



EDITORIAL

Boldly struggle to end Duterte's tyranny!

Boldly struggle to end the scourge of Duterte's tyrannical rule at the soonest possible time. Every moment he remains in power, the people's burden and suffering worsen.

Almost three years under his rule, people's lives have worsened and the economy deteriorated.. Unemployment has worsened, taxes have become more burdensome and prices have soared, while people's wages and income remain low. The drug menace has escalated, as the government itself has morphed into the number one syndicate.

On the other hand, Duterte's wealth of Duterte and that of his bureaucrat capitalist and oligarch cohorts continue to grow from government contracts and plundering the people's money. He is subservient to foreign powers and surrenders the country's sovereignty and patrimony.

Duterte is flaunting his power across the country. He employs the entire armed force and state resources to subject the people to violence and deception. He silences his critics, activists, lawyers and the media. He suppresses the people's resistance. Killings, attacks against entire communities, arrests and imprisonment are rampant.

Duterte controls the entire bureaucracy, the armed forces and government branches. To escape culpability for his crimes, he seeks to perpetuate beyond 2022 the power and privilege he enjoys with his family and accomplices.

Still, however powerful Duterte

"Boldly..." continued on page 2

NPA-Samar confiscates 4 firearms

THE NEW PEOPLE'S Army (NPA)-Northern Samar confiscated four firearms during its successful raid against a detachment of the Alpha Company, 63rd IB at Sitio Little Lanubi, Barangay Lanubi (EJ Dulay), Lao-ang, Northern Samar on May 21, 4 a.m. The NPA blasted and fired shots at the detachment. Three R4 rifles, a pistol, magazines, ammunition and other military equipment were seized during the raid. Three soldiers, including two officials, were killed during the 30-minute encounter. Meanwhile, the NPA paid tribute to Ka Yulo who was martyred during the offensive.

The 63rd IB was among the battalions that besieged Marawi. When the battalion was redeployed in Northern Samar, it

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appears, he can not forever suppress the people's aspiration to be free from tyranny and fascism. Their demand for justice and democracy will not be silenced.

It is the right of the Filipino people to resist and overthrow a government that oppresses their common interests and relentlessly suppresses them. Just as the Marcos and Estrada regimes were overthrown, there is nothing more just for the people to do than oust the brutal, corrupt, oppressive and treasonous Duterte regime.

To the Filipino people: steel yourselves in the difficult struggle against the fascist regime and to correct the course of the country's history. If the people will unite and march as one, they are an invincible political force and impetus of change.

Build the people's organized strength. Open their eyes to the real situation of the country. Tear off the blindfold of Duterte's lies and distortions. Persevere to un-

mask, understand and expose the social realities, the absence of democracy and freedom, the rule of a few oligarchs, bureaucrat capitalists and fascists, and the oppression and exploitation of the toiling masses.

Pay attention to people's issues and questions of state. Repudiate indifference. Grapple and comprehend the roots of everyday problems and grievances. Be students of history, politics and economics.


Firmly unite. Reject self-interest. One's well-being is linked to the welfare of all. Give everything to build and broaden mass organizations. Strengthen or establish factory unions. Build and strengthen various mass organizations that unite the majority in schools, offices and communities.

Act as one and express grievances over local, sectoral and national issues. Struggle for wage increases and workers rights, to reduce land rent and loan interests and for fair prices of palay and other products, against tuition in-

creases and state abandonment of education, against demolitions, against unjust fees and other urgent demands. Link these with the bigger national issues and with the struggle to end Duterte's tyrannical rule.


Mass activists must arouse, organize and mobilize hundreds of thousands of people in the cities and countryside. Be the engine of mass study and mass propaganda. Lead discussions, speak before assemblies, hand out leaflets in the streets and paint and post urgent calls on walls. Convince everyone to join mass actions and resist. Bring the Party's message and calls to the masses.


Duterte aims to drive a wedge among the people in order that evil forces such as he and his cronies and cohorts can continue to rule. If millions are organized and will act collectively, there is no power that can stop the people from ousting Duterte, advancing change and determining the country's destiny. AB





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troopers served as security forces of private contractors delivering road projects in the area.

After the offensive, the military shelled the barangay and threatened residents.

Quezon. On June 13, a unit of the NPA-Quezon ambushed more than 30 elements of the 85th IB who were patrolling at Sitio Tanauan in Barangay Villa Nacaob, Lopez, Quezon. Two soldiers were killed in action.

