



EDITORIAL

Oppose US military intervention and heightening war-mongering

The Philippine's false sovereignty is increasingly being exposed amid heightening military intervention of US imperialism. The strategic goal of the US is to reinforce its dominance and control of the country and to use it as launching pad for provoking war with its imperialist rival China in the Asia-Pacific region.

Heightening US military intervention in the Philippines at present has two salient aspects: first, the push to strengthen American troop presence and deployment of weapons, using the country as a military base or military outpost within its network of military bases in the Asia-Pacific; and second, increasing military assistance to the intensified war of suppression against revolutionary and progressive forces who raise the flag of national freedom.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) is the main instrument of the US in these two aspects. It is the pillar of US domination and interference in the Philippines. The AFP was formed, molded and

trained in line with US imperialist doctrine and since the outset has been used to secure the neocolonial state in the country. Over the past decades, it has been reliant on US military assistance and policy, could not stand on its own feet and is incapable of defending the country's territory, especially in the face of Chinese aggression in the West Philippine Sea.

US Vice President Kamala Harris' recent visit highlighted the country's false independence. She used the AFP and the Marcos regime's reliance on US assistance to promote US military presence in the Philippines as defense against China's threats. Harris also used the visit to push for the use of nuclear

energy which will benefit American capitalists and further drown the Philippines in a sea of foreign debt.

At the same time, Harris made use of the Philippines, especially when she traveled to Palawan, closest to China's military facilities within Philippine maritime territory, to further raise tensions with China which she criticized for "irresponsible behavior" in the South China Sea.

Harris pushed the US demand for five more locations to set up US facilities under the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA). Currently, the US has military facilities inside AFP camps at Basa Air Base in Pampanga, Fort Magsaysay in Nueva Ecija, Lumbia Air Base in Cagayan de Oro, Antonio Bautista Air Base in Palawan and Mactan Benito Ebuen Air Base in Cebu.

The Marcos regime promptly acquiesced to the US demand when

the AFP declared willingness to open two camps in Cagayan, and one each in Palawan, Zambales and Isabela, areas that are key to the US strategy of countering China's growing military strength and expansion. The US clearly wants to riddle the country with its military facilities. This is brazenly overturning the historical victories of the Filipino people in the struggle against US military bases.

Harris' visit forms part of the US push to raise the temperature of armed tensions in the Asia-Pacific. Prior to the Philippines, Harris also traveled to Japan and South Korea, to project military strength from US



military bases in those countries, to which both China and North Korea responded with their own display of firepower. It was only a few months ago when US Speaker Nancy Pelosi traveled to Taiwan and assured it of "US defense" in a direct slap to China and the US' long-standing recognition of the "One China" policy.

The US push to heighten armed tensions in the Asia-Pacific also complements its relentless stoking, together with the NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization), of the war in Ukraine against Russia. In fact, incited by the US, the Europe-centric NATO has now declared itself anti-China. By feeding an endless war, US monopoly capitalists in the military industry and its allies are raking in huge amounts of profits.

To further strengthen its power in the Philippines, the US also continuously provides the AFP with assistance to suppress the revolutionary and patriotic forces fighting US imperialist dominance and control in the country. The US trains, advises, funds, and arms the AFP to carry out a brutal counterinsurgency war against the Filipino people and their revolutionary forces.

All-out state terrorism is now underway across the country in the form of massacres and murders, torture, and imprisonment of suspected supporters of the New People's Army. Capitalists earn superprofits with US supplying drones, airplanes and cannons to carry out the bombing of communities, farms and forests. Through the AFP and the fascist NTF-Elcac, and by occasionally joining ground operations, the US is again applying its tactics of widespread terrorism used in its failed Vietnam war. The Anti-Terror Law (patterned after the US "war against terrorism") is being used to crush the patriotic and progressive forces, and prevent peace negotiations.


US imperialism is directly responsible for gross human rights violations and war crimes of the AFP. The US, Marcos and the AFP have bloodied hands in their relentless fascist attacks against the Filipino people. They should be held responsible and punished.

