

# On the Peasant Movement and Agrarian Reform



jose maria sison

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15

julieta de lima  
editor



***Jose Maria Sison***  
***On the Peasant Movement and***  
***Agrarian Revolution***

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***Book 15***

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***Julieta de Lima***

***Editor***

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### Foreword

Land Reform and National Democracy

A Seminar of Landlords on "Land Reform"

The Treachery of Taruc as a Negative Example

Reformist Organizations Beg for Land Reform from Reactionary Government

Revolutionary Guide to Land Reform

Land Reform and the Peasant Movement: Message to the National Founding Congress of Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas

Impact of Imperialist War and Terror and Further Strengthening of the People's Movement

Land and Justice for the Peasants and Farmworkers of Hacienda Luisita

Message of Solidarity and Support for the National Laksbayan in the Philippines

Wholehearted Solidarity with the Farmworkers of Hacienda Luisita and All Supporters

On the Year of Rice Action against the 50th Year of the International Rice Research Institute

Solidarity Message to the Asian Peasant Coalition Caravan

Strengthen Unity for Genuine Land Reform

Fight for Land Reform, Justice and Freedom

Consolidate your Gains, Strengthen Asian Peasant Unity and Intensify the Struggle

Message to the 4<sup>th</sup> National Convention of Anakpawis Partylist

Advance the Agrarian Revolution and Intensify the Struggle for National Democracy

Intensify the Global People's Resistance against the WTO and Imperialist Plunder

KM@50: Continuing the Advocacy for Genuine Agrarian Reform

Recall Successes and Brilliant Lessons

Message of Solidarity to AMBALA on its Summit

Message of Solidarity to NNARA-Youth on its 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

Advance the Interests of the Peasantry and the People

Intensify the Struggle for Genuine Land Reform

Solidarity with the Peasants in Southern Tagalog on the Occasion of the Rural Poor Summit

Solidarity with People's Camp of AMGL, Farmworkers and other Poor Communities in the Countryside

ILPS Condemns Massacre of Peasants in Taquaruçu, Extends Solidarity with People's Movement in Brazil

Consolidate Your Ranks and Advance the National Democratic Struggle

Rise up against Hunger and Fascism

Duterte Is Engaged in Bogus Land Reform, He Is Doomed in the Most Ignoble Sense

Boldly Expand and Consolidate UMA in the Face of Escalating Fascism

Message of Solidarity to Sama-Samang Artista para sa Kilusang Agraryo (SAKA) On its 2<sup>nd</sup> Year General

### Assembly

Fight for Land, Justice and Peace

On the Land Problem, Peasant Class and Agrarian Revolution

Message of Solidarity to the KMP on its 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

The Semifeudal Mode of Production in the Philippines in the Light of International and National Developments in the Past Three Decades

On Semifeudalism

Genuine Agrarian Reform

On the Filipino Peasants' Struggle for Food Security

On Agrarian Revolution and National Industrialization

Introduction to Kerima Tariman's Luisita

## Foreword

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*On the Peasant Movement and Agrarian Revolution* consists of Jose Maria Sison's writings between 1966 and 2021 on the peasantry, the main force of the Philippine revolution and their demand for agrarian reform, which is the main content of the national democratic stage of this revolution.

According to Joma, "The relation between national democracy and land reform is very clear. We can achieve genuine land reform only if we, as a nation, are free from colonial and imperialist domination. In fighting for national democracy against US imperialism and feudalism today, we need to unite the peasantry — the most numerous class in our society — on the side of all other patriotic classes and we need to unite with the peasantry, as the main force or backbone of our national unity and anti-imperialist struggle."

The first item, a speech delivered in 1966, is a historical and dialectical presentation of the role and aspirations of the peasantry as they confront their enemies—the local exploiting classes of landlords and the comprador big bourgeoisie and their foreign masters at various stages in the revolutionary struggle of the Filipino people.

The most important item in the book is the Revolutionary Guide to Land Reform, which Joma drafted for the CPP Central Committee in September 1972 to guide the conduct of the revolutionary forces in advancing the peasant movement for agrarian reform.

Other items in the book are messages and speeches to various peasant organizations in the Philippines and abroad as well as articles and interviews. Let us study these writings to understand the role and importance of the peasantry in the struggle for national liberation and democracy in our country and all over the world.

Julieta de Lima

Utrecht, The Netherlands

May 31, 2023

# ***Land Reform and National Democracy***

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Speech delivered in Filipino at the First Central Luzon Regional Conference of Kabataang Makabayan at Republic Central Colleges, Angeles City on October 31, 1965 in English at the College of Agriculture, University of the Philippines, Los Banos, Laguna, March 23, 1966

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## ***THE COLONIAL QUESTION and the agrarian question***

At the present stage of our national history, the single immediate purpose to which our people are committed is the achievement of national democracy. On this single purpose, all are agreed, irrespective of social classes, unless one belongs to a class aggrandized by the perpetuation of semi-colonial and semi-feudal conditions in our society. Unless one is a landlord or a comprador, one aspires to have his nation free from colonial and imperialist exploitation. Every patriotic Filipino wishes to liquidate imperialism and feudalism simultaneously in order to achieve national democracy.

The relation between national democracy and land reform is very clear. We can achieve genuine land reform only if we, as a nation, are free from colonial and imperialist domination. In fighting for national democracy against US imperialism and feudalism today, we need to unite the peasantry — the most numerous class in our society — on the side of all other patriotic classes and we need to unite with the peasantry, as the main force or backbone of our national unity and anti-imperialist struggle.

The peasantry will join the anti-imperialist movement only if it is convinced that the movement can bring about a state capable of carrying out land reform. In his long struggle for social justice, the Filipino peasant has learned that there must first be a decisive change in the character of the state, brought about largely and fundamentally by the worker-peasant alliance. He has learned the lesson a long time ago that before democratic reforms can be completely effected the national state must be secured from imperialist control and must be firmed up by the overwhelming support of the peasantry and the working class, whose alliance is far more reliable and more qualitatively powerful than the peasant-*ilustrado* combination which became frustrated by US imperialism at the start of this century.

If we study closely the early development of the national-democratic movement, we can see its profound basis in the agrarian situation in the Philippines during the Spanish colonial era. The demand for political freedom became a valid demand to the masses only when they realized that a national state, their own popular sovereignty, could protect them against the exploitative colonial power which could only benefit the colonizers and their local agents. The Philippine Revolution of 1896 took full form only after the peasantry became mobilized into a powerful national liberation movement against colonialism and serfdom. The peasantry provided the mass support for the Philippine revolutionary government and fought the most intense patriotic war against colonial authority, especially in those areas where the contradiction between the peasant and the landlord was most intense. Colonial domination meant feudalism. It had to be overthrown by the armed might of the peasantry.

If we study assiduously the writings and experience of the old national-democratic heroes, we cannot help but find the insistent line that the lack of political freedom of a nation is based upon economic exploitation and control by an alien power. In the case of the Filipino people, during the Spanish era, the theocratic unity of church and state and the lack of national and individual freedom were based upon the feudal economic order and upon the mutual landlordism of lay and ecclesiastical authorities.

In Dr. Jose Rizal's *El Filibusterismo*, you will note how the story of Cablesang Tales cries out for a nation-state capable of protecting its own citizens against foreign exploiters. The story of Cablesang Tales is no different from the lives of our peasant brothers today. He is a victim of excessive land rent, usury, servitude, extortion, insecurity from both lawless elements and legal authorities, ignorance of laws made by landlords for their own benefit, and even of his own industry which only attracts more exploitation from the exploiters. His daughter, Huli, is sacrificed to the unjust circumstances that afflict her father's goodwill as she falls prey to the pious hypocrisies of

usurious do-gooders and the local curate who would even violate her virginal virtues as she seeks his fatherly assistance. On the other hand, while her family suffers all these difficulties, her brother is conscripted into the colonial army — in the same way that our youth today are conscripted into the US-controlled military machinery — to fight peasants that are in revolt in other islands and in neighboring countries. As the unkindest cut of all to her family, Tano her brother — now called Carolino after his share of fighting for Spanish colonialism against the rebellious natives in the Carolines — finds himself in his own country to hunt down a so-called bandit called Matanglawin, his own father who has turned into a peasant rebel leading multitudes of those who had been dispossessed of their own land.

In an ironic situation where the peasant conscripts must fight their own peasant brothers upon the orders of a foreign power, when the mercenaries must face mountains and mountains of guerrillas, Carolino shoots down his own grandfather, the docile and over-patient old peasant who has always advised Cablesang Tales, his aggrieved son, never to respond to the provocations of the powerful. Old as he is, representing several generations of peasant oppression and patience, he has finally become a peasant fighter after the brutal death of his dear granddaughter only to be shot down in an objective act of colonial reaction by his own unwitting grandson. It is too late when Tano or Carolino realizes it is his own grandfather he has shot, unwittingly betraying his own family and his own class. Such is the ironic situation into which many of our peasant brothers are drawn when they enlist in the military, follow the orders of US-trained officers, use US arms, be guided by US intelligence, ideology and advice, and allow themselves to be used against their own peasant brothers in other towns or provinces in our own country, or in foreign countries where they are used by US imperialism to fight peasants who are fighting for their national freedom, as in many countries of Southeast Asia today.

The story of the peasant rebel, Matanglawin, has its basis in the life of Dr. Jose Rizal. As a young man and as a leader of his people, he showed courage in exposing the exploitative practices of the friar landlords and drew up a petition seeking redress which was signed by the tenants, leaseholders and leading citizens of Calamba. What followed the petition came to be known as the Calamba Affair. Governor General Weyler surrounded the town of Calamba, burned the homes of the people, confiscated their animals and exiled the Filipino town leaders. The colonial logic of the Calamba Affair was pursued to the end, to the death and martyrdom of Rizal and to the outbreak of the Philippine Revolution. The dialectics of history led to the polarization between the Filipino peasantry and the Spanish colonial authorities. What made Rizal unforgivable to the Spanish colonial authorities was his having exposed feudal exploitation to its very foundation.

Andres Bonifacio, the city worker feeling spontaneously the fraternal links between his nascent class and the long-standing class of the peasantry, expressed in fiery revolutionary language the peasant protest against feudalism in his poem, “*Katapusang Hibik ng Pilipinas*”:

*Ang lupa at bahay na tinatahanan,*

*Bukid at tubigang kalawak-lawakan,*

*Sa paring kastila’y binubuwisan...*

*Ikaw nga, Inang pabaya’t sukaban*

*Kami’y di na iyo saan man humanggan.*

*Ihanda mo, Ina, ang paglilibingan*

*Sa mawawakwak na maraming bangkay.*

Bonifacio’s call for revolt against feudal exploitation had been prepared by a long series of peasant struggles covering hundreds of years before him. Only after having waged a long series of sporadic and uncoordinated rebellions did the Filipino peasant realize that it took a well-organized and a conscious nation of peasants working as a single massive force to successfully attack feudal power and achieve the formation of a nation-state. Note clearly in the revolutionary poem of Bonifacio that the denunciation of feudal exploitation goes with his call for armed

struggle against the colonial power.

Apolinario Mabini, in the *Ordenanzas de la Revolucion*, a collection of directives for the successful conduct of the revolution, expressed in clear terms the abolition of feudalism as a national objective: "*Rule 21. All usurpations of properties made by the Spanish government and the religious corporations will not be recognized by the revolution, this being a movement representing the aspirations of the Filipino people, true owners of the above properties.*"

The Philippine Revolution of 1896 could have been the instrument of the peasant masses for redeeming the lands taken away from them by their feudal exploiters through more than 300 years of colonial rule.

