

EDITORIAL

## Duterte is putting the country in the middle of the battle of imperialist giants

President Rodrigo Duterte recently expressed apprehension over the possible break-out of armed confrontation between the US and China in the South China Sea (SCS). He claims, China is "already in possession" of the sea and that US military drills are only provoking counter-action. The Philippines will suffer in the event of such a war in the area.

Duterte is washing his hands of responsibility for the rising tensions in the SCS. The fact is he has a lot to answer for in the state of affairs in the SCS which arose partly because of his two-sided betrayal of Philippine national sovereignty allowing both the US and China to militarize or heighten their military presence in the sea.

The Filipino people are suffering from Duterte's spineless foreign policy and his refusal to uphold the country's sovereignty on various issues. Duterte's betrayal is tantamount to selling off the Filipino

people's wealth and national freedom, which further strengthens imperialist power and domination.

On the one hand, Duterte is completely selling out to China the country's wealth and rights in the SCS. In the past two years, he has set aside Philippine sovereignty in the Spratly islands when he acted meek while China engaged in the reclamation of close to 1,300 hectares of land on which it erected various facilities. Several thousand hectares of reefs and

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## AFP suffers 39 casualties

THE ARMED FORCES of the Philippines suffered not less than 39 casualties—23 killed and 16 wounded— from successful military actions launched by the New People's Army (NPA) in Bukidnon, Iloilo, Northern Samar and Camarines Sur this October.

**Bukidnon.** Successive armed actions were mounted by the NPA-Bukidnon from November 10 to 16, killing 13 soldiers and wounding at least 10 others.

On November 16, a unit of the NPA-Bukidnon ambushed 65th IB troopers operating in the boundary of the province and Pinilayan, Tagoloan 2, Lanao del Sur. Two enemy units were slain in the incident. The troopers were deployed as reinforcement to the military elements already operating in the area.

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fishing ground were ruined by these construction.

Duterte set aside the 2016 Arbitral Tribunal decision which decided that the Spratly islands, the Scarborough Shoals and other areas of the SCS as part of the Philippine exclusive economic zone and extended continental shelf and recognizes Philippine rights under the UN Convention on the Law of the Seas. Duterte is inciting baseless fear that "the Philippines cannot afford to go to war with China" as if war is the only way to assert the country's rights.

With Duterte's refusal to uphold such decision, China was given free rein to build its military bases in the Spratly islands to strengthen its military presence in the area against the US. Among others, China built an airfield with a 10,000-foot runway, ports and other facilities. Chinese coast guards continue to interdict Filipino fisherfolk as if they own the Philippine seas. Heightened Chinese military presence in the SCS aim to curb US military presence and

secure vast resources under the sea.

In the face of all these, the obsequious Duterte has acted like a meek lamb who knows no profanity. With complete servility, he recently declared to China: "So you're there, you're in possession, you occupied it. Then tell us what route shall we take and what kind of behavior." Duterte's servility is absolutely obscene. He has no sense of national integrity.

Duterte's shameless servility and submission to China has no other aim but to plead for more loans to fund his ambitious Build, Build, Build program. The visit by China President Xi Jinping this November will serve as occasion to sign an agreement for "joint exploration" of the Philippine seas, violating even the 1987 constitution which reserves such right to the State.

Similarly questionable is the China-funded 2005 Joint Marine Seismic Undertaking (JMSU) which sought to determine the wealth in more than 142,886-square-kilometer of seas (almost half of the total Philippine land mass). The study was

completed in 2007 but China has exclusively held on the results. China estimates that the SCS holds as much as \$60 trillion worth of oil, natural gas and other minerals. In the name of "exploration," China hopes to determine whether it is commercially viable to mine these resources.

Just like how China dangled a \$904 million loan package in 2004 for Arroyo in exchange for the JMSU, China is now dangling several billion dollars of loans for Duterte including funds for rail projects, roads and others to have the "joint exploration" agreement which China wants to be presumed on its sovereignty claims. In exchange for these few billion dollars of loans, Duterte wants to give China not only trillions of dollars worth of resources, but the country's sovereignty as well. With Duterte's appetite for high-interest China loans, the Philippines is bound to be a debt-slave.

On the other hand, Duterte is also shameless for his subservience to the US imperialists. He has castigated the SCS naval exercises of the US for risking an armed confrontation with China, but has allowed the US' full military use of the country's ports for US warships. The Philippines serves as a base of the US for mounting so-called "freedom of navigation operations" to supposedly secure trade routes but in fact ensure only US presence and power in the SCS.

At any time, the US military can use Philippine airports and other facilities to stockpile war matériel and for rest and recreation of American troops.

Under Duterte, the number of joint exercises and war games mounted by the US military is increasing.

Duterte's proclamation that he would not allow stockpiling of weapons in Palawan is meaningless. In fact, the US has long been using the Ulungan naval base which it expanded in 2014 to be used as

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# China accelerates economic colonization of the Philippines\*

China aims to overwhelm the Philippine economy with its excess capital, make it dependent on Chinese loans and grants, impose neoliberal economic policies, plunder and exploit the country's labor and natural resources, control the key aspects of the economy, and lock the Philippines in a perennial state of exporting cheap and low value-added raw and semi-processed goods and importing capital goods and consumer commodities.

