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Anti-militarization 7,000-strong protest in Masbate



AROUND 7,000 peasants in two Masbate towns launched protest actions last October 14 and 25 condemning the continued militarization in the province. On October 25, around 3,000 peasants demonstrated in front of the Cawayan municipal hall, while some 4,000 Masbateños protested in the Dimasalang municipality on October 14.

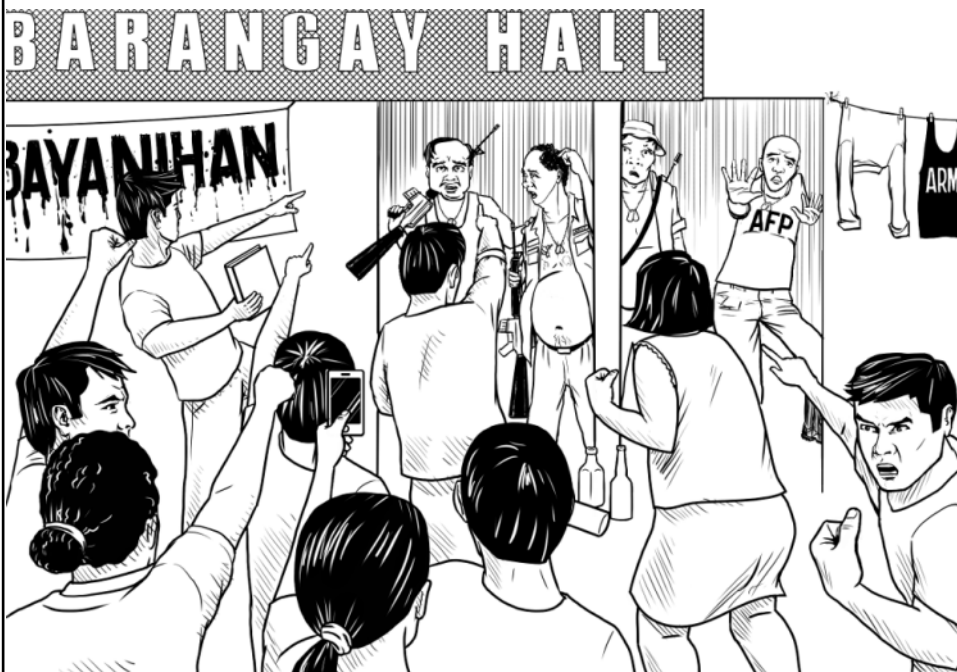
The action was led by Bagong Alyansang Makabayan-Bicol, Masbate People's Organization (MA-PO) and Karapatan.

The protesters asserted that soldiers must get out of their communities and return to their barracks. Their presence violates their own declared ceasefire. The soldiers used census-gathering and the anti-drug Oplan Tokhang as their cover. They bluntly declared that "Only the NPA has a ceasefire. We don't!"

In the village residents' experience, soldiers repeatedly visit homes of suspected NPA supporters. During the protest, Analyn Sabares, a Cawayan resident, reported that AFP troops returned to her house looking for her. The military had visited her three times in the past.

"We cannot dry our rice. We

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EDITORIAL

Heighten the struggle against the more vicious Oplan Bayanihan

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) is further intensifying its armed counterinsurgency operations under the US-designed Oplan Bayanihan. It is trampling outright on the spirit of the mutual declaration of ceasefire and peace talks between the GRP and NDFP by continuing to deploy its armed units in hundreds of rural barrios.

Officials of the AFP are zealots of the counterinsurgency doctrine which their US advisers have drilled into their brains. They have virtually thrown out GRP President Duterte's policy of friendship with the revolutionary forces.

Over the past weeks, psywar, intelligence and suppression operations against activists and members of open and secret mass organizations and local branches of the Party have become more vicious. When village folk question

their operations, soldiers declare "only the NPA are on ceasefire" and "Duterte cannot stop us."

Hand in hand with armed coercion, the AFP is carrying out offensive indoctrination to denigrate the NPA and the entire revolutionary movement. The "war against drugs" is being used to carry out propaganda activities against the NPA and the revolutionary movement.

The people's anger is rapidly rising against the AFP's operating

troops because they flaunt their armed power, disturb peace and order, disrupt the people's lives and livelihood, intimidate, threaten and unleash violence. They cause fear and trauma to the residents, especially the children.

Daily, the people's anger rages against the AFP over its violation of civil rights and humanitarian law in the areas they occupy. In the desperation to force the peasant masses to bow to their power, there are increasing numbers of incidents of illegal arrests and detention, mauling and other violations of civil rights.

Amid continued scouring of barrios by armed troops of the AFP, there is rising clamor by the people for the Party to end its ceasefire declaration so that they and their people's army will no longer have their hands tied from defending their welfare and rights against the AFP's armed oppression.

The Filipino people should unite to vigorously oppose the relentless virulence of Oplan Bayanihan, in

particular, the presence, occupation and operations of armed soldiers in civilian communities.

The demand to end Oplan Bayanihan and remove all armed suppression troops of the AFP from the center of civilian communities must reverberate across the country.