The patrolling unit is part of the pursuit operation of the 85th against a unit of the NPA that attacked their troops on June 11 at Sitio Bunga in the same barangay. Combat operations of the said battalion in the area started on June 7. Three towns in Quezon were ravaged, and 16 barangays were occupied by more than 200 troops of the AFP-PNP-CAFGU. AB

Duterte, a coward before China and US

Rodrigo Duterte displayed utter cowardice before China as he failed to defend Philippine sovereign interests amid widespread clamor to demand China's culpability over the reported June 9 incident at Recto Bank, where a Chinese trawler rammed and abandoned a sinking fishing boat carrying 22 Filipino crew.

Instead, Duterte parroted China's subterfuge by downplaying the incident as a "simple maritime accident." He concealed the more prejudicial fact that a Chinese vessel was fishing in Philippine territorial waters.

The Recto Bank incident is evidence of China's increasing aggressiveness in transgressing and plundering Philippine maritime territory. Such impunity is a consequence of the Duterte regime's slavishness and complete failure to uphold Philippine sovereign rights and laws.

Duterte is spineless because he is paid by China. He fears losing millions of dollars of bribe money and other favors he and his cohorts are receiving from the state monopoly capitalists of China in exchange for onerous and odious loans.

At the same time, Duterte is silent and meek amid US noise and threats of military intervention. The US took advantage of the incident at Recto Bank and declared that the incident may "trigger" the provision of the Mutual Defense Treaty. Following this, the US announced its plans of deploying the USS Stratton, a US Coast Guard cutter, purportedly to protect Philippine territory. The US raises threats of armed confrontation or war with China using the Philippines as its launching pad.

Aside from military facilities put up by the US in various parts of the Philippines, it has also maintained military presence along the western coasts of the Philippines with the aim of projecting its power along the South China Sea trade routes. **AB**

CPP welcomes call for UNHRC investigation

THE COMMUNIST PARTY of the Philippines (CPP) welcomed the call of the United Nations Human Rights Commission (UNHRC) to conduct an investigation into the worsening human rights situation in the country under the Duterte regime.

Aside from widespread killings, state security forces also perpetrated various cases of illegal arrests, filing of trumped-up charges, legal harassment, threats, armed raids of communities, hamletting and occupation of rural villages, food and economic blockade, and so.

It stated that the investigation must subject to critical inquiry both Duterte's drug war, as well as his counterinsurgency directive "to end local communist armed conflict" and its various components including Mindanao martial law, Memorandum Order 30, Oplan Kapayapaan, Oplan Sauron and Oplan Kapanatagan. These grave crimes must indeed be investigated, exposed and condemned. The Filipino people's clamor for justice must be made known across the world, concluded the CPP. **AB**

Gluttonous bureaucrats

Duterte is not the only one in the government with an unexplainable accumulation of wealth. In 2018, the net worth of 15 of his cabinet officials increased based on their Statement on Assets, Liabilities and Net Worth or SALN. Similarly, seven congressmen—mostly allies of the incumbent regime—grew richer after only a year.

In the cabinet, Mark Villar, secretary of the Department of Public Works and Highways, is still the richest with a net worth of P1.408 billion. Alfonso Cusi, secretary of the Department of Energy, recorded the highest increase in wealth. His net worth grew by P29 million from P1.356 billion in 2017 to P1.385 billion in 2018.

In the Lower House, businesswoman Delphine Lee of the Agri

Party-list recorded the highest increase in wealth. Her net worth increased by 400% from P50 million to P254 million in 2018. But in terms of actual assets, bourgeois comprador Michael Romero of the 1-Pacman party-list has recorded the highest increase—from P7.291 billion net worth in 2017 to P7.858 billion in 2018. These bureaucrats used the party-list system to sit in Congress and monopolize fat public contracts. **AB**



2nd IB: Butchers of Masbate and Albay

Around 1,000 residents from eight barangays in Cawayan, Masbate protested in front of the municipal hall last June 3-8. They condemned the intense militarization of their communities and demanded the pull out of 2nd IB troopers who have been occupying these since May 20.

Kilusang Magbubukid ng Masbate (KMM) said that the human rights violations perpetrated by the 2nd IB, including the destruction of people's livelihoods, are escalating.

Last May 22, elements of the 2nd IB forcibly entered the residences of and mauled KMM members. They also robbed KMM member Rosemarie Erero's P12,000-savings, and illegally arrested her brother Nilo Erero Jr. Farmers Danilo Landao, Arnel Punay, Jovanie Impas, Bobby Baybayon, Ondo Rondina, Tong-tong Pinar, Titing Delos Reyes, Ondoy Pinar and Boy-boy Sare were also abducted and were subjected to forced labor.

Aside from this, 11 farmers were coerced to serve as guides in military operations. Former barangay council member Danilo Cunel was threatened to be killed and Barangay Dalipe residents were prohibited from going in and out of their village.

