



EDITORIAL

Rise up and end the oppressive and heedless regime

Social inequalities in the country have worsened alongside sharpening of contradictions as the Duterte regime adopts militarist and anti-people measures to confront the Covid-19 pandemic. While a few remain insulated in their mansions and palaces and continue to accumulate wealth, abuse power and engorge themselves in the masses' sweat and blood, millions of people are mired in poverty and extreme hardship.

The people demand justice for all those made to suffer hunger and poverty, suppressed and denied of their rights. After more than three months of failed measures and policies, the Filipino people suffer unprecedented hardships.

For close to three months, Duterte imprisoned the entire people in their crowded homes in the name of preventing the spread of the virus. But Duterte and his generals squandered the people's sacrifices. Not enough funds were spent to enable the health system cope with the pandemic. There is no mass testing. No free treatment of

Covid-19. Data gathering is delayed and deficient leaving the government blind as to where the virus is spreading.

Not only did promised social aid come late, it was also inadequate and typically pilfered. "Life is good!" exclaimed a senator, as officials partied and have filled their pantries, while they forced people survive on porridge and sardines, if any. Majority of the people who live at subsistence level suffered hunger and distress. Those desperate enough to leave their home to scrounge for money and food were denounced, apprehended and se-

verely punished.

Lacking a clear health plan to overcome the pandemic, Duterte stopped everything and shut down a large part of the economy. Millions lost their jobs and income. Small business owners faced devastation. When restrictions were eased this June, it did everything to help big business rise again, while abandoning the toiling masses and practically telling them "you're on your own!"

While people were rigorously made to follow suffocating policies, Duterte and his rotten ilk freely breathed and moved around.

While Duterte flew back and forth to Davao aboard a private plane, hundreds of thousands couldn't find a ride home. They were made to wait on streets and sidewalks, hungry and with no certainty when they could easily get a

ride and reach home. Who can forget Michelle Silvertino who died after five days of waiting for a ride home to Bicol on a foot bridge in pasay?

Everyday, workers and employees race and ram against one another as they rush for seats in limited buses and trains. Because not enough safe mass transportation was prepared, thousands are now left with no other option but to walk or ride along dangerous highways everyday.

In the face of insufficient workers' wages, Duterte still permitted big capitalists to cut wages supposedly to help them recover their profits. They were also freed from responsibility to have their workers tested to identify possible Covid-19 infections.

Duterte is unperturbed in the face of millions of job losses. He is not rush-

ing anything to stop the sharp downturn in their living standards.

While allowing "modern" jeeps owned by big corporations, it continues to ban hundreds of thousands of small jeepney drivers and operators. Duterte has turned a deaf ear to the clamor of ordinary drivers for subsidies to allow jeepneys to provide a safe ride even if, in fact, jeepneys and tricycles are

much safer than the closed vehicles. Duterte has virtually kicked them out. The "kings of the road" are now pleading and begging on the streets.

While Duterte is once again rushing to import tons of rice from agriculture-subsidizing countries, funds are sorely lacking to subsidize Filipino peasant masses and buy their produce.

Millions of people are aggravated by onerous police requirements for those seeking permits to travel or go home to their provinces or regions.

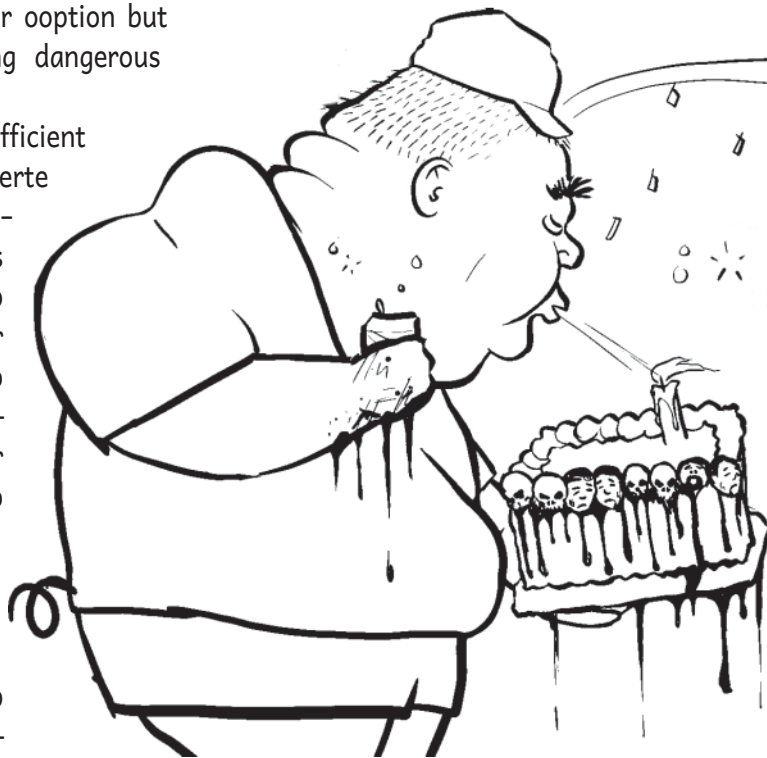
Because of its refusal to allot enough funds to allow schools to open safely (more schools, classrooms, teachers and other educational infrastructure), Duterte banned classes in the coming months. Instead, he ordered teaching to be done online but without allotting funds, thus passing to teachers and students the costs of purchasing computers, internet services and other needs.

Millions of youth are gripped by fear as many schools plan to raise tuition, while state subsidy for education remain acutely insufficient. They are also victims of arbitrary restrictions against 16-21 year olds which prevent them from seeking work or participating in various social activities.

Instead of cutting spending for unproductive debt-driven infrastructure projects, and realigning billions of pesos for confidential and intelligence funds, hundreds of billions of pesos for the purchase of helicopters, bombs and war matériel, the Duterte regime has chosen to go on a borrowing spree to fund its expenses during the pandemic.

The debt burden is lopsided on the people's shoulders. Instead of being increased, the tax share of the billionaire big capitalists were cut by the Duterte regime; and now

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ANG Bayan

Vol. LI No. 12 | June 21, 2020

Ang Ang Bayan is published in Pilipino, Bisaya, Iloko, Hiligaynon, Waray and English.

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Ang Bayan is published fortnightly by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines

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plans to increase the share of ordinary income earners. The regime has refused to ease the tax burden on the impoverished people even for a moment and even by the slightest amount.

In the past three months of the Covid-19 pandemic, the anti-people Duterte regime has been further unravelled by its refusal to put ahead the people's interests and prioritizing instead the interests of the big capitalists and pocketing large amounts of people's money. Duterte himself has admitted he was the one who ordered the purchase of overpriced equipment. In addition, he has prioritized the Anti-Terror Bill, the silencing of critics and the strengthening of his military forces in order to intimidate the people, suppress democracy and perpetuate himself as a powerful dictator.

