

EDITORIAL

Long live the memory of Ka Joma! Strengthen the Party and advance the revolution!

The whole party and revolutionary movement give extraordinary honor to Jose Maria Sison (Amado Guerrero), founding chairman of the Communist Party of the Philippines, and greatest Filipino and revolutionary leader of the past century. For so long, Ka Joma served as guide and beacon, bastion and bulwark of the Party and the Philippine revolution.

Ka Joma was a master of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, the ideology of the proletariat. He led the Party's re-establishment and the resurgence of the Philippine revolution. He studied the basic character of the semicolonial and semifeudal system in the Philippines, exposed the three monsters of imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism that primarily enslave the broad Filipino masses, and illuminated the path of national-democratic revolu-

tion as the road towards the people's liberation from poverty and oppression.

Ka Joma all-sidedly strengthened the Party. He taught and trained thousands of cadres of the Party's Central Committee, central organs and regional committees, who led the Party's nationwide expansion and strengthening. He led the establishment of the New People's Army in 1969 and trained and guided the first ranks of Red com-

manders and fighters. In 1973, he led the establishment of the National Democratic Front (NDF). Under his leadership, the people's war spread like a prairie fire across the country.

When captured by the enemy, he was subjected to nine years of torture inside the fascist dungeons, yet his revolutionary spirit prevailed. He was freed when Marcos's dictatorship was dismantled by the powerful surge of the people's struggle and armed struggle.

Ka Joma was forced into exile in 1987 when his passport was cancelled preventing his return to the country. For over 35 years, he stayed in The Netherlands in a small

apartment with his family, and in the care of Filipino migrant workers. No matter the distance, he remained close to the Philippine revolution and gave sharp analyses and timely advice. Ka Joma's exile worked to the advantage of the revolutionary movement as it provided him the conditions and opportunity to enrich the theory of the Philippine revolution based on its ongoing practice. When the Party was led astray, Ka Joma became the light that served as guide for the Second Great Rectification Movement.

He served as the NDF's chief political consultant in peace negotiations with the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and excellently guided the forging of historical agreements in line with the aim of achieving just and lasting peace. Thus, the militarist agents of US imperialism, who oppose efforts to resolve the social and economic roots of civil war through negotiations, relentlessly persecuted him.

He was arrested in 2007 in a fabricated case which was eventually dismissed for lacking evidence. He was labeled a "terrorist" by the US and its puppets, an accusation dismissed in a European court in 2009. He was repeatedly accused of masterminding the Plaza Miranda

(1971) bombing even though this was dismissed by a Manila court in 1994 for lack of evidence.

It is undeniable that in Philippine history, no one surpasses the work done by Ka Joma in rousing the Filipino people to stand up and fight. Millions of workers, peasants, petty-bourgeois intellectual, ordinary employees and professionals across the country rose up, joined forces and took action under the Red flag and the torch of the revolution. All national-democratic activists, Red fighters and Party cadres began their enlightenment and roused by the "Philippine Society and Revolution" (PSR), the most comprehensive analysis of the country's history and conditions.

Because of his leadership, lasting contribution, and lifelong dedication to advancing the Philippine revolution for genuine national freedom and democracy, Comrade Jose Maria Sison is a great hero of the Filipino people. Indeed, he is the greatest of all.

In his death, Ka Joma bequeathed the Party a golden treasure chest brimming with theory of the Philippine revolution. Let us use and further enrich it through our current practice and through the future of waging people's democratic

revolution to the socialist revolution. Its eternal brilliance will serve as our light through the difficult path. Keep his great memory and legacy eternally Red. Firmly continue the revolution which he started with our great martyrs and heroes.


Let us be masters in the theories and lessons left by Ka Joma. Carry forward a movement to review his writings, from the PSR to the "Five Volumes" collection of his articles. Tighten our grasp of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism which is the class standpoint, viewpoint and method of thinking of Ka Joma. A firm grasp of his ideas and guidance is one of the keys to further advancing the Philippine revolution.

The Communist Party of the Philippines is noble. When Ka Joma re-established it, he was aware of the Party's role as a vanguard of the proletariat that would lead the new democratic revolution, and the entire historical period of the socialist revolution to communist society. It will cover the time beyond a person's life or generation.

The Party was fortunate that Ka Joma's life lasted for more than six decades for him to lead and guide the practical movement. In the second Congress in 2016, the Party paid tribute and expressed its gratitude to Ka Joma.

