



EDITORIAL

Resist the rotten and fascist Marcos-Duterte alliance!

As expected, the electoral alliance of the Marcoses, Arroyos and Dutertes (MAD) was forged in the form of the 2022 election tandem of candidates Ferdinand Marcos Jr. (Bongbong) as president and Sara Duterte-Carpio as vice president. The tandem was formed after devious maneuvers, arm-twisting and negotiations between these camps that form the greediest for power, wealth and privilege.

This alliance is composed of the most rotten and fascist reactionary cliques in the country. The years of their reign in the Philippines are the darkest periods in the nation's history. They have done away with the reactionary state's trappings of democracy and openly ruled through terror, bloody repression and murder, unrestrained thievery and plunder of public coffers and national treachery.

For more than five years, these cliques have benefited the most under Duterte's tyranny. They indulged themselves over the

large-scale infrastructure projects and government contracts. They profited even from the pandemic while people were subjected to immeasurable suffering.

The Marcos and Duterte-Carpio tandem aim to complete the restoration of the Marcoses to power, three and a half decades after the Marcos dictatorship was overthrown in the EDSA uprising. Over the past years, the Marcoses poured billions of pesos in a campaign of deception to erase the major crimes of the Marcos dictatorship from the pages of his-

tory and the people's consciousness.

Despite the forging of the Marcos Jr and Duterte-Carpio tandem, cracks have also appeared and may worsen in the coming months. Duterte has openly expressed dismay over the vice presidency run of daughter Sara after months of pouring funds to drum up her presidential run with Bong Go as vice. This went against the ambitions of Marcos Jr. to be president. Despite Arroyo's open push for Duterte-Carpio to run as president, she gave way to the Marcoses to preserve the MAD alliance. Arroyo is also wary of her interests if power becomes too concentrated in the hands of the Dutertes.

Duterte fears being dropped by Marcos Jr. like how he did not support for six years the latter's elec-

toral protest to be vice president. Thus, he is now openly hitting at Marcos Jr and pushing for the presidential run of his minion Bong Go and endorsement of daughter Sara as vice president.

He can use the disqualification case against Marcos Jr and the threat to arrest Imelda Marcos (convicted in 2018) to wring more concessions and assurances of power sharing (including proposals for three-year term sharing between Marcos Jr. and Duterte Carpio). Whether these cracks will be patched or worsen will be known in a few weeks or months. However, there still remains the possibility of Duterte setting all these aside and opting to openly declare and impose a fascist dictatorship.

The upcoming 2022 elections is expected to be among the dirtiest of all past reactionary elections. In his desperation to cling to power and avoid indictment and prosecution, Duterte will surely manipulate the

results of the elections in favor of his candidates, just as he did in the 2019 elections to install his minions in congress and the senate. Majority of the officials of the Commission on Elections (Comelec) are Duterte's appointees. By controlling the automated counting of votes, Duterte can easily manipulate the results of the election. It is anomalous that the Comelec granted the contract for the delivery of ballots and voting machines to a company owned by Dennis Uy, a Duterte crony. Duterte remains firmly in control of the military and police forces which he uses against his political opponents using the "war on drugs" and "counterinsurgency" as veil.

The Filipino people must firmly unite against the schemes of the Marcos-Duterte alliance to perpetuate the reign of tyranny and corruption and oppression of the Filipino people. The plot to falsify the results of the elections must be





exposed and resisted.

There must be continued efforts to unite all opposition forces to forge a united front against the Marcos-Duterte alliance. A few of the leading presidential candidates are anti-Duterte or claim to be anti-Duterte. Among them, the most credible opposition is Leni Robredo. However, she did not endorse the senatorial candidates of the Makabayan block which is among the biggest and strongest fort of resistance against the tyranny.

In the face of Duterte's absolute hold on power, their chances of defeating Duterte in the elections will be enhanced only if they unite, win the support and mobilize the people in their millions. If such unity is forged, Duterte's cheating of the election will become more stark. They must deny Duterte the opportunity to make it appear that opposition votes were divided to conceal the manipulation of votes in favor of his candidates.

The national democratic forces must now continue to amplify the Filipino people's call for an anti-Duterte united front. The people must be mobilized to push for a united front of anti-Duterte candidates to frustrate the scheme of the Marcoses and Dutertes to install themselves in power.

