

Philippines: Right to strike suppressed

Thursday 3 May 2007, by [Partido Manggagawa](#) (Date first published: 3 May 2007).

May 2, 2007

Partido ng Manggagawa [Labor Party-Philippines]

Lone strike is due to labor repression not industrial peace

The labor party-list group observed that the lone strike for this year that President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo cited in her May Day speech is sign of labor repression not industrial peace. "It is a blatant lie to say that labor disputes are being resolved and thus strikes are waning. The truth is that workers are prevented from striking through the government's power to assume jurisdiction of strikes," explained Partido ng Manggagawa [Member of Parliament] Rep. Renato Magtubo.

He cited as typical the case of the workers of Philippine National Construction Corp. (PNCC)-Skyway [a part state-owned, part private-owned company that administers the highway in the south of the capital Metro Manila] who went on strike yesterday in time for Labor Day. "The makeshift tents in their picketline have hardly been heated by the summer sun when the assumption of jurisdiction order from the Labor Department arrived at around 8 a.m. The order enjoins the 155 stationary guards, motorcycle riders and traffic patrolmen of PNCC-Skyway from proceeding with the strike and commands them to return to work," argued Magtubo.

He added "As of today, the striking workers have reported for work lest they be charged with defying the order, be liable for an illegal strike and thus be vulnerable to dismissal from the company. So the Labor Department's database still records one strike when in fact the labor dispute at PNCC-Skyway remains unsettled and workers grievances remain unmet."

The labor party-list group is supporting the fight of the PNCC-Skyway Traffic Management and Security Division Workers Organization against management's intransigence in the collective bargaining negotiations that have reached a deadlock. They are also condemning the Labor Department's abuse of the power to assume jurisdiction of disputes and strikes. ###

May 1, 2007

[Member of Parliament] Rep. Renato Magtubo

Partido ng Manggagawa [Labor Party-Philippines]

Solidarity with the PNCC workers strike and demands

The Partido ng Manggagawa and its brothers and sisters in the labor movement express our support for the fight of the PNCC workers that has matured into strike in the face of management's intransigent position in their collective bargaining agreement.

We condemn too the Department of Labor's suppression of the strike through an assumption of jurisdiction order issued by the office of Sec. Brion. The PNCC workers have just setup their picketlines today when the assumption of jurisdiction order arrived immediately around 8 a.m. The power to assume jurisdiction of labor disputes is being abused to weaken labor's bargaining power and favor the position of capital.

In fact the Department of Labor's data that only a single strike was launched this year is not a sign of industrial peace but of labor repression. This is the peace of the grave with the right to strike being buried six feet under the ground through the power to assume jurisdiction.

Thus we are pushing for the rationalization of the power to assume jurisdiction to protect the right to strike, bargain and organize. It should be allowed only in essential industries like electricity, water and hospitals and be banned in all other cases. In general, government must not intervene in the resolution of labor disputes and strikes.

We believe that the PNCC employees' demands are not unreasonable given the financial capability of the company and the options for making savings on the part of management. It is time that management make sacrifices instead of the lowly workers.

The PNCC employees are asking for the following: PhP1,800 per year increase for 3 years [exchange rate USD1=PhP48], PhP10,000 medical reimbursement, PhP10,000 signing bonus, additional free HMO, stop to management's overspending, removal of 65% subsidy to the company car loan privileges of managers and executives, and decrease in the number of managers in every department. ###

April 3, 2007

Partido ng Manggagawa [Labor Party-Philippines]

PNCC Skyway employees hold protest as CBA deadlock looms

Rank-and-file employees and supervisory personnel of the PNCC Skyway held another picket-protest at the main office in the Bicutan Interchange in Paranaque [in the south of Metro Manila] to press management on their demands. This time the protest was dramatized as "Calvary of the PNCC employees."

More than a hundred PNCC employees and workers from nearby factories launched the mass action from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m today. A protester carried a symbolic wooden cross labeled with their demands. The labor party-list group Partido ng Manggagawa and Paranaque factory workers joined the fight of the PNCC workers in solidarity.

The rank-and-file and supervisory unions are both holding collective bargaining negotiations with management but the workers are about to declare a deadlock preparatory to filing a notice of strike. The brewing labor dispute at PNCC is a portent of labor discontent as hundreds of collective bargaining agreements are set to expire within the year.

Rene Soriano, president of the rank-and-file union, said that "Management is taking a hardline position on the workers demands on the alibi that the company does not have the money. Yet management is overspending and splurging on luxuries. We have seen that in other government-

owned corporations, like the case of GSIS under Garcia [the state insurance agency for government workers].”

The employees are asking for the following: PhP1,800 per year increase for 3 years, PhP10,000 medical reimbursement, PhP10,000 signing bonus, additional free HMO, stop to management’s overspending, removal of 65% subsidy to the company car loan privileges of managers and executives, and decrease in the number of managers in every department.

“The employees’ demands are not unreasonable given the financial capability of PNCC and the options for making savings on the part of management. It is time that management make sacrifices instead of the lowly workers,” asserted Soriano. ###

March 29, 2007

Partido ng Manggagawa [Labor Party-Philippines]

PNCC employees headed for a deadlock in negotiations, holds picket protest

Rank-and-file employees and supervisory personnel of the PNCC held a picket at the main office in the Bicutan Interchange in Paranaque [south of the capital Metro Manila] to press management on their demands. Some 50 employees launched the protest from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m today.

The activity was a joint activity of the rank-and-file and supervisory unions. Both unions were holding collective bargaining negotiations with management. The Partido ng Manggagawa is supporting the fight of the PNCC workers.

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