



EDITORIAL

Firmly resist the Duterte regime's fascism

Almost five decades ago, Ferdinand Marcos placed the entire country under martial law which launched his brutal dictatorial rule. For 14 years, the Filipino people resisted valiantly and fought on all arenas of struggle.

The Filipino people today are subjected to same fascist brutalities and cruelties under Duterte's de facto martial rule. Attacks against the people are far more brazen and are on a greater scale, particularly in terms of killings perpetrated by state forces.

The Duterte regime is a thinly disguised fascist state. Duterte exercises near absolute powers, employing the military and police as his armed agents to carry out his dictates. He uses anticommunism and anti-terrorism as his overarching ideology to justify his relentless attacks against civilians, his political opponents and all other democratic forces. The military is given absolute powers in the name of the

"whole-of-nation" approach to counterinsurgency.

Duterte is presiding over a pseudo-democratic government. His strongman tactics have rendered the legislative and judicial branches of government powerless. All democratic forces are being silenced, intimidated, neutralized and vanquished in a war of all-out suppression.

Duterte is a fascist demagogue. He plays on the broad masses' popular sentiments and grievances to misrepresent himself as one with them. He wants to attract the support of the people, exert influence on the masses, while at the same time impose policies which oppress

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NPA-Negros confiscates military equipment

THE NEW PEOPLE'S Army (NPA)-Negros mounted a series of successful tactical offensives in response to the intensifying suppression campaign of the regime in the region.

On August 8, the NPA-Central Negros ambushed 62nd IB troopers operating at Sitio Buyuron, Barangay Buenavista, Himamaylan City. PFC Joel Parnas was killed in action while several other officers and troopers were wounded. To cover save face, the butcher AFP refused to disclose the actual number of casualties it incurred.

Nine magazines, ammunition, backpacks and other military equipment were seized during the offensive.

Earlier, Red fighters harassed a detachment of the AFP

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and burden them. He has made atrocious distortions of history, promoting Marcos as a hero and glorifying authoritarianism in a self-serving effort to justify his tyranny and bid to establish a dictatorship. To rationalize his appointment of large numbers of former officials of the AFP, he acclaims the military officers as disciplined and trustworthy, obscuring its long history of rights abuses, involvement in criminal syndicates and corruption.

Duterte has openly abetted the military and police to carry out extrajudicial killings and rape. He openly encouraged state security forces to disregard human rights.

Duterte's fascism is the unbridled terrorist rule of the most reactionary elements of the ruling classes of big bourgeois compradors, landlords and bureaucrat capitalists in the country. Duterte represents the vilest and most bestial segment of the ruling reactionaries. He is from the same vein as the Marcoses and Arroyos and other

Philippine icons of corruption and oppression. He has risen to the top of the bureaucrat capitalist ladder and has resorted to fascism to eliminate all challengers and opponents.

Duterte's fascism is intolerant of the democratic forces of the oppressed masses which challenge the exploitative and oppressive system. It aims to destroy militant trade unions and workers organizations, patriotic student groups, peasant associations demanding land reform and various democratic organizations.

It aims to suppress mass resistance in a united democratic uprising. Fascist-type pro-Duterte groups are formed to attack various democratic organizations and create an illusion of mass support for his despicable regime.

The ruling Duterte clique's use of fascism indicates the inability of the ruling classes to perpetuate their rule in the old way that veiled barefaced state terrorism under the trappings of bourgeois-democratic processes. This is a result both of

the deep and virulent divisions within the ruling classes, and the rising challenge to the class rule by the organized resistance of the oppressed and exploited classes. However, fascism further weakens the ruling state because it intensifies the contradictions not only between the oppressed masses and the ruling state, but also that between the different rival factions of the ruling classes.

In 1972, Marcos declared martial law, abolished the ruling political system in one fell swoop and established his dictatorial rule. When his regime was overthrown, the bourgeois-democratic and trappings of the ruling system which he abolished were restored under the 1987 Constitution. These, however, are now fast being eroded by the fascist order being established by Duterte.

The Filipino people must firmly resist and seek to end Duterte's reign of fascist terror. They must fight for their democratic rights and clamor for justice. Struggle to prevent Duterte from perpetuating his rule, and demand that he be made accountable for all his crimes.