At the same time, the people must continue to organize and carry forward their democratic struggles amid the economic crisis and pandemic and to raise the call to wage a national democratic movement to cause the downfall of imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism. They must act collectively and resist the US-Duterte regime's suppression and repression. In the face of Duterte's schemes to perpetuate himself in power, the people must prepare to act and manifest their strength in the streets and use this power to end the tyrants and dictators. **AB**

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|  <p>Vol. LII No. 22 November 21, 2021</p> <p>Ang <i>Ang Bayan</i> is published in Pilipino, Bisaya, Iloko, Hiligaynon, Waray, English and Spanish. 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> @prwc_info</p> <p> fb.com/editorsofAB</p> <p> cppinformationbureau@gmail.com</p> | <h2 style="text-decoration: underline;">Contents</h2> <p>Editorial: Resist the rotten and fascist Marcos-Duterte alliance 1</p> <p>Brawling tyrants 3</p> <p>Bombing and killings in Leyte 3</p> <p>#MarcosHindiBayani 3</p> <p>Tributes to Ka Oris 4</p> <p>NPA seizes 2 R4 rifles 4</p> <p>Protests 4</p> <p>Workers, shortchanged by government 5</p> <p>In short 6</p> <p>Philippine food manufacturing 7</p> <p>Anti-peasant laws, to be repealed in India 7</p> <p>Imperialism and climate change 8</p> <p>Activist abducted in Pampanga 9</p> <p>Cuban victories vs. Covid-19 10</p> |
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Brawling tyrants

After several months of political maneuvering by the Marcos, Arroyo and Duterte (MAD) camps, the tandem of thieves and budding tyrants was formed in the persons of Ferdinand Marcos Jr. and Sara Duterte-Carpio.

However, MAD alliance personalities remain locked in a brawl. This heightened on November 15 on the last day of withdrawal and substitution of candidates. According to the Commission on Elections or Comelec, 97 aspirants have filed their certificates of candidacy for president, 29 for vice president, and 176 for Senator as of October 8, the last day of the filing of certificates. As of November 15, the lists of presidential, vice presidential and senatorial candidates were trimmed down to 94, 25, and 171, respectively.

Duterte-Carpio withdrew her candidacy as Davao City Mayor three days before the deadline of substitutions. The following day, she filed her certificate of candidacy as vice presidential candidate of the Lakas-CMD, Gloria Arroyo's political party. Duterte-Carpio was forced to concede and just run as vice president due to the refusal of the Marcos camp to give up its plan to

return to Malacañang.

Duterte was infuriated with the Marcoses' insistence and for having his daughter run for a lower position. He ordered his minion Bong Go to run as president to get for himself the votes of Marcos Jr.'s supporters, especially in Mindanao. He also personally filed a certificate of candidacy for senator. Democratic groups called these maneuvers a "desperate attempt" to avoid criminal prosecution awaiting him after his term ends.

Duterte successively lashed out at Marcos Jr. to make sure the latter won't turn traitor. On the night of November 16, he met with 95 congressmen and ordered them to support Go's candidacy.

Meanwhile, three disqualification petitions against Marcos Jr. are now filed at the Comelec.

The petitions are based on Marcos Jr.'s failure to declare in his certificate of candidacy the "undeniable

fact" that he was convicted by the court in 1995. He was slapped with seven criminal charges for violating the National Internal Revenue Code for failing to file income tax returns. Under the said law, a public official who is found guilty of violating its provisions can face a maximum punishment of lifelong disqualification from holding any government position, voting or participating in any elections.

Marcos Jr. was never imprisoned. His lawyers appealed the convictions and overturned some of these. In 1997, the Court of Appeals withdrew its decision to imprison Marcos Jr., but maintained its decision to charge Marcos with a fine of ₱32,000. The decision was made final in 2001.