Over the past three months, the people have been boiling with rage against the Duterte regime. They slowly overcome fear and manifest courage and the willingness to fight.

The Filipino people stand on moral high ground to rise up and resist. It is imperative for them to unite and use their power to perform the historical task of shaping the country's destiny. Clouds of social storm are now fast gathering. They must seize the time and opportunity to unleash all rage against Duterte's corruption, neglect, fascism and treachery and put an end to his dictatorship. AB

Who is Michelle Silvertino?

Michelle Silvertino was one of millions of Filipinos who sought a better paying jobs abroad to feed their families. Fail to travel abroad, she worked as a maid in Metro Manila. Due to strict lockdown restrictions, she was not able to travel back home to her province. When restrictions were eased, she decided to go home to Bicol to be with her four children.

Silvertino first went to Cubao hoping to catch a bus ride from there. As there were no buses there, she then went to Pasay City where she continued to wait in vain. Unable to catch a ride anywhere due to arbitrary changes imposed by the IATF, she decided to stay at a footbridge in the same city. She immediately ran out of money and food supplies. She got sick on the third day, but instead of being brought to the hospital, she was brought by the police to a precinct. After exhibiting Covid-19 symptoms, the police decided to transfer her to a barangay hall. Seeing there was no one at the barangay hall, the police decided to return her to the footbridge. She died the next day (June 5) and was buried in a shallow grave. It is clear that she died due to the regime's criminal neglect.

A kilometer away from where Sil-

vertino waited, more than 700 migrant workers and locally stranded individuals (LSI) also stayed under a bridge near the airport while waiting for their flights back home to their respective provinces. They endured surviving with minimal food supplies and no beds. They were only given attention by the government and transferred to an evacuation center after being met with criticism for its negligence.

Silvertino and the 700 who are staying at airports are part of the 4.1 million LSIs who are being neglected by the regime. On top of its limited and slow program to transport LSIs, the government is also profiteering from them by requiring them to apply for numerous requirements such as a barangay certifications, medical and laboratory examinations, IDs and travel authorization from the police. AB

NPA strikes at soldiers occupying Mangyan communities

THE NEW PEOPLE'S Army (NPA)-Mindoro mounted successive offensives against the Philippines National Police and fascist troopers of the 4th and 76th IB last month. Six harassment operations were launched in Mansalay, Bulalacao, Socorro ng Oriental Mindoro and Rizal, Occidental Mindoro from May 6-18. A soldier was killed and seven others were killed in the attacks.

The offensives were mounted in response to complaints of peasants and Mangyans in the town of Rizal and Calintaan who were forced to evacuate due to the military's combat operations in their community on the first week of May. More than 600 military elements were deployed in the area. They also installed artillery cannons in Rizal.

In Negros Oriental, the NPA punished a CAFGU element in Barangay Luz, Guihulngan City last June 11. The CAFGU member helped guide 62nd IB operations and actively participated in Oplan Sauron attacks wherein

scores of peasant masses were illegally arrested and killed.

On June 16, two intelligence agents of the 94th IB were also attacked by the NPA in Himamaylan City. The two are notorious for tagging civilians as "NPA supporters." On the same day, the NPA successively mounted two harassment soldiers against operating soldiers in barangays Mahalang and Buenavista.

In Palawan, another NPA unit blasted a detachment of the 3rd Marine Brigade in Barangay Magara, Roxas on May 22.

"This is a mañanita, not a rally"

Coordinated mass protest actions, dubbed "mañanitas," were mounted last June 12 in Metro Manila and 14 provinces to oppose the Anti-Terrorism Bill. The protests were an outright act of defiance to the Malacañang's ban on rallies. Protesters called their protest a "mañanita" as a sarcastic reference to the birthday feast by the police in the National Capital Region for their chief Debold Sinas last May. The protest was held in conjunction with the commemoration of the 122th Philippine Independence Day. Majority of the participants were from the youth sector.

More than 5,000 converged at the campus of the University of the Philippines (UP) in Diliman, Quezon City to conduct a "Grand Mañanita." Similar to a birthday celebration, protesters wore party hats, brought balloons, food and cakes containing the call "Junk Anti-Terror Bill." There were songs, dances, speeches and cultural performances.

The rally in UP was spearheaded by the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) and its allied organizations of workers, youth, women, health workers, government employees, urban poor and others.

Did you know?

"MAÑANITA" (which means "little tomorrow" in Spanish) is a surprise serenade to awaken a birthday celebrant early in the morning or at the crack of dawn. It is being practiced in various parts of the Philippines and has become a tradition wherein families gather to mark the start of a birthday. In Mindanao, a particular mañanita song entitled "Malipayong Adlaw" is often sang by Red fighters for their comrades who celebrate their birthdays. The was written and popularized by Agaw-Armas.

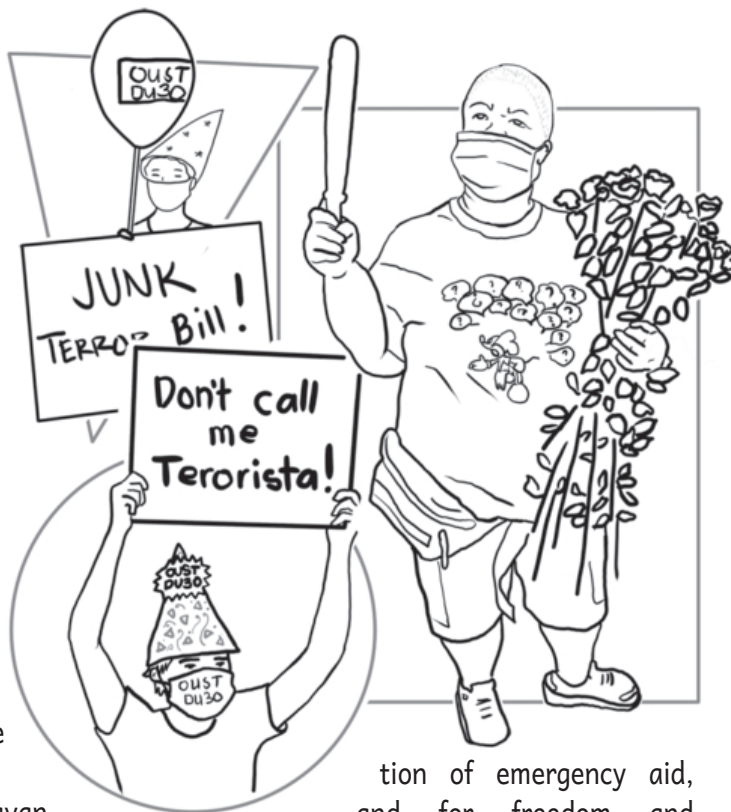
Public figures such as those from the Liberal Party and other organizations, as well as famous artists and cultural performers participated in the protest.