Mount an assiduous propaganda campaign among the masses against Duterte's fascist demagoguery and lies. Oppose Duterte's exercise of absolute powers, his treason and corruption. Expose the deception and corruption behind fake surrenders and persona non grata declarations.

Broaden and strengthen democratic organizations in urban centers and the countryside. Do not let them fall into passivity amid threats. Actively vitalize these as a weapon for defense and advancing the masses' interests. The people should be infused with courage to advance their struggles for livelihood, defend their rights, and persevere in the difficult struggle against Duterte's fascist tyranny.

All democratic forces continue to unite and further broaden the

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antifascist united front against the Duterte regime. The oppressed and exploited classes, the intellectuals and professionals, academics, church people, cultural and media workers, women, the youth and the anti-Duterte political opposition are brought together. Maximize the rift between the ruling classes. Be perceptive of upheavals to rouse and mobilize the masses. Exert further effort to unite hundreds of thousands and millions of people in various forms and fields of struggle to end the US-Duterte regime.

The Party and the NPA served as

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in Barangay Mahalang, Himamaylan on August 1. The military sustained two casualties. The NPA also attacked a de-

tachment at Sitio Kabangahan, Barangay Hilamunan, Kabankalan City on July 31. At least three enemy troopers were killed in action. AB

the strongest bulwark of anti-fascist resistance against the Marcos dictatorship, waged underground and armed struggle, inspired and militated the Filipino people to unite and struggle for democracy. Culminating long years of anti-fascist resistance, the Filipino people rose up in their millions in 1986 causing the overthrow of the US-Marcos dictatorship.

The Party and the NPA remain the most consolidated bastion of the Filipino people's anti-fascist resistance. All cadres and members of the CPP and Red fighters of the NPA must strengthen and steel themselves ideologically, politically and organizationally in order to be at the vanguard and core of the people's struggle against the fascist Duterte regime. AB

Escalating suppression against the urban poor in Manila

During the first meeting of the newly formed National Capital Region Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NCRTF-ELCAC) of the Duterte regime last September 10, regional police chief Maj. Gen. Guillermo Eleazar baselessly claimed that Metro Manila is a hotbed of the armed revolutionary movement, especially the cities of Caloocan, Malabon, Navotas and Valenzuela (CAMANAVA).

While there is no armed conflict in Metro Manila, he is making it appear that the vast urban poor communities in the CAMANAVA area are communist bases. He is asserting that the deployment of additional state forces is necessary to purportedly maintain "peace and order" in the area. It is clear, however, that he only aims to justify the regime's vicious counter-insurgency campaign which suppresses the democratic struggles of residents for decent housing and livelihood.

Instead of addressing the plight of the urban poor, the regime is using the NCRTF-ELCAC to sow fascist terror not only in the said areas but also in other parts of Metro Manila



to intimidate and silence them.

BAYAN Metro Manila pointed out that many residents and activists in the CAMANAVA area reported several cases of harassment and intimidation against them by the police and military since the NCRTF-ECLAC was formed. The Defend the Defenders Network (DDN) reported that Major Jeffrey Braganza is spearheading the attacks of state forces against KADAMAY members in Caloocan City.

In response, the DDN led the protest of CAMANAVA residents on September 18 at the Monumento Circle in Caloocan City to condemn the intensifying suppression of the

regime against them.

Urban poor situation in Metro Manila

Metro Manila is known as the world's densest region with an average population density of 19,988 individuals per square-kilometer (km²). Manila is considered the densest city with 41,515 individuals/km². Meanwhile, Caloocan, Malabon and Navotas are also among the densest with 27,915, 22,419 and 21,674 individuals/km², respectively. The largest urban poor communities in the country are concentrated in these areas.

Due to the high population

"Suppression..." continued on page 4

density and the lack of affordable and decent housing in these areas, many residents are compelled to live in slums along creeks, rivers, railways, alleys and even at dumpsites. Data by the reactionary government in 2014 indicate that about 32% of the population in NCR or around 4.64 million residents live in slums, most of which are without proper water and power supply. The said rate is expected to reach 36.7% (6.3 million residents) by 2020.

Majority of residents in these communities are semiproletariats or those without a regular source of income. Amid the continuous growth of the slum population, the government shows no intent to address their plight while livelihood opportunities remain scarce.