Having been at the center of the imperialist global value chain, China has long become the top destination of Philippine exports of raw materials and semi-manufactures and has become the primary source of the country's imports.

Over the past two years, China has moved more quickly to further strengthen its economic presence in the country. Its official development

assistance has shot up to \$63.5 million last year from \$1.5 million in 2016. Foreign direct investments (FDI) from China grew at a faster rate reaching \$1.043 billion in the first two years under Duterte, close to 85% of its total FDI over six years under the previous Aquino regime (\$1.231 billion) and more than that (\$825 million) under Arroyo's nine-year reign.

China seeks to accelerate its economic domination of the Philippines by investing in large infrastructure projects in order to mobilize its idle capital and provide a market for its surplus steel and cement. It has enticed Duterte with promises to spend \$15 billion in dams, roads, bridges, sea ports and railway projects and provide loans of up to \$9 billion in the next few years.

These promises of fund infusion, however, remain largely unfulfilled. But bureaucrat capitalists are drooling over the potential kick-backs to be pocketed in the form of

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port and storage under EDCA. It has constructed a series of radars along the Palawan stretch to spy on the Philippine seas. In the name of pre-positioning "humanitarian and disaster response," the US set up facilities in Pampanga to be used by its military. It is building military facilities in no less than five AFP camps across the country.

The US continues to fortify its domination in the Philippines by strengthening its control of the AFP. According to the US, it has 200-300 military advisers to the AFP who are permanently stationed in the Philippines. They provide trainings and direct some AFP operations. The US continues to provide military aid to the AFP, including drones, helicopters, guns, bullets and other weapons used in armed suppression under Oplan Kapayapaan.

The US continues to pour funds to Marawi to strengthen its presence in Mindanao. On its prodding, Duterte declared the CPP and NPA as "terrorists" to give the US pretext for establishing its Operation Pacific Eagle-Philippines (OPE-P) as a US "anti-terrorist operation" which is

now used as platform for US intervention in the country. By extending martial law in Mindanao, US initiative is also strengthened through the AFP's imposition of absolute power.

The US has long used the Philippines as an instrument for its hegemony. It has used the country as base for its wars in Korea, Vietnam, Iran, Afghanistan and other countries. Because of this, it is also always a target of US rivals and enemies since the 1930s.

Under Duterte, the US continues to use the Philippines for its military strategy. It is now using the country as a base to contain the rise of China's military power, project power and maintain permanent military presence in the South China Sea to secure control of the trade routes.

The country remains without national sovereignty and economic freedom under Duterte. It remains to be a semicolony of US imperialism which continues to be the dominant political and military power in the country. Duterte's declaration of an "independent foreign policy" is hollow.

In the face of the worsening

crisis of the global capitalist system and rising China challenge to US power, the Philippines is a tool and target of both imperialist powers. Because of Duterte's servility to the US and China, sooner or later, the country will be caught between the battle of two imperialist giants.

This can only be avoided if the whole Filipino people will firmly assert national sovereignty and vigorously advance the policy of peace and non-alignment. The people must assert the country's sovereignty in the SCS and demand its demilitarization, calling for both the dismantling of Chinese military bases and the withdrawal of all US warships in the Philippine territorial seas.

In line with this, the people must assert economic sovereignty, through genuine land reform and national industrialization. Upholding national sovereignty can be effectively carried out only if the country has economic freedom and can stand on its own two feet; on the other hand, economic freedom can only be achieved if there is national freedom to determine the country's destiny in accordance with the people's interests. **AB**

so-called "finder's fees." The big bourgeois compradors and Duterte dummy capitalists eagerly await the partnership with Chinese corporations to make large profits in state-guaranteed projects.

### **Perpetuation of Philippine economic backwardness**

By applying the same method of economic colonialism on the Philippines, China will merely perpetuate the backward, agrarian and non-industrial character of the Philippine economy which has long been dominated by the US and Japan monopoly-capitalists. Philippine addiction to China loans will make it a debt slave of China, in addition to being dependent on loans and grants from IMF-WB, the ADB, the Japan Ex-Im Bank and other creditors.

Up to the present, the Philip-

pinos remains a semicolony and military stronghold of the US imperialists, with which China is now locked in an intensifying trade war and challenging US economic, political and military domination.

Although fast catching up, China still trails behind the US and Japan in terms of investments and loans to the Philippines. In the field of portfolio investments or infusion into the Philippine stock market and other financial instruments, the US remains the top source of capital with 43% share compared to China's share of 6%.

Economic policies, such as the imposition of the TRAIN law, continue to be influenced primarily by the IMF, US-controlled credit rating agencies and such groups as the Partnership for Growth. AB

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*\*From the CPP statement "Resist China efforts to impose imperialist power on the Philippines," November 20, 2018.*

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Earlier, on November 12, the fascist troopers were hit twice in armed actions launched by the Red fighters in the said barrio. Three were slain and four wounded. On November 11, they conducted a counter-offensive against elements of the same unit who attempted to raid their camp, killing three soldiers and wounding four others. A Red fighter was martyred during the encounter.

Meanwhile, a unit of the NPA-Bukidnon harassed operating troopers of the 8th IB in Barangay Bulonay, Impasug-ong on November 10 at 4 p.m. The troopers have been operating in the area for more than a week already, causing distress among residents and disruption of their livelihood.