According to Bayan Muna chairperson Neri Colmenares, the Anti-Terror Bill is dangerous because it can be used against ordinary civilians who criticize or post express their sentiments against the regime.

Before the protest, the police set up a checkpoint at the entrance of the university in an attempt to stop participants from going in. Anticipating this, protesters organized a team of lawyers to defend those who would be arrested. Health workers also stood by to ensure that Covid-19 preventive measures are observed by protesters.

The protesters strictly maintained a meter distance from each other. Face masks, face shields and alcohol were also distributed during the mass action. The program ended after three hours.

Protesters pointed out that while the rally is directed against the Anti-Terrorism Bill, it also aimed to hold the regime accountable for its ineptness to ensure the health and welfare of the people amid the Covid-19 pandemic. They called for mass testing, tracing and validation of Covid-19 cases, distribu-



tion of emergency aid, and for freedom and democracy.

Among the highlights of the rally was the speech of Marie Dinglasan, an sari-sari store vendor who trended on social media for posting a video criticizing Duterte and bravely responding to Duterte's trolls who tagged her as an "NPA supporter." The program also featured a performance by theater actress Mae Paner who dressed as Debold Sinas, and the collective dance and singing of the jingle parody "Don't call me terorista (a terrorist)."

Before the "Grand Mañanita," protests were also conducted at the De La Salle University in Manila and at Sitio San Roque, Barangay Pagasa, Quezon City.

Across the country, numerous activists and youth groups took to the streets and rallied against the Anti-Terror Bill.

Baguio. One hundred individuals protested at UP Baguio. Earlier on June 3, 62 youth organizations signed a petition against the Anti-Terror Bill. The petition signing was led by the Youth Act Now Against

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Tyranny-Bagui-Benguet.

Nueva Vizcaya. Anti-mining and environmental advocates and residents of Didipio, Kasibu conducted a protest action in their community.

Isabela. The police stopped several students from holding a program at a school in Santiago, Isabela. They were told to take pictures instead, and immediately disperse.

Pampanga. Five activists were tailed and interrogated by police agents after participating in a program at the Plaza Miranda in Angeles City.

Albay and Naga. The Youth Act Now-Albay spearheaded a protest at the Pinaglabanan Monument in Legazpi City. According to the Justine Mesias, spokesperson of the said alliance, the regime's Anti-Terrorism Bill will only aggravate the plight of the people. Approximately 200 members of Anakbayan-Naga City and Bayan-Camarines Sur also protested at the Plaza Quince Martires in Naga City.

Negros. Lightning rallies were

mounted by the Bacolod Youth Alliance at six spots in Bacolod City including the Rizal Freedom Park, Bacolod City Plaza, Fountain of Justice, San Sebastian Cathedral, local ABS-CBN station, and in front of the office of Cong. Greg Gasataya. Simultaneously, a protest action was also held by Paghiliusa, Liberal Party Negros and the Federation of Urban Poor in front of the San Sebastian Cathedral to condemn the Anti-Terrorism Bill. That afternoon, similar protest actions were also conducted by Bayan and Karapatan-Negros in front of the Fountain of Justice.

Iloilo. A "mañanita against terrorism" was held by students and teachers of UP Visayas, the church sector and the Commission on Human Rights Region 6 in front of the university campus in Iloilo.

Cebu. With police troops encamped in front of UP Cebu and the refusal of the university administration to recognize the rights of students to assemble in the campus, progressive groups conducted their lightning rallies at the Gorordo Avenue and Escario Street in Cebu

at around 6:00 a.m.

Davao. The PASAKA Confederation of Lumad Organization hosted a program at the UCCP Haran in Davao City which was participated in by 500 evacuees. The participants also conducted a protest action while strictly observing physical distancing. Later that evening, Lumad leaders led a torch lighting ceremony to symbolize their determination to bring light amid the dark times of tyranny under the Duterte regime, and how this light is further ignited through the people's struggle.

Datu Minstroso Malibato pointed out: "We are struggling to educate our children but the government is ruthlessly closing down our schools and killing our people." The group stressed that the real terrorist is the Duterte government.

Butuan. A "mañanita" was also held at the Freedom Park in Butuan City.

Youth groups and lawyers also conducted "mañanitas" in Cagayan de Oro, Dumaguete, Zamboanga and Bulacan. AB

"I still can't stop crying..."

ONE OF THE 16 youths who were illegally arrested after conducting a peaceful protest action at the Ronda in Barangay Pala, Iligan City on June 12 said that she still could not stop crying due to trauma.

Majority of those arrested were former students of the Mindanao State University-Iligan Institute of Technology. They were apprehended by police troops after their protest. While attempting to flee, the victims heard a police officer shout "pusila, pusila!" (shoot them, shoot them!). An activist who attempted to explain was restrained by chokehold. Their cell-phones were confiscated and they were forcibly taken to a police precinct where they were interrogated and threatened. Four of them were maliciously tagged as having links with the New People's Army. During the interrogation, the victims discovered the extent of police surveillance on them.

They were detained for seven hours before their lawyers were able to get them out. The protest was part of the coordinated nationwide "mañanita" against the Anti-Terror Bill.

Military arrests CPA founder

ANNE MARGARET Tauli, 70, was arrested by military elements in Besao, Mountain Province and flown by helicopter to Baguio to face National Security Adviser Sec. Hermogenes Esperon, Jr. on June 11.

Esperon made it appear that Tauli "surrendered" and "returned to the folds of the law." He accused her of being a ranking member of the Communist Party of the Philippines, a claim which her relatives belied.

They said that Tauli has long been receiving death threats for advocating for participating in mass campaigns to advance the right of the Igorot people to autonomy and self-determination. Earlier in March, state elements attempted to arrest her. There were also reports of a shoot-to-kill order against her.

Tauli, a former teacher, was one of the founders of the Cordillera People's Alliance (CPA) in 1984. She is a leader of the Batil-ang Peypeyan clan. Her sister, former UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, was also accused of being a ranking CPP official.

The Philippines is surrounded by US and Chinese warships

From east to west Philippines, one can find US and Chinese warships. Both are saber-rattling. Tensions and threats of war breaking out are heightening. There is rising danger of the Philippines getting caught in the armed conflict of two imperialist powers.

In the West Philippine Sea, Chinese Coast Guard and "militia" ships are permanently stationed. There are also at least seven Chinese military bases and facilities in the area, several of which were constructed within the country's territory.

On the Philippine Sea (on the country's east), two US carrier strike groups (armadas with lead aircraft carriers) and submarines operate. Not far from the country's seas is another US aircraft carrier, the USS Nimitz.