Housing crisis

Conservative estimates by the reactionary state indicate that the national housing backlog (housing demand) is expected to reach 6.8 million by 2022. In sum, ₱3.4-trillion is needed to address the housing gap.

Despite this, the regime is deliberately turning a blind eye to the housing problem and only proposed a ₱6.2-billion budget allocation to the Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development (DHSUD) for the next year. The agency is mandated to administer the housing programs of the regime. The proposed allocation does not meet even 1% of the aforementioned budgetary requirement.

Meanwhile, it only allocated ₱3.2 billion to the National Housing Authority and ₱1.3 billion to the Social Housing Finance Corporation which are mandated to support the DHSUD.

This miserable condition along with the adverse impact of the regime's anti-poor and fascist policies such as the TRAIN Law and Oplan Tokhang leave millions of urban poor residents, not only in Metro Manila but also across the country, with no other option but to fight for their rights. AB

Continuing attacks against the urban poor in Pandi

Members of a group called "Pagkakaisa Mamamayan Tungo sa Kaayusan" ransacked the office of the Kalipunan ng Damayang Mahihirap (Kadamay) in Barangay Mapulang Lupa, Pandi, Bulacan on September 9. After searching through the office, the group torched the properties of Kadamay and stole the belongings of its members including important documents.

The goons dubbed themselves "pro-Duterte" and "anti-Kadamay." The said group was formed by state agents and is used to incite former Kadamay members to attack the community. Imposing authority, its members distribute entry passes bearing the name of the National Housing Authority. Elements of the 48th IB and PNP-Malolos, Angat and Pandi, under the command of a certain Placido, escorted and guarded the goons as they perpetrated the attack. The troopers have been in the community since September 4 and are intimidating residents. Kadamay leaders, Pat Tupaz and Obet Lunzaga, were threatened to be killed.

According to Kadamay, these incidents are part of the regime's campaign to crush their organization and evict them from housing units they occupied in 2017. Since then, Kadamay has been subject to relentless vilification and attacks. The organization was tagged as a "communists front," and intimidated with gunshots. Last May, two of its members were illegally arrested.

Tactics employed by the

regime in Pandi are no different to its maneuvers in Negros, Bukidnon, Davao and other areas wherein paramilitaries dubbed "anti-communist groups" are being employed by the AFP at PNP. The regime makes it appear that these groups are not linked with the state, even if these were actually formed and funded by it.

Even their legitimate demands for water and power services are denied them by concerned agencies. Simultaneously, the regime employs paid social media trolls to maliciously attack Pandi residents, most of whom are workers and semiproletariats. Amid brazen attacks to their livelihood, Kadamay members initiate livelihood programs, only to be undermined by higher power and water rates.

Kadamay members occupied the idle housing units after the conduct of unsuccessful dialogues with the government to address their demands. Recently, even members of the group which perpetrated the ransacking also occupied idle housing units using the name of Kadamay. This only proves how intense the housing crisis of the urban poor sector is. AB

AFP gimmicks

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) desperately employed several gimmicks and concocted lies to make it appear that the revolutionary movement is already being decimated. They also used these to pocket funds from the regime's E-CLIP program. Part of this is the fake surrender of state agents as "members" of the New People's Army (NPA), and several fake encounters.

Fake surrender

The NPA-Negros vehemently condemned the 3rd ID for staging the fake surrender of 310 armed members of the Revolutionary Proletarian Army-Alex Bongcayao Brigade (RPA-ABB) last September 8. This gimmick is extremely absurd as those who purportedly surrendered their firearms were subsequently promised by Duterte to be issued weapons and a war tank after undergoing a 45-day training as elements of the Community Defense Unit. This a clear example of capitulation and collaboration.

The RPA-ABB is notorious for serving as a force multiplier of the AFP in implementing its counter-insurgency campaign in the Negros Island since the 1990s. These armed mercenaries are involved in various criminal and anti-social activities, and are coddled and

armed by despotic landlords and capitalists in grabbing farmlands of poor farmers. Among their most recent crimes is the massacre of nine farmers in Sagay in October 2018.

