

Stop the War on Workers in Southern Tagalog, Philippines!

Bayan Canada National Organizing Committee

April 3, 2009

Bayan Canada denounces the continued harassment and intimidation of workers in the region of Southern Tagalog. Last March 17, 2009, the Municipal Trial Court in Rosario, Cavite province issued a warrant for the arrest of 33 militant trade unionists according to a press release dated April 1, 2009 from the Workers Assistance Centre in Cavite.

The warrant of arrest is for 31 members and officers of the *Nagkakaisang Manggagawa sa Chong Won* (NMCW, United Workers of Chong Won), the *Kaisahan ng mga Manggagawa sa Phils. Jeon Inc.* (KMPJI, Union of Workers in Phils. Jeon Inc.) and for two officers of the Solidarity of Cavite Workers (SCW). The Chong Won Fashion Inc and Phils. Jeon, Inc both operate inside the Cavite Export Processing Zone. Chong Won is known as a supplier of the North American retail giant Walmart.

The bogus criminal charges of direct assault upon agents of persons in authority and grave coercion against these trade unionists were made by the Cavite Provincial Prosecutor's Office based on complaints filed two and a half years ago, October 12, 2006, by the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA) police force and the Chong Won Management.

However, the same Prosecutor's Office remains silent on the charges of grave coercion filed by the striking workers of NMCW and KMPJI against the PEZA police and the management of the Chong Wong Fashion Inc. and the Phils. Jeon Inc. on October 27, 2006. The strike that began on September 25, 2006 and which lasted nearly a year was met with violent attacks, dispersals, and death threats by the PEZA against the striking workers. To date, there has been no genuine move to resolve the workers' complaints and grievances.

The lopsided justice in this specific case favours the foreign corporations over the workers who resorted to their ultimate weapon of the strike when all recourse had failed. The criminalization of the brave actions of the workers in Cavite is meant to crush the militant unions. It is also meant to intimidate and silence the workers and their supporters and thus create a semblance of industrial peace that foreign corporations and investors need to keep their operations going and their profits flowing.

The Philippine Macapagal-Arroyo regime continues to sell national patrimony to foreign interests, shoving trade union rights aside and criminalizing workers who resist. At the same time the Arroyo regime begs the US for more military assistance and training for her military forces through unequal agreements like the Visiting Forces Agreement and its *Balikatan* war exercises which bolsters the security for foreign interests and investments in the country and Arroyo's maneuvers to stay in power beyond 2010. While the empty political rhetoric of "change" continues to come out of America, it is business as usual in at least one of US imperialism's neo-colonies.

In Canada, hundreds of Filipinos have already lost their jobs along with thousands of other Canadian workers due to the current world economic crisis. The same sort of manufacturing industries in Canada, including ones that supply Walmart, have thrown thousands of workers out in the cold while they move their manufacturing jobs to countries that can provide cheaper labour like that of the Philippines.

Bayan Canada calls on its member organizations and supporters to take action in support of the persecuted officers and members of the NMWC, KMPJI and the SCW. Actions may include demonstrations in front of Philippine consulates and the Embassy in Ottawa, writing protest letters, drafting statements of support to the workers and helping to raise funds for their bail money and legal fees.

**Stop trade union repression in the Philippines now!
Drop the charges against the 33 trade unionists in Cavite!
Wages, rights and livelihood!**

**Bayan (short for Bagong Alyansang Makabayan or New Patriotic Alliance) in Canada is an alliance made up of progressive Filipino organizations and organizing committees in the provinces of Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, Alberta and British Columbia. The National Organizing Committee is working towards building an official overseas chapter of [Bayan in the Philippines](#).*

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