### ***US imperialism: enemy of the Filipino peasantry***

When US military intervention and aggression came in 1898 to mislead and subsequently crush the Philippine Revolution in the Filipino-American war of 1899-1902, the main revolutionary objectives of establishing a free nation-state and of achieving land reform was crushed. In order to succeed in its reactionary venture, US imperialism snuffed out the lives of more than 250 thousand combatant and non-combatant peasants. They did to our people, largely to our peasant masses, what they are now directly doing again to the people of Vietnam with the same purpose of frustrating a revolutionary nation and its collective desire for democratic reforms, particularly land reform.

In order to stabilize its imperialist rule in the Philippines, the US government sought the collaboration of the old ruling class in the previous colonial regime. It returned to the friars and their lay collaborators their landed estates which had been confiscated from them, and offered to the landlord class as a whole the privilege of sharing the spoils of a new colonial administration and of participating in a new pattern of commercial relations, that is, one between a capitalist metropolis and a colony. The new dispensation of US imperialism required the Philippines to be a producer of raw materials for US capitalist industries and a purchaser of surplus US manufactures.

As a result of the continuous struggle of the peasant masses against US imperialism even after 1902, when all the Filipino landlords and *ilustrado* elements had already accepted US sovereignty and were already collaborating with the new colonial masters, the US colonial administration went through the motion of buying friar estates for the purpose of dividing and redistributing them to tenants. However, no change in the agrarian situation could really be effected. The tenants were in no position to pay the high land prices, the high interest rates and the onerous taxes. The complicated land title system confounded them and allowed smart government officials and private individuals to grab lands. The lack of governmental measures of assistance brought about the wholesale loss of holdings of tenants who did acquire them. Huge tracts of land became alienated into the hands of US corporations and individual carpetbaggers in contravention of laws introduced by the US regime itself. Filipino landlords and renegades of the Philippine Revolution were given more lands as a reward for their collaboration and were allowed to gobble up small landholdings both legally and illegally.

US imperialism had planned that large *haciendas* would still remain in the hands of the landlords in order that sugar, copra, hemp, tobacco and other raw agricultural products would be immediately exchanged in bulk with US surplus manufactures through the agency of what we now call the compradors. Today, if you wish to have a clear idea of compradors, observe the comprador-landlords, under the leadership of Alfredo Montelibano in the Chamber of Agriculture and Natural Resources, who are benefited by the neocolonial trade between the Philippines and the United States and who are now maneuvering the perpetuation of parity rights and preferential trade.

According to the MacMillan-Rivera report, 19 percent of the farms in the Philippines were operated by tenants or sharecroppers at the beginning of the US colonial regime. By 1918, after the supposed division and redistribution of the friar estates and after a large increase in total farms through the opening of public lands, tenancy had risen to 22 percent. In the 1930s, as the peasantry became more dispossessed and poorer, tenancy further rose to 36 percent. The pretended grant of independence by the United States, far from reversing the trend of peasant pauperization, increased it and exposed the emptiness of such a bogus grant. By the late 1950s the tenancy rate rose to 40 percent.



According to figures issued by the reactionary government, tenancy in the Philippines embraced eight million out of 27 million Filipinos in 1963. In Central Luzon, 65.87 percent of all farms were tenant operated, and in the province of Pampanga it was 88 percent — the highest rate for all provinces in the country. This did not yet include an equal number of the wholly landless agricultural workers who subsisted under onerous contract labor conditions on sugar *haciendas*, coconut plantations and elsewhere. The displaced tenants and the irregular, seasonal agricultural workers — the *sacadas* — are also a part of the hapless poor peasantry.

### ***Political unity of the peasantry and the working class***

Within a decade after the ruthless suppression of the last guerrilla remnants of the First Philippine Republic, the worsened conditions of the peasantry in our barrios gave rise to spontaneous revolts and also produced peasant mass protest organizations. These unified in 1922 in the *Confederacion de Aparceros y Obreros Agricolas de Filipinas*, which was broadened and renamed two years later as *Katipunang Pambansa ng mga Magbubukid sa Pilipinas* (KPMP). The KPMP not only demanded agrarian reforms but also called for national independence in the same way the *Katipunan* of Bonifacio did. In 1930, the leaders of this peasant organization consequently united with the *Katipunan ng mga Anak Pawis ng Pilipinas* for the purpose of creating a worker-peasant political alliance under the leadership of the Communist Party of the Philippines.

The establishment of the Communist Party of the Philippines marked a qualitative change in the status and thinking of the working class and a strategic portion of the peasantry. It made these two classes more capable of conducting their own class struggle and the national struggle. They challenged the liberal-democratic pretensions of US imperialism and its local agents.

So long as US imperialism held the reins of power in the Philippines, however, the Filipino peasantry could not raise themselves from their exploited condition. The more they manifested strength and progressive consciousness, the more they became subjected to military and police suppression unleashed by the US imperialist regime. And yet, in that period, the peasant mass organizations were led into reformist activities exclusively and seemingly directed at the landlords and the trade union movement directed its main blow at the bourgeoisie “*in general*.” It is true that the working-class party was aware of the popular outcry for national independence, but it failed to develop the corresponding national-democratic strategy. It failed to deliver powerful blows at US imperialism to expose it thoroughly and mass the forces of the nation against it. Instead, it was the puppet politicians and even the *Sakdalistas* who seemed to have perceived more clearly the main contradiction and the main demand and they tried to pursue the same objective of sabotaging the national-democratic movement into two disparate ways. The puppet politicians took the way of begging for independence from US imperialism. The *Sakdalistas* took the way of anarchism.

US imperialism, together with its landlord-comprador cohorts, was certain of its main enemy. A few months after the formal alliance of the KPMP and the KAP, the Communist Party of the Philippines was immediately outlawed; thus, it was deprived of its democratic rights.

The outlawing of the Communist Party of the Philippines, nevertheless, could not conceal the reality of peasant oppression during the direct colonial rule of the United States. In 1931, a local peasant revolt occurred in Tayug, Pangasinan. A bigger armed uprising of armed peasants occurred in 1936 in the towns of Cabuyao and Santa Rosa, Laguna led by the Sakdal. These peasant revolts were continuing manifestations of the unbearable exploitation of the peasantry and were at the same time the critical effects of the US capitalist depression in the 1930s.

The bitterest agrarian unrest in the 1930s occurred in Pampanga where the Socialist Party and its peasant union, *Aguman din Maldang Talapagobra*, militantly fought the landlord and stood their ground against the civilian guards and the Philippine Constabulary. The Socialist Party led the peasants and agricultural workers in the open until anti-communist repression was eased as a result of the Popular Front tactics and the Communist party of the Philippines was allowed to surface to add its force to the worldwide anti-fascist struggle. The “*social justice*” program of President Quezon was articulated only as a concession to the vigorous demand of the peasantry for agrarian reform.

When World War II broke out, the dislodgement of US imperialism from the Philippines and the emergence of anti-Japanese resistance became the condition for the success of the peasant movement in Central Luzon and Southern Luzon to effect land reform among themselves on the land abandoned by the landlords. Throughout the country, landlord power was generally weakened as its normal lines of control were broken by the conditions of war.

The Japanese imperialists were resisted by armed peasant masses. Where resistance was most successful, the peasant masses were able to use the land abandoned by the landlords to their social advantage. The resistance against Japanese imperialism served as a means for the peasants to assert their power over the land. The armed struggle gave them the power to eliminate the control and influence of the landlords over their land. Many landlords decided to collaborate with the Japanese imperialists. This occasion should have been an opportunity for the entire peasantry to learn that landlordism seeks protection in the bigger power of imperialism, whether American or Japanese. It was, indeed, unfortunate that while they were warding off the excesses and brutality of the newly-come imperialists, they became distracted from the similar nature of US imperialism whose radio broadcasts were blatantly announcing its desire to retake the Philippines and whose motley agents were already scattered throughout the archipelago to keep USAFFE guerrillas waiting for MacArthur. The anti-fascist struggle could have been converted into a struggle against imperialism, both Japanese and American. The cadres of the peasant movement could have exposed the inter-imperialist aspect of the US-Japanese war and alerted the peasantry to the return of US imperialism. They could have spread out throughout the country and developed a reliable anti-imperialist guerrilla movement independent of the US-directed and US-controlled USAFFE. At any rate, through constant struggles against Japanese fascism and its landlord collaborators, the peasantry built up and supported a powerful national liberation army which delivered the most effective blows against the Japanese imperial army in the strategic areas of Central Luzon and Southern Luzon. These areas are strategic because they envelop Manila.

### ***The return of US imperialism and landlordism***

When the US imperialists returned in 1945, they immediately attempted to reinstall the landlords in all parts of the archipelago, particularly in Central Luzon and Southern Luzon, where they went to the extent of arresting, imprisoning, coercing and liquidating the peasant leaders and their comrades. They trusted the landlords, including those who had collaborated with the fascist invaders, as their true allies and they were extremely distrustful of peasant guerrillas who were independent of the US-controlled USAFFE. Not only the HUKBALAHAP became the object of US discrimination and abuse after the war but also the independent guerrilla units, of which the exemplary unit of Tomas Confesor in the Visayas was typical. Post-war benefits and backpay went in bulk to prop up the recognized hero-puppets of US imperialism.

Depending on the intelligence provided by the USAFFE, the Counter-Intelligence Corps and the landlords, the US imperialists gave instructions to the Military Police and the Civilian Guards to attack the peasant masses and apprehend their leaders who had valiantly resisted the Japanese imperialists.

An entire squadron of anti-Japanese peasant fighters which accompanied the so-called US liberators from Central Luzon to Manila was disarmed in Manila, driven off on their bare feet and massacred in Bulacan by the Military Police under secret imperialist orders. Peasant leaders were thrown into the same prisons where pro-Japanese puppets were kept. No less than the national chairman of the *Pambansang Kaisahan ng Magbubukid* was murdered while he was under the protective custody of the Military Police and while he was campaigning for “*democratic peace*” in the countryside. Eight members of Congress who ran under the Democratic Alliance and who were elected by the overwhelming votes of the organized and class-conscious peasantry were forcibly removed from Congress. All these provocations, which preceded the outbreak of full-scale guerrilla warfare were conducted by US imperialism to clear the way for the complete return of imperialist-landlord control of the Philippines. All these provocations led ultimately to the suspension of the writ of habeas corpus and the unwarranted murder and imprisonment of peasants and their leaders and the antidemocratic crackdown on the Communist Party of the Philippines and such mass organizations as the *Pambansang Kaisahan ng mga Magbubukid*.

After the expulsion of the peasant-supported Democratic Alliance members of Congress in an all-out abuse of

democracy, the Bell Trade Act and the Parity Amendment were ratified, thus formalizing the re-establishment of the imperialist-landlord pattern of trade, free-trade so-called, and the parity rights for US citizens and corporations in the exploitation of our natural resources and the operation of public utilities.

US imperialism, by unilateral choice, retained its military bases at twenty-three strategic points all over the archipelago, maintained the privilege of expanding them and of moving its troops from there, and employed them to exercise coercive influence on the peasantry and the entire Filipino people. Subsequently, the US-RP. Military Assistance Pact formally sanctioned the subordination of our military to US military officers in the JUSMAG and to the entire system of US military bases, supplies, planning and advice. In our civil service, US advisers continued to control and direct the most strategic offices. In short, US imperialism retained strategic control over the coercive paraphernalia of the Philippine puppet state and over the economic foundation and civil appurtenances of daily political life.

