



EDITORIAL

Duterte's failed pandemic response makes people turn to revolution

In the face of rapid rise in Covid-19 infections which is steadily overwhelming hospitals, health workers issued statements calling for comprehensive changes in the government's strategy to manage the pandemic. Instead of addressing these calls, Duterte angrily rebuked them for making public their demands and proceeded to taunt them declaring "if revolution is what you want, do it, and do it now."

If he insists on his military and police-centric response to the pandemic and does not relent on intimidating people, Duterte is bound to get what he wishes for. Hardships and sufferings brought about by Duterte's failed response to the pandemic are rousing the people. More and more are now openly indignant and defiant. People are realizing more clearly that the biggest impediment to the country's ability to surmount the pandemic is Duterte himself.

Because of the fascist orientation and mindset of Duterte and his

cabal of inept generals controlling the Inter-Agency Task Force, the Covid-19 pandemic is treated more as a national security question and a matter of political survival, and less than a public health crisis. They are more obsessed with suppressing discontent, than the virus. He took advantage of the situation to secure the anti-terror law under which he claimed additional extraconstitutional powers. He is itching to use these powers in the vain hope of silencing everyone and securing his power.

Since the start, the Duterte re-

gime failed to put into place urgent measures to strengthen the capacity of the country's health system to manage the pandemic. Measures to strengthen the public hospitals and laboratories, recruit additional nurses, provide enough personal protective equipment, raise their wages and give medical insurance are absent, inadequate or late.

Hospital and medical facilities are reaching full capacity, forcing doctors and nurses to go on rotations of 10 days or longer. There is a disproportionately high rate of infections and deaths among health workers. Laboratories are overwhelmed and unable to cope with the number of tests. Data reporting is slow and unable to provide a real-time picture of the pandemic.

As a result, the number of Covid-19 infections in the Philip-

piners continue to rise, making Filipinos even more vulnerable to the pandemic. The number of cases has skyrocketed to 120,000, four times more compared to a month ago. The number of deaths has doubled to more than 2,000. The regime continues to rely on lockdowns to control the infections. In Marcosian fashion, Duterte blames the people's "lack of discipline" for the spread of the virus to justify the restrictions and suppression of people's freedoms as pandemic tactic. People are forced to stay in their homes without income or livelihood, and without adequate and timely social subsidies.

In Metro Manila, tens of thousands are rushing to go home to their provinces. Idiotic travel restrictions and policies resulted in large crowds congregating in airports, piers and stadiums waiting to travel. Hundreds were likely infected and became disease transmitters in the provinces. Many reported that their first Covid-19 infections involve people returning from abroad or from Manila.

Duterte's prolonged lockdowns have devastated the economy. The economic decline due to the international capitalist crisis has accelerated. Millions of people are going hungry and driven to desperate straits. Thousands are forced to beg in the streets, especially since many have yet to receive social subsidies. The regime has no plans to distribute additional subsidies despite borrowing hundreds of billion pesos, but has plans to cut taxes of big foreign capitalists. Instead of investing in production to manufacture medical equipment and other necessary commodities to create jobs and reduce reliance on imports, the regime is going berserk in borrowing money to fund its corruption-laden infrastructure projects.

Duterte took advantage of the pandemic to consolidate his tyrannical regime and tighten his grip on the fascist state. Under the regime's new terror law, the police and military establishment has been given unprecedented powers suppress people's democratic rights. Amid the Covid-19 pandemic,





counterinsurgency and political repression are the tyrant's top priorities.

Duterte spews the vilest propaganda against the patriotic, progressive and revolutionary forces and promotes the most backward, unscientific and repugnant ideas in the vain hope of poisoning the minds of the people to keep them in a perpetual state of stupor. However, the more that Duterte assaults the people with his lies and demagoguery, the more that he rouses the people's indignation and stokes the fire in their bellies.

The more that Duterte uses the pandemic to strengthen his grip on power, to accumulate more wealth by diverting public funds, serve the economic interests of his favored oligarchs, and further kowtow and surrender the country's economic sovereignty to China in exchange for financial and political favors, the more that people are convinced that there is no other recourse but to raise their collective voices to demand the tyrant's resignation or cause his ouster. The Filipino people know they cannot wait for a vaccine or for 2022, knowing how deeper the rut that Duterte will pull the country into within that time.