During Ka Joma's lifetime, several lines of cadres have taken the reins of the Party's leadership. Certainly, several more generations of Party cadres—perhaps some are yet to be born—will be readers and students of Ka Joma's writings, as well as of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, Mao, and will embrace and lead the great aspirations of the proletariat.

Our Central Committee has declared ten days of mourning that will end on the 54th anniversary of the Party. Let us dedicate this day to pay tribute to the memory of Ka Joma. Let us use this occasion to stand together, and reaffirm our determination to march forward and wave high the Red flag of the Party and revolution.



Vol LIII No. 24 | December 21, 2022


Ang Bayan is published in
Pilipino, Bisaya, Iloko, Hiligaynon,
Waray, English and Spanish. Ang
Bayan welcomes contributions in
the form of articles and news
items. Readers are encouraged
to send feedback and
recommendations for improving
our newspaper.


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Ang Bayan is published fortnightly by the Central Committee
of the Communist Party of the Philippines

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 [@angbayan1969](https://twitter.com/angbayan1969)

Jose Maria Sison, 83

Tributes, salutations and recognition poured for the great revolutionary leader and founder of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), internationalist, patriotic and torch bearer of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism Prof. Jose Maria Sison after he passed away on December 16. He died peacefully, among his family and friends, at UMC Hospital in Utrecht, The Netherlands at 9:40 pm in the Philippines. He was 83. He bereaved his wife and fellow revolutionary Juliet de Lima Sison, their four children, and grandchildren.

Ka Joma died after more than two weeks of hospital confinement. During the few minutes before he breathed his last, Comrade Julie shared that he talked about ensuring the revolution's victory and advance to socialism. In his last thoughts, he remained optimistic about the Filipino people whom he served with utmost determination.

His remains are currently in Barbara Uitvaartverzorging Utrecht and can be viewed by the public from December 18 to 22. There will be activities in his wake such as poetry reading, film showing, singing Ka Joma's favorite songs and others. On December 23, a day of honor will be held by international guests, comrades and representatives of political parties and organizations. His remains will be delivered to the Crematorium Daelwijck on December 27th.

In the Philippines, the Party has declared a 10-day mourning starting December 17 and ordered all units of the New People's Army (NPA) to conduct a silent 21-gun salute as tribute and farewell.

In its tribute, the CPP Second Congress offered the highest recognition and deepest gratitude to Ka Joma for his immense contribution to the Philippine Revolution as the founding chair of the Party, founder of the NPA and pioneer of the People's Democratic Government in the Philippines.

In Metro Manila, various legal and democratic organizations held a program honoring Ka Joma. They gathered at the University of the Philippines (UP)-Diliman, Quezon City on December 19, from 1 p.m. to midnight, to remember Ka Joma's

life and struggle as a great teacher and beacon to the toiling masses.

The next day at the same venue, more than 500 peace and human rights advocates came together to honor him as a freedom fighter and a proletarian internationalist. National-democratic groups are set to hold, under the leadership of the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan, a grand tribute program in the next few days.

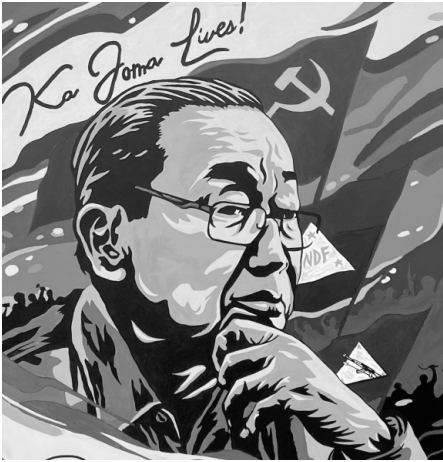
Recognition, tribute

Many organizations in the Philippines and the different parts of the world have expressed their gratitude, recognition and tribute to Ka Joma for his contribution to their struggles.

Underground and revolutionary organizations allied to the NDFP, such as the Liga ng Agham para sa Bayan (LAB), Christians for National Liberation, Katipunan ng mga Samahang Manggagawa, Makibaka and others honored Ka Joma. NDFP regional chapters and regional Party committees also issued statements.

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Maoist) extended its condolences to the CPP and its recognition of Ka Joma. It declared, "He has many writings in the ideological field that are very important. We have greatly learned from these." The Marxist-Leninist Party of Germany (MLPD), and the Communist Party of Turkey-Marxist Leninist (TKP-ML) and its armed forces also extended their respects.

Communist parties, political parties, and organizations from Norway, Turkey, Kurdistan, United States, Australia, Romania, Russia, Spain, Portugal, Sweden, England,



Indonesia, Ireland, China, Palestine, Canada and other countries paid their respects.