Of those which filed disqualification petitions, three are civic groups, taxpayers, religious groups, and human rights groups including Karapatan, Kapatid, Samahan ng Ex-Detainees Laban sa Detensyon at Aresto, and the Campaign Against the Return of the Marcoses and Martial Law. AB

Bombing and killings in Leyte

THE NEW PEOPLE'S Army-Leyte reported this November that an FA-50 fighter jet of the military dropped three bombs at the farmlands of Sitio Quarry, Barangay Balocawehay, Abuyog, Leyte on September 29, at 3 a.m. The bombing caused fear and traumatized civilians. This further aggravated the plight of farmers in the area who have long been suffering from losses in their livelihood.

The following day, three farmers were arrested by the 14th IB.

In Southern Leyte, elements of the 14th IB killed farmer Marcos Dadap, 49, on August 17 at Sitio Tabjon, Barangay Kalagitan, Hinunangan. Dadap was among the residents who opposed the threat of eviction from their lands to pave way for the construction of a local government infrastructure.

People declare:

#MarcosHindiBayani! (Marcos no hero)

THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST the Return of the Marcoses and Martial Law spearheaded a protest caravan last November 18 from the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City to the Libingan ng mga Bayani (Heroes' Cemetery) in Taguig City.

The protesters called the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos Sr. a "thief, murderer, and plunderer." His burial at the Libingan ng mga Bayani is an attempt by the Marcos family to revise history and cover up the the dark era of martial law from the 1970s to 1980s.

On the same day, activists based in Baguio City protested in front of the defaced Marcos Sr. bust in Tuba, Benguet. The New People's Army in Ilocos-Cordillera called the monument an "insult to justice." It was destroyed during a demolition operation mounted by Red fighters on December 29, 2002.

A picket was also mounted in front of the Commission on Human Rights on November 14 after the Marcos-Duterte tandem was announced.

Revolutionaries around the world

pay tribute to Ka Oris

Revolutionaries across the country and around the world paid tribute and extended their condolences over the death of Ka Oris (Jorge Madlos), erstwhile commander and spokesperson of the New People's Army (NPA). On the International Day of Remembrance held on November 7, revolutionary units and groups, and activists held meetings with ice cream and sweet potato (Ka Oris' favorite food) to commemorate his legacy.

Simultaneously, friends of the Filipino revolution translated the tribute of the Communist Party of the Philippines to Ka Oris into various languages. The tribute which was originally published as a special issue of Ang Bayan was translated into German, French, Russian, Chinese, Spanish, Catalan (Spain), Korean, Bahasa Indonesia, Turkish, Portuguese, Swedish and Dutch (The Netherlands). These were produced so that more peoples across the world will know about his life and heroism.

Communists and revolutionary organizations abroad also issued their respective tributes and extended their condolences. This includes revolutionary and progressive groups from India, China, West Papua, Turkey, Kurdistan, Germany, France, The Netherlands, Ireland, Russia, US, Canada, Brazil and other countries.

Ka Oris' cremains were buried in Surigao del Norte on November 20. In tribute, the Communist Party of the Philippines ordered all NPA units to observe few minutes of silence at high noon. Earlier, a two-day wake for Ka Oris was held in Siargao, the island where he grew up in. AB

NPA seizes 2 R4 rifles in Negros

TWO R4 RIFLES were seized and nine soldiers were killed in an ambush mounted by the New People's Army (NPA)-Central Negros (Leonardo Panaligan Command) on November 3 in Barangay Quintin Remo, Moises Padilla, Negros Occidental.

According to NPA-Central Negros spokesman JB Regalado, joint elements of the 62nd IB and 79th IB have been operating for more than a month now in the mountainous areas of the towns and cities of Binalbagan, Isabela, Moises Padilla, Guihulngan, and La Libertad adversely affecting the livelihood and lives of the masses. Communities are subjected to red-tagging, harassment and intimidation by the soldiers.

The NPA-Central Negros also mounted two other harassment operations against the 94th IB. The first one was carried out on October 17 at 2 p.m. in Barangay Mandapaton, La Libertad, Negros Oriental, and the second was on November 9 in Barangay Amontay, Binalbagan, Negros Occidental.

Northern Samar. Five soldiers were killed in an armed action mounted by the NPA-Northern Samar (Rodante Urtal Command) in Barangay E. Duran, Bobon, Las Navas in the afternoon of September 16.

On October 18, Red fighters mounted a sniping operation against soldiers who were combing through Barangay San Jose, Las Navas. AFP military operations have adversely affected the lives and livelihood of the farmers.