Clouds of a perfect storm continue to gather. The people's rumblings of discontent steadily grow stronger and await the opportunity to explode in a conflagration that will surely terrorize the tyrant and surpass his worst nightmares. People must heighten efforts at getting more organized and raise their capacity in mobilizing their ranks. Soon enough, the Filipino people will be able to overcome the regime's reign of terror, surmount state repression and bring together large numbers of people in an exercise of the people's power. Duterte likes to believe that he has surpassed Marcos for having established a dictatorship without yet declaring martial law. But in the end, he will prove to be no different from Marcos, who was driven away

"Duterte's...", continued on page 3

 <p>Vol. LI No. 15 August 7, 2020</p> <hr/> <p>Ang <i>Ang Bayan</i> is published in Pilipino, Bisaya, Iloko, Hiligaynon, Waray and English. Ang Bayan welcomes contributions in the form of articles and news items. Readers are encouraged to send feedback and recommendations for improving our newspaper.</p> <p> instagram.com/prwcnewsroom</p> <p> @prwc_info</p> <p> cppinformationbureau@gmail.com</p>	<h2 style="text-decoration: underline;">Contents</h2> <p>Editorial: Duterte's failed pandemic response makes people turn to revolution 1</p> <p>Fidel Agcaoili, 75 3</p> <p>NPA offensives against destructive mining 4</p> <p>Mushrooming detachments in NCMR 4</p> <p>Sharpest economic downturn in 4 decades 4</p> <p>SONAgkaisa protests 5</p> <p>Empty SONA speech 5</p> <p>Farmlands in Samar shelled 88 times 6</p> <p>Journalists file complaint vs. repression 6</p> <p>114 SONA protesters arrested 6</p> <p>Unremitting reign of political dynasties 7</p> <p>The Duterte dynasty 8</p> <p>Chinese vaccines for loans, influence 8</p> <p>Trump deploys paramilitary in Portland 8</p> <p>Covid-19 vaccine, greedy Big Pharma 9</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Ang Bayan is published fortnightly by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines</p>	

Fidel V. Agcaoili, 75

Tributes and memorials rushed in after the National Democratic Front of the Philippines announced the demise of Fidel V. Agcaoili last July 23. Ka Fidel was the chairperson of the NDFP's negotiating panel to the peace talks with the Government of the Philippines since 2016. He passed away in Utrecht, The Netherlands at approximately 12 noon. He was cremated after a short program launched by his closes friends and comrades on July 31. His family, as well as numerous friends, comrades and acquaintances were not able to attend due to the pandemic's travel restrictions.

"It happened so fast," Ka Connie said, referring to Ka Fidel's death. "One minute, his nose was bleeding, and then he passed out." He did not make it to the hospital. According to his doctors, he died due to pulmonary arterial rupture which caused internal bleeding. The NDFP clarified that it was not Covid-19 related.

Comrades and friends are having a hard time believing his death. Nwel Saturay, a friend and photographer said that Ka Fidel was "full of life" and someone who one would never be of need of a tribute pic-

"Duterte's...", from page 2

by the invincible force of a united people.

As the detested regime intensifies its antidemocratic and anticommunist tirades and attacks, the Filipino people, especially the youth, are becoming more open to revolutionary propaganda and education. The pandemic has laid bare the ills of the semicolonial and semifeudal society which can only be resolved through a people's democratic revolution.

By tirelessly arousing, organizing and mobilizing the people, the revolutionary movement is rapidly expanding and strengthening its ranks both in the underground mass movement and in the armed movement in the countryside. The Filipino people's national democratic aspirations are ever fervent and irrepressible. AB

ture, at least not for "a very, very long time. He was joyful, funny and easily humored, easy to be friends with, both for the young and the old. When he was younger, was known as "Pidolps" because of this, and also because of his uncanny resemblance to the late comedian Doplhy.

"Terrible, bok!" he would often humorously say, wrote Atty. Edre Olalia, NDFP's peace panel lawyer. He can be exacting and impatient, the lawyer says, but always humble.

In an interview, Ka Fidel recognized that all men die. Even some bourgeois philosophers, he said, recognize that "it's helping out others that is the meaning of existence. To bring about changes, to bring about a worldwide society that is just, that is equal." In the same interview, he said that he has chosen the right path, and given another chance, he would still choose the same path. "I have no regrets," he said. "I will stay in the movement as long as I live."

