



EDITORIAL

The revolution is just and necessary

In its own court, the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) failed to prove its allegation of "terrorism" against the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and the New People's Army (NPA). In its September 21 decision, the Manila Regional Trial Court Branch 19 dismissed the Department of Justice's case and declared that the CPP and NPA are not terrorists and should be more accurately regarded as rebels with reasonable aims of any civilized society.

The Party and NPA represent and promote the interests and aspirations of workers and peasants, the most oppressed and exploited classes in the Philippines. Insisting on tagging the CPP and NPA as terrorists has no other aim but to obscure and oppose the people's national and democratic aims.

The terrorist taggers are fascists and warmongers. They defend the exploiters and oppressors, and corrupt ruling systems. They are agents and lackeys of imperialism that suppress patriotism and the desire to end neocolonial rule.

The Marcos regime is now the

despicable face of fascist terrorism in the country. It uses the brutal state terrorism to suppress the clamor for genuine land reform and national industrialization, and the demands for higher wages, lower prices, and free social services. It employs fascist terrorism to defend local and foreign capitalists who make profit from hospitals, schools, water, electricity, telecommunications and public infrastructure.

While people wallow in poverty, Marcos wastes state resources to purchase additional bombs, ammunition, guns and powerful weapons of repression. Amid widespread suf-

fering, Marcos and his family spent millions of pesos in a US and Singapore junket and luxury vacation. Marcos ignores opposition to import liberalization despite massive damage to agricultural production and local manufacturing.

Marcos and the pro-US zealots oppose calls to abrogate the Mutual Defense Treaty and all unequal military treaties with the US. Instead, the Marcos regime allowed the US to further strengthen its military presence in the Philippines in line with the US strategic plan to raise armed tensions with China.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) leads in terrorist tagging the CPP, NPA and other patriotic and democratic forces. They use this to make the people kneel before their power, to destroy their organizations and break their resistance. This is the "peace and order" desired by the ruling

classes.

They oppose holding peace talks with the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP). They oppose giving attention to the basic social problems behind the armed conflict in the country, and resolving these in favor of workers and peasants.

The Manila RTC's decision exposes the AFP's "war against terrorism" as a big sham. It reveals the fact that the AFP's counterinsurgency war is a war of suppression and pacification, a war to suppress the different forms of people's struggle against imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism.

The CPP and NPP unite with all patriotic and democratic forces in the Philippines. In recent decades, the armed struggle being waged by the NPA has been proven as one of the most important weapon of the Filipino people. It is just and necessary arena of struggle, and the highest form of resistance. The revolution is not terrorism and revolutionaries are not terrorists.

The armed struggle is now even more important in the face of relentless fascist repression: left and right massacres, killings, arrests, armed intimidation, bombing and shelling, military occupation of villages and other forms of state terrorism.

The NPA is a weapon of the broad masses, especially peasants, to defend their rights and lives against the abuse and brutality of fascist monsters of the AFP and the Philippine National Police (PNP). Wherever the NPA is, the masses are eager to provide support and join the armed struggle to defend themselves, their livelihood, the environment and natural resources.


In mounting armed struggle, the NPA upholds the highest standards for protecting the rights and welfare of civilians. It strictly enforces its rules and discipline, as well as guidelines of international humanitarian law. The NPA has grown and gained strength because of the people's support. The NPA and the people are firmly united and grows in strength together.

The Filipino people now face worsening conditions under the rotten semicolonial and semifeudal system. They suffer from anti-people and anti-poor policies of the Marcos II regime that aim to secure and grow the Marcos' wealth and perpetuate their political dynasty. Marcos Jr is the epitome of the ruling class' lack of empathy for the suffering of the toiling masses.

Amid crisis, workers and peasants, as well as the youth, students, teachers, academics, lawyers, writers, journalists, doctors, nurses and other professionals, should participate in the revolutionary struggle to defend their rights and fight for their aspirations. Expose and oppose all forms of fascist terrorism by Marcos's armed minions.

Poeple must get organized and participate in the national-democratic struggle and join the underground allied organizations of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines. Above all, the doors of the New People's Army is open to anyone 18-year-old and above, who has a sound mind and body. Join the NPA and support the armed struggle to achieve national and social liberation.






