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Editorial

Close ranks and mount protests to jolt the US-Aquino regime

We must shake the US-Aquino regime with protests throughout 2015. All sectors must unite to resist the regime's antipeople policies and to advance their welfare and interests. The Filipino people must spark up major battles in a head-on collision with the ruling regime's rottenness and corruption, and its puppetry and brutality, which are all bound to worsen.

The US-Aquino regime immediately opened the new year by striking a major blow against the people's interests. The substantial MRT and LRT fare hikes it has imposed are a huge and added burden to the 1.3 million workers, students, rank-and-file employees and other ordinary folk who ride the trains daily. It must be resisted not just by residents of Metro Mani-

la but by the entire nation.

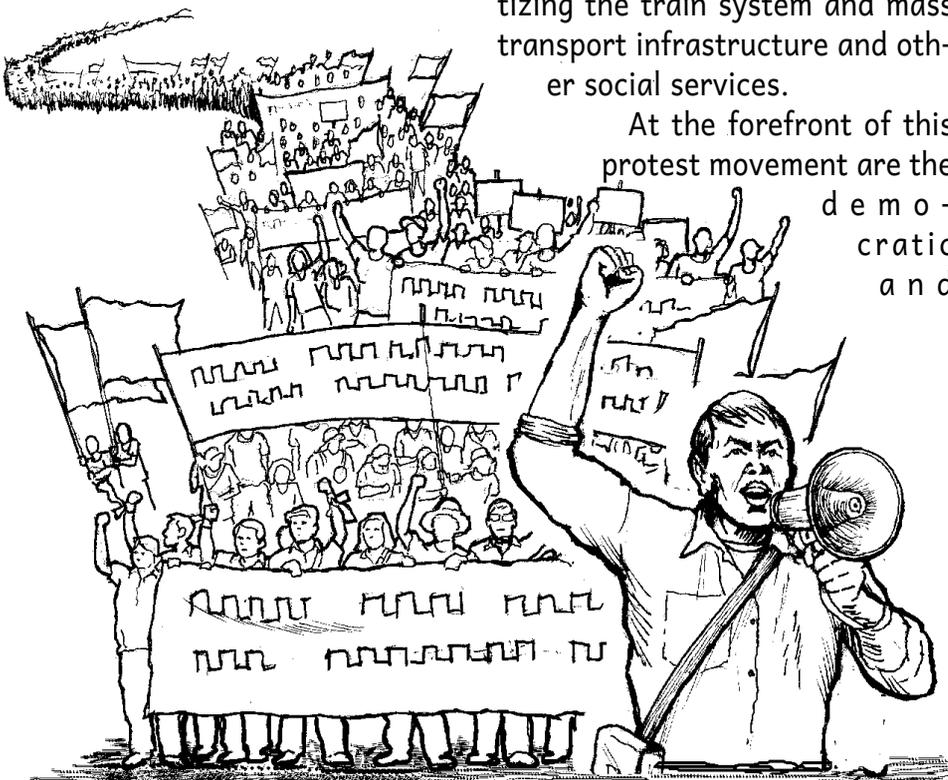
The regime ordered the train fare hikes in the first days of the year in the belief that the people's protests and resistance would be powerless to stop it. The Filipino people are determined to prove the Aquino regime wrong. To do this, they must unleash the broadest movement to oppose it and generate gigantic street rallies protesting not only the train fare hikes but the policy of privatizing the train system and mass transport infrastructure and other social services.

At the forefront of this protest movement are the democratic and

patriotic forces. All sectors must unite to fight the fare increase and draw up plans of action for the next several weeks in order to bring forth gigantic protests against the MRT and LRT fare hikes. Workers, youth and students, rank and file employees and the semiproletariat in the communities must closely cooperate to form multisectoral coordinative committees focused on advancing the campaign on a day to day basis.

Activists must promptly and tirelessly reach out to the millions of people directly affected by the MRT and LRT fare hikes. They must develop expertise in arousing the unorganized masses and mobilizing them in various forms of protest to prepare them for even bigger mass protests within and outside campuses, offices, factories or communities.

The key to effectively reaching out to, and in arousing and mobilizing the masses is to develop expertise in propaganda and organizing. The real or basic issue behind the MRT and LRT fare hike must be sharply laid out, and this is no other than Aquino's servility to the interests of big capitalists like the Ayalas and Pangilins who have been able to wangle the contracts for operating the



metrotrains as well as the construction of the rail extensions to Cavite and Bulacan. These contracts allow the Ayalas and Pangilins to raise train fares annually to ensure their profits.

The public must be informed that these contracts are part and parcel of the continuing policy of privatization. They must see how massively detrimental privatization and deregulation have been on the people economically for the past three decades. They must know that the US-Aquino regime has a policy of slashing budgets for public services and transferring the funds to subsidize and guarantee the incomes of the government's big capitalist cohorts under Aquino's so-called Public-Private Partnership program. The issue of privatization and deregulation must be linked to other national and sectoral issues, among them the privatization of health and education services, of utilities like water and electricity as well as public infrastructure such as roads.

The masses' attention, their

anger and protests must be aimed at the privatization and deregulation policies and at the contracts entered into by Aquino with the Ayala-Pangilinan-big foreign capitalist and financier combine for the metrotrain operations and extension.

In making improvements on propaganda work, various appropriate forms of expression and mobilization must be utilized that would enable the progressive and democratic forces to reach the broad masses and encourage them to join and demonstrate their solidarity with people's actions. Propaganda forms that are popular, easy to use and disseminate (such as primers) must be used. The internet and social media must be availed of for propaganda purposes and for organizing mass actions. Various forms of mass actions must be creatively utilized, gearing them to the people's actual conditions and level of preparation. Attention must be given to forms that provide the people with opportunities to express their anger and

grievances regarding the burning issue of the MRT and LRT fare hikes and against the ruling regime.

We must pay particular attention to, and make plans, on how to reach the broadest numbers of students in the biggest number of schools within Metro Manila and its environs. Protest actions must erupt in the various campuses and pour out into the streets or nearby communities. We must also spark various kinds of protests, big and small, in communities, offices, hospitals, malls, public markets and other places. Those who oppose the MRT and LRT fare hikes must be promptly organized into patriotic and democratic associations.

All regions must express solidarity for, and take action against, the MRT and LRT fare hikes because this is not an issue of Metro Manila residents alone or of those living in its environs, but of the entire people: it is an issue concerning the continuing policies of privatization and deregulation.

Legal measures such as petitioning the Supreme Court and calling for Senate and Congressional investigations are likewise appropriate. The broadest possible unity must be forged among the various sectors, personalities and other entities in protesting the privatization and deregulation policies and the MRT and LRT fare hikes. Nonetheless, mass actions hold the key, and are what the patriotic and democratic forces must train the most attention on.