The ongoing crisis of the global capitalist system, particularly the US economy's slide back to recession, will further push it to strengthen its hegemony and control over countries and areas to source natural resources and invest excessive capital, as well as over strategic international trade routes. This includes US imperialist control of the Philippines.

The people should fight against US military intervention, inter-imperialist war-mongering, and sponsoring fascist terrorism in the country. Agreements that bind the Philippines to the US and give American troops excessive rights to use the country for their strategic interests, must be abrogated. Filipinos should unite with peoples all over the world to fight imperialism and imperialist war.

The Filipino people must struggle to end US imperialist military, economic, political and cultural domination in the Philippines. This is the key element in the struggle for national democracy.

AB




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The militarist Biden-Harris Asia-Pacific strategy

US imperialism's geopolitical strategy under the previous Donald Trump government and the current Biden-Harris government is no different in form, purpose and essence. It continues the earlier "Pivot to Asia" declared in 2008 which saw the strategic shift of its policy towards China as a leading imperialist rival. This military strategy aims to prevent further expansion of China's military strength and political influence, and prepare for and incite a direct or indirect inter-imperialist war.

Under its so-called "Indo-Pacific Strategy," the US consolidates its military power in countries surrounding China through the Quad (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, with India, Japan and Australia) and AUKUS (Australia-United Kingdom-US), in conjunction with tightening control over its military puppets in South Korea, Thailand, the Philippines, as well as Japan. The US is also provoking its North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) allies in Europe to stand against China.

This strategy takes the form of launching a series of large "military drills" in various countries around China and sailing US warships in the South China Sea and Taiwan Strait. These are combat maneuver exercises against China at its very borders. These are combined with provocative acts such as the successive visits by US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and other officials to Taiwan in August, and by US Vice President Ka-

mala Harris to South and Southeast Asia.

The military drills this year in Japan (Keen Sword, 36,000 troops) and South Korea (Ulchi Freedom Shield, over 67,500 troops) are said to be "biggest in history." Similar exercises were held in Thailand (Carat), Indonesia (Garuda Shield), Australia (Cope North), Guam (Valiant Shield) and other US territories in the Pacific. In the Philippines, the Balikatan was launched in March-April in which 8,900 troops took part.

In June-August, the US conducted the 11-day Rim of the Pacific (RimPac), the world's largest combat drill, in various parts of the Pacific from the US military base in Hawaii. Up to 38 warships, four submarines, nine armies, more than 170 aircraft and 25,000 troops from 26 countries participated in the training. Eight of these countries are members of NATO, which are behind the US proxy war in Ukraine against Rus-

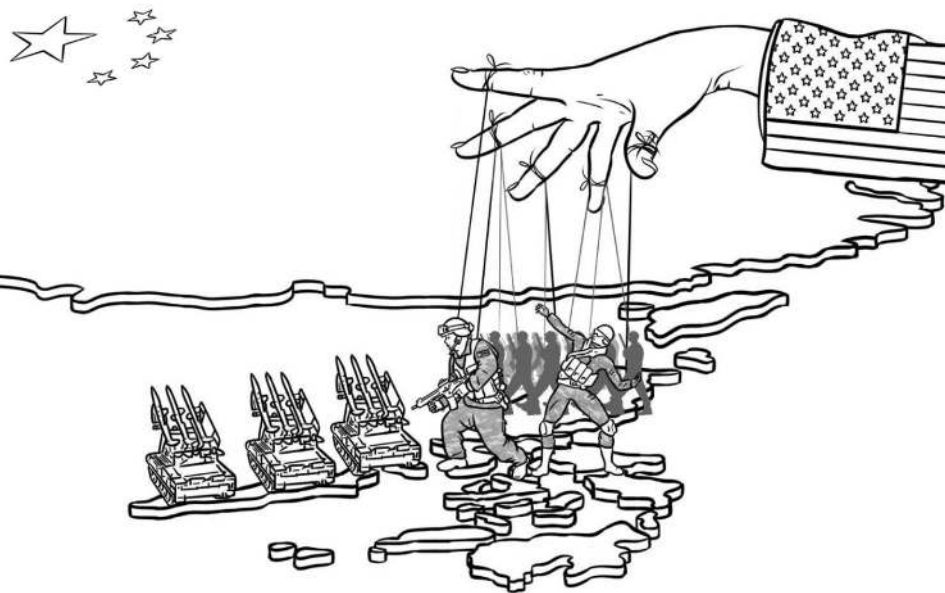
sia. Thousands of small, medium-sized and unannounced military trainings are also conducted by the US in "all corners" of the Asia-Pacific. These involve hundreds of bomber planes, nuclear-capable warships, cannons, missiles, ammunitions and troops that carry out "live-fire exercises" leaving toxic waste and chemicals in the water, air and soil. In the Philippines alone, there are approximately 300 such trainings per year.

