

Philippines: PALEA gets backing of Occupy protesters

Tuesday 20 December 2011, by [MANGGAGAWA Juan](#), [RIVERA Gerry](#) (Date first published: 15 December 2011).

1 of 40 In front of the consulate: PALEA VP Alnem Pretencio is joined by Geraldine Kearney, President of the 2-million strong Australian Council of Trade Unions and leaders of the Australian Services Union, Maritime Union of Australia, Victorian Trades Hall Council and the Australia-Asia Workers Links

Just as truck drivers and longshore workers got the support of Occupy rallyists in the United States, the Philippine Airlines Employees' Association (PALEA) received the solidarity of Occupy protesters in Canada. Occupy Toronto activists together with Canadian airline unions held a solidarity action at the Toronto international airport Dec. 10.

On Tuesday, various ports along the West Coast such as Oakland, Los Angeles and Portland were shutdown by community pickets of Occupy protesters with the support of port workers who refused to cross the picketlines. As is the practice in Occupy protests, the Toronto rally was called a "general assembly" and speeches were "echoed" by the participants.

The series of solidarity actions for PALEA continued with a picket at the Tokyo office of Philippine Airlines (PAL) by Japanese railway workers last Dec. 12. On Dec. 14 another rally was held at the Philippine consulate in Melbourne that was attended by PALEA vice president Alnem Pretencio, the head of the two million-strong Australian Council of Trade Unions Geraldine Kearney and leaders of the Australian Services Union which represents airline workers including Qantas, Maritime Union of Australia, Victorian Trades Hall Council and Australia Asia Worker Links.

Gerry Rivera, PALEA president and vice chair of the Partido ng Manggagawa, said that "We salute the Occupy shutdown of the West Coast ports to demand justice for truck drivers and longshore workers. The fight for better pay, job security and union rights is a common struggle of port workers, airline employees and workers around the world. PALEA stands shoulder to shoulder with Occupy protesters."

The latest series of solidarity actions for PALEA is the second wave after earlier rallies staged in late October to early November in Washington D.C., San Francisco, Chicago, Los Angeles, Tokyo and Hong Kong.

Renato Magtubo, chair of PM and co-chair of the Church-Labor Conference, declared that "The latest rallies in support of PALEA are a level up from earlier actions since the call for a boycott of Lucio Tan-owned PAL and Air Philippines are explicitly expressed. The widespread boycott campaign will hurt PAL since the regional flights to Australia and Japan, and the transpacific flights to the US are among its most profitable operations." He added that "The fact that PAL is having a promo during the Christmas peak season belies its claims that its operations are back to normal."

Rivera claimed that "The convergence between the youth-led Occupy protests and the workers struggles for wages, jobs and rights is a welcome development. Social change will come from the unity and action of the 99%."

Juan Manggagawa

Manila : Philippines

For a video of the Toronto action: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZV8lFtTCo7Q>

For photos of the Melbourne action:

<https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.283439828375106.80352.100001272721169&type=1&l=94715c3e50>

For photos of the Tokyo action:

<https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.282035501848872.80162.100001272721169&type=1&l=adb20681a6>

* *From Allvoices, | Dec 15, 2011 at 8:54 AM:*

<http://www.allvoices.com/contributed-news/11102874-palea-gets-backing-of-occupy-protesters>

* *JuanManggagawa is based in Manila, National Capital Region, Philippines, and is an Anchor for Allvoices.*

Support PALEA members and families this holiday season

The Philippine Airlines Employees' Association (PALEA) once more appeals for support as it enters the third month of a lockout by Philippine Airlines (PAL) and the prospect of spending the holidays on the picketlines.

PAL, despite having earned USD 76.5 million in net income, illegally retrenched 2,400 of its regular workers. PALEA is fighting PAL's outsourcing scheme that sought to downgrade us into contractuales and bust the union.

PALEA is against contractualization. What we want is a life of dignity for workers and our families.

Three typhoons have come and gone yet PALEA's protest camps outside the international airports of Manila and Cebu remained strong and defiant. Heavy rains and soaked sleeping mats failed to dampen the fighting spirit of PALEA members. Every day several hundred workers man the pickets in shifts.

PALEA's protest camp has been attacked twice by hired goons. But vigilant PALEA members frustrated their plan to demolish the picketline though seven workers were injured.

PALEA is demanding that PAL open talks to resolve the labor dispute. The lockout must stop, the outsourcing plan should be scrapped and the workers should be allowed to return to their jobs as regular workers.

PALEA needs your moral and logistical support.

We ask for solidarity messages and actions. Even the simplest expression of support will help sustain the high morale of PALEA members at the picketlines.

Trade union and church groups who are in solidarity with PALEA have called for a boycott of Lucio

Tan-owned PAL and Air Philippines until management has heeded workers demands for a return to their regular jobs. We welcome such and other forms of support. Sign the online petition at http://action.laborrights.org/p/dia/action/public/?action_KEY=3183.

Finally we appeal for financial assistance to sustain the campout, to help PALEA members who have been without jobs and wages for the last two months and to lend a hand to our families and children who will be spending the holidays at the picketlines.

Donate online via the website of Partido ng Manggagawa [Labor Party-Philippines]:

http://laborpartyphilippines.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=blogcategory&id=21&Itemid=43.

Or send donations by bank to:

PALEA Strike Fund
Account Number 00008-057-00403-9
Rizal Commercial Banking Corporation (RCBC)
Quirino Ave., Baclaran, Paranaque City, Philippines.

For packages, send to PALEA 2014 J. Gabriel St., Baclaran, Paranaque City, Philippines 1702.

Sincerely,
(signed)

Gerry Rivera
President, PALEA
Vice Chair, Partido ng Manggagawa
Vice Chair, Ground Staff Committee of Aviation Section, ITF

December 2, 2011