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Contents

Editorial: The revolution is just and necessary	1
Legitimate military actions of the NPA	3
Court, groups defend red-tagged judge	3
50th anniversary of martial law	4
Filipino criticize Marcoses' profligacy	4
CAFGU element punished	4
CNL holds 9th Congress	5
Cebu workers fight illegal retrenchment	5
Kasama-CPDF's second assembly	5
In short	6
Baby, 11 others fall victim to military abuses	7
Protests	7
Memories of martial law in ST	8
Save Sierra Madre	9
Economy falters as peso weakens	10

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 ang.bayan@cpp.ph

 [@cpp_angbayan1](https://twitter.com/cpp_angbayan1)

Spies and paramilitaries are legitimate military targets

In its failed case, the Department of Justice cited nine incidents to prove its allegation that the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and the New People's Army (NPA) are "terrorist organizations." The court dismissed the case and said that the incidents were insufficient to prove the allegation. To help further clarify and deepen the understanding of the raging war in the country, additional details on five of these incidents are presented below, even as information on the other four are consolidated.

Contrary to the DOJ's claim that they are "civilian victims," Bandi Astudillo and Zaldy Ibañez are legitimate military targets, as well as Jomar Bocales, Alberto de la Peña and Artemio Moldez, and Ryan Badiang. They are members of Bagani, Magahat and other paramilitary groups which are notorious for being anti-people and counter-revolutionary, while three are CAFGU members who are active in the AFP's combat, espionage and psy-war operations.

In the case of Bocales and his two CAFGU companions, they engaged in battle and were killed in an NPA ambush. In addition to being legitimate targets, five have individual war crimes. They are all involved in the killings, harassment and intimidation of civilians suspected as NPA supporters. They were also instrumental in forced

CAFGU recruitment and other violations of the rights of their fellow Lumad and villagers.

Bocales and his group are behind the heinous Lianga Massacre of September 1, 2015 where they killed Emerito Samarca, executive director of the community school of Alcadev, Datu Bello Sinzo and Dionel Campos, leaders of the MAPASO group. Magahat members, who rule Lumad communities under the auspices of the AFP, are involved in numerous other crimes.

They also are involved in such crimes as extortion, corruption of funds, land grabbing, eviction of farmers, and more. Bandis, for one, was charged for raping his own grandchild, and attempted rape of his niece.

In the DOJ's case, only Eli Apacible, a teacher, is a civilian. It was unfortunate that he was wear-

ing a military hat and was among a group of soldiers when an NPA team mounted a harassment operation against soldiers who were occupying a school at the time. The NPA operation unit acknowledged the error of failing to detect the presence of a non-soldier in the military group.

The "abduction of seven civilians," including a Ryan Badiang, lacks context. Badiang, a former member of the CAFGU was a legitimate military target being an active spy and asset of the AFP. Six other residents were with him at that time but were immediately released after verification. A 15-year-old CAFGU element named "Batik" was also released since he was a minor. There is no truth to the allegation that Badiang was beheaded. The CAFGU and AFP did not immediately retrieve his body, despite the fact that his family was immediately informed of its location. It took more than a week before they took the body, which was already in the advance state of decomposition.

All these actions are in line with the Declaration of Undertaking to apply the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and Protocol I of 1977 issued by the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) in 1996. In mounting attacks against armed adversaries, the NPA complies with this declaration to protect the civilian population and ensure the right of hors de combat. In the declaration above, the NDFP identified units, personnel and facilities of the AFP, Philippine National Police, paramilitary forces and their personnel in intelligence as legitimate targets of the NPA. (For more details, read the article "Additional Remarks on the court decision against the terrorist label vs CPP/NPA," October 1, 2022 on philippinerevolution.nu).

AB

Court, groups defend judge in case vs CPP and NPA

JUDGES AND LAWYERS strongly condemned threats against Manila Regional Trial Court Judge Marlo Magdoza-Malagar. More than 600 lawyers signed a statement calling for the protection of judges who are being attacked on social media, such as those from former NTF-ELCAC spokesperson Lorraine Badoy. The statement was submitted to the Supreme Court on September 30.

On October 4, the Supreme Court ordered Badoy to explain why she should not be held in contempt in relation to her threats against a judge. Malagar became a center of attack on Facebook and YouTube after dismissing the Department of Justice's case to declare the CPP and NPA as "terrorist organizations."

