

EDITORIAL

Shatter the illusion of democracy under Duterte's tyranny

The Duterte tyrannical regime stole the recent midterm elections. Duterte employed strongman tactics and vast state powers and resources to ensure that the outcome of the elections will favor his ambition to control the congress and the entire government..

The midterm elections are being falsely touted as a show of overwhelming support for Duterte. But it was far from being free or fair, especially as these were conducted under conditions of martial law in Mindanao, all-out war nationwide and the fake drug war. The results merely reflected the extent to which Duterte has succeeded to put the entire ruling political system under his tyrannical sway.

He used the military and police to intimidate, silence and undermine support for his rivals and critics. Before and during the cam-

paign, his clique has successively perpetrated the killing of numerous rival politicians.. He openly used the courts, agencies and local governments to brand progressive candidates and parties as "terrorists" in line with the "whole-of-nation" approach against "insurgency." He spent billions of pesos of people's money to flood the media with pro-administration lies and drown the voices of the opposition.

Most crucial of all, he used the Commission on Elections to carry out massive cheating by hacking the re-

"Shatter....," continued on page 2

NPA-Negros seizes 8 firearms

THE NEW PEOPLE'S Army (NPA) successfully raided a detachment of the Revolutionary Proletarian Army-Alex Bongcayao Brigade (RPA-ABB) at Sitio Mambinay, Barangay Locotan, Kabankalan City in Negros Occidental last May 8 at around 1:00 a.m. Two RPA elements were killed while three were wounded. The NPA seized a machinegun, a Browning Automatic Rifle, an M14, three M16s, two pistols and bullets.

Since the RPA-ABB broke away from the NPA in 1993, it has served as a force multiplier for the AFP's anti-revolutionary campaign. At the same time, it also acted as a private army for big comprador-landlords in Negros like the Arroyos, Alvarezes, Zaycos, Solas, Maranons, Benedicto de la Cruzes and Eduardo Cojuangco.

The group started as an

"NPA-Negros....," continued on page 3

"Shatter...", from page 1

sults of the automated vote counting and tallying system. On election day, around 1,000 vote counting machines malfunctioned and counting was delayed for seven hours. Voting for overseas Filipinos was also problematic. According to experts, the recent elections was the most unsuccessful so far, and the most dangerous in history.

By shutting out the political opposition from the Senate, Duterte has now effectively put all branches of government under his thumb. He previously controlled the Lower House through his alliance with Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. Using this same alliance, alongside the Marcos millions, he is set to dominate anew the recently-elected Congress, as well as the local governments. Aside from this, he appointed 12 out of 15 Supreme Court justices.

Duterte is further emboldened by his illusory victory to go after his rivals and critics with even more ruthlessness. He is determined to step up persecution and suppres-

sion of both the conservative opposition and the mass movement against his tyranny and prevent the democratic forces from building a broad front against his dictatorship schemes.

Duterte's ambitious drive to establish himself a dictator is driven by his dread of being arrested, prosecuted and imprisoned for all the crimes perpetuated by his brutal regime. His drive to monopolize power will deepen the schisms within the ruling class, even among his allies. The opposition is already preparing for the next elections. Competition between military and police factions will heighten as they jockey for favors and positions in the civilian and military bureaucracy.

Duterte's cheating and tyranny has created even more favorable conditions for the advancement of the legal mass movement. The movement should persevere to break the illusion of democracy under Duterte's tyrannical rule. It should further expose his grave abuse of power, widespread killings,






protection of big drug lords, gross violations of human rights, imposition of onerous taxes, sell-out of the country's patrimony to China, subservience to the US military, corruption in government loans and contracts, and other grave crimes.

They must broaden the struggle against Duterte's plan to amend or overhaul the constitution to extend his term and remove guarantees to human rights. Among the amendments proposed by Duterte is to allow foreign big capitalists and their local comprador cohorts to plunder the country's remaining resources and squeeze further the Filipino working class for more profits.

Alongside, Duterte is sure to push for the passage of other bills that would tighten his fascist control over Philippine society. His priority bills include the lowering of the minimum age of criminal responsibility, death penalty and mandatory military training of minors through the Reserved Officers Training Corps.

All democratic forces must painstakingly conduct propaganda work among the masses to expose Duterte's tyranny. They must persevere in organizing those who are fed up by Duterte's corrupt, criminal and puppet reign. They must strive to generate bigger and wider mobilizations. They must double the efforts to unite anti-Duterte groups and build the broadest unity against his tyranny. The key to ousting the rotten, fascist and puppet regime is through arousing, organizing and mobilizing the people.