**Panay.** The NPA-Southern Panay (Napoleon Tumagtang Command) attacked a patrol base of the 61st IB and 33rd Division Reconnaissance Company in Barangay Ig-

cabugao, Igaras, Iloilo last November 12.

Initial reports indicate that four soldiers were killed. To save face, the troopers peddled a lie that a car and not their base was hit in the offensive. They also arrested a farmer and accused him as an NPA sympathizer. After a day, the troopers were compelled to release the victim after failing to present any evidence against him.

Since 2015, troopers of the tactical patrol base serve as mercenaries of Century Peak, a company operating a mini-hydro plant in the area. Residents of Igcabugao, Passi and other neighboring barrios are opposing the plan of the company to conduct mining operations.

In a related news, the NPA-Southern Panay offered a Red salute to Casimiro (Ka Boy) na who was martyred during the offensive in Igcabugao. He is a resident of Barangay Buloc, Tubungan, Iloilo.

### **Groups meet Xi Jinping with protests**

GROUPS LED BY the Pilipinong Nagkakaisa para sa Soberanya (P1NAS), Bagong Alyansang Makabayan and Anakbayan met Xi Jinping's arrival in the Philippines last November 20 with protests.

P1NAS trooped to the Chinese consulate in Makati to demand China's withdrawal from the West Philippine Sea where it has conducted reclamation and constructed various military infrastructures. The group said that no amount of loan can make its illegal occupation acceptable to the Filipino people.

Joining the rally were members of Dumagat communities from Southern Tagalog which face threats of flooding with the impending construction of the China-funded Kaliwa Dam in Sierra Madre and Zambales fisherfolk who continue to be adversely affected by the Chinese coast guard's occupation and control of the Scarborough Shoal. AB

**Northern Samar.** Five soldiers were slain while many others were wounded in the harassment operation launched by the NPA-Northern Samar (Rodante Urtal Command) against operating troopers of the 43rd IB in Barangay Cagamesarog, Lope de Vega on November 6.

In retaliation, more than 100 fascist soldiers scoured the area and sowed disinformation to belittle the victory of the NPA.

**Camarines Sur.** The NPA-Bicol (Romulo Jallores Regional Operations Command) applauded the successful ambush by Red fighters under the Norben Gruta Command in Sitio Patag, Barangay Mambulo Nuevo, Libmanan last November 17 at 4:30 p.m.

Six police officers who are members of the Task Force Bicolandia were wounded during the attack. The said task force was established to "decimate" the armed revolutionary movement in the region. AB

## NPA-Zamboanga foils AFP attacks

Amid relentless attacks of the fascist troops and local spies of the US-Duterte regime, the New People's Army (NPA) and its mass base in the Zamboanga Peninsula remain steadfast and are steadily fighting back. Among the victories won by the NPA in the last six months (May-September 2018) are as follows:

Last May, the 42nd IB attempted to conduct extensive military operations in Zamboanga del Norte purportedly to decimate the NPA in the area. But even before they could hit any NPA unit, comrades were already able to score an attritive operation against them on May 18. An NPA unit blasted a truck of the enemy unit killing seven and wounding three troopers on board. The truck was also completely destroyed. The incident took place just a kilometer away from Kalawit town where the battalion headquarters is located.

On May 30, in an NPA checkpoint in Sitio Tanggupon, Barangay Mauswagon in Godod town, the Red fighters captured two police officers and seized three M16 rifles, one 9mm pistol, thirteen magazines and live ammunition from them.

The captives were treated with

respect and were immediately released. After the incident, one of the police officers commented that he was wrong to think all along that Red fighters of the NPA are crooks.

On July 27, elements of the 42nd IB and CAFGU failed in their attempt to raid an NPA unit resting in the forest areas of Sitio Kulasian, Barangay Kulalian, Kalawit. The Red fighters foresaw the plan of the enemy and were able to mount an effective defense plan. After a 30-minute running gunbattle, the soldiers withdrew carrying their casualties which included seven killed and one wounded troopers.

The NPA scored another victory against operating troopers of the 67th IB in an encounter last August 23 in Barangay Delokot in Godod town.

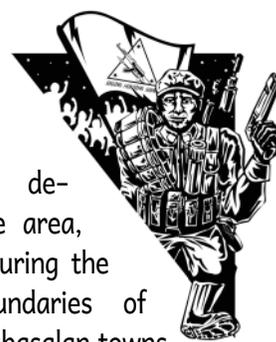
Fascist troopers from the 97th

IB, recently deployed in the area, had been scouring the forested boundaries of Godod and Kabasalan towns

intending to start their operations with a bang. By the early morning of August 23, they attempted to raid an NPA camp in the area. The Red fighters, however, had been alerted and were able to fire at and blast the maneuvering enemy troopers.

When the attackers took over the abandoned camp, they were still deliriously mad and spent thousands of ammunition rounds firing aimlessly at open air, silent trees and empty hillsides. While Red fighters were able to withdraw with no casualties, five enemy troopers were confirmed killed while three others were injured including a CAFGU combatant.

An army officer lamely admitted by saying, "The NPAs were just lucky that time. They occupied superior ground, fired their guns first while we were still trying to gain a more favorable position." AB



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## Imelda, sentenced guilty but remains free

THE SANDIGANBAYAN FOUND Imelda Marcos, wife of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos, guilty of seven counts of graft and corruption in a ruling issued last November 9. Despite this, she was not arrested and was even allowed to post a bail bond of P150,000.

