle Validation Report for the 3rd Quarter of 2007" of the Philippine Army 10th ID came from a concerned soldier. There are similar "orders of battle" in other military divisions, he said.

Among those listed in the OB are church people, activists, legislators, lawyers, journalists and local politicians that the military considers as "enemies of the state". A partial list includes Joel Maglungsod of KMU-BAYAN who now sits in Congress as a representative of Anakpawis party; Felix Irag and Omar Bantayan of KMU; Rumualdo Basilio and Antonio Flores of KMP; Traquillano Goc-ong of the Farmers Association of Davao City; Edilberto Gonzaga of Transmission-PISTON; Corazon Espinosa of Samakana; Kelly Delgado of Karapatan; Jeppie Ramada and Joel Virador of BAYAN; and Luzviminda Ilagan of GABRIELA. Their organizations were maliciously cited in the military report. There are also 16 non-government organizations, as well as labor unions and federations listed in the OB.

Ocampo said the OB shows that under Oplan Bantay Laya, there is no distinction between the open, legal movement and the underground armed movement. This, he said, has led to the growing number of extrajudicial killings in Southern Mindanao. **AB**

Series of disasters in Compostela Valley mining areas

Residents of Compostela Valley have suffered a series of disasters brought about by mining operations in the area in the past months. Landslides have claimed a number of lives and injured hundreds of others. Thousands of residents have been forced to flee their homes. To cover up their culpability, the mining companies and the reactionary government have been blaming the landslides on the heavy rains and loose soil, and have even resorted to blaming the victims themselves.

On May 18, landslides occurred in two mining sites in Sitio Mangapispis, Barangay Napnapan, Pantukan, claiming the lives of 22 residents, wounding 23 others and leaving five victims missing. This is the biggest disaster ever recorded in the history of Mindanao.

Four months ago, a landslide also occurred in Sitio Diat Uno in the same barangay where a father and his son were killed. Pantukan town is located in the southern part of Compostela Valley province.

On September 6 and 7, 2008, two successive landslides also occurred in the barangay center of Masara, Maco town, claiming 30 lives and leaving 5,000 residents homeless. The disaster also destroyed 83 houses, two mine bunkhouses and the barangay hall. A year earlier, a similar incident also took place, causing the death of ten residents in the area.

In fact, three successive landslides occurred in the mining areas of Monkayo last year. In November 2008, three miners died in Sitio Bango, Barangay Ngan, Compostela. Two more landslides took place in Purok 17 and Sitio Dipo, Upper Ulip in Monkayo town the following day. As a result, five residents were killed and two others remain missing. In December, an-

other landslide took place in Mt. Diwata where 202 families or 960 residents were forced to flee their homes and 12 houses and four school buildings were destroyed.

People's resistance

After the series of landslides in Pantukan, residents, environmental advocates and church people demanded that Congress conduct an immediate investigation into the mining operations of Crew Minerals Inc. (CMI), a foreign mining firm. They urged Congress to ban big-time commercial mining operations in the area and demanded the immediate abrogation of the Mining Act of 1995, the law that permits such operations.

In October 2008, Bayan Muna representatives filed House Resolution 797 calling for a probe of the reactionary government's failure to implement environmental laws and put a stop to "irresponsible mining."

CMI has denied that its mining operations are the cause of landslides in the area and belied reports that these disasters occurred within its mining areas. The DENR and the Mines and Geosciences Bureau supported CMI's claims.

NPA investigation

A team of the New People's Army (NPA) was tasked to look into the real cause of the landslides in Masara.

Masara and other barangays are located within CMI's more than 2,000-hectare mining concession. The investigation revealed that CMI has denuded the

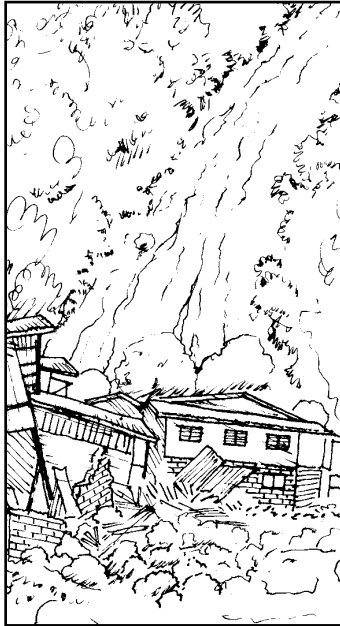
thick forests that used to surround the village. It has dug a deep well near the barangay and conducted its mining operations right near it.