These efforts should be complemented with the intensification of armed struggle across the country. The state's security forces who relentlessly commit abuses, killings and intimidation against millions in the countryside should be death with big and small blows to show support to the people. As Duterte's brutal reign continues, the task to overthrow him grows more urgent. **AB**

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"NPA-Negros seizes...", from page 1

armed component of the Rebolusyonaryong Partido ng Manggagawang Pilipinas (RPMP) in 1994. The RPMP was founded by revisionist traitors like Arturo Tabara who refused to rectify errors in the 1990s. Meanwhile, the ABB was a guerilla unit based in Metro Manila and was

headed by Nilo dela Cruz. The RPA and ABB merged in 1997. Not long after, RPA-ABB elements became rabid counterrevolutionary elements and formally surrendered to the US-Estrada regime in 2000. Since then, successive regimes have used the group as a model for localized

peace talks for capitulation. They pretend to be revolutionaries but in reality, they are mercenaries, bandits and goons working for the ruling class of big compradors and landlords. Among their most recent crimes is the massacre of nine peasants ni Sagay last year. **AB**

Las Navas residents expel encamping soldiers

LAST MAY 10, residents of Barangay San Miguel, Las Navas successfully expelled soldiers of the 20th IB who have occupied their community for more than a year.

This came after the residents' evacuation and dialogue with the local government of Las Navas, the 20th IB and the Department of Interior and Local Government last May 9.

On the same day, 60 residents marched from San Miguel to downtown Las Navas. The soldiers attempted to block the residents in Barangay San Jorge and forced them to sign a logbook which they refused to follow. The 20th IB have maliciously tagged the farmers as supporters of the New People's Army to justify its illegal occupation of the community and harrassment of residents.

The soldiers also harassed the delegates of a national fact-finding mission conducted last May 20-22 by Katungod Sinirangan Bisayas, Karapatan and Rural Missionaries of the Philippines.

NDF-ST condemns bombings, forced surrenders of Mangyans and Dumagats

THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC Front-Southern Tagalog vehemently condemned the relentless militarization of Mangyan communities in Mindoro and Dumagat communities in Quezon.

AFP and PNP operations continue unabated in Quezon since May 2018. These past months, the AFP even concocted fake encounters between its units and the New People's Army to justify its occupation and deployment of additional troops in Dumagat communities.

These actions have all been directed by the Southern Luzon Command and implemented by the Regional Task Force (RTC) to End Local Communist Armed Conflict. The RTC is pushing for the implementation of so-called development projects including the Laiban Dam and Kaliwa Dam which residents are opposing.

In Mindoro, Col. Marceliano Teofilo of the 203rd IBde is directing a suppression campaign against Mangyans. Last May, the said unit conducted indiscriminate bombings and strafing in Barangay Monteclaro, San Jose, Occidental Mindoro and Barangay Lisap, Bongabong, Oriental Mindoro. This resulted in the forcible evacuation of 1,000 Mangyans. **AB**

#LabanBayan, protests against election manipulation

MORE THAN 2000 protested last May 17 in front of the Philippine International Convention Center (PICC) where tallying for the 2019 midterm elections was undertaken. The youth, women, church people and various groups led by Kontra Daya and Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) collectively condemned the manipulation of and violence during the elections.

On the evening of May 13, election day, the release of initial vote tally by the Commission on Elections (Comelec) was delayed for seven hours. At the same time, 1,665 SD cards also malfunctioned and had to be replaced on the day itself. Similarly, 961 vote counting machines malfunctioned and were unable to accept ballots.

Duterte's clique, the military and police blatantly intervened in the election that was conducted. Days before the election, progressive parties and their members were attacked one after another and tagged as terrorists. The worst cases of harassment were perpetrated in Mindanao under martial law.

Similar protests were held in the cities of Quezon, Baguio, Naga and Tacloban, and in the provinces of La Union, Bohol and Iloilo. Before this, two protests were launched by national democratic groups in Metro Manila. **AB**

12TH MANGYAN DAY. Seven Mangyan tribes gathered in Calapan, Mindoro Oriental last May 10 to celebrate Mangyan Day 2019. On its 12th year, the tribes united under the theme "Mangyan, Unite for Ancestral Land, Environment, Livelihood and Clean Elections!"

The Mangyans presented their struggles for their livelihood, ancestral land, and against militarization and violence of armed state elements against them. On May 9, the delegation from Bongabong were blocked by three police cars. The celebration culminated with a protest-caravan.

Duterte consolidates power through elections

Through violence, deceit and widespread cheating, Duterte managed to get 10 out of 12 of his candidates elected to the Senate in the recent elections. This brings the number of pro-Duterte senators to 19 or 3/4 of the Senate. There are only five opposition senators left, with one of them, Sen. Leila de Lima, languishing in jail.