These cases add to the long list of the 2nd IB's crimes against the Bicolanos. From atrocious killings to banditry, this butcher battalion wreaked terror in Masbate and Albay in the last 13 years. The battalion is currently under the command of Lt. Col. John Oliver F. Gabun and is based in Barangay Bacolod, Milagros, Masbate.

Murderers

Since 2010, the 2nd IB perpetrated at least 41 killings of civilians and six cases of frustrated killing. Most of their victims were accused of being members or supporters of the revolutionary movement. Twenty of the killings were carried out in Masbate within the last three

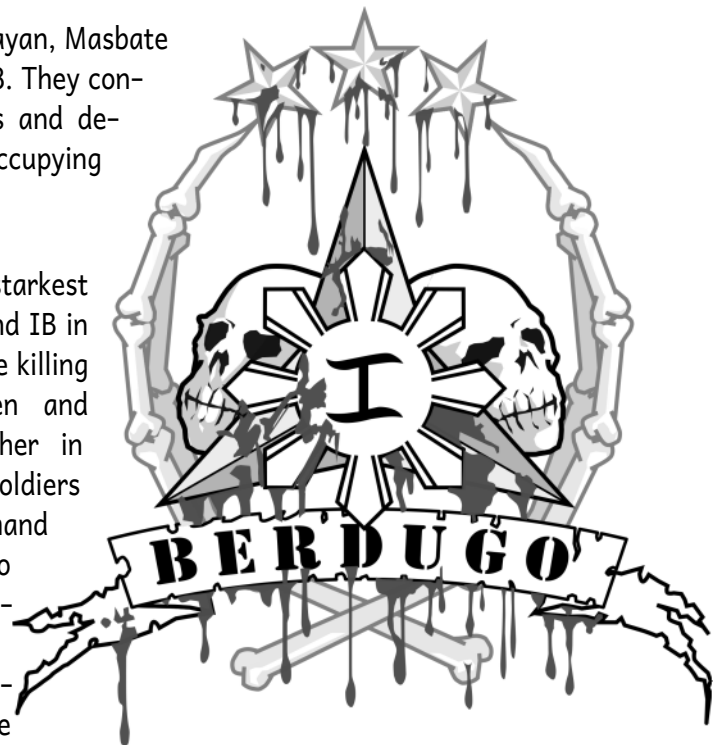
years.

One of the starkest crimes by the 2nd IB in Masbate was the killing of two children and their grandmother in April 2017. Soldiers under the command of Lt. Karlito John Cabillo indiscriminately fired at the residence of the victims in Barangay Panan-awan, Cawayan. Lita Villamor Pepito, 70, and siblings Reden and Rechillen Luna, 9 and 11 years old, were killed during the incident. Pepito's husband Paoling was also wounded.

In June 2018, from August 26-September 7, the butchers killed seven civilians. Five of the victims were residents of neighboring villages in the towns of San Jacinto, San Fernando and Monreal. Some houses were also torched by the soldiers. Atrocious killings were also perpetrated by the 2nd IB in Albay when it was stationed in the province from 2006-2016. Two of its victims were decapitated, one was burned and another's neck was slashed. Two massacres were perpetrated by the 2nd IB in the province.

Attackers of children

Children and the youth are not spared from the various crimes of the butcher battalion. Aside from the Luna siblings, two other youth fell prey to the 2nd IB's strafing in Pioduran, Albay in April 2012. One was killed while another was wounded after they were fired upon by the soldiers. The two were on



their way to a village dance.

In the 2nd IB's massacre of the Lotino family in Daraga, Albay in October 2010, one of the victims was a minor. Three young children survived the attack while another suffered severe trauma.

In barangays occupied by the 2nd IB, children are used as human shields. In Guinobatan, Albay, cases wherein minors are used by soldiers as guides in their operations were reported.

Bandits

In Barangay San Jose, Uson, Masbate, soldiers repeatedly stole domestic animals, belongings and cash of the villagers in September 2017 and August 2018.

In Barangay Talisay in San Fernando, Masbate, the soldiers robbed the villagers thrice in May 2018. Lt. Col. Gabun himself spearheaded the crime. The officer forcibly rounded up the villagers, while his men ransacked their properties. Among the belongings seized by the 2nd IB were eight fishing boats and nets, rice, dozens of domestic animals, five generator sets and farm equipment. A day earlier, four motorcycles were also

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seized by the soldiers. Two incidents of theft by the 2nd IB, affecting 35 victims, were recorded

Even when it was still deployed in Albay, the 2nd IB was already notorious for banditry. Its detachments were known for spearheading criminal activities including holdup incidents. Recruits in the Barangay Intelligence Network accompany soldiers in heists which primarily target middle forces accused of supporting the revolutionary movement. A rape case was also committed by the 2nd IB's thieves.