Control of the seas

In September, the US announced the formation of Task Force 76/3, combining naval forces under the US Indo-Pacific Command, permanently stationed in the South China Sea. It aims to tighten US control over facilities, bases and naval troops in South, East and Southeast Asia countries behind the veil of "integration" and "interoperability." It launched in October 2022 the Kamandag 2022 exercises in Bataan, Palawan and other points in Luzon.

This is a new mechanism under the Pentagon's Pacific Deterrence Initiative, which got a \$5.1 billion budget this year. This program aims to set up facilities in countries within the "First Island Chain" (Japan, Taiwan, the Philippines, etc) to permanently station land-based long-range missiles near China's borders.

When Harris visited the Philippines in November, her agenda was to finalize plans for building five additional US bases in the country. These include plans for rebuilding US military facilities in Subic, Zambales to position US forces, missile and warships, 30 years since they were booted out.



Armed struggle against military rule in Masbate

The New People's Army-Masbate (Jose Rapsing Command) reported this December that more than 20 military actions were launched by its units against the military and police in the province in 2022. These form part of the NPA-Masbate's ongoing campaign to emasculate and frustrate the focused military operations and the "shock and awe" campaign of the Joint Task Force Bicolandia in the province. No less than five AFP-PNP-CAFGU battalions were deployed in the province composed of more than 1,500 men to launch these operations and militarization of communities under the RCSP (Retooled Community Support Program).

These actions include the November 7 ambush in Barangay Manlut-od in Placer where two CAFGU troops were killed, and in which the NPA seized two pistols, magazines, ammunition and other equipment.

Four of the offensives were launched in the first 100 days of the new Marcos regime in power. Eleven soldiers were killed and five were

wounded in these offensives.

These include the demolition action on August 11 against the 2nd IB in Sitio Puro, Talisay, San Fernando in Ticao island. Five enemy forces were killed and three were wounded. Five were also killed in the sniping-harassment operations against the armed group of village chief Adriel "Boyot" Besana, CAFGU and 2nd IB in Sitio Baldoza,



Cabungahan, Cawayayan, Masbate on August 18.

These offensives also show the Red Army's perseverance to defend and strengthen the determination of the Masbateño masses to act and fight the ongoing military reign in Masbate. Under the Marcos regime, the Masbateño peasants face threats of worse fascist attacks by the AFP-PNP-CAFGU and the Masbate TF-Elcac.

The military and local ruling classes have started its campaign to grab large tracts of former grazing and hacienda lands which were once won by the peasant movement. Up to 11 have been reported victims of political killings in the province. This include the series of murders of peasants cultivating in and around the Pecson land which provincial bureaucrats under Marcos want to secure. The latest case was the murder of Ronnie Andren in Placer town on November 27. He was apprehended while preparing copra and killed.

According to Luz del Mar, spokesperson for the NPA-Masbate, the people's army will not stop defending the Masbateño masses against military violence and in making the AFP-PNP-CAFGU's accountable for its crimes against the people. Del Mar declared the NPA's readiness to continue fighting the worsening state fascism and terrorism in Masbate.