Duterte must be asked to prove himself true to his policy declaration of friendship with the CPP-NPA-NDFP and order the AFP to end all counterinsurgency operations to allow peace talks between the GRP and NDFP to proceed to resolve the roots of the civil war through negotiations.

Such an undertaking is also consistent with his declaration for an independent foreign policy because Oplan Bayanihan is part of US scheme to suppress the patriotic forces. Such will also form part of Duterte's effort to finally end US control of the AFP and put it under his command.

If Duterte will not end or even suspend Oplan Bayanihan, the CPP

will have no more reason not to terminate the ceasefire declaration. This will add to the failure of the Duterte regime to fulfill its promise of releasing 432 political prisoners through an amnesty proclamation.

Large protest actions of thousands of people have been launched in some towns. This should be emulated across the country. Legal organizations covering towns, districts and provinces must act quickly to unite the people and organize their collective action.

They can work with human rights centers, church people, progressive lawyers and paralegals and other sectors who ardently support peace talks. Organizations against Oplan Bayanihan must be built in all barrios being occupied by the armed troops of the AFP.

Protests against Oplan Bayanihan must be broadcast throughout the entire country and the entire world. The atrocities in the barrios committed by AFP armed troops and PNP combat troops must be quickly exposed. Immediately inform the mass media of their presence by calling radio stations, recording videos or taking pictures and propagating these on the internet. Progressive media must act posthaste in order to quickly expose the havoc wrought by Oplan Bayanihan operations.

The protests against the AFP's Oplan Bayanihan must be replicated across the entire country. These must be carried out in line with intensifying the mass struggles to defend and advance the democratic interests of the people.

Strengthen the support of students, church people, friends in the mass media and other urban forces in the struggle to drive away the armed soldiers from rural communities.

Organize activities in schools, churches and offices in the cities to give the peasants an opportunity to speak of their sufferings under military occupation.

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|  <p>Vol. XLVII No. 21 November 7, 2016</p> <p><i>Ang Bayan</i> is published in Pilipino, Bisaya, Hiligaynon, Waray and English.</p> <p><i>Ang Bayan</i> welcomes contributions in the form of articles and news items. Readers are encouraged to send feedback and recommendations for improving our newspaper.</p> <p>  instagram.com/prwc_info  youtube.com/PhilippineRevolutionWebCentral  @prwc_info  fb.com/PhilippineRevolutionWebCentral  cppinformationbureau@gmail.com </p> | <h2 style="text-decoration: underline;">Contents</h2> <p>Editorial: Heighten the struggle against the more vicious Oplan Bayanihan 1</p> <p>7000-strong protest in Masbate 1</p> <p>AFP- US pillar of rule in the Philippines 4</p> <p>US intervention and subversion 6</p> <p>US, keep out of the Scarborough issue 6</p> <p>Natmins return to the US embassy 7</p> <p>National Day of Protest 8</p> <p>Activist-leader in Cavite killed 8</p> <p>Remembering the October Revolution 9</p> <p>Agrarian Reform Conference in ST 10</p> <p>New decision on the coco levy 11</p> <p>Advance the people's welfare 12</p> |
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Organize and mobilize volunteers who wish to help in the campaigns against Oplan Bayanihan. Organize rallies or missions from the city centers towards the barrios occupied by the AFP in order to directly unite with the struggle of the people to drive away the armed soldiers from their barrios.

Even if the the NPA is not launching offensive operations against the uniformed state armed forces in accordance with the cea-

sefire declaration of the CPP, it maintains closest ties with the masses to help them resolve their problems and advance their struggles.

With the help of the NPA, Party branches, people's militias and mass organizations are being built inside the guerrilla fronts. The NPA is busy helping the peasant masses advance their antifeudal struggles.

The NPA supports all-out the people's stand and efforts against

Oplan Bayanihan. The NPA extends protection to the barrio activists and mass leaders who are being targeted by the AFP.

The NPA remains the strongest fort of the people's democratic power. It continues to recruit and train new Red fighters and strengthens its unity in preparation for bigger struggles ahead to defeat Oplan Bayanihan as well as the enemy's all other campaigns of suppression. AB

AFP, a pillar of US rule in the Philippines

For the last seven decades, US imperialism maintained its neocolonial rule in the Philippines. The US used its political, economic and cultural domination to prolong its rule.

But the US most important facet in preserving its domination is its continued military presence combined with its use of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) as its pillar of rule.

This role of the AFP as instrument of the US is becoming increasingly evident upon the emergence of an anti-US Duterte regime.

These past months, Duterte's criticisms against US interference and military presence have come one after another. Despite Duterte's declaration of separation from military and economic ties with the US, one US official averred that they will continue to work with the AFP, and not Duterte.

This statement shows the direct US link to the armed machinery of the Philippine government.