Unrest in communities

In barangays occupied by the 2nd IB, residents are coerced to construct huts for the military, post guard and conduct reconnaissance. Cases of threat and harassment against suspected members or supporters of the revolutionary movement are prevalent.

From 2010-2015, 2nd IB "peace and development" operations occupied and terrorized barangays in the second and third district of Albay. In Masbate, its crimes against the people are most intense in the first and second districts.

The 2nd IB also perpetrated the illegal arrest and detention of 39 civilians, torture and physical injuries of five, and harassment of eight others.

The 2nd IB was previously deployed in Bicol in 1986, and then transferred to different provinces within the region. After undergoing "retraining" in 2006, the battalion's atrocities escalated when it was transferred from Sorsogon to Albay. Here, the 2nd IB carried out the brutal campaigns Oplan Bantay Laya 1 and 2, up to Oplan Bayanihan. The butchers were then transferred to Masbate in 2016 and carried on with their crimes there. AB

8 killings in 7 days

In just a week, eight activists and peasants were killed by armed state elements. Civilians were also subjected to various incidents of harassment and intimidation across the country.

Two staff members of Karapatan-Sorsogon were shot-dead in the morning of June 14. Ryan Hubilla and Nelly Bagasala, 69, were aboard a tricycle when they were fired upon by two assailants at Phase 2, Seabreeze Homes Subdivision, Barangay Cabid-an, Sorsogon City.

Bagasala served as a human rights defender for several decades. She was subjected to relentless vilification and Red-tagging by the military. Hubilla and Bagasala were also subjected to surveillance and harassment in the past months.

On the next day, Nephtali Morada, former campaign officer of Bayan-Bicol was gunned down in Barangay San Isidro, Naga City.

In San Fernando, Masbate, farmers Arnie Espinilla and Sando Alcovindaz were successively killed on June 9 and 10 in Barangay Liong and Buenavista, respectively. They were killed by the group of Sgt. Chalas, official of the Peace and Development Team of the 2nd IB operating in the barrios of Talisay, Altavista, Buenavista, Canelas, Del Rosario and Progreso. The victims were tagged as members of the New People's Army (NPA).

On June 14 in the evening, soldiers trooped to the residence of Pizo Cabug and then gunned him down. Cabug was a member of the Masbate People's Organization.

Amid successive killings of human rights defenders in Bicol and other parts of the country, around 6,000 individuals protested in Naga City. The mobilization was dubbed "Kilos Bicolano laban sa Tiraniya" (Bicolanos Fight Against Tyranny). Karapatan members also protested in front of the Department of National Defense headquarters in Quezon City on June 17.

In Bukidnon, state elements gunned down Nonoy Palma in front of his house at Sitio Malambago, Barangay Halapitan, San Fernando, on June 16. Palma was a member of KASAMA, provincial chapter of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas. One of the three assailants was identified as a member of the Alamar paramilitary group.

Meanwhile, Felipe Dacaldacal, member of the National Federation of Sugar Workers was gunned down in the evening of June 9 at Sitio Dita, Barangay Pinapugasan, Escalante City, Negros Occidental.

Killing of a person hors de combat

Edwin "Ka Dupax" Dematera, commander of NPA-Sorsogon was killed hors de combat by the 31st IB on June 12. He was gunned down after being beaten up outside his house in Barangay Incarizan, Magallanes, Sorsogon. Dematera was temporarily confined in the area due to a swollen foot.

After killing Dematera, the soldiers ransacked his house and seized the belongings of his relatives' visitors. Jemuel Non Saturday was also illegally arrested and brought to Camp Escudero in Sorsogon City. He was accused of being a member of the NPA and was made to appear to be in possession of a .38 caliber pistol.

The 31st IB is led by Lt. Col. Randy N. Espino and is based in Barangay Rangas, Juban, Sorsogon. The battalion was deployed in Camarines Norte in the 1990s. They were transferred to Sorsogon in 2011 and are still operating in the province at present.

Bloody record

Ang Bayan reports indicate that the 31st IB has perpetrated

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18 killings since 2014. The battalion is also notorious for illegal arrests, theft, and illegal search of civilian residences. The battalion also perpetrated a number of hors de combat killings.

Among its starkest crimes is the indiscriminate strafing of the Garduque residence on May 2014 in Matnog, Sorsogon. Couple Elias and Cynthia were accused as members of the NPA.

Elias was killed during the incident, while his wife and one-year old baby were wounded. The soldiers left the mother and baby to bleed for nine hours and prevented villagefolk from rescuing them.

