



EDITORIAL

Shake down the king of corruption and terrorism with people's protests

The ruling Duterte regime is being rocked by crisis. This is a result of the reeking stench of Duterte's corruption in exploiting the pandemic to pocket billions of pesos in government funds. This was exposed amid widespread joblessness, skyrocketing prices, low wages and destruction of people's livelihood aggravated by endless lockdowns. The pandemic remains out of control as hospitals are overwhelmed by large numbers of Covid-19 patients.

Duterte is being slapped left and right by Senate investigations of corruption in the Department of Health (DOH). He was denounced for lawyering for his officials and bullying senators. Even as these investigations have not been concluded yet, another investigation is set to be initiated by the International Criminal Court (ICC). He is now internationally notorious for being a sitting president directly being indicted for crimes against humanity for masterminding the murder of thousands in his bloody and bogus "war on drugs."

Amid the corruption, uncontrolled pandemic, depression of people's lives and resort of the ruling regime to more cruel terrorist attacks against the people, the continuing reign of the Duterte regime will bring nothing but more hardship and suffering.

The worsening health, political and economic crisis is rousing the people in numbers. Their outrage is fueled by their ceaseless suffering from oppression and crushing burdens. The Duterte clique's scheme to stay in power beyond 2022 is a nightmare to the people. More and

more people aspire to see Duterte out before the elections that he is set to rig, and end his reign as soon as possible.

There are increasing numbers of people ready to take the path of collective action and struggle. Pro-act actions are sprouting to manifest the grievances of various sectors and communities. The demonstration of several thousand in late July during Duterte's last state of the nation address (SONA) shows that people will not be cowed by fear or the pandemic.

During the past weeks, health-care workers fervently spoke out and mounted protest actions to denounce health officials for the delay in the release of their benefits and pay and additional salaries. Young people, parents and teachers also protested against the continuing "blended learning" system and to

demand the safe opening of schools for in-person classes. There were also protest actions against the proposed budget that favors increased spending for the military and infrastructure projects, against the need to prioritize the health system, education and economic support for millions who remain jobless.

There are workers protest actions to fight for wage increases, and oppose red-tagging and military harassment against their unions. There are also people's protests against environmentally destructive projects, mining, reclamation, construction of casinos and ecotourism, especially those owned by big Chinese capitalists who are close to Duterte. There are peasant actions to oppose construction of military camps in their villages, against liberalization of rice imports and to demand higher prices for palay and their other produce.

The people urgently need these protest actions to give shape to their indignation against corruption, oppression, suppression and

treachery of the US-Duterte regime. Despite being small and scattered, all these are pinpricks against the fascist regime. Above all, these protest actions mirror the objective interests and demands of the people. There should be unwavering effort to reach out to and rouse the people in their millions to bring them to the path of collective action and struggle.

Show the link between the different issues confronting various sectors and strengthen their unity. The root of people's problems must be exposed to strengthen their determination to work together to pull it out and get rid of it completely. They must firmly support each other and bring together all their grievances. The people's demand and actions for livelihood and welfare must be raised to the level of






political calls, keen that these will not be attained as long as the anti-people and oppressive Duterte tyranny remains in power.

As the 2022 elections near and Duterte's plans to remain in power become clearer, more political and social forces are coming out openly to stand against him, including some former allies. Some Catholic bishops have urged the people to mount rallies to manifest their opposition to the tyranny. In the face of this, the democratic united front must be further strengthened and expanded and encouraged to put an end to Duterte's reign the soonest.

There are numerous factors that create the possibility of rapid changes in the political situation, including possible Duterte miscalculations in his desperation to suppress the people and defend his rotten regime. Opportunities to push a surge in the protest movement must be taken advantage of in order to shake down and deal heavy blows against the Duterte tyranny.

National democratic forces must persevere in arousing, organizing and mobilizing the people. Tirelessly raise the people's militance and determination to fight. The Filipino people have twice proved that they can overthrow a ruling fascist regime. It is not impossible for them to use this power the third time.

AB

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Open schools for in-person learning

Parents, teachers and students greeted the opening of the school year with protests last September 13. Demanding #LigtasNaBalikEskwela (Safely Open Schools), the Alliance of Concerned Teachers condemned Rodrigo Duterte for displaying no sympathy in abandoning the education sector amid the pandemic.

ACT members marched to Mendiola in Manila calling for state support for teachers and students on distance learning and to safely open schools. The youth's future now lies in the collective resolve of teachers, parents and students to end the Duterte regime and push for better governance, the group said.