The decision by the Sandiganbayan is a ruling over the ten cases filed against the Marcoses on December 1991. The cases involve the Marcos couple's hidden wealth deposited in their private bank accounts in Switzerland and Imelda's abuse of power.

Marcos was sentenced to six years and a month up to eleven years in prison for each case she was found guilty of or a total of 42 and seven months up to 77 years. The ruling also prohibits her from running for any position in the reactionary government.

The Party welcomed the ruling against Marcos but said that it

already came "too late." This addresses the demand of the Filipino people to penalize the Marcoses over their crimes against the nation. The case was, however, queued for 30 years in the reactionary court, allowing Imelda Marcos to evade imprisonment. Now, at the age of 89, she is left with only a few years to serve her sentence, if she is indeed to be imprisoned.

In previous years, all reactionary regimes failed to address the demand of the Filipino for swift justice and even allowed the Marcoses to rehabilitate themselves.

Various organizations and the

dictatorial regime's victims promptly mounted successive protest actions to condemn the disinterestedness of the Duterte regime to convict Marcos. Carrying placards with the call "Imelda, Iselda!" ("Imprison Imelda!"), members and supporters of the Campaign Against the Return of the Marcoses and Martial Law staged a protest last November 12 in front of the Sandiganbayan.

On November 14, similar protest actions were mounted by martial law victims from North Luzon and by student activists in UP Diliman, University of Sto. Tomas, Far Eastern University and De La Salle University.

Earlier, on November 9, the UP Diliman community lighted a bonfire in celebration of the issuance of the ruling. AB

# Building the Party in Regata



*This article is a contribution by Party members from the youth sector to Ang Bayan's (AB) series featuring outstanding experiences on Party branch building in various fields of revolutionary work. AB's editors encourage all Party committees to contribute to this series by submitting their featured stories.*

Regata is a university in the national capital with a large student population and broad influence. It is also among the universities where the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) is deeply rooted and where it has actively led the campaign and worked to forge a broad unity against the tyranny of dictator-wannabe Rodrigo Duterte.

On top of skyrocketing tuition and other school fees which increase annually, students are also burdened with the university's oppressive anti-democratic policies. Organizing in this university is a rigorous task because of stringent policies on the recognition and operation of organizations. A Party group has long been operating in the university but has, however, experienced problems with expansion and consolidation.

Change, indeed, came in the university when Duterte became president and started his campaign of suppression which has killed thousands and plagued the lives of millions of Filipinos. A broad unity among students was gradually forged within the university which resulted in successive campaigns against Duterte's "wars"—his "war on drugs", the "war on terror" which he used as a pretext to impose martial law in Mindanao and his "all-out war" against progressive forces.

This unity has served as a springboard for the Party's expansion and consolidation work in Regata. Starting with the broad anti-fascist sentiment within the university, the Party strove to rouse students to tread the path of the national democratic struggle by educating them on broader issues and problems that confront the Filipino masses.

## Striking deep roots

Despite the relative smallness of its initial machinery, Regata strove to expand in strategic colleges and

was gradually able to spearhead mass struggles within the entire university. A major factor contributing to this achievement is the determination of the students themselves to stand up for their democratic rights and to get involved with national issues that affect them and the people. Advanced elements eventually emerged from their ranks and served as seedlings for the Party's further growth and consolidation within the university.

Party organizers in Regata seized every issue and mass struggle to educate, organize and rouse the student masses to action. Every opportunity is used for recruitment and promotion of the revolutionary analysis of the Philippine society and the national democratic alternative. Recruitment is carried out at the classroom level.

Ka Mina was among those who were recruited during the course of a national campaign. She was politically roused after attending a film showing depicting the fascist attacks of the state on various democratic sectors. Afterwards, she was invited to further discussions wherein she actively studied various local and national issues.

She was then given specific organizational and political tasks. Eventually, she was recruited into the Party and became one of the cadres responsible for building the Party in Regata.

The interplay of expansion and prompt consolidation was key to the fast development of local cadres. To



reach the broadest number of students, Party members delved into their ranks. The interplay of the students' initiative and firm political guidance enabled them to lead the sector's struggles.

Party members carry on with organizing work even during their vacation. Semestral breaks allow them to integrate, organize and teach in urban poor communities. The experience helps shape and firm up the perspective of students for deployment to other sectors.

The prompt delegation of particular and concrete organizational tasks to new members is an effective key to recruiting new cadres who will eventually lead the university-wide mass base that is being established.

Party branches were formed in various colleges within a short span of time. Simultaneously, the number of full-time cadres grew. They took on the responsibility of leading the university-wide operations of the Party.

## Education campaign

Along with ensuring political leadership and organizational expansion, the revolutionary forces in Regata are also responsible of raising the political consciousness of the studentry through constant education. Education on local and national issues are broadly conducted in the form of discussion groups and study circles. Formal courses on



Marxism-Leninism-Maoism are promptly conducted to ensure the students' ideological development. The comrades ensure that all Party members are able to study the Basic Party Course (BPC) and regularly study other Party documents. They are also striving to ensure that BPC graduates are able to immediately take up the Intermediate Party Course.