The butcher battalion is also responsible for the killing of Teodoro "Tay Tudoy" Escanilla, 63, spokesperson of Karapatan-Sorsogon, in August 2015. He was gunned down in his house in Barangay Tagdon, Barcelona sa Sorsogon. **AB**

CIDG illegally arrests journalist

THE ARBITRARY ARREST and detention of renowned journalist Fidelina Margarita Valle on June 9 by officers of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group Region 9 was met with widespread condemnation.

Valle was arrested while waiting for her flight to Davao City at the Laguindingan Airport in Misamis Oriental. She was detained for 12 hours based on a warrant against a certain Elsa Renton, alias Tina Maglaya and Fidelina Margarita Valle, who was wanted for arson, multiple murder and destruction of government property.

Valle's family said that the arrest is clearly a case of harassment and intimidation against the victim for her

advocacy and stand against the tyranny of Rodrigo Duterte. The PNP was compelled to release Valle after the incident was broadly criticized. The PNP lamely reasoned out that the arrest was "a case of mistaken identity" and merely apologized. The Valle family rejected the apology and vowed to file charges against the CIDG.

Valle is a columnist of news portal Davao Today. **AB**

Police demolishes evacuee camp

POLICE OFFICERS DEMOLISHED the camp of Lumad evacuees near the provincial capitol in Cagayan de Oro City on June 18. Lumads from Sitio Kamansi, Barangay Banglay, Lagonglong, Misamis Oriental have been camping in the area for more than a year due to military occupation of their community. The occupation will pave the way for the operation of big geothermal and mining companies in Mt. Balatucan, including the Balatucan-Balingasag Geothermal Prospect Energy Development Corporation.

DEMOLITION. Five individuals were wounded, one of whom is in critical condition, during a demolition in Sitio Malipay III, Barangay Molino IV, Bacoor, Cavite, on June 18. The Villars ordered the demolition to pave the way for the construction of infrastructures in the area.

On June 10, 55 SWAT elements and local government agents demolished civilian residences at Sitio Kawayanan, Titus Street in Barangay San Agustin, Novaliches, Quezon City. Despite having lived in the area for several decades, residents were forcibly evicted to pave the way for the construction of "Bistekville," a housing project of the local government. **AB**

Disgusting hypocrisy and corruption

This June, reports began to circulate about corruption in the Philippine Health Insurance Corp. (PhilHealth). Duterte's former speaker, Harry Roque himself exposed that PhilHealth was scammed hundreds of billions of pesos.

Part of this are the overcharging of hospitals, "upcasing" or listing of cough for instance as pneumonia and duplication of lists and receipts. Among the starkest is the claiming of Wellness Dialysis Center of PhilHealth benefits for fake and deceased patients.

Reports indicate that PhilHealth lost P154 billion since 2013. A large chunk or P102 billion of this was charged through over-

charging and ghost treatments for fake patients.

In response, Duterte ordered the resignation of PhilHealth president Roy Ferrer only to replace him with his favored henchman. Ret. Brig. Gen. Ricardo Morales's name has come up despite being unqualified to lead the institution. PhilHealth funds are directly deducted from workers' wages both in the private and

public sector. The large amount of money it is able to collect qualifies it as one of the most advantageous institutions in the civilian bureaucracy.

From time to time, Duterte exposes cases of corruption in his government to make it appear that his reigning neatly. This is not to purge the bureaucracy from corrupt officials but to allow him to interchangeably place his henchmen in various positions, suppress or dismiss from office those who do follow his plans, and place his favored military officials in vacant positions. **AB**

Duterte's land program:

Reconcentration, not distribution

Rodrigo Duterte's so-called land distribution is bogus. Behind this, the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) is railroading the reclassification and conversion of agricultural lands to speed up its reconcentration in the hands of big land lords and bourgeois compradors.

From April to May this year, DAR issued one administrative order after another to hasten the reclassification of agricultural lands and convert these for residential, commercial and industrial use. Aside from "simplifying" the process, the DAR also established a special committee to fast track applications for conversion and award exemptions from the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP).

These orders followed Duterte's executive order to put applications for land reclamation near big cities under presidential authority.. This is to expedite the reclamation process and allow the president to monopolize kickbacks from the construction of commercial establishments and airports on reclaimed

lands.

These orders precede the National Land Use Act, one of the Duterte regime's priority bills, that will reclassify agricultural lands and forests, in compliance with the long-standing demands of real estate developers, big agribusiness companies and other big capitalists. The law will facilitate widespread land grabbing of agricultural lands from peasants and national minorities to give way to the construction of roads, airports, subdivisions, buildings, dams, energy plants and other big infrastructure projects under his Build, Build, Build program. In his haste, Duterte wants to shorten the reclamation application process from 26-36 months to 30 days.