Drivers, conductors protest in Metro Manila. Nagprotesta noong Nobyembre 15 sa Quezon City ang mga drayber at konduktor na bahagi ng programang Libreng Sakay ng LTFRB upang batikusin ang mahigit isang buwan nang pagkaantala ng kumpensasyon para sa kaniyang serbisyo. Nangangamba silang mawalan ng trabaho sa pagtatapos ng programa.

#HLM17. The 17th anniversary of the Hacienda Luisita Massacre was commemorated simultaneously in Tarlac and Mendiola, Manila last November 16. Not one of the soldiers and goons who opened fire and killed seven farmers has been punished. Land in the hacienda remains undistributed.

#KliMalaya against environmental plunder. Environmental groups rallied in front of the Commission on Human Rights in Quezon City on November 6, in solidarity with international protests mounted to mark the Conference of the Parties (COP26) in Glasgow, Scotland. The Youth Advocates for Climate Action Philippines dubbed the program #KliMalaya: Fight For Freedom From Climate Injustice.

National Students' Day. Youth groups protested in front of the Commission on Higher Education on November 17 to commemorate the National Students' Day. They submitted a petition to the agency containing their recommendations and calls for the safe reopening of schools. The commissioners rejected the request of the protesters to have a dialogue.

Residents in Taguig assert their right to housing. Residents of Maysapang in Barangay Ususan, Taguig City light candles on November 17 to oppose the impending demolition of their homes by RII-Builders and MGS Consortium. More than 500 families fear that they will lose their homes after the Bases Conversion and Development Authority claimed the right to own the area.

Workers, shortchanged by government neglect

Emil works as a deliveryman for a furniture shop. Before the pandemic, he earned ₱15,000 per month. In 2020, however, his monthly salary was arbitrarily slashed by his employer to ₱5,000. In dire straits, he was forced to look for other sideline jobs. No matter how hard he works, he only manages to earn an additional ₱3,000 per month.

His income is insufficient to meet the basic needs of his wife, four children and mother-in-law which amounts to ₱16,750. This does not include expenses for transportation, housing, medical and other expenses.

For the entire 2021, workers have tirelessly fought for their right to decent wages and job security amid the pandemic. In January, workers demanded a ₱100-subsidy on top of their daily wage to help them get by the hardships caused by the pandemic and inflation. On November 7, the Makabayan bloc lobbied for the enactment of laws for wage increase amid the nonstop increase in the prices of petroleum products over the past 10 weeks.

Until now, workers' wages have not been increased even by a centavo even as prices of goods and services skyrocket. Government data indicate that inflation shot to 4.6% last October, beyond its 2%-4% target at the start of the year. The price increases are felt especially by households at the bottom 30% income group or the lowest three income deciles combined. This is because they have the highest consumption of food and beverages, the prices of which increase more rapidly than other commodities. In September, pork, vegetables and fish recorded the highest inflation rates at 15.2%, 12.7%, and 9.4%, respectively.

According to Ibon Foundation, Duterte implemented the least number of wage increases and lowest wage increases in past 35 years. Research by Kilusang Mayo indicates that minimum wage rates were only increased by two to three times per region, or by an average

of ₱50, since Duterte assumed power in 2016. The last regional wage increase was implemented in March 2020 (₱25 increase in Cagayan Valley).

The current minimum wage rate in the National Capital Region (NCR) is only ₱537. However, its real value is only ₱434 when inflation is taken into account. (The real value of ₱1 at present is only ₱0.36 compared to its value in 2000.)

The current minimum wage in NCR is much lower than the family living wage (FLW or the amount a family of five needs for a decent living). Latest estimates last July indicate that the FLW in NCR is ₱1,065 per day (or ₱25,091 per month).

The conditions of workers in other regions where wages are lower are worse. The lowest minimum wage rates for industry and service workers are implemented in the Ilocos Region (₱282-₱340), followed by the Bangsamoro (₱300-₱325). Both regions also recorded the lowest minimum wage rates for agricultural workers (₱282-₱295 in Ilocos, and ₱290-₱300 in Bangsamoro).