AB

NPA mounts 6 military actions in Negros and Bukidnon

Six military actions in the last two weeks were launched by the New People's Army (NPA) against fascist military troops. These actions were mounted amid AFP's focus military operations.

In Sipalay City, the NPA-Southwest Negros seized two calibre .45 pistols, ammunition, three magazines, two cellphones and one grenade from two intelligence agents of 47th IB ambushed last November 24 in Sitio Camboguiot, Barangay Camindangan. The two soldiers, involved in spying and suppressing the masses, were killed.

NPA-Southwest Negros spokesperson Andrea Guerrero said the armed action serves as a warning to all AFP and PNP spies and assets.

The NPA-Central Negros fired at the PNP substation in Sitio

Parkingan, Barangay Trinidad, Guihulngan City on November 25. A police officer was wounded. On November 21, the NPA also fired at two different 62nd IB units in Sitio Tuko in the same village. Two soldiers were killed and another was wounded.

In the same city, the NPA fired at the Army Patrol Base in Barangay Sandayao on November 23. A soldier of the 62nd IB was wounded.

In Bukidnon, the NPA fired at the operating troops of the 8th IB in Purok 8, St. Peter, Malaybalay City on November 16. A soldier was killed in the armed action.

Soldiers kill Negros farmer in front of his family

Recent weeks have seen successive cases of human rights violations under the Marcos regime. These include the killing of a farmer, bombing and strafing of a community, and arbitrary arrests of civilians.



The 62nd IB troops killed farmer Victor Baldonado at his home in Sitio Columbia, Barangay Trinidad, Guihulngan City, Negros Oriental on November 21, at 6 a.m. The soldiers shot him in front of his wife and children.

The 62nd IB claimed Baldonado was a fighter of the New People's Army (NPA) and that he was killed in an armed encounter. The soldiers dressed his dead body and laid weapons and documents by his corpse to justify the crime.

Arrest. In Negros Occidental, the 62nd IB arbitrarily arrested Wilben Callura and Juliet Callura, residents of Sitio Binataan, Barangay Quinten Remo, Moises Padilla. At the same time, military troops strafed the house of Virgie Perolino, Roberto Gario and Jorenda Callura in the same sitio. Soldiers stole their chickens and butchered their pig. As a result, 800 farmers fled their homes in Sitio Oway-uway, Binataan and other nearby communities.

On November 25, soldiers of the 62nd IB and 33rd DRC ransacked homes in Sitio Ngalan in the same village. They forcibly entered and searched the house of Zaldy Jimenez, Richard Jimenez, Robert Jimenez, Cardo Juanites and Sernel Juanites. Soldiers stayed in these houses from November 25 to 28.

Unionist Roel Duyag was arrested on November 25 in Butuan City at the wake of his mother. Duyag is the coordinator of the Kilusang May Uno in the Caraga region. He was taken to Butuan PNP Station 1 and lodged with false charges of

murder.

Bombings and strafing. Rockets and ammunition shook Purok 8, St. Peter, Malaybalay City, Bukidnon on November 16 after the 8th IB rained the community with bombs and bullets. This attack is a clear retaliation against civilians after the AFP suffered defeats from two recent NPA armed actions. An MD520 helicopter released 16 rockets and strafed the village eight times. The first round lasted 40 minutes.

Residents ran away in panic because the bombs fell very near their community. Teachers and students dropped to the classroom floor as helicopters flew just above their village.

Shooting. Five civilian hunters were fired at by troops of the 24h IB in the forested area of Sitio Sap-al, Barangay Buneg, Lacub, Abra on November 27.

Two farmers were injured in the incident while the three ran to a nearby community to ask for help.

The soldiers came upon the five while they were resting. The hunters immediately raised their hunting weapons and shouted "We are civilians!" so that soldiers would not shoot them. Despite this, the soldiers still fired at them.

Dispersal. Police and guards violently dispersed a workers' picket last November 25 at the Manila Harbor Center in Road 10, Manila City. They destroyed the tent that was just set up by workers and their youth supporters. Workers demand immediate reinstatement of 370 workers who were illegally terminated in 2020.