The opposition won not even a single seat. In the Senate, it only takes 13 votes to pass a bill. Among the newly elected senators are Imee Marcos, daughter of dictator Ferdinand Marcos; Ronald dela Rosa, police chief who spearheaded the bloody “war against drugs” and Christopher Go, Duterte’s special aide who spent 30 times more his net worth and openly used public funds for his campaign.

Aside from the three, other pro-Duterte winners are Pia Cayetano, Sonny Angara, Lito Lapid, Francis Tolentino, Aquilino Pimentel III, Ramon Revilla Jr and Cynthia Villar. Nancy Binay and Grace Poe, who are neither Duterte’s party-mates nor considered as opposition, also won.

In the Lower House, 85 representatives from Duterte’s political party, the PDP-Laban, won. This number was followed by 43 from Manuel Villar’s Nacionalista Party (NP); 36 from Eduardo Cojuangco’s Nationalist People’s Coalition (NPC) and 25 from Ronaldo Puno’s National Unity Party (NUP). The opposition Liberal Party (LP) only won 18 seats. Other winning representa-

tives came from Lakas, Asenso and various regional parties, including Sara Duterte’s Hugpong ng Pagbabago. NP, NUP, Lakas, Asenso and most regional parties are PDP-Laban and together, they constitute the majority in the Lower House.

In the provincial level, 41 out of 81 governors are Duterte’s party-mates. Most local candidates were compelled to support Duterte’s party for fear of being arbitrarily included in his narcolist. In many places, Duterte supported two or three candidates vying for the same position to ensure votes for his senators.

Destroying the party list system

Duterte ordered his minions to use create electoral parties to paralyze the party list system and pre-

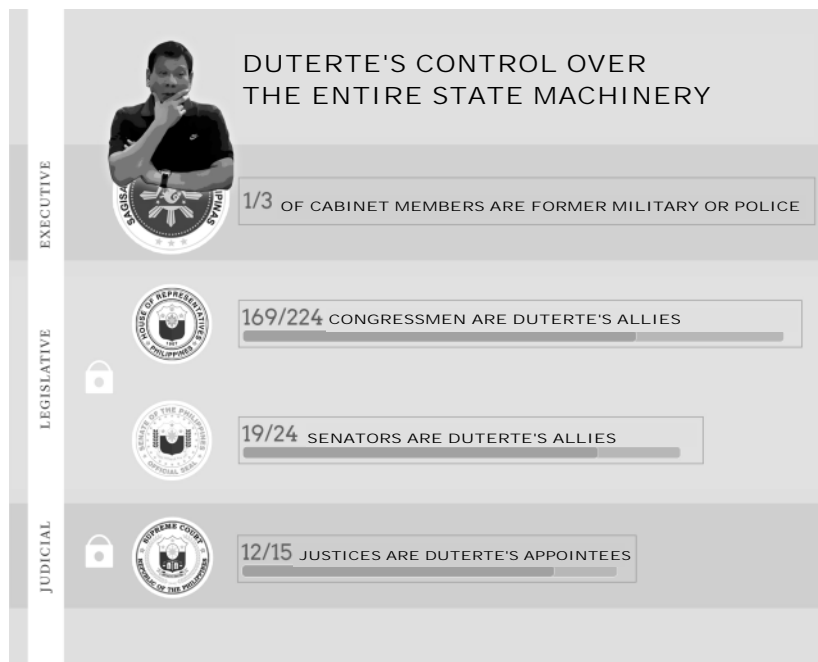
vent progressive parties, particularly the Makabayan bloc, from gaining their rightful number of seats.

Only six representatives from four progressive parties will serve in the next Congress after all the slander and attacks against them by the military, police and Duterte himself. Bayan Muna garnered the second highest number of votes and will have three representatives. Among them is Iear Euphemia Culamat, a Lumad and a member of Kasalo-Caraga. Gabriela, ACT Teachers Party and Kabataan Partylist will have one representative each.

Due to the regime’s manipulation and fear-mongering, Anakpawis was not able to gather the required number of votes to win a seat in Congress.

Fifty one parties won 61 seats in Congress under the party list system. Twenty nine of them have representative who are either Duterte allies, former politicians or big businessmen.