As the landlords and the imperialists cooperated to their mutual advantage in attacking the peasant masses, the latter were compelled to fight back in order to defend their national and democratic rights. The result of the peasant struggle between the years 1946 to 1952 you already know; it is recent history and there are no better sources of information on this struggle than the veteran peasant guerrilla fighters themselves.

At the height of its world power, US imperialism based its forces against the organized peasantry in order to paralyze the backbone of the Filipino nation and make its anti-national and anti-democratic impositions. In order to suppress the organized and class-conscious peasantry, the puppet agencies of US imperialism recruited its troops from the peasantry only to use them against their own brothers in other barrios and towns. Thus, the story of Cablesang Tales and his son Tano or Carolino was again repeated in the ceaseless struggle of the peasantry.

The leadership of the revolutionary mass movement had emerged from the war politically unprepared to expose and fight the return of US imperialism, which was the only power which could under the circumstances effectively help the landlords to retrieve their lands from the patriotic peasantry of Central Luzon and southern Luzon. Instead of exposing and fighting the revolutionary alliances between the landlords and the newly-returned US imperialists who masterminded and gave full arms support to the Military Police and the Civilian Guards, the peasant movement accused the landlords only as pro-Japanese collaborators and failed to direct immediately the main blow against US imperialism. The leadership of the revolutionary mass movement did not expose promptly the fact that the landlords who had been pro-Japanese collaborators became pro-US collaborators. The delay in the exposure of US imperialists gave the landlords the time to consolidate their positions.

The reactionary triumph of US imperialism and feudalism has prolonged the suffering and exploitation of the peasant masses. Our peasant masses continue to suffer from the unfair distribution of land and the exploitative relations between tenant and landlord, unfair sharing of the crop, usury, landlord-controlled rural banks and cooperatives, profiteering middlemen, lack of price support, lack or high cost of fertilizers, irrigation and agricultural machines, inadequacy of extension work and scientific information and the deplorable conditions of the peasant in health, housing, nourishment and education. All of these difficulties and misfortunes are those of the entire nation, our agrarian nation whose numerically dominant class is the peasantry embracing more than 70 percent of our population. The specter of feudalism haunts us to this day and substantially determines the colonial character of our economy.

With the collaboration of US imperialists and Filipino landlords in full swing, we observe that the supremacy of a ruling elite in this country combines the character of imperialism and feudalism. We observe the local supremacy of the comprador-landlord class which is the most benefited by the strategic US control of our national economy and foreign trade. The owners of the sugar, coconut, abaca and other export-crop plantations have benefited the most from that colonial pattern of trade between our raw material exports and manufacture imports from the United States and other capitalist countries.

It was the military power of US imperialism which prevailed over the peasantry in the absence of a prompt anti-imperialist and anti-feudal strategy developed by a peasant-mobilizing party. However, the myth that Ramon

Magsaysay "*saved democracy*" has been created by US imperialist propaganda. While Magsaysay was a successful propaganda weapon of US imperialism and while he was able to confuse even some peasant leaders, it is clear beyond doubt now that he was responsible for the all-out abuse of democracy directed mainly against the peasantry, for thwarting the solution of the land problem by the peasant masses themselves, for the suspension of the writ of habeas corpus and for the brutalities of the *sona*, village bombardments, mass detainments and murders.

The imperialist version of land reform for which Magsaysay was glorified during his time has gone completely bankrupt. The land resettlement program intended supposedly for the benefit of the landless has only prolonged the life of feudalism in the Philippines. Landlords have taken over far vaster tracts of land in those areas of resettlement and in too many cases, they have even put into question the titles of small settlers. The program of expropriating big landholdings for redistribution to the landless has only been used by the landlords to dispose of their barren and useless lands at an inflated price to the government. The Magsaysay land reform, conducted by the Land Tenure Administration and the NARRA, have failed to improve the condition of the peasantry as the rate of tenancy has risen far beyond 40 percent. The credit system of the ACCFA and the system of FACOMAs have failed to help the tenants and the small farmers and have only been manipulated by the landlords and corrupt bureaucrats for their selfish interests. Agricultural extension workers from the Bureau of Agricultural Extension have always been inadequate. As the imperialist-landlord combination ruled over the country in the 1950s by force of its state power, the reform measures and palliatives proved ineffective in alleviating the condition of the peasantry or in whipping up false illusions. Imperialist and clerical organizations like the Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement (PRRM) and the Federation of Free Farmers also proved ineffective even as propaganda instruments among the peasantry, especially among those who had experienced genuine peasant power.

If the old palliatives become totally useless, an exploiting ruling class looks for new and seemingly better ones. The exposure of the true nature of palliatives is too risky for the ruling class. It must adopt new palliatives designed to meet a possible resurgence of its suppressed adversary. Even as the class-conscious and progressive peasant movement has been quite suppressed since the middle of the fifties, the ruling classes never discount the possibility of an antagonistic resurgence of a peasantry left with no quarter. So, it must make certain concessions even only on paper. Thus, the Agricultural Land Reform Code has been proposed and passed. At the same time a new scheme of "*civic action*" in the countryside, directed by the JUSMAG and the "*counter-insurgency*" adviser, has been laid out. This "*civic action*" in the rural areas is to be coupled with the rural development campaign of the most numerous church.

### ***New conditions and the danger of Yankee monopolization***

New conditions have developed making it necessary for US imperialism to exercise direct control of Philippine agriculture. US imperialism is now trying to plant its roots in Philippine agriculture and complete its control of our agrarian economy in the face of the impending termination and renegotiation of the Laurel-Langley Agreement and Parity Amendment. The policy planners of US imperialism are applying the same tricks they applied on Cuba before and after the dissolution of the Platt Amendment — the Cuban version of our parity amendment. In other words, the US imperialists want to pre-empt the negotiation table by deepening their control of our agrarian economy now. They want to continue parity rights even after the formal termination of the Laurel-Langley Agreement.

The present world condition, especially in Southeast Asia, is forcing US imperialism to prepare the Philippines as a growing ground for agricultural products that it uses directly or are used by Japan, its co-imperialist in the Far East. The Philippines is now being prepared as a reagent in a US-controlled US-Japan axis antagonistic to the anti-imperialist peoples of Asia. If you investigate now the US agro-corporations or the Japanese agro-corporations wanting to develop Philippine agriculture, you will notice how all are commanded by the US cartels and finance institutions, especially the Rockefeller monopoly group. It is certain that the Agricultural Land Reform Code is directed, in its original form as well as in its present form, against old-style landlordism. Had this code in its original version been passed, the statutory retention limit of 25 hectares for landowners who refuse to mechanize and the provisions imposing heavy taxes on undeveloped lands would have severely weakened old-style landlordism. Landlords would have come under greater legal compulsion to mechanize or sell out to those who have capital to mechanize or just cheat the law by delaying it and sabotaging it through a corrupt bureaucracy. The sham

liquidation of old-style landlordism is progressive on first impression. But if the vast lands will only be retained or expanded in the hands of those individuals and agro-corporations which have the necessary capital to mechanize, then we will only be developing a new type of feudalism, only in certain parts of the country, and the peasant masses, particularly the landless tenants, would not be benefited at all. The condition of the peasant masses would only be aggravated by land monopolization conducted by private agro-corporations and individual capitalists. Some tenants would be converted into agricultural workers, others would be displaced and thrown out of the farm by the process of mechanization and modern business organization. The small landowners, in due time, would be forced into bankruptcy because of higher production costs per hectare and would not be able to compete with the large plantations which maintain more economic operations. Even the rich peasants who produce more than enough for their households to be able to sell in the market would be eventually eased out by lower prices of crops produced by the modern plantations. A modern plantation economy in the Philippines will convert a relatively few Filipino peasants into wage-earners but will displace many more tenants whom it will not be able to employ promptly and in sufficient number in industrial centers made even more efficient by automation. An efficient plantation economy in the Philippines will become more of an appendage to foreign monopoly-capitalism. The Philippines will be farther from an even and well-proportioned industrial development.

Since only US firms are now in a financial position in the Philippines to invest in Philippine agriculture, as our own Filipino industrialists are themselves credit-starved (now much more in the case of old-style landlord!) because of decontrol and other restrictive conditions, the process of land monopolization would become more detrimental to the entire Filipino people. The superprofits to be derived from these enterprises would be continuously repatriated and unemployment would increase faster. US firms and subsidiaries are even under instruction now by the US government to prevent the outflow of dollars from the United States by getting credit from local sources in the Philippines. It is a widely perceived fact that US projects and so-called joint ventures are utilizing the resources of such institutions as Government Service Insurance System (GSIS), Social Security System (SSS), Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP) and others, thus depriving the Filipino investors themselves of much-needed credit. Modern landlordism under the control of Esso, Dole, United Fruit, Philippine Packing Corporation, Goodyear, Firestone and other US monopoly firms which have had the experience of ravaging Latin America is no better than the old type of landlordism.

At present, we can already see how vast tracts of land have been alienated from our national patrimony by giant US firms under so-called “*grower*” or “*planting*” agreements with government corporations like the National Development Company and the Mindanao Development Authority. Despite the constitutional limitation that no private corporations shall hold more than 1,024 hectares, the Philippine Packing Corporation and the Dole Corporation have separately taken hold of 8,195 hectares and 5,569 hectares, respectively, through a “*grower*” agreement with the National Development Company and they are supposed to hold on to these lands, with option to expand at any time, for long stretches of periods well beyond this generation and beyond 1974 when parity rights will have terminated.

The United Fruit deal involving the alienation of 10,000 hectares of highly developed public lands and the project to segregate 50,000 hectares at the Mt. Apo National Park Reservation for delivery to US firms through the NDC during the Macapagal administration are convincing manifestations of a new plan US imperialism has for the Philippines.

The Dole takeover of 5,569 hectares of homestead lands in Cotabato is a clear negation of the owner-cultivatorship objective of the Agricultural Land Reform Code. This particular takeover for pineapple plantation and other commercial crops has adversely affected rice production in Cotabato by reducing severely the area devoted to rice.

That US imperialism is literally planting itself in Philippine soil is very evident in several other moves, which were definitely made after decontrol and the approval of the five-year socioeconomic program of Macapagal. Means for higher productivity in agriculture have been set up confidently by US firms. Esso has put up a US\$30 million fertilizer plant which maintains a strategic role. International Harvester, including Japanese farm machinery firms, are also optimistic that they will provide the implements and machines for large-scale farms. In the long run, these modern means for higher productivity can rise in price in such a way that the big plantations, because they buy

them in bulk and use them more economically and profitably, will squeeze out the owner-cultivators from the field of production and marketing. Control and ownership of fertilizer production alone provides US imperialism a powerful leverage with which to squeeze out the leaseholders, the owner-cultivators and even the rich peasants.

The US government has conveniently made use of the World Bank to encourage agricultural education in order to provide the necessary technical support for US plantations. The tested US marionette, Carlos P. Romulo, was re-assigned to the University of the Philippines in order to pay special attention to the receipt of a US\$6 million loan from the World Bank for Los Banos and the procurement of ₱21 million from the Philippine Congress as counterpart fund. Romulo's field of operation has been expanded by the Marcos administration in apparent concession to US imperialism, by making him secretary of education. Twenty-eight million dollars of the belated US\$73 million in war damage payments is about to be rolled out to sustain a land reform education program to be controlled directly by the US government in accordance with the Johnson-Macapagal communique of 1964. This amount is expected by the reactionaries to subvert the revolutionary peasant movement. At the moment, there is a splurge of US activity in the countryside through a multifarious array of agencies such as US Agency for International Development (AID), Philippine Agency for Community Development (PACD), Freedom Fighters, Peace Corps, World Neighbors, Esso, Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement (PRRM), CDRC, CAP, AGR, COAR, ACCI, FHD, IRRI, Operation Brotherhood, CARE, DND and Special Forces, which are directly controlled by the US embassy through JUSMAG and the "*counter-insurgency*" adviser.