From April to May, amid the Covid-19 pandemic, US and Chinese military forces maneuvered and countermaneuvered in the South China Sea. In mid-April, China deployed the Haiyang Dizhi 8 survey ship for searching sea and mineral resources, escorted by a flotilla of coast guard and militia ships.

Tensions rose on April 28-29 when the US deployed the USS Gabrielle Giffords, a combat littoral ship, to "patrol" the area. Tensions further rose when on April 29 two US Air Force B-1B Lancer bomber plane were launched from continental US and flew towards the South

China Sea.

In early May, the US dispatched the USS Montgomery and USNS Cesar Chavez to conduct patrol operations. On May 8, two more US bombers launched from Guam flew over the South China Sea. Around the same time, the Japan-based US Seventh Fleet bragged that three submarines under its command are conducting war exercises in the Philippine seas.

On the first week of June, the US military claimed it has three carrier strike groups conducting operations across the Indian Ocean and Pacific. Two of these strike groups, the USS Theodore Roosevelt strike group, and the USS Ronald Reagan (from its Japanese port), both nuclear-powered warships and carrying a combined force of more than 10,000 troops, are presently operating in the Philippine Sea.

The maneuvers and countermaneuvers of US and Chinese military forces within and around Philippine territories must be denounced. All these heighten tensions and raise the danger of confrontations and igniting direct armed conflict in the region.

The Duterte regime must be denounced for following the dictates of both US and China in the military, political and economic terms. On the one hand, it has failed to assert the country's territorial and economic rights as recognized by the 2017 decision of the International Tribunal on the Law of the Seas, when it allowed China to construct military facilities in areas under Philippine jurisdiction. On the other hand, it continues to allow the US to use the country as launching pad for its operations in the South China Sea, the Philippine Sea and the rest of the Asia-Pacific region. It has also allowed the US to set up facilities within AFP camps, in exchange for helicopters and other war matériel for its war of suppression against the Filipino people.

The people must demand the dismantling of Chinese military facilities in the country's territory and reparation for damaged marine resources. They must also demand the withdrawal of armed Chinese Coast Guard and paramilitary ships.

At the same time, the people must call for the complete abrogation of the Visiting Forces Agreement, the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement and all other lopsided treaties which give US military forces extraterritorial rights. **AB**

US AND CHINESE WARSHIPS IN THE PHILIPPINES



Millions of OFW are stranded abroad

The reactionary state has always treated overseas Filipino workers like garbage. The pandemic only highlighted this fact. Last June 16, 14 Filipinos who wanted to come home were barred by the Duterte regime from leaving Amsterdam, the Netherlands because there were not enough quarantine facilities in the Philippines. They were told that Rodrigo Duterte only allows 1,000 OFWs to come home per day.

The 14 are among the millions of migrant Filipinos in various parts of the world who are now suffering due to the Duterte regime's neglect. In Asia-Pacific countries, many of them work in the health and service sectors. They face the threat of infection everyday. Domestics in Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan and Singapore are not spared from this situation.

The government does not have a plan to give them protection. In Hong Kong, migrants themselves have to buy medical supplies like face masks and alcohol. In South Korea, they had to push Philippine embassy officials to distribute masks. Thousands of Filipinos working in ships are detained in the shores of Australia because they were banned from docking. The regime has no plan to conduct mass testing among them or to pay for their hospitalization in case they are infected.

Because of this neglect, more than 6,000 migrants have been infected with Covid-19 in 51 countries. More than 440 have died.

One in every three Filipinos who succumbed to the disease is an OFW. Many of them have resorted to begging the Philippine embassies for food. In other parts of world, three have committed suicide out of depression as they lost their jobs.

The Duterte regime has no plan in place against the mounting unemployment among migrants due to the pandemic. Despite getting billions worth of loans, Duterte only allocated P1.5 billion to those who have lost their jobs. Due to budget constraints, funds to provide P10,000 per worker financial aid have long dried up.

Majority of those who requested for aid were turned down as funds were limited to migrants in 29 countries. Migrants in more than 190 countries and territories were not counted where most are temporary workers, trainees, students, tourists and undocumented workers. Families of OFWs in the Philippines are also excluded.

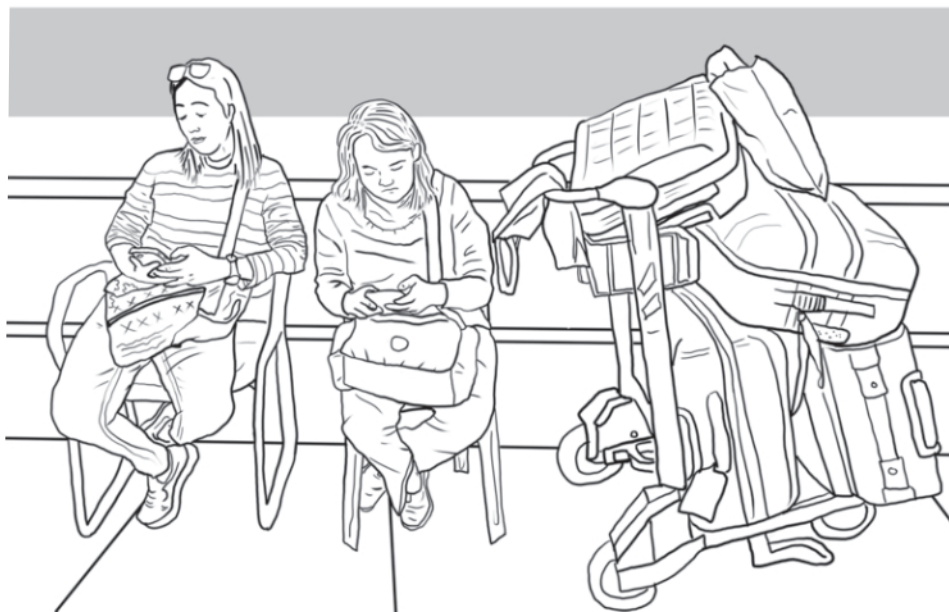
According to the DOLE's understated estimates, 700,000 to

a million migrant workers will lose their jobs. But according to estimates by the International Labor Organization in April, the figure could go up to 5 million. This is because most Filipino migrant workers (43%) work in food and accommodation, wholesale and retail, manufacturing and trade services and administration—sectors which are most affected by the pandemic. Adding insult to the injury, the regime even plans to increase the migrants' Philhealth contribution to 3%. AB

Remittances set to plunge this year

IN EARLY APRIL, the National Economic Development Authority projected that the inflow of remittances sent back home by overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) will plunge by around 30% this year due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This is because almost half of the total number of OFWs are employed in sectors hardest hit by the pandemic in various countries.

This poses a huge challenge to the local economy especially that it is heavily reliant on remittances. Last year, OFW remittances hit a record high of P1.68 trillion, which is equivalent to 10% of the gross domestic product in the same year. OFW remittances are among the regime's primary source of funds to sustain local consumption and resolve the ever-increasing deficit in its balance of payments.