The US-Aquino regime must be rattled intensely by protests against the MRT and LRT fare hikes. These protests can gain even greater momentum from other people's struggles in the coming months. Starting with this struggle, we must likewise

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bolster and advance protests against upcoming water and power rate hikes, demand lower prices for petroleum products and other basic commodities and reduced fares for provincial buses as well as sea and air travel. We must broaden unity on, and strengthen, the struggle for a ₱16,000-minimum monthly wage.

The MRT and LRT fare hikes are just one of the many other doubly oppressive policies that Aquino is expected to impose in his last year in power. On

the last year of Aquino's term as president, he will become even more corrupt, brutal and subservient to US imperialist dictates in an attempt to extend the power of his clique beyond 2016.

The intense protests against the MRT and LRT fare hikes will further boost the people's movement to oust the US-Aquino regime. We must pull all stops to call to account and punish the US-Aquino regime, shake it to its very foundations and oust it for its onerous policies against the Filipino people. **AB**

MRT and LRT fare hikes condemned

Various sectors roundly condemned the sudden implementation of fare hikes at the MRT, LRT-1 and LRT-2 train systems at the beginning of the year.

Protests by Anakbayan and the Strike the Hike group marked the first day of implementation on January 4. The day after, progressive organizations filed a petition for a Temporary Restraining Order (TRO) at the Supreme Court to put a stop to the fare hike implementation. Progressive organizations led by the RILES Network and other groups simultaneously launched protest actions at various MRT and LRT stations.

The fare hikes were enforced without benefit of public consultation, even if it was an added burden to the daily lives

of the workers, salaried employees and students who comprise the majority of commuters. The MRT and LRT have up to 1.3 million passengers daily.

Among those who filed the petition were representatives of the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan and allied organizations and personalities.

Sens. Francis "Chiz" Escudero and Grace Poe likewise opposed the fare hike. They said that the Department of Transportation and Communications had no reason to call for an increase since it was financially capable of funding the improvement and rehabilitation of the MRT and LRT.

The two senators assailed the DOTC's treacherous maneuver, since it did not inform the Senate about its plans to raise fares when the 2015 national budget was being deliberated. Thus, Congress approved an allocation of up to ₱12 billion for the DOTC, including funds for rehabilitating

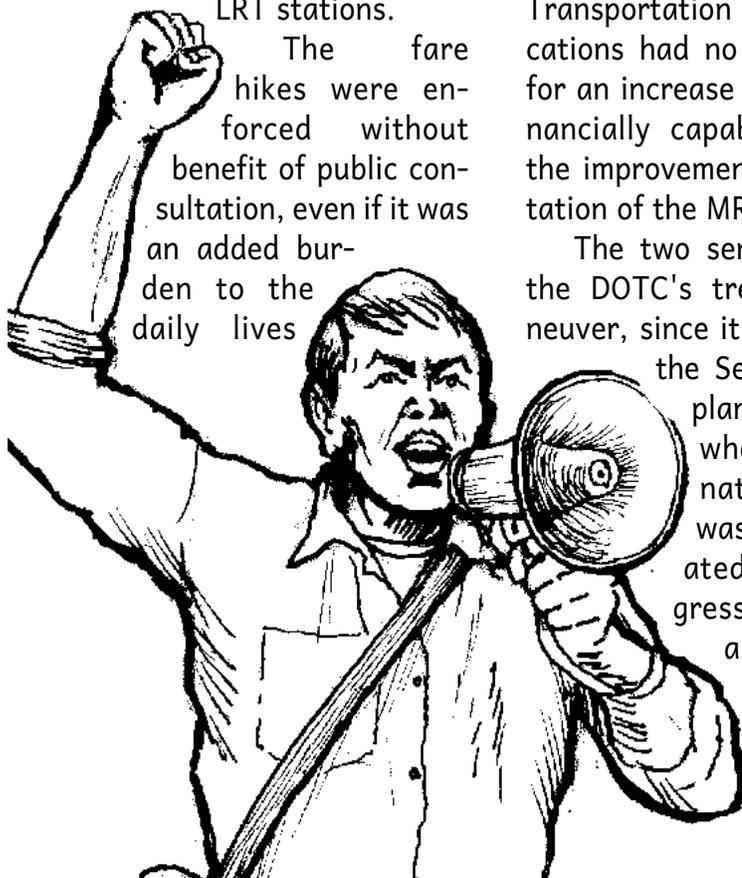
and maintaining the MRT and LRT.

Under the new scheme, fares for the Baclaran-Roosevelt route at LRT-1 would be raised from ₱20 to ₱30 (or a 50% hike). At LRT-2, the maximum fare is now ₱24-25, up from ₱15 (or a 66% raise). At MRT-3, the maximum ₱15-fare has been raised to ₱28 (or an 87% hike).

The fare hikes are in keeping with the US-Aquino regime's contracts entered into with big capitalists last September. The privatization of LRT-1's operation and management forms part of the LRT-Cavite extension contract awarded to Ayala Corporation and Metro Pacific. The contract guarantees an immediate fare hike at the LRT and regular fare increases thereafter for a period of 25 years. The LRT-2 line is likewise slated for privatization.

Meanwhile, the MRT has been under a Build Lease Transfer (BLT) agreement since the US-Ramos regime, with the state providing ₱6-7 billion in subsidies yearly.

On January 8, a consultation will be held at the Senate concerning the fare hikes. Progressive organizations are preparing to attend the consultation as a means of opposing and resisting the fare increases. **AB**



Water rate hike assailed

Bayan Muna Rep. Neri Colmenares assailed the government for announcing a water rate hike affecting the entire Metro Manila area and parts of Rizal and Cavite effective January 5. Water concessionaires Maynilad and Manila Water will be passing on to their consumers increases in the "foreign currency differential adjustment" (FCDA)

The FCDA is a scheme to ensure that private concessionaires are able to recover possible losses from foreign currency debts arising from fluctuations in the value of the peso. This is a government guarantee against reductions in the profits of big capitalists should the peso depreciate vis a vis the dollar.

Manila Water consumers will be paying an FCDA of ₱0.36 per cubic meter while Maynilad consumers will be charged an FCDA of ₱0.38 per cubic meter.

As a result, those consuming 10 cubic meters or less will be paying ₱1.19 more per month. The water bills of those consuming up to 20 cubic meters will reflect a ₱4.45 increase; while those consuming 30 cubic meters will be paying ₱9.12 more monthly. Aside from the FCDA, there are other impositions such as the value-added tax.