Harris, go home! Protests by more than 500 people greeted the arrival of US VP Kamala Harris in the Philippines on November 20. They marched to Mendiola on the day that Harris met Ferdinand Marcos Jr in Malacañang.

KM, 58 years. More than 100 youth staged a lightning rally on November 27 along Recto Avenue in Manila in celebration of KM's 58th anniversary on November 30. They conducted a short program and left a streamer emblazoned with the words "Long live the CPP-NPA-NDF! Young people, head to the countryside! Join the New People's Army!"

Masapa, 44! Scores of health workers staged a lightning rally on December 6 along Carriedo Avenue in Manila to celebrate the 44th anniversary of the Makabayang Samahang Pangkalusugan (Patriotic Health Association). They urged health workers to join the people's army.

Release unionists! Supporters and relatives of union organizers Romina Astudillo, Mark Ryan Cruz, Jaymie Gregorio Jr, and Joel Demate, staged a picket on December 6 at the Quezon City Hall of Justice and the Manila City Regional Trial Court. The unionists were among the "Human Rights Day 7" arrested on December 10, 2020.

November 30: Day of Bonifacio and the toiling masses

Workers, urban-poor and other sectors marched from Liwasang Bonifacio to the the Mendiola Bridge in Manila to commemorate Andres Bonifacio's 159th day, which they also declared as the Day of the Toiling Masses. Among the marchers were the Kilusang May Uno and the All Workers Unity, Bayan and its organizations, and the Nagkaisa and Paggawa under the banner of United Labor. Around 6,000 participated in the mass action.



They demanded wage increases, and lowering prices of commodities. They placed the current daily living wage at ₱1,100 in the private sector and ₱33,000 per month for government employees.

In Baguio City, various sectors marched from Sunshine Park to Igorot Park. Various democratic groups, including the youth, also staged protests in Crossing, Calamba in Laguna.

Rallyists gathered at Freedom Park in Davao City despite heavy rains. Rallies were also held at Car-

bon Free Market Freedom Park in Cebu City, in Iloilo City and at the Fountain of Justice in Bacolod City.

Before the protest day, progressive unions and federations staged preparatory actions.

The Alliance of Health Workers held a noise barrage in front of the Department of Health on November 24. They demand that entry-level monthly salaries of health workers in the private and public sector be raised to ₱33,000. Simultaneous actions were staged at hospitals in Baguio City, Bacolod City and in Manapla, Negros Occidental.

On November 22, six major federations and organizations of government employees gathered in Quezon City to call for the increase in the minimum salaries of employees up to ₱33,000.

Meanwhile, the workers' union in Technol Eight Philippines succeeded in their fight for wage increases in negotiations with the company on November 24. Included among the gains achieved in their CBA is a ₱50 daily wage increase for the next 2 years, a bonus of ₱30,000, free rice and union leave. AB

Military murders NDF consultant, peasant leader

Elements of the 94th IB and 47th IB killed Ericson Acosta and Joseph Jimenez on November 30 in Sitio Makilo, Barangay Camansi, Kanbakan City, Negros Occidental. Acosta was a consultant of the National Democratic Front (NDF) in peace talks while Joseph Jimenez is a local organizer of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas and an official of a local peasant organization in Barangay Camansi. The two were apprehended at 2 a.m., but were made to appear to have died in an armed encounter in the morning.

Acosta is a well-known poet, writer and composer. The Party hailed him as one of the important cadres and warriors in Negros. He became part of the NDFP panel preparing the Comprehensive Agreement on Social and Economic Reforms (CASER) during formal peace talks in 2016.

According to preliminary reports of the September 21 Movement, to make it appear that there was an encounter in the area, soldiers fired at Ronald Francisco's

home, where Acosta and Jimenez were resting. After that, Francisco, his wife and three children were taken to a military camp.

Human rights defenders, church people and friends of Acosta and Jimenez called for an impartial investigation into this incident violating humanitarian law.