Ka Fidel was not a stranger to sacrifice. He was the longest serving political detainee under the Marcos dictatorship (11 years). Couple Lou and Raffy Baylosis recalled that he would be passed over by other detainees but he would always smile while waving goodbye to those released before him. In the next decades, he lived apart from his family. This was for his safety from threats to his life by the Enrile-Honasan-RAM faction during Cory Aquino's regime.

In the last few years, he was able to mingle with Red fighters and



the revolutionary masses in guerrilla fronts. He was a guest of honor during the Party's 46th anniversary celebration in Agusan del Sur where he was able to meet Ka Oris. Ka Oris personally waited for him before the opening of the 2nd Congress, but Ka Fidel was unable to attend due to security difficulties and other tasks. Comrades in the countryside who know him was shocked and saddened by his sudden death.

Jose Maria Sison, the Party's founding chairperson and one of Ka Fidel's closest comrade and friend, afforded him the highest tribute as a great patriot and an outstanding communist, even based only on what is publicly known.

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines paid him the highest honors. (*Read the Ang Bayan Special Issue, July 29, 2020.*) The NPA likewise saluted him through Ka Oris' condolences.

Others such as media personalities who knew him, mass organization in the country and abroad, communist parties and Norway offered condolences.

The Central Committee of the Party declared August 8, when Ka Fidel would have turned 76, as a Day of Remembrance and Tribute. The NPA national command called on all Red fighters to salute him with their weapons at dawn for the NPA's tribute to a great communist leader. AB

NPA offensives against plunderous mining ops

The New People's Army (NPA) mounted successive military actions to halt plunderous mining operations in Western Samar and South Cotabato from June to July.

Western Samar. An NPA unit targeted troopers of the 8th ID who were conducting security operations in the province to pave way for the opening of the Samar Bauxite Project of the Marcventures Holdings, Inc. The said mining operations is set to cover up to 12,231 hectares of land which has rich bauxite deposits. Marcventures is owned by the Davao-based Alcantara family.

On July 1, a soldier was killed in an NPA sniping operation in Barangay Beri Motiong. Out of fear, the military unit along with other troopers who encamped in adjacent barrios retreated after the harassment.

On July 7, two soldiers were killed in another NPA sniping operation in Barangay San Nicolas, San Jose de Buan. In retaliation, the military perpetrated rights abuses against residents in a nearby peasant community after a week. (*Read related article in page 7.*)

South Cotabato. On June 15, the NPA paralyzed the construction equipment of the Gemma Construction Company, a local contractor of the regime's key infrastructure projects in the Far South Mindanao Region. The incident took place in Purok Pag-asa, Barangay Veterans, Surallah. Approximate P23-million worth of equipment were destroyed, including a backhoe, payloador and dump truck.

The company is constructing

various roads which directly serve the operation of the Tampakan Copper-Gold Project, a mining project which is responsible for the eviction of Lumad minorities and destroying their ancestral lands. The roads are also being used by agribusiness companies which are expanding their operations in the area.

The said company is owned by businesswoman Lora Uy. The Uy family also owns hundreds of hectares of banana plantations in T'boli, South Cotabato which are notorious for evicting minorities from their ancestral lands.

In related news, Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Sec. Roy Cimatu announced on July 22 that he has already allowed the companies that were closed down and suspended by his predecessor, Gina Lopez, to resume their mining operations. Lopez ordered the closure of 26 mining companies in 2016 for violating environmental standards.

Meanwhile, three soldiers were killed in a series of encounter in Barangay Baluan, Palimbang, Sultan Kudarat on July 26. A Red fighter was martyred during the incident.

An element of the 72nd DRC was also killed, while three others were wounded, in an NPA demolition operation in Barangay Dili, Sta. Cruz, Ilocos Sur, on July 31. AB

Lumads hit mushrooming AFP detachments in NCMR

MILITARY DETACHMENTS ARE sprouting like mushrooms in North Central Mindanao even amid the pandemic. Instead of putting up barangay health clinics, six detachments were constructed by the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) in various parts of the region in the past five months. This includes detachments in Barangay Durian, Las Nieves, Agusan del Norte; Balagnan, Esperanza, Agusan del Sur; Sitio Kipunay, Eureka, Gingoog City, Misamis Oriental; Sitio Pangagpungan, Kalabuan, Esperanza, Agusan del Sur; and Sitio Mahayag, Naminam, San Fernando, Bukidnon. Communities in the said areas are not geared to face the Covid-19 pandemic as residents only rely on medical services provided by volunteers who come to their communities.