"This has been going on for seven years and up to ₱15 billion has already been collected from the consumers," said Colmenares. He also pointed out that private concessionaires have been allowed to raise water rates by up to 600% since 1997, when the public should instead be refunded the ₱50.7 billion collected for development projects that have never been implemented.

The Ayalas control Manila Water in partnership with the Japanese-owned Mitsubishi Corp., Singaporean companies and the World Bank's International Finance Corp. Maynilad, on the other hand, is controlled by Manuel V. Pangilinan's Metro Pacific Investments and the Indonesian bourgeois comprador Salim group.

Meanwhile, power rates will be hiked by four centavos per kilowatt-hour this January. The Energy Regulatory Commission has allowed the National Transmission Corp. to add the feed-in tariff allowance to consumers' bills. The tariff allowance, which represents expenditures for renewable energy projects, will allegedly serve as an incentive to companies investing in solar, wind, biomass and hydropower. **AB**

The AFP's bogus ceasefire

The Aquino regime once again manifested its mendacious and deceitful character when it reversed the facts surrounding the death of a lieutenant and two of his men in an ambush in Mabini, Compostela Valley on December 29. The regime is now using the incident as a pretext to malign the revolutionary forces and look for an excuse to scuttle the resumption of formal peace talks which may be held this January.

In a statement, Teresita Quintos-Deles, Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process claimed that the ambush was a ceasefire violation by the New People's Army (NPA). Contrary to claims made by Deles and AFP propagandists that the ambushed soldiers were unarmed and on their way home to their families, the 80-man combat unit of the 71st IB then led by 1st Lieutenant Bautista was conducting clearing operations in the villages of Palali, Panamin and Mascareg to pave the way for the massive and destructive operations of the Australian-owned One Asia Resources. The 71st IB's overall military operations likewise cover the villages of Darot, Linaw, Manasa, Anitapan and Candinuyan.

In reality, 1st Lieutenant Bautista and his men had come from their detachment in Barangay Anitapan to launch military operations right smack in the middle of the AFP's much-vaunted month-long ceasefire.

One Asia Resources and other big mining companies in the area fund the combat, intelligence and psywar operations of the 71st IB to suppress the people's opposition to military abuses and the destruction of their livelihoods due to large-scale mining. Included in the 71st IB's psywar operations is a vilification campaign against community leaders who have been leading struggles against foreign mines and military attacks, and programs to develop production and raise the prices of their agricultural produce.

Aware of how much the 71st IB's connivance with One Asia Resources is detrimental to the people's interests in the area, a people's militia unit initiated an ambush against 1st Lieutenant Bautista's unit. Bautista and two other soldiers were killed in the ambush launched in Sitio Barigyan, Barangay Candinuyan, Mabini at around 10 a.m. of December 29. As the commanding officer, Bautista was himself armed with a handgun and a grenade, while his men were armed to the teeth.

Said the NPA Comval-Davao Gulf Subregional

Command, the December 29 ambush was not a violation of any ceasefire but was a means of meting justice on the 71st IB for its military abuses. The 71st IB is responsible for the merciless killing of 8-year old Roque Antivo and the wounding of Jeffrey Hernan and Earl Antivo, both 13 years old,

in April 2013 and the killing of 7-year old Sunshine Jabines in September 2011. It was a legitimate politico-military action by the masses who have long been suffering from fascism and economic dislocation brought about by large-scale foreign mining. **AB**

CPP-Mindanao holds successful celebration of 46th anniversary

"The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) in Mindanao grew by thousands despite intense militarization in the entire island." Thus did Ka Oris describe the Party's overall disposition in Mindanao during a program held to celebrate the CPP's 46th anniversary on December 26.

More than 10,000 Party members, friends and allies were able to gather in a village in Marihatag, Surigao del Sur despite maneuvers by the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) to stop them from attending by setting up many checkpoints along the way and delaying the advance of a convoy of up to 200 vehicles.

Among those who joined the gathering was Fidel Agcaoili, a member of the NDFP negotiating panel; Surigao del Sur vice governor Manuel Alamada; and other local politicians and their representatives.

According to Ka Oris, National Democratic Front-Mindanao spokesperson, the CPP in Mindanao has been able to maintain its 46 guerrilla fronts amid relentless attacks by AFP forces who now number 55 battalions. Throughout 2014, the NPA was able to launch 300 tactical offensives and inflict battalion-size casualties on the enemy.

"The mass movements in the urban centers of the various provinces of Mindanao like the cities of Davao, Cagayan de Oro, Butuan, Surigao, General Santos, Iligan, Zamboanga, Dipolog,

Kidapawan, Cotabato and Tagum have supported the advancing armed struggle."

A key indicator of the overall advance are the thousands of new Party members in the villages, factories, schools and communities. Their recruitment was due to the sustained and vigorous mass movement and strict implementation of ideological work such as giving the intermediate and advanced Party courses to its members.

"As a result of the Party's firm leadership, it has a growing influence over the various sectors, including church people, academics and other middle forces, in their particular struggles," said Ka Oris.

The celebration provided an opportunity to hold a peace conference, where Ka Fidel Agcaoili accepted the manifesto of support for the GPH-NDF peace talks drawn up by Sowing the Seeds of Peace-Mindanao Movement for a Just and Lasting Peace (SSP-MMJLP). The SSP-MMJLP

is composed of religious leaders and church people, lawyers, human rights advocates, Bangsamoro organizations and local government officials.

Among the SSP-MMJLP's eight-point agenda are calls for genuine agrarian reform, national industrialization and development, jobs and recognition of workers' rights, socio-economic and democratic rights, respect for the rights of national minorities, national and scientific culture, an independent foreign policy and equal allocation of resources for Mindanao from the GPH national budget.

After the peace forum, colorful cultural performances were presented by various groups and individuals representing the different provinces and sectors.

The gathering was a joyous occasion for comrades from various units to warmly exchange news and jointly feast on food donated by allies.

A battalion-size people's militia provided security alongside several companies of regular NPA forces who attended the gathering. **AB**



NCMR scores numerous victories

The revolutionary forces led by the Communist Party of the Philippines in Northcentral Mindanao Region (NCMR) scored numerous victories in 2014. According to Ka Norsen Manggubat, the region's Party spokesperson, NCMR was able to contribute to the overall advance of the democratic revolution towards the strategic stalemate.

It had its share in thwarting the Aquino regime's Oplan Bayaninhan. In the face of intense militarization, it was able to launch up to 102 various military actions against the AFP, PNP, CAA and paramilitary groups. The NPA was likewise able to seize 55 firearms of various caliber and inflict 183 casualties on the enemy, including 103 killed. It destroyed six military vehicles and fired at Air Force helicopters on three separate occasions. It launched punitive actions against oppressive, exploitative and environmentally destructive companies, criminals and other bad elements. The enemy's forces have become overstretched.