Also, improvement of US military bases in the South cannot but mean securing Mindanao for US agro-corporations. Within the Dole plantation area, underground missile launchers are supposed to have been set up. These are bases apparently prepared to strengthen US aggression in Southeast Asia. Nevertheless, they can very well serve to protect US agro-corporations producing crops that the United States may in the near future never be able to get from neighboring countries because of the rise of anti-imperialist movements in the region. It is highly significant that large rubber plantations are being prepared in Mindanao today. Aside from serving the needs of US imperialism, technical crops are also intended to serve the needs of Japan.

The narrow foreign policy of the Philippines, which has been chiefly geared to the so-called special relations with the United States, is expected to trap land reform in the vise of US agro-corporations and of US global economic policy in general. The obvious lack of funds in the National Treasury has been used as an occasion to call for "*land reform*" loans from US-controlled financing institutions like the World Bank, AID, IMF, and others. The Land Bank and the Agricultural Credit Association are bound to be controlled by the US finance system.

### ***The agricultural land reform code***

The Agricultural Land Reform Code claims to seek the abolition of tenancy and the establishment of owner-cultivatorship as the basis of Philippine agriculture. It is supposed to help the small farmers, especially those with economic family-size farms, to be free from pernicious institutional restraints and practices to build a viable social productivity and higher farm income. Aside from expropriation and land redistribution, land resettlement and public land distribution are also proposed by the code. A whole chapter of the code is devoted to provisions guaranteeing the application of all labor laws equally to both industrial and agricultural wage-earners.

For the purpose of giving lands to the landless and to those who have less than enough for their respective families, a leasehold system is to be set up as the first step towards self-reliance. The national Land Reform Council, composed of the representatives of all land reform agencies and of the political party in the minority, is supposed to proclaim an area as a land reform area before its inhabitants can enjoy the leasehold system wherein the tenant becomes a leaseholder paying only 25 percent of the average of three previous annual harvests as rent to the landowner.

That only some Filipino tenants can enjoy the rent of 25 percent upon the proclamation made by the National Land Reform Council is quite puzzling to those who are convinced that such rent may as well be paid in common by all tenants to landowners all over the country by general proclamation. This general proclamation should not even carry the pretentious claim that it abolishes tenancy and replaces it with the leasehold system. For after all,

both terms “*tenancy*” and “*leasehold system*,” although the former sounds more pejorative, means essentially the burden of paying rent.

The Code says that the National Land Reform Council can proclaim a land reform area only after it has considered the nature and possibilities of the proposed land reform area in accordance with priorities set by the code. It is in the consideration of these priorities and other factors that land reform in favor of the peasant masses can be delayed indefinitely, derailed and sabotaged. It is in the consideration of these priorities that the bureaucrats in the land reform agencies will find more affinity with the landlord and imperialist interests which have plans opposed to those of the poor peasants on the same tract of land.

The very idea that the NLRC may proclaim a land reform area only where the leaseholders have a good chance of developing into owner-cultivators is obviously self-defeating and deceptive. Among the several factors that must be considered in the choice of a land reform area are its “*suitability for economic family-size farms*,” which is unfortunately defined by the code as a “*situation where a parcel of land whose characteristics such as climate, soil, topography, availability of water and location, will support a farm family if operated in economic family-size farm units and does not include those where large-scale operations will result in greater production and more efficient use of the land*.” This matter of “*suitability*” is taken into consideration even as the leaseholders can always petition the Land Authority to acquire the leaseholdings for redistribution to them.

On the question of suitability, before any proclamation is made by the NLRC in favor of prospective leaseholders and owner-cultivators, the landlord can easily pre-empt altogether the leasehold system and expropriation proceedings by asserting that large-scale operations by himself on his land will result in greater production and more efficient use. The question can be reduced to a question of legal definition pure and simple by the landlord, or he can actually start what may be termed as “*large-scale operations*” on his land in order to prevent either the question of rent reduction or expropriation from being raised. What is absurd is that the prospect of large-scale operations by cooperatives of owner-cultivators on the same tract of land is pre-empted among other things by the landlord.

To evade the leasehold system and possible expropriation proceedings, the landlord has simply to mechanize, to engage in “*large-scale*” operations such as sugar planting, or to plant permanent trees like citrus, coconuts, cacao, coffee, durian, rubber and others. In Central Luzon and other parts of the country, the landlords are converting their rice lands into sugar lands. In the years to come, this will continue to deal a telling blow on our rice production. In Southern Luzon, those working in coconut, citrus, abaca and coffee lands as tenants are complaining and asking why they are not benefited by land reform. Those who work on fishponds and salt beds have the same complaint of not being within the purview of land reform.

To pursue the discussion as to how the landlord can evade expropriation, let us assume that the NLRC does unilaterally and successfully proclaim land reform over a certain area. The Land Authority — the implementing arm of the council — will still have to subject its acquisitions to the following order of priorities: idle or abandoned lands; those whose area exceeds 1,024 hectares, those whose area ranges between 500 and 1,024 hectares; those whose area ranges between 144 and 500 hectares; those whose area ranges between 75 and 144 hectares. The Philippine government is obviously making a big joke by saying that it wishes to exhaust its financial resources on idle or abandoned lands which are in most cases too expensive to develop. The poor peasant cannot afford to develop such kind of land and it is simply futile for the government to purchase this.

The statutory limit of 75 hectares that a landowner can retain is big enough to perpetuate landlordism in the Philippines. Besides, a landlord can easily retain many times more than this size so long as he has enough members of his family to distribute it to. Another course of action for the landlord is to own land in many different places and keeping to the statutory limit of 75 hectares in each place. In the Agricultural Land Reform Code, there are no plugs to these loopholes.

The landlord has so many defenses to pre-empt the expropriation of his property. But, little is it realized that a landlord might actually offer to sell his land to the Land Authority. Because, according to the order of priorities, in the acquisition of lands by the Land Authority, idle or abandoned lands are to be purchased first. So long as the

landlord can demand “*just compensation*” or even an overprice, he can always strike at a private bargain with the government appraiser. After getting the payment for his expropriated property, he can always acquire private lands elsewhere or public lands to perpetuate his class status. It can be said conclusively at this juncture that the Agricultural Land Reform Code allows the perpetuation of landlordism in the country. The landlords are not hindered but even encouraged to seize public lands already tilled by the national minorities and small settlers in frontier areas.

The ability of the Land Authority to relieve deep agrarian unrest and provide the landlords with “*just compensation*” would depend on the adequacy of funds in the Land Bank. It is already clear that the government is reluctant to make an actual release of funds to the Land Bank. The financial crisis of US imperialism and all its running dogs is something to be seriously reckoned with. Even if funds of whatever enormity are to be released, these could be gobbled up by only a few landlords and bureaucrats. Past experience clearly shows that the bureaucrats and landlords collude in fixing a high price for lands that the latter are willing to part with. The result is that the landlords have more funds to acquire more lands and the poor peasants can never afford the redistribution price exacted by the government.

Except in the change in name, the Agricultural Credit Administration, is no different from its corrupt and inadequate predecessor, the ACCFA. The Commission on Agricultural Productivity is also nothing but a new name for the old Bureau of Agricultural Extension; it is nothing but an ill-manned and indolent bureaucratic agency of the ESFAC. The landlords have always used these agencies more to their advantage than the poor peasants.

There will be more severe contradictions between the peasant masses and the landlord class. The contradictions will arise from the given conditions of these classes as well as from the interpretation of the Agricultural Land Reform Code.

These contradictions are supposed to be resolved by the Court of Agrarian Relations if ever they become formal legal disputes. The Office of Agrarian Counsel is supposed to provide free legal assistance to individual peasants and peasant organizations. But judges and government lawyers are themselves landlords, land-grabbers and land speculators. Behind the facade of populist expressions, they support the landlord system.

It is relevant to cite the fact that when the Agricultural Land Reform Bill was being drafted in Malacanang and discussed in Congress, there was no representative of the peasantry there — particularly the poor peasantry — who was conscious of the class interests of the peasantry and who would have fought for those class interests. What happened, therefore, in the absence of direct political representatives of the peasant masses, was that the political representatives of the landlords and the imperialists had all the chance to finalize the bill according to their class interest and provided themselves all the escape clauses.

The Agricultural Land Reform Code will not solve the land problem. As a matter of fact, it will only aggravate the dispossession of the peasantry and intensify unjust relations between the landlord class and the peasantry. The beautiful phrases in the code in favor of the landless are immediately nullified by provisions which in the realm of reality will be taken advantage of by the landlord class.

### ***What is to be done?***

For the activists of national democracy there is no substitute to going to the countryside and making concrete social investigation in order to determine the oppression and exploitation imposed on the peasantry by the landlord class.

There is no point in making a rural investigation if the facts learned from the masses are not analyzed and processed into terms for basic comprehension of problems as well as solutions. The activists of national democracy should show to the peasants, especially those who have no land at all and those who do not have enough land, the essence of their suffering and arouse them to solve their own problem.

In the present era only the peasant masses can liberate themselves provided they follow the correct leadership of the working class and its party. It is senseless to put trust in laws made by the landlords themselves no matter



how gaudily they may wear the garments of bourgeois reformism.

The concrete step that can be immediately taken by the activists of national democracy is to organize peasant associations dedicated to fighting for the democratic rights of the peasantry. The present laws may be used to some extent but if they are not enough, as practice has borne out, then the peasant masses themselves will decide to take more effective measures, including armed revolution.

The activists of national democracy who go to the countryside should exert all efforts to arouse and mobilize the peasant masses into breaking the chains that have bound them for centuries. Agrarian revolution provides the powerful base for the national-democratic revolution.

## ***A Seminar of Landlords on "Land Reform"***

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**Ang Bayan, Vol. I, No. 3, August 1, 1969**

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THE SEMINAR ON LAND reform in Asia and the Far East held jointly by the FAO-ECAFE-ILO in Manila during the first half of July was actually a gathering of landlords and land-grabbers.

As usual, the example of Chiang Kai-Shek troops grabbing land from the inhabitants of Taiwan, Zionist "Israel" grabbing land from the Arabs and the forcible liquidation of feudalism in capitalist Japan were praised to high heavens as successful "land reform" under the aegis of US imperialism.

The puppet chieftain Marcos aided by his sidekick Gov. Conrado Estrella of the Land Authority took to boasting of his own "land reform" accomplishments before his fellow landlord puppets. Marcos owns more than 20,000 hectares in the Nueva Ecija-Isabela area and several thousands of hectares in Mindanao all of which he gained through land-grabbing.

The seminar also featured representatives of the Federation of Free Farmers (FFF) and the Filipino Agrarian Reform Movement (FARM) who mildly "criticized" the land reform program of the Philippine government but only to attack viciously the peasant masses themselves whom they fear to be set on waging an agrarian revolution.

The FFF is an organization directed by the Catholic Church, especially American Jesuits, and its president is himself a landlord in Alaminos, Pangasinan. The FARM is an organization subsidized by the Marcos regime and its president is a landlord in Concepcion, Tarlac.

### ***Masaka factions quarrel over Ople***

One of the minor events in the bourgeois political scene last July was the quarrel of the two national councils of Masaka over such a trivial matter as to who is the real supporter of the senatorial ambitions of Labor Secretary Blas Ople, one of Marcos' "leftists."

Felixberto Olalia, who used to implement the decisions of the Lava revisionist renegade clique as late as 1967-68, found himself at the receiving end of hard-hitting press releases issued by the Flores-Santos faction that is now the tool of the Lava revisionist renegades.