The International League of Peoples' struggle, in behalf of all its member organizations and chapters across the world, which Ka Joma led and established in 2001 also honored to him.

Countless national-democratic organizations have given their tribute to Ka Joma. From chapters of youth organizations, urban poor associations, rural farmers, women, church people, workers and their unions, and several others cry as one: Ka Joma Lives! Long live the memory of Ka Joma!

AB

AFP bombs destroy forest

THE ARMED FORCES of the Philippines (AFP) indiscriminately bombed a portion of Mt. Hilong-Hilong forests along the border of Agusan del Sur, Agusan del Norte and Surigao del Sur on November 30. From 5:40 a.m. to 7 a.m., it dropped six large bombs and blasted two rockets in the area.

Nearly 100 trees were damaged due to the bombing. It also left knee-deep wide crates and caused a landslide.

The said mountains are one of the remaining habitats of the Philippine Eagle and many types of flora and fauna.

No holiday ceasefire

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines announced on December 19 that it would not declare a ceasefire during the holidays. "There is absolutely no reason to declare a ceasefire," the Party said.

Military operations and attacks by the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) continue in many communities in the countryside. Several villages are placed under military control (hamlet). Military abuses and violations of basic rights such as restricting people to work in their fields, illegal search of houses, illegal arrests, torture, bombing and strafing, shelling of farm fields and nearby forests, forced surrenders and many others.

Desperate to "crush" the revolutionary movement, the Marcos regime and its armed forces have relentlessly violated human rights and international humanitarian law. Not less than 45 were victims of po-

litical killings by the military and police since Marcos Jr took power. A total of 47,000 victims of human rights violations have been recorded,

In principle, the Party authorized the New People's Army (NPA) to mount tactical offensives for the next days. "It is the duty of the NPA to come to the people's armed defense, even during these holidays, and even as we mourn the recent passing away of our beloved comrade Jose Maria Sison," the Central Committee declared.

It directed the people's army through its National Operational Command and Regional and Subregional Operational Commands to ac-

tively fight and frustrate the AFP's campaign of armed suppression.

Units of the NPA can concentrate a superior force against the isolated, weak, and tired units of the military and police and punish them for their increasing crimes against the people. AB

Protests held on Marcos Jr's first Human Rights Day

Thousands of Filipinos mark the first International Human Rights Day under the Marcos Jr regime with protests. Thousands of rallyists marched on December 10 from Liwasang Bonifacio to Mendiola in Manila to criticize and hold responsible Marcos Jr and state armed forces for their many human rights violations.

Led by Karapatan and the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan, activities were held before and on December 10 in many parts of Metro Manila. Protests and gatherings were also held in the cities of Baguio, Naga, Legazpi, Sorsogon, Kalibo, Roxas, Iloilo, Bacolod, and Davao. Similar activities were held in Ilocos Sur at Ilocos Norte, La Union, Kalinga, and Mt. Province. Filipino communities in United States, Canada, Europe, Hongkong and Australia also gathered.

According to Karapatan, the culture of impunity continues to be pervade under Marcos Jr. The group criticized the counterinsur-

gency campaign in the countryside which continues to result in widespread evacuations, dislocation of farmers' lives and livelihood, illegal arrests, bombing and strafing of civilian communities and others.

Various sectors expressed their demands in the protests and mass actions. Workers shouted: Fight for a living wage! Health workers, teachers and government employees demanded for salary increases. Youth and students, church workers, women, journalists, farmers and other democratic sectors joined the protests.

They denounced the US military aid to the Marcos regime that it uses to suppress the people. AB

Defend Louie Jalandoni.

Members of the group Defend Louie Jalandoni staged a picket last December 9 in front of the Department of Justice in Manila to call for the removal of the former NDFP Chief Negotiator's name from the baseless "terrorist" list of the Anti-Terrorism Council.

Black to Block MROTC.

Youth groups wearing black gathered in front of the University of Sto. Tomas in Manila to protest the legislation of the NCSTP/MROTC bill on the afternoon of December 15. They also protested in front of Congress on December 12 while the bill was being deliberated.

Protest against Marcos in Europe.

Migrant groups based in Europe mounted protests on December 14 and 15 to welcome Marcos Jr to the continent. Marcos was in Belgium to join European Union and ASEAN leaders' meetings.

Bacolod barricade.

Residents of Purok Katilingban, Barangay Punta Taytay, Bacolod City mounted a barricade to stop the demolition of 40 houses in the area. The demolition is illegal as this was ordered merely by a tenant and not by the land owner.

