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Editorial

Profligacy and avarice

The impoverished and hungry people can no longer stomach the boundless greed, profligacy, arrogance, callousness and abuse of power of the ruling US-Arroyo regime.

Fanning the flames of their anger are exposés of how Arroyo and her 60-strong coterie squandered the nation's coffers on their latest US trip. They all thought that because they were so far away from the country, the people would never get wind of their unscrupulous behavior. They frittered away the people's money by staying in luxury hotels, riding in limousines and feasting in expensive restaurants for a series of celebrations of Gloria and Mike Arroyo's wedding anniversary. They were also celebrating their new imperialist master's agreeing at last to give notice and grant the audience that his pleading puppet has been asking for.

Adding fuel to the people's ire are recent disclosures of how Arroyo's wealth had ballooned since she took power in 2001, and how she has relentlessly been looking for ways to grow even richer, to the detriment of a more deeply impoverished people.

The convoluted tirade of justifications, attacks and coverups by her apologists and Malacañang stooges have only succeeded in stoking the people's fury.

The majority impoverished and hunger-stricken Filipinos can no longer believe that the US-Arroyo regime is after

their interests. The ruling regime can no longer convince those who have had to make do with grossly inadequate and substandard social services that their plight is due to a lack of government funds. And the mass of Filipinos are no longer surprised to know that Arroyo's open wealth has more than doubled and her hidden wealth has grown by even bigger proportions since she became president.

Whatever excuses, counter-attacks and gimmicks Malacañang concocts, it is the ruling regime's brazen avarice, profligacy, mendacity and evil that have made a searing impression on the people's minds. For them, Gloria Arroyo is another Imelda Marcos. They are beside themselves in anger and have launched protests against the greedy, immoral, callous and brutal rule of the reactionary and puppet regime.

Like the old democratic revolution whose outbreak was precipitated by the same decadent behavior of the monarchies of Europe in the 17th to 19th centuries, what the people have witnessed of the conduct of the would-be queen in Malacañang fires up the new democratic revolution that has been advancing throughout most of the archipelago. It fuels the struggle and determination of the revolutionary forces and the impoverished Filipino people to give their all in resisting and overthrowing the corrupt, avaricious, profligate, lying, abusive and repressive Arroyo regime. **AB**



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Arroyo clique hosts lavish feasts in US

The Arroyos and their huge coterie squandered millions of pesos during their latest US junket from July 30 to August 4. The highrolling and calous ruling clique did so in the face of reports that the Philippines is now reeling from the highest hunger and poverty incidence in its history and amid the grave economic crisis besetting the country and the entire world.

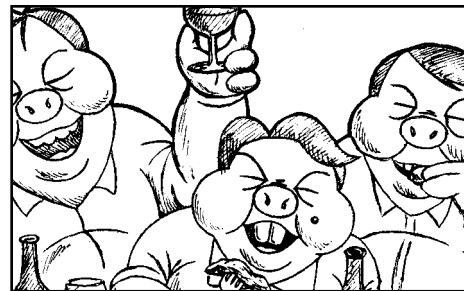
News of the Arroyo clique's extravagance came streaming in after an American newspaper reported on the group's lavish dinner at New York City's Le Cirque Restaurant, one of the most expensive dining places not only in the US but worldwide. Arroyo's gang blew up to \$20,000 (almost a million pesos) on expensive courses and several bottles of wine worth more than \$500 (P25,000.00) each. There were 15 of them who wine and dined that evening, putting the tab at P66,666 per person for that one dinner. The money spent on the lavish meal would have been enough for the food and upkeep for a day of 3,000 ordinary Filipino families of six members each.

After the exposé of the Arroyos' lavish spending at Le Cirque came news of another expensive meal, this time at Bobby Van's Steakhouse in Washington D.C. on July 30 where they spent \$15,000 or P750,000 for lunch. A woman with

a bagful of dollars reportedly paid the tab. The woman—no other than Medy Poblador—is the Arroyos' girl Friday who takes care of all the couple's needs that require special handling, including their whims and caprices. It was Poblador who also settled the bill for the Le Cirque dinner.

Subsequent reports indicate that Arroyo's group actually had lavish meals at several other expensive restaurants every single day they were in the US.

The Arroyo clique not only frittered away huge amounts of money on meals. They also had luxurious accommodations, staying at the likes of the Willard Hotel in Washington D.C where a suite costs up to \$4,159 a night. In New York, they stayed at the posh Waldorf Astoria where the Arroyo couple's suite cost \$4,100 a night. As for the 60 other congressmen and other hangers on,



they each stayed in rooms costing \$990 a night. Each member of the coterie also rented limousines for the three-day stay.

Arroyo's group admitted spending a total of P37 million or an average of more than P6 million a day in the US. The figure does not include the expenses of cabinet members and the 27 congressmen who accompanied Arroyo on her trip.

Arroyo's group spent the most for transportation (P13 million), followed by hotel accommodations (P8 million). They also spent up to P6 million on tips.

At the same time, news leaked on Arroyo's plans to purchase two jet planes worth P1.2 billion each. The plans were cancelled after a barrage of criticisms that centered not only on Arroyo's penchant for luxuries but because such a purchase signified her intentions of clinging to power.

Excuses. When news of the Arroyo clique's lavish feasts in the US first hit the headlines locally, Malacañang's knee-jerk reaction was to blame "communist front organizations" for circulating such "rumors." After being lambasted by so many quarters, however, the Palace's apologists decided to make all sorts of convoluted excuses.