On September 24, HUKOM Inc, an association of trial judges in the country, condemned the threats against Malagar. Lawyers from the Ateneo de Manila University School of Law, Philippine Bar Association, Free Legal Assistance Group and Integrated Bar of the Philippines likewise conveyed their support for the judge.

50th year of martial law commemorated

Various groups here and abroad launched a series of gatherings, study activities, cultural performances, protests and other activities to mark the 50th anniversary of the declaration of martial law.

Thousands attended a cultural gathering at the University of the Philippines (UP)-Diliman in Quezon City on September 21. Speeches and presentations in the gathering highlighted the anti-dictatorship struggles of veteran activists and the continuing struggles of the youth and the people against fascist state repression. Prior to the gathering in UP, progressives staged a rally in Mendiola, Manila and other parts of the national capital.

Protests were also mounted in Baguio, Naga, Cebu, Iloilo, Bacolod, and Davao. Local chapters of the

Bagong Alyansang Makabayan led these mass actions. Many students also joined the day of commemoration by wearing black clothes.

Prior to September 21, teachers and members of the academe launched the "lakbay-aral" (study trip) initiative wherein they brought their students to historic spots in Metro Manila connected with the anti-dictatorship struggle. Some groups also showcased a play about the Escalante Massacre which happened under the Marcos I regime. Others mounted a widescale poster-ing and streamer hanging bearing

anti-martial law slogans. Many groups commemorated the anniversary through different creative ways.

Overseas, Filipino migrants in Hong Kong, Germany, US, Canada and Australia launched protests and activities.

Marcos Jr hounded with protests

In conjunction with the 50th anniversary of martial law, Filipino activists in the US hounded Ferdinand Marcos Jr with protests when he visited the country from September 18 to 23 to attend the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).

Upon arrival on September 18, Marcos was met with protests by Filipino migrants outside the New Jersey Performing Arts Center. On September 19, protesters also met Marcos in front of the New York Stock Exchange where he was set to meet with foreign leaders.

They also held a series of protest actions from September 20 to 23 in New York City on the opening of the UNGA and to commemorate the 50th anniversary of martial law. On September 23, they were at the headquarters of the Asia Society New York to protest Marcos' attendance in a dialogue. Three were arrested during the protest.

AB

Filipinos criticize Marcoses' profligacy

WHILE IN THE US, the Marcos family and their minions wildly spent the people's money. They stayed in a hotel at \$10,000--\$15,000 per night (or more than ₱3.5 million per room for a week.) His wife, Liza Araneta-Marcos, visited luxury shops and watched pricey shows. During his departure and arrival in the Philippines, their chartered airplane was escorted by FA-50 jetfighter planes.

The Marcos' profligate lifestyle did not end in the US. On October 1, Marcos, his son, and his cousin House Speaker Martin Romualdez flew to Singapore to watch a car racing event. They used the government's Gulfstream jet, previously purchased by the Duterte regime to serve as a "command center" of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, like a private jet. They made the trip amid the suffering of more than 157,000 Filipinos devastated by typhoon Karding.

NPA punishes CAFGU agent behind Guihulngan massacre

THE NEW PEOPLE'S Army (NPA)-Central Negros on September 24 punished a CAFGU trooper responsible for the killings of civilians in Guihulngan City. The NPA's partisan operation targeted Joselito Raboy, an operative during many combat operations of the 62nd IB and police units.

One of Raboy's biggest crime was his role in the massacre of the Jacolbes last July 26 in Guihulngan City, where then 5-month-old pregnant Cristina Jacolbe, her 16-year-old daughter Everly Kee and a family friend Rodan Montero were killed. Raboy was also with military troops who indiscriminately fired at and attempted to kill Boyer Cesar and Marjun Mahinay in July and August.

Armed, Raboy went house to house along with two other CAFGU members, threatening and terrorizing residents in a village.

"The punishment... serves as a warning to all those working with the military against the movement, especially those who capitulated and now serve as mercenaries of the fascist AFP, PNP and NTF-ELCAC, causing the destruction of livelihood and lives and resulting in blood debt to the people of Central Negros," said NPA-Central Negros spokesman JB Regalado. The NPA in the island is determined to search for ways to mete out punishment and attain justice for the victims of state fascism, he added.