The vigorous education campaign in Regata is considered as the comrades' most effective tool for consolidation and raising the commitment of Party cadres. After such in-depth studies on theory and practice, most of the members are often convinced to serve full-time.

To Ka Mina, such studies firmed up her decision to visit a guerrilla front and eventually join the New People's Army. It is clear to her and other young revolutionaries that the youth has an important role in advancing the revolutionary movement in urban areas and the armed struggle in the countryside.

The congruous interplay of proper political leadership and the cadres' eagerness to raise the political consciousness of the local Party's general membership and of the studentry has enabled the Party in Regata to overcome the problems which hindered its development in the past. It dropped various unnecessary requisites for recruitment of new members and strategically organized local chapters of Kabataang Makabayan in every college where the greatest number of students are concentrated.

Lessons from organizing the Party in Regata are celebrated by the whole sector as it anticipates the 50th year anniversary of the Party. The sector recognizes the challenge to the youth to go the countryside and contribute to advancing the armed revolution. AB

## International Students' Day commemoration

VARIOUS YOUTH GROUPS attended the National Students' Rights Summit 2018 in the office of the Commission on Human Rights in Quezon City on November 17 in conjunction with the commemoration of the 79th International Students' Day (ISD). The said activity was spearheaded by Rise for Education, Kabataan Partylist at Youth Act Now Against Tyranny (YANAT) and was participated by nearly 200 student leaders from 55 universities and schools.

Meanwhile, progressive student youth groups mounted successive protest actions across the country. Simultaneous protests were conducted last November 16 in Baguio by members of YANAT-Baguio-Benguet; in the Polytechnic University of the Philippines by students and workers who slammed the proposed budget cut in the university; in the Bulacan State University by students who opposed various maneuvers being implemented by the school administration to deny students their right to free education; and in Cebu by members of Anakbayan who demanded to scrap the neoliberal K-12 program.

Students of the University of the Philippines (UP) Manila also protested on November 15 to condemn the presence of police and military elements in the campus who conducted a forum where they maliciously tagged progressive students and organizations as members of the armed revolutionary movement. Students of UP Los Baños also condemned the university's stringent enrollment system.

Students, employees, teachers, drivers and vendors also protested in UP Diliman on November 9 to demand the junking of the Master Development Plan and other privatization and commercialization schemes being implemented by the university administration.

In a related news, students, teachers and employees condemned the Supreme Court ruling issued this November declaring the K-12 program "constitutional." The ruling simultaneously revoked the temporary restraining order on CHED Memorandum Order 20, a legal action against the removal of Filipino and Literature as key subjects in college. Students of the College and Letters in UP Diliman mounted a protest on November 13 to condemn the said ruling. AB

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## Women strike back at SM's "endo" scheme

GABRIELA AND KILUSAN ng Manggagawang Kababaihan mounted a picket-rally in front of SM Manila to condemn the widespread implementation of "endo" (end-of-contract) in the company.

They called for an inquiry on the consignment scheme implemented by the SM Retail Inc. to circumvent its legal obligations to workers. Under this scheme, SM hires contractual workers, but passes the burden of paying salary and benefit to third-party agencies called consigners. A similar protest was simultaneously conducted in front of SM Cebu by GABRIELA-Cebu.

Last November 13, Workers of SMT-Philippines from Laguna trooped to the headquarters of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) in Intramuros, Manila. They conducted a noise barrage to condemn DOLE's inaction in the face of the illegal lockout and food blockade in the company.

Members of the Nexperia Inc. Workers Union NAFLU-KMU conducted a similar protest in Laguna last November 17 to demand the scrapping of the scheme requiring them to explain absentism even during holidays. This was used by the management to dismiss union officers from the company in 2014.

Meanwhile, the Kalipunan ng Damayang Mahihirap (KADAMAY) conducted a protest along Agham Road on November 18 to oppose the continuing price hikes and call for the scrapping junk the regime's TRAIN law. The group said that workers' wages have remained extremely low in the face of incessant increases in the prices of basic commodities. It also condemned the demolition threat against urban poor communities to pave the way for the construction of business and corporate establishments. AB

# Justice evades Hacienda Luisita Massacre victims

PEASANTS COMMEMORATED THE 14th year of the Hacienda Luisita Massacre last November 16 and condemned the continuing suppression and attacks against their ranks.

The *sacadas* (sugarfield workers) along with members of progressive organizations held a mass at the Central Azucarera de Tarlac Gate 1 before marching towards the Northern Luzon Command to denounce the presence of a military detachment in the hacienda. They culminated the commemoration with a program at the Tarlac City Downtown Public Market.

In solidarity with the *sacadas*, progressive groups also launched a cultural night in Plaza Miranda, Angeles City on November 15.

In Metro Manila, the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas spearheaded a protest action at the Mendiola Arch on November 16 to demand justice for the victims of the Hacienda Luisita Massacre and the recent massacre in Sagay City.

On the same day, members of the Peasant and Church People's Movement of Cavite stood in solidarity with the farmers of Lupang Ramos and Kapdula in Dasmariñas, Cavite to defend their *bungkalan* (collective land cultivation). The farmers and their supporters held a

mass and built a human chain in front of the gate of Lupang Kapdula, Barangay Sampaloc II.

The farmers who have long been conducting *bungkalan* activities in the said areas are now subjected to constant harassment and threats by landlord Rudy Herrera's goons.