Also among those exposed were the arrest by PNP operatives of soldier Joselito Novelo Naag in Pasig City last September who was deceitfully presented as an official of the NPA-Bicol with a P100,000 bounty; and the fake surrender of Jasmen Acevedo along with other members of his bandit group to the 36th IB as members of the NPA in Surigao del Sur on September 4.

Fake encounter

"There has been no encounter between the NPA and 79th IB." This was the rebuttal of the NPA-Negros to the 303rd IBde's that several NPA members were pur-

portedly arrested during an encounter at Sitio Maitom, Old Poblacion, Escalante City, Negros Occidental on September 17.

This scheme desperately aims to sow fascist terror to sabotage the commemoration this month of the 34th anniversary of the Escalante Massacre, and force residents to participate in an anti-people "peace summit" which was scheduled on the same day. The 79th IB used the "encounter" to justify its operation and suppression campaign at Sitio Maitom, Barangay Old Poblacion which resulted in the forcible evacuation of 145 residents on September 17.

The NPA-Eastern Visayas also denied involvement in an encounter in Barangay Olera, Calbayog City, Samar last August 23 wherein 2Lt. Geroe Jade Nicor, Cpl. Joelito Canico and two other 43rd IB troopers were killed. It said that the troopers actually engaged with the armed goons of Calbayog City Mayor Ronald Aquino. It added that to NPA unit was operating in the area during the encounter. AB

PMA cadet dies from hazing

A REPORT LAST September 18 exposed that a Philippine Military Academy (PMA) cadet identified as Darwin Dormitorio, 20, from Cagayan de Oro, died after sustaining serious injuries from hazing. An autopsy indicated the cadet's internal organs were broken and that there is a possibility that he was electrocuted.

PMA officials will also be investigated after attempting to cover up the victim's real cause of death. The PMA initially reported that Dormitorio suffered from urinary tract infection that resulted in blood vomiting and stomach pain which caused his death eventually. Three cadets suspected of spearheading the hazing are still in the custody of the PMA.

Hazing is a PMA fascist tradition wherein new cadets are subjected to physical and mental torture to purportedly prepare them for the ordeals of actual warfare as future soldiers. This was based on the initiation ritual of the United States Military Academy West Point. AB

Continuing bloodshed in Bukidnon

Two killings of farmer-activists were successively recorded in the past few weeks.

Leonides Bacong, known leader of KASAMA-Bukidnon was gunned-down by unidentified assailants in front of his residence in Barangay Little Baguio, San Fernando, Bukidnon last September 11.

Angelito Marivao, also a member of the said organization, was gunned down by suspected elements of 88th IB in Barangay Mabuhay in the same town. Marivao is the 16th victim of political killings in Bukidnon this year.

KASAMA-Bukidnon is actively opposing the entry of big mining corporations into the Pantaron Range.

In Isabela, Sammy Pahayon, a community organizer, was also killed by unidentified assailants inside his residence in San Mariano, Isabela last September 11.

Illegal arrest and detention

Antonietta Setias-Dizon, former official of the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration and one of the longest serving organizer of the Confederation for Unity, Recognition and Advancement of Government Employees (COURAGE) was arrested last September 18 by the PNP San Pedro

inside her residence in San Pedro, Laguna. She was arrested based on planted evidences of firearms, explosives and subversive documents. She was accused of involvement in a murder case in Bayugan, Agusan del Sur. She is currently detained at San Pedro Police Station.

Earlier in 2015, Dizon was also subjected to harassment and was compelled to seek sanctuary and file a petition for a writ of amparo and habeas data, in fear of being abducted or assassinated.

In Quezon, Alexandra Pacalda,

a human rights activist and former member of the College Editors Guild of the Philippines, was arrested elements of the 85th IB last September 14 and was coerced to sign an affidavit indicating that she surrendered as a member of the New People's Army. She was detained for almost 30 hours in a military camp in Barangay San Miguel Dao, Lopez before she was transferred to police custody. She was planted with a .38 caliber pistol and ammunition, and the military made it appear that she voluntarily surrendered these items.