On the same day, youth groups also congregated in Mendiola to call for the safe and immediate opening of schools for in-person learning. Similar protests were held in Pres. Corazon C. Aquino Elem. School in Quezon City, in the University of the Philippines-Manila, Eusebio Highschool sa Pasig City and in Poblacion, Muntinlupa.

No change in the ineffective mode

The Department of Education (DepEd) has done nothing to change the failed and burdensome learning system that it implemented last year. To make up for the ineffective online and module-based mode of teaching, teachers resorted to different ways just get lessons across to children. Even so, they admit that the quality of education has gone down due to the myriad limitations and problems with regards to gadgets, internet access, modules and parental capacity. In addition, students who did not participate in classes or those who did not even show their faces were allowed to move to the next grade level in accordance to DepEd's dictates to justify the continuance of the blended learning

mode.

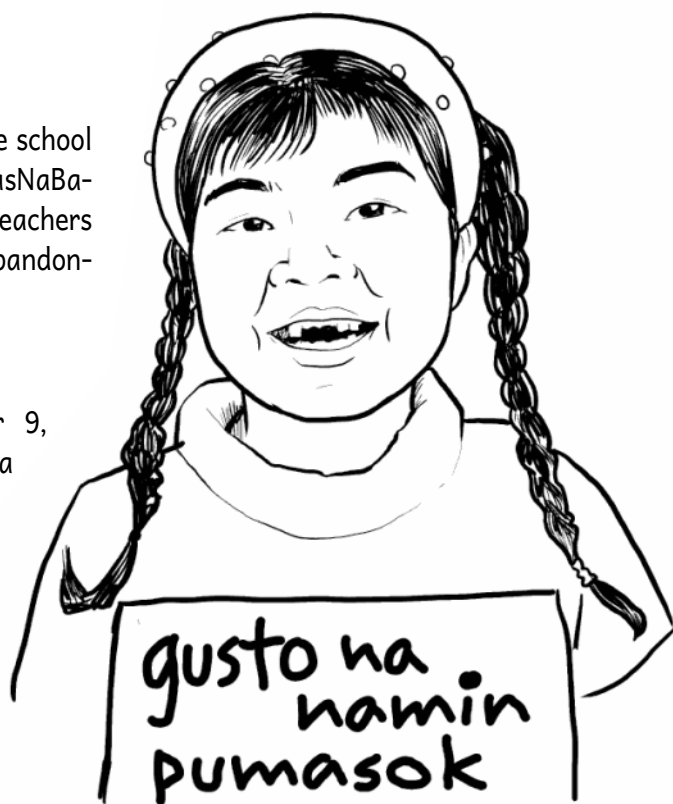
Last September 9, the ACT released a study on public schools' preparedness for the incoming school year. The study highlighted major problems such as shortages and delay in the release of modules, lack of gadgets and funds for internet access and excessive work for teachers.

The DepEd's support for the teachers is almost non-existent. Its much vaunted procurement of 68,500 laptop is lacking as about 1 million public school teachers need them. The teachers also has no use of the sim card the department distributed due to poor signal in their areas.

Teachers have had no proper rest since the end of the last academic year. They carried on working through July and August with enrolment and printing of modules. Many of them are forced to seek donations from private donors due to lack of funds. They were supposedly on a work-from-home arrangement but they are compelled to be physically present in schools several times a week. They have yet to receive compensation for a total of 87 days overtime pay.

No budget, no plan for in-person learning

For colleges, the state continued with online classes to avoid be-



ing criticized for abandoning education, said the National Union of Students of the Philippines (NUSP). Except for limited courses in 22 universities, in-person learning is prohibited despite various calls and studies supporting the safe opening of campuses since last year. The NUSP said the state needs to allocate funds to ensure the minimum health protocols are followed, for test kits and testing facilities inside campuses and for retrofitting classrooms to ensure social distancing. They asserted that the state distribute ₱10,000 as aid to support students with the increasing costs of schooling in the midst of the pandemic.