**Yolanda survivors storm Tacloban.** The People Surge alliance spearheaded the protest action of nearly 5,000 Yolanda survivors who occupied the whole downtown area of Tacloban City last November 8. They condemned the government's criminal neglect over the victims.

The alliance demanded that the Aquino and Duterte regime be held accountable for their failure to promptly provide aid and address the demands of the disaster victims. Relief and cash assistance are yet to be distributed to the victims while there remains no support for the agricultural sector. They also condemned the substandard housing units that were given them and the intensifying militarization of their communities.

**Mass in commemoration of Leonard Co.** A mass in remembrance of environmentalists Leonard Co, Sofronio Cortez and Julius Borromeo was held last November 15 at Dita Tree, EDC Arboretum, Institute of Biology, UP Diliman. The three were murdered by 19th IB elements in Kananga, Leyte eight years ago. The program was spearheaded by Advocates of Science and Technology for the People (AGHAM). Candles were lit by supporters to demand justice for the victims.

**Third martial law extension.** In conjunction with the commemoration of the Children's Day last November 20 at the Sunken Garden in UP Diliman, the Save Our Schools Network and Lumad youth condemned the threats of the Philippine National Police and Armed Forces of the Philippines to pursue with the third extension of martial law in Mindanao.

Students from the University of Santo Tomas and UP Diliman participated in the protest to oppose the threat which they said will further intensify violence in Lumad schools and across the whole island. AB

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## State forces illegally arrest NDFP consultant and two others

ELEMENTS OF THE police and military illegally arrested National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) consultant Vicente Ladlad along with Alberto and Virginia Villamor last November 8 at midnight in Doña Tomasa, San Bartolome, Novaliches, Quezon City.

The police planted with AK-47 rifles, grenades and subversive documents to make it appear that they were combatants despite their age and sickly condition. Ladlad, 69, has a lung (emphysema) and heart complication, Alberto Villamor has diabetes and Virginia Villamor has a pelvic fracture. The three were charged with illegal possession of firearms and explosives.

The victims were initially detained in Camp Karingal in Quezon City. Ladlad's was then moved to various detention cells which ag-

gravated his complications.

The NDFP vehemently condemned Ladlad's arrest, a member of the Reciprocal Working Committee on Political and Constitutional Reforms. He is the third NDFP consultant to have been illegally arrested under the Duterte regime, which blatantly violates the GRP-NDFP Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees. Jose Maria Sison, chief political consultant of the NDFP said that, "it is obvious that Duterte is leaving no space for the possible resumption of peace negotiations in order to scape-

goat the CPP, NPA and NDFP as "terrorist organizations" and give him the pretext to establish a fascist dictatorship through martial law his bogus federalism.

Meanwhile, Fidel Agcaoili, Luis Jalandoni and Coni Ledesma canceled on November 19 their plan to visit the country for the supposed informal negotiations on the possible resumption of peace talks. This cancellation came after Duterte's threat that he will have them arrested upon their arrival. Later on, it was discovered by lawyers of the NDFP that the Manila Trial Court has already issued an arrest warrant for Jalandoni and Ledesma in connection with the proscription case filed by the regime which declares them as "terrorists." AB

# AFP sows terror and disinformation in Negros

After the massacre in Sagay, the 303rd IBde of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) now aims to sow terror by focusing its military operations in the communities of Escalante City where farmers are actively mobilizing and struggling for their right to land.

On November 16 at around 4 a.m., more than 100 soldiers and paramilitary elements occupied Sitio Puting Bato and Pangahuyan in Barangay Washington, and Cogon and Lawes in Barangay Alimango, Escalante City, Negros Occidental. Several households, particularly that of Elena Yap, a member of PAMALAKAYA and Gabriela-Negros, were surrounded by the troopers.

Checkpoints were mounted in Puting Bato and Tubigon, depriving residents of their freedom of movement. Church people and members of cause-oriented groups who were

supposed to deliver humanitarian aid were blocked in the said checkpoints and were barred from entering the community. Members of the media were also prohibited from entering and reporting about the ongoing military occupation.

The troopers sowed disinformation to justify their encampment in the villages. First, they absurdly claimed “sightings” of Abu Sayyaf rebels in Puting Bato. They also claimed that an encounter between the NPA and AFP took place in the same barangay, a fictitious incident which was promptly belied by the NPA-North Negros. The most pro-

voking story, made-up and peddled by the troopers, was that the suspects of the Sagay massacre are hiding in the village. The residents firmly confuted this lie. They testified that massacre survivors’ relatives are the ones who actually fled to the community for refuge.

In connection with this, harassment against the supporters of the massacre victims continues. On November 9, Clarizza Dagatan, secretary general of KARAPATAN-Negros, received death threats via text message saying that she will be the next to be killed. Roque Rillo of the National Federation of Sugar Workers, Noli Rosales of Kilusang Mayo Uno and Christian Tuayon of Bagong Alyansang Makabayan-Negros likewise received threat messages. AB

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## Fascist suppression and attacks intensify in Cebu

THE FASCISTS ATTACKS of the US-Duterte regime against progressive forces in Cebu are unrelenting. Cases involving a violent dispersal of a camp and the arrest of workers who constructed it, sexual harassment of a female paralegal, demolition of hundreds of houses, and Red-tagging of youth activists have been reported in just a span of four days.