CNL holds 9th Congress

The Christians for National Liberation (CNL), an underground revolutionary organization of Christian church workers affiliated with the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP), recently held its 9th National Congress.

The congress carried the theme “Consolidate and expand our ranks! Unite and overthrow the US-Marcos II tyranny by advancing the national democratic revolution with a socialist perspective! Onward with the people’s war!”

Intensifying political repression under the US-Marcos II regime fail to deter the gathering of Christian revolutionaries, the congress’ communiqué said. The delegates came from all island groups of Luzon,

Visayas and Mindanao, and for the first time, from overseas.

The congress affirmed the analysis of the worsening imperialist crisis and its effects on the Philippines as a neocolony. Based on this, it situated their political and organization situation to draw up its revolutionary tasks; and approved the CNL’s general plan for the next few years to contribute to the revolution on all fronts under the Communist Party of the Philippines

(CPP). The CNL assessed the condition of its branches and units since its 8th Congress in 2017; elected officers for the National Executive Committee, and drew up a four-year plan.

The CNL paid tribute to its martyrs and heroes who offered their lives in serving the people especially in the dark years of the Marcos I dictatorship. A special tribute was given by the CNL to its chair, Comrade Pua who succumbed to illness. The congress also read solidarity messages from the CPP and the Katipunan ng mga Makabayang Guro, both allied organizations to the NDFP.

AB

Cebu workers fight illegal retrenchment

Workers under the Liwayway Workers Union (LWU-Anglo-KMU) staged a protest action at the DOLE Central Visayas office last September 19 and 22 against the company’s widespread retrenchments. They staged the protest while their case against contractualization was being heard inside the agency. For months now, the factory where they worked has been closed due after the company transferred operations from Mandaue City to Liloan, both in Cebu.

Meanwhile, the Alyansa sa mga Mamumuo sa Sugbo-KMU condemned the firing of 4,485 workers in five clothing factories owned by a Taiwanese company in the Mactan Export Processing Zone. The layoffs were announced last September 29. According to the group, the real purpose of the retrenchments is to keep the wages low and to avoid im-

plementing wage orders. The group pointed out that the P425 daily wages Filipino workers receive are very low compared their Taiwanese counterparts who receive ₱1,631/day.

In addition, the group received reports that the companies were hiring new workers to immediately replace those it fired. “It is a huge

injustice to the workers who lost their jobs because of the intense crisis in the world, only to be replaced by others.”

The companies cited the imminent global recession with high inflation and poor financial conditions as the cause for closure. Like other manufacturing subsectors, textile manufacturing relies on foreign material and machinery. Production is oriented for the global market.

In addition to the Mactan retrenchments, Shopee Philippines also fired an undisclosed number of workers.

AB

Kasama-CPDF assembly reaffirms support for people’s war

THE KATIPUNAN NG mga Samahang Manggagawa-Cordillera Peoples’ Democratic Front (Kasama-CPDF) Wilfredo “Ka Hoben” Aloba Chapter reported in the last week of September that it successfully held the organization’s second assembly in a secret location in the Cordillera.

Officers and members of the Kasama-CPDF from various communities and semiproletarian sectors attended the gathering. The chapter summed up its experiences in the past three years. According to their report, it sustained a 60% average membership expansion rate. It also established 6 organizing groups in various communities and

sectors of the semiproletariat and regularly held the Council of Leaders’ meeting.

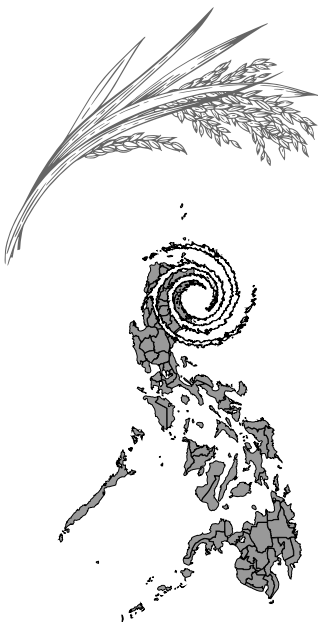
To support the New People’s Army, the chapter collected approximately ₱15,000.00 worth of financial, logistical and material support for the Red fighters.