First, they nonchalantly said that Le Cirque was a spontaneous choice because it was nearby and happened to be open on the night of July 31. What they had was a simple dinner, nothing lavish, they claimed. The fact is that Arroyo was in a hurry to reach New York after her audience with US Pres. Barack



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Obama so she could make it to the previously arranged dinner at Le Cirque. They had made reservations two days before.

But hit by so many brickbats for her extravagance, Arroyo looked for persons who could take the heat for her. Her apologists claimed that they were merely invited to dinner by Rep. Martin Romualdez who footed the bill. Romualdez, however, kept on dodging the media. He later denied having paid for the dinner and pointed to his wealthy New York-based architect-brother as their sponsor. His architect-brother, however, did not join them for dinner, and could not be reached for verification.

Rep. Danilo Suarez decided to take the heat for the lavish lunch at Bobby Van's by claiming to have paid the bill. To date, no one has come forward with claims of having footed the bill at the other expensive restaurants Arroyo and her group went to.

Overshooting the budget for foreign travels. Arroyo found her-

self deeper in hot water when reports came out that she had already spent P3 billion on her foreign trips (P1.6 billion more than the allowable budget) from 2003 to 2008 and spent the most for this purpose this year.

Malacañang claimed that the House of Representatives footed the bill for their latest trip, but House Speaker Prospero Nograles denied this. He nonetheless tried to save Arroyo's skin by saying that the US government most likely took care of most of the expenses—which the US embassy promptly denied.

In the end, Malacañang admitted to having paid the expenses only for Sens. Miriam Santiago and Lito Lapid and for Nograles. Nograles has not mentioned who paid the balance but said that he would be asking each congressman who joined the US trip to cough up P300,000. The congressmen retorted that if they would be paying, they plan to source the money from public funds, claiming that the trip was a working visit and not a jun-

ket.

Protest actions. Some 200 members of the League of Filipino Students, Anakbayan and Student Christian Movement staged a lightning rally at Malacañang's Gate 7 to condemn the profligate regime. They cried "Spend for services, not luxuries!" Twenty students were arrested and beaten up after policemen violently dispersed the rallyists.

The Kalipunan ng Damayang Mahihirap (KADAMAY) also launched a protest action in Mendiola on August 17 while members of Anakpawis and Kilusang Mayo Uno held a picnic on August 11 in protest of Arroyo's lavish dinner. The Kabataan Party dispatched a mobile propaganda team (MPT) on August 10 that went around canteens at the University Belt to show students taking their lunch how much Arroyo spent for her meals compared to their meager lunch money. The Kabataan Party's MPT gained the sympathy not only of the students but of the canteen owners. AB

Arroyo family grows richer by leaps and bounds

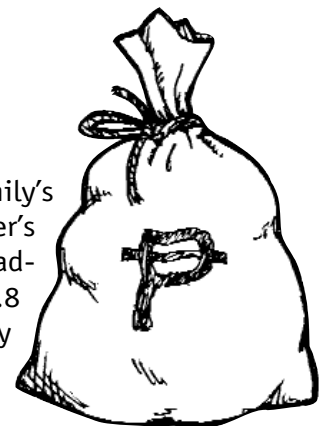
Gloria Arroyo and her family have expanded their holdings with phenomenal speed. From total assets of P66.8 million when she first took her seat in the Palace in 2001, the bogus president's net worth skyrocketed to P143.54 million or more than doubled by 2008. Arroyo added an average of more than P11 million yearly to her assets—which taken together is 20 times her salary of P45,000 per month.

If one were to use as a starting point Arroyo's declared assets of P6.73 million in 1992 when she first became senator, her wealth has grown by a whopping 2,000%.

Arroyo has used her power to amass properties and other assets, enhance their value and conceal them through various means.

A recent exposé revealed that Arroyo was using government funds and machinery to build infrastruc-

ture projects near her family's properties to raise the latter's value spectacularly. Five road-building projects worth P44.8 million were carried out by the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) from 2004 to 2007 in the remote corner of Barangay Pulo, San Rafael, Bulacan where Gloria's husband Mike Arroyo owned just under three hectares of land. With the area now "developed" and with some arm-twisting thrown in for good measure, he was able to raise the property's value and sell it for P1,400 per square meter in 2008 even as the prevailing price in the area was only P100-250 per square meter. Arroyo made a stunning P41.48 million from selling the property which he bought in 1996 for on-



ly P100,000.

Of their various pieces of real estate, they listed only six valued at just P5.7 million. They own many more pieces of residential and commercial real estate that are undeclared, including several houses and lots in the US under the name of their front company LTA-USA and numerous other lots, houses, plantations and fishponds in the Philippines under many other names, including various front foundations. There are also properties under the name of Mike's brother Rep. Ignacio Arroyo. The houses and lots they own in La Vista Subdivision in Quezon City and in Forbes Park in Makati have long remained undeclared. There is also no declaration of the millions of pesos worth of jewelry, race horses and other assets owned by the Arroyos.

Neither have they declared the millions of dollars of profits amassed by Mike and Gloria Arroyo through the sale of their lots, houses and condominium units in the US. The latest of these is the \$247,000 they garnered in 2002 after selling a lot they bought in San Francisco, California for \$1,428,000 in 1999.

While it is against the law for government officials to have financial interests in private companies, Arroyo holds many shares in such corporations. Now Malacañang is presenting the lame excuse that since these financial interests are not held by Gloria Arroyo herself but by her husband Mike Arroyo and that the other interests are owned and managed by her children, they do not represent a conflict of interest with her presidency. On paper, she has declared that the value of her corporate shares has grown from P55 million in 2006 to P62 million in 2007 to P110 million in 2008. But all she has listed is the purchasing value of these assets. The shares are actually worth far more in terms of their current market value.