Government data indicate that from 1998 to 2016, around 98,000

hectares of agricultural lands (equivalent to land areas of Metro Manila and Cebu) have been converted to residential, commercial and industrial uses. This figure does not include applications approved by local government units and lands illegally converted. Majority of these converted lands are in Luzon (80%), especially in CALABARZON (Southern Tagalog) and Central Luzon. **AB**



SOT: Putting contractualization into law

End ENDO your face. This seems to be the message of the US-Duterte regime to workers after railroading in Congress the approval of the Security of Tenure (SOT) Bill before the 17th Congress ended.

Duterte has promised to end contractualization since he came to power. In 2017 and 2018, he attempted to pacify workers by issuing orders which purportedly aim to push for regularization of workers. These, however, actually further reinforced contractualization schemes. Among these are the Department of Labor and Employment Order 174 and Executive Order 51, issued in 2017 and 2018 respectively, which were both rejected by labor groups.

As these orders are essentially toothless, Duterte passed the responsibility of ending contractualization to Congress.

Job insecurity

Contrary to its title, the final draft of the SOT Bill approved in Congress will not ensure job security. It will only put into law and not end contractualization. This is worse than DOLE and Duterte orders as the latter can be easily superseded unlike laws that are enacted.

Similar to previous orders, SOT allows job outsourcing (contracting of workers from labor agencies). Like other forms of contractualization, it absolves capitalists from all their legal obligations and leaves the task of upholding labor rights to contractors or labor agencies. Its primary objective is to mini-

mize the labor cost of capitalists and deny workers of their labor rights.

In the case of big malls, capitalists may argue that they do not directly employ their salesladies as their primary business is leasing out commercial spaces and not selling products. This subterfuge has long been used by big bourgeois compradors to perpetuate the contractual status of their workers.

This bill is no different to the current system, wherein the DOLE purportedly deploys inspectors to companies that practice contractualization, who in most cases, side with capitalists. It comes as no surprise that the bill was approved by Congress and was loosely accepted by capitalists. **AB**

CMO 20: A neoliberal scheme in education

Academics and professionals were dismayed with the decision issued by the Supreme Court on June 11 which upholds the constitutionality of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) order which seeks to remove Filipino, Panitikan (Filipino Literature) and Constitution from the college curriculum. The said provisions are contained in the CHED Memorandum Order Number 20 (CMO 20) which was issued earlier in 2015 by the US-Aquino regime. CMO 20 is part of the series of neoliberal offensives in the education sector.

Prior to this, the K-12 program was implemented. The said program added two years of high school for technical-vocational education and encourages students to enter the workforce instead of proceeding to college. This reform in primary and secondary education aims to train the Filipino youth based on the need of local and foreign companies for cheap, docile, and low- to semi-skilled labor.

In particular, the college curriculum was deliberately narrowed down, made less multifaceted and centered on technical, scientific, professional and cultural-ideological training to serve the needs of the world capitalist system. Complying with this neoliberal framework, the state dismisses the relevance of studying Filipino, Panitikan and Constitution in college. In the past, these subjects serve as an avenue

for patriotic academics to teach progressive and nationalist views.

According to Tanggol Wika, the Filipino language is a "significant cornerstone of national identity... which serves as a medium communication between ethnolinguistical groups and classes" especially in an archipelagic country. This paves the way for unity and people empowerment.

Meanwhile, professors from the University of the Philippines said that the Filipino language and Panitikan are vital in "deepening the critical, creative, free and liberative skills of students and the people." They added that the subjects are not merely a repetition as these have a higher level of theory, practice and use, especially in helping shape Filipino consciousness.

CMO 20 is a manifestation of the reactionary state's disinterest



in developing a patriotic and national culture and Filipino identity. The development of a nationalistic culture has no place or value in the direction set by this order. It allows foreign interests and influence to dominate and condition the minds of Filipinos, especially the youth, into patronizing foreign products, including cultural products, and bury their objective aspiration for national sovereignty.

The Filipino people need to expose not only CMO 20 but also all other neoliberal educational reforms and fight for a genuinely patriotic, scientific and mass-oriented educational system. AB

Transportation woes

Everyday, Filipinos, especially in the national capital, have to endure a myriad of transport problems. The most glaring of these are traffic, road shortages and the absence of an efficient mass transport system which cost them a big chunk of their incomes. These problems are further exacerbated by various schemes of those in power, which mostly cater to the whims of big capitalists.

According to a study in 2012, a commuter in Manila is stuck in traffic for an average of an hour and six minutes a day. This translates to 16 days a year. An individual loses up to P100,000 in income in the said duration. The local economy is estimated to have lost P2.4 billion a day due to traffic. Overall, this is equivalent to 2% to 5% of the GDP.

This is worsened by the increase in number of private vehicles due to

low interest rates on car loans. Estimates indicate that the number of private vehicles during rush hours is double the capacity of roads. As a result, commuters spend more than double the time they need in transit.