Dagyaw-alayon's good path

It has been common for residents of Barangay B, a village in Visayas, to complain of body aches, especially on their legs and feet. They theorized that this was due to the heat of the motorcyle during hours of transporting their palay and other produce to the market. The road has so many potholes and even transforms into a small river during the rainy season that getting their legs and feet wet has been inevitable.



The peasants understood that this pain was not only a medical concern but also an issue of the corrupt government's neglect in repairing the damaged road to their village. For them, it was a foregone conclusion that the allotted millions of pesos for farm-to-market roads that AFP and NTF-Elcac boast of have already been pocketed.

In a consulation, the local organization decided to repair their road through *dagyaw-alayon*, a traditional form of mutual aid in farming practiced by poor farmers. In the beginning, only a few participated but soon, others saw its benefits. Up to 60-120 people from four of the six sitios contributed their labor to the project.

Farmers set up teams to ensure every task and stage of the project. At each stage, they made sure democracy flowed, workers were cared for and good relations among participants of the *dagyaw-alayon* was maintained. Women, together with the village's children, ensured that the workers had enough food. Someone was tasked in creating a schedule for the workers and en-

suring proper work distribution. They also assigned a group to get the support of the middle to rich peasants. A group was also formed to gather resources for the project.

Participants held the *dagyaw-alayon* once a week. They temporarily stopped if they had many tasks on their farms or if the fascist military and police launched their troublesome combat operations. Apart from packed food, they brought with them implements such as shovels, hoes, bolos and so on.

The peasants demanded that barangay officials provide rice and funds for viand for the road-workers. Large farm owners contributed one up to two sacks of palay. Truck drivers transporting agricultural products also donated money for rice and viand as they pass.

Adults worked on the road while the youth fetched drinking water and perform other tasks assigned to them. Before starting each workday, they held meetings to unite on tasks for the day. Another meeting was called at the end of the working day to evaluate and gather commentaries.

At first, some farmers were fearful that police and military might attack them for their efforts to improve their livelihood. But they overcame this fear knowing that there was nothing illegal or criminal with what they were doing. They liaised with barangay officials to make sure that they were not interrupted. Later, they included other barangay infrastructure projects in their *dagyaw-alayon*.

Barangay B's commendable experience served as inspiration to two of its barangay neighbors. In Barangay A, the road for their carriages, motorcycles and trucks transporting palay, corn, sugarcane, pineapple, vegetables and other produce was repaired through *dagyaw-alayon*. About 30 to 40 individuals from three of its six sitios participated. They held the mutual aid activity once a week.

In Barangay K, about 50 to 80 people from four sitios undertook the *dagyaw-alayon*. Palay, corn, cassava and other root crops are the barangay's produce. Twice a week, they launched their *dagyaw-alayon*, an activity which was applied only to farming before but now covered other activities.

The peasants considered convincing rich peasants to participate in the *dagyaw-alayon* a breakthrough. The then almost voiceless poor to middle farmers calmly and actively explained the activity, and were able to convince those in the upper classes or strata, who were at first doubtful of the project.

Punitive action in Negros

OPERATIVES OF THE New People's Army-Northern Negros paralyzed two trucks of big comprador and landlord Teotimo Ballesteros in Sitio Proper, Barangay Tabun-ac, Toboso, Negros Occidental on December 14 at around 9:30 a.m.

Ballesteros is a notorious counterrevolutionary and landgrabber. Known for his notoriety, he hired armed goons and military to guard his sugarcane fields. He pays them to maintain control over the land he seized from farmers. He is known for giving very low wages and being abusive to sakadas and as such, sugarcane cutters and workers rejoiced over his punishment.

Congress railroads MIF, MROTC bills

The Marcos regime's henchmen in the Lower House railroaded the Maharlika Investment Fund (MIF) and Mandatory ROTC bills (passed as the National Citizens Service Training Program Act or NCSTP) on Congress' last day for the year on December 15. "Deliberations" were dispensed with after Ferdinand Marcos Jr. certified both bills as urgent. The bills have no corresponding proposals in the Senate.

Marcos Jr's relatives (son, cousin and his wife) submitted the bill to create the MIF (House Bill 6398) on November 28, with the support of the regime's "economic supervisors." The proposal was criticized because of its initial plan to use the hard-earned pensions deposited in the GSIS and SSS as seed fund. Workers and government employees and their representatives in Congress led the opposition. Academics renounced the plan, and even neoliberal economists and entrepreneurs raised concerns.