A recent study by the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism (PCIJ) reveals that the Arroyos are using the La Vista Investments and Holdings and 14 other front companies to conceal many of their other investments and assets. This is apart from their newly established secret companies registered in the name of Arroyo crony Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco. The Arroyos also have investments and funds stashed away in banks and companies in Dubai and in various countries in the Caribbean, which is the reason why the Arroyo family often makes secret trips to these places.

There are many more mysteries yet to be uncovered on how the family currently occupying Malacañang has miraculously expanded its assets. The people are already beside themselves with anger given the ever growing gap between their abject poverty and the Arroyos' cornucopia of riches. Succeeding revelations will further fuel their rage. **AB**



NPA seizes 15 rifles in Davao del Norte without firing a single shot

The US-Arroyo regime's Oplan Bantay Laya 2 (OBL2) campaign suffered another piercing blow in separate tactical offensives launched by the New People's Army (NPA) in various corners of the archipelago.

The most outstanding of these firefights was a raid in Asuncion, Davao del Norte where Red fighters of the Armando Dumandan Command (ADC) were able to seize 15 automatic rifles (six M14s, one M16 and eight Garands) without firing a single shot. The five-minute raid was launched against the 72nd IB detachment in Barangay Napungas at noon of August 9. The NPA also confiscated a communications radio.

As a coverup for this defeat, Maj. Gen. Reynaldo Mapagu, chief of the 10th ID of the Philippine Army accused the NPA of violating the protocols of war by allegedly using a civilian as a human shield in this operation.

The military official's accusation does not have an iota of truth, said Ka Marcela Valiente, spokesperson of the ADC-NPA. The civilian they were probably referring to is the commander of a detachment in the neighboring barrio of San Miguel who was arrested at an NPA checkpoint and brought along when the detachment in Napungas was raided, she said.

None of the military and paramilitary troops was wounded because none of them fought back, the spokesperson explained.

Following are other reports received by *Ang Bayan*:

August 17. An NPA unit under the Herminio Alfonso Command (HAC-BHB) raided the Traveller's Inn and Restaurant in Kitaotao, Bukidnon to confiscate an Uzi submachine gun and other firearms from the Nieves family, owners of the establishment.



The family was using the firearms to terrorize and threaten farmers living nearby. After this, the Red fighters also ambushed reinforcements from the PNP and 29th IB at around 2:00 p.m. in Barangay Kipolot.

Meanwhile, the HAC-NPA belied the 10th ID's accusations that the Red fighters stole P22,270 from the Nieveses. The HAC-NPA clarified that the NPA strictly abides by the policy of confiscating only firearms and other military equipment used in counterrevolutionary and anti-people activities. It does not touch money and other personal belongings of persons and establishments that are targets of tactical offensives.

August 16. Three soldiers were killed on the spot and many others were wounded when an NPA unit in Aurora ambushed troops of the 71st IB operating in Sitio Upper Diayo, Barangay Galintuja, Maria Aurora, Aurora at around 7:00 a.m. No injuries were sustained on the side of the Red army.

To avoid being publicly humiliated, the 7th ID purposely hid the incident from the media.

In Albay, a soldier who was a member of the 49th IB's RSOT was shot in the hip by an NPA sniper while he was cooking breakfast at the barangay hall in Barrio Cagui-ba, Camalig at around 6:30 a.m. The soldier had no idea where the sniper was positioned because the barangay hall was surrounded by mountains.

August 13. Four soldiers of the 67th IB were wounded, including 1Lt. Elizalde Calayo when they were ambushed by Red guerrillas of Front 15 in San Isidro, Bagan-ga, Davao Oriental. The soldiers were carrying out a military operation in Barangay Marikit in Bagan-ga when their military vehicle was ambushed. AB

NPA-Leyte continues to defeat OBL2

Red fighters of the Mt. Amandewin Command (New People's Army-Leyte) launched seven consecutive and successful military actions against Philippine Army troops from June 8 to July 9. Ten soldiers were killed and many more wounded, and several weapons seized from the encounters. There were no casualties on the NPA side.

These military actions bely claims by the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) that the NPA has been eradicated on the island.

The NPA launched these armed actions in response to massive military operations conducted by the 19th and 52nd IB and special forces under the 8th ID-PA in the towns of Baybay, Burauen, Lapaz, MacArthur and Albura since June. In addition to reinforcements from the CAFGU, the enemy was also equipped with two helicopters, 105 mm howitzers and armored personnel carriers.

The following are initial reports from NPA-Leyte:

July 9. Intelligence operative Cpl. Nelson Vancunawa was punished in a special NPA operation in Barangay Upper Sugod, Carigara town.

July 2. A soldier was killed and another wounded in a tactical offensive in Barangay Cagbana, Burauen.

June 28. A soldier was killed and many more wounded in an encounter between AFP troops and NPA guerrillas.

June 25. A soldier was killed and an undetermined number wounded in an NPA harassment operation in Barangay Bunga, Baybay.

June 20. Two soldiers were killed in an NPA tactical offensive in Barangay Bunga.

June 13. A soldier was killed in a harassment operation in Barangay Cagbana, Burauen.

June 8. A soldier was killed in an NPA harassment operation in Barangay Bunga.

Aside from the casualties sustained by the AFP from the NPA's military actions, two more soldiers were killed and five were wounded when the fascist troops had a mis-encounter. An enemy column that had become disoriented due to the NPA's attacks detached from its main military unit and got mixed up with another group of soldiers. The confused enemy troopers ended up firing at each other.