In a statement released last July 28, the Revolutionary Organization of Lumads (ROL) in the region hit the continuing militarization of Lumad communities. They said that they expect nothing new from Duterte's "new normal" as terror, hunger and hardship continue unabated under his regime and the AFP's reign. Sixteen battalions are currently deployed in the area with 189 detachments, 163 of which are CAFGU detachments comprised of peasants forcibly recruited by the AFP.

Sharpest economic downturn in 4 decades

THE PHILIPPINE GROSS domestic product (GDP) dropped by 16.7% during the second quarter of 2020, the sharpest economic decline in the past 36 years.

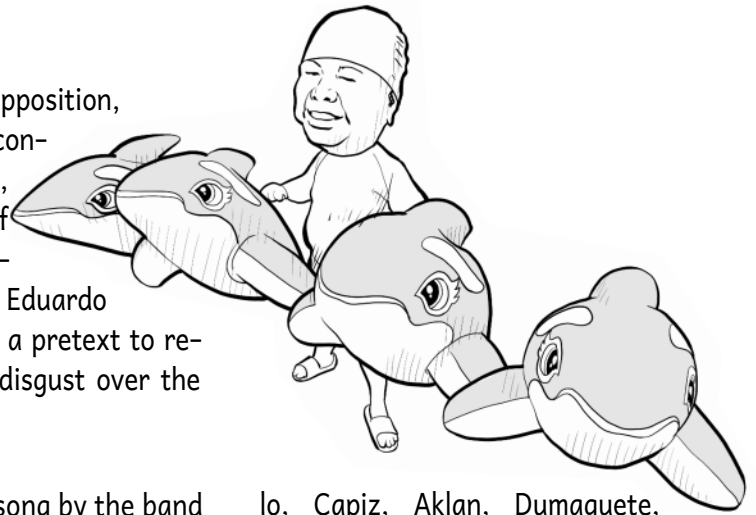
The economic downturn follows the longest lockdown which Duterte imposed after failed to promptly and correctly manage the pandemic. The economic decline is the worst in Asia, and is considered crucial to workers and Filipino businesses.

The drop is worse than the 10.7% GDP decline in 1984, two years prior to the ouster of the Marcos regime.

Prices of commodities have surged further with Duterte's imposition of the second enhanced community quarantine in Metro Manila.

SONAgkaisa protests

National democratic organizations, the traditional opposition, along with other groups and individuals once again converged at the University of the Philippines (UP) in Diliman, Quezon City in conjunction with Rodrigo Duterte's State of the Nation Address (SONA) last July 27. The protesters defied Department of Interior and Local Government Sec. Eduardo Año's ban on rallies. Año attempted to use the quarantine as a pretext to restrict the people and suppress their right to express their disgust over the inutile, corrupt, puppet and fascist regime.



The mobilization was spearheaded by Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) and its allied organizations. This was participated in by various sectoral groups which united under the banner of "SONAgkaisa." Health workers wearing personal protective equipment, teachers, church people, youth and students, scientists, lawyers, workers, farmers, fisherfolk, residents from urban poor communities and many others participated in the protest. Instead of marching at the Batasan Pambansa, representatives of the Makabayan bloc joined the protests, donning their protest wear to demand the junking of the Anti-Terror Law and safe opening of schools, among others. ABS-CBN employees also trooped to UP from the network's station in Mother Ignacia St. Bayan estimated that approximately 8,000 people participated in the protest action which was held from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

In Tondo, Manila, the youth and drivers mounted a lightning rally to avoid being arrested. Other protesters went to Quiapo Church to attend mass. Police troops entered the church and arbitrarily snatched the protesters' placards during the mass.

In the afternoon, famous artists launched an online concert named "Tinig ng Bayan" (people's voice). The concert showcased a community singing of "Di Niyo Ba Naririnig?" (Do you hear the people sing?) which featured Angel Locsin and other personalities. A music

video of "Rage," a song by the band The Jerks, was also posted in Facebook. The music video featured Martin Nievera and other artists.

In Cagayan Valley, Catholic churches rang their bells in solidarity with the protests in Isabela and Tuguegarao. Catholic churches also rang their bells in Baguio City.

In Bicol, progressive groups rallied in Legazpi City, Albay, Naga City and Catanduanes. In Davao City, police arbitrarily restricted activists from mounting their first protest since the lockdown which was supposed to be held at the Freedom Park by requiring participants to bring quarantine passes. The protesters, instead, launched their rally in front of the headquarters of Kilusang Mayo Uno.