Everyone understood that the MIF will only serve as a milking cow for the Marcos family, their business cronies and lackeys in Congress. The Marcoses are known throughout the world as looters and thieves of public funds. They are salivating over the initial estimated ₱275 billion in seed funding and ₱618 billion possible funds it can raise in the following years.

Due to the criticisms, the GSIS and SSS were removed from the list of sources of funds, and the remaining ₱110 billion will be taken from the Landbank of the Philippines and the Development Bank of the Philip-

pines. It was also reported that the regime will sell eight public properties, including Basay Mining with mineral reserves worth ₱102.8 billion. It also intends to use revenues from casinos, highways and airports.

It is clear that the Philippines does not have any "surplus funds." Its financial deficit is at its historic highs and its debt is gigantic. Even neoliberals pointed out that global conditions for such a fund is dire. In fact, the "sovereign wealth funds" of countries that truly have "excess funds" such as Taiwan, Singapore and Norway are suffering because of the severe crisis that is affecting the global capitalist system.

In the Philippines, "sovereign funds" and similar funds have become synonymous with corruption. These include the funds created by Marcos Jr's father in the 1970s that became the milking cow of his family and cronies. An example of this is the coco levy fund that was established to forcibly collect the meager income of small coconut farmers. In other countries, the prime minister of Malaysia was recently convicted of graft and money laundering for using the country's sovereign fund

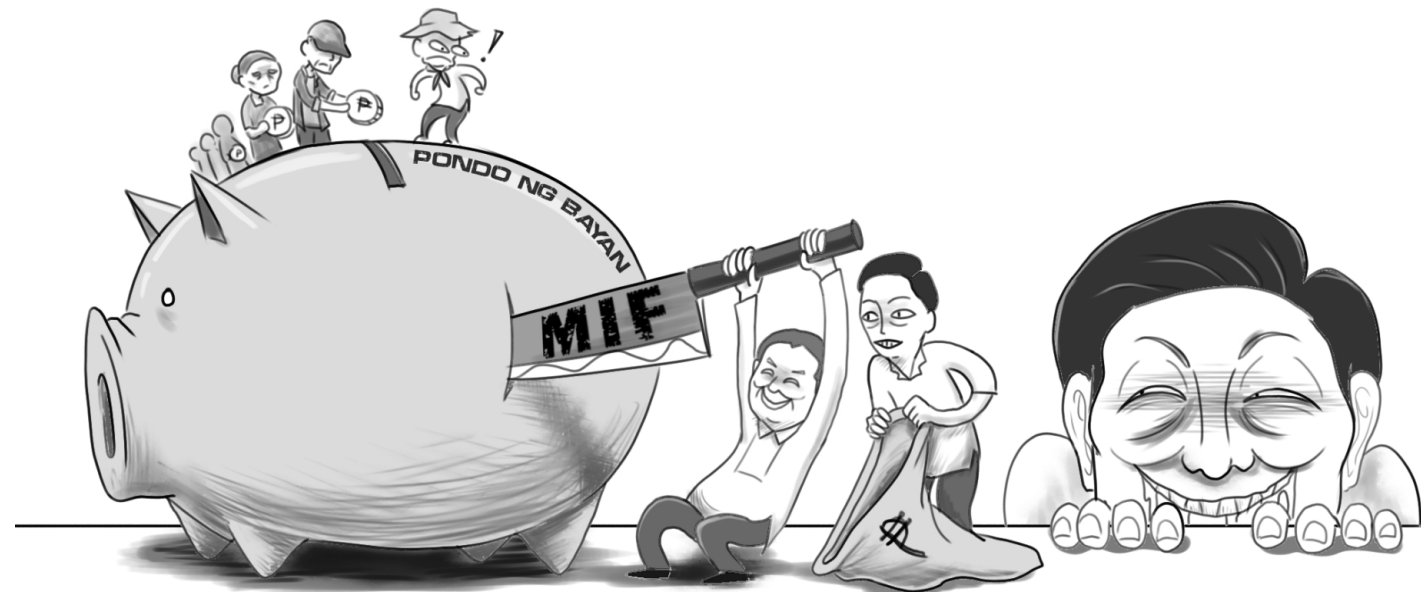
as a personal bank.

Deaf to all objections, the bill was passed by a vote of 279-6 only after 18 days. Apart from the three representatives of Makabayan, only two representatives from Bicol and one from Basilan voted against it.