History of servitude

Even during the early part of US colonialism, its military already formed and armed Filipino mercenaries to suppress their fellow Filipinos. The former local troops of the Spanish colonialists from Ma-

cabebe, Pampanga were reorganized by the US in 1899 and integrated into the newly-formed Philippine Scouts that were pitched into battles against the Filipino revolutionaries. The colonial government also formed the Philippine Constabulary (PC) in 1901 as provincial police to control the population, and later to fight the revolutionaries. As expected, the brutality of US troops against the Filipino people were copied by the Macabebe, Philippine Scouts and PC against their own people. The academy for PC officers established in 1905 in Intramuros was transferred to Baguio City in 1908. By 1936, this academy was opened to officers of the newly-created Philippine Army and came to be known as the Philippine Military Academy (PMA).

From 1935 to 1940, the US established, trained and led the



Philippine Army, Philippine Navy and the germinal Philippine Air Force. American general Douglas MacArthur, who was reactivated from retirement, became the commander of Filipino forces. He held this section of the Filipino military, sending them to war against the Japanese. He abandoned them when he deserted at the height of the war in 1941. After the Second World War, the US used its trained Filipino troops to pursue the Hukbong Mapagpalaya ng Bayan. In 1947, the Armed Forces of the Philippines was formally established and some of its battalions were deployed in the US wars of aggression against the people of Korea and Vietnam.

cannot move around nor work because they [the soldiers] are there," Sabares recounted.

She is worried that soldiers might plant bombs and illegal drugs inside her house like they planted ammunition and revolutionary papers at another house.

On October 23, 12 soldiers came to her house asking the whereabouts of Red fighters. This pressed her family to relocate and live with another relative in a nearby village. Many families have fled in fear. Residents also report numerous illegal searches of their homes.

According to MAPO, some 100 soldiers are deployed in the village of Dimasalang, while around 60 are in Cawayan. There are also soldiers in communities in the municipality of Palanas.

Meanwhile, the NPA-Masbate (Jose Rapsing Command or JRC) condemned the intensified militarization of the whole province. According to Ka Luz del Mar of the JRC, militarization intensified in Ticao Island after the AFP deployed "Peace and Development Teams" (PDT) since the latter part of 2014.

The JRC identified seven Ticao towns as militarized up to the present. Since October 6, soldiers occupied three villages in Dimasalang town and six in Cawayan, all focused with PDT operations. The 9th IB, Alpha Coy of the 31st IB, and the 9th CMO Battalion are all deployed in these towns.

The JRC added that the operations and continued occupation of the military creates great fear and apprehension among the village people. It's as if martial law reigns in these towns because the local officials' functions have been taken over. In Cawayan, one civilian was illegally arrested on October 22, his house searched and he was forced to act as a guide in the military operations. A peasant youth was also arrested on October 24 in Barangay Cabungahan. ■

JUSMAG direction

After declaring the Philippines' bogus independence in 1945, the US maintained tight control of the Philippine armed forces. It imposed a set of unequal military agreements, including the Military Bases Agreement (1946), the Military Assistance Agreement (MAA, 1947) and the Mutual Defense Treaty (1951). Under the MAA, the Joint US Military Advisory Group (JUSMAG) was formed from combined officers and men (starting at 300 personnel under a major general) of the US Army, Navy, and Air Force that would decide the AFP's counterinsurgency plans, arms and equipment procurement, training, indoctrination and orientation. The JUSMAG offices functioned like a military base, not unlike the 22 other US military bases.

All official expenses of the JUSMAG are being undertaken by the Philippine government, including its offices and housing for its personnel and their families who are now based inside the AFP General Headquarters in Camp Aguinaldo.

JUSMAG advice to the AFP comes directly from the US Pacific Command from courses to be taught PMA cadets, to trainings of Filipino officers under the International Military Education and Training. From 1950 to 1990, more than 20,000 AFP officers were sent to US military camps and trained in US doctrine, military practice and weaponry.

JUSMAG also determines the AFP's arms and equipment procurement, often of the US military's outmoded stocks. From 2001 to 2015, US military aid to the AFP reached \$340M, the fourth largest US military aid.

From 1986-1989 the US sent the AFP almost 2,900 military vehicles, around 50 helicopters, more than 1,650 radios and others. The AFP also received \$183.4M

military aid from the US under the US-Aquino regime from 2010-2015.

US counterinsurgency operations

The JUSMAG also oversees the implementation of the US government's Foreign Internal Defense (FID) in the Philippines. FID operations are also known as counterinsurgency operations that are mainly implemented by the US Army Special Forces, with the assistance of Psychological Operations and Civil Affairs forces in their target countries.

These operations include directing AFP operations, training and arming them, and employing large-scale civil-military and intelligence operations to enhance combat operations. The "triad" (combat-intel-psywar) operations and the "clear-hold" phases of the past AFP counterinsurgency campaigns are clear examples of the US' FID-based strategies. Barangay zonings in the 1970s against Moro people and the revolutionary movement's bases are also designed from the US' hamletting campaign since the 1900s and in Vietnam in 1962.

The US military also occasionally publishes Field Manuals as guide for various fields of counterinsurgency. In the 2010 Field Manual for counterinsurgency, the US Special Forces openly advocated the maximum preponderance of forces as supposedly the most effective way to minimize violence. It also cites large-scale surveillance, censorship, media control, repression of trade unions and political parties, illegal arrests and detention, and other human rights violations, and the associated psychological warfare to make these violations acceptable.