Anti-poor plan on the education system

Devoid of sympathy and preparation. This was what millions of parents and thousands of teachers accuse Rodrigo Duterte and his education officials with regards to the plan of enforced “distance learning” for the coming schoolyear. “The online, modular, television, radio and laptop methods are inappropriate since families’ conditions vary,” a mother and member of the Amihan, an organization of peasant women, said. “They no more money for buying food, what more for buying gadgets,” the group said. In many rural areas, many have no access to the internet and people have no gadgets. Some do not even own a television or radio. There are also places with no electricity.

Under the Department of Education’s distance learning, classes will be held without opening schools. This was after Duterte declared that there will be no face-to-face classes in all areas at all levels until a vaccine becomes available. Parents can supposedly pick from three options—the modular, online and television/radio-based instruction. In the modular distance learning, parents pick up learning instructions from schools, either in digital or printed form, which the children will then learn on their own. For online classes, all these will be done through the internet, and the third option will have children learning their lessons from the television or radio. In all three options, mothers or a family member will be obligated to stay at home to act as teacher. Teachers, on the other hand, will take on the responsibility of preparing the ma-

terials, buying the needed gadgets and paying for the needed internet services.

Joy, a contractual worker with two school-age children, is feeling the pressure. She only has one phone which she uses in her work as a doctor’s assistant. She is among those who are under a no-work, no-pay scheme, and earns only P15,000/month. She is thinking of picking the modular type of instruction but worry that her children will not learn anything without a teacher since she is at work for most of the day.

Teachers are also stressed. A group of teachers in Maco Valley, Davao de Oro was forced to set up camp along the highway for a DepEd webinar since it was the only area where they could pick up internet signals. Even students feel the

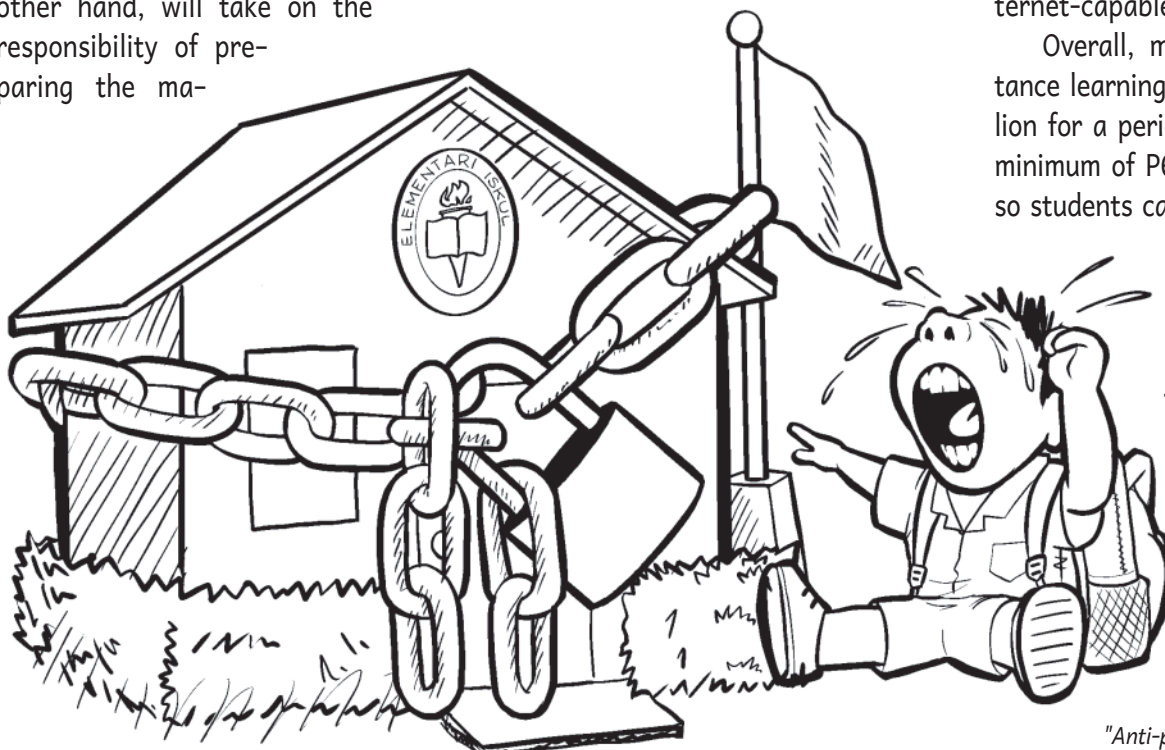
pressure. A 19-year old student committed suicide as he was extremely stressed on where to find money for his cellphone services.

Anti-poor and a sham

Distance learning pushes many children and youth to drop out of school. Estimates put that only 55% or 15.2 million of the 27.7 who enrolled in 2019 will enrol this year. Enlistment already slowed down from 6.3 million during the first week of June to 4.2 million in the second week. From this number, only 319,000 enrolled in private schools or a mere 7.6% out of the 4.2 million private students last year. Private enrolment will probably not reach a million this year.

There are studies which say that the number of cellphones exceed the number of Filipinos (117 million for 110 people.) But these are concentrated in urban areas, and half of which are not internet-capable. Majority of internet users (80%) are subscribed to the cheapest, intermittent and slowest connection. The cheapest student internet service package is P50 for 3 days. Each student will then need either a laptop (P18,000) or an internet-capable cellphone (P2,500).

Overall, minimum costs for distance learning can reach P110.8 billion for a period of three months. A minimum of P69.25 billion is needed so students can each have access to a gadget. The cheapest internet services will cost at least P41.55 billion. This does not include teachers’ needs such as laptops and internet allowance set at P1,500/month. Cellphone and internet companies are set to make a



"Anti-poor..." continued on page 9

Lumads urge 88th IB to leave community in Bukidnon

The confrontation between Lumads and 88th IB officials became heated during a dialogue held in Cabanglasan, Bukidnon last June 13. The Lumads urged the military unit to leave and demanded an end to its attacks in the community. The unit has occupied the communities of Eyaray, Lakap, Katablaran, Salorenga, Maynaga, Tombaga, San Vicente and Kahen. The dialogue was attended by the Cabanglasan local government, barangay captains and 200 residents from barangays Kanangaan, Iba at Manggaod, along with three chieftains. This was the first dialogue conducted in the area.

In a radio interview, Datu Konrado Salimbon narrated that in the past, they allowed themselves to be used by the AFP as paramilitary forces of Alamara and Bagani. They were regularly used as guides by AFP regular platoons against the New People's Army. Their anti-Lumad activities ruined the communities and their tribal unity. For two decades, they had no livelihoods, and there were frequent "lidos" or interclan wars. The military also used them to plant marijuana in their ancestral lands in Pantaron.