Meanwhile, mass transportation is severely insufficient. Train systems in Metro Manila which span 246 kilometers are 100% congested.

Because of this, many commuters prefer other modes of

transportation such as private vans, FX (UV express) and others. Newest among these is the ride-sharing system operated by big companies such as Grab and Angkas. Many commuters rely on these modes for their daily commutes. Thus, they are dismayed by the regime's policies which made commuting more strenuous.

Among these is a regulation issued by the Land Transportation and Franchise Regulatory Board which limits vehicles under the UV express system to pick and unload passengers only at terminals. This is akin to the Metro Manila Development Authority's banning of pro-

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The woeful plight of teachers

The woeful plight of teachers was once again highlighted when a picture of a toilet-turned-faculty room circulated in social media on the first week of June. The picture portrays what teachers and workers in the education sector have long endured such as shortages of classrooms, teaching aids and other teaching materials.

Due to the lack of funds, teachers often shoulder the costs of teaching aids like chalk. But worse than this is the low wages that teachers are made to endure, which the state and even its Department of Education (DepEd) secretary Leonor Briones insist as "sufficient."

Extremely inadequate salary

Since his campaign, Duterte has promised nine times to raise teachers' salaries. But up to now, this remains unfulfilled as he prioritized raising police and soldiers' salaries. He also increased his own salary by 200%.

Presently, a teacher's salary is only at P20,000-P22,000/month.

Deducting taxes, loan payments and others, teacher is left with a meager P5,000 as take home pay. Teachers complain that almost half of their salaries are spent on water and electricity bills. They stretch whatever is left for food and medicines. Because of this, are often left with no choice but to borrow cash from the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS), loan institutions and loan sharks.

Data by the DepEd indicate that the collective debt of teachers ballooned by P18 billion in just two years—from P301 billion in 2017 to P319 billion this year.

Almost half of this amount was loaned from the GSIS while P162

billion was loaned from private institutions. This figure does not include loans from loan sharks. Payment for GSIS and other loan institutions are automatically deducted from a teacher's salary until the loan is fully paid.

The ACT Teachers Party has long called for raising the entry level salary of teachers to P30,000/month. The group estimates that this amount is sufficient for a family of five.

Ibon Foundation estimates indicate that the state only needs to levy a 30% tax on individuals earning P50 million up to fund the needed increase. This measure can raise up to P400 billion/year which is even higher than the budgetary requirement for the P10,000/month wage increase which is at P150 billion/year. This will affect only the 38,000 richest individuals or 0.04% of the nation's population, the group said. **AB**

Who will profit from the privatization of Clark Airport?

Big bourgeois compradors and bureaucrat capitalists are currently pocketing billions of funds and kickbacks by implementing the US-Duterte regime's grandiose infrastructure projects. Among these is the Clark International Airport Expansion Project in the province of Pampanga, one of Duterte's big ticket infrastructure projects under his Build, Build, Build program.

Pro-capitalist project

Duterte is using the congestion and growing demand at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) in the national capital to push for the construction of a new 82,000-hectare terminal in Clark with an additional handling capacity of 8 million passengers per year.

To purportedly resolve the problem, the regime awarded in December 2017 the P9.36-billion public contract for the expansion of the Clark Airport to the Megawide Construction Corporation (MGC) and its

Indian corporate partner, GMR Infrastructure Ltd. This was implemented under the hybrid public-private-partnership (PPP) modality which means that the people will directly shoulder the costs for the said project that will only be used as a milking cow by local and foreign capitalists afterwards.

Utilizing the budget of the Bases Conversion and Development Authority (BCDA), the consortium is currently constructing the said infrastructure. The government recently reported that the new termi-

nal is 59% complete and will be operational by 2020.

MGC is owned by capitalist Edgar Saavedra, the 35th richest individual in the country who declared a net worth of \$245 million in 2018. He manages the company with Michael Cosiquien, the 36th richest with a net worth of \$240 million.

The grandiose infrastructure program of the regime is further lining the pockets of these two capitalists. In sum, the MGC is currently profiteering from its simultaneous delivery of five PPP projects. In 2010, the GMR-MGC consortium was also awarded a P17.52-billion contract by the Arroyo regime for a similar project at

"Berdugo..." sundan sa pahina 5

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the Mactan-Cebu International Airport.

Railroaded privatization

After pouring in billions of funds for the expansion of the airport and even though its construction is yet to be completed, Duterte railroaded the public bidding of a contract for the operations and maintenance of the entire airport to further guarantee the profits of private corporations. This is in compliance with the recommendations of the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the private investment arm of the World Bank, which drafted the concession agreement for the privatization of the airport.