The FID also promotes the training of Civilian Self Defense Forces to further destroy the

people's unity. In the Philippines, the first CAFGU forces were formed by the present Department of National Defense Delfin Lorenzana in 1987 when he was deployed in Davao as commander of the 2nd Scout Ranger Battalion. During that time, he actively supported paramilitary operations such as those by the *Alsa Masa*.

Likewise, the AFP's extrajudicial killings of activists and suspected supporters of the revolutionary movement are based on the US FID in El Salvador during the 1970s and 1980s. In the AFP's case, there have been 238 victims of extrajudicial killings under Oplan Bayanihan by May 2015, and 270 cases of survivors from the shooting. On the other hand, there were more than 1,100 victims of killings under Oplan Bantay Laya 1 and 2 from 2001 till 2009.

Another example of JUSMAG-implemented FID is the operation of around 700 US troops of the Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines that have been training battalions of AFP and PNP yearly in the guise of "Balikatan" exercises to use in their "anti-terrorist war."

Aside from troops of the Special Operations Command-Pacific, Central Intelligence Agency agents have been involved in pursuit and combat against the Abu Sayyaf, Jemaah Islamiyah, and those they consider "terrorists" in 2014. The JSOTF-P also trained and directed the PNP Special Action Force that killed alleged terrorist Zulkifli Abdhir (Marwan) in Mamasapano, Maguindanao in January 2015.

US power remains over the government's armed machinery as long as the JUSMAG and other US-imposed unequal military treaties exist. As long as the AFP does not do away with its puppet orientation, its officers and men will continue to be instruments against the democratic and anti-imperialist interests if the people. AB

US: Keep off the Scarborough issue—CPP

THE COMMUNIST Party of the Philippines (CPP) warned the US military and government off the issue of the Scarborough Shoal on October 29 even as it welcomed the peaceful settlement of the matter through friendly negotiations between the GRP President Duterte and China Premier Xi Jinping.

"The settlement of the Scarborough issue underscores what can be achieved by asserting national independence, building friendly relations with neighboring countries and opposing outside interference, especially war instigations by the US military," said the CPP.

Since 2012, the Chinese Coast Guard had barred Filipinos from fishing around Scarborough Shoal with the former asserting sole rights in the area. This was the situation after China responded when the Philippines sent a warship to arrest Chinese fishermen, an act it considered provocative.

After Duterte's talk with China and his declaration of an independent foreign policy, fishermen have freely continued their livelihood at the Scarborough fishing grounds. Last November 1, elements of the Chinese Coast Guard and Filipino fishermen shared a meal at the shoal.

The CPP anticipates further success in the peaceful settlement of other conflicting maritime claims, including those around the Kalayaan Islands, in line with the assertions of the Filipino people.

The basic premise and most urgent condition for the settlement of all conflicting claims should be the demilitarization of the South China Sea to allow all countries to make use of the sea route for international trade. The CPP demands the US military to end all naval patrols including so-called "freedom of navigation operations" which has no other aim but invite retaliation.

"The US has no standing whatsoever to meddle in an area that is part of Philippine maritime territory. It is US war-mongering and naval build-up in accordance with its US pivot that is at the root of the outstanding security problems in the South China Sea, the CPP added. AB

US intervention and subversion

SOON AFTER Pres. Rodrigo Duterte attacked US intervention in the Philippines and declared an independent foreign policy, US State Department Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Daniel Russel in a speech last October 23 threatened him with "people power." According to him, "nobody has come out victorious against the US."

In the same speech, he said that the US is willing to continue "cooperation" with the Philippine military despite Duterte's "confusing" statements. This is in line with the retraction made by Delfin Lorenzana, current Department of Defense secretary.

Prior to this, US State Department's Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs John Kirby outrightly threatened subversion in

a speech he made in November 3. Kirby dismissed the existing government's sovereignty when he said that the US does not need to go through Duterte to develop relations with the different government agencies, as well as individual members of his cabinet.

He said that the US can maintain relations despite the "uncertainties" brought about by

the president's strong pronouncements.

In addition to what he called "people-to-people" relations, Kirby reiterated US control over the country's security issues, and the continuing subservience of the Philippine military to the US. In relation to this, US Defense Secretary Ashton Carter met with Lorenzana in Hawaii in late September, along with other ASEAN defense secretaries.

This November, the US withdrew its sale of 27,000 armalites to the Philippine National Police citing dismal reports on its anti-drug war killings. The US also threatened to withdraw its \$32 million military aid promised to Duterte in July.

At the same time, the AFP is still preparing for a month-long military exercise between the US and Philippines slated this November 16 in Palawan. A company from the Philippine Army Special Operations Command and more than a dozen elements from the US Special Operations Forces are set to participate in the Balance Piston 16-4. US special forces are still operating in Mindanao, despite Duterte pronouncements that they "must go."

Meanwhile, a 10-day military exercise (Humanitarian Mine Action Assistance Training) between the US and Philippine navies was just concluded this October 26 in Palawan to train Philippine marines on how to operate US Navy explosives. This is despite Duterte's announcement that the military exercise held on the first week of October will be the last joint exercise to be held in the country. ■

Minorities return to the US embassy

On October 27, hundreds of national minorities, Moro and other sectors marched to the US embassy, to call for an independent foreign policy and the removal of US troops from the country.