According to the Efen Martires Command (NPA-Eastern Visayas), demoralization is sweeping the ranks of the 8th ID's troops because of the NPA's military actions. This, despite their massive show of force. With their operations disrupted, the soldiers prefer to confine themselves in the villages for fear of sustaining even more casualties. Meanwhile, morale is high among the NPA, the peasant masses and allies due to the revolutionary victories gained.

The victories of the Mt. Amandewin Command in Leyte prove that guerrilla warfare that enjoys mass support can overcome the allout war being waged by the Arroyo regime under OBL2. AB

Peace talks in danger of being scuttled

The Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) is insincere in implementing the peace talks. National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) peace panel chair Luis Jalandoni cited, among others, the government's violation of agreements previously arrived at by both parties during informal talks held at The Hague on June 15 on the immediate release of political detainees who will be participating in the peace talks.

Currently, only two NDFP consultants have been released by the GRP—Randall Echanis and Elizabeth Principe. Principe was released not because of the aforementioned agreement but because of her legal victories against the trumped-up charges filed against her in various courts, added Jalandoni. Jalandoni also said that the terms of Echanis' release were

malicious because his freedom was only limited to six months or for as long as the peace talks continue.

The GRP is not only dillydallying with the release of the detained consultants. In actuality, it has not ceased surveilling and abducting the NDFP's consultants. It illegally arrested NDFP consultant Alfredo Mapano on August 1 in Cagayan de Oro City.

For as long as the GRP shows insincerity in implementing the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees which provides safe passage to all participants in the peace negotiations, it cannot be sincere in holding the actual talks. The NDFP is demanding the release of 22 negotiators and political detainees as part of preparations for the resumption of formal peace talks in Oslo scheduled from August 28 to September 5. **AB**

Catandunganon folk oppose mining by Arroyo crony

THE people of Catanduanes are up in arms against plans by a company owned by Arroyo crony Enrique Razon Jr. to mine P15.6 billion worth of coal in the province. Led by Bishop Manolo A. de los Santos of the Diocese of Virac, Catandunganon folk lambasted the government's awarding of a 7,000-hectare concession to Monte Oro Resources Energy Inc. (Morei) and plans to grant the company another 8,000 hectares.

The people of Catanduanes warned of the damage that will be caused by mining activities in the forests especially in the towns of San Andres, Caramoran, Panganiban and Viga which are covered by the project. There are only 60,000 hectares of forest left on the island.

The revolutionary movement expressed its solidarity with the people opposed to the project. In a statement, NDF-Bicol spokesperson Ka Greg Bañares said that there is widespread belief that Razon is only fronting for the Arroyos who are the true owners of Morei. He said that only the Arroyo clique will benefit from the billions of pesos of profit from mining in the province. **AB**

NDFP-Negros assails local peace talks scheme

"Same old tune." This is what NDFP-Negros spokesperson Ka Frank Fernandez said of the so-called localized peace talks being pushed by Gov. Isidro Zayco of Negros Occidental. In a statement issued on August 17, Fernandez said that Zayco's scheme is tantamount to sabotaging the resumption of peace talks between the NDFP and GRP scheduled to take place in Norway.

Governor Zayco's implementation of "localized peace talks" and grant of "amnesty to rebels" shows that he is not interested in attaining a genuine and just peace and resolving the roots of the raging civil war in the Philippines, said the NDF-Negros spokesperson.

The governor's only objective, said Fernandez, is for the revolutionary forces in Negros to capitulate so he and his clique could freely continue their domination of the island's economy and politics. Aside from Zayco, the other members of the ruling clique in Negros are the Arroyo, Cojuangco, Marañon and Teves families.

Fernandez moreover said that Zayco was using his position as governor to push the psywar program of the Office of the Presidential Assistant on the Peace Process (OPAPP) whose components are "localized peace talks" and "amnesty".

The revolutionary leader also scoffed at the recent disbursement by the Philippine Army and the OPAPP of P20,000 to each of the more than 300 fake "rebel surrenderees". He said this was merely an operation to milk kickbacks from government funds. **AB**

NPA in Iloilo declares temporary ceasefire

The New People's Army is implementing a 15-day cessation of military offensives in the town of Tubungan, Iloilo to facilitate the conduct of rescue and relief operations for victims of a landslide. The ceasefire was announced in a statement issued by Ka Ariston Remus, spokesperson of the Napoleon Tumagtang Command of the NPA (NTC-NPA) in southern Iloilo and Antique in Panay.

The NTC-NPA ordered all units operating in this area to temporarily stop initiating military actions from August 10 to 25. This order was issued to express the revolutionary movement's sympathy with

the Tubunganon people who have suffered much from the calamity that has befallen them. On the other hand, the NPA units were reminded also to maintain alertness in defending and preserving themselves in case the AFP should traitorously attack them.

More than 2,000 residents began to flee on August 9 from the villages of Igtuble, Igpahu and Molina in Tubungan town. The landslide took place in the upland areas of Tubungan on August 6 after almost a week of continuous rain. Many crops, fields and livestock were destroyed after being buried in tons of mud and boulders from

the mountains. Forty houses were reportedly in ruins.

Ka Ariston Remus added that the victims were dismayed because government officials and agencies, including the Philippine Army 301st Brigade and 3rd ID who came scurrying after the landslide, acted too late on what has been a longtime problem. The residents have been in a precarious situation since July 2008 after the destruction wrought by typhoon Frank. In fact, they have long been demanding that the Tubungan local government evacuate them to safer ground in order to avoid an imminent disaster.