All the love and labor expended by the Olalia and Flores-Santos factions for Ople went to naught when the senatorial lineup of the Nacionalista Party was finally announced. Ople did not make it.

The two factions are very active today in supporting this or that political candidate or party as if they could muster large numbers of votes in the bourgeois elections. They are silent, however, about the real life-and-death struggle between the peasantry and the reactionaries in Central Luzon.

## ***The Treachery of Taruc as a Negative Example***

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LUIS TARUC BEARS NO significance to the revolutionary movement today except as a special tool of the exploiting classes and a vicious enemy of the people. But in a general review of the history of the revolutionary movement, as we rectify the errors of the past, he bears a special significance of internal value to proletarian revolutionaries today. The emergence of Taruc as a vociferous traitor to the Party and the people from his past role of being the commander-in-chief of the Anti-Japanese People's Army (Hukbalahap) and a leading member of the Communist Party of the Philippines (merger of the Communist and Socialist parties) makes his case a negative example which provides us an important lesson.

The lesson consists of always giving first place to man in handling the relationship between man and weapons; to political work in handling the relationship between political and other work; to ideological work in relation to routine tasks in political work; and in ideological work, to the living ideas in a person's mind, as distinguished from ideas in books.

Luis Taruc is a living proof of the erroneous ideological influence of the first Lava (Vicente) leadership in the old merger party. Taruc was allowed to remain as the general representative of the members of the Socialist party who failed to grasp the theory of Marxism-Leninism and yet who assumed leading positions in both the old merger party and the Hukbalahap. However, the first Lava leadership of which Taruc was a part was in no position to raise his consciousness on the basis of Marxism-Leninism because in the first place this leadership itself did not grasp Marxism-Leninism. It carried out a bourgeois reactionary line throughout its tenure. Until now, Taruc praises Dr. Vicente Lava to high heavens because both of them were both Right opportunists from the beginning to the end of their party membership. The basic document of rectification, "Rectify Errors and Rebuild the Party," which has guided struggle, criticism, and transformation among Party members, explains the empiricist subjectivism and Right opportunism of Vicente Lava and his ideological affinity to Earl Browder who also turned into a counter-revolutionary revisionist and anti-communist traitor to the American revolutionary movement despite the fact that he had been no less than the general secretary of the CPUSA for one decade and a half.

The importance of correct ideology in the revolutionary movement cannot be overemphasized. Today, those whom we regard as our comrades and those who aspire to become Party members must continuously be raised to the level of proletarian revolutionaries in their theory and practice if our Party and Army are to achieve revolutionary success. Some may fall on the way and turn into counter-revolutionaries like Luis Taruc. That is because they shall have failed to revolutionize their consciousness all the way through constant study and practice. By the law of contradiction there will always be uneven development in the theory and practice of Party members as the Party will always reflect the contradictions existing in society and the bourgeoisie will always attempt to subvert it. It is possible even for an entire revolutionary Party to become revisionist and counter-revolutionary; that is, if the bourgeois headquarters within overpowers the proletarian headquarters. In the Philippines, the dominance of the bourgeois reactionary line of the Lavas and the Tarucs during more than three decades has actually been responsible for too many members of the old merger party turning into shameless traitors like Luis Taruc and the two separate cliques of counter-revolutionaries: the Taruc-Sumulong gangster clique and the Lava revisionist renegade clique. The clearest proof that Luis Taruc was never able to grasp the revolutionary theory of Marxism-Leninism and likewise its decisive importance in making revolution is the foolish statement he still makes that to be guided and inspired by ideas proven to be correct in the revolutionary struggles of the world proletariat and of other peoples is unpatriotic and subservience to a foreign power. Thus, he considers Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought as "alien" and "useless" to the Filipino people. This patent stupidity is equal to the treachery and demagoguery of the Spanish governor-general and his local stooges in calling the revolutionary democrats of 1896 as "foreign agents" for being guided and inspired by what they considered to be correct ideas emanating from the French Revolution. Luis Taruc in his newly-found piety never finds Christian theology an alien ideology by his own

definition. He seems not to know that his religious faith was brought over to the Philippines through colonial conquest and this grew on the basis of feudal conditions. He seems not to know that in actually submitting himself to the ideology and material Interests of US imperialism, he is the short-sighted and narrow-minded traitor who opposes the broad democratic interests of the masses and who, therefore, isolates himself from the most powerful ideological weapon, Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought, of the international proletariat and the oppressed peoples of all countries.

Taruc should be the last to resort to chauvinist demagoguery because his supposed latest book, *He Who Rides the Tiger*, as was his egocentric *Born of the People*, was written for him by a foreigner, another communist-turned-renegade, written from a class standpoint totally inimical to the interests of the Filipino people. Douglas Hyde, the actual writer who writes of "winter" in the Philippines in the book, is a well-paid CIA agent specializing in the recruitment of traitors to the side of US imperialism. What we wish to emphasize is not the fact that Taruc is a fake author; but that he is a shameless tool of that foreign, power, US imperialism, whose Central Intelligence Agency subsidizes such ghostwriters as Douglas Hyde, such USIS potboilers as that book of treason *He Who Rides the Tiger* and such publishers as Frederick A. Praeger, Inc. and Geoffrey Chapman.

Taruc is now a well-paid agent of US imperialism, domestic feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism whose special task is mouthing "revolutionary" slogans and narrating his "revolutionary" experience with the single vain purpose of attacking and discrediting the revolutionary movement. In his speeches and articles, his modus operandi is first to sound angry at the exploiting classes, then to turn his fire against communists and those whom he imagines to be communists, and finally to call on the reactionary state of the same exploiting classes to strike down those who dare to oppose it. It is, therefore, fitting for such a scab and traitor to get his CIA salary from such a conduit as the Ateneo de Manila University and the Jesuits whom Rizal, through Pilosopong Tasyo, exposed a long time ago as pretending to be going with the tide of progress but actually trying to hold it back. Even as he accuses the Communist Party of the Philippines and the New People's Army of being subservient to a foreign power in their application of the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought in the concrete practice of the Philippine Revolution, Taruc tries vainly to show off that he has a smattering of Marxism-Leninism by reciting such a line as "One who launches an untimely armed uprising is not only a fool but a 'Left' adventurist criminal" and then by saying that there is no "revolutionary situation" and no "revolutionary crisis" to warrant armed struggle under the present circumstances. Reciting a line or dropping terms does not automatically impress genuine Marxist-Leninists. But by doing so out of historical context, Taruc only proves himself guilty of the dogmatism, book-knowledge or jargon-memorizing that he accuses others of committing. The line that he recited and the terms he dropped pertain to the launching of an armed uprising for the immediate seizure of power in the cities.

The Communist Party of the Philippines and the New People's Army do not have any intention yet of launching an uprising to seize Manila now or in the near future. To do so now, as did the Jose Lava leadership during its own time, would really be foolish, adventurist and criminal. The Program for a People's Democratic Revolution of the Communist Party of the Philippines, the Rules of the New People's Army and every major document of the Party never fail to point out that, in taking advantage of the grossly uneven development of this semicolonial and semifeudal country, we have to build Red political power first in the countryside before seizing the cities. We are not yet prepared to seize the city. The Party has only been recently re-established and has just started to develop the armed struggle and build a revolutionary united front in accordance with genuine Marxism-Leninism. It is idle for the traitor and scab Luis Taruc to provoke a metaphysical debate similar to that one he had with Jose and Jesus Lava, which resulted in Taruc begging for peace negotiations and finally surrendering; and in the Lavas foolishly trying to seize Manila even without the necessary rural bases and adequate revolutionary forces and ending up in a crushing defeat which came as quickly as their tempers had risen.

The international communist movement has passed three major stages of development. The first stage was the era of Marx and Engels who developed the theory of scientific socialism, as against the various forms of utopian socialism that preceded it. The second stage was the era of Lenin and Stalin who developed the theory and practice of proletarian dictatorship and established socialism in one country in the era of imperialism. The third stage is the present era of Mao Zedong who has developed the theory and practice of continuing revolution under

proletarian dictatorship and of preventing the restoration of capitalism in a socialist country.

Taruc is a counter-revolutionary agent who failed to learn Marxism-Leninism. He certainly is grossly ignorant now of the advances of Marxism-Leninism in theory and practice. Despicably though ridiculously, he pretends to know Marxism-Leninism and he uses such pretense to attack it. The proletarian revolutionaries of today look for Ideological guidance in Marxism- Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought and seek historical lessons from the Chinese revolution in the same way that in the era of pre-monopoly capitalism they looked for ideological guidance in Marxism and sought historical lessons from the Paris Commune and subsequently in the era of monopoly-capitalism or Imperialism they would look for ideological guidance in Leninism and seek historical lessons from the October Revolution and the building of socialism in the Soviet Union.

In the same manner that the counter-revolutionaries attacked Filipino communists as "Moscow agents" when the party of Lenin and the Soviet Union held the correct and most advanced position in the world proletarian revolution, the counter-revolutionaries will also attack the genuine communists of today as "Chinese agents" when the Party of Mao Zedong and the People's Republic of China hold the correct and most advanced position in the same world proletarian revolution.

The Communist Party of the Philippines is in stride with the development of Marxism-Leninism in theory and practice by being guided by Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought. This by no means is taking Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought as a dogma. We use it as our practical guide in accordance with concrete analysis of concrete conditions. We are in the process of applying it on concrete Philippine conditions. It will still be essentially through the painstaking and self-reliant efforts of Filipino proletarian revolutionaries and the Filipino people that a people's democratic revolution will be won in this country, although the triumphs of the world proletarian revolution and other oppressed peoples against US imperialism, modern revisionism and all reaction will serve as favorable conditions.

As one who pretends to be a revolutionary but who seeks to undermine the revolutionary movement and attack proletarian revolutionaries, Taruc is even worse than a chieftain of a cattle rustling gang or a cruel overseer or a detested landlord whom the people single out for punishment at the earliest stage in the development of a guerrilla zone. Aware of the gravity of his treasonous acts and his cowardice, he is afraid to go to Central Luzon without the armed protection of the reactionary authorities that suppress the exploited masses.

In his demagogic harangues and his articles rewritten by CIA agents, he speaks egotistically of his supposed personal glories as a young "revolutionary and his personal sacrifices for the masses." But one thing is clear: he has ended up as a speculator on the blood of the masses and he is now a well-paid traitor and scab in the service of the bloodsuckers of this society. His personal anecdotes merit no admiration but contempt. In the eyes of the truly revolutionary masses and youth, he is nothing but a vulture feasting on the corpses of revolutionary martyrs and threatening to attack the living masses. In another manner of speaking, one may describe him as an unprincipled panhandler who would tell any tale of bad luck to solicit a handout every time he dishes out stories about his personal sacrifices.

During his incumbency as commander-in-chief of the People's Army and as a top party person in authority, he was responsible for countless abuses against the masses. He was responsible for the disastrous line of allowing the entry of ruffians into the People's Army and encouraging them to abuse the people in the name of "economic survival." He is now so proud as a supposed "Christian" to criticize the erroneous bourgeois "revolutionary solution to the sex problem" of the Lava leadership but he was responsible for the malicious policy of using women as "bait" for men to enlist in the People's Army and he himself was no exemplar in his conduct towards women. Internally, he abused the power and prestige of the old merger party but he was always notorious for giving the class enemy the best chances for employing counter-revolutionary dual tactics. He was always first in responding to such enemy tactics as negotiations for "peace," amnesty or surrender. Instead of putting down Taruc as a mere careerist in one case, the Lavas should have made a more thorough-going analysis of his class standpoint in so many other cases. But the Lavas in their own super-careerism were themselves merely maneuvering for positions in the old party organization and on the whole they shared in the error of allowing Taruc to pursue his career as an

agent of the bourgeoisie in the old merger party until he was already breaking it up in a big way through his capitulation to the class enemy.