The Assembly elected new members of the executive committee for the next three years. They also approved the organization’s general program for the next few years with the theme: “Lead and mobilize the broad masses of the semiproletariat to the path of the national democratic revolution! Expand and consolidate the Kasama-CPDF!”

₱3B

estimated loss in value of agricultural products, **mostly palay**, damaged when Typhoon Karding hit Cagayan, Southern Tagalog and Luzon last September 25.

Source: Department of Agriculture, October 3



79

killed in the continuing fake "war on drugs" the Marcos regime assumed power up to September 22

Source: @DahasPH

270

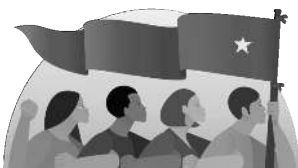
environment and land defenders have been killed and disappeared by state forces in the Philippines,

19

of them in 2021.

Source: Global Witness Report 2021

formally launched on September 28 in Phuket, Thailand against imperialism and all reaction. It consists of 14 international formations.



INTERNATIONAL PEOPLE'S FRONT

\$35.75B

Philippines' trade deficit due to skyrocketing fuel prices from January to July this year. This is 45% higher compared to the whole of 2021.



2,553 AMERICAN SOLDIERS
1,057 FILIPINO SOLDIERS

participated in the US **Kamandag** military drill conducted in Philippine territorial waters in the South China Sea. It is one of the **1,500 military exercises** which the US conducts in Asia every year.

HERNANDEZ DOCTRINE

based on a Supreme Court decision which states that political cases should not be filed as separate criminal cases, but should instead be consolidated as a single rebellion charge. Thus, anyone who resists the state and fights for social change **should not be treated as a criminal.**

Pierre Chrétien de Geyter

communist musician who composed the tune of **The Internationlé**, written by a member of the Paris commune, **Eugene Poittier**. De Geyter was born on October 8, 1948 in Belgium while Pottier was born on October 4, 1816 in France.



Baby, 11 others fall victim to military abuses

Three cases of physical assault and abuse by soldiers against peasants and indigenous peoples were recorded in the provinces of Oriental Mindoro, Negros Occidental and Surigao del Sur in recent weeks. All victims are being accused of having links or being members of the New People's Army.

In Surigao del Sur, 75th IB troops arrested and tortured seven civilians in Sitio Katabadan, Barangay San Roque, San Miguel on September 18.

The soldiers accosted Leboy, his wife Etshell, Erlyn, John Paul, Archie and Dennis, both minors, all members of the Montenegro family, in their farm. They were with Raffy Arcinal. They were beaten, despite having asked the military permission for permission to work that day. John Paul was wrapped in canvas and repeatedly kicked upon. Soldiers placed a plastic bag on Leboy's head and was made to crawl in front of his family.

In Negros Occidental, the 94th IB detained spouses Gamay and Orillo Carpentero for more than four hours with their and 1-year-old baby, and Dodong Carpentero in Sitio Negros 9, Barangay Oringaw, Kabankalan City on September 20. They were subjected to extreme psychological torture.

The Gamay and Dodong brothers were harvesting vegetables when they were taken in by more than 20 soldiers. Gamay's face was pushed on the ground when he tried to scream and ask for help. Orillo and her baby, who were looking for Gamay, were also arrested. They were all taken to a military camp in Barangay Camingawan. They were released around 9 o'clock in the evening.

In Oriental Mindoro, the 4th IB ransacked the home of native Mangyan-Hanunuo G. Kitot in Sitio Gaang, Barangay Panaytayan, Mansalay on September 22. He and his son were beaten by soldiers. The two were harvesting kaong

when the military attacked. Soldiers claim that two guns were seized from the house. The military also sexually harassed G. Kitot's wife. To this day, G. Kitot has yet to be surfaced.

Killings. Armed elements ambushed and shot veteran radio commenter Percival "Percy" Lapid at the BF Resort Village in Talon Dos, Las Piñas on October 3. He was a known critic of the Duterte and Marcos II regime. He was the second journalist killed under the new regime.

In condemnation, various groups led by the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines staged a protest action on the evening of October 4 at Boy Scout Circle, Quezon City.