Deliberations for the 2022 national budget in Congress showed that funds for educational facilities were cut. According to the ACT, only ₱5.4 billion was allotted for the purpose in 2022, down by 51% compared to ₱11.1 billion allocation this year. From this, only ₱358 million was allocated for health facilities, a prerequisite for safe school openings. There was no clear budget for hiring school nurses. AB

NPA-Negros fires at detachment

THE NEW PEOPLE'S Army (NPA)-Central Negros (Leonardo Panaligan Command) fired at a CAFGU Active Auxillary (CAA) detachment in Barangay Guba, Vallehermoso, Negros Oriental on September 8. A soldier of the 62nd IB was killed. Residents complained that they were coerced by soliders to "surrender" and enlist in the CAFGU.

The NPA-South Central Negros paralyzed a backhoe at Sitio Bulod, Barangay Carabalan, Himamaylan City, Negros Occidental on September 11. The backhoe was owned by destructive company ESJ and Sons Construction Co. According to the NPA, its project will pave way for the entry of mining companies which will destory approximately 1,100 hectares of Itoman-Maghat-Bukidnon ancestral lands.

Release NDFP peace consultant!

THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC Front of the Philippines (NDFP) and the Communist Party of the Philippines demanded the immediate release of Loida Magpatoc, consultant of the NDFP for the peace negotiations with the government of the Philippines. She should not have been arrested and harassed as she is covered by the Joint Agreement on Safety ang Immunity Guarantees. The trumped-up charges against her must be junked immediately. She must also be immediately afforded legal representation and medical attention.

Magpatoc was illegally arrested in Barangay Paitan, Quezon, Bukidnon on September 15. She was slapped with trumped up charges of murder and destruction of property.

On September 16, the Quezon City Regional Trial Court ordered the immediate release of Esterlita Suaybaguio, another NDFP consultant, after junking the cases of illegal possession of firearms and explosives slapped against her. She was illegally arrested in Quezon City in 2019.

ICC pursues investigation on Duterte's crimes

THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL Court (ICC) will go through with the investigation on Rodrigo Duterte's crimes against humanity. The court's judges announced the decision on September 15. The investigation will cover cases of extrajudicial killings perpetrated from 2011 to 2019. The ICC judges said that the "so-called 'war on drugs' campaign cannot be seen as a legitimate law enforcement operation, and the killings neither as legitimate nor as mere excesses in an otherwise legitimate operation." They added that "widespread and systematic attack against the civilian population took place pursuant to or in furtherance of a state policy."

Meanwhile, Investigate PH, an international body composed by former parliamentarians across the world, released its third and final report on September 13. The report covers Duterte's violations of economic, social, and cultural rights, the right to development, self-determination and peace. The group called on the United Nations Human Rights Council to immediately conduct a separate and independent investigation in the Philippines.



Resistance against Cebu reclamation.

Shipyards workers in Consolacion, Cebu mounted a series of pickets from September 11 to 17 in Barangay Tayud to oppose the impending 234.8-hectare reclamation project in the area to pave way for the construction of the Seafront City. The eco-tourism project will close down five shipyards and destroy the source of livelihood of 200 fisherfolk. According to the Barangay Tayud Fisherfolk Organization, majority of them have been residing in the area for 20 years. The project will also displace 25% of 25,000 residents of the said barangay who mainly rely on the shipyard for their livelihood.

Resistance against magnetite mining in Lingayen.

On September 13, Pamalakaya-Central Luzon declared its opposition to the Iron Ore Pangasinan Offshore Magnetite Mining at the Lingayen Gulf in Pangasinan. The project affects the livelihood of 5,000 fisherfolk.

The mining project is being pushed by the Australian company Iron, Ore, Gold and Vanadium Resources Inc. It aims to extract 5 million tons of magnetite per year in the area for over 25 years. The offshore mining operation will cover the seas of the towns of Sual, Labrador, Lingayen and Bimalely, and Dagupan City.

Wyeth workers protest red-tagging.

Workers of Wyeth Philippines trooped to the office of the Department of Interior and Local Government in Quezon City last September 15 to demand an end to the red-tagging campaign by the NTF-ELCAC against their union. Recently, workers were coerced by the NTF-ELCAC to "surrender," and to disaffiliate the Wyeth Philippines Progressive Workers Union from the DFA-KMU.

Vendors condemn demolition in Carbon Market.

Vendors of the Carbon Market protested in front of the Cebu City Hall on September 14 to condemn the illegal demolition of their stalls at the Layo Seaside and Quezon Boulevard in the said market.

The unforgivable crimes of the Marcos dictatorship

Never again to martial law! This is the united battlecry of the people against attempts of the family of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos to revise history and return to Malacañang. The Marcos family is shamelessly clinging to power in connivance with the equally detestable Duterte family.