When he surrendered to Magsaysay under the auspices of the Central Intelligence Agency, Taruc shamelessly bargained for special considerations for himself. While in prison, he allowed himself to be used by the reactionaries in the vain attempt to break the will of the revolutionary masses and his fellow political prisoners. He did this in exchange for comfort. He was never actually in prison. He was provided with a bungalow in the Panopio Compound and he had his own television, refrigerator, a plush toilet and bath and a library. He could go out as he pleased, with government bodyguards, even to seek his kind of spiritual comfort in nightclubs.

Luis Taruc thinks his luck will never run out. Like the Lava revisionist renegade clique of today, he misuses such a term as "united front." He conceives of a "united front" in which traitors and counter-revolutionaries like himself have a role and he thinks that the Communist Party of the Philippines now guided by Marxism-Leninism-Mao Ze-dong Thought is being narrow-minded and isolating itself by refusing to engage in a "united front" for parliamentary struggle and putting such traitors and counter-revolutionaries as himself to at par with every one else. As far as the Party is concerned, the only "united front" in which traitors of Taruc's kind have a place is the counter-revolutionary front of US imperialism, modern revisionism, feudalism, bureaucrat capitalism, and all reaction.

This line of Taruc is no different from that of the Lava revisionist renegade clique. The Tarucs and the Lavas of this country think that a "revolutionary situation" and a "revolutionary crisis" will occur after they have exhausted all legal possibilities. Acting as the spokesman of these counter-revolutionaries, Taruc pontificates: "A revolution is not invited. It comes spontaneously when the rich and powerful have become excessive in their cruelty and greed and the entire people can no longer be stopped in their anger, hunger and anxiety. They shall arise and only then shall emerge good leaders, those with the capability to unite and relate all revolutionary groups. "

He declares further: "In all meetings that I have attended in the most strategic places and cities of the entire Philippines, the most widespread desire now of our countrymen searching for patriotic change is a strong national unity conforming to all peaceful and democratic methods."

These statements show that Taruc is a deliberately counter-revolutionary juggler of words and once again prove that, indeed, he was never a communist. He believes in spontaneous revolution. He has no real knowledge of class struggle and of Philippine society; he now mistakes his present bourgeois status and his bourgeois masters and audiences for the state of the nation and the oppressed masses. He does not recognize the uneven development in this semicolonial and semifeudal country on the basis of which a people's war is now being waged step by well-studied step.

Undialectical in their outlook, the Tarucs and the Lavas do not recognize that they are already circumscribed and corrupted in their bourgeois offices even now and that the masses do not recognize them at all as revolutionary leaders. They are not even recognized by the masses as leaders of reformist organizations; they are only vaguely known as beggars of bourgeois peace and accommodation. If they cannot be revolutionary today, there is no reason why they will suddenly become the revolutionary leaders of the masses tomorrow. Even if Taruc delivers a million speeches and writes a million articles, he will only end up as a sham and as a counter-revolutionary.

A man who keeps on writing the following will come to no good end: "with the apparent stupidity if not real stupidity, or pretended blindness if not real loss of sight, of our government intelligence and security agencies, they are putting the whole country in grave danger in the long run. For that matter, the ones with the most responsibility are the President of the Nation and Congress. They are very intelligent people. Why have they not solved it, especially during the time that the revolutionary movement of the HMB was at its weakest, through sincerely humane and democratic methods? It should have been finished a long time ago. And we should have long ago embraced each other as united and loving compatriots, and like one man striving for the progress of the whole nation in democracy, freedom, prosperity and good government.

"The big danger that we shall face is this: (the author gives a long warning to the reactionary government)... It has already started in Central Luzon, it has already reached the Visayas, and it is possible that it now has groups in

Mindanao. That is the danger! What is the answer to that?"

Only a real counter-revolutionary, an enemy of the people, can write in such a vicious way as this. He wants the exploited classes to embrace the exploiting classes under the present reactionary state. He is also offering his "expert" testimony and services to convict newsmen and the labor organizers in the bourgeois courts of the Visayas. What "united front" is Taruc really interested in? It is one in which such cheap traitors like him join the reactionary government in suppressing the masses. It is a counter-revolutionary front, not a revolutionary united front.

It is clear in the Program for a People's Democratic Revolution that the Communist Party of the Philippines wields the two weapons of armed struggle and national united front. One helps the other. Our principle of revolutionary united front is different from the counter-revolutionary united front of the Tarucs and the Lavas in that ours is a united front for waging armed struggle against US imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism.

Taruc's idea of a "united front" is one that broadens support for his pocket and bloats his ego. He knows that when the Party wields both the weapons of armed struggle and the united front as during the Japanese occupation, it is stronger, more stable and wider in mass support. It is when one is separated from the other that the Party is weak.

It is idle for Taruc to attack the Party for making criticism of certain bourgeois personalities. These same personalities will always be willing to cooperate with us when they see that they stand to gain something from cooperation with us. This fact is clearly evident in Central Luzon where the Party has already established a modest amount of revolutionary power. As a matter of principle, the Party will always maintain its independence and initiative in a united front in the same way that it allows other class allies to do the same. One basic principle in the united front is the combination of unity and struggle all for the sake of taking the best steps to destroy the common enemy. This is based on class analysis. The Communist Party of the Philippines will always criticize and rectify the errors and weaknesses it commits or those committed by its allies in the course of revolutionary struggle.

In writing an article on the treachery of Luis Taruc and in replying to his article entitled "Foreign Ideology of the Patriot" (Isipang Dayuhan ng Makabayan) in *Taliba* (August 31, 1969), it is not so much to engage in polemics with a traitor and a scab like him as to expose his errors and lies for the benefit of the masses and of other allies who might be misled by outbursts of anti-Chinese chauvinism and by counter-revolutionary views on "national unity" and "peace" which are calculated to conceal class struggle and the reactionary character of the present state. It is never a lowly or trivial task to do this. It is a necessity and a duty in the same way that we never tire in exposing the evils of US imperialism, modern revisionism and all reaction.

In conclusion, let it be stated once more that the Communist Party of the Philippine will always be in stride with the advances of the world proletarian revolution in theory and in practice and it will always integrate the universal theory of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought with the concrete practice of the Philippine revolution. It will always combine proletarian internationalism and revolutionary patriotism in the struggle against US imperialism, modern revisionism and local reaction. All of us who fight for people's democracy are all at once patriots and internationalists.

There is not a single significant ideological trend or movement in the Philippines today which does not seek inspiration and lessons from and relations with definite world historical forces. Neither revolutionaries nor counter-revolutionaries nor even the "pure" nationalists can claim their actions and ideas to be absolutely isolated from precedent and contemporary class forces in the world, historically, ideologically or politically. Even such a numbskull counter-revolutionary like Luis Taruc does not show any sign of being solely or mainly guided by the aboriginal ideas of the vestigial Dumagat nomads. Even nationalism was something that emerged in the Philippines during the late part of the 19th century in emulation of the bourgeois liberalism that had been previously systematized in Europe during the early stages of capitalist development.

As proletarian revolutionaries, we are always aided by the struggles and victories of the world proletariat and all oppressed people. But as Chairman Mao has pointed out, "In the fight for complete liberation, the oppressed people rely first on their own struggle and then, and only then, on international assistance." He has long declared:

"We stand for self-reliance. We hope for foreign aid but cannot be dependent on it; we depend on our own efforts, on the creative power of the whole army and the people."



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VIOLENCE AND DECEPTION are always employed at the same time by the reactionaries. While they attack the revolutionary peasant masses of Central Luzon and the resolute organizers of farmworkers and peasants in Negros with the most vicious forces, they field and manipulate reformist organizations that mendaciously borrow the slogans of the revolutionary mass movement with the sole purpose of sabotaging it.

Thus, on the question of land reform, such an ideological and material bastion of feudalism as the Catholic Church started to put up at the Agrifina Circle a sham demonstration for the cause of land reform last September 11. The press releases issued by the priests and their sacristans tried to create the illusion that they have very many organizations for extending charity to the peasants and farmworkers. They are the Federated Movement for Justice and Reform, Young Christian Socialists, Federation of Free Farmers, Youth for Land Reform, Christian Youth Activists, Concerned Christian Youth and so many others with fancy names.

Among the supporters of these "land reform" enthusiasts were characters from the US Agency for International Development (AID), end, of course, the children of landlords in exclusive boys' and girls' sectarian schools.

The bourgeois press bloated up the actual number of the cleric-led demonstrators at the Agrifina Circle from less than 500 to 5,000 at one time and from less than 50 to 500 on most of the days they sat it out on the steps of the old Department of Agriculture building. It always pictured the demonstration leader as furiously threatening to make "revolution" in between his pleas to have audience with government bureaucrats from the rank of bureau director to department secretary. At one time, the sham demonstrators numbering less than 100 were reported by the bourgeois press to have "stormed" Malacanang and managed to reach Marcos himself without suffering a single casualty despite all "preventive" measures taken by the entire Presidential Guards Battalion.

If a summary were to be made of the whole sham show made by the clerics, the protest demonstration was actually an attempt to minimize the land problem as something that can be solved by the reactionary government.

Playing up to the antics of the clerics and their sacristans, the Flores-Santos faction of the Masaka (Malayang Samahang Magsasaka), which is closely identified with the Land Authority Gov. Conrado Estrella, spent a large amount of money (at least PhP30,000) on chartered buses last September 19 to ferry about 5,000 people from the provinces in an attempt to join up with the cleric-run demonstration in a "united front" for bourgeois land reform.

They were promptly denounced by the clerics and sacristans as "infiltrators." They were also denounced as "col-orum" by the Olalia faction of the Masaka which is closely identified with Secretary of Labor Blas Ople. The press agency of the Lava revisionist renegades bloated up their actual number to 15,000.

Blatantly avoiding Malacañang Palace, the Masaka demonstrators preferred to march from the Agrifina Circle to Plaza Miranda where their energy was dissipated by the speech-making of their officers who demanded that they be employed in the "land reform" agencies of the reactionary government and that such bills as farmers' social security, farmers' memorial and bank, and unification of farmers' associations be passed.

The speakers representing the BRPF (Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation of the Philippines) and the MPKP (Malayang Pagkakaisa ng Kabataang Pilipino) in the Masaka demonstration advocated a "boycott" of the elections. This only served to expose the "multiple policies" of the Lava revisionist renegade clique on the same question. Like the Olalia faction, the Flores-Santos faction is deeply committed to the re-election bid of Marcos and Lopez and, of course, to the art of begging for official positions in the reactionary government and for financial manna from the reactionaries especially during this bourgeois electoral season.

To the genuine proletarian revolutionaries, land reform is not only a matter of distributing land here and there as the reactionary government may wish. It is essentially the acquisition of political power by the revolutionary

peasants themselves under proletarian leadership. Real destruction of feudalism and the achievement of land reform cannot be made without first undermining and destroying the political power of the landlords by revolutionary armed force.

# ***Revolutionary Guide to Land Reform***

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**Drafted for the CPP Central Committee, September 1972**

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## **CHAPTER I. THE MAIN Content of the People's Democratic Revolution**

Section 1. The main content of the people's democratic revolution is the fulfilment of the peasants' demand for land and the eradication of the various forms of feudal and semifeudal exploitation.