An AFP brigade commander and battalion commander were both relieved from their positions for incurring heavy losses in clashes with the NPA. The NPA arrested and detained as prisoners of war two 8th IB soldiers and held them for more than four months, proving the NPA's capability to arrest and detain enemy forces and respect their rights as prisoners of war. The 403rd Bde's attempts to get hold of them were all in vain.

Amid the intensity of enemy attacks, the number of guerrilla platoons grew by 12%. The people's militia likewise grew by 57%, and has company-size forces in village clusters and battalion-size forces at the municipal level. The people's militia daringly launched 21 independent tactical offensives or 20% of the total number of military ac-

tions in the region in 2014.

On the other hand, the only thing the regime achieved in its imposition of brutal militarization in the region was the displacement of thousands of people from their homes and livelihoods and a longer roster of military abuses and human rights violations.

To further invigorate the agrarian revolution, the Party convened the second regional consultation of Party cadres on agrarian revolution to deepen understanding of the land problem and the prevalent relations of production and draw up concrete measures to advance the antifeudal struggle to a higher stage.

From small and sporadic barrio-level antifeudal actions, the masses are now able to launch municipal and inter-municipal antifeudal mass movements. Despite the enemy's relentless combat operations, 18 antifeudal struggles were launched in 58 barrios covering 13 municipalities in three provinces.

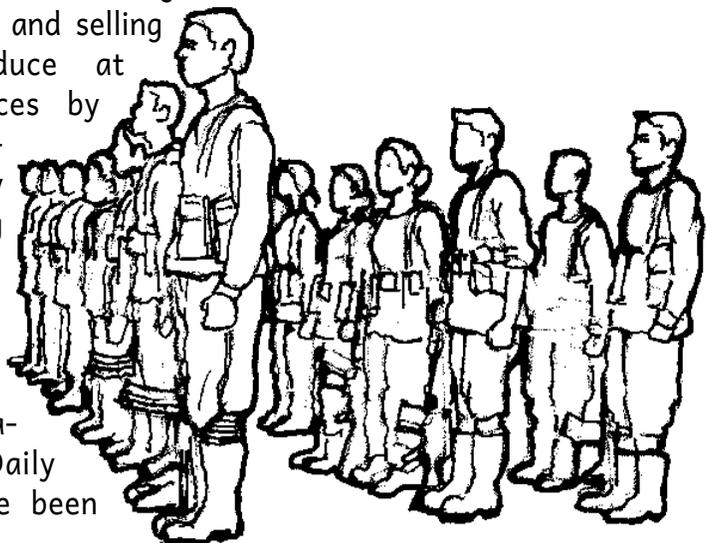
The peasants succeeded in raising wages, reducing milling fees and selling their produce at higher prices by courageously confronting landlords, buyers, usurers and owners of farm machinery. Daily wages have been

raised from ₱150 to ₱200, milling charges decreased by ₱0.20 to ₱0.50 per kilo and prices for abaca fiber, rice and other products have been increased. More than 3,400 families or almost 20,000 individuals benefited from these actions, providing them some measure of relief from their poverty.

In certain areas, land has been confiscated from landlords and abandoned or vacant land occupied and cultivated. The ejection of peasants from their homes and the lands they till has likewise been prevented in various ways.

The campaign to develop a self-sufficient economy has been expanded in the uplands, taking concrete form in the setting up of agrarian cooperation through labor-exchange teams, cooperative and communal farming, animal-raising and fish culture. Campaigns against the spread of destructive imperialist genetically modified seeds have been launched as well as against the expansion of agribusiness plantations and the entry of mining companies.

Amid the scourge of fascism, Lumad communities stood as one to defend and assert their rights. They resorted to organized evacuation to make their issues heard and win powerful



support to sustain their struggle until they could return to their homes safely.

Campaigns to rehabilitate and defend the environment have been launched through the widespread study of a primer on climate change. Nonetheless, more effort is needed to propagate the issues and educate the organized masses, especially those who live in forested areas and continue to make their living out of small-scale logging activities.

Tree-planting campaigns were begun in 2014 in at least 100 villages. The majority of the guerrilla platoons are now conscious of limiting the felling of trees when setting up camp. There are platoons that regularly collect seeds, plant bamboo and join other tree-planting activities and conduct regular assessments of the number of trees planted and grown.

The revolution's mass base has expanded and deepened, now numbering in the tens of thousands. In the uplands, from the accumulated strength of peasant and Lumad organizations, local organs of political power continue to grow through the establishment of more barrio revolutionary committees. Municipal-level revolutionary mass organizations have also been established.

Leadership over Party branches in the barrios has further expanded and people's organizations down to the area and sub-village level have become more tightly knit following the successful implementation of the minimum land reform program.

The invigoration of the revolutionary movement in the countryside closely influences the urban poor in the cities of the region who aspire eagerly for genuine change, especially those who have fallen victim to demolitions, injustices and the reactionary government's neglect. The open mass movements in the region's cities continue to condemn the rottenness of the ruling system, its failure to solve injustices and provide badly needed assistance to calamity victims, and its utter puppetry to US imperialism. The region marched abreast with the rest of the country in demanding the ouster of the reactionary Aquino government.

The legal democratic movements in the cities continue to serve as wellsprings of activists and youth and semi-proletarian cadres.

Vigorous education work continues with the implementation of the three-level Party course as well as special courses. Party education work has been conducted even under the very noses of the enemy. Young cadres are trained in assuming leadership tasks in the different fields of Party work.

In conclusion, Ka Norsen said that the key in all of the Party's achievements is ideological and political consolidation. The region has overcome the conservatism of years past and has learned to further advance warfare through warfare no matter how harsh conditions are. He called on comrades in the region to redouble their efforts in the coming years to further keep the flame of revolution raging and achieve more victories. **AB**

Tasks in advancing the revolution in Panay in 2015

Even as it succeeded in maintaining areas under concentrated enemy attack, the NPA was likewise able to expand to new areas in Panay. The NPA took advantage of the enemy's concentration of relatively large forces to guard the Jalaur River Dam project and other antipeople projects of the government and big capitalists.

At the same time, mass struggles gained momentum in the face of the people's efforts to recover from the devastation wrought by typhoon Yolanda and battle the Aquino regime's neglect. Apart from rehabilitating Yolanda-affected areas and even those not severely devastated, production campaigns have also been launched to help the people recover their livelihoods. These efforts have resulted in greater support for the guerrilla war and the NPA.