The NTC-NPA promised to help the victims to the best of its ability. AB

Honoring the martyrs of Northeastern Mindanao

The following was excerpted from the statement of Ka Maria Malaya, spokesperson of the National Democratic Front-Northeastern Mindanao Region (NEMR) on the occasion of Martyrs Day in NEMR on August 9. This day is also the 15th death anniversary of Fr. Frank "Ka Migo" Navarro, a Catholic priest who became a renowned revolutionary leader in the region.

The victories achieved in the armed struggle, agrarian revolution and united front building in NEMR have been nourished with the blood of revolutionary martyrs. Instead of being weakened from their loss, the armed revolution has grown stronger because the lessons that have been learned from the martyrs' lives and struggle have all contributed to the further advance of the revolution.

The martyrs' loyal service to the people have become models for the Red fighters even though this cost them their lives. Their boundless service and solidarity with the oppressed and exploited people inspire the youth, new Red fighters all the revolutionary forces.

Experience has shown us that for every comrade or Red fighter who falls, there will be many more who will stand up and bear arms in the armed struggle.

Today is the day we celebrate the memory of all Red fighters in NEMR who gave their lives for the rev-

olution. This commemoration is also in honor of all living revolutionaries serving the people and the revolution.

Today we also commemorate the 15th death anniversary of Fr. Frank "Ka Migo" Navarro, a great revolution-

ary martyr. We remember this in the midst of the intense repression of our Lumad brothers and sisters in the area where Ka Migo's political consciousness was awakened and where he joined the New People's Army. The piercing oppression, exploitation and trampling of the human rights of the Lumad in Lianga, San Agustin, Marihatag and Tago, Surigao del Sur that he witnessed challenged him to join the armed revolutionary struggle. Ka Migo died a genuine people's warrior in the heart of Andap Valley which is the ancestral land of the Lumad people in NEMR.

Today, let us pay tribute to the martyrs of the revolution along with dedicating our whole lives to the armed struggle until victory is won. AB





Ka Jessie, barrio cadre and martyr

On June 14, a resident of Baryo Bag-as passed away and needed to be buried at the earliest opportunity because there were no embalming facilities in the area. His village mates marched with his coffin towards the small patch of coconut grove he and his family owned. The whole family was there—his brothers and sisters, his wife and children.

From a distance, it appeared as if a simple burial was taking place. But up close, this was no ordinary funeral but a special salute to a village mate whose whole life was lived in service to them and the revolution.

The air was filled with sobs and weeping while the whole barrio paid tribute to Ka Jessie, a member of the local branch of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP). The red flag of the CPP was draped on his coffin. The entire local party branch and members of the local chapter of the Pambansang Katipunan ng mga Magbubukid (PKM) were present. More than a hundred attended the tribute.

The tribute started with the singing of the Internationale. In the barrio, as well as in the other neighboring villages, almost all of the residents' collective activities always start with the singing of the Internationale. They are quite familiar with this song just as they are familiar with the song Lupang Hinirang. This was followed by other songs, poems with movement and interpretative dances prepared in honor of the late comrade. The

songs were tribute songs that told of the importance of the lives of comrades who have passed away and of how the revolution will be carried on by those they left behind.

His siblings, his comrades from the local party branch and members of local party branches in other localities contributed messages. His wife and children were unable to speak due to the intensity of their grief. However, all of them united to carry on the revolution.

After the cultural tribute, the hammer and sickle sewn onto the red flag was removed before the red fabric was wrapped around Ka Jessie's body. The symbols were made of paper cut from a piece of cardboard while the red fabric was a curtain that belonged to one of their village mates. The symbols were placed under his coffin. This practice became a regular part of the tributes because of the barrio's experience with AFP soldiers digging up isolated graves they chance upon during their operations because their suspicion that these are graves of Red fighters.

The Party members and revolutionaries also use this opportunity to pay tribute to the other revolutionary martyrs who served their barrio.

The funeral was a coordinated activity of the local branch. Ka Jessie's collective planned the tribute and secretly

passed word of this to their barrio-mates, neighboring villages and other comrades in the area. They first made sure that there were no military operations taking place that day to ensure the security of all those attending.

Local cadre

Ka Jessie died of colitis, a serious intestinal ailment. The NPA medical team operating in the area did its best to treat him but because the medicine he needed was so expensive, he was unable to sustain medication. Also because of poverty, he was forced to work his farm even though he was ill.

Ka Jessie was a poor peasant. He joined a revolutionary mass organization in 1977 and worked as a fulltime revolutionary in 1979. In 1980, he married a barrio lass and decided to stay and serve the revolution in the village. He and his wife became members of revolutionary organizations in the locality. His wife is a member of the Makabayang Kilusan ng Bagong Kababaihan or MAKIBAKA while both of them became members of PKM. Their five children are also members of the Kabataang Makabayan and PKM. One of their children is also a member of the Bandilang Pula, a cultural group in the barrio.

Ka Jessie actively and unwaveringly worked for the revolution. Militia work was one of his strengths. He could be counted on at whatever time he was needed, especially when it came to matters of security. Among the responsibilities he carried out was scouting the area for the NPA, serving as their guide and maintaining communication lines during times of emergency. He also participated in tactical offensives.



He was always able to balance his tasks and was not limited by particular personal problems. He was industrious and gave great importance to bearing and delivering supplies to the NPA. There was a time when he served as special liaison officer between two Party provincial units.

As a member of PKM, he was active in improving production in the barrio, especially in communal production fields of which a share was given to NPA comrades. His morale was not easily diminished even during times when some members of his collective wanted to quit. He was reliable at all times.

Even when he became ill, his number one regret was the loss of his physical ability to help and be part of the implementation of the Party branch's tasks. At times he would see some residents pass by carrying supplies needed by the Red fighters. He sadly said, "If only I weren't sick, I could still join them".