CMI has also repeatedly evacuated residents of Barangay Masara and other barrios directly within their areas of operation. Landslides, however, also occurred in the relocation areas due to tremors from dynamite explosions in the course of constructing underground tunnels. Because the relocation sites for Masara residents still pose dangers, the victims have no choice but to transfer again to another area.

Foreign mining firms have long been extensively conducting excavations in Masara, which has resulted in the wanton destruction of mountains, the death of several streams and rivers and the denudation of forests. Before CMI, it was Apex Mining Inc. that operated in the area in the 1970s. In 2005, CMI acquired Apex's mining rights.

Since CMI started its operations, it has aggressively undertaken underground mining. Drilling operations have gone on without letup, with all the tunnels stretching 32 kilometers from end to end.

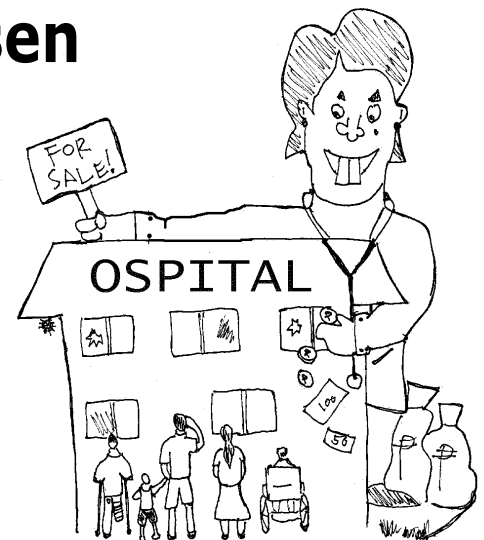
CMI's relentless tunnelling is due to its desire to reach its target of extracting 85,000 to 180,000 ounces of gold and 500,000 to 600,000 ounces of silver this year. It is also upgrading Apex's former processing plant so it can handle as much as 2,400 metric tons of ore daily, from its present capacity of only 500 metric tons daily. The CMI is hell-bent on hitting its target, despite the destruction wrought by its operations on the people and the environment. **AB**



Privatization and neglect worsen dismal health situation

Five out of ten Filipinos die without receiving medical attention. Twenty-one percent (21%) of these deaths are caused by pneumonia, diarrhea and tuberculosis—which are all highly preventable and treatable. There is only one doctor for every 25,000 patients. This is far below the international standard of one doctor for every 600 patients.

This abject situation is aggravated further by policies of the reactionary government that have led to the gross neglect of the health sector, salary cuts for health professionals working in public institutions, the drive to export Filipino doctors and nurses and the abolition of existing institutions providing free health services to the people.



Foremost among the policies that have led to deteriorating health services is the privatization of public hospitals through mergers and corporatization.

The decade-long implementation of the so-called Health Sector Reform Agenda (HSRA) has only reinforced the privatization and commercialization of health services, instead of improving the health sector.

As a result of the HSRA, many public hospitals have been forced to give up programs providing free services to the poor or simultaneously maintain private sections that provide services at commercial rates just to make money.

In 2005, the "FOURmula ONE for Health" program was launched, which cut funds for public hospitals. Government hospitals have since been forced to charge their patients higher fees, making health services even more of a commodity.

Along with this, the Arroyo regime has also launched its "medical tourism" program where foreigners are enticed to come to the Philippines to avail of medical services. To whet their interest, doctors prioritize the tourists' needs, especially in highly specialized hospitals.

The Arroyo regime is in the process of merging five hospitals under the Philippine Center for Specialized Health Care (PCSHC) in a systematic bid to attract medical tourists.

The PCSHC program calls for the merger of the National Kidney and Transplant Institute, Philippine Heart Center, Lung Center of the Philippines, Philippine Children's Medical Center and the East Avenue Medical Center purportedly to attain a more effective and coordinated delivery of services. In truth, the regime uses this as a pretext to reduce the number of health workers it employs and thereby reduce the funds needed by these hospitals.