Struggles were likewise launched to suspend debt payments to usurers and develop crops that would help farmers become less dependent on usurers for capital. The peasants were also able to demand higher farm-gate prices for their products.

In this light, the Communist Party in Panay called for the follow-

ing:

First, thwart the enemy's plans to weaken the revolutionary forces in Panay. Seize the initiative and simultaneously disrupt attacks by the enemy which has concentrated two battalions in each guerrilla front. Sustain coordinated tactical offensives against repeated "clearing operations" and renewed efforts to bore "key-holes" in the guerrilla fronts. Oblige military forces to garrison themselves within the compounds of the destructive projects that they have been guarding.

Continue pinning down the military by flexibly concentrating and meting blows on the enemy's isolated and weak points. Recover areas within guerrilla zones or their environs that have been temporarily abandoned due to concentrated enemy attack. As much as possible, maintain consolidated areas being besieged by the enemy. Shift when there is danger of being embroiled in a decisive battle or of being rendered passive. Abandoned areas can be recovered by disrupting enemy actions.

Raise the fighting spirit of all Red fighters in thwarting enemy attacks. Develop more coordinated and intensified tactical offensives throughout the island. Make sure of seizing arms from the enemy. Further expand the NPA to raise its capability to launch coordinated tactical offensives and attend to the growing number of tasks especially in the countryside.

Second, sustain and strengthen the mass movement in order to contribute to the ouster of the US-Aquino regime. From sustaining coordinated and large mass movements, further develop the capability to hit the regime at its most vulnerable spot—its failure to help typhoon victims and its very belated distribution of limited cash assistance, which even became part of its electioneering.

Give further momentum to efforts to expose the hundreds of billions of pesos worth of pork barrel funds in the hands of Benigno Aquino III which he has been giving to his favored landlord-comprador cronies. Give particular attention to exposés of militarization and the regime's violations of human rights. Take advantage of national and international activities, like the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) secondary ministerial conference to be held in Panay in order to expose the regime's brutality, rottenness and criminal negligence.

Relentlessly underscore the various issues that anger the people of Panay and the entire country such as high prices of food and other prime commodities. Prepare for and launch sustained, intense and large-scale mass campaigns at the time of the regime's actual ouster.

Third, pursue the campaign to help in the economic recovery and in rebuilding the houses and social facilities of people who already know how to take organized action. Develop a comprehensive movement that would help the people recover from the typhoon's devastation and move towards developing governance capabilities as a response to the regime's criminal incompetence, corruption and brutality.

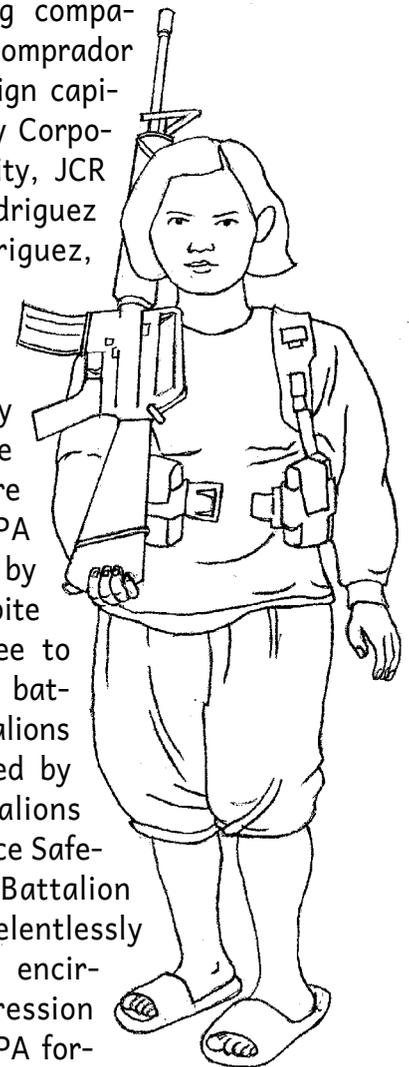
AB

Advances in Sierra Madre-ST and Southwest Negros

The revolutionary movement in both the Sierra Madre-Southern Tagalog (ST) subregion and the Southwest Negros guerrilla front registered advances. The Sierra Madre-ST subregion encompasses the provinces of Laguna and Rizal as well as northern and central Quezon. Southwest Negros, on the other hand, covers the towns of Cauayan, Hinobaan, Candoni and Ilog and the cities of Kabankalan and Sipalay, as well as parts of Negros Oriental.

In Sierra Madre-ST. In the past two years, the New People's Army (NPA) was able to launch 50 annihilative and attritive tactical offensives in all the provinces covered by the subregion, or an average of four per month. The enemy suffered platoon-size casualties (26 dead and 27 wounded). Meted blows by the NPA were the enemy fascist troops of the butcher 16th IB, 1st IB, 59th IB, 21st and 22nd DRC. The NPA likewise meted punishment on exploitative and environmentally destructive quarrying companies owned by big comprador bourgeoisie and foreign capitalists like Rapid City Corporation in Antipolo City, JCR Aggregates and Rodriguez Rock, Inc. in Rodriguez, Rizal.

The NPA has been able to maintain initiative and flexibility in battle. Out of the 56 firefights, 50 were initiated by the NPA and only six initiated by the AFP. This, despite the presence of three to four Philippine Army battalions and two battalions of SAF-PNP supported by three CAFGU battalions and the Regional Police Safety and Maneuver Battalion which have been relentlessly launching sustained encirclement and suppression campaigns against NPA forces. The AFP-PNP's declarations



that Laguna is now "insurgency-free" is a big lie. Neither has the NPA been absent from Rizal province and central and northern Quezon.

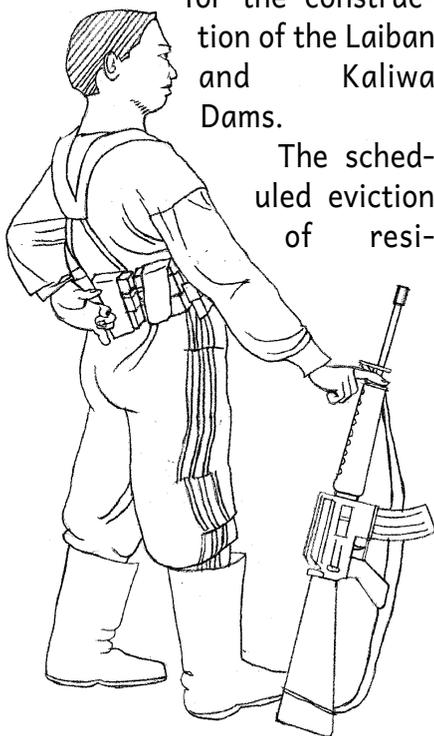
On the other hand, the mass base continues to expand throughout the subregion. The organized mass base expanded by 68% in the past two years, and the number of full-fledged peasant mass organizations have doubled despite incessant enemy attacks.