This clamor resounded further with the approach of the 49th anniversary of the imposition of martial law on September 21.

The latest of these attempts of historical revisionism was a YouTube interview with former senator and vice-presidential loser Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos, Jr. about the so called "greatest lesson" he learned from his father. The interview drew flak as it attempted to portray the former dictator as a good man.

Martial law survivors condemned the interview which was guised as "neutral." The Martial Law Museum of the Ateneo de Manila University also criticized the lies of the younger Marcos.

Currently, the Marcoses hold several high positions in the bureaucracy. One is currently a senator while another is a governor. Bongbong Marcos has more than welcomed the chance to run as Sara Duterte's vice-president. as vice president of Sara Duterte. His son is also set to run as congressman.

Martial law is remembered as a dark chapter in Philippine history marked by suppression of civil rights, extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, media repression, economic downfall and many others. The period touted as "golden years" by the Marcoses and dictator-wannabes

like Duterte, is actually an "era of impunity."

Data by the Amnesty International indicate that approximately 70,000 individuals suffered in military stockades, while 34,000 were tortured and 3,200 killed by state forces from 1972 to 1981 alone. Many others cases of violations perpetrated by state forces were unreported. The Marcos dictatorship was toppled in a popular uprising in 1986.

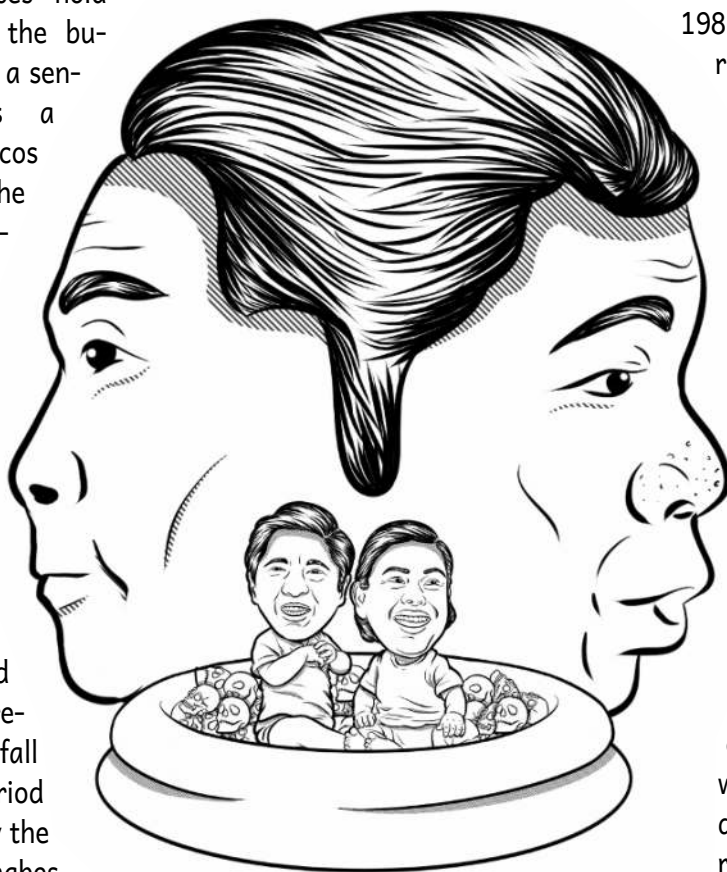
The Samahan ng mga Ex-Detainees Laban sa Detensyon at Aresto condemned with utmost rage and condemnation the Marcoses' attempts of historical revisionism. "For us who were among those who challenged his fascist reign, Marcos'

birth date reminds us of the countless human rights violations and massive plunder that his regime had committed," said Danilo dela Fuente, vice chairperson and spokesperson of the group.

He added that "the nation's coffers were also emptied and the national debt ballooned due to his family's lavish lifestyle and his cronies' corruption. His evil shadow still haunts us to this day." Government debt is expected to reach ₱13 trillion (equivalent to a debt per capita of ₱100,000) by the end of Duterte's term in 2022.

According to Ibon Foundation, the "golden years" of the Philippines under martial law is a myth. The Philippines was among the weakest economies in Southeast Asia from 1965 to 1986. It is untrue that the Philippines was the most developed economy in the region next to Japan in 1965, but was in fact the fifth to last among other countries. In 1986, the Philippine economy ranked 11th in Asia. According to Ibon Foundation, Marcos devastated the local economy after implementing the policies of neoliberal globalization in the 1980s.