Ka Jessie was a good leader and collective member. He was warm-hearted towards his comrades in the branch and to the whole community in general. There were times he would be carried away with emotion in pursuing a point, especially when he was in the right, but he was quick to admit his weaknesses and was always ready to criticize himself. He did not harbor any grudges.

Ka Jessie was a good father and husband. He worked hard to meet the needs of his family. He was anxious when his children had nothing to eat, especially the little ones. But he was good at balancing this with his work and responsibilities in the local branch and the revolutionary movement.

His relatives were convincing him to sell their small piece of land or carabao so he could afford medical treatment. But he would not hear of it because he was thinking of the long term means of livelihood of his children.

Martyr of the revolution

Ka Jessie as well as all the other party cadres like him in the locality deserve to be given tribute. They gave their lives and even their families for the advancement of the revolution. He and other local cadres like him are the key to advancing the revolution to the next level. His life and the experience of the local branch teach us that there are many problems that can and should be resolved by the villagers themselves. Thus, they become more able to help the Red fighters.

Everyone should learn from Ka Jessie's open and unwavering service to his fellow villagers and the entire revolutionary movement. Though he and others like him have passed away, this is their legacy to their families, barriomates, comrades in the mass organizations and the entire revolutionary movement. **AB**

This account was the result of exchanges between the Ang Bayan staff and members of the local branch of the CPP in Baryo Bag-as. The local branch submitted a report on the tribute which they further enriched through correspondence with the staff. The AB staff thanks the whole CPP branch in Baryo Bag-as. This article is also in honor of all members of other local Party branches throughout the country.

Tandag evacuees still unable to return home

The Manobo and Mandaya Lumad folk who had to leave their homes due to intense militarization in Andap Valley, Surigao del Sur continue to suffer. They are currently cramped in makeshift shelters within the compound of Bishop Nereo Odchimar's official residence in Tandag, Surigao del Sur. Several hundred of the 1,700 evacuees who came from the hinterland villages of Lianga, Tago and San Agustin are reportedly ill and hungry due to the shortage of medical and food supplies. Everyday, more and more of the evacuees succumb to various ailments. Most of the victims are children.

The evacuees are still unable to return home because the Philippine Army 401st Brigade continues to turn a deaf ear to the Lumad's demand that the soldiers leave their communities which they have occupied since intense military operations began several weeks ago. Sixty to 90 soldiers from the 58th IB invaded their communities in June and have been coercing the Lumad men to join the Task Force Gantangan-Bagani Force and carry arms. The military has threatened anyone who refuses to be conscripted into the paramilitary group.

The military has also been imposing a food blockade, requiring residents to purchase no more than five *gantang* (approximately three liters dry measure) of rice per family per day.

Gabriela Women's Party Rep. Luzviminda Ilagan recently visited the evacuees. They explained to her that they were





forced to flee their homes because the military has been indiscriminately strafing their communities and dropping bombs in the upland villages of Andap Valley. Ilagan promised to investigate in Congress military officers who continue to ignore the evacuees' vehement demand for an immediate stop to the militarization of Andap Valley. **AB**

Cebu activist granted writ of amparo

The Supreme Court (SC) granted a *writ of amparo* to Paz Silva, a Cebu-based council member of Karapatan-Central Visayas. Silva demanded that the military and police stop pressuring and intimidating her.

The high court also ordered the Court of Appeals (CA) to hear Silva's petition last August 18. The CA was required to resolve the case within ten days after receiving the Supreme Court's order.

In her petition, Silva said that officers of the Philippine Army 79th IB and the Philippine National Police in Negros Oriental have been systematically and maliciously accusing her of murder and other crimes in the province.

The human rights activist testified that military agents who are constantly tailing her have been trying to terrorize her. She has received malicious text messages and has been slapped with trumped-up charges involving the death of a soldier.

Silva said the military and police have continued to hound her even after the Dumaguete City Prosecutor's Office dismissed last June 15 the cases filed against her. **AB**

Civilians injured in mortar explosion

NINE civilians were wounded when the AFP exploded mortar shells near the Makasendig Elementary School in the town of Pikit, North Cotabato on August 6. Eight of the victims were children. The mortar attack came from the 58th IB which was targeting fighters of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

Bantay Ceasefire identified the victims as Sitie Ansa, 35, and eight children. The wounded were brought to the Bahay Kalinga Health Center in Sta. Catalina Parish and to the Cotabato Regional Hospital. **AB**

Terror battalion wreaks havoc in Rizal

The 16th IB—dubbed as the 2nd Infantry Division's (2nd ID) terror battalion—is sowing fear among the people of Rizal province. Its list of human rights violations includes terrorizing youth and students and illegally arresting and detaining innocent civilians.

This terror battalion has relentlessly committed human rights violations throughout the province of Rizal especially in the past six months, said Arman Guerrero, spokesperson of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines in the province (NDFP-Rizal).

In a statement issued on August 7, Guerrero said that the province's upland villages have become virtual military garrisons where AFP troops perform executive and legislative functions and even serve as judges. Not satisfied with that, military troops especially the RSOT have been descending on the urban poor communities of Antipolo City, Rodriguez and San Mateo.

Presently, according to Guerrero, the RSOT is launching military operations even within elementary and high schools. As they do in the mountainous villages, the RSOTs have been turning day care centers, barangay halls and elementary and high school facilities into command posts and detachments. They have disrupted the normal run of the students' lives, added the NDFP-Rizal spokesperson.