Congress also passed the NCSTP (House Bill 6486) on the same day, after 27 separate measures were consolidated to restore the mandatory military training of youth (Reserved Officers Training Course or ROTC.) According to youth groups, the bill includes even worse provision compared to the earlier versions they opposed. The fascist Armed Forces of the Philippines will directly oversee the trainings, which could last for two years. This will militarize campuses, which violates academic freedom. It also violates students' rights who will be forced to train even if they are still minors. According to the students, NCSTP/MROTC is an added burden and hardship as it will entail added tuition and material costs.

In addition to the two bills, there are currently eight proposals to amend the constitution through Constitutional Convention lined up in Congress. These aim to allow foreign ownership of local businesses. Due to the proactive vigilance of the opposition, the next hearing for this was postponed to January 26, 2023.

AB



7th IB massacres six in Sultan Kudarat

Soldiers of the 7th IB brutally massacred five Red fighters and a civilian at Sitio Mugti, Barangay Chua, Bagumbayan, Sultan Kudarat on November 23. The five Red fighters decided not to engage in battle when they were encircled by the enemy as there were many civilians in the area, and as such no armed encounter took place.

No amount of denial from the Armed Forces of the Philippines can hide the 7th IB's brutal massacre and desecration of the remains of Indot Dulunan (Ka Dennis), Sep Kasa (Ka Ho), Allan Dalimbang (Ka Duran), Annabel Talon (Ka Elena), and Ka Pogi, and civilian Gerry Kasa.

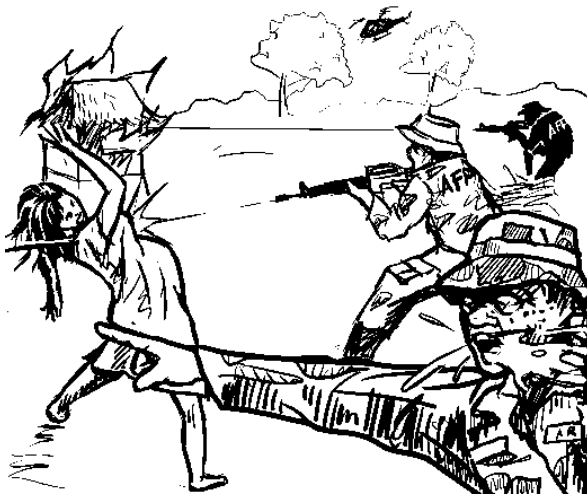
According to witnesses, the cadavers bore torture marks and signs of that they were shot at close range. The killing of surrendered combatants and *hors de combat* violate the rules of civilized warfare.

Shelling. In Buenavista, Agusan del Norte, the 23rd IB thrice strafed and shelled three separate barangays on the last quarter of 2022. This resulted in widespread chaos and disturbance in communities and destruction of farmlands. Resident Juanito Junaldo, who was

then working in his farm in Barangay Lower Olave on December, was wounded in one of the incidents. On November 5, soldiers killed Rene Villa and claimed he was a Red fighter killed in a fake encounter.

Arrest. Soldiers of the 10th ID in plainclothes illegally and without warrant arrested poor farmer and habal-habal driver Danilo Antumikay on December 10 at 1 p.m. Antumikay was abducted in Barangay Tugaya, Valencia City. Fearing for Antumikay's life, his wife and 2-year old child insisted that they accompany him.

Attack on the press. Sectors condemned the guilty verdict handed down by a Quezon City local court against journalist Frank Cimatú on charges of cyberlibel. According to journalists, the con-



viction reinforced the "chilling effect" faced by journalists in the country. They called for the repeal of libel laws especially as these are used by corrupt politicians they expose to jail journalists and attack press freedom.

Forced surrender. La Union Peace and Justice Advocates condemned last December 4 the forced surrender of San Antonio chapter members of Timpuyog dagiti Mari-grigat nga Umili iti Naguilian and San Nicolas West chapter members of Timek ken Namnamma dagiti Babassit a Mangngalap iti La Union in Agoo town. The incident happened on November 26 when the police forced leaders of the two groups to submit a list of their members and sign documents declaring their "withdrawal" of support from the said organizations.

Militarization in Mindoro. The National Democratic Front-Mindoro reported 29 cases of human rights violations by the 203rd IBde in Rizal and Calintaan in Occidental Mindoro in November.

These include 13 cases of encampment in schools, churches and barangay halls; seven cases of physical assault, four cases of threats, three cases of illegal search, two cases of strafing and one each of illegal arrest and detention, forced surrender and evacuation.