Groups also protested in Laguna, Cavite, Pampanga, Tarlac, Iloilo,

Capiz, Aklan, Dumaguete, Kabankalan, Bacolod, Cebu and Ozamis.

In the US, local chapters of Bayan in New York, New Jersey, Philadelphia, Washington D.C., Chicago, Seattle, Portland, San Francisco-Bay Area, Los Angeles and Hawaii issued a statement of unity and conducted their respective protests. In San Francisco, approximately 300 people and 80 vehicles participated in a caravan and protest which they called the Northern California State of the Nation Address. They called for Duterte's ouster. Protesters also marched from the Howard University Hospital to the Philippine Embassy in Washington DC.

Similar protests were mounted in Canada. Anakbayan-France also spearheaded a rally near the Eiffel Tower in Paris. AB

Empty SONA speech

RODRIGO DUTERTE DELIVERED his SONA speech at 4 p.m. in front of 29 congressmen and eight senators. Vice President Leni Robredo was not invited to physically attend Duterte's address. She along with all other congressmen and senators attended via teleconference.

Duterte used his speech to hurl personal attacks against his political rivals. He made no mention about the plight of farmers, workers and other sectors that are direly affected by his inept, militarist and failing response to the pandemic.

He refused to call out China for its escalating aggression in Philippine maritime territories near the South China Sea stating that he is "inutile" with regard to this matter. Instead of announcing measures against the pandemic, he revived his proposal to implement death penalty, incentivize corporations, and extend his emergency powers to enable him to accumulate more kickbacks.

8th ID shells farmlands in Samar 88 times

The 8th ID fired a total of 88 artillery rounds at farmlands in San Jose de Buan, Western Samar last July 14 and 29. This resulted in the evacuation of 50 farmers from adjacent communities.

At least 64 rounds of mortar and howitzers were fired by the military at farmlands in Mt. Huraw near the town center of San Jose de Buan on July 14. This was followed by 24 rounds of mortar which were fired at a forested area in Sitio Salvacion, Barangay San Nicolas on July 29. There was no NPA unit in the area during the artillery shelling incidents. The military carried out the attacks despite knowing that the area serves as residents' main source of food and livelihood. They hunt their food here and gather rattan which they sell.

Earlier, soldiers arrested farmer David Dacles while on his way home to Sitio Salvacion on July 25. He is currently detained and being interrogated at a military camp in Barangay Cantato, Paranas.

Peasant couple murdered in Northern Samar

Peasant couple Alberto and Maritess Durin were killed when CAFGU elements under the 20th IB

indiscriminately strafed their house in Barangay Natawo, Palapag, Northern Samar on July 26. Their grandchild, a minor, was also wounded during the incident. This is the second case of indiscriminate strafing by soldiers in Palapag since June.

Earlier, military agents reportedly killed Nonoy Truza, a barangay councilor and chairperson of a local association of agrarian reform beneficiaries in Barangay Nagbinlod, Sta. Catalina, Negros Oriental during the last week of June.

Tumandoks arrested in Negros Occidental

Elements of the 62nd IB simultaneously arrested Tumandok minorities Martin Lindayao, Wenie Carillo and Demas Lindayao in Barangay San Agustin, Isabel, Negros Occidental on July 2, 7 a.m. The arrest is part of the continuing focused military operations in the area.

Journalist file complaint against repression

JOURNALISTS FROM Altermidya, Pinoy Weekly, Kodao Productions and Bulatlat filed a complaint at the Commission on Human Rights on July 30 against National Task Force to End the Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC) and Philippine National Police for subjecting them to continuing harassment.

The complaint includes the recent confiscation of thousands of copies of Pinoy Weekly Magazines by the police last July 26 at the office of Kadamay in Villa Lois, Pandi, Bulacan. The police made it appear that the magazines are subversive. A separate complaint was also filed by Bulatlat associate editor Danilo Arao for being implicated in a fabricated "Oust Duterte Matrix" last year.

Activist Rose Fortaleza was arrested during the incident for purportedly disseminating subversive documents. She was brought to a precinct and was charged with disobedience to persons in authority.

141 SONA protesters arrested

Based on reports by mass organization, at least 141 activists were arrested by the police during or on their way to rallies last July 23.