Ibon added that the government can lessen the hardships of workers by providing them with support. Aside from giving loans to small enterprises to help them compensate their workers, they must also be exempted from paying taxes given that most of them have not earned any income during the pandemic. Conservative estimates by the government indicate that more than half of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) have

stopped their operations during the pandemic. MSMEs employ approximately 63% of the total local workforce.

The aid extended by the Duterte regime to MSMEs and workers is gravely lacking and its distribution is inefficient. This November, the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) announced that the government will extend loans to MSMEs to pay the 13th month pay of their employees. However, only 15,000 out of 952,000 MSMEs are covered by the said program which has a measly budget of ₱500 million.

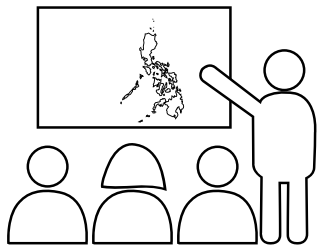
More than 100 MSMEs have already submitted their loan applications, but only 10 have been approved. Aside from this, MSMEs that will avail of the program will be charged a 4% service fee. Even worse, the said monetary benefit which families usually use to celebrate the Christmas season will only be received by workers on March 2022. Instead of giving them this monetary benefit, DOLE is pushing for the distribution of grocery supplies. AB



—IN—SHORT

Only **100**

elementary schools were **opened** for **in-person learning** on **November 15**



—19 months after these were closed down.

Learning poverty in the **Philippines** hit

90%

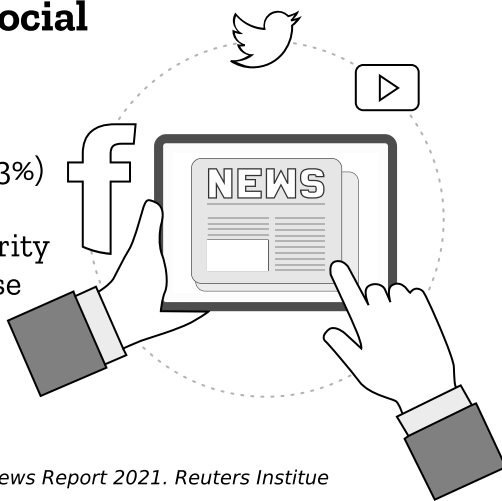
in 2021 due to the **inefficient distance learning system.**

This means **9 out of 10 Filipino children, aged 10, cannot read** and understand a simple story.

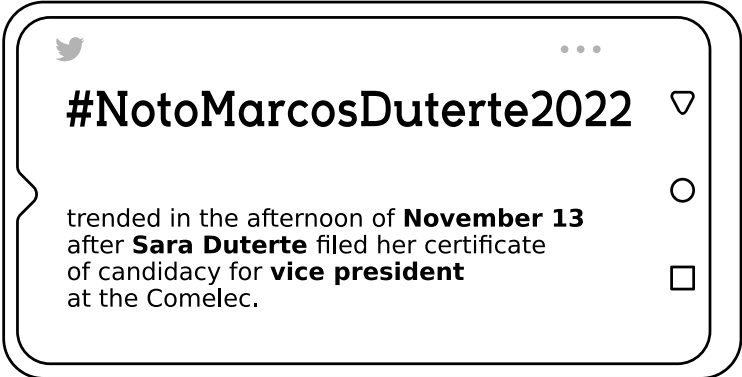
72%

of **Filipino readers** get their news from **social media.**

Most of them (73%) read news from **Facebook.** Majority (78%) of them use smartphones.



Source: Digital News Report 2021. Reuters Institute



29% - 80%

of **private hospital bills** are out-of-pocket payments due to the **low capacity** of **PhilHealth** to fund **health services.**

3-5

victims of violence against women and children report to **Gabriela** daily.