ACT-CIS, Marino and Duterte Youth are some of the parties associated with Duterte. ACT-CIS, which garnered the most number of votes, is spearheaded by the Tulfos who are known as rabid supporters of Duterte and his brutal “anti-drug war.” They also support his proposed amendments to the pernicious Human Security Act. **AB**



PICKET AGAINST CRPIP. Igorot minorities trooped in front of the National Economic and Development Regional Office in Baguio City last May 7. The protest was held in conjunction with the conduct of a meeting between minorities affected by the Chico River Pump Irrigation Project (CRPIP), representatives of the National Irrigation Administration (NIA) and the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP).

A few days later, NCIP Cordillera Director Ronald Calde ruled to temporarily stop the construction of the CRPIP in Pinukpuk, Kalinga for failing to acquire Free, Prior and Informed Consent from affected residents. The construction was shifted to the Cagayan area.

Grabbing Maranao lands for military-use

It has been almost two years since the US-Duterte regime evicted Maranaos from Marawi City. Until today, however, no family has been allowed to return to the citycenter as this is currently being occupied by both US and Filipino soldiers. As time goes by, their return is becoming increasingly impossible.

Using a presidential decree issued in 1953 as a pretext, the AFP immediately started the construction of a 10-hectare military camp right at the heart of the city. Guised as a headquarters of the AFP, the said facility will actually be used by the US for its special operations in the country.

The US has long used Marawi as a base for its operations in Mindanao. In 2010, the US Special Operations Command's (SOC) use of Camp Ranao, 103rd Bde's headquarters in Marawi, was exposed after the killing of Gregan Cardeno made the news. Cardeno was then working inside the camp as a translator for the Liaison Coordination Elements (LCE). LCEs are a small group of special forces units that "advise" Filipino soldiers and are incorporated in AFP tactical commands.

Since the beginning, Marawi and the towns surrounding Lanao Lake have always been of crucial interest to the US. When the US occupied Mindanao in the early 1900s, the US purposely invaded these Lanao towns and conquered their chieftains. What academics dub the Moro Rebellion (1899-1913) started in this area. The Moro Rebellion was the Moro's armed resistance against American occupation and to defend their

society and ancestral land. During the Battle of Bayan (now Bayang, Lanao del Sur), Maranaos valiantly fought against the US encroachers using indigenous weapons. The Maranaos were conquered by US troopers who used brutal tactics and modern weapons. Despite the downfall of Bayang, uprisings continued in Bacolod and Taraca where US forces sustained numerous casualties. The Americans eventually reached Marawi (formerly Dansalan) and linked it to Iligan.

The US first established a military camp in Bayang (Camp Vickers) in 1902. Captain John Pershing who was considered an "expert" in counterinsurgency after purportedly pacifying the Maranaos was based here. In reality, the so-called pacification or cooperation of the chieftains of Lanao with Pershing only came after the US' brutal and bloody attacks against the Maranaos.

In 1903, the US established Camp Keithley in Marawi, in honor of Fernando Keithley, an American soldier who was killed in an ambush by Maranaos. Camp Keithley (also known as Camp Amai Pakpak which the AFP inherited) covers 6,000 hectares of land in Marawi and the adjacent towns of Marantao, Piagapo and Saguiaran. AB



SUPER 8 WORKERS' VICTORY. The Samahang Manggagawa ng Super 8 Retail System Incorporated successfully conducted a black shirt protest and production slowdown last May 8. This was launched in condemnation of the suspension of 15 of their co-workers who refused to work overtime on May 4. The suspended workers were reinstated immediately after a dialogue with the management. They were also able to lay down their contention against inhumane overtime work.

Meanwhile, relatives and co-workers of the Kentex 72 commemorated the death anniversary of the victims last May 12 in Valenzuela City. The Workers Rights and Advocates Network called for justice and demanded to hold the Kentex management accountable.

In a related news, Kilos na Manggagawa trooped to the Regional Wage Board office in the National Capital Region on May 20 after employers submitted a Motion to Dismiss the workers' petition for higher wages in the region.

PROTEST AGAINST BACIWA. Consecutive protests and noise barrages were held by union members of the Bacolod City Water District (BACIWA) in front of their office on the third week of May.

The union condemned the decision of the BACIWA Board of Directors to enter into a 25-year joint venture agreement with Prime Water, a private company. If the agreement materializes, Prime Water will own 80% of BACIWA and only 20% will be left for the government.

According to the union, this will adversely affect 520 employees. Similarly, consumers will have to shoulder a 12% value added tax due to its transfer to a private entity.

NATIONAL DAY OF HEALTH WORKERS. Last May 7, health workers from private and public hospitals gathered in Manila to celebrate the National Day of Health Workers. The Alliance of Health Workers called for the implementation of a ₱16,000 national minimum wage for public employees, ₱750 daily wage for private employees and ₱30,000 entry pay for nurses. They also demanded an end to prevalent practice of contractualization in the sector.