In Agusan del Sur, soldiers of the 9th Special Forces Company killed civilians Lonie Hainamos Pison and Jessa Terol Empoy on September 30 at P-7, Barangay San Vicente, Prosperidad. The military claims that the two were killed in an encounter. They were former members of the people's army.

Indiscriminate firing. Nine civilians were fired upon by the 1st Special Forces Battalion (SFB) in Barangay Bagoaingud, Tagoloan II, Lanao del Sur on September 18. The said unit was part of a group of more than 100 soldiers operating in the area.

Harassment. Kara Taggaoa, organizer of the Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU), and Helari Valbuena, leader of the Pasiklab Operators and Drivers Association-Piston, were charged by the Quezon City police with trumped-up cases of robbery, according to a report by the KMU

last September. The case was filed against them for being the alleged leaders of a peaceful protest in July 2020.

AB

12th anniversary of San Roque's People's Barricade.

Residents and supporters of Sitio San Roque staged a protest in front of the National Housing Authority on September 25 to commemorate the 12th year of the People's Barricade that stopped the demolition of their community. Sitio San Roque is part of the land being grabbed by bourgeois compradors Ayala and Enrique Razon.

Oppose the SIM card registration bill.

Organizations opposed to the SIM card registration bill led by the Computer Professionals' Union, mounted a protest action in Mendiola, Manila on October 4. According to the group, SIM card registration violates the right to privacy and anonymity and will not prevent crimes contrary to government claims.

Raise teachers' salary!

Hundreds of teachers marched from Morayta to Mendiola, Manila on October 5, the World Teacher Day, to demand the Marcos government to raise their salaries, increase their benefits and improve the schools. They also called for an increase in the education sector budget. According to the Alliance of Concerned Teachers, the salary of uniformed personnel such as the military and police are higher compared to teachers.

Southern Tagalog remembers the dark years of martial law

Filom (not his real name) was not even 10 years old when he witnessed his grandfather being beaten up by elements of the Philippine Constabulary (PC) in their farm in Barangay Panaytayan, Mansalay, Oriental Mindoro. The reason? His grandfather was carrying a long bolo.

"Things were so strict that even carrying a bolo to town was banned," Filo, a Mangyan said, as he recalled the abuses of martial law in Southern Tagalog. "A Mangyan, however, cannot be separated from his bolo!"

In addition, Filom and his fellow Mangyans remember PC elements preventing him and others from going to their farms on suspicion that they might be meet up with members of the New People's Army (NPA).

In their village, members of the Mangyan-Hanunuo tribe, accused of having links to the NPA, were tortured and severely abused. Two of the victims were Aloy* and Nomes*, who were Amas or elders and leaders of their tribes. They recalled how PC elements not only harassed the Mangyan people, but also disrespected and trampled on their culture and beliefs. Military operations rampaged through the mountains and blasphemed their sacred places. PC elements dug up graves of indigenous people and scattered the bones of their ancestors in their hunt for "hidden guns of the NPA."

Around the same period, seven Philippine Army battalions, two PC battalions and a marine battalion landing team were deployed at the boundary of Southern Quezon and Bicol. Each battalion had air support and were supported by Philippine Army Light Armory in their search and destroy operations. Homer, a farmer, recounts how PC soldiers controlled the amount of food purchases. They are also required everyone to sign a logbook every time they tended to their

farms.