Bonifacio Ilagan, dramatist, former political detainee and one of the convenors of the Campaign Against the Return of the Marcoses and Martial Law said: "The bottom line is that Duterte and Marcos's legacy are these: crimes against the Filipino people and humanity and world class plunder and thievery. If we will not stop it, Duterte will definitely surpass Marcos's record."



State agents kill lawyer in South Cotabato

A human rights lawyer and a Red fighter rendered hors de combat were killed by armed state agents in the past weeks.

Two gunmen gunned down Atty. Juan Macababba, vice chairperson of the Union of Peoples' Lawyers in Mindanao and member of the National Union of Peoples' Lawyers, in front of his house in Surallah, South Cotabato on September 15.

Atty. Macababba represented Lumads, teachers, political detainees and members of other marginalized sectors in the region. He was also a member of the Bayan Muna partylist.

In Camarines Sur, policemen

and soldiers tortured and summarily executed on September 12 Dioscorro L. Roma (Ka JR), an hors de combat Red fighter of the New People's Army (NPA). Ka Roma was captured outside an NPA camp in Tible, Lupi while fetching supplies.

According to his family, the lifeless body of Roma was unrecognizable due to the intense torture he suffered. His face, fingers and testicles were broken, and his entire body was covered in bruises.

Meanwhile, elements of the

Philippine National Police-Labo arrested two officials of Barangay Dumagmang, Labo, Camarines Norte on August 30. Barangay watchwomen Angelita F. Talla and Julieta Clores Dela Cruz, 65, were maliciously accused of involvement in an NPA armed action in the said barangay last March. They were slapped with charges of direct assault and frustrated murder.

Elements of the 62nd IB also arrested farmer Toto Moreno, resident of Sitio Uyangan, Barangay Budlasan, Canlaon City, Negros Oriental, on September 14 and accused him of being an NPA member **AB**

Moro fighters are displeased with BARMM

Fighters of the Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Forces (BIAF), the armed wing of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), are displeased with false promises of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM). Many of them remain jobless despite having surrendered their weapons in compliance with the decommissioning provision stated in the final agreement between the MILF and Government of the Philippines.

Their displeasure further escalated after the postponement of the Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA) election from 2022 to 2025. This will extend the term of incumbent officials who, according to the fighters, are exclusively benefiting from the establishment of BARMM. They said that BARMM did not benefit real fighters who struggled for the Moro's right to self-determination over the past decades.

As of September, around 12,000 of 40,000 BIAF forces have already handed over their weapons in exchange for jobs which they are yet to receive. Approximately 14,000 more fighters are set to surrender their firearms.

Even non-Moros are displeased with the administration of the BTA. According to Loyukan, a Lumad organization in Far South Mindanao, the BTA has not implemented any action to resolve the series of killings of Lumad Tedurays and Lambiangan over the past years. From July 2018 to July 2019, the group documented the killing of 11 Lumad leaders in Maguindanao. This year, 12 more Lumads were killed due to land conflicts. BARMM has jurisdiction over 127,000 non-Moro residents residing in 208,258 hectares of ancestral lands in Far South Mindanao.

All BTA officials were appointed by Rodrigo Duterte and pays favors to him. **AB**

Makabayan bloc files bill against union repression

THE MAKABAYAN BLOC filed the Union Independence Act of 2021 in Congress on September 19 to prohibit any person from harassing, threatening or coercing workers and unions. This was filed amid reports of successive red-tagging incidents against unions in export processing zones, and incidents involving workers being coerced to renounce their affiliations to the Kilusang Mayo Uno.

The red-tagging campaign and unabated harassment against workers and unionists are perpetrated by the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict and the Joint Industrial Peace and Concerns Office or JIPCO which were established in labor enclaves.

On top of this, the Philippine National Police is also attempting to attack workers under the proposed establishment of the Alliance for Industrial Peace and Program Office (AIPPO) which will give police the authority to intervene in labor disputes.

Labor groups assert that JIPCO and AIPPO will only result in widespread and systematic attacks on workers' rights to unionize. This will further worsen the exploitation and plight suffered by workers in export processing zones.

—IN—SHORT

The Philippines is the

3rd

worst country in the world for land and environmental defenders,

with 29 killed this year. A total of 227 land and environmental defenders were killed across the world in 2020. The highest number of killings were recorded in Columbia (65), followed by Mexico (30).