The people's open antifascist, antifeudal and anti-imperialist mass struggles against the reactionary US-Aquino regime is intensifying in the face of the AFP and PNP's brutality and human rights violations, beatings, rape of women and destruction of the people's livelihoods.

Protest actions are persistently launched to resist the widespread eviction of minority peoples and peasants from the UP Land Grant in Real, Quezon; from ARC lands in Mauban, Quezon; from lands being claimed by the Roxas family in Nakar, Quezon on which they plan to build the Pacific Coast City; and the upcoming inundation of seven barangays in Tanay, Rizal and two barangays in Nakar, Quezon

for the construction of the Laiban and Kaliwa Dams.

The scheduled eviction of resi-



dents living around Laguna Lake to give way to the construction of circumferential road-6 (C-6) and plans to extend MRT-7 from Quezon City to Bulacan will further drive the people to take action to defend their lives and livelihoods. It is clear to the people of Sierra Madre-ST that only through their collective opposition and action can they effectively defend their rights.

The Party's membership and the number of basic Party organizations continue to grow. The Party exercises firm leadership over the theater of guerrilla war, the guerrilla fronts, Sierra Madre-ST's urban areas and the people in the villages, communities, factories, mass organizations and alliances and within NPA units. More than 95% of Party members within the NPA have taken the Basic Party Course. Almost half of the members of Local Party Branches have also finished taking the basic course. Cadres at the guerrilla front and section levels and a number of Party branch cadres have also taken the Intermediate Party Course.

Company-size guerrilla fronts must be further strengthened. Within Sierra Madre-ST, it is both possible and feasible to maintain nine to 11 company-size guerrilla fronts. The NPA must continually be expanded until platoon-size units have been established in every appropriate town within Sierra Madre-ST.

More people's militia units as well as barrio defense units and sectoral self-defense units must also be established, trained and armed. The masses must continually be mobilized to join tactical offensives and engage in intelligence work, recruitment, production, raising supplies and logistics and other revolutionary tasks.

In Southwest Negros. As 2015 begins, intensified people's struggles are expected to confront the next stage of implementation in Southwest Negros of the AFP and Negros Occidental Gov. Alfredo Marañon Jr.'s Marching for Peace program as well as the US-Aquino regime's neoliberal policies.

According to Ka Andrea Guerrero, spokesperson of the Armando Sumayang Jr. Command of the New People's Army in Southwest Negros, the Red fighters have been able to expand their areas of operation and maneuver as the AFP chose to concentrate only on a number of areas. Party Section Committees have been established to assist NPA platoon cadres in maintaining older areas. The NPA likewise engaged in production work together with the peasant masses and the people's militia.

As a result, the theater of guerrilla war has expanded, providing more favorable conditions to the NPA to exercise initiative. It has been able to launch basic tactical offensives, including punitive actions against two construction companies and their CAFGU security guards (*see related article*) and bodyguards of despotic landlord Pablo "Jin" Sola. The NPA also punished rabid fascist elements and military intelligence operatives.

Agrarian revolution has consistently been implemented. Peasants and farm workers have demanded higher wages for work in sugar cane fields, higher prices for charcoal and coffee crops and the right to till vacant land. There is intense resistance to landgrabbing in the uplands to replace existing crops with pineapple, oil palm, rubber trees and banana. The middle forces in Hinobaan and

Cauayan have undertaken significant action against black sand mining in coastal and upland areas. There is also a widespread petition among residents of coastal areas in Cauayan against Aquino's "No Build Zone" (NBZ) policy.

These various mass struggles have exposed the hollowness of the much-vaunted peace and development under the Provincial Integration Development Unit (Providu) and Marching for Peace. The regime's reforestation program is nothing but a smokescreen to enable big companies to penetrate ancestral land. There is widespread resistance among minorities and settlers to schemes by the government and landlords to provide Ancestral Domain Titles (ADT) to the national minorities in exchange for allowing their land to be planted to rubber trees, oil palm and banana.

Marañon's much-vaunted claims of having put a stop to illegal logging in Hinobaan is all for show to cover up his role in denuding the uplands and divert the people's attention from the construction of a pier in Barangay Culipapa that will cause the eviction of hundreds of families. In Candoni town, huge amounts of local government funds have been poured into the establishment of Barangay Peacekeeping Action Teams (BPAT) to ensure the suppression of the people's resistance to plans by TADECO to plant banana and pineapple in the villages of Gatuslao, Agboy and Payawan. Meanwhile, Marañon turns a blind eye to the proliferation of illegal drugs.

Residents of Sipalay and Cauayan are likewise worried about the reopening of Philex Mining Corp. because this would lead anew to the destruction of the environment and the people's livelihoods. **AB**

4 soldiers killed, 7 wounded

Four soldiers from the 29th IB Bravo Company were killed and seven wounded after being hit by a command-detonated explosive (CDX) planted by a team from the Western Agusan Norte-Agusan Sur Subregional Command of the New People's Army at about 8 a.m. of December 22 in Rizal, Buenavista, Agusan del Norte.

Arriving aboard a six-by-six truck, the ambushed platoon had come from the Bravo Company command post in Barangay Rizal to relieve troops stationed at Sitio Bangkaling, Nongnong, Butuan City.

The soldiers aboard the six-by-six truck were unable to return fire due to the impact of the explosion.

A full five minutes elapsed before reinforcements arrived. But they were too scared and could only manage to fire their weapons indiscriminately, hitting a boy who was walking at a nearby rice paddy. Aside from the explosives detonation, no other shots came from the NPA side. Thus, claims by the the 29th IB of a ten-minute exchange of fire were a figment of their imagination.

No matter how much the military and police deny the casualty count, there is no hiding this fact from residents living nearby, from others who had passed by the scene of the ambush and from people living adjacent to the military camp.

Meanwhile, an NPA unit under the Armando Sumayang Jr. Command of Southwest Negros disarmed Efren Baton Solanoy, an active CAFGU element under the 12th IB. The disarming operation was conducted in Sitio Tau-angan, Gil Montilla, Sipalay City on the night of December 14.

Seized from Solanoy was an M14 automatic rifle with nine magazines and 110 rounds of ammunition. The NPA also confiscated a military backpack, two camouflage uniforms and an ID. Solanoy and another CAFGU element are assigned to secure the International Builders Corporation (IBC) Batching Plant. **AB**

NPA releases prisoners of war

Four prisoners of war were released on two separate occasions last December in Mindanao.