The reactionary government has been allotting a very meager budget to the health sector. From ₱314 per person in 1990, the government has slashed the allotment down to only ₱144 per person in 2008. From 2.9% of the national budget in 1997, the Arroyo regime allotted only 1.5% for the health sector in 2006.

In stark contrast, the reactionary government has been raising its budgetary allotments for debt service and other non-productive expenses. From 1986-2007, the amount spent on debt interest payment was 13 times bigger than that budgeted for the people's health while the amount spent on defense was three times bigger.

AB



NPA offensives

Red fighters of the New People's Army (NPA) seized nine weapons of various caliber, killed 14 soldiers and wounded three enemy troops in tactical offensives launched in Davao, Compostela Valley and Negros in the past two weeks.

June 1. One soldier was killed and another wounded in an NPA ambush in Sitio Habana, Barangay Catigan, Toril, Davao City. The ambush took place at around 1:30 a.m. while elements of Task Force Davao were patrolling the area as part of the Barangay Defense System they are implementing.

May 31. The NPA meted out punishment on an operative of the 10th Military Intelligence Battalion under the 10th ID of the Philippine Army-Eastern Mindanao Command at Crossing Sasa Wharf, Km. 10, Barangay Sasa, Davao City. A .45 caliber pistol was confiscated by the Red fighters.

May 29. Four M16s and an M14 were seized in an attack by a platoon of the 3rd Pulang Bagani Company of the NPA on a squad of the 1102nd PNP Provincial Mobile Group (PMG-PNP) that serves as the security force of the Apex Mining Corporation in Barangay Masara, Maco, Compostela Valley. The policemen were unable to retaliate. The mine, which is owned by Crew Minerals Corp. was punished for continuing practices destructive to the environment. The 1102nd PMG-PNP is also a part of the Investment Defense Force (IDF), an armed group formed by the Arroyo regime to protect the interests of large mining and agri-business corporations and deprive poor peasants and Lumad of their economic rights and ancestral lands.

May 26. Seven fascist soldiers were killed in an ambush by Red fighters of the Rhyme Petalcorin Command of Guerrilla Front 27 in Barangay Mainit, Nabunturan, Compostela Valley. Troops from the





1102nd PMG, the PNP Special Action Group and elements of the Citizens' Armed Forces Geographical Unit (CAFGU) were patrolling the area when they were ambushed by the NPA. The following day, the 1001st Brigade of the 10th ID retaliated by sending airplanes and helicopters to bomb the area around the ambush site.

May 23. Three soldiers of the 11th IB of the 303rd Brigade were killed in an ambush by a squad of Red fighters under the Leonardo Panaligan Command (LPC- NPA) in Sitio Busay, Barangay Hilaitan, Guihulngan, Negros Oriental. The NPA seized three pistols.

The soldiers belonged to a platoon of the Reengineered Special Operations Team (RSOT) that operates in Barangay Trinidad, Guihulngan. This unit is responsible for a multitude of fascist crimes, including murdering a number of civilians in Barangay Panubigan, Canlaon City; illegally arresting a local peasant leader in Barangay Quintin Remo, Moises Padilla and five poor peasants from Asaran, Buenavista, Hima-maylan; threatening and detaining members of a fact-finding mission in Barangay Buenavista, Hima-maylan; threatening the masses, destroying their

crops and killing their livestock; forcing the masses to become members of the Barangay Defense System; filing trumped-up cases against innocent people and threatening and harassing them because they were asserting their right to assemble and air their grievances. The 11th IB also serves as the private army of Rep. Josie Limkaichong.

Meanwhile, in Compostela Valley, two CAFGU elements were killed by the NPA in a firefight in Barangay Awao, Monkayo.

May 24. S/Sgt. Rolan Maglangit was killed after he tried to escape from his NPA captors. Maglangit was arrested on May 22 at a checkpoint in Barangay Pasian, Monkayo, Davao. He was an intelligence operative of the rabidly criminal 36th IB based in Agusan del Sur and was facing cases of human rights violations.