Section 2. It is therefore the prime duty of the people's democratic government to fulfil such demand by implementing a comprehensive land reform program whose essential goal is the free distribution of land to the poor peasants and lower-middle peasants and the promotion of productive cooperation among the peasant masses.

## **Chapter II. The Land Reform Program**

Section 1. This land reform program shall have as its minimum goal the drastic reduction of land rent and the elimination of usury; and as its maximum goal the free distribution of land to the tillers who have no land or who do not have enough land. This program shall also have as a constant goal the betterment of wage and living conditions of farmworkers in landed estates operated on a capitalist basis.

Section 2. Free distribution of land shall be effected as soon as the Communist Party of Philippines, the New People's Army, the people's democratic government, the peasant associations and other mass organizations, the militia and the local guerrillas are sufficiently strong in the land reform area.

Section 3. The Party Central Committee or a regional Party committee shall have the authority to determine whether the free distribution of land is already possible in a given land reform area.

## **Chapter III. Rent Reduction and Elimination of Usury**

Section 1. In lands where feudal relations exist, land rent shall be reduced to ten percent or even less of every crop. Such land rent may be made in cash or kind.

Section 2. The net crop shall be arrived at by deducting from the gross crop all agricultural costs incurred by the tenant. Costs for ploughing, harrowing, rent or depreciation of farm animals and implements, irrigation, seeding and seedlings, planting, weeding, fertilizers, pesticides, harvesting, hauling, threshing and milling shall be in the category of agricultural costs. Such shall be determined according to price standards set by the peasant association and also according to current prices.

Section 3. Usury shall be completely eliminated by four methods: a) encouraging the peasant masses to keep personal savings; b) letting the peasant association operate as a cooperative association in order to accumulate savings and other income; c) limiting the rates of interest to only a simple interest of six percent per annum on current debts; and d) cancelling all unjust debts and recomputing old debts as far back as five years at the simple interest rate of six percent per annum.

Section 4. Any agricultural cost, especially seed grain, which may be shouldered by the landlord shall be paid for without profit or interest and shall be deducted from the gross crop. The peasant associations shall inquire into every loan agreement between a landlord and a tenant and shall not allow any landlord to compel a tenant to receive any loan from him or from any known usurer, especially when the interest rate charged is more than the simple interest rate of six percent per annum.

Section 5. Rent on work animals and farm implements which are both landlord property shall be reduced parallel to land rent reduction. The rich peasants and upper-middle peasants shall also be persuaded to reduce rent on their work animals and implements.

Section 6. No landlord, administrator or overseer shall be allowed to demand any kind of tribute from the tenant families, whether this be in the form of labor, menial service, fees or anything else in kind from the main or side occupations of the tenants.

Section 7. Rich peasants and upper-middle peasants shall be persuaded to increase the wages of the farmworkers that they hire or reduce the rent paid to them by their tenants or subtenants in accordance with standards set by the peasant association. Such standards shall not make the rich peasants and upper-middle peasants lose their status.

Section 8. In case of any calamity like floods, drought, crop disease, fire, enemy action or the like, where at least twenty percent of the crop is destroyed, the tenant shall not pay any land rent to the landlord. Should the calamity damage the crop to the extent of at least fifty percent, the tenant shall not pay any land rent for the incumbent crop and also for the next crop. Payments on debts previously incurred on destroyed crops shall be justly settled by decision of the peasant association according to concrete circumstances. The peasant association may decide to cancel the debts to an extent parallel to the amount of destruction, especially if those debts were incurred from landlords and other private moneylenders.

Section 9. In case a tenant for one reason or another forfeits his right to till the land, it shall be the responsibility of the peasant association to determine tenancy rights. The tenancy rights shall be passed on to an immediate relative of the previous tenant or to someone else who is a farmworker or poor peasant.

Section 10. The simple method of withholding information from the landlord about the actual harvest may be employed to reduce land rent drastically. In such a case, one half of the land rent that should have gone to the landlords shall be given to the people's democratic government through the peasant associations or the New People's Army and the other half shall accrue to the income of the tenants.

Section 11. On the eve of the confiscation of landlord property and free distribution of the same, simple non-delivery of land rent to the landlord shall be made concertedly by the tenant masses. One half of the land rent that should have gone to the landlords shall automatically be given to the people's democratic government through the peasant association or the New People's Army and the other half shall accrue to the income of the tenants.

Section 12. The peasant associations and their committees shall conduct mass meetings on land reform, and shall continuously study and discuss and eventually agree on how to distribute the lands to be confiscated from the landlords. Such activities shall facilitate the current as well as future work of the land reform committees.

Section 13. Any landlord who resorts to violent means or any other counter-revolutionary action in order to counteract the campaign to reduce the land rent and eliminate usury shall be punished according to the gravity of the crime, shall have his land confiscated and shall have the loans he has lent cancelled without further compensation. However, other members of his family shall be given the opportunity to have a means of livelihood, including land cultivation, provided they obey the laws of the people's democratic government.

#### Chapter IV. Free Distribution of Land

Section 1. Land shall be confiscated from the landlords and shall be distributed free to the poor peasant and lower-middle peasant families, who shall have priority in owning the piece of land that they till but who shall at the same time agree to certain readjustments for the purpose of ensuring each family has sufficient land and therefore promoting the common welfare.

Section 2. Land shall be distributed according to the principle of equalizing landed property and enabling the poor peasants and lower-middle peasants to achieve the status of middle-middle peasants. Due consideration shall be given to the following: a. the total amount of land available for distribution in the area; b. the size and labor power of every family or household receiving the land; and c. the quality, location and size of the land.

Section 3. Dependents of revolutionary martyrs, cadres and Red fighters shall enjoy priority in receiving a share of the land being distributed free. In cases where they lack sufficient labor power, the people's democratic

government shall see to it that the peasant association in their locality gives them all necessary cooperative assistance in cultivating their land.

Section 4. The middle-middle peasants shall be given some share of the land being distributed free in order to raise the level of their livelihood to some extent, provided that their land share does not give them the status of upper-middle peasants or rich peasants.

Section 5. Workers, handicraftsmen, pedlars and other poor non-peasants who are willing to till the soil shall be given a share of the land being distributed free. Should they continue to have means of livelihood other than tilling the soil, their land share shall be properly adjusted.

Section 6. Work animals, farm implements and such other property confiscated from the landlords shall be distributed free on the basis of equalizing property or turned over to the peasant association for administration and common use.

Section 7. Orchards, fishponds, ranches and other such property which are landlord property but which cannot be divided without prejudicing their productivity shall be turned over to the cooperatives or to the people's democratic government for appropriate purposes.

Section 8. Depending on concrete conditions, one to ten percent of the land confiscated from landlords should be set aside for public use; for production plots of the New People's Army, the peasant associations and other mass organizations; experimental farms; and also for future readjustments in land distribution.

Section 9. The surplus land and other means of production owned by the rich peasants and upper-middle peasants shall not be confiscated. However, these rich peasants and upper-middle peasants shall be persuaded to further increase the wages of the farmworkers that they hire or reduce the rent paid to them by their tenants in accordance with standards set by the peasant association. In cases where the rich peasants and middle peasants rent lands from the landlords, such lands shall be considered landlord property and shall be subject to confiscation, with the rich peasants and upper-middle peasants getting their due share in the free distribution of land.

Section 10. The land of revolutionary martyrs, cadres, Red fighters, school teachers, professionals and workers which do not exceed the limits of the landholdings of rich peasants shall not be considered landlord property and shall not be confiscated, provided they are tilled by relatives of the owners and provided further that the local masses agree.

Section 11. Homes, industrial and commercial enterprises, artisans' shops, schools, religious houses, plazas, public playgrounds and the like shall be allowed their necessary land sites. Even before the free distribution of land, all tenants shall be assured of ownership of their home lots without paying any amount to their landlord.

Section 12. The members of the enlightened gentry who support the people's democratic government and agree with its land reform program shall not be subjected to any punishment or humiliation, and each of them shall be allowed to keep his own house, personal facilities and industrial or commercial business or a piece of land which is roughly equivalent to the piece of land owned by a rich peasant.

Section 13. Landlords who have not committed any serious crime against the people shall be allotted land to the same extent and quality given to the poor peasants and lower-middle peasants, provided they are willing to till the soil and to re-educate themselves through their own labor.

Section 14. Persons of good standing who have left their home barrios for one reason or another shall upon their return be given land for them to till so long as they express their willingness to till the land.

Section 15. Enemy soldiers and officers who have mutinied against or deserted the enemy shall be absolved of responsibility for past actions committed under orders of their superiors and shall therefore be allowed to enjoy the benefits of land reform.

Section 16. Any landlord who resorts to violent means or any other counter-revolutionary action in order to

sabotage or counteract the campaign to distribute land for free shall be punished according to the gravity of his crime. However, other members of his family shall be given the opportunity to have a means of livelihood, including the right to own and till a piece of land, provided that they obey the laws of the people's democratic government.

## Chapter V. The Peasant Association as a Cooperative Association

Section 1. The peasant association shall at the barrio level and upwards function as a cooperative association mainly of poor peasants, middle peasants and farmworkers, unless there is some particular need for a cooperative association that is distinct from the peasant association.

Section 2. The peasant association shall always foster and undertake among its members such elementary forms of cooperation as mutual aid and exchange of labor in order to promote the common welfare, raise production, reduce certain production costs and eliminate the need for credit from the usurers.

Section 3. The peasant association shall see to it that the products of its members can be sold at the best possible price and shall combat exploitative merchant manipulations. It shall deal fairly with the merchants and allow them a fair rate of profit.

Section 4. Equal grain or cash contributions shall be specially pooled or regularly accumulated from members of the peasant association in order to create various types of common funds such as the following: a) for acquiring work animals, farm implements, equipment and facilities that otherwise cannot be afforded by a single person or family; b) for setting up a store that buys basic commodities as well as seeds, fertilizers and pesticides in bulk and that consequently sells to the local people at retail prices lower than if the goods were otherwise purchased; c) for developing side occupations; d) for storing medicine for common illnesses as well as for getting adequate medical and dental services; and e) for supporting educational and cultural activities and also recreational projects and facilities.

Section 5. The peasant association may acquire such modern equipment as irrigation pumps, tractors and threshing and milling machines but before any such acquisition it shall demand more efficient and cheaper service from owners of equipment already in operation.

Section 6. When credit is explicitly extended to particular members, the peasant association shall not charge an interest rate higher than six percent per annum and shall accept land, the next harvest, farm animals, implements or some useful personal property as collateral commensurate in value to the amount of credit extended. Credit can be extended only for productive or other worthwhile reasons. The peasant association shall have the right to inquire any time into the actual use of the loan.

Section 7. The peasant association shall apply cooperative efforts in helping the dependents of revolutionary martyrs, cadres and Red fighters cultivate their fields or earn a living in some other way.

Section 8. The peasant association shall develop on a cooperative basis such side occupations as cultivation of orchards and vegetables, poultry raising, hog-raising, cattle-raising, lumbering, carpentry, collection of wood fuel, fishing, fish-farming, fish processing, handicrafts, tailoring and dressmaking, blacksmithing, transportation (tricycles, jeepneys and motor boats), motor repair shops and others.

Section 9. The peasant association shall decide according to concrete conditions how to recover expenses, maintain levels of financial sufficiency and draw a fair rate of return on investments.

Section 10. The peasant association shall acquire lands for cooperative purposes and shall during the free distribution of land have their own share. The lands owned cooperatively shall serve as the base for reaching higher levels of cooperation and their income shall be used for acquiring surplus lands of rich peasants and others permitted to own surplus lands and also the lands of the beneficiaries of land reform who for one reason or another want to sell their lands.