Meanwhile, Bayan-Panay secretary general Elmer Forro was released on bail last December 7. AB

ILPS calls to support the people of Peru

THE PEOPLE OF have been protesting for the past two weeks against the "parliament's coup" that ousted Peru's elected president Pedro Castillo last December 7. Castillo was ousted from power after he was impeached by the "right-wing" Congress. These protests were led by agricultural unions, peasant movements, indigenous groups and other democratic sectors. They called for Castillo's reinstitution to power, abolition of the Congress and establishment of a Constituent Assembly to draft a new constitution. They fully reject the current constitution which has been carved from neoliberalism.

In the face of these events, the International League of People's Struggles Committee for Latin America and Carribean called on all anti-imperialist democratic forces in the region to support and collectively rise up with the workers and people of Peru. It encouraged the people to "follow the path of the already revolting people of the region," like in Argentina, Chile, Ecuador and Colombia. On these, the people attempted to "overcome the limitations of popular and Left-leaning governments to successfully challenge plans of the ruling classes, and pave way for national and social liberation."

US economic hegemony in Asia-Pacific

Strengthening its economic hegemony over its allies and colonies in the Asia-Pacific is part and parcel of the militarist Indo-Pacific Strategy of US imperialism. Towards this, US Pres. Joseph Biden launched the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF) before the meeting of the Quadri-lateral Security Dialogue (US, Japan, Australia, India) in Japan last May. Economic officials from its 14 member countries held their first meeting in Australia on December 10-15.

IPEF's overt goal is to counter the expansion of imperialist China in the region. Apart from India and the US, all IPEF members are also members of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) and have strong trade relations with China. The US intends to restrict these relations and rob China of its advantages in global trade, especially in semiconductor manufacturing. At the same time, it wants to tighten its control over the resources, markets and areas where it can dump its surplus capital in the Asia-Pacific.

Although it is being peddled as a "partnership" (or cooperation), the IPEF is no different from the US-abandoned Trans-Pacific Partnership and other multilateral agreements that destroyed underdeveloped and semicolonial countries and stunted their development. This will push countries to open up their economies in exchange for limited capital. It is also an additional instrument of the US to im-

pose rules and processes favorable to American companies and investments in the regional market while keeping its own economy closed.

Many countries complain of the IPEF terms and US initiatives that blatantly violate their economic sovereignty. Recently, the US announced new restrictions on American companies exporting material related to the production of computer chips. It prompted South Korea and Singapore to impose similar restrictions. In this area (trade), Indonesia, Thailand and India have already warned that they will not allow the IPEF to be used to "isolate" a country. They flatly refused to sacrifice their relationship with China.

Total subservience of the Marcos regime

Unlike countries that promote economic independence, the puppet Marcos government hurried to be part of the IPEF. The regime's policy of "opening wide" of the local econ-

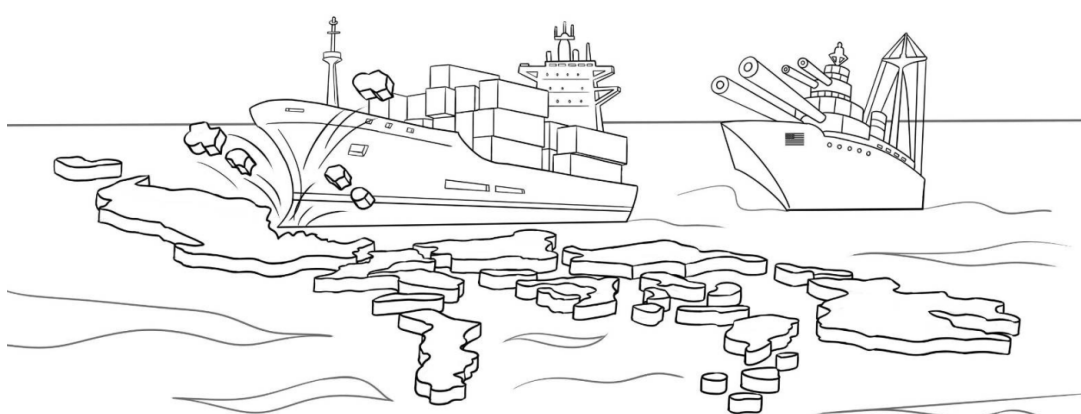
omy for foreign plunder in exchange of meager capital and American market share is in line with this framework.

The US intends to put up a local office of the US Trade and Development Agency (USTDA) in Metro Manila to strengthen its control over policies and economic projects in the Asia-Pacific. In the Philippines, this agency will help American companies corner contracts in the recently opened public utility sector, telecommunications, infrastructure and energy projects and the expansion of mines and commercial plantations.