**Dispersal in Coca-Cola.** Police officers and goons violently demolished the camp of Alsa Kontraktwal Cebu and Coalition of All Coca-Cola Workers (CACCW) in front of the Coca-Cola FEMSA plant in Mandaue City on November 16 at around 7 p.m.

After the dispersal, three workers were illegally arrested and detained in Subangdaku Police Station. The arrested were identified as Oscar Villarino, vice chairperson of Alsa Kontraktwal-Coca-Cola Chapter, Gerome Villarino and Vincent Juarez. They installed the camp to demand the reinstatement of 40 dismissed workers and oppose widespread contractualization in the company.

The next day, a police officer sexually harassed a female paralegal who was providing legal

assistance to the arrested workers. The police officer coerced her to leave but she resisted. Consequently, the officer harassed her saying, “You shut up! Otherwise, I’ll make you my mistress!”

**Demolition in Mandaue.** On November 14 in the morning, state agents demolished the houses of more than 550 families near the abandoned Cebu International Convention Center in Mandaue City to pave the way for the construction of a hotel-casino in the area. Police officers were deployed in the community to prevent the residents’ resistance. They also accused the residents as members of the NPA.

The residents whose houses were demolished have been temporarily settling in the area after their houses in Barangay Guizo and Mantuyong were razed by fire on

March 2016. Not every family was allowed to return to their respective barangays. On April 17, the local government conducted a raffle to identify those who could return. Up to the present, there is no clear relocation plan for the residents.

**“CPP’s minions.”** Last November 17, alleged military elements distributed flyers along Gorordo Avenue maliciously tagging progressive youth leaders as “CPP’s minions” and “deceivers of the youth. Printed on the flyers are photographs and names of six leaders of the local chapters of Anakbayan, Kabataan Partylist and Youth Act Now Against Tyranny; and of three student leaders from the University of the Philippines-Cebu and University of San Carlos.

Anakbayan Cebu condemned the harassment against the youth leaders. The state is conducting a “Red-tagging” campaign to justify its armed suppression of activists, human rights defenders and other civilians. AB

## **Maguindanao Massacre commemoration**

FAMILIES AND MEMBERS of the media commemorated the ninth year anniversary of the Maguindanao Massacre at Sitio Masalay, Ampatuan, Maguindanao last November 18.

The families held a mass in the site of the massacre in remembrance of the victims. The participants called for the conviction of the Ampatuan brothers, the prime suspects in the 2009 carnage wherein 58 people were killed, 32 of whom are media workers.

In a related news, the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines stood against PNP's blatant harassment of media workers. On November 9, they launched a campaign which they dubbed as "Sign against the Sign" to oppose the PNP's scheme compelling media workers to become witnesses in anti-drug operations.

They said that signing this scheme is tantamount to expressing support for the PNP's war on drugs. Journalists must only stand for the truth, they added. **AB**

## **Soldiers encamp in civilian structures in CamSur**

MILITARY OPERATIONS ARE relentlessly conducted by elements of the 902nd IBde, 9th IB, at 92nd Civil Military Company in barangays Villasocoro, Tanag, Calabnigan, Malinao and Odoc in Libmanan town, Camarines Sur. The troopers are spreading psywar to threaten the residents of the said barangays.

The troopers are currently occupying the schools, barangay halls and churches in the communities. Residents are subjected to surveillance, harassment and interrogation, while some, particularly those who are accused as members of the NPA, are coerced to surrender to purportedly "clear" their names. The residents believe that the soldiers were behind the bombing of a chapel in Barangay Tanag last October 21. **AB**

## **Attempted killing of a NAMASUFA striker**

TWO UNIDENTIFIED GUNMEN shot Jerry Alicante in front of his house in Purok 10, Osmeña, Compostela last November 11 at 8:20 p.m. The victim survived the slaying and sustained two bullet wounds on his right arm. Alicante, a plantation worker of Sumitomo Fruit Corp., is an active member of Nagkahiusang Mamumuo sa Suyapa Farms (NAMASUFA) which mounted a strike on October 21. Along with other workers, he is actively campaigning for the regularization of contractuels and the recognition of the right of their union to collective bargaining.

NAMASUFA condemned the intensifying attacks against their ranks in their protest last November 16 outside the Davao Convention Center where the National Banana Congress was concurrently being held.

## **AFP pursues closure of Lumad school in Talaingod**

THE 56TH IB and the ALAMARA paramilitary group continue to harass the community of the campus of Salugpongan Ta' Tanu Igkanugon Community Learning Center, Inc. (STTICLCI) in Sitio Nasilaban, Barangay Palma Gil, Talaingod. Carrying hammers, four elements of Alamara forcibly entered the school compound and threatened to destroy the campus last November 11. This compelled 35 students and three volunteer teachers to immediately evacuate to Sitio Dulyan. Simultaneously, 56th IB troopers coerced the tribal chieftains of Talaingod to sign a petition for the closure of the campus. On November 13, they assembled and forced the residents to participate in a "protest" against Salugpongan.