But because of the 88th IB's repression, they were forced to unite to escape from the military's deception and exploitation. They decided to air their grievances and did not let attempts by the military to stop them from going out of their communities. They successfully demanded the local government to

attend the dialogue amid intense focused military operations in their area.

The Lumads were angry with how the 88th IB summoned residents two at a time to force them to surrender as NPA members. They were further enraged when the military claimed that their presence is for the Lumad's good. The 88th IB, however, admitted that they remain in the area because they regard the residents as Red fighters.

The 88th IB's area of operation covers the municipalities of Valencia, San Fernando, Quezon, Maramag and Kitaotao. Human rights violations are rampant in these areas. From January 2019, *Ang Bayan* recorded seven cases of extrajudicial killings and 112 arrests. There were at least two bombing incidents which forced 3,509 individuals to evacuate. Last

Agents strafes house of Kasama-Bukidnon leader

SUSPECTED ELEMENTS of the 88th IB strafed a house where Elita Manlapid, 59, and her family were staying on the night of June 16. Manlapid was the chairperson of the San Fernando Kasama-Bukidnon chapter in 2013.

She has been repeatedly pressured to "surrender" as a member of the New People's Army in 2016 and 2019. The 88th IB also summoned her to their headquarters in Maramag. The residents in the area have been experiencing violence and threats by an AFP-organized paramilitary group. Kasama-Bukidnon has been leading the fight to defend the Pantaron range and stop mining companies from destroying the Lumad's ancestral land.

May 15, the 88th IB expanded its operations and covered the town of Cabanglasan. This came after the 4th ID's declaration that it has already decimated the NPA in the aforementioned towns. AB

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killing. If parents do not shell out for these gadgets and services, local governments, like Pasig City, will do the purchasing using public funds. If the said private companies give-away their products and services, all their "donations" will be tax-deductible.

On the other hand, the DepEd estimates that it will take only P37 billion to put into place the basic health measures. Combined with mass testing of teachers (at the most P6.9 billion for three months) and other adjustments to class size, duration and frequency, opening of

schools and face-to-face interaction is more advantageous and cost-effective, especially in areas where Covid-19 is not prevalent.

Nevertheless, these health measures should be accompanied with extensive reforms to resolve decades-old problems of the educational system. Social distancing is difficult to implement in schools with acute shortages of classrooms, chairs and desks. In 2019, the DepEd admitted a 800,000 classroom shortage. Toilets, water and other sanitation facilities are also severely lacking.

There are not enough teachers,

nurses and other school personnel who can go on rotation if necessary. The DepEd plans to add only 10,000 teachers for 2020, even though 81,000 teachers have been needed since 2018.

In general, 30 million students, teachers and other school employees in elementary and high schools are affected by Rodrigo Duterte's lack of sympathy and preparation. The pandemic exposed not only the regime's inutility in addressing the needs and rights of children and the youth, but also the country's backward and rotting educational system. AB

Unemployment at all-time high

Reports of mass lay offs filled the news as companies face the threat of bankruptcy due to the crisis wrought by Duterte's almost 3-month lockdown.

Companies have successively expressed their intent to retrench their workers. Among these are the Bank of Philippine Islands which announced it will retire 1,286 employees who are 50 years and older.

Cebu Pacific is also planning to retrench 1,000 of its ground crew who are outsourced from the 1Aviation Services Corp., on top of the 400 who were laid earlier in April. The Philippine Airlines and Air Asia will also retrench 564 workers. About 400 workers of Victory Liner are set to lose their jobs. Okada Manila also announced it will lay off 1,000 workers.

In Davao City, approximately 200,000 workers will lose their jobs as more than 10,000 companies expressed their intent to reduce their respective workforces.

Worst unemployment in history

The Department of Labor and employment reported that more than 2,000 companies with a total workforce of 69,000 closed down since the lockdown.

The Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) also published a survey this June stating that the total number of unemployed has reached 7.3 million in April, bringing the unemployment rate to 17.7%. The number of unemployed is more than thrice higher than the 2.4 million recorded in January.

Ibon Foundation, however, said that the actual number of unemployed is 14 million, and the unemployment rate is actually 22%. These figures were derived by adding the number of discouraged workers and those who lost their jobs during the lockdown who were dropped by the PSA its computations.

In sum, there are 20.4 million

unemployed and underemployed Filipinos during the said period, which is the highest in history.

Further burden

Amid worsening crisis, the regime fast-tracked the implementation of more neoliberal policies to further exploit workers and ensure the maximum profit of capitalists.

On May 16, the Department of Labor and Employment issued Labor Advisory 17 which allowed employers to retrench their workers, cut salaries and benefits, compress working hours and days, and implement various flexible labor schemes. This includes the "work from home" arrangement which is being used by employers to cut the salaries of workers in half.

Earlier on May 7, the department issued Department Order 213 which suspended the conduct of inspections in work places which is a requisite in ensuring safety as the economy reopened. It also suspended all activities related to union work which effectively suppressed the right of workers to redress grievances.

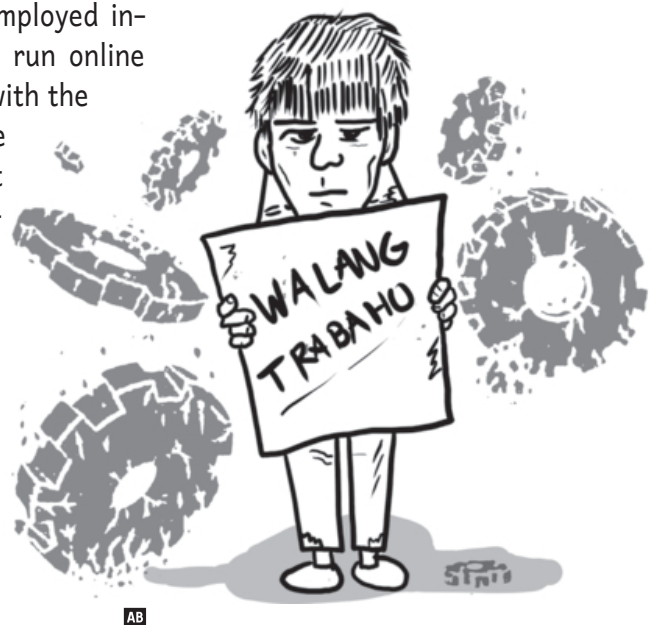
Meanwhile, the Bureau of Internal Revenue issued a memorandum requiring self-employed individuals or those who run online businesses to register with the agency. Applicants are expected to spend at P2,260 for the registration alone. Through this, those earning more than P20,833 per month will be charged a tax of 20%. Many workers who lost their jobs during the lockdown shifted to this sector to earn a living.