Unlike the October 19 violent dispersal, the police observed the rallyists from a distance and were ordered by their commander to remain calm. The protest was part of a two-week *lakbayan* that started on October 13.

Under the leadership of Sandugo, the alliance of national minorities, groups and sectors declared the *lakbayan*'s success. The firm unity of national minorities in their struggle for the right to self-determination related to an independent foreign policy had been forged.

The historic *lakbayan* was concluded by the first ever tribunal against the US government for their exploitation of the country from the colonial period to the present. The tribunal that was held at the Bonifacio Shrine in Manila was led by three judges or *wali*: Bagobo Matanen Monico Cayog, Maranaw Sultan Macasalong Sarib and Manobo Bibyaon Ligkayan Bigkay.

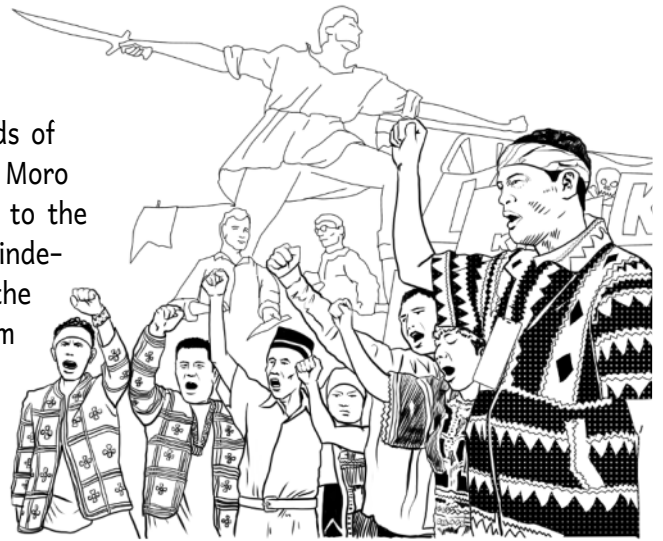
The US troops' crimes as presented by the leaders were:

- Massacre at Bud Dajo and Bud Bagsak, where thousands of Moros were killed

- 1906, the US' scorched earth policy against the Lumad at Davao Gulf, in retaliation for the killing of an American officer Edward Bolton

- the case of the Aytas in Central Luzon who were displaced from their ancestral lands to give way to the US military bases and fell victim to the violence and brutality of US troops

- Killings and other human rights violations in Mindanao brought about by the presence of American troops



under the VFA and Mutual Defense Treaty, particularly by the Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines - land grabbing of Lumad and Moro ancestral lands by US companies to give way to plantations, mines and illegal logging

"The tribunal called for the death to imperialism!" announced Bigkay. Sandugo leaders vowed to continue their struggle against foreign control, as they did against the Spanish and American colonialists.

"We will not allow the Philippines to become a slave to whatever foreign power. We must lay the foundation for an independent foreign policy that has pro-people economic policies on land reform and national industrialization," declared Piya Macliing Malaya, Sandugo spokesperson.

Before this, progressive organizations protested in front of the Police Regional Office 13, Butuan City to denounce the violent dispersal of the mass actions of national minorities on October 19.

On October 24, a dialogue also transpired between Sandugo and Department of Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Gina Lopez, at the Campus Maintenance Office of the University of the Philippines-Diliman. During the talks, Lopez called Lt. Gen. Ricardo Visaya, AFP Chief of Staff, on the phone to appraise him of the Sandugo complaints on the continuing militarization and human rights violations of the soldiers and paramilita-

ry elements in their communities.

The general denied the militarization and gave the excuse that the military were in the Lumad communities to "teach" them to live peacefully and improve their livelihood. According to Visaya, the killed Lumads were NPA members.

Kerlan Fanagel, chairman of Pasaka, Confederation of Lumad Organizations in Southern Mindanao, belied this statement. Visaya's pronouncements were no different from what they have been hearing from the past regime, he said. Fanagel said, militarization has intensified coinciding with opening up an additional 500,000 hectares of ancestral land for mining and 700,000 hectares for bio-fuel plantations.

Meanwhile, on October 27, Be-

nito Tiamzon and Wilma Austria-Tiamzon of the NDFP visited the Sandugo camp. The two consultants declared their support for the national minorities' stand against foreign aggression. They said that the NDFP will include the national minority question in the agenda for the peace talks with the GRP.

That same day, Sandugo filed a case at the Ombudsman against the police involved in the October 19 dispersal. They filed charges for the violation of R.A. 7438 (right of persons arrested) and B.P. 880 (right to peaceably assemble and petition the government) against Manila Police District Deputy Director for Operations Senior Superintendent Marcelino Pedrozo, MPD Supt. Albert Barot, PO3 Franklin

Kho, and seven other police officers. Several criminal cases were also filed against them.