Because of the failure of their counterrevolutionary OBL1 and OBL2, the AFP has resorted to the desperate measure of capturing members of the New People's Army (NPA) who are on medical leave and are being treated in hospitals. A stark example is the illegal arrest and imprisonment of Rose Ann Gumanoy and Marilyn Anayat, who were hors d' combat and undergoing medical treatment when arrested by AFP operatives.

Innocent civilians and former members of the NPA who have long lived quiet lives as civilians are also being arrested. Husband and wife Ramil Cardinal and Recy Joy Menorca, along with their one year old child were illegally arrested and detained and are being pressured into issuing statements against the revolutionary movement. The military has done the same to Juli Saytomo, Rodel "Bogting" Perez, Gumanoy and Anayat.

Because of the 2nd ID's desperation to destroy the revolutionary movement, particularly in Rizal, it would not be surprising if in the coming days, the military's psywar experts present former NPA members and innocent civilians as "rebel surrenderees", said Guerrero. Even so, this scheme is bound to fail.



In relation to the Arroyo regime's avowed readiness to resume peace negotiations, the NDFP-Rizal demanded that the regime fulfill the following as proof of its sincerity: release Marilyn Anayat and hand her over to her relatives; release husband and wife Ramil Cardinal and Recy Joy Menorca and their one year old child; and stop human rights violations in Rizal. **AB**

Human rights violations in Leyte and Samar

Due to the military's failure to rout the revolutionary movement in Eastern Visayas, the Philippine Army 8th Infantry Division (8ID-PA) is carrying out brutal military operations that are victimizing numerous civilians.

In Leyte. The military has banned residents from going to their farms in 16 barrios in the towns of Barauen, Lapaz, MacArthur and Baybay. The few that have been allowed to do so should not go farther than 30 meters from their homes.

The military has limited the purchase of rice from two to three *gantang* (approximately three liters dry measure) only for each family per day. Soldiers conducting operations destroy houses they happen to pass by and uproot the peasants' crops. Several civilians have been arrested and beaten up, detained and subjected to interrogation at the military camps, and forced to serve as guides during operations. Upland areas of these towns are being mercilessly bombed and strafed using 105 mm cannons and two helicopter gunships.

The military has forced residents of Barangay Cagbana and Barangay Lanawan to flee towards the Burauen town center. The military, in cahoots with Burauen Mayor Fe Renomeron, has been spreading the canard that the residents who have evacuated from the two barrios are NPA surrenderees.

In Samar. On June 4, operating troops of the 34th IB mauled

Juanito Dacles, 39, council member of Barangay San Andres, Motiong; and Prudencio Gabiana, 48. At 7:15 a.m., Dacles was suddenly picked up by the military while working on his farm. He was brought to his hut and beaten. His legs were whacked with a piece of wood until they broke. Not satisfied, the soldiers even stole Dacles' machete and wallet.

The military also picked up Gabiana from his farm. They kicked him in the stomach until he urinated from the intense pain. They threatened to kill him if he did not spill the names of the NPA members that pass through the area. The soldiers pointed two M16 rifles at Gabiana while subjecting him to interrogation.

Meanwhile, the military arrested without warrant three barangay captains from Samar on February 10. The victims were Marito Igdalino of Barangay Pusongan, Motiong; Jemie Caburubyas of Barangay Angyap, Motiong; and Renato Fabilar of Barangay Tutubigan, Paranas.

Before being released, the three barrio officials underwent seven hours of interrogation by Brig. Gen. Francis Lanuza, chief of the 801st Bde. They were accused of being NPA supporters. **AB**



Repression and dictatorship in Burma

The abuses and repression committed by Burma's military junta against Aung San Suu Kyi, the elected president of Burma for the past 20 years have been endless. Aung San's party, the National League for Democracy, won the election held in 1990 but the ruling military never allowed her to sit as the Burmese president. Instead, she has been under house arrest for 14 out of the last 20 years.

Aung San remains imprisoned for a variety of charges and pretexts concocted by the junta to distance her from the center of Burmese politics. Aung San's last sentence was supposed to have been served in May but because of another manufactured case, she will remain imprisoned for the next 18 months.

Aung San was fettered with additional prison time after John Yettaw, an American who forced his way into her residence, was discovered in her household in August. Aung San does not know Yettaw and had no knowledge of his arrival but she was still punished because she had allegedly violated the security regulations of her house arrest for having allowed Yettaw to momentarily rest outside of her house.

Yettaw was slapped with a seven-year prison term but he was released and sent home to the US after a US senator negotiated for his freedom.

Because of the intense criticism inside and outside the country, the junta reduced Aung San's



sentence from three years to 18 months. The sentence reduction was a shrewd maneuver because it still ensures that the Burmese leader will still be in detention during the upcoming election in 2010. The junta cleverly called for an election next year to give its critics the impression that there are democratic processes in Burma.

Who is Aung San Suu Kyi?

Like Corazon Aquino in the first half of the 1980s against the Marcos dictatorship, Aung San became the center of the movement against the Burmese military dictatorship, which has ruled the country since 1940.

Intense protests surged within Burma against the dictatorship in 1987 after the country was struck by an intense financial crisis. The protest actions of thousands of Burmese people grew and expanded to call not only for better economic conditions but for the toppling of the dictatorship and implementation of democratic reforms, including the conduct of free elections.

In response, the military junta organized the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) in 1988 and declared martial law. Several thousands of students, monks and other civilians were killed in a series of massacres and violent dispersals of protests. The protests continued in the midst of the junta's violence until 1989. It was in that year that Aung San was put under house arrest.

Despite pressure from the SLORC, the democratic movement in Burma was able to demand the holding of national elections in May 1990. Aung San's party ran and won, in spite of her detention and that of the majority of her allies. The junta refused to allow the

winners to take their seats in government. It refused to free Aung San and many other political detainees from prison.