Source: *The Last Line of Defense*, Global Witness

8.692 MILLION

Filipinos were underemployed in July,



higher by 2 million compared in June. Despite recording a lower unemployment rate, the **number of employed actually decreased** during the said period (41.667 million in July from 45.075 million in June) after more than 2 million were dropped from the labor force.

Source: *Philippine Statistics Authority*



₱10/kilo

farmgate price of palay in Occidental Mindoro

imposed by big traders who benefit primarily from rice importation. This is a far cry from the ₱35-44 retail price of rice in local markets.

Source: *Amihan Federation of Peasant Women*



500%

increase in the number of extrajudicial killings of lawyers under the Duterte regime.

Not less than 65 lawyers were killed in the Philippines since 2016. From 1972, the average number of lawyers killed was 10 for each administration.

Source: *Integrated Bar of the Philippines*

30%

increase in net worth was recorded by the biggest 50 capitalists in the Philippines

amid the pandemic. Their accumulated **wealth grew by a P4-trillion** over the past year. The biggest increase was recorded by Betty Ang, the 18th richest Filipino, and owner of food and beverage manufacturing company Monde Nissin.

Source: *Forbes 2021 Philippines' 50 Richest List*

The Duterte regime spent

37%

more for debt servicing in 2021 compared in 2020. Government debt has already reached a record-high of ₱11.61 trillion, which is 26.7% higher than the ₱9.16 trillion debt recorded by the end of 2020.



\$4.4 trillion

was spent by Pentagon

for the procurement and research and development of weapons since the 9/11 Attacks in the US in 2001. Approximately **\$2.2 trillion** of these funds went to the top five US weapons makers—**Lockheed Martin, Boeing, General Dynamics, Raytheon, at Northrop Grumman.**

Neglect in corn production

Corn is the second most important staple agricultural commodity produced and consumed in the country next to rice. This is not only consumed by the people, but also serves as an important raw material in the production of animal feeds and other food products. Despite this, the reactionary state is systematically neglecting corn production. Over the past years, the local production of corn has been decreasing while the country is becoming increasingly dependent on imports. Farmers face bankruptcy due to underpricing. Instead of supporting corn production, the government is pushing for all-out liberalization of importation.

Under the Duterte regime, corn farmgate prices remained low, while retail prices in local markets soared annually. From 2016 to 2020, the retail price of white corn increased by 32% from ₱22.77 to ₱30.15. On the other hand, farmgate prices dropped by ₱0.27 from ₱12.30 to ₱12.03. Yellow corn prices also increased by 13% from ₱20.36 to ₱22.97, while the average farmgate price increased by a mere 2% from ₱11.78 to ₱12.

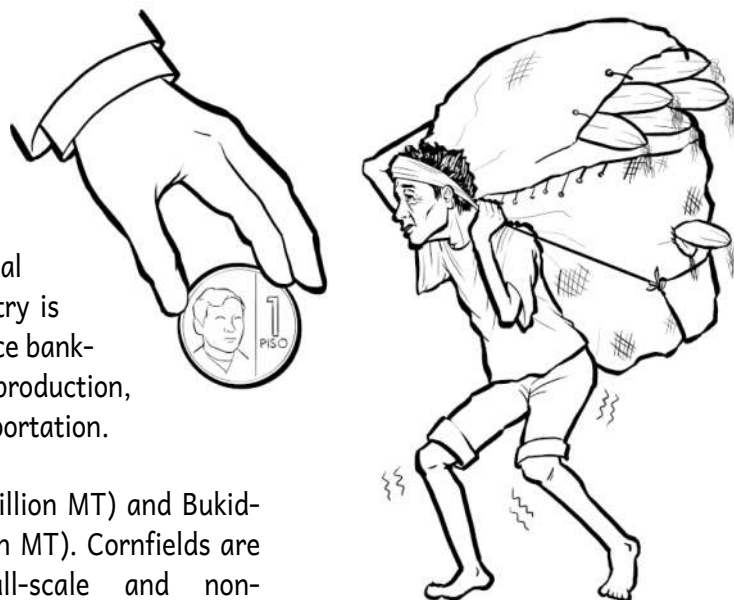
White corn is usually milled and consumed as substitute for rice, or processed as cornstarch, corn chips and binatog (a corn snack). Yellow corn, on the other hand, is a vital material in feeds for hogs, chicken and fish, and is also used to manufacture corn chips. On average, every Filipino consumes 15 kilos of white corn per year. The consumption per capita is higher in the regions of Zamboanga Peninsula (159 kilo), Northern Mindanao (45 kilo), Davao (41 kilo), and Central Visayas (37 kilo) where corn is more commonly consumed instead of rice.