In Metro Manila, 34 activists were arrested including 5 PISTON members and 24 activists in Marikina City. In Southern Tagalog, 85 activists were arrested while on their way to participate in a protest action at University of the Philippines-Los Banos. Among those arrested are 62 members of Bayan-Cavite who were apprehended and detained for three hours before being informed that they were held for not having travel passes.

In Bulacan, police elements arrested four residents and members of Kadamay-Pandi who posted protest photos in social media in solidarity with the mobilization in UP Diliman. They were arrested after the online protests in their respective houses and were brought to a police precinct without charges. The victims were released on August 5. Thirteen individuals who were on their way to UP Diliman were also arrested in San Jose del Monte.

In Tuguegarao, four activists were arrested, including Joshua Buyogan of UP Baguio Outcrop who was in the area to cover the protest for their campus publication. In Cebu, the police arbitrarily stopped the conduct of an online cultural program.

All arrests were perpetrated by the police for alleged "violations" of quarantine protocols. Lawyers, however, insist that the arrests are baseless. They clarified that the resolutions and orders of the IATF may not be used as bases for the arrests.

The unremitting reign of political dynasties

Philippine politics has long been dominated by dynastic families at all levels.

Election results in 2019 indicate that around 163 families have at least two members who are simultaneously seated as senator, congressman or governor. Eighty-eight of these families are from Luzon, 29 from Visayas, and 44 from Mindanao. The results reflect data during the 2013 elections wherein about 169 out of the 200 district representatives were members of dynastic families who have been in power since the 1970s.

In the current Congress, 14 out of 24 senators and 162 out of 300 representatives are from dynastic families. Approximately 18 political dynasties have at least two members seated simultaneously in Congress, in addition to six married couples. Sixty-two percent or 153 out of 247 district representatives are dynasts. Nine partylist representatives are also from dynastic families.

Meanwhile, 60 out of 81 governors in the country are dynasts. In sum, they have 108 relatives who are also seated in various local government posts as vice governors, board members, mayors, vice mayors and councilors.

Aside from Rodrigo Duterte, the heads of both Senate and Lower House are from dynastic families as well. The Senate is currently being headed by Sen. Vicente Sotto, a fourth generation dynast from a Cebu-based dynasty. The Lower House, on the other hand, is headed by Rep. Alan Peter Cayetano, a 2nd generation dynast from Taguig City. Mark Villar from the Aguilar-Villar dynasty of Las Piñas City was also appointed by Duterte as his cabinet member. Four other members of this family are seated in highest elective positions in the local government of Las Piñas, while another was ap-

pointed as undersecretary. The Singson dynasty of Ilocos Sur has the highest number of members in government with 14 members. The Dys of Isabela, Ortegas of La Union, and Matugases of Surigao del Norte also have 9 members each seated in elective posts.

Political dynasties are a legacy of Spanish colonizers in the country. Dynasts consolidated the rule of American colonialists by ensuring the colonizers' interest while administering the the emergence of a Filipino government. The power and wealth bestowed by colonizers upon these families ensured their unremitting rule of in succeeding decades. In exchange, they played a key role in perpetuating the semi-colonial character of Philippine society in favor of their colonial masters, as well as the semi-feudal system which ultimately benefit them.

In the succeeding century, these families used their positions to acquire and accumulate money, land, businesses and properties, as well receive favor from other landlords, bourgeois compradors and their fellow bureaucrat capitalists. This

has not changed despite the conduct of elections in past decades after the Marcos dictatorship was overthrown. In fact, 86 more dynasties emerged since the People Power in 1986. This families include the Binays of Makati, Andayas of Camarines Sur and Cuas of Palawan. This is in addition to 71 dynastic families which have reigned even before martial law.

By perpetuating their reign, they are able to aggrandize themselves and use their power to corner the biggest loot, bribes and cuts from government contracts. Dynasts use their political capital to promote their family businesses or those of their other relatives, friends and allies, as well as gain favors from contractors, loan agencies, foreign capitalists and banks. Public economic resources, instead of benefiting the people, are diverted and concentrated into the hands of these political dynasties.

Most dynasts in backward provinces also happen to be warlords who maintain large private armies. They cultivate loyalties among military and police officers to protect their businesses and criminal syndicates and suppress anyone who challenge their rule. **AB**



The Duterte dynasty

In his State of the Nation Address 2020 on July 27, Rodrigo Duterte repeatedly lashed out at Sen. Franklin Drilon who challenged him to push for the implementation of the Anti-Dynasty Bill. Drilon proposed to ban dynasties in the reactionary government, extending the regulation up to the second degree of consanguinity and affinity. Duterte got extremely infuriated as he claimed that the senator said that the Duterte family is dynastic.