May 22. Red fighters ambushed troops of the 25th IB in Barangay Baylo, Monkayo, Davao at around 10:30 a.m. The battalion commander, Lt. Col. Roberto Angcan, was seriously wounded in the neck. Simultaneous with this encounter, Red fighters harassed a detachment of the 72nd IB in Barangay Rizal in the same town. **AB**

NPA in Bicol reaps political and military victories

The New People's Army (NPA) in Bicol reaped political and military victories in tactical offensives launched by its Red fighters in the last two weeks of May. In a statement, NDF-Bicol spokesperson Ka Greg Bañares said the people were overjoyed by the powerful blows meted out by the people's guerrillas against the fascist henchmen of the US-Arroyo regime.

In Camarines Sur, the Eduardo Olbara Command of the NPA launched eight big and small tactical offensives from May 19 to 26. The Red Fighters attacked a detachment of the 22nd IB and CAFGU in Barangay Lubigan Junior, Sipocot town, seizing five carbines, four Garands, an M14 and two .45 cal. pistols, a Global Positioning System (GPS) device, uniforms and ammunition. The AFP incurred numerous casualties while there were no deaths on the side of the NPA despite the three defensive battles that took

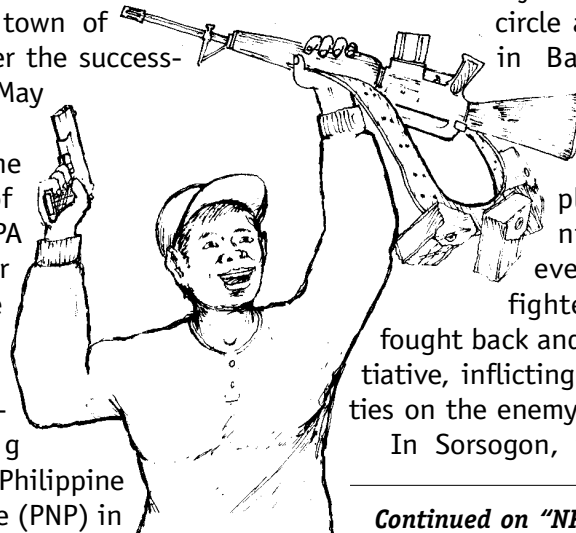
place in the town of Libmanan after the successful raid on May 19.

On the morning of May 21, an NPA platoon under the Jose Rapsing Command ambushed ten responding troops of the Philippine National Police (PNP) in

Barangay Real, Monreal town on the island of Ticao, Masbate. One policeman was killed and three others were wounded. The NPA confiscated several M16 magazines and ammunition and an M14.

Also in Masbate that same day, three elements of the 507th Provincial Mobile Group of the PNP were killed when they attempted to encircle an NPA platoon in Barangay Puting Bato, Esperanza. The firefight took place before nightfall. However, the Red fighters effectively fought back and seized the initiative, inflicting several casualties on the enemy.

In Sorsogon, the NPA under



Continued on "NPA..." on page 9

Lessons from the ambush in San Remigio, Antique

It was quite a shock for a squad from the 31st Division Reconnaissance Company (DRC) of the Philippine Army 3rd ID to be ambushed by the New People's Army (NPA) in Barangay Bulan-Bulan, San Remigio, Antique on the afternoon of April 4, 2008.