Among those who filed cases were the women who were ran over by the police van—Piya Malaya, 27, Valeria Catubigan, 61, Nicole Soria, 18, and Queenilyn Gromeo, 16, and Raymark Sumalbag, 23, driver and Piston member, who was pulled out from his jeepney and mauled by the police. He was in and out of the hospital for his head injuries and was only discharged on October 22.

The group also filed a case at the GRP-Nominated Section of the Joint Secretariat of the GRP-NDFP Joint Monitoring Committee on the Comprehensive Agreement on the Respect for Human Rights and an Law. AB

Group holds National Women's Day of Protest

LED BY THE Gabriela Women's Party (GWP), hundreds of women launched the 33rd National Women's Day of Protest on October 28.

The women marched to the US embassy with calls to remove US military troops in the country and develop an independent foreign policy.

"This day of national women's protest, we register in front of the US Embassy our call for the immediate removal of US soldiers, bases and war materiel in our country. All unequal treaties that stunted the growth of our country must be ended. The Philippines can! US, go home!" said Rep. Emmi De Jesus.

Arlene Brosas, GWP representative, stressed the social costs of continued US presence in the country. She said this has resulted in a generation of abandoned children and innumerable women who are left vulnerable and exploited by the military agreements. This has brought about prostitution in the face of a weak economy that leaves many women unemployed.

The first national women's day of protest was held on October 28, 1983, when more than 10,000 women led by Gabriela marched to Mendiola to condemn the exploitation, repression, corruption and torture by the US-Marcos dictatorship.

Mass leader and activist murdered in Cavite

TRECE MARTIRES CITY, October 19, 10 p.m.: Merly Valguna and Rodora Mallari were shot to death at close range by a helmet-wearing man at the Bantayan sa Palengke protest center they were setting up inside the TMC Annex Market. Valguna and Mallari were then guarding the said center.

Valguna is president of the TMC Annex Association, the organization fighting for the sellers' rights to decent livelihood. Mallari is an active member of the said organization that is leading the fight against the market's imminent re-fencing and lock-down.

Patnubay de Guia, spokesperson of the National Democratic Front-Southern Tagalog, strongly condemned the reprehensible murder. De Guia called upon the TMC Annex Market sellers and their advocates to continue intensifying the struggle for their right to land and livelihood, and to attain justice for Valguna and Mallari.

The sellers' struggle started after the local government passed the market's management to the private YIC Group of Companies and CitiSquare in 2013. The sellers already had outstanding contracts for their right to lease the stalls and have been regularly paying market stall fees. When they refused to sign the new contracts being forced on them, they became subject to attempted eviction and market demolition by the mayor's goons. Through all these, they continued to defend their rights by signing petitions, filing charges, holding dialogues, and linking arms to bodily block the demolition.

Meanwhile, other markets in Bacoor, Cavite also face imminent closure. Earlier in 2011, a part of the Kadiwa Market had been demolished to give way to an SM Hypermarket branch, which deprived 1,500 sellers and 500 families of their livelihood.

Remembering the 1917 October Revolution

The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) declared last year the start of a two-year commemoration of the centennial of the Russian October Revolution's victory (See *Ang Bayan*, November 7, 2015.) The CPP encourages launching of seminars, publication and dissemination of Marxist-Leninist-Maoist writings, creation of artworks, assemblies and cultural presentations on this subject.

Today marks the commencement of the one year commemoration of the Russian October Revolution that brought Russia (eventually known as the USSR or Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) to the peak of socialist development in the latter half of the 20th century. Although the USSR disintegrated totally in 1991, the October Revolution inspired victorious revolutions and continues to convey lessons to all revolutionaries desiring liberation from imperialism and the creation of socialism in their own countries.

It was in October 25 (in the Julian calendar used by Russia then and equivalent to November 7 in the Gregorian calendar used today), 1917, when the Bolshevik Party (later to become the Communist Party) under the leadership of Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov (Lenin) declared the revolution's victory. This was the result of three months of preparation and two days of armed clashes.

Revolutionary preparations

The Bolshevik Party operated above-ground after the tsar's defeat by the bourgeois-democratic revolution on February 27, 1917. The February Revolution gave birth to two separate centers of political power, one at the national level, the bourgeoisie-controlled provisional government under Prime Minister Aleksandr Kerensky, and another composed of the soviets (local workers, soldiers and peasants committees), where the Party led only a few. Although the Kerensky government preferred to continue the tsar's policies, the Party did not call for its immediate overthrow. Instead, it carried the line of winning the majority of the soviets, and through the soviets to alter the composition and policy of the government. The Party launched indefatigable propaganda and organizing work among the soviets, trade unions and workers committees,

and among soldiers in the army and navy at the front and rear. By June, most of the soviets' composition had changed in favor of the Bolsheviks and supported the Party's call.

Of the tsar's previous policies that the Kerensky government opted to continue, the involvement in the First World War was most hated by the people. From June to July, massive demonstrations of hundreds of thousands of spontaneous and organized workers, soldiers and women were held in Petrograd—Russia's industrial center as well as the Bolshevik Party's center—to protest the war and call for the transfer of power from the provisional government to the soviets.