The Duterte family has now been in power for 74 years and three generations already. The Dutertes first entered politics in the 1946 when its patriarch, the late Atty. Vicente Duterte, was appointed as officer-in-charge mayor of Danao Cebu by the Osmeña regime. After relocating to Davao City in 1949, Vicente ran and was elected governor in 1959. During his term, in 1965, he appointed his own son, Rodrigo Duterte, as his Secretary of the Department of General Services. Vicente's brother Ramon Duterte also became mayor of

Cebu City in 1957. Ramon's son Ronald succeeded him and became Cebu City mayor in 1986.

Rodrigo Duterte is a second generation dynast. He has held positions in government for 32 consecutive years already. Rodrigo Duterte was first appointed officer-in-charge vice mayor of Davao City by the Aquino regime in 1986. Bearing his father's name, he ran and was elected mayor in 1988 and stayed in office until 1998. To circumvent the reactionary law on term limits, he ran as congressman

of the First District of Davao City and won. He again ran for mayor in 2001 and remained in office until 2010, the year he ran as his daughter Sarah's vice mayor, again to circumvent the aforementioned law. He again ran for mayor in 2013 and remained in office until his presidential bid was launched in 2016. During his long stint as mayor, he appointed his own brother Emmanuel as his personal secretary.

The local government of Davao City is currently dominated by his children. Duterte's eldest son, Paolo, is its First District congressman, while his daughter Sarah is its mayor and youngest son Sebastian its vice mayor. Ultimately, Rodrigo Duterte wishes to perpetuate his cling to power or his anointed successor's reign. AB

Chinese vaccine for loans, influence

Aside from profits, China aims to expand its influence and owned favors from countries needing a vaccine. In its haste to be first in the market, it has authorized the military to use of one of its vaccines, Sinopharm's Ad5-nCoV ng Sinopharm, in June 25 even if it has not entered the third phase of clinical trials. Despite being not fully tested, it has already used this on returning workers and workers flying out of Beijing when infections rose in the city.

Another Chinese company is also in the race with Oxford. The company Sinovac is readying its clinical trials in Brazil, where Oxford is also conducting its own tests. In exchange, it has already promised Brazil 100 million doses.

Aside from Brazil, only a few countries have signified interest in China's vaccine (UAE, Mexico, Canada and Malaysia) since the larger countries already have developed their own. To corner the Latin America and Caribbean market, it has offered a billion in loans so that countries here will have "access" to the Chinese vaccine. In short, China will give out loans so that its vaccine will be sold. It has fasttracked construction of two plants for production.

Duterte is making it sound that the China is doing the Philippines a very big favor by giving us the first chance to buy its vaccine. He has repeatedly thanked China, and even pledged to borrow or sell public lands and properties.

He is ready to override regulatory agencies. He is also ready to dismiss transparency processes such as public biddings for a vaccine to favor Chinese companies. As Duterte himself disclosed, a vaccine from China will cost \$10/dose, more than double than Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine which will only cost \$3-\$4/dose.

Trump deploys paramilitary to suppress Portland protests

PORTLAND, A CITY in Oregon, US became the subject of a number of news reports since the deployment of federal agents there by Donald Trump last July 4 to suppress mass protests being conducted in the area. Citizens were enraged and raised alarm over the spate of kidnapping and arbitrary arrests perpetrated by operatives in plainclothes against rallyists. These paramilitary forces use tear gas, rubber bullets, pepper spray and flash grenades to disperse nightly protests in front of a federal structure.

Federal agents serve as paramilitary forces which are under the direct command of the the Department of Homeland Defense. They are unlike police operatives that are under the control of US states and cities. Residents have been protesting in the area for two months already in support of the the Black Lives Matter movement.

The Portland City mayor and the Oregon governor condemned Trump's deployment of federal agent and for using militarist tactics to suppress the rallyists. Paramilitary violence and presence resulted in even bigger protest actions. Last July 23, the local government refused to cooperate with the paramilitary agents and demanded their withdrawal.

Covid-19 vaccine, greedy Big Pharma

To cover up his regime's inutility and incompetence in controlling that Covid-19 pandemic in the country, the phrase "wait for a vaccine" has already become Rodrigo Duterte's mantra. He has given no support to Filipino scientists in the effort to discover one. His P10 million bounty to first discoverers is worthless without funding for research. In addition, he has done nothing to change the country's lack of capacity to manufacture vaccines and its overdependence on foreign drug exports.