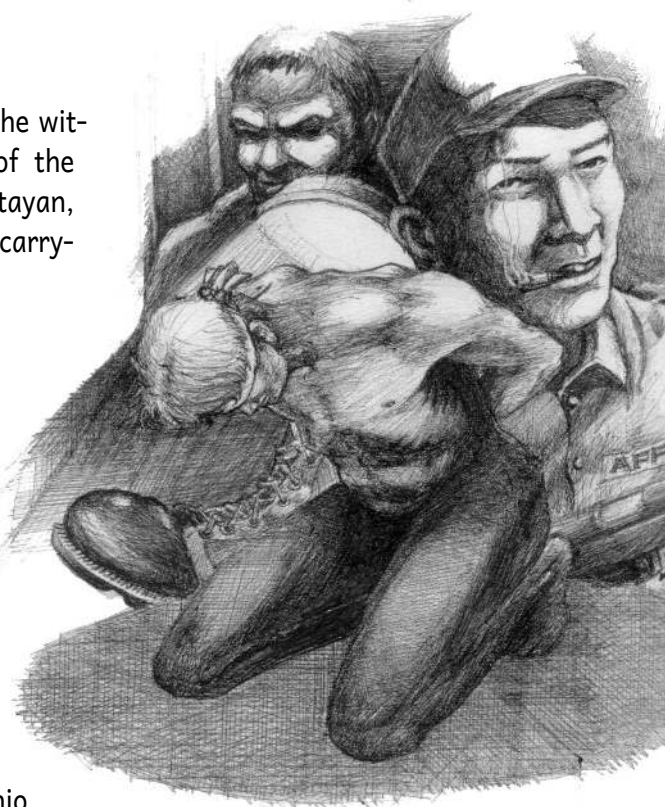
Areas with suspected NPA units were targets of brigade-sized military operations, supported with aerial strafing and bombings. In April 1974, 800-900 military troops occupied Barangay San Antonio, Kalayaan, Laguna and nearby areas for a month.

Insufficient indemnification

As a victim of martial law cruelty, Tatay (father) Andy received ₱75,000 as indemnification based on the Hawaii Court's decision against the Marcoses. But this did not ease his pain. In their community in Barangay Quipot, San Juan, Batangas, only four were indemnified although their entire village suffered the cruelty and barbarity of martial law.

In the 1980s, Tatay Andy was accused of having links with the NPA. He was abducted at his house and tortured by the fascists in a camp in Barangay Castillo, San Juan. He was made to lie down with a wet towel on his face as soapy water was poured over his head.

Residents from Barangay Quipot were made to report to the military camp. They were tortured under interrogation in which they were made to crawl on their knees around the camp while others were buried up to their necks. The PC also carried out dastardly acts to drive a wedge between neighbors and families and pitting fathers against their and sons. They would



force the son to punch his father strung up by rope. If the son refuses, they would beat him up.

Residents of Quipot were even more vexed when after the lifting of martial law, the bastards involved in the violence and tortures were promoted.

According to Filom, "it is infuriating that another Marcos now sits as the president of the country, especially since the dictator's family has not expressed regrets nor acknowledged the crimes of their family especially during martial law."

The entire nation's struggle to indict and hold the Marcos family and their factotums accountable for their crimes against the people continues. This is a great challenge as a Marcos not sits in Malacañang and amid systematic revisions and distortion of history to misrepresent the tragic phase of the nation's history as "golden years."

"The experience of how people suffered under martial law should be remembered, especially by the youth. Our experiences will serve as a reminder and challenge so that the dark years of martial law will never be repeated," Tatay Andy said."

AB

Stop the megadams in Sierra Madre

Calls to save Sierra Madre resounded a day after super typhoon Karding rampaged across the provinces of Cagayan, Central Luzon and Southern Tagalog on September 25. The day (September 26) coincided with the Save Sierra Madre Day which was first declared in 2012. The Sierra Madre mountain range plays a crucial role in protecting the people and plains of Luzon against strong storms and the disastrous floods, heavy winds and rains that come with it.

The Sierra Madre, the Philippines' the longest mountain range (680 kilometers), is called Luzon's backbone. It crosses 10 provinces in three regions. It is rich in forest resources. It is home to 808 animal species, half of which are endemic and many near extinct. The largest remaining old forest is said to be found here. It is considered one of the most biodiverse places in the country.

Despite nearly 10 years of marking Save Sierra Madre Day, destructive activities continue in these mountains. Despite its undisputed importance, the reactionary state continues to allow destructive infrastructures in its parts. This includes the construction of dams that face fierce opposition from those residing in these mountains.

Four dams

In the past few decades, attempts have been made to build various megadams in Sierra Madre. These are the Laiban, Kaliwa-Kanan and Ahunan dams. The largest, the Laiban Dam, was supposed to be built on the Kaliwa River in Barangay Laiban, Tanay, Rizal. It would have dislocated 11,000 families covering 28,000 hectares of watershed area and 2,239 hectares as reservoir area. The Laiban plan was replaced by the Kaliwa Dam that is set to be built on the Kaliwa River in Barangay Pagangangahan, General Nakar, Quezon. It will submerge 9,700 hectares of protected forests and ancestral land and will dislocate 1,465 families of the in-

digenous Dumagat-Remontado people. It is part of the grand design of nine dams in different parts of the adjoining rivers Kaliwa, Kanan and Agos. In total, the whole project is estimated to affect 11 barangays and 39 indigenous communities. According to indigenous groups, the government prioritized the construction of the Kaliwa Dam as it had the "weakest resistance" in 2015.