Last December, the government awarded the contract to Luzon International Premiere Airport Development Corp. (LIPAD), a consortium led by bourgeois comprador relatives Josephine Gotianun-Yap of Filinvest and Lance Gokongwei of JG Summit. The private consortium is set to take over the management of airport operations on July 21.

Filinvest, the lead member of the consortium with a 42.5% share, is headed by Josephine Gotianun-Yap. She is a daughter of Mercedes Gotianun, the 17th richest individual in the country who declared a net worth of \$1.15 billion last year. The Gotianuns own Filinvest, a real estate company which is notorious for converting agricultural lands into subdivisions.

JG Summit on the other hand, which has the second highest share in the consortium (33%), is currently headed by Lance Gokongwei. He is a son of John Gokongwei Jr., the 3rd richest individual in the country with a net worth of \$4.4 billion. The Gokongweis own Robinsons and Universal Robina Corporation which are notorious for unfair labor practices.

The said privatization contract will surely fatten the pockets of these capitalists. Through this, they will be able to accumulate profits

through the imposition of high service charges such as terminal and parking fees that passengers commonly pay.

If the consortium will impose a P300-terminal fee/passenger, it can collect up to P2.4 billion/year in the new terminal alone. This excludes the value of revenues that can be collected from the payment of aircraft parking and landing fees by airlines, and rental fees by business establishments leasing commercial spaces at the airport.

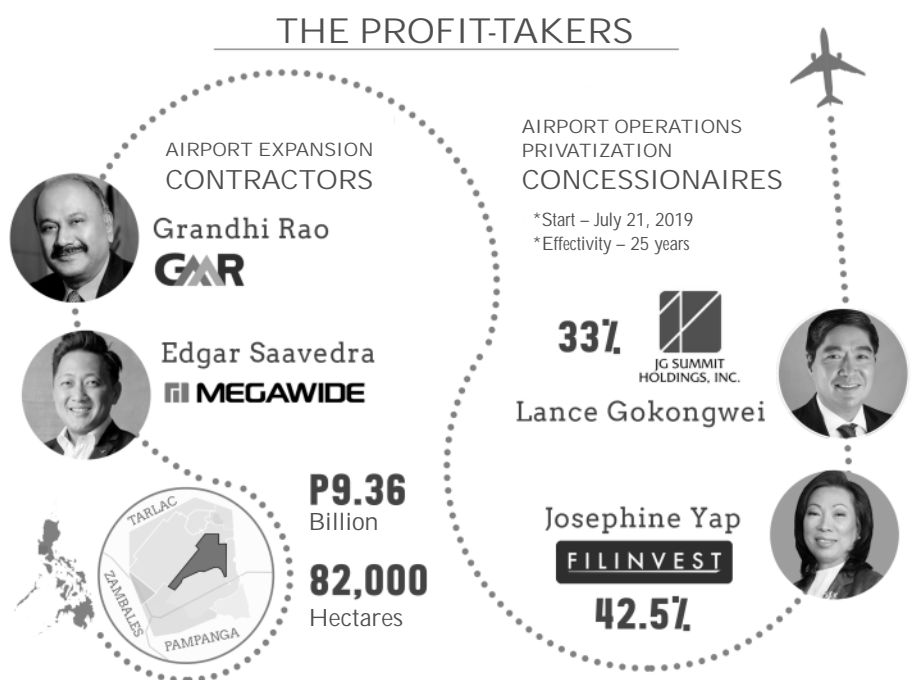
On top of this, the concessionaire will also enjoy fiscal incentives under the Build-Operate-Transfer Law, including a four- to six-year tax exemption.

With all that it will be able to gain, the concessionaire is only obligated to pay P1 billion per year to the

BCDA for ten years as payment to the government.

Meanwhile, the privatization concession is a bane to airport employees. Despite provisions in the concession agreement which state that regular employees will be given a separation incentive package and will be rehired, they are still uncertain of what their employment status will be upon the take over of the new operator. Even the National Conciliation and Mediation Board declined to comment to the inquiry of the employees if the new operator will absorb them as stated in the contract. In addition, the "separation incentive package" which affected employees are supposed to have received by now is yet to be approved by Duterte.

AB



"Transportation..." from page 8

vincial buses along EDSA, Metro Manila's main thoroughfare which cuts across several cities. The MMDA regulation also limits buses to load and unload passengers at dilapidated terminals across the metropolis. These regulations make commuting more difficult and expensive to many travellers. It is also dangerous for the elderly and disabled who rely on direct transportation.

The continuing and worsening transport problem is a result of the Duterte regime's failure to develop an efficient mass transportation system that will benefit the people. His policies only serve the interests of big capitalists including oil companies, big banks, car and other private vehicle manufacturers.

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