On December 26, two soldiers captured in August in Impasugong, Bukidnon were released in Marihatag, Surigao del Sur. For more than four months, AFP forces failed to discover the whereabouts of Pfc. Marnel Cinches and Pfc. Jerrel Yorong. The prisoners were detained for a long period due to the AFP and the Aquino regime's refusal to implement a seven-day ceasefire of limited scope requested by the NPA.

Prior to this, a custodial unit under the NPA Comval-North Davao-South Agusan Subregional Command released Cpl. Benjamin Samano and Pfc. Alvin Ricarte in Montevista, Compostela Valley on December 21. The two soldiers were captured on December 2 in an NPA attack on the compound of Sumitomo Fruits Corp. in New Corella, Davao del Norte where they were serving as security guards. The NPA transferred custody of the two soldiers to Davao City mayor Rodrigo Duterte, who in turn turned them over to the AFP Eastern Mindanao Command. **AB**

NPA arrests ComVal jail warden

The New People's Army (NPA) Comval-North Davao-South Agusan Subregional Command arrested on December 23 Jose Mervin Coquilla, jail warden of the Compostela Valley Provincial Rehabilitation Center.

The arrest was spurred by complaints received by the NPA on alleged anomalies related to Coquilla's administration of the Compostela Valley Jail and his involvement in the trafficking of illegal drugs inside the detention center.

The complaints allege that Coquilla stole funds meant for the detainees, resulting in substandard food and medical services received by the inmates.

Coquilla also allegedly abused the detainees physically and psychologically. Visiting family members are reportedly forced to talk to their detained loved ones with the latter remaining behind bars.

On the other hand, Coquilla has reportedly been turning a blind eye whenever prisoners are caught using illegal drugs or when jail guards are caught smuggling drugs into the jail.

The NPA assured Coquilla's family that he would be treated well by the Red fighters and the revolutionary mass base while he is under investigation. **AB**

Political detainees appeal to Pope Francis

The release of the country's political detainees. This was what political prisoners and their families have requested on the upcoming visit to the Philippines in mid-January of Pope Francis, patriarch of the Roman Catholic Church.

Among those who wrote letters of appeal to Pope Francis were the parents of two youth activists who graduated from the University of the Philippines-Pampanga who were illegally arrested by the 3rd IB in Carranglan, Nueva Ecija on August 9 and accused of being members of the New People's Army. Mrs. Marita Cadanao wrote on behalf of her son Guiller Martin Cadanao while Mrs. Rowena Salonga wrote in behalf of her son Gerald Salonga.

Meantime, a separate letter was written by Andrea Rosal to Pope Francis requesting him to help in her release. Rosal was arrested in March 2014 in Caloocan City while she was seven months pregnant. Her newborn daughter died in May 2014 due to lack of medical care and the hardships she suffered in detention. Andrea is the elder daughter of the late CPP spokesperson Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal. **AB**

AFP violates own ceasefire in SMR

The month-long ceasefire declared by the Aquino regime and the AFP that was supposed to have started December 18 is utterly useless. Particularly in Southern Mindanao, forces of the AFP Eastern Mindanao Command continue to occupy and conduct military operations in the following areas:

1) Davao City: Mapula, Lumiad, Paquibato Proper and Malabog in Paquibato District; Domingga in Calinan District; Marilog; Salaysay; and Tambobong in Baguio District.

2) Compostela Valley: Kingking, Napnapan, Tibagon and Las Arenas in Pantukan; Panamin and Anitapan in Mabini; Nuevo Iloco, Nueva Visayas, Barangay Andili and Sta. Monica in Mawab; Cabidanan and Mainit in Nabunturan; Paloc, Mahayahay, Parasanon and Tandik in Maragusan; Casoon in Monkayo; Sangab, New Visayas, Lapulapu, Teresa, Masara, Panoraon, Elizalde and Malamodao in Maco; Ngan in Compostela; and Manurigao in New Bataan.

3) Davao Oriental: Taguibo in Mati City; Caus-

wagan and Maputi in Banaybanay; San Isidro, New Visayas, Don Mariano Marcos, Maragatas, Calapagan and Marayag in Lupon; Binondo and Mahan-ug in Baganga; Taytayan, Malibago and Mainit in Cateel; Caatihan in Boston; and Lapulapu and San Roque in San Isidro.

4) North Cotabato: Don Panaca, Kinarum, Bangkal, Amabel, Noa, Binay, Bagumbayan, Balete, Basak, Mahongcog, Manobisa, Imamaling and Bongolanon in Magpet.

5) Agusan del Sur: Santa Josefa, Veruela, Sabud and Kauswagan in Loreto; Salvacion and New Visayas in Trento.

The NPA cited the case of Barangay Catihan, Boston where 14 soldiers from the 67th IB occupy the multipurpose gym, private homes and videoke bars while conducting intensified intelligence operations.

In Sitio Balod, Barangay Malibago, Cateel, the 67th IB Bravo Company arrived at around 5 a.m. of December 19, scoured the area and occupied the village center. **AB**

Hold the US accountable for its crimes during the Philippine-American War (1899-1913)

We will be commemorating the 116th year of the start of the Philippine-American War on February 4. On that day in 1899, the first Filipino fighter was felled by a soldier from the American occupation army in a skirmish at Sta. Mesa, Manila.

Let us refresh the memories of the new generation of Filipino youth on the genocide, the crimes and brutalities committed by the US military against the Filipino people and the latter's heroic struggle for national freedom and democracy.