Hundreds of professionals suffer under lockdown

HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS of professionals and workers in the service sector continue to suffer from the Duterte regime's neglect under the lockdown. They lost incomes when schools, offices and cinemas were closed. Among them are 50,000 teachers in universities and colleges, and 500,000 education workers in private schools. In addition, 800,000 workers in the film industry, and the arts and culture were also affected.

Most of them are hired on a no-work, no-pay basis. Despite this, they are not covered by the regime's miserable aid and compensation.

Wages for teachers in private colleges stopped in March. They will not be paid until classes resume. Many teachers and employees of private schools have not been paid since the middle of April. They are in the brink of losing their jobs as estimates show enrollment in private schools down by 75% down this year.



The revolution takes root in Niyog

Opening new territories, or doing expansion work in an area, is a difficult but challenging task of the people's army. In Negros, one such place is Niyog, a barrio in the island's hinterlands. Almost all residents here are poor peasants. Some are farmworkers. They plant coconuts and produce copra.

At the outset of expansion work, a unit invariably faces challenges. But by firmly grasping mass line, constantly conducting investigation and upholding military discipline, the Red fighters will be able to organize and establish mass organizations from which Red power will grow.

The first thing the comrades did in Niyog was find a good site to encamp outside the community. Since they didn't know anybody in the area, the comrades became creative in finding food, and competed in catching the most frogs and crabs, and gathering wild vegetables and others.

The people of Niyog were not only unaware of the NPA, they were fed with lies by the AFP. The comrades knew that Niyog residents will be uneasy of the NPA as the AFP had told them that NPA members

"have horns, tails and go angry when rice cauldrons are empty."

At first, the comrades did not introduce themselves to avoid alarming the residents. They befriended them while deepening their knowledge of the barrio and its people's issues. At first, they asked around for animals to buy, and hung around to listen to barrio tales. Once, a comrade asked a mother what will happen if he ever crossed paths with an NPA member in the area.

"You'll have to excuse me, my child," she told the comrade, "I haven't seen one of those. I don't know if that's a person or an animal or what. Just proceed carefully."

The comrade did not prolong the suspense and introduced himself. "Thank you, but you should also forgive me. We are NPA members. We don't have tails or horns,

we're just ordinary. We are here to serve you wholeheartedly and we ask for nothing but your support."

"Oh lord! I thought the NPAs were bad people! But you are all so handsome and beautiful!" she said. "Come inside the house, so I can give you some coffee." From then on, she would always look for the comrades. One of her early memories are of the 10 Red fighters who amazed her when they helped her harvest her produce in lightning speed. This jolly mother, who was then 54, became one of staunchest supporters of the people's army.

There was a time when the comrades hesitated to speak to people who lived in a big house. They thought they might need to adjust their approach as they might face someone from a higher class. It turned that the house was actually Niyog's barangay hall. It turned out, their appointment was with village officials who wanted to talk and join the organizations.

Through constant immersion and

"The revolution..." continued on 12



Party conducts coordinated BPCs in Bicol

Four full sessions of the Basic Party Course and an instructors training was recently conducted in the Bicol region. "The BPC further deepened my eagerness to join the NPA. This gave me a clearer understanding of what the people's army actually does," said Ka Troy, one of the students.

Coordinated educational discussions were conducted to consolidate the mass base and the people's army. This is also in response to the fascist counterinsurgency campaign of the fascist Duterte regime. This was conducted while the guerrilla front was not focused of military operations.

Within five weeks from March until the first week of April, 84 residents and Red fighters finished the BPC.

Result of the studies

Ka Troy is a member of a youth group who later on became a key partner of the New People's Army (NPA) in their community. He is among the 70 farmers who graduated from the course. "I learned more about the policies... these policies are the reasons why I like how the people's army operates," commented Ka Troy during the graduation.

Through the BPC, Ka Troy was finally able to firm up his decision to join the NPA as a full time member,

along with several other students.

An instructors training was also conducted and produced 18 more BPC instructors in the guerrilla zone. The training was launched in between BPC sessions. The newly graduated instructors were immediately assigned to teach and were grouped to discuss particular topics.

"At first, I was not at ease to lead discussions on the subject matter... I initially felt timid," narrated Ka Nati, one of the new instructors. He said the techniques taught during the training such as use of illustrations helped him in the discussion.

Decisiveness

Last year, holding Party courses in the guerrilla front was not as fruitful due to lack of proper planning and motivation. This year, the Party leadership in the province led the planning and execution of the educational discussions in the said guerrilla front.

Planning and the students' eagerness to finish the courses are



key to conducting the BPC and other Party courses.

After planning, the guerrilla front immediately invited the local Party branch in the barrio and asked them to list those who will participate in the discussions. The plan was also coordinated with Party members in the urban center for them to be able to send their delegates. Red fighters ensured the security of the venue of the program.

On average, the courses were completed in one week. The conduct of educational discussions were coordinated in various barangays. Instructors were able to immediately respond to the instruction needs in other areas.

AB

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explanations, the comrades reversed the ugly picture of the NPA painted by the AFP, and forged the unity between the people and their army. The people's fears and doubts were replaced with joy and unwavering support to the mass struggles.

The first educational seminar was held in the village basketball court where they established the local chapter of the Pambansang Katipunan ng mga Magsasaka. A discussion on the short course on Philippine society and revolution was also held. Forty people attended the meeting, Tatay Abraham

rose to become their first leader.

In the next months, the army and the mass organizations launched mass campaigns for the improvement of the community. Niyog residents participated wholeheartedly as they knew these were for their own welfare.

It did not take long for Niyog to move from an expansion area to a consolidated one. The barrio's first Red fighter and martyr, Ka Marmar, joined in 2018. He was killed this year. Many of Niyog's best sons and daughters have joined, and will continue to join, the people's army.

When the comrades and Niyog's

residents reminisce, they could not help but be amused by some of their experiences. But they also know that such experiences during that formative period shaped both the comrades and the masses which they serve.

For the moment, Niyog's revolutionary people are faced with the challenge of standing firm and expanding further their organizations and movement in face of intensified military operations in Negros. They are confident that they will overcome their difficult situation, with their beloved army on their side.

AB

200 attend wedding in a guerrilla front

Nearly 200 residents from various barangays and communities attended the wedding of four Red fighter couples in Bukidnon last June 11. The people witnessed the couples exchange vows under the rules of the revolutionary government and flag of the Communist Party of the Philippines.

Simultaneously, a conference of revolutionary youth organization Kabataang Makabayan (KM) was held in the province. Up to 37 KM members from different towns, cities and communities of the province participated in the activity.

Issues of national concern as well as those affecting the KM's particular areas were discussed in the conference. Foremost among these is the global concern of Covid-

19 which calls for collective response.