Around 500,000 farmers depend primarily on corn production. In 2020, a total of more than 8.1 million metric tons (MT) of corn was produced by the country. Of this volume, around 60% were processed as feeds. Nearly 2.5 million hectares of farmlands are planted with corn across the country. The biggest of these are located in the provinces of

Isabela (1.1 million MT) and Bukidnon (0.8 million MT). Cornfields are typically small-scale and non-contiguous with an average area of only 1.3 hectares.

Although non-contiguous, yellow corn production is dominated and controlled by only four big local companies which manufacture animal feeds: B-MEG of San Miguel Foods Incorporated owned by capitalist Ramon Ang, Univet Nutrition and Animal Healthcare Company of the Campos family, Pilmico Foods Corporation of the Aboitiz family, and Universal Robina Corporation of the Gokongwei family. These companies usually have processing plants in areas with a huge concentration of cornfields. These include the provinces of Isabela, Bukidnon and South Cotabato where 45% of the total volume of local yellow corn is produced. These companies control farmgate prices and impose requisites in buying corn including *resiko* (moisture content). The Biggest of these companies is B-MEG which controls 25% of the animal feed market in the country.

Under Duterte, the volume of corn imports slightly increased, primarily those from the ASEAN and US. From 2016, the share of imports in the total supply of corn in the local market increased by 10% to 12% in 2018. The largest volumes were imported from Indonesia (25%), Thailand (23%) and the US (21%).



On average, the country imports around 580,000 MT of yellow corn per year.

Foreign control of the local corn industry is set to tighten with the attempt of the American Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines and European Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines to push for the enactment of the Rice and Corn Industry Liberalization Act. This is being pushed in Senate by its Committee on Agriculture and Food chairperson Sen. Cynthia Villar. The bill seeks to allow foreign companies 100% foreign ownership of corn processing companies in the Philippines. Villar also authored the Rice Liberalization Law which resulted in the influx of imported rice in the local market and bankrupted local rice farmers.

Corn farmers are facing threats of bankruptcy with the continuing spread of the African Swine Fever. A report by the Global Agricultural Information Network indicated that the total production of corn in the country will drop by 2.4% to 8 million MT this year due to the spread of the virus, primarily in Luzon, which continues to result in lower consumption and demand for hog feeds

AB

Backbreaking corn production

Roger is 32-years old and one of nine siblings who own corn farms in the island of Negros. Seven of them live under one roof and work together in their cornfields. They own a total of 12 hectares of farmlands, a fourth of which is dedicated to the production of white corn for family consumption. The larger part of their farmlands is dedicated to the production of other crops which they sell to raise income and sustain other basic needs. Their farmlands are located in different parts of an isolated community which can only be reached by horse.

Corn production is backbreaking, from land preparation to corn milling. Roger and his siblings work six days a week in their cornfields. They spend around two and a half weeks in clearing their fields, a day or two in plowing, a day in planting, and a week in waiting. This is equivalent to around 30 days of back-breaking labor every cropping cycle. They regularly start work at 7 a.m. and end at 4 p.m.

They are able to harvest thrice a year. Typically, they are able to plant two to three *gatangs* (1 *gatang* or equivalent to approximately 2.25 kilos) of corn per cropping season in two separate parcels of land. The ears of corn which they

plant are locally sourced and do not require fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides. Their only means of production are their carabao and plough.

On average, they are able to produce 34 sacks of corn every year. They manually use these stones and are able to produce approximately 17 sacks of corn grits. This is only enough for their consumption. They do not bother to have their produce milled in the town center as this will require them to travel for one day, and spend ₱500 for transportation.

Rogers' family consumes around three sacks and 15 *gatangs* (33.75 kilo) of corn grits each month. On top of this, they have to raise



₱2,400 monthly for other basic needs by selling cash crops. They can barely make ends meet and survive only on dried fish, especially amid the pandemic when the farm-gate price has dropped while the prices of basic commodities continue to increase. They were not able to receive any form of aid during the period. They said that they are further burdened by largescale military operations in their community because soldiers prohibit residents from working in their farms. **AB**

Communist Party of India-Maoist celebrates anniversary

THE COMMUNIST PARTY of India (CPI)-Maoist celebrates its 17th anniversary today, September 21. The anniversary is commemorated in a week-long celebration participated in by the revolutionary people of India, fighters of the People's Liberation Guerrilla Army, and the toiling masses.