In a related news, a member of MISFI Academy Parents-Teachers-Community Association was killed by suspected 19th IB and CAFGU elements in Kitaotao, Bukidnon last November 17 in the evening. The victim was identified as Esteban Empong Sr., 49, resident of Barangay ` , Arakan, North Cotabato. The victim was shot dead while sleeping in his relatives' house in Barangay Sagundanon. Earlier, Empong received threats from 19th IB troopers who coerced him to surrender and accused him of being a member of the people's army. **AB**

## **283,000 march against rising fuel price in France**

NEARLY 283,000 FRENCH citizens participated in more than 2,000 coordinated protest-actions in France last November 17 against the anti-people reforms implemented by their president, Emmanuel Macron.

The protesters voiced their anger over the continuous fuel price increases brought by Macron's imposition of additional fuel taxes. Their call for Macron's resignation resonated across the country's major roads.

Police officers blocked the protesters' marches and violently drove them back using tear gas. More than 220 protesters were injured while 100 others arrested.

The action was dubbed as the "yellow vests movement," because the protesters wore yellow vests that all French drivers must keep in their vehicles in case of breakdowns.

The citizens blockaded the major roads of various cities, including Paris, the national capital of France, as sign of their protest.

The protesters said that the blockade symbolizes the isolation of the Marcon regime from the people and its disconnect to their day-to-day economic difficulties. **AB**

# The bias of corporate media

Last October, the Committee to Protect Journalists, an international organization, listed the Philippines as the third most violent country to journalists. The country has held this position since 2010. Majority of the victims were members of regional or provincial media outfits who were killed due to their exposés of corruption and other anomalies of those in power.

On one hand, this demonstrates the courage and standpoint of the local and independent media in carrying out their task of giving the public the correct information. On the other hand, it does not reflect the character of the dominant media in the Philippines which is controlled by big bourgeois compradors and their cohorts in politics.

In reality, the largest media institutions in the country are controlled by a few families and biggest government officials for a long time. Majority of these institutions were created and operated for big compradors to maintain control over their other businesses and for competition, raking in more profits and promotion of their own economic and political interests. This character and system is called the corporate media.

In the Philippines, the Lopez and Gozon families, as well as Manuel Pangilinan dominate the media. The Lopezes own ABS-CBN which has radio, television and film subsidiaries.

They also own electrical, real estate and telecommunications companies. The Lopezes also have shares in manufacturing, remittance and other media-related companies. Meanwhile, the Gozons and Jimenezes who control GMA7 (both radio and television) have shares in financial institutions and real estate corporations. Ramon Ang of San Miguel Corporation bought a stake in the industry in 2017 when he bought the Philippine Daily Inquirer, one of the country's major newspapers. Although his stake are relatively small compared to TV5/Interaksyon (television and online news), Pangilinan exercises substantial influence on other media and telecommunications groups. He bought shares in two of the most widely read newspapers in the country—the PDI and Philippine Star by partnering and using the funds of Anthoni Salim, an Indonesian businessman. The Pangilinan-Salim group also jointly control telecommunications groups (Smart, Sun and PLDT)

and public utility companies such as Meralco and Maynilad. The group also operates the Manila North Tollway and Cavitec, some of Luzon's primary highways.

Ownership of a media company is a major factor on the quality and credibility of its coverage. Ownership plays a deep and extensive role on the kind of content, type of stories, issues and news a company (television, radio and print) will highlight. News companies and their owners are careful not to impugn or compromise their own interests and that of their partners and advertisers. *(See related article below.)*

To avoid this, media companies often center their coverage on common crimes which they sensationalize to catch the public's attention. Under this system, journalists have their hands tied as they are required to follow the policy of protecting the interests of the companies' bourgeois-comprador owners and their political allies.

Contractualization and job insecurity is rampant among media workers. Most of them can be arbitrarily dismissed or their contracts discontinued when they insist on their views and stand for their rights. AB

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## Anti-worker capitalist media

CORPORATE MEDIA'S CAPITALIST interests are in full display in their treatment of their employees and coverage of recent struggle of Filipino workers. A striking example is the media's coverage of the consecutive protests by PLDT workers after its management fired 8,000 contractuales last June. The massive lay-off took place despite a Supreme Court order to regularize the said workers. This was the biggest lay-off this year.

Despite gaining mileage in social media, the workers and their supporters' protests did not make the news in Pangilinan-Salim-controlled TV5. Coverage was also thin in ABS-CBN and GMA7, companies where contractualization is also rampant.

Though some newspapers and online sites reported about the lay-off and the #SavePLDTContractuales campaign, discussions on systematic contractualization by big companies, including in the media, to shortchange the workers and deny them their rights, were either missing or insignificant. The media failed to put the PLDT workers' plight in the context of extensive labor contractualization and job insecurity. There was also no coverage on big companies' various maneuvers to skirt their legal obligations.

Other workers' struggles such as in Jollibee, Nutri-

Asia and Middleby also got little or no coverage.

In the case of the violent demolition of NutriAsia workers and supporters on July 31, ABS-CBN even used a video captured by an independent group to slander the workers. The network only started broadcasting the truth after alternative groups showed more videos proving that police attacked the striking workers and their supporters without provocation. The corporate media repeatedly snubbed the workers' and their supporters' accounts on the dispersal and their protest.

Still in the case of NutriAsia, TV networks and newspapers even peddled a fake news about a "rallyist" who was supposedly caught carrying a gun during the picket. In time, the said rallyist confessed that he was acting on orders of the police. AB