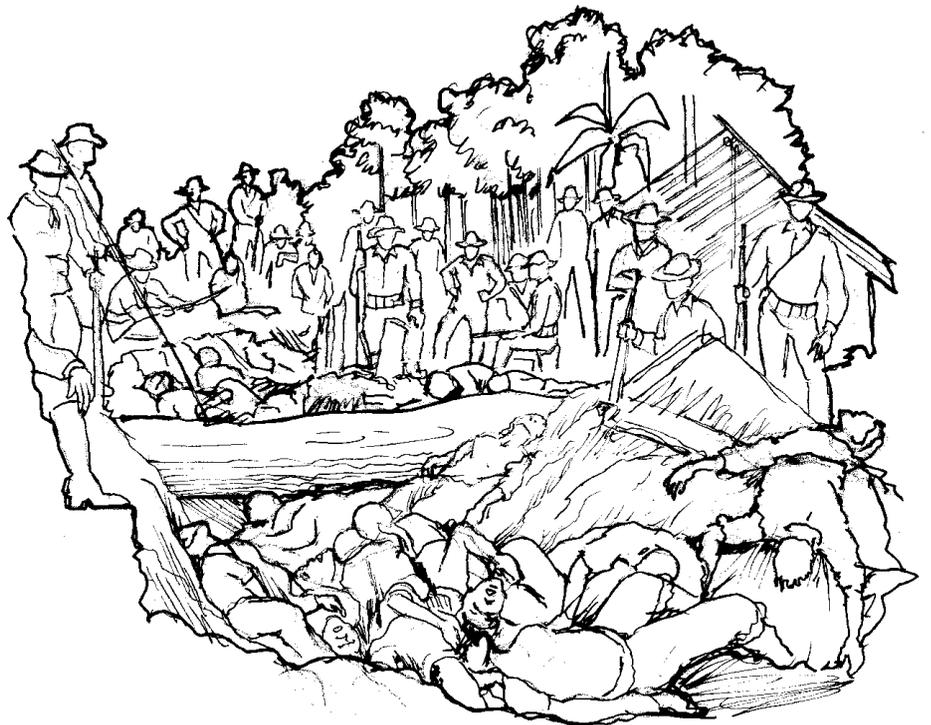
Gen. Elwell S. Otis, the US military governor in the Philippines (1899-1900) led the first round of the violent suppression of the Filipino people. The US Army used the tactics of reconcentrating civilians in military camps, the "water cure" in interrogations, and the "scorched earth" campaign which involved burning down entire communities. These did not only happen in Batangas and Laguna, but were likewise widespread in Bicol, the Visayas and parts of Mindanao.

Eminent historians estimate that up to 1.4 million Filipinos, or more than 10% of the Philip-

pine population at that time died from 1899 to 1905, the first years of the Philippine-American War. Up to 600,000 died in Luzon, including 300,000 reported by the US military to have died in Batangas alone in the face of wanton killings and

atrocities. These figures do not include the thousands of Moros killed by American soldiers.

Despite their superior weapons, US military forces failed to quickly defeat the Filipino people's resistance. The brutality of the US military incited widespread resistance. The Filipino people mounted an armed revolution lasting close to 15 years, using old rifles, revolvers, machetes, daggers, arrows, spears



Barangay chairman slain in Agusan del Sur

Elements of the 26th IB mercilessly killed a barangay chairman on December 22, in violation of the Aquino regime's much-vaunted ceasefire. Barangay Chairman Nicasio "Angis" Precioso Sr. was gunned down in Km. 2, Barangay Nuevo Trabajo, San Luis, Agusan del Sur while he was on his way to a meeting of the Municipal Peace and Order Council. The NPA Western Agusan Norte-Agusan Sur Subregional Command strongly condemned the heinous killing.

The day before, Kapitan Angis and other villagers had confronted a Community Organizing for Peace and Development (COPD) team under the 26th IB led by Sgt. Andres Villaganaz, telling the soldiers to stop camping out in the bar-

rio and intimidating residents. They also told the troopers to return to their barracks since they had declared a ceasefire anyway.

Precioso's fellow villagers had long been complaining about the military's harassment and intimidation, with the village chair staunchly standing by his people. Among the long list of military abuses in the area are a grenade throwing incident in the village in 2005 and another one at the house of the former barangay captain in 2007; the killing of Datu Mansubaybay in 2009; and several other human rights violations.

Precioso was also a noted leader of the Banwaoon tribe.

AB

and other indigenous weapons.

Hamletting. The military camps where Filipinos were forcibly herded were known as *reconcentrados*. The camps were severely cramped, leading to the spread of disease and widespread deaths. One camp that was little more than three kilometers long and half a kilometer wide housed 8,000 Filipinos. In another report, 8,450 out of 298,000 people incarcerated in *reconcentrados* died between January and April 1902.

Areas outside of the *reconcentrados* were called "free-fire zones," meaning anyone seen outside the camp without a *cedula* or residence certificate was to be shot. General J. Franklin Bell claimed in a letter that he organized the camps to "protect" friendly Filipinos from the "ladrones" or thieves (which was how the revolutionaries were called) and "assure them an adequate food supply" while teaching them "proper sanitary standards."

"Scorched earth policy." Notorious examples of the policy of burning down entire villages was Gen. Jacob Smith's orders to his men in Samar to "kill and burn," "Kill everyone over ten years of age!" and "Turn (Samar) into a 'howling wilderness' so that 'even the birds could not live there.'"

It was General Smith's retaliation for the successful raid on September 28, 1901 by revolutionaries under Gen. Vicente Lukban on Company C of the 9th US Army Regiment then stationed at the Balangiga town

center in Eastern Samar. The 74-man company suffered 48 killed and 26 wounded. The revolutionaries were able to seize 100 rifles and many rounds of ammunition.

Some of the American soldiers survived when they were able to ride a dugout canoe to Basey, Samar province. Company G commander Capt. Edwin V. Bookmiller later returned to Balangiga and burned the town to ashes.

"Water cure" and other US Army crimes. American soldiers systematically used the "water cure" and other forms of torture on captured Filipinos, in a desperate attempt to quell the armed resistance. In a letter to his family in the US on November 25, 1900, Sgt. Charles S. Riley recounted how they gathered the *presidente* (mayor), the priest and another local leader, and investigated them. The mayor evaded some questions, and he was soon bound and subjected to the water cure. He was made to lie face up under a water tank while water flowed to his mouth. Another man sat on his belly to prevent him from drowning. The mayor begged for mercy and talked. He was subjected a second time to the water cure until he divulged all the information that they sought from him.

The people of Panay likewise fell victim to intense brutality in the hands of the Americans. A letter by a man named Mr. Nelson to the *Boston Herald* on August 25, 1902 recalls the burning of Panay:

"There was talk of indiscriminate burning by General Smith. The 18th Regulars marched from Iloilo in the south to Capiz in northern Panay, with orders to burn all towns allied with the resistance. This resulted in clearing an area 60 miles wide from end to end"—meaning the American soldiers had burned down an area of more than 96 square kilometers.

Suppressing information. Otis suppressed all reports regarding such military tactics to prevent them from reaching anti-imperialist newspapers and the American Anti-Imperialist League of which writer Mark Twain was a member. Otis also ordered particular unit commanders to order their men to reverse or retract their initial statements reported in the US media.

Meanwhile, Otis launched his own counter-propaganda, claiming "Filipino bandits" were the ones torturing their American captives. This was belied by reports from other foreign reporters and representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) like F.A. Blake.

When Blake arrived in Manila to investigate the atrocities, Otis confined him to his office in Manila. Once, when Blake was able to shake off his military escorts and venture into the field, he saw burned houses and "horribly mutilated bodies of Filipinos, with stomachs slit open and occasionally decapitated." Blake recounted this to an American reporter upon his return to San Francisco, California, USA. **AB**