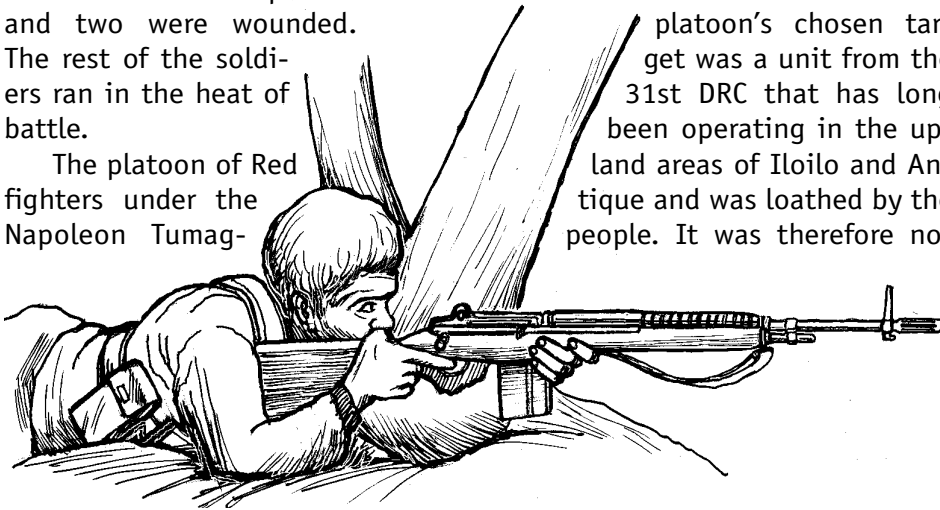
The soldiers were taken by surprise because the area was not a typical ambush site. Actually, that morning, the entire platoon had passed by that particular road and saw nothing that a group of guerrillas could use for concealment. They were nonetheless ambushed. Three of their troops were killed and two were wounded. The rest of the soldiers ran in the heat of battle.

The platoon of Red fighters under the Napoleon Tumag-

tang Command of the NPA in the Southern Front of Panay was able to launch a successful ambush through meticulous planning, the employment of appropriate tactics and the support of the masses.

Planning, preparation of forces and implementation of the tactical offensive. The

platoon's chosen target was a unit from the 31st DRC that has long been operating in the upland areas of Iloilo and Antique and was loathed by the people. It was therefore not



"NPA...", from page 8

the Celso Minguez Command seized a 9 mm pistol from an abusive engineer named Edgar Curativo (2nd District of the Department of Public Works and Highways) in Barangay Bagacay, Gubat on May 24. The disarming operation was conducted after numerous complaints by employees and residents in the area who were scared of the gun-toting engineer.

As a result of these tactical offensives, the NPA in the region added to their arsenal, raised their level of experience in coordination and fighting tactics and techniques and enhanced their ability to crush units of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and paramilitary groups.

No civilians were injured or killed in these encounters.

On the other hand, the tactical offensives belied arrogant claims by the 9th ID of the Philippine Army and the entire AFP that "you can count on the fingers of your hands" the remaining number of NPA guerrillas and that the revolutionary movement in the region is on a losing course and about to meet its downfall.

difficult to enlist the help of the masses in observing their route of operation and the activities within their detachment in Barangay Anigngalan. It was revealed that the unit practices counter-guerrilla tactics to avoid becoming a target of the NPA.

Based on the concrete information gathered, the command was able to come up with a plan and appropriate tactic: an ambush that would employ explosives and quick maneuvers simultaneous with rapid firing at the enemy.

The command then prepared the weapons and command-detonated explosives (CDX), the Red fighters and officers' personal needs, medicine and food supplies. They also prepared numerous punji sticks to achieve a breakthrough in the use of indigenous weapons against the superior forces of the enemy.

The Red fighters and officers underwent retraining, conducted a dry-run in organizing the platoon for blocking and assault maneuvers, seizing the enemy's firearms, and positioning the CDX team and reserve forces. They also enthusiastically conducted studies and presented cultural shows to raise the Red fighters' fighting spirit and their determination to win the upcoming battle.

Disciplined movements, element of surprise. In order to attain the highest element of surprise, the platoon command chose an ambush site that the enemy would never suspect because of the fields of low grass on either side of the road. To the enemy's mind, there was no way the NPA could conceal itself and wait in ambush in this area because the military always cut the grass to clear the surroundings. In this case, the soldiers would lower their guard as

they passed through the ambush site which was also a mere three kilometers from their detachment in Barangay Aningalan.

Over 30 Red fighters positioned themselves in an area far from the ambush site. But a small CDX team was secretly positioned on the side of the road. It is difficult to hide the footprints of a platoon-size force, but they were able to do this through the support of the masses and by exercising a high level of discipline in their movements. Because of this, they were able to sustain their watch over their target for a span of five days. There was no smoke, no noise or any other sign that could be noticed by the enemy or other elements passing through the road.

The platoon command also correctly calculated that before long, a relatively weaker enemy force that was preparing for an operation would return to the camp.