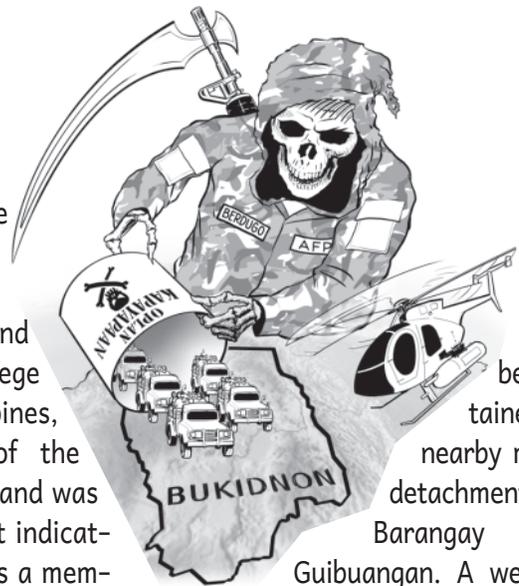
Pacalda strongly belied the statements of the police and military indicating that she voluntarily surrendered. She added that she was deprived of sleep, food, and access to a personal lawyer.

In Negros Occidental, nine members of Teatro Obrero and National Federation of Sugar Workers were illegally arrested by elements of the police and 79th IB at Sitio Barca, Barangay Jonob-Jonob, Escalante City last September 18. A .38 and a .9mm caliber pistol and several liquor bottles supposedly for making explosives were planted inside their jeepney. Their cell-phones were also confiscated.

Last September 11, Joel Casusa, chairman of Kauswagan ng Mangunguma was arrested by police forces at Sitio Pisok, Barangay Buenavista, Himamaylan City. He was accused as a member of the NPA and charged with a fabricated frustrated murder case.

Abduction

Elements of 20th IB abducted Argentina Madeja last September 13 in Barangay Burabod, Gamay, Northern Samar. She has not been found until today and is believed to



be detained in a nearby military detachment in Barangay Guibuguan. A week before the incident, Nario Lagrimas a farmer and resident of Barangay E. Duran, Bobon was also abducted.

Harassment

As part of the psywar campaign of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), an "awareness drive" was launched in various universities across the country during the past few weeks. Among the those they visited were the Bicol University, University of San Carlos in Cebu and Don Honorio Ventura State University in Pampanga. In their forum, military forces maliciously linked progressive student and youth organizations to the revolutionary movement.

Meanwhile, a police officer also threatened Noe Santillan, a professor of the University of the Philippines Cebu and vice-president of the All UP-Academic Employees Union, for simply wearing a Mao cap (a cap with a red star at the center).

Militarization and forced evacuation

Last September 20, 93 families evacuated from Barangay Roxas, Lope de Vega, Northern Samar due to attacks by troops of the 43rd IB against their community. The fascist elements ransacked the residents' houses, threatened and intimidated them.

Last 2018, the same community evacuated from their villages due to intense military operations. AB

Commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the Chinese Revolution

It is but proper for the Party and the revolutionary movement in the Philippines to remember and commemorate the forthcoming 70th founding anniversary of the People's Republic of China (PRC) on October 1.

The establishment of the democratic republic is a victory of the Chinese democratic revolution which is a source of inspiration and strategic lessons to the Philippine democratic revolution. The socialist construction in China in 1949-1977 is one of the greatest victory of the international proletariat. This paved the way for the second series of democratic and socialist revolutions across the world and marked the second general crisis of imperialism.

During its founding, one-third of the entire world, including the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR, currently Russia), has been under the the advanced and progressive socialist system.

Mao Zedong, then chairman of the Communist Party of China, declared the founding of the PRC at the Tiananmen Square in Beijing. This marked the beginning of the socialist revolution and construction which lasted for three decades. In the succeeding years, it completed the democratization of China. It established the people's democratic government, wherein all democratic sectors—workers, peasants, petitbourgeoisie and national bourgeoisie—were united and mobilized to forge a free society.

People's congresses and consultative conferences were established in China at all levels to pave the way for the emergence and flow of an active and genuine democracy. Through these, the toiling masses fully realized their freedom and enjoyed benefits under the new system, wherein their power superseded that of the oppressive and exploitative big compradors and landlords.

Under the Communist Party, land reform was completed in ten years only, liberating hundreds of millions of peasants from feudal and semifeudal exploitation. This enhanced land productivity and that of the the agricultural sector and paved the way for the development of basic industries. It gave rise to the establishment of heavy industries, based on the productivity of agriculture and the development of light industries.