search queries about the topic **increased by 63%** during the **pandemic.**

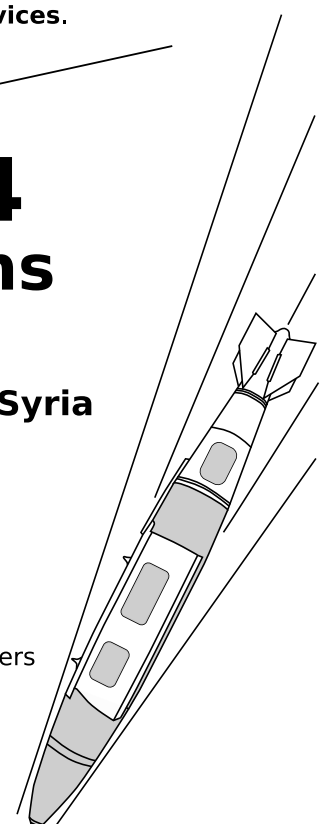
Source: Gabriela

64 civilians

were **killed** by the **US** in **Syria** in 2019 using **500 lbs.** and **2000 lbs. bombs**

Up to the present, the US military covers up this fact.

Source: New York Times



Foreign-dependent Philippine food manufacturing

When the Covid-19 pandemic hit the Philippines, food manufacturing was not shut down as it was declared essential to society. Big factories were allowed to operate up to 90% of their capacity in April 2020 amid the restrictive lockdown. But many medium and small-scale establishments closed due to transportation restrictions and as general demand fell.

In 2020, food manufacturing volume and value fell by 18%. This is due mainly to shortages of imported raw materials and ingredients affected by border closures and international transportation crisis. Prior to the pandemic, the subsector grew by an average of 5%-6% every year (2012-2017).

Food manufacturing is the largest subsector in the manufacturing sector in terms of the number of establishments and workers employed. In 2018, it comprised 31.4% of all establishments in the formal sector. It employed 151,514 workers, mostly male.

In April 2020, the subsector contributed 7.9% to the country's gross domestic product. Around 90% of its manufactures are consumed locally.

Food manufacturing are grouped in seven categories. Grains milling, mostly wheat (51%) and rice and corn (38%) make up the majority of the firms. This is followed by processing and preserving of meat,

fish and other sea products, vegetables and fruits, manufacture of vegetable oil and animal fats and manufacture of dairy and dairy products.

Manufacturing of "miscellaneous foods" have the most number of companies (40%) and highest sales (22%). Almost half (45%) of this category produce flour-based noodles. Beverage manufacturing is a separate category.

Four out of the seven groups of food manufacturing (grains, meat, dairy and miscellaneous) and the beverage sector rely heavily, if not wholly, on imported raw materials. The other three (fish, vegetables and fruits, oil) use mainly local materials but rely on imported ingredients for mixing, spices and preservatives.

Wheat for flour and other flour-based products is wholly imported. Raw materials for milk and dairy based products such as cheese and

butter are almost wholly imported.

Even before the African Swine Fever spread in 2018, 85% of raw materials for processed meats are imported. This was despite the overcapacity of local swine industry to produce its needs during this period. Local meat manufacturers refuse to use local meat due to its "incompatibility" to processing. Many processed meat (hotdogs, corned beef, burgers) use mechanically deboned meat, skin, innards, fats and offals not eaten in other countries and are therefore cheap to buy.

Processing, flavoring, removing odors and preserving vegetables and fruits also rely on foreign inputs.

Foreign and big bourgeois comprador companies dominate the sector. The biggest among them in terms of revenue is Nestlé Philippines, a subsidiary of The Netherlands' Nestlé Global. Following it are Universal Robina Corporation of the Gokongweis, Betty Ang's Monde Nissin, Century Pacific Food of the Po family, San Miguel Purefoods-Hormel headed by Ramon Ang, Pilmico Foods Corporation of the Aboitizes, Alaska/Royal Friesland-Campina of The Netherlands.

General production slowed down but big food companies raked in profits in the middle of the pandemic. Monde Nissin's profits were so high that it propelled its owner Betty Ang to the Forbes's richest Filipino list this year.



Anti-peasant policies, set to be repealed in India

PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA Modi announced on November 19 his plan to repeal three neoliberal farming laws. This came after a year of massive and sustained peasant protests in India against these. The said laws were first implemented by the regime in October 2020.

Thousands of protesters occupying the roads leading to New Delhi, capital of India, celebrated this victory. According to them, they will not leave the streets and continue to protest until the parliament repeals these laws.

Hundreds of millions of farmers participated in the protests which erupted amid years of hardships caused by low farmgate prices, inflation and low productivity due to widespread drought aggravated by the Covid-19 pandemic crisis.