On November 30, on the very day of their death, democratic organizations gathered before the Commission on Human Rights to condemn the murder of the two.

Two other victims

Instead of administering first aid, troopers of the 62nd IB killed two wounded Red fighters in Sitio Patuatan, Quinten Remo, Moises Padilla on November 28. Mario Baldusa (Ka Jekoy) and Janhel Sarsa (Ka Jorge) were injured in an encounter that morning.

Instead of treating, ascertaining their identity, and declaring them as prisoners of war, the 62nd IB willfully killed the two.

The four adds to the more than 100 revolutionaries and civilians who were not in a position to fight but willfully killed by the military since 2017. The killings violate existing humanitarian rules of warfare and protections for individuals under the CARHRIHL and Geneva Conventions. AB

Land grabbing in Isabela behind the veil of development

Rich in sea and land resources, Divilacan, a town in Isabela province, leans against the Sierra Madre and overlooks the Pacific Ocean. It has 12 barangays with around 6,000 residents. It has an area of 89,000 hectares. Much of the town can be considered ancestral land of Dumagat and Agta minorities. It was declared a municipality in 1969.

But behind the promoted image of a paradise, the people of Divilacan live in backward circumstances. Most residents have no title or any proof of land ownership. The landlords, bureaucrat-capitalists and their foreign and local partners took advantage of this to rob the indigenous peoples and peasants of their land.

Two grandiose infrastructure projects—the 62-kilometer Ilagan-Divilacan Road and the Divilacan Airport—were undertaken benefitting the land grabbers. The Ilagan-Divilacan Road connecting the town to the Isabela capital, is portrayed as "development." But instead of progress, it brought disaster to the people when almost an entire village and farms in Barangay Sapinit was buried in a landslide in 2019. This was due to the construction that cut mountain ridges and fell trees along the path of the roads. The road was made to pass through the protected forest of Sierra Madre.

In 2013, the local government duped the Agta Sapinit Tribal Council to consent to the project in exchange for irrigation, school, health centers and other services for the Sapinites. These promises remain unfulfilled. The road did not help farmers market their products. Instead, it paved the way for land grabbing by politicians and local and foreign busi-

nesses. Land-grabbers mobilized the fascist 95th IB.

It was in 2014 when police and goons of former governor Faustino Dy Jr violently demolished the community in Barangay Dipudo to give way for the international airport. It covered the 112-hectare coastal land and 8-hectare coconut plantation. Using his position, Dy forced the residents to sell him their land for ₱250,000 and agree to be relocated. Dy moved them to a forested section of the Northern Sierra Madre Natural Park (NSMNP). The place is around 14 kilometers from the coast where they source their food and livelihood.

The state also wants to kill them by starvation because the NSMNP prohibits their livelihood of swidden farming and charcoal making. Farmers eventually left because of the lack of livelihood. The relocation area was not recognized as a barangay. To this day, construction of the small day care in the area is incomplete. There is no proper water system or other public services. This is despite a ₱3 million budget allocation.

The islands that form part of the Agta ancestral lands were also

grabbed. The Dys also seized the 24-hectare Honeymoon Island and made a tourist area. They desecrated the Agta sacred graves where they set up commercial resorts, restaurants and other facilities. Dy did the same to Gay Island, which he gave as "gift" to Jose Mari Antonez, a Smartmatic official.

Farmers face grave threats of their land being taken away after the Provincial Assessors Office canceled land declarations in the town and declared them as "public land." This will facilitate land grabbing administered by the local government itself. It sells the prime lands, especially those along the coast.