20 men attack Holcim workers' picket

UNIDENTIFIED MEN ATTACKED the picket of Holcim Philippines Inc. workers in front of the company plant in Davao City last May 1. More than 20 men wearing bonnet and yielding knives stormed the picket. They removed the streamers and placards of the Davao Holcim Employees Workers Union.

Pickets were mounted by workers since March 4, after 100 were illegally dismissed. The workers strongly believe that the Holcim management was behind the attack.

This May, First Stronghold Cement Industries Inc., a subsidiary of San Miguel Corporation (SMC), bought Holcim for \$2.15 billion. SMC is run and owned by compradors Ramon Ang and Eduardo Cojuangco.

SMC is boosting its cement and construction business to benefit from Duterte's 'Build Build Build' program.

Holcim Philippines is formerly a subsidiary of LafargeHolcim Ltd., a Swiss company. In the first quarter of 2019, it had an income of P703.86 million which is greater than the P699.89 million it accumulated in 2018. The company has four cement plants and a cement grinding mill. AB

US plans to launch bigger military trainings in 2020

THE US PLANS to launch bigger military trainings in the country in 2020. Particularly, it is targeting to double its participants—from 900 this year to 1,700 next year—for the Salaknib training. Salaknib is conducted in preparation for the annual and much bigger Balikatan exercises.

US activities have increased from January to March this year. According to the US Inspector General's (IG) report regarding the Operation Pacific Eagle-Philippines (OPE-P), the US conducted other military activities in addition to military trainings and ship dockings. This include jet fighter flyovers in Philippine sovereign territory, deployment of a Stryker Brigade to "assist" in AFP military operations, deployment of special forces advisers for the "anti-terrorism" campaign and battle tracking.

As in the previous year, the AFP completely relies on the US for ISR (intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance). According to the IG report, the AFP "lacks the capacity" to gather and analyze intelligence data on its own. In 2018, the US spent \$50 million to fly surveillance drones, and for base maintenance and data analysis.

Similarly, the US conducted 250 military activities in the country. In return, it sold to the AFP obsolete war materiel amounting to \$35 billion. During the first quarter of 2019, it sold materiel worth \$5.8 million to the AFP. AB

CHILDREN NOT CRIMINALS.

Members of human rights groups and organizations protecting children's rights led by Salinlahi Alliance for Children's Concerns picketed in front of the Senate of the Philippines in Pasay City last May 20 coinciding with a Senate session. They condemned the intent to pass a bill lowering the minimum age of criminal responsibility.

YOUTH CONDEMNS ADDITIONAL FEES IN COLLEGE.

Kabataan Partylist called for an investigation of the Commission on Higher Education's (CHED) approval of 141 other school fees to be collected from State Universities and Colleges (SUCs). This is contrary to the free education law in public tertiary education. Kabataan submitted a resolution to review the commercialization maneuver in Congress last May 12.

According to the group, the CHED is simply seeking ways to allow collection of fees in SUCs, as tuition fees continue to rise in private universities.

IGOROT LEADER RECEIVES RECOGNITION IN KOREA.

Joanna Kintanar Carino was awarded with a Gwangju Price for Human Rights in South Korea last May 18 in recognition of her defense for human rights. This is despite the Duterte regime's tagging of Carino as a terrorist last year.

May 18 Memorial Foundation handed the award to Carino for her her longstanding advocacy. Carino fought the US-Marcos regime despite arrest and torture. She is also one of the founding members of Cordillera People's Alliance. AB

US-China trade war intensifies anew

TRADE NEGOTIATIONS between US and China was temporarily put on hold on May 10 after US presidente Donald Trump announced the imposition of a 10%-25% tariff on Chinese goods worth \$200 billion. Trump accused China of renegeing on previous agreements on intellectual property rights, lowering trade barriers and manipulating and controlling the value of the yuan Chinese currency, .

This was followed by Trump's Huawei ban on May 18 prohibiting US companies to sell components to the Chinese company. Huawei manufactures cellphones and telecommunications equipment. Earlier, Trump accused the company of espionage and declared it as a threat to national security.

China retaliated through imposing 25% tariffs on US goods worth \$60 billion. It also threatened to stop importing US natural gas and oil.

The US engaged China last year to pressure the country into opening its markets to more US imports. It already imposed tariffs on US products twice in 2018 before negotiations started between the countries last January. Despite the fresh wave of tariffs and sanctions, the negotiations shall continue.

The US imports around \$540 billion Chinese products while it exports only \$120 billion US goods to the country.