Climate change is business as usual under imperialism

The agenda of imperialist countries and monopoly corporations that attended the 26th Conference of the Parties (COP26) runs counter to the goal of addressing the rise of global surface temperature. This was the criticism of the International League of Peoples' Struggle (ILPS) during the conference organized by the United Nations (UN) in Glasgow, Scotland from October 31 to November 13.

The COP26 is the most recent conference organized by the UN since it issued a resolution to address climate change due to the increase of atmospheric greenhouse gas (GHG). Carbon dioxide is the primary type of GHG emitted by the burning of fossil fuels (coal, petroleum and natural gas). Massive GHG emission is caused by anarchic capitalist production, including production in the energy industry, manufacturing, transportation, industrial agriculture, mining, military production, wars, construction, and others.

Almost three decades later, big countries and their monopoly corporations have even doubled their GHG emissions. The most notorious of these countries including the US, China, Canada, Japan, UK, and other European Union members participated in the conference to dominate it and lobby for bogus solutions.

The ILPS said that these countries are silent on their massive and disproportionate contributions to global carbon emissions. In fact, people in semicolonies suffer the worst impact of climate change, including more frequent and stronger typhoons, floods, soil erosion and drought.

In a related statement, the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) said that the insatiable hunger for superprofits of monopoly capitalists drive the reckless plunder and destruction of the environment resulting in rising global temperatures. Despite advances in technology and high levels of organizations, the capitalist system con-

tinues to be marked by anarchy and waste of resources.

To address climate change, the CPP said that the only real path is revolution to fight for liberation from imperialism and to build socialism.

Problematic solution

From the outset, the urgent need to stop using coal has been clear. However, capitalist countries opt to come up with solutions which protect their capital accumulation. Among the solutions they are pushing for in the past few years is the Net Zero emission program, which purportedly aims to offset GHG emissions. This paved way for the establishment of vast tree plantations by capitalists. Similarly, the construction of hydroelectric megadams, nuclear plants, and renewable-energy powerplants became widespread.

According to ILPS, reports are coming in of massive commitment of

trillions of dollars by monopoly corporations who continue to invest in fossil fuels. They have already earned up to \$17 billion through financing fossil fuels since 2015.

However, an increasing number of scientists prove that GHG emissions cannot be offset unless the use of fossil fuels is stopped. The Net Zero program has only resulted in the denudation of forests and destruction of rivers. This is carried out along with widespread human rights violations and dislocation of minority peoples.

The ILPS was among the millions of protesters in Glasgow and across the world while the COP26 was being held. They sought for radical and urgent reforms in the economic and social systems of countries.

According to the CPP, the proletariat and toiling people, especially the young generation who will inherit the earth, must act to avert climate disaster. Under the proletariat, the state can plan production and wealth distribution and ensure that democracy thrives, that the interests and welfare of workers and toiling people are primordial, and that the earth will remain healthy under communism. AB



State forces abduct activist in Pampanga

An activist was abducted by state forces, while two others were killed and another eight arrested in the past three weeks. They were all accused of being members of the New People's Army (NPA).

Suspected state agents abducted Steve Abua, organizer of Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas-Central Luzon, in Sta. Cruz, Lubao, Pampanga on November 6. Abua was a former BS Statistics student and student-leader at the University of the Philippines.

According to his wife Johanna Abua, she received a message from his abductors few hours after he was taken. Through video call, the abductors showed her Steve who was wearing a white shirt and bonnet, while his mouth was gagged.

Killing. Victims of killings by the 59th IB identified as Jorge Coronacion, 64, and Arnold Buri, 43, on November 17 were farmers. They were on their way home to Barangay Taquico, Sampaloc, Quezon when they were killed. Coronacion is visually impaired.

On November 3, soldiers killed farmer Nilo Habal in Caramoan, Camarines Sur.

Arrest. Five activists and organizers of progressive groups in Cagayan Valley were arrested by policemen in two separate operations in Bulacan on November 16. The victims were identified as Irene Agcaoili, Estelita Alamansa, Arcadio Tangonan, Lourdes Bulan and Roy dela Cruz. Four of them are above 60 years old, while one is a disabled stroke patient.