On the morning of April 4, an entire platoon of the 31st DRC marched by. The Red fighters let them through. At past 5:00 p.m., they saw that a squad from that platoon was arriving on foot to regroup with their detachment in Aningalan.

The firing began at around 5:45 p.m. The enemy was surprised when a bomb from the hidden CDX team exploded in their midst. The moment the explosives were discharged, the people's army's main assault force maneuvered quickly and in unison towards the road that was 10 to 15 meters away. They fired volleys of shots at the soldiers, neutralizing the enemy's retaliating fire. The other soldiers ran from the scene of battle after 15 minutes.

The Red fighters were able to seize two M16 rifles, about 400 rounds of ammunition, magazines and other military equipment. As the firefight ensued, an efficient communication system became important in effectively coordinating the maneuvers of the NPA platoon.

The explosives also played a huge role in paralyzing the enemy and the punji sticks helped make the enemy's retreat difficult.

Nightfall was favorable to the Red fighters' retreat. On the other hand, darkness was a problem for the enemy's reinforcements, who were only able to retrieve their casualties the following day.

This ambush demonstrated the development of the NPA's ability to launch basic tactical offensives despite the enemy's intense implementation of Op-lan Bantay Laya 2 and the steps it took to avoid ambushes, raids, sniping and harassment from the NPA. AB

(Excerpted from the March 2009 issue of Daba-Daba, the revolutionary mass newspaper in Panay.)



General Motors and Chrysler go bankrupt

In the span of a few months, two US car industry giants folded under the weight of their debts, enormous production expenses, plummeting sales and financial losses. The twin bankruptcies signified the worsening depression that has been bludgeoning the capitalist economy in the US and worldwide.

On June 1, General Motors, the largest automobile producer worldwide from 1931 to 2008 declared bankruptcy. The first to declare bankruptcy last April 30 was Chrysler LLC, the third largest automobile maker in the US.

GM, which has assets worth \$82.3 billion was the largest industrial corporation and the fourth largest of all the companies that went bankrupt in the entire history of the US. Chrysler which has assets valued at \$39.3 billion is the second largest industrial corporation in the US to fall and the seventh largest of all those that went bankrupt.

Before declaring bankruptcy, GM already had \$176.4 billion in debts. GM had already suffered \$88 billion in financial losses from 2005-2008. For years, it suffered reduced sales, which fell by as much as 30% in 2008. Its stocks were worth practically nothing before they were withdrawn from the market this June. Still hoping to save the company, the Obama government provided GM a \$4 billion loan at the end of 2008 and added another \$15.4 billion in early 2009. However, this was still not enough.

Aside from the US government, no one else was ready to lend GM any money. Under the terms of the bankruptcy agreement entered into by GM with the Obama government, the latter agreed to provide an additional \$33.3 billion loan in

exchange for 60% control of the "new GM". The federal government of Canada and the province of Ontario also lent money in exchange for 12% ownership of the company. Another

10% of the company will go to other creditors.

It is the





workers of GM who will be making the biggest sacrifices as per the terms of this agreement. For one, they will be deprived of their \$20 billion pension and health fund in exchange for a 17.5% share of the new company's stocks to be held by their union. Their wages will be frozen and even reduced, aside from having \$1.3 billion slashed annually from their health fund and other benefits.

An estimated 20,000 out of the 62,000 remaining GM workers in the US will be booted from the company between now and the end of the year. Another 26,000 of its employees in other countries will also get the boot. As many as 100,000 workers will lose their jobs with the shutdown of 2,400 car dealerships.

Chrysler has also entered into the same kind of agreement with the Obama government as a condition for declaring bankruptcy. Prior to this, its sales fell by 53% and it suffered a shortfall of \$8 billion in 2008 in addition to being already saddled with \$6.9 billion in debts to several large banks. In exchange for providing an additional \$8 billion loan on top of its initial \$4 billion loan, the US government will take over 8% of the company's assets. The Canadian government has also provided a \$2.7 billion loan in exchange for 2% of the company's assets.