The SLORC momentarily released Aung San from her home in 1995 but she was again arrested in 1996 while on her way to her party's first congress. More than 200 delegates to the congress were also arrested. Aung San was again released in 2002 but was placed once more under the custody of the SLORC in 2003.

Worsening violations of human rights

Aung San Suu Kyi is but one of thousands of political detainees who were arbitrarily arrested and imprisoned by the SLORC. According to human rights advocates, there are as many as 2,000 political detainees in Burma. Tried by courts controlled by the junta, most of them were sentenced to 60 years imprisonment.

Thousands of people have also become victims of extrajudicial killings. Massacres are widespread, especially along the borders of Burma where the struggle against the dictatorship is strongest.

The SLORC suppresses the Burmese people's basic civil rights. Even the judicial branch is under its direct control. It was in the 1990s that the last national elections took place for any government position. All cabinet positions are held by military officials, active and inactive.

There is no freedom of speech and any kind of organized movement is restricted. The junta regularly carries out arbitrary searches of homes and monitors private correspondence and telephone conversations. Whoever the junta chooses to suppress is deprived of the right to use

the telephone, computer or any other means of communication.

The Burmese military has also committed appalling crimes against national minorities who have steadfastly fought the dictatorship. The junta primarily targets civilians in its war against armed minority groups. Hundreds of thousands of minorities have been forced to flee their ancestral lands to avoid military offensives.

Killings, torture and other physical abuse, abductions and arbitrary arrest, forced labor and conscription as guides, burning of houses and entire villages and the destruction of crops are widespread. The military has also long practiced the imposition of various blockades to collectively punish the indigenous people fighting against them.

Even so, the Burmese people continue to rise up against the junta. The latest uprising took place in August and September 2007 and was dubbed the "Saffron Revolution". The name was derived from the color of the robes the monks wear. The streets of Burma were awash with the color saffron in several weeks of protests against poverty and repression. The protests were violently dispersed and thousands of monks and their supporters were slain. AB



AFP suffers big defeat in Basilan

US Pres. Barack Obama had just finished praising his puppet Gloria Arroyo for what he called her successes in the “anti-terrorism campaign” in Mindanao when news broke out on the humongous failure of the latest operation carried out by the government’s military and police forces against the terrorist Abu Sayyaf on August 12.

A combined force of 400 troops from the Philippine Marines, Philippine Army and Philippine National Police launched a raid on the hideout of an estimated 150 Abu Sayyaf elements in Sitio Kurrelem, Barangay Silangkom, Tipo-tipo, Basilan. However, the operation failed and the government forces suffered major casualties.

There is no truth to the AFP’s report that it was able to overrun the targeted Abu Sayyaf camp. In fact, the government forces had just arrived when they were fired upon by the bandit forces waiting in ambush. They didn’t realize that they would be spotted after passing through numerous communities where the bandits’ relatives reside, and information on their presence could easily be relayed to the Abu

Sayyaf. The bandits immediately gained an advantage over the government forces.

This was a big slap in the face of the US-Arroyo regime and the AFP high command because they had boasted several times that there were only a handful of Abu Sayyaf elements left in Mindanao and they would be easy to defeat. But it is no less than the collusion and the benefits that both high-ranking government officials and Abu Sayyaf leaders gain from the latter’s kidnap for ransom activities that have been strengthening the bandit group. Foremost among these government officials is DILG Secretary Reynaldo Puno who has amassed a huge amount of money from the ransom paid to the Abu Sayyaf by families of prominent lo-

cal and foreign personalities kidnapped by the bandit group.

Government forces suffered even heavier casualties when they also encountered the stronger and better fighters of the MILF. Elements of the Marine Battalion Landing Team 10 (MBLT 10) made the mistake of attacking the MILF base near Barangay Baguindan when the AFP sent them to reinforce the government forces being battered by the Abu Sayyaf. The MILF said that the AFP lied when it claimed that it had coordinated first with them before entering their territory. The MILF forces were obliged to defend their base because of the sudden attack of the MBLT 10. The MILF assailed the AFP’s actions as a betrayal and a violation of the existing formal ceasefire agreement.

It turned out that most of the casualties (23 killed and 22 more wounded) incurred by the government forces were inflicted by the MILF. Ten MILF fighters were killed in the fighting.

Youth breach oil depot gates

YOUTH and students led by Anakbayan managed to breach the gates of the Caltex oil depot in Pandacan, Manila on August 11.

The protest action was spurred by the latest increase in oil prices. Anakbayan called for an end to the cartels’ monopoly control of the oil industry in the country.

Tension was in the air when policemen seized the students’ megaphone and identification cards. The students also pounced on a policeman who was illegally videotaping their protest.

In a related development, the Pinagkaisang Samahan ng mga Tsuper at Opereytors Nationwide (PISTON) said that lawmakers should suspend the oil deregulation law. Congressional hearings, they said, are useless

if oil companies keep raising their prices every week. They threatened to hold another transport strike if oil prices continue to rise.

Meanwhile, members of the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan-Southern Tagalog launched a noise barrage in Los Baños, Laguna and San Mateo, Rizal. BAYAN-ST said that oil prices have already gone up by ₱5 in the past three weeks.

Oil price increases became a weekly occurrence starting just hours after Arroyo’s State of the Nation Address on July 27 when prices rose by ₱2 per liter. This was followed by another increase of ₱1 per liter on August 4 and ₱1.50 on August 11. The price of diesel has gone up by ₱9.56 per liter while ₱3.57 per liter has been added to the price of gasoline, stated BAYAN.