The "public land" supposedly for the people will benefit only a handful under the state acting as the biggest landlord. The various government schemes of land grabbing have long been exposed to the people of Isabela, especially to the indigenous Agtas. In the past, it took the form of establishing the NSMNP, then the National Greening Program, and today, the Coastal Development Plan. AB



₱378/kilo

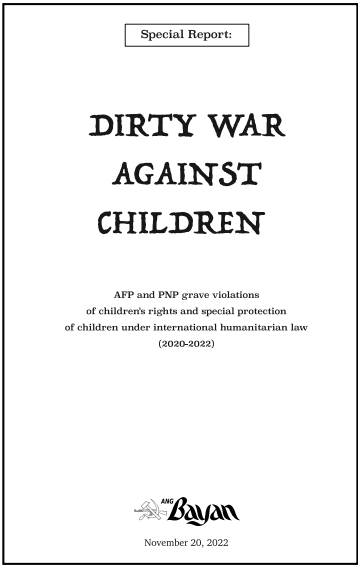
September prices of onions was highest in the world. This was three times more than the ₱85.14 world average.

Source: Global Product Prices



political prisoners arrested since Marcos Jr became president up to **November 30.**

Source: Karapatan



Special report on child rights violations by the AFP and PNP. Download a copy from www.philippinerevolution.nu and print to read.



1/week

victim of **political killings** in Bicol since **Memorandum Order No. 32** was implemented on **November 22, 2018.**



₱15.6 B

spoiled Covid-19 vaccines in November because of the slow and unsystematic vaccination campaign.

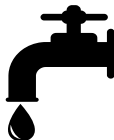
MAHARLIKA WEALTH FUND

latest plan of the **Marcos family** to siphon public funds, including workers and government employees' pension funds on the pretext of investment.



70%

of the US population favor establishing unions. Currently, only around 10.3% of American workers are unionized.



₱8.04 per cubic meter

increase in **Maynilad Water's** fees starting **January 2023** if their proposal is granted.

Kabataang Makabayan: Wellspring of the revolution in Negros

The chapter of Kabataang Makabayan in Katrina (not its real name), a village in Negros, was established in 2008. The chapter was formed at a time when the village was surrounded by CAFGU detachments and bad elements abound.

Poverty is severe in Katrina due to backward agricultural production. Most farmers here are tenants of landlords, rich and upper middle peasants. They barely earn enough because of the existing sharing scheme that favor the land owner. Due to poverty, they cannot afford to send their children to school.

To add to their families' income, Katrina's youth take jobs as domestic helpers even as young as 15 years old. In 2008, nearly 300 of them left for the cities to work in temporary low-wage jobs with no benefits. They went to Metro Manila, Cebu, Panay and Bacolod City. Not a few of them became victims of prostitution, mistreatment and sexual abuse.

Due to their bitter experiences, many parents no longer allowed their children to leave to work in cities. They were instead encouraged to plant corn, root crops, bananas and other food crops.

In early 2008, the Pambansang Katipunan ng Magbubukid was established in Katrina. The youth were gathered and had a talk with their organized parents who asked them to be their partners in revolutionary work. A batch of eight young reliables with no criminal records was the first to study the Short Course on Philippine Society and Revolution. From here, the organizing group of the Kabataang Makabayan was set up.

The group was assigned to organize other youths in the village to develop production and mount

anti-feudal struggles. They were also encouraged to join the *dagyaw-alayon*, a form of cooperation.

Interaction between the youth and the Red fighters became frequent. Their activities, including cultural and instruction for PaDePa (Pambansang Demokratikong Paaralan or National Democratic School) trainings, are regularly assessed. Eventually, they were asked to participate in studies of Party courses and short politico-military courses.

Part of their task is to stage performances during mass actions. In the guerrilla zones, they enliven the anniversary celebrations of the Communist Party of the Philippines, the New People's Army, the National Democratic Front of the Philippines and the Kabataang Makabayan. They also handle the tribute activities for the revolutionary martyrs.

Member-students are tasked to organize fellow students. They encourage students to participate in their cultural performances at school. They enlighten even their teachers.

Due to their perseverance and that of villagers, the organizing committee was built in December 2008 with more than 100 members. It expanded to more than 10 sitios from six at the beginning. Subsequently, three chapters were



built in nearby villages.