The participants discussed current national issues, as well as issues faced by the youth in areas where the KM chapters operate. These discussions resulted in the formation of an organization that will collectively respond to the pandemic and oppose to the US-Duterte regime's terrorist attacks.

Both the mass wedding and the



KM conference were concluded safely, even as four battalions of the Philippine Army mounted attacks in the area. Although the area is Covid-19-free, health measures were strictly observed during both activities. AB

Killings, arrests and attacks are prevalent even without ATB

Two civilians were killed and seven others were arrested by state forces in the past two weeks.

Suspected state agents gunned down Sanggunian Kabataan (SK) councilor Harold Tablazan at Sitio Passi, Barangay Mayang, Tubungan, Iloilo last June 20. Tablazan was a former member of the Federation of Iloilo Farmers Association and is currently working in the island. His companion, SK chairman Glenn Bunda, was also killed in the attack.

In Negros Occidental, joint elements of the police and 79th IB illegally arrested activist Gaspar Davao last June 12 at a checkpoint in Barangay Caduha-an, Cadiz City. The police claimed the victim was found positive of Covid-19. The police planted a grenade in the victim's bag while he was being detained. Davao is an organizer of the National Federation of Sugar Workers and has long been tagged by the military as a supporter of the New People's Army (NPA). He was presented by the AFP before the media as an "NPA surrenderee."

In Gonzaga, Cagayan, joint elements of the Marine Battalion Landing Team 10 and Cagayan PNP Provincial Mobile Force Company arrested peasants Rolando Reyes, 40, and Ranchi Tubban, 19, last June 10. They were nabbed at a checkpoint in Centro Gonzaga. Troopers planted a grenade inside the victims' van while inspecting it. The victims were on their way home from ushering stranded stranded passengers to the next town.

On June 12 in North Cotabato, elements of the PNP, 73rd IB and 39th IB abducted Lumad Mongkel Tacalan, 66, and his two children. The Tacalans were apprehended outside the Mindanao Interfaith Services Foundation Incorporated in Barangay Kisante, Makilala, North Cotabato. They were detained by the 39th IB before being surfaced in June 17.

On June 13, six armed state agents also abducted Elena Tijamo at her house in Barangay Kamping-

ganon, Bantayan, Cebu. She is coordinator of the Farmers Development Center (Fardec) sustainable agriculture program. She is also a member of the International Association of Women in Radio and Television Philippines which operates the Radio Sugbuanon. She is yet to be surfaced by the abductors.

Meanwhile, three farmers were attacked by soldiers last June 15 at around 5:00 a.m. in Tayasan, Negros Oriental. Victims, Doday Perez, 51, Quiting Amad, and an unidentified person, are all residents of Barangay Laguit. Soldiers mauled Perez and his companion, while Amad was stabbed by six unidentified men who were with the soldiers.

Barangay Tayasan residents are actively opposing the entry of a destructive mining company in the area. The company is set to operate in Basay, Ayungon, Bindoy, Jimalalud, La Libertad and Guihulngan. The 11th IB was redeployed in the province in June 2019 particularly to suppress the residence struggle against the said project. AB

Americans mark 155th anniversary of end of slavery

Thousands of Americans marched in more than 100 cities across the US in June 19 to mark the 155th Juneteenth, the day in 1865 when the Black people were formally emancipated from slavery in the United States.

Majority marked the commemoration with protests to demand justice over police brutality and racist killings that target Black Americans. Massive protests condemning the police killing of George Floyd continue to expand across the US. On June 12, people were further enraged with the police shooting of Rayshard Brooks in Atlanta, Georgia while attempting to run from police operatives. Brooks, a restaurant employee, died after sustaining two gunshot wounds in the back.

In solidarity, thousands of workers mounted strikes at the International Longshore and Warehouse Union in Oakland, California on June 19. The strike paralyzed the operation of approximately 29 ports along West Coast for eight hours.

Hundreds of teachers and their families also marched to seek additional funding for black students and demand that the curriculum be reformed to include the history of the Black people in history classes. A number of monuments associated with Black slavery were taken down by the people, including statues of slave traders and flags of big landlords who refused to liberate their slaves, among other images and symbols of discrimination.

Defund the police

Among the major calls of the Black Lives Matter movement and other groups is to reform the police institution. This includes the removal of its ranking officials, enactment of laws that will hold them

accountable for their crimes, removal of their many privileges, defunding the institution, and even calls to dismantle the police. At least nine states supported these calls, including Minneapolis, where George Floyd was killed, which demanded that the police be dismantled. Resolutions were also recently issued to prohibit the use of excessive force by police against suspects including chokeholds and no-knock warrants. In Washington D.C., a resolution was issued banning the police from using tear gas, pepper spray, rubber bullets and stun grenades in dispersing protest actions.

The Black Lives Matter movement also called for jobs, wage increases, housing and the respect of human rights. They asserted that many crimes in their communities stem from poverty, state neglect and discrimination. AB

Protests in Chile, Lebanon and Hong Kong

THOUSANDS OF CHILEANS trooped to Santiago, the national capital of Chile, on May 18 to express their anger and expose the hunger and poverty they are suffering due to the lockdown and the onslaught of the Covid-19 crisis. They condemned the surge in the prices of food and water in the country due to the lockdown arbitrarily imposed by the state.

Successive protests were also mounted by several thousands in Beirut, the national capital of Lebanon since June 11. They condemned the economic downturn in the country and the currency devaluation of more than 70%. More than a third of Lebanon's are jobless, and the pandemic has further aggravated their plight.

Meanwhile, thousands of Hong Kong citizens marched on the streets on May 24 and 27 to oppose the resolution issued by the National People's Congress of China which implemented a mechanism to "preserve" the national security of Hong Kong. Protesters were dispersed with tear gas and rubber bullets. China made it appear that the said resolution only aims to combat threats of separatism, subversion, terrorism, and foreign interference in Hong Kong. In truth, the resolution actually seeks to suppress the citizens' struggle for autonomy.

Exploitation and oppression, Danding's legacy to peasants

LANDLORD AND COMPRADOR Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco, Jr died last June 16. He was one of the closest cronies of late dictator Ferdinand Marcos and is notorious for plundering the coco levy fund and land grabbing. He left a legacy of landlessness and oppression to farmers and farm workers.

In Negros Occidental, he monopolized control over 11 haciendas covering 4,461 hectares of land which he grabbed from peasants. He was notorious for conniving with anyone in power to strengthen his control over the haciendas. He also masterminded the eviction and slapping of trumped-up charges against peasants asserting their right to own the land in the said haciendas.

He was also notorious for plundering the coco levy fund that is supposedly intended for coconut farmers. He used the said fund to buy the San Miguel Corporation. Approximately P105 billion are yet to be returned to coconut farmers. His companies are notorious for widespread practices of contractualization and other flexible labor arrangements.