Twenty percent of the company will also be sold to Fiat Group of Italy with the objective of incorporating the latter's technology in manufacturing cheaper smaller cars. Fiat could end up owning up to 51% of Chrysler if it is able to reimburse all the funds provided by the US government. It is expected to salvage Chrysler but the problem is that Fiat is also counted among

Overcapacity and overproduction of cars worldwide

The fall of GM and Chrysler as well as the plummeting sales and profits of many giant automobile companies in the US and worldwide are telltale signs of the depth of crisis resulting from several decades of overproducing cars. In the automobile industry, overproduction and excess productive capacity are several times greater than what the market could absorb.

Until the end of the 1990s, the international automobile industry was capable of producing more than 70 million cars per year. However, during that entire decade, actual yearly production was only 41.36 million (representing 28.64 million excess capacity). By the beginning of 2008, annual capacity had come to 94 million vehicles. However, actual production was only 52.94 million (representing 41.06 million excess capacity). Fourteen percent (14%) of these vehicles went unsold, however, and remain part of the mounting inventory.

The market has simply not expanded as fast as the growth of productive capacity. Currently, car sales worldwide are estimated to be at their lowest level in the past 34 years. In 2008, total sales fell by more than 11%—equivalent to 3.5 million vehicles (out of an estimated total sales of 45.7 million). Car sales in the US are expected to slide down further in 2009 to its lowest level in 30 years.

With so many automobile plants lying idle, many car companies have been forced to close down their factories and stop production altogether. The automobile industry in the US has had to let go of as much as 43.1% of its workforce (the equivalent of 560,000 employees) since 2000. As many as 200,000 more will be losing their jobs with the shutdown of an estimated half of the 51 automobile factories in the US in the coming years.

AB

the moribund companies of the international automotive industry.

As with GM, it is Chrysler's workers who will mainly be sacrificed in the company's bankruptcy deal with the US government. The agreement calls for Chrysler's remaining workers to suffer a 50% cut in wages and other benefits. Chrysler's longstanding \$10.6 billion debt will be cut in half, with the payment sourced from its workers' health and pension funds. The remaining half will be paid within 15 years. In exchange, the United Auto Workers will be given

55% of the stocks of the new Chrysler, which is a meaningless acquisition as it is the US government that has actual control over the company. The shareholdings will come to nought once majority ownership and decisive control over the company go to Fiat.

In the past two years, Chrysler retrenched 37,000 of its workers (37% altogether). More than 3,000 are scheduled to be laid off this year. Tens of thousands more will also lose their jobs once the company drops half of its suppliers and dealers.

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Kabataan Party lambasts CHed silence on tuition fee increase

REP. Raymond “Mong” Palatino of the Kabataan Party lambasted the silence of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) regarding higher tuition and other fees in colleges this school year.

Palatino said the National Union of Students in the Philippines reported that well-known universities and colleges in the country have raised tuition and other fees. For example, the University of the East raised miscellaneous fees by 5% and the Far Eastern University by 6%. Tuition fees at San Beda College have also gone up by 20% and by 15% at the Philippine School of Business and Arts. At the Cebu Doctors University and Northeastern Cebu Colleges, tuition fees went up by 5-6%.

At the University of Santo Tomas, the tuition fees of first to third year college students went up by 7% and 8.52% for fourth year students.

The rate of tuition fee increases doubled nationwide during the time of the Arroyo regime, according to Palatino. He said that tuition fees increased in the National Capital Region by 94.54% from the average of ₱439.59 up to the average of ₱855.20 per unit.

Palatino and Rep. Teddy Casiño of Bayan Muna have filed HB 2440 which calls for a three-year moratorium on student fee hikes.

Meanwhile, the Kabataan Party also launched the “Kabataan Balik-Eskwela” program this school year to receive complaints on tuition

fee hikes and other campus issues. Among the initial complaints received by “Kabataan Balik-Eskwela” are the ₱150 PTA fee being charged per student at the Justice Cecilia Muñoz-Palma High School and the ₱470 PTA fee being charged at the Culiati High School; the ₱140 workbook fee and ₱100 Red Cross being charged by the Quirino High School; as much as ₱400 in fees being charged by the New Era Public High School; and fees as high as ₱4,432 being charged by the University of the Philippines Integrated School.

The Kabataan Party also plans to file a resolution at the Lower House to have the Department of Education investigate and prevent the charging of such fees.