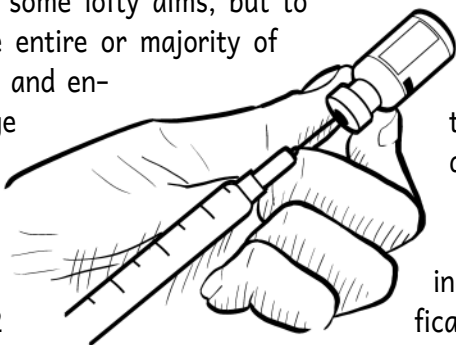
The regime has no plans to vaccinate the majority of Filipinos. According to Duterte, the government will only pay for the vaccination of 20 million of the "poorest" out of 110 million Filipinos. This is notwithstanding the 30 million students, teachers and staff he promised before opening classes, health workers and workers working in unsafe factories and workplaces. Worse, Duterte already said he would prioritize the military. He repeatedly whines that he is out of money, despite the \$8 billion his regime borrowed using the pandemic.

Big Pharma's monopolistic control

Monopoly capitalists in the pharmaceutical industry control the research, manufacturing, distribution and pricing of drugs and vaccines all over the world. The biggest of them are Johnson & Johnson (US), Roche (Switzerland), Sinopharm (China), Pfizer (US), Bayer (Germany), Novartis (Switzerland), Merck & Co. (US), GlaxoSmithKline (UK), Sanofi (France) and AbbVie (US). In 2019, these companies combined earnings rose to \$512 billion.

The abovementioned companies are competing to develop the Covid-19 vaccine. They are in a race for a vaccine, not out of humanitarian reasons or some lofty aims, but to control the entire or majority of the market and ensure huge profits.

Pfizer has already earned \$2



billion during the first three months of the pandemic. This is on top of its \$16 billion profit in 2019. Johnson & Johnson, on the other hand, is set to rake in an additional \$5-billion in profits this year, almost double of what it earned during the same period last year.

As of July 28, there are already candidate vaccines but only 25 are in clinical trials and five have reached the third and last phase of testing. These are vaccines developed by Pfizer (US) at BioNTech (Germany), Moderna (US), Oxford at AstraZeneca Plc (UK), Sinovac (China) and Sinopharm (China). Sanofi (France) and GlaxoSmithKline's (UK) vaccine, as well as Johnson & Johnson's (US), are in the first and second phase. Their Phase 3 will commence on September.

These companies are developing vaccines apart from each other and are jealously guarding their experiments. No one can be sure of the truth from their press releases if a breakthrough is near. This is in line with the tactic of manipulating the capitalist markets and pushing the value of their products and shares in the stock market.

Industry experts say that a vaccine will be available probably at the end of 2021 and will most likely be approved but for emergency-use only. In the past, the shortest time for a vaccine to be licensed is after five to seven years of continuous development.

The experimental vaccines are in the stage of being tested for safety and efficacy. Oxford's vaccine has

reported side effects of body pains, malaise and fever. The same side effects were observed in Moderna's vaccine. None of the five vaccines are expected to be licensed by the end of the year.

Even so, imperialist countries have been competing in snapping up supplies. Governments in imperialist countries already have supply agreements with these companies for 250 million doses even as the vaccines are in the experimental stage. Among them is the UK which is already in an agreement with GlaxoSmithKline and Sanofi to buy - 60 million doses. This in addition to 100 million doses it has already bought from Oxford/AstraZeneca Plc.

The US, on the other hand, already have a supply agreement with Pfizer and BioNTech for 60 million doses worth \$1.8 billion. The European Union and Japan also have supply agreements with the said companies.

Amid the intense competition, more than a billion doses have already been bought or promised even before a vaccine is manufactured. This means the rest of the countries will have to compete against each other or wait until Big Pharma go into more mass production. If the world's population is to be covered, these companies will have to produce 14 billion doses for a 2-dose vaccine. This will take time, as there have been estimates that it will take up to the first quarter of 2022 to manufacture a billion doses.

Due to the intense competition among imperialist countries, intentions to bring about fair sharing of vaccines by the alliance Covax will become moot. The alliance is headed by the World Health Organization, and Coalition of Epidemic Preparedness and is comprised of 145 poor nations. The Philippines is part of Covax.