This transformed agriculture through collectivization, mechanization of production and the establishment of factories for the production of food and other consumption goods. Production has drastically improved and sufficed for the Chinese people's basic needs including food, clothing, housing, and others. Millions reaped the benefits of the betterment of living conditions which further enhanced their general wellbeing.

The economy was gradually developed through a systematic and a general manner using five-year plans. Roads and bridges were constructed, through the labor of millions of workers, to transform China from being a feudal and backward country into becoming a modern and democratic society.

Amid this, Chairman Mao called on the Chinese proletariat to carry on with the revolutionary struggle against elements of the bourgeoisie within the Communist Party who were then relentlessly attempting to derail the progress of socialism in China and place it on the road of capitalist restoration. From 1966 to 1976, it mobilized the people, especially the Chinese youth, in a cultural revolution against these plots.

This practice produced the theory of the continuing revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat to consolidate socialism and prevent capitalist restoration. This is one of Mao's most significant contributions in developing the proletarian theory and practice.

For ten years, the Chinese proletariat was able to prevent the restoration of bourgeois domination. However, the proletarians were defeated when state power and the Communist Party leadership were seized by Deng Xiaoping and his clique in 1977. The democratic power of workers and peasants was dismantled, while officials, managers and capitalists were given authority to decide over production, trade and investment, employment, and other economic matters.

The victory of the Chinese people was gradually reversed with the implementation of "pro-market" reforms in 1978, only a few years after the death of Chairman Mao. Deng aligned the Chinese economy with the global capitalist system through the establishment of economic zones in four coastal towns, and eventually in adjacent towns. He used the low wages of Chinese workers to encourage the entry of foreign capital even into interior towns. This resulted in the dismantling of the communal production system, and massive conversion of agricultural lands into export-oriented industrial enclaves. Chinese capitalists utilized the roads, sea and airports, factories and the community of workers, established during the socialist construction, to serve their private accumulation of profit.

China followed the capitalist road, which Deng dubbed "socialism with Chinese characteristics, and

"Commemoration..." continued on page 8

Groups mount nationwide protest against dictatorship

THOUSANDS PROTESTED in various parts of the country last September 20 to commemorate the 47th year of martial law declaration of the dictator Ferdinand Marcos. Led by youth groups, protesters vehemently condemned the tyranny and the scheme of the Duterte regime to establish a dictatorship.

In Manila, thousands marched from Mendiola to Luneta Park where the main part of the program was held. Various sectors participated in the activity, carrying their calls against the attacks of the regime. The groups primarily condemned its red-tagging campaign against the students, journalists, peasants and others. They also opposed increasing presence in the campuses and communities.

About 400 farmers and activ-

ists led by BAYAN-Bicol joined the mobilization. The group condemned the implementation of Memorandum Order (MO) 32 and Executive Order 70 which institutionalized the regime's "whole of nation" approach which effectively put the entire country under de facto martial law. This resulted in unabated violation of human rights and worsened the economic crisis.

Raoul Manuel of Youth Act Now

against Tyranny asserted that the terror of dictatorship must not be restored.

Various organizations that are members of the United People's Coalition also participated in the protest. They slammed the crackdown against and the killing of church people, workers and human rights advocates simply because of their political stance and for criticizing Duterte's policies.

Meanwhile, similar protests were held in various urban centers across the country including Los Baños, Baguio, Angeles, Tarlac, Cebu, Iloilo and Davao City. AB

"Commemoration....," from page 7

beset the Chinese society and economy in the crises that are inherent in this system. Monopoly bureaucrat capitalists and their local and foreign counterparts dominated. Decades of unsurpassed capitalist expansion—due to the liberalization of capital, services and trade, massive land conversion, unmatched profiteering through low workers' wages, financial and real estate speculation—has ended.

The Chinese economy is now considered the second biggest in the world and is expected to surpass that of the US in coming years. However, it is currently beset in the crisis of overproduction, especially that of steel, cement, semiconductors and others. Since 2018, its local production slowed down after more than a decade of achieving high growth rates.

China is now a big imperialist power. It is the biggest exporter of surplus products and capital in the world. In 2007, it founded the China Investment Corporation (the biggest investment

company in the world) with a \$200-billion capital. It also founded the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China at South Africa) investment bank to facilitate its export of capital.