When an encounter between the NPA and the AFP broke out in Katrina at the beginning of 2010s, close to platoon-sized number of young people volunteered to join the people's army. In the following years, full-fledged mass organizations were established in the area. The level of the organs of political power and the local guerrilla unit in the village was raised. The militia unit and self-defense units were assigned members from the organizations. The barrio revolutionary committee was established. Most of them became Party members.

In 2018, the US-Duterte regime brutally ravaged Katrina. Not a few were killed and illegally arrested. As a result, scores again joined the NPA. In 2019, Party cadres and Red fighters from Katrina were assigned to strategic areas and other guerrilla fronts on the island. Eight of its warriors became revolutionary martyrs.

On the occasion of the 58th anniversary of the Kabataang Makabayan this year, the people of Katrina stand proud of the youth and Red fighters it has produced for the continuing revolution, not only in their area, but throughout the island. AB

Golden vegetables

Recent weeks saw Filipinos heaping jokes about "golden onions" because of its high prices and that of other commodities. But onion farmers in Nueva Ecija are not amused, saying they have not benefitted from the high prices of onions, and that they are, in fact, deep in debt. The situation of potato farmers in Benguet are no different.



In September, the price of potatoes in the Philippines was at ₱109.84 per kilogram. Although, these are not the most expensive in the world, unlike those of onions, it is far higher than the farmer's ₱30 per kilogram selling price. The same with cabbage which sells for ₱300 per kilo, but are sold by farmers at ₱50 per kilogram.

One of these farmers (or gardeners) is Jeremy, who plants potatoes on his own 2,500-square meter land or quarter hectare, with his six siblings. They bring their produce to the Nueva Vizcaya trading post, four hours away from their area.

The potato planting cycle lasts three months. In Jeremy's case, he borrows his uncle's tractor, so he doesn't have to pay rent for its use. He spends for fuel (₱1,360) and pays the operator wages for a three-day job (₱3,000). At ₱70 per kilogram, he spent ₱28,000 for 400 kilograms of potato seeds. Potatoes need fertilizers and pesticides to grow, thus a large amount goes to buying chicken dung (₱7,200) and urea (₱10,000), and different packages of chemicals for spraying. In total, the cost of fertilizer and pesticides reaches ₱39,700.

This year, Jeremy and his fellow gardeners suffered gravely from the rapid increase in urea prices from ₱1,200 to ₱2,400, fuel prices, as well as other commodities. This adds to their previous burden of unabated importation of vegetables and other agricultural products (often from countries with government subsidies for agricultural production) that further pulls down their farmgate prices.

All in all, Jeremy's total cost during one cropping cycle reaches ₱167,060. The largest part of this is ₱86,260 cost of largely imported farm input. He spends ₱21,000 for transportation and an additional ₱4,500 for other travel fees (toll fee, parking fee and more). Of his total income, 10% will be deducted for debt payments.

By his calculations, the price of labor (rent and family) is at ₱37,300 for the entire cycle—from land preparation, planting, collecting chicken manure, pesticide spraying every two days, harvesting to delivery.

At the price of ₱30 per kilogram, Jeremy sold 6,000 kilograms of potatoes for ₱180,000. Subtracting all costs, he is left with ₱12,940, equivalent to ₱143.78 per day. This

is less than half of the region's ₱300 minimum wage, and only 13% of the ₱1,100 living daily wages.

Every year, the cost of production of gardeners steadily rises while the price of their yield varies on the weather and the caprices of the buyers.

During times of severe losses, Jeremy and his fellow gardeners survive through a mutual aid system called "ub-ubbo" or cooperation not involving money. They freely give their labor to fellow gardeners in exchange for the labor power extended to each other's farms.

Although heartwarming, their mutual help cannot hide their suffering and those of the families. While gardeners are forced to survive on small income, fat profits are earned by multinational companies who sell expensive farm inputs, usurers who charge high interests, traders who undercut farmgate prices and by government who promote importation that further pull down the prices of agricultural products.

For the full story of potato gardeners in Ifugao, read "The Adventures of Jeremy Gardener" at www.philippinerevolution.nu. AB