



METAL WORKERS ALLIANCE OF THE PHILIPPINES

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MWAP Statement on the Conclusion of NXP Cabuyao struggle
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“The struggle of the workers in NXP Philippines ended victoriously. This is a sweet victory that resulted from the unity of the NXP workers and from the strong support of the local and international community.”

Thus said NXP union president Reden Alcantara on the recently-concluded labor dispute in NXP Cabuyao. Alcantara is also the National President of the Metal Workers Alliance of the Philippines (MWAP).

NXP illegally dismissed 24 union officers last 5 May 2014 for taking time off on regular public holidays including May 1 or International Labor Day. The illegal dismissal came in the midst of a stall in the CBA negotiations. It was clearly a part of management’s scheme to decimate the union leadership, sow fear among the membership and weaken the bargaining power of the union.

The strong campaign that ran for nearly five months forced the NXP management to back down on its relentless attacks. Yesterday, 26 September, the union and the management formally signed a new collective bargaining agreement for 2014-2016.

Twelve (12) union officers were reinstated and the remaining 12 were given a decent separation package. Wages were increased by a total of 12.25% spread over three (3) years. A significant number of contractual workers were given regular status. And most of all, the union was able to foil NXP’s union-busting efforts.

“The NXP management failed to bust our union, which is one of the few unions inside the hostile territory of the special economic zones. That, to us, is our biggest victory,” adds Alcantara.

It was a struggle not seen in the recent history of workers in the special economic zones (SEZs) in the Philippines. NXP workers broke the “no-union, no-strike” policy in the SEZs. Together with their supporters, they repeatedly asserted their right to hold concerted actions inside this hostile territory. They broke the heavily-guarded and secured gates of the Light Industry Science Park 1 (LISP 1) to protest in front of NXP. The heavy presence of security guards, police and goons, the steel barriers in the gates, the surveillance cameras and the harassments and intimidations were no match to the strong and determined spirit of the workers and their supporters.

Inside the special economic zones, the call to organize and to unionize reverberated.

Lessons learned

The fight in NXP taught us significant lessons.

It reaffirmed the prime value of workers’ unity. Had it not for their strong unity, this fight could have been crushed at its onset.

It once again confirmed the importance of consolidating the union thru continuous political education. The power of the union springs from the workers’ awareness of their fundamental rights and the need to fight for them.

It taught us the lesson of what a genuine leader should be in the face of such crisis. A true union leader knows that collective leadership and collective decision brings the best results. True union leaders know that their interest is secondary to the interest and welfare of their members and are prepared to sacrifice for the good of the majority.

It taught us the importance of uniting with other sectors of society. Various sectors and organizations - trade unions, government employees, migrant workers, health workers, women, youth, church people and even progressive parliamentarians - supported our fight. They joined protest actions, sent protest letters, popularized the issue in social media and other venues, and gathered moral and financial support to sustain the fight.

The NXP struggle was a showcase of what international solidarity can do. We are deeply thankful to the all-out support of our global union IndustriALL who worked hard especially in pressuring key NXP customer Apple, as well as Nokia, Samsung, Ericson and Panasonic, to uphold their ethical supply chain commitments. They urged them to call on NXP to respect workers' rights.

We are also thankful to the support we received from our colleagues and friends in the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union, IG Metall, Union of Professional Engineers in Finland, Trade Union Pro, Finnish Metalworkers' Union, Unite, United Steel Workers, NXP workers council in Hamburg, Good Electronics, United Students against Sweatshops, International Campaign for Responsible Technology, Philippine Australia Union Link, German Filipino Friends, China Labour Action; to our brothers and sisters in Indonesia, China, Belgium, Netherlands, Hongkong, US and others; to other global unions like UNI; and to the advocacy social media sites SumofUs and LabourStart. The list is long and though we cannot mention everyone, we are sincerely thankful for all of your support.

Definitely, the NXP fight has become an inspiration to so many workers, especially in the hostile territory of SEZs, to fight for their fundamental right to unionize and have collective bargaining. This important lesson is already imprinted in the history of the Philippine union movement.

What lies ahead

The fight in NXP Cabuyao exposed the real character and ferocity of the company. For so many years, they tried to portray "industrial peace" in this NXP facility. The management pretended that they care for the welfare of their workers. Yet, they were just waiting to strike and bust the union that has existed for 33 years.

The recent fight presages an even intensified struggle in the future. The union must be prepared for this. It must continue to be vigilant against any union-busting schemes of the company. We are confident that the important lessons learned from this recent struggle will further empower the workers to defend their union and to foil any attacks against them.

The 12 officers who were not reinstated will continue to be part of the labor movement and will serve the workers outside of NXP. We take pride in having union leaders who do not bow down in the face of adversities.

"We believed that we have waged a strong battle. We encountered many difficulties in this long and painstaking struggle but we never stopped at finding solutions. We were very sure that we will end up victorious because we are fighting for our rights. This victory is not only our victory. It is a victory of all workers fighting for a genuine union," said Alcantara.

Again, we thank you for standing with us in this painstaking struggle. We hope to continue our joint efforts and strengthen our solidarity in our common goal of creating a world that puts premium to the interest of workers and people. To you we say: *maraming salamat at mabuhay ang pakikibaka ng mga manggagawa!*" (thank you very much and long live the struggle of the workers), ends Alcantara. ###

Reference:

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