One of the biggest programs funded by China is the Belt and Road Initiative (or One Belt, One Road), an infrastructure project that will connect countries in Asia, Europe and Africa to China. Upon completion, it will change the conduct of trade and production in the said countries and place China at the center.

In the face of the global capitalist crisis, China is pushing for a new imperialist division of the world. It is challenging US domination and is aspiring to become one of, if not the sole, power in the new international order that it seeks to create. It is pushing for "reforms in global governance" which has been formerly and solely set and dictated by the US.

To be continued on the next issue... AB

Protest against suppression

A "ROGUE GALLERY" or a gallery of photographs of primary suspects involved in the violation of human rights were posted by rallying activists in front of the headquarters of the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) last September 12. The protest was held in conjunction with the conduct of a hearing regarding attacks perpetrated by the state against the people.

To justify their crimes, AFP and PNP officials attended the hearing and openly tagged progressive groups as legal fronts of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and New People's Army (NPA).

According to Roneo Clamor of Karapatan, the peddling of malicious propaganda by the AFP is part of the counter-insurgency campaign of the National Task Force to End Local Communist Insurgency. Its troopers continue to peddle disinformation, endangering the lives and livelihood of human rights defenders, activists, farmers, lawyers and many others.

Resolution for rice farmers

TO ARREST THE worsening rice crisis, 53 congressmen led by the Makabayan Bloc filed a resolution last September 19 to propose an additional ₱15-billion budget for the National Food Authority (NFA).

This will be used for the procurement of 750,000 metric-tons (MT) of palay (unhusked rice) from local farmers at a farmgate price of P20/kilo. They asserted that the initially proposed ₱7-billion allocation is extremely low as this can only procure 350,000 MT of palay.

To help ease the adverse impacts of the Rice Liberalization Law, they also proposed to peg the market price of NFA rice at ₱27/kilo.

Jeepney strike in Valenzuela

PISTON SPEARHEADED THE strike of 500 drivers in Valenzuela on September 16 to protest the implementation of the "no contact apprehension program" of the local government which raised the fine on traffic violations from a minimum of ₱500 for the first violation to ₱1,000-₱3,000.

The drivers asserted that the said amount is way beyond what drivers, operators and motorists can manage to pay. They also criticized the local government for implementing the ordinance without even conducting a public hearing. They demanded to revert the fines to at least P500. Instead of addressing their demands, Valenzuela Mayor Rex Gatchalian threatened to arrest the drivers as he alleged that the strike is a "violation" of their franchises.

In Bacolod City, drivers stopped their trips for two hours last September 11 to protest the implementation of the 45 to 60-day experimental rerouting of public utility jeepneys. They complained that their incomes were significantly cut due to this.

Meanwhile, PISTON, Stop and Go and the Alliance of Concerned Transport Organizations invited drivers to participate in a nationwide transport strike on September 30 to oppose the impending implementation of the jeepney phase-out program under the pretext of "jeepney modernization."

US uses attacks in Saudi Arabia as pretext to suppress Iran

THE SERIES OF attacks on large oil processing plants and facilities in Abqaiq and Khurais, Saudi Arabia on September 14 are being used by US imperialism as a pretext to intensifying its suppression of Iran.

The Houthi militia, an anti-imperialist movement of workers in Yemen, immediately claimed responsibility for the missile attacks on the oil plants. Despite this, however, US Secretary of State Michael Pompeo is desperately making it appear that Iran was behind the attack which it called an "act of war." The Houthis said that the sabotage operation was a response to the

continuing aggression and intervention of Saudi Arabia in Yemen.

In retaliation, US President Donald Trump threatened to deploy additional military troops and impose new and heavier sanctions against Iran to paralyze its economy, especially its oil industry. Iran strongly denied the accusations and criticized the threats which Iran Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad

Zarif called "illegal and inhumane" as these are directed at ordinary civilians.

Saudi Arabia, which has the world's largest oil reserves, is one of the closest ally of the US in the Middle East and its source of around 10 million barrels of oil per day. Damaged oil plants produce up to 5.7 million barrels per day or equivalent to 5% of the global supply. Due to the attacks, the price of oil in global market increased by 14% to an average of \$62.90 per barrel, which is the highest since 1988. **AB**