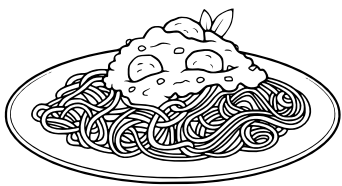
Among US funded projects are two disastrous projects that its vice president, Kamala Harris, even boasted about when she visited the country. One of them is the geothermal project in Mt. Apo in North Cotabato where the USTDA partnered with the Energy Development Corporation (EDC) of the Aboitiz family. Another project is with Eramen Minerals Inc. in putting up a nickel and cobalt processing facility in Zambales.

Both these projects have been subject to the long and bloody resistance of farmers and Lumads. These have caused dislocation of farmers and Lumads and damage to the environment. EDC's geothermal plants were illegally built on Manobo ancestral land in Mt. Apo, which is a protected area. The operations of EMI were once shut down by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources due to its harmful effects on the community. Both projects are contrary to the US rhetoric of "development" and environmental protection that are part of "combating climate change."

AB



₱2,458



price of **noche buena** items this year which is 25.7% higher compared to prices in 2021 and far from the insisted **₱500** budget for a 5-member family.

Source: Noche Buena Price Index, Department of Trade and Industry

36.7%

Filipinos receive at least one social protection or benefit.

Source: World Protection Report 2020-2022, International Labor Organization

₱5.268T

legislated 2023 national budget which was passed almost without adjustments from the original allocation which includes budget for intelligence and confidential funds.



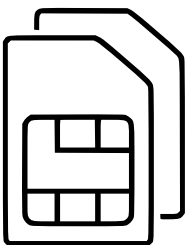
₱1.4M

expensive bail assigned by the court for the temporary freedom of activists **Reina Mae Nasino, Ram Bautista** and **Alma Moran**.



51%

or 316,405 Filipino **nurses** are working overseas due to the lack of local opportunities, low salary, incomplete benefits and inhumane working conditions.



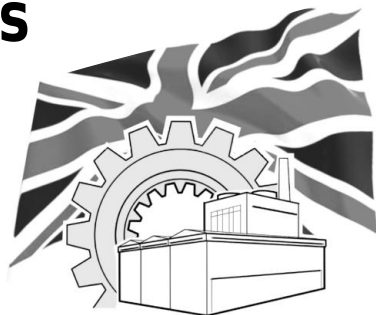
82%

or 131 million of 158.6 million active SIM cards are prepaid or unregistered and face the threat of losing its services if unregistered once the implementation of the **SIM Card Registration** begins on December 27.

25,000

truck drivers in South Korea held a **strike** for 3 weeks to call for wage increase and better working conditions.

Hundreds of thousands UK workers strike over the holidays



This December, trade unions in various sectors of the United Kingdom held strikes for decent wages and humane working conditions. An estimate of 500,000 to one million workers are to go on strike up to the end of the year. These are part of outbreak of workers' struggles in the country since June. According to The Guardian, around 1.1 million workdays were lost between June and October due to labor strikes.

Last December 13, 40,000 members of the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers (RMT) launched their strike against low wages. Railroad workers rejected the companies' offer of a 5% wage increase for 2022 and 4% for 2023. They called the offer "sub-standard," especially in the face of the country's rising cost of living.

The RMT operates 14 companies that run trains. They launched the first wave of strikes on December 13 and 14, and the second wave on December 16 and 17. They will continue their mass actions until 2023.

On December 15, 100,000 nurses in England, Wales and Northern Ireland launched the first national nurses' strike in the United Kingdom. The Royal College of

Nurses is demanding a 19% pay rise and the hiring of additional nurses in hospitals to ensure patient safety. They are part of the public health system (National Health Services or NHS) which has been suffering for several years from low wages, overwork and insufficient state subsidies. Another 24-hour strike was launched on December 20.

The nurses were joined by 10,000 ambulance drivers, paramedics and other emergency workers, who are set to strike on December 21 and 28. They are protesting the NHS' refusal to hand over the 4% pay rise already approved by their government.

Before December, Royal Mail workers and the University and College Union (teachers and other aca-

demic staff) representing 150 universities carried out pickets and strikes. On December 5, 1,000 guards of banks and financial institutions went on strike.

In Scotland, the Scottish Secondary Teachers Association and other teachers' unions went on a 2-day strike. In London, 2,000 bus drivers are planning to strike as their companies continue to refuse more acceptable pay increases.

Over the past decade, there has been minimal, if any, pay rise for workers in the UK. This is while their housing bills and services and commodity prices continually increased. In April, the real value of their wages fell by 3% due to 10.1% inflation. It further fell by October when the inflation rate was recorded at 11.1%. The country's economists fear that it will soar to 18% next year.

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