Police officers arrested Maria Salome Crisostomo-Ujano, 64, in Malolos, Bulacan on November 14. Ujano is a women and children's rights advocate.

In Cebu, state forces arrested peasant leader Sabiniana Castro of the Napo Farmers Community Organization and charged him with libel on November 12. She was arrested at her house in Barangay Guindarohan, Minglanilla. The charges stem from her exposing the destructive operations of a construction company.

State forces arrested Pablito Bernacer Galo, member of the Hugpong sa Mag-uuma sa Mabini, in Barangay San Isidro, Mabini, Bohol on October 29. Operatives planted evidences of firearms in his house.

Harassment. Police elements in Gumaca, Quezon refused to release the remains of Roderick Sinas, a Red fighter who was killed in an encounter on November 12.

On November 18, political prisoner Antonio Molina died at the Puerto Princesa City Jail in Palawan. Molina was arrested based on trumped-up charges of illegal possession of firearms and explosives in October 2019. Molina, 67, suffered from stomach cancer.

Demolition. Gregorio Araneta III's goons demolished the houses of farmers at Sitio Ricafort, Barangay Tungkong Mangga, San Jose del Monte City, Bulacan on November 4. The incident is part of the massive landgrabbing operations of the Araneta Properties, Inc. in the area. The affected lands are cultivated by hundreds of peasant families in the said city. **AB**

Cuban victories against the Covid-19 pandemic

Last November 15, Cuba's remaining 1.7 million elementary and high-school students returned to their classrooms. "Cuba lives and is reborn in our schools!" Miguel Bermudez Diaz-Canel declared as he welcomed back students with joy.

On the same day, Cuba opened its airports to international tourists. This was made possible after vaccination reached 100% of the population, ages 2-up, last October 27. At the same time, 68% of the population have already completed the 3-dose regimen.

Earlier, Diaz-Canel criticized the US embargo against Cuba which was made more restrictive in the middle of the pandemic. He said that Cubans know that the US

heightened sanctions to demoralize them, create dissent and demonize communism. The US poured millions of funds into small groups inside Cuba to create chaos and propagate lies.

"Imperialism is angry against Cuba's victories in its fight against the pandemic," according to Diaz-Canel. "In every victory...we defeat imperialist aggression." He called the US "shameless" in its calculated use of the pandemic to the detri-

ment of the entire population.

The US accelerated its efforts for "regime change" in Cuba this year. Through the US-funded opposition, it tried, but failed, to stage huge anti-government rallies last July 11, and again, on November 15.

Vaccine sovereignty

Cuba is listed second among 218 nations in terms of number of doses administered per 100 persons. On November 14, more than 27.4 million doses were given at the rate of 242 doses per 100 persons. (Gibraltar is listed as the

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number one country with 94,469 inoculations at a rate of 280 doses per 100 people.) Cuba's population stands at 11.3 million.

Currently, two vaccines are used in the country—the Soberana 2 and Abdala which comes with Soberana Plus as its booster shot.

The Lancet Regional Health-Americas, an international medical journal, noted last September that two doses of Soberana and a dose

of Soberana Plus have a 91.2% efficacy rate. Abdala registered a 92.8% efficacy rate. Like Soberana, Abdala's second dose is given 28 days and the booster shot 56 days after the first dose.

Those who have been infected and survived Covid-19 are given only a shot of Soberana Plus.

Fight the sanctions

Protests were staged in 80 cities on November 15 in solidarity with the Cuban people. In addition to US cities, demonstrations were

mounted in Greece, Kazakhstan, Ukraine, Belarus, Ecuador, East Timor, China, Peru, Dominican Republic and others under the banner "Let Cuba Live."

Before this, hundreds of personalities, including past and present presidents in Latin America, signed a unity statement condemning sanctions against Cuba and calling for their immediate lifting. They also condemned the US attempts to "sow anarchy and chaos" inside Cuba for the "sole purpose of installing (a regime) that responds only to its interests."

Up to 243 new restrictions against Cuba imposed by Donald Trump are retained by the current administration of Joseph Biden. These has caused heightened shortages of basic supplies in the country, including medical supplies crucial to the production and rollout of vaccines.

Aside from Cuba, the US is also actively sowing chaos and attempting the overthrow of elected regimes in Nicaragua at Venezuela.