The latest project is the Ahunan hydropower dam being built by Prime Metro Power Holdings Corp. owned by bourgeois-capitalist Enrique Razon. It was first announced in September 2021 and construction has started in August. This dam will clear 300 hectares of forests in Pakil, Laguna and siphon water from Laguna de Bay. It will obliterate small rivers, streams and waterfalls, from where 20,000 residents around the area get their water. The dam will eject 12,000 residents from their lands.

Strong objections

The indigenous Dumagat-Remontado and environmental groups defeated the construction of the Laiban Dam in 2009. However, in 2019, the then Duterte regime treacherously replaced it with the Kaliwan dam project and awarded the contract to Chinese companies in exchange for millions of dollars



of loans from China.

The project fell under the New Centennial Water Source, said to be built to supply water to Metro Manila. In early 2022, the regime tried to manipulate the Dumagat-Remontado communities in a fake consultation.

An assessment report from the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System in 2019 proved that construction of the Kaliwa dam will cause major damage to the Sierra Madre mountains. It will destroy the ancestral lands of the Dumagat-Remontados, of which 12 areas are considered sacred. The project will affect the drinking water and irrigation in Infanta, which is reliant on the Agos River. During storms, water released from the dam will submerge villages and communities at the foot of the mountains.

Resistance to Ahunan dam is also widespread. Environmental groups deem its construction dangerous as it lies in three fault lines. The company has started drilling despite not having secured a permit. As with the struggle against the Kaliwa dam, the state responded to opposition with harassment and intimidation of residents.

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Economy falters as peso weakens

Over the past few weeks, the value of the Philippine peso against the dollar has been dropping to record lows almost everyday. Since the start of the year, the peso's value against the dollar has slid by more than 15 percent from ₱50.9 to ₱58.9 to the dollar. There are estimates that the peso will further tumble to between ₱65 and ₱70 to the dollar before the end of the year.

The peso's devaluation comes with the weakening of various currencies around the world due to the US government's push to raise the value of the dollar. The US aims to save its economy from stagflation. The US and other capitalist countries fear the risk of recession.

As in other backward countries, the devaluation of the peso relative to the US dollar has grave consequences on the local economy and livelihood of Filipinos. Combined with rising prices of petroleum products and other commodities, and increasing dependence on imported food supplies, the peso's devaluation is pushing up the costs of imports and, as a consequence, raising domestic prices. With the peso sliding further, Filipinos face the threat of sharp increases in the prices of food,

petroleum products, as well as other basic commodities in the coming months.

Increasing fuel prices has resulted in rapid rise of the country's trade deficit, where the 7-month (January-July) gap has reached \$35.75 billion, more than 45% higher than \$24.6 billion trade deficit for the entire 2021. This widening gap will aggravate the economic crisis, especially with the weakening of the peso. The country's balance of payment in the first half of the year rose to \$3.1 billion, 63.1% higher compared to the same period last year. The country's dollar reserves have steadily declined for six months to \$99 billion, the lowest in the last two years.

These drastic consequences of the peso devaluation on the Philippine economy and the socioeconomic

conditions of the Filipino people are a result of the country's dependence on imported commodities, especially capital goods, equipment, manufactures, consumer products, and increasingly on food supplies. As a result of the destruction of local productive forces over the past 40 years, the country is now practically importing everything (including salt), making it vulnerable to currency devaluations. Local production remains largely backward, agrarian and non-industrial. Manufacturing is limited to assembly of import-dependent components (including semiconductors), the demand for which has sharply declined.

Marcos Jr and his economic managers have no plan to end the country's over-dependence on imported commodities. Instead of addressing the need to raise the country's capacity to produce food and other manufactures, they are bent on perpetuating dependence on imports, foreign investments and foreign debt-infusion. AB