The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) saluted Indian comrades in facing the challenges and obstacles to advance the people's war in India. Like in the Philippines, people in India suffer oppression and exploitation under a semicolonial and semifeudal societal system. The CPI-Maoist leadership and support to the mass struggles provide of the Indian people, especially to farmers' struggle with the implementation of neoliberal agricultural policies amid the pandemic, is laudable.

The Party supports the call of the CPI-Maoist to strengthen and broaden the massive protests of farmers and foil the attempt of the ruling Hindutwa group under the BJP party to stay in power in the upcoming national election in India.

Tribute to Abimael Guzman, communist leader of Peru

THE COMMUNIST PARTY of the Philippines expressed its condolences to workers, peasants and all oppressed classes and sectors in Peru over the demise of revolutionary leader Manuel Rubén Abimael Guzmán Reynoso. He was known as as Presidente Gonzalo, founder and leader of the Communist Party of Peru and Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path), one of the brightest stars of armed struggle in the world in the 1980s and 1990s.

The Party condemned the Peruvian government for having subjected Comrade Gonzalo to prolonged persecution through physical and mental torture. He and his comrades were forced made to undergo repeated illegal trials. Comrade Gonzalo died at the age of 86 in prison where he was detained for 29 years.

Killing by drone and aerial bombing

The US military left a bloody crime in Afghanistan before the last American soldier left the country after its 20-year of war of occupation. On August 29, a US armed drone fired a 20-pound Hellfire missile into a residential compound in the capital city of Kabul, killing ten civilians, including seven children.

In the face of overwhelming evidence, the US Central Command was forced to admit last September 17 that the bombing was a "tragic mistake." This came after weeks of asserting that they successfully killed a terrorist supposedly belonging to the ISIS-K. They claimed that the person killed was involved in the suicide bombing in Kabul last August 26 which killed scores of people including 13 American soldiers.

Before admitting their mistake, US military officials asserted they were "98% sure" that their strike was successful and that they have nothing to prove or explain. Using a drone, they claimed to have monitored the movements of the suspected terrorist the entire day and saw him visit "known hideouts." The US military insisted they prevented another terrorist attack because their target was then carrying heavy things in the trunk of his car which they assumed were explosives.

The truth is that the man killed by the US drone strike was Zemari Ahmadi, an employee of the Nutrition and Education International, an American charity organization. Ahmadi just arrived from all-day driving his officemates to and from their office. When the US missile exploded, he was then unloading large water containers for his family. His children were among those killed.

The US only admitted their mistake when investigation by Afghanistan reporters in partnership with the New York Times and the Washington Post, renowned US newspapers. They pointed out that Ahmadi was among Afghans who helped the US occupation and that he was planning to go to the US after the Taliban seized power last month.

Before this incident, the US has been forced to admit its mistake in killing civilians. This include the bombing of a marriage ceremony in 2002, the killing of more than 100 civilians in Farah province in 2006 and the bombing of a hospital in 2016 where 42 doctors perished.

According to the Bureau of Investigative Journalism, not less than 16,900 have been killed and 3,900 wounded in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Somalia and Yemen since the US started to use armed drones in 2001. It has no exact data of the casualties of US drone strikes in Iraq, Syria, Nigeria, Mali, Libya, Gaza and West Bank in Palestine, the Kurdistan region in Turkey and the Philippines.

Over the past 20 years, US military officials have ignored the clamor of thousands upon thousands of victims of their aerial



bombing using drones. The US one-sidedly boasts of the technology and advantage of using drones in the field of battle. They disregard and bury the truth in their propaganda that the use of drones violate laws of war and employed in their intervention in different parts of the world.

Drones are flying vehicles that carry powerful cameras, thermal sensors (which detect heat signatures) and other equipment for surveillance and spying. There are drones that carry missiles and bombs.

The US used an MQ-9 Reaper drone against Ahmadi. This is capable of flying for 42 hours carrying 450 kilograms of explosives. This is controlled from military camps in the US and can be flown in different parts of the world communicating via satellite links. There are "drone command centers" in the US in Las Vegas, Nevada and other military camps, as well as in 27 camps in different parts of the world, including four in Afghanistan and one in the Philippines.

(To be continued in the next issue.)

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