The demonstrations were met with state violence and many demonstrators were killed. The government then turned to the revolutionary movement and issued an arrest warrant for Lenin and other Party leaders for high treason and allegedly organizing an armed uprising. Thus, the Party resumed underground operations. In the July-August conference, it decided that the peaceful period had come to an end, and armed revolution was the order of the day.

The seizure of power

On October 10, 1917 the



Party's Central Committee decided that conditions were ripe for armed uprising. This was based on (1) international status of the Russian Revolution as evidenced by the revolt in the German navy, the threat of conclusion of peace by the imperialists with the object of strangling the revolution in Russia, as well as the decision of the bourgeoisie to surrender Petrograd to the Germans, (2) the fact that the proletarian party has gained a majority in the Soviets, taken in conjunction with the peasant revolt and the swing of popular confidence towards the Party, and (3) the obvious preparations being made by the right for a second military action.

The Party set up a Revolutionary Military Committee of the Petrograd Soviet, while the counterrevolutionaries set up an Officers League which reached 43 shock battalions (special infantry assault units) aside from other special battalions.

On October 18, two traitors to the Party exposed the planned uprising so Kerensky transferred more troops to Petrograd from the war front and prepared to attack the Bolshevik headquarters at Smolny on the eve of the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets.

On October 21, the Revolutionary Military Committee sent out the directive to all revolutionary units in the army, factories, plants and even the warships Aurora and Zarya Svobody to prepare for the uprising during the opening of the second All-Russia Congress of Soviets.

While boasting at a meeting of the Petrograd Soviet, Leon Trotsky, a Party member who strongly disagreed with Bolshevik policies, exposed the planned date of the uprising. The Party reset the date one day earlier, but Kerensky started the attack at dawn of October 24 (November 6) at the Party's central organ *Rabochy Put's* printing plant. This was repulsed by the workers' militia, the Red Guards. By 11 a.m., the *Rabochy Put* had printed out the Party's call for the overthrow of the provisional government. Until evening, detachments of Red Guards and soldiers supporting the revolution poured in to Smolny, and they were dispatched to surround the Winter Palace, the tsar's former seat of rule, where the Kerensky government was entrenched and defended by cadets and shock battalions.

By the morning of October 25 (November 7), revolutionary troops controlled the train station, post office, telegraph office, the ministries and the state bank. In the evening, the warship Aurora shelled the Winter Palace, after which, the revolutionary workers, soldiers and marines stormed the palace and arrested the provisional government.

The Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets began at Smolny at 10:45 p.m., where majority of the elected were Bolsheviks. The congress proclaimed that state power had passed into the hands of the soviets. One sixth of the face of the earth had been liberated from imperialism. AB

Peasants hold conference on agrarian revolution in ST

Last year, a guerilla front in Southern Tagalog (ST) held a front-level conference on agrarian revolution. More than a hundred peasants from different barrios and towns attended. The conference was part of the regional effort to consolidate peasant organizations and advance the people's war.

Preparations for the conference took almost a year. Prior to the activity, researches were made, initial meetings and activities for consolidation and expansion were held. Most of the participants were long-time members of local Party branches and chapters of the Pambansang Katipunan ng mga Magbubukid (PKM or National Peasant Association). They looked forward to sharing their experiences and drawing up new plans.

The conference tackled the national peasant situation, as well as their particular situation in the region. The delegates looked back on previous victories before initial research results were presented.

In general, the 60-40 share system favoring the landlord prevails in areas of the said front. There are areas where the 50-50 share system already exists. But under this division, the peasant shoulders most of the cost of production, which amounts to 17% of the net profit while the landlord shoulders only up to 5%. When computed, peasants' profits amount to only P19/day. Under this arrangement wherein the landlord shoulders too little of the cost of production, the real sharing system is actually set at 70-30.

During the previous years, successive typhoons worsened the peasants' plight. With production at its lowest, leasing out land became prevalent, a situation landlords and usurers exploited. In some cases, interest rates reached up to 350%. In cases where land is leased out to a landlord, sharing is set at 85-15 even where the 50-50 system already prevails. Under these circumstances, peasants could never recover from their debts despite all their toil.

At the same time, the delegates acknowledged the neglect of ideological, political and organizational work during this period. These prevented their associations from effectively countering the heightened landlord exploitation and previous victories were thus not sustained.

In this light, the delegates, together with the front's red fighters and leading Party cadres, went through the PKM basic documents, the Revolutionary Guide to Land Reform and Guide to the Establishment of the People's Democratic Government. These guides, alongside initial researches, will guide them in the restoration and
reacti-
vation of



their organizations.

Among the resolutions the conference reached was the establishment of the PKM at the municipal level, and the concurrent fast and widespread creation of its chapters in the front's barrios. In order to do this, they elected a municipal-level standing committee which will coordinate their efforts.

As one delegate observed, "We have long been contented with organizing groups and organizing committees at the barrio level. These past years, our most advanced experience has been developing full-pledged mass associations. The resolution to set-up PKM at the municipal, district and provincial level is a big step forward and a learning process in how to manage the revolutionary peasant movement.

Nine other resolutions were passed by the conference. These include the campaign against the 75-25 sharing system in favor of the peasants from the current 60-40. There were also resolutions for campaigns to increase farm workers' wages, lower usurious rates and debt interests and raise farm gate prices.

In response to the call to strengthen armed struggle, the delegates pledged to deploy three to five members per organization to the New People's Army.

The PKM conference formally closed with speeches from its leaders. The activity left each delegate the challenge to consolidate the initial efforts to establish Red power in the countryside by upholding, supervising and strengthening their organization at all levels, advancing agrarian revolution and intensifying armed struggle. ■

Call on Duterte to address the people's urgent needs

Despite the Duterte regime's promises of change, it is undeniable that measures to address the people's poverty and hardship have been woefully inadequate.

It has done nothing to decisively end contractualization. It continues to deny the workers' demand to raise wages. It claims to lack the necessary funds to raise salaries of government employees, except for the police and military. It permitted foreign companies and big compradors to raise prices of their products and services. Worse, it allowed technocrats in its cabinet to draft anti-people schemes in the form of additional taxes.

The Duterte regime has done nothing to address the oil prices which has risen thrice since October. Prices increased after the OPEC (Organization of Oil-Exporting Countries) announced its intention to impose a moratorium on oil production to arrest the decline in crude oil prices. The cut back is yet to be implemented in November but oil companies have already been using this to justify successive

increases in gasoline, diesel, kerosene and liquified petroleum gas (LPG) prices in the country.

Diesel and kerosene prices rose highest on the second week of October (P1.50/liter at P0.85/liter respectively) while LPG prices rose by P3.41/kilo this November. This year alone, diesel and gasoline net price increases reached up to P7.63/liter and P5.04/liter respectively.

Oil price increases will become even more burdensome if Congress passes the Department of Finance's bill to impose excise taxes on petroleum products like diesel, kerosene and LPG at P6/liter. Products like gasoline, aviation fuel and others will have their excise taxes raised from P4/liter to P10/liter. This is over and above the 12% value-added taxes already levied on the said products.

Meanwhile, the Duterte regime

New decision on coco levy slammed

THE KILUSANG MAGBUBUKID ng Pilipinas (KMP) and Coco Levy Funds Ibalik sa Amin (CLAIM) strongly denounced the Supreme Court's reversal of its 2000 decision ordering the San Miguel Corporation (SMC) to return P25.45 million shares that form part of the government's billion-peso coco levy fund, including the income the shares earned since March 1986.

KMP secretary-general Antonio Flores said it's as if the Supreme Court has no shame in reversing its decision. The court's decision states that the SMC was supposedly not given a chance to "present, explain and prove" its claim on the said shares. Using "due process" as justification, the Supreme Court denied the small coconut farmers of their just and reasonable recovery of the funds.

The group asserts that SMC's controlled shares are from the Coconut Industry Investment Fund-Oil Mills Group (CIIF-OMG), thus clearly belonging to the coconut farmers.

CLAIM-Quezon encouraged the Duterte administration to approve Anakpawis Partylist's House Bill 557 which will create a Genuine Small Coconut Farmers' Fund (GSCFF).

The GSCFF will establish a "council of small coconut planters" to protect the more than P72 billion coco levy fund already in government hands. This will give control to the funds' legitimate owners.

has remained silent on the increasing power rates which have risen since July from P0.19/kwh or P200/month for a family which consumes 200/kwh. Companies are saying that charges will increase again in November and December due to the weakening of the peso and rising coal costs. The Philippines has one of the highest electricity rates in Asia.

The Duterte regime has also not done anything to arrest rising prices of commodities this past quarter, especially food which has risen supposedly due to successive typhoons. Inflation rates increased to 2.4% in September, the highest in the last 18 months. October rates are expected to be much higher due to the increase in almost all non-food items such as housing, electricity and water, fuel and transportation.

Faced with such hardships, the regime's tack of distributing aid and assistance to calamity victims and families it deems to be the "poorest of the poor" is not enough to alleviate the people's situation. Duterte

should move away from stop-gap measures and institute decisive steps to raise the people from poverty.

The regime must make good its promise to stop contractualization and more importantly, create new and regular jobs. It should decisively confront the capitalists and side with the workers to raise wages and salaries. It should address the rising costs of petroleum products through centralized and state-to-state oil procurement from countries like Brunei, Indonesia or even Iran and Venezuela.

It should implement strict price controls and prevent capitalists and merchants from exploiting shortages. More than



this, it should put into place agricultural policies which will ensure sufficient food supply, subsidize basic agricultural products and support peasants during calamities.

The people's plight is worsening. In a national survey conducted by Ibon Foundation in September, seven of every ten Filipinos said that they are poor. More than half of the subjects said that they had difficulties buying food due to lack of funds. About 40% said they had difficulties sending their children to school and almost 50% said they had difficulties in buying medicine.

The said survey put into doubt an earlier touted survey that the number of poor Filipinos have gone down during the second quarter of the year. According to state agencies, the said drop is artificial, temporary and was made possible only due to electoral spending. If the regime does not make any move soon, the people's lives will continue to deteriorate.