Section 11. Members of the peasant association shall be entitled to an equal share of labor and likewise to an equal share of income in the cultivation of the lands owned cooperatively. However, the peasant association shall devise a system of work done by the members. The members shall be compensated accordingly.

Section 12. Peasant associations of a number of barrios, towns, districts or provinces may undertake joint cooperative projects under the direction of a committee and upon the approval of the people's democratic government at an appropriate level.

## Chapter VI. Better Wage and Living Conditions of Farmworkers in Capitalist Farms

Section 1. In farms operated on a capitalist basis, full support shall be extended to the formation of workers' unions and exercise of democratic rights among the farm and other workers and likewise to union demands for better working and living conditions and other benefits.

Section 2. Better working and living conditions and other benefits shall mean job security, a fair minimum wage, a higher wage rate for overtime work and for more dangerous work, a wage scale based on efficiency and length of service, better facilities of work, better housing facilities, vacation privileges, pension plans, operation of store cooperatives to assure them of basic commodities at low prices, free medical and dental services for the worker's entire family, free elementary and high school education for their children, compensation for death or accidents, free burial expenses, and the like.

As much as possible, farmworkers shall be allotted private lots in order to undertake side occupations with which to supplement their consumption needs as well as income.

Section 3. Since farmworkers, especially those categorized as non-regular and non-permanent workers in capitalist farms, are drawn from the ranks of the peasant masses, the peasant association shall examine and take appropriate action on any contract or plan by which a landlord, administrator, overseer or labor contractor seeks to recruit farmworkers from a locality. The peasant association shall safeguard the political and economic rights of the farmworkers who may at the same time join the workers' union in their place of work.

Section 4. Anyone who recruits farmworkers shall be prohibited from violating fair contracts, practicing usury, getting cuts on wages, cheating on accounts and other exploitative practices. Anyone who violates this prohibition shall be subject to punitive measures.

Section 5. The agricultural workers' union or the peasant association in the vicinity of a capitalist farm shall see to it that idle or excess parts of a landed estate operated on a capitalist basis shall be distributed for cultivation. In the case of ranches the area shall be correlated with the actual number of cattle.

Section 6. Depending on concrete circumstances, the people's democratic government may completely take over landed estates operated on a capitalist basis or allow the landowners to continue ownership and management of these under such strict conditions of the workers and to pay taxes mainly in cash to the people's democratic government.

Section 7. Big foreign capitalists shall be strictly prohibited from owning to any extent or controlling in any manner agricultural lands and therefore they, together with their running dogs, shall be subject to punitive measures should they violate this prohibition.

Section 8. The owners, administrators, overseers, labor contractors, including other running dogs, who use private armed guards or enemy troops or police to guard landed estates and oppress the farmworkers and the people shall be subject to punitive measures.

Section 9. Agricultural lands operated on a capitalist basis shall ultimately be nationalized by the people's democratic government. The unions and mass of workers shall be oriented towards this goal.

## Chapter VII. The Poor Settlers and National Minorities in Frontier Areas

Section 1. In frontier areas, the poor settlers and national minorities shall be organized into peasant associations in order to look after their common interests, foster cooperation and combat feudal and semifeudal exploitation. Unity and understanding between the settlers and original inhabitants shall be promoted.

Section 2. The poor settlers and national minorities in logged over areas, forest clearings, pasture lands or reclaimed areas, shall be assured of ownership of the homestead or lots that they cultivate and shall be encouraged to further develop these.

Section 3. Resettlement of landless peasant in frontier areas shall be promoted in order to make up for land scarcity in certain areas. However, no infringement whatsoever of the equal rights of the national minorities or original inhabitants shall be allowed.

Section 4. The people's democratic government, together with the peasant associations, shall be responsible for the amicable settlement of land disputes in frontier areas.

Section 5. Big capitalists, landlords and comprador-bureaucrats shall be prohibited from grabbing lands in frontier areas and therefore they, together with their running dogs, shall be subject to punitive measures should they violate this prohibition.

Section 6. Restrictions shall be placed on deforestation with due concern for the general welfare and without prejudice to the welfare of the poor settlers and national minorities.

## Chapter VIII. Implementation of the Land Reform Program

Section 1. The people's democratic government shall establish land reform committees at every level in order to supervise land reform work. These land reform committees shall be given the authority to decide on problems pertaining to land reform. Units of the New People's Army shall assist them.

Section 2. The peasant associations and their leading organs shall mobilize the peasant masses in achieving land reform. Aside from conducting mass meetings, they shall make a class analysis of households in their locality; determine the amount of labor power and number of dependents in every family or household; draw up an accurate map of the lands to be confiscated including the adjoining lands thereof; and indicate the quality and sizes of parcels as they are before the free distribution of land and as they will be when free distribution of land shall have been made.

Section 3. Mass meetings shall be conducted as often as necessary in order to strengthen the resolve of the peasant masses to conduct and win the struggle for land. These shall promote the general line of the people's democratic revolution and the current line on land reform in the area; give full play to the pouring out of grievances against imperialist, feudal and bureaucrat oppression; point out the solution of current problems; and foster the spirit of productive cooperation.

Section 4. Despotic landlords and their running dogs who violently oppose land reform shall be arrested by the militia, local guerrillas or regular units of the New People's Army for trial by the people's court.

Section 5. Landlords shall be classified as either despotic or non-despotic; enlightened or non-enlightened gentry; and big, medium or small prior to and in the course of land reform. They shall be treated accordingly, with the most powerful struggle of the peasant masses concentrated on despotic landlords who are in authority and have big landholdings.

Section 6. In the course of the free distribution of land, the people's democratic government shall issue new land titles through the land reform committees. The land titles of the landlords shall be automatically nullified.

Section 7. The basic unit area for both minimum and maximum goals of land reform shall either be the municipality, a large continuous landed estate or even a barrio.

## Chapter IX. Agricultural Taxes



Section 1. The success of land reform shall be the key to self-reliance of the people’s democratic government.

Section 2. Tax collection shall be made from the peasant masses on the basis of family heads or households after every harvest. Tax payments shall be made in kind or cash.

Section 3. An agricultural tax shall be collected and shall normally be equivalent to ten percent of the total gains made by the poor and lower-middle peasants as a result of land reform.

Section 4. Only for definite reasons, such as the intensification of the war effort or support for refugees, shall the agricultural tax be raised to as high as the maximum limit of forty percent of the total gains made as a result of land reform.

Section 5. Peasants of middle-middle status immediately prior to land reform shall be required to pay an agricultural tax equivalent to five percent.

Section 6. Rich peasants, upper-middle peasants and other non-cultivator owners of agricultural lands comparable in size to those owned by rich and middle peasants shall be required to pay an agricultural tax equivalent to ten percent of their net crop.

Section 7. Peasant associations shall contribute every month to the funds of the people’s democratic government an amount equivalent to two percent of their monthly net income.

Section 8. Agricultural capitalists, corporately and individually, shall pay a graduated income tax annually ranging from a minimum of ten percent to fifty percent of their net income in accordance with the following table:

Net Income in Philippine Pesos Tax (%)

Over 5,000 up to 10,000	10
Over 10,000 up to 20,000	15
Over 20,000 up to 40,000	20
Over 40,000 up to 80,000	25
Over 80,000 up to 160,000	30
Over 160,000 up to 320,000	35
Over 320,000 up to 640,000	40
Over 640,000 up to 1,280,000	45
Over 1,280,000	50

Section 9. Agricultural workers shall pay a monthly tax equivalent to five up to ten percent of wage increases gained as a result of the assistance of the people’s democratic government or the New People’s Army. This tax shall be apart from dues paid to their unions.

Chapter X. Class Status in the Countryside

Section 1. A landlord is one who owns land but does not engage in labor or only engages in supplementary labor and who depends entirely or mainly on land rent for his means of livelihood. Land administrators, overseers, labor contractors and local bullies who are at least better off than the middle-middle peasants by depending on the exploitation of peasants as the main source of income are also in the category of landlords. Aside from exploiting the peasants, mainly through the collection of land rent, landlords also engage in usury, non-payment or hiring of labor, cheating on accounts, renting out farm animals and implements, operation of modern agricultural equipment and various forms of extortion.

Section 2. A rich peasant generally owns land although in many cases he also rents land. He can be distinguished from the landlord in that he depends mainly on his own labor and tillage of the soil for his means of livelihood. He can also be distinguished from the upper-middle peasant in that he depends on the exploitation of others to the extent of over thirty to fifty percent or thereabouts. He engages in such exploitative practices as hiring wage labor and renting out farm animals and implements and has surplus funds to enable him to engage in moneylending.

Section 3. Many middle peasants own land, although in other cases they rent land. They depend wholly or mainly on their own labor for their means of livelihood and generally they do not sell their labor power to others. a) The upper-middle peasant engages slightly or occasionally in exploitation. But income from such exploitation ranges from over fifteen up to thirty percent of their total income. b) The middle-middle peasants generally do not suffer direct landlord exploitation and they themselves do not engage in exploitation. However, some middle-middle peasants engage slightly or occasionally in exploitation, to an extent that their income derived from such exploitation ranges from one percent to fifteen percent of their total income. c) The lower-middle peasants sell their own labor to some degree or occasionally so that wages constitute a secondary part of their total income. They are on the verge of becoming poor peasants and are subject to exploitation by others in the form of land rent and loan interest.

Section 4. The poor peasants are wholly or mainly tenants of landlords. They have no land at all or, if they have any, only a very small portion of the land that they cultivate. Sometimes, they lack adequate farm implements and have no farm animal at all. It is a necessity for them to sell their labor power for certain periods.

Section 5. The workers in the countryside generally own no land and farm implements and they depend wholly or mainly on selling their labor power for their means of livelihood. Farmworkers fall under this category. They work for capitalist or semi-capitalist farms and also for rich peasants and to a lesser extent for upper-middle peasants. Many farmworkers earn a living simply by going around with no definite single employer and taking part in agricultural work, especially planting, weeding and harvesting, here and there.

Section 6. In making firm the above classifications, the people's democratic government, the peasant associations and land reform committees shall always take into full consideration the number of family dependents and the actual surpluses that every family or household has.

## Chapter XI. Supplementary Rules and Regulations

Section 1. The Party Central Committee shall make the appropriate decisions to modify or supplement this general guide on the basis of further social investigations and actual experience in land reform work.

Section 2. The regional Party Committee may draft rules and regulations as well as explanations and clarifications to supplement this guide for land reform. These shall be subject to approval by the Party Central Committee.

***Land Reform and the Peasant Movement:  
Message to the National Founding Congress  
of Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas***

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**July 24, 1985**

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I WISH TO EXPRESS MY most heartfelt greeting to all the representatives of the peasant organizations now assembled here for the founding of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (Peasant Movement of the Philippines).

The formation of a national peasant alliance is the welcome fruit of indefatigable efforts to uphold, defend and promote the democratic rights and interests of the Filipino peasantry in the face of worsening feudal and semifeudal exploitation, imperialist incursions in Philippine agriculture and the brutal campaigns of terror in the countryside.

United in a national alliance, peasant associations can grow stronger and become more effective, can arise where they do not yet exist, and can generate a powerful movement not only to push land reform and uplift the economic conditions of the peasant masses but also to make them the main political force in the struggle for national freedom and democracy.

After all, the peasantry is the majority class in the semicolonial and semifeudal society. The solution of the land problem is the main content of the national democratic revolution. In the course of carrying out that solution, the peasant masses emerge as the backbone not only of the economy but also of democracy.

Aside from adopting an organizational framework satisfactory to all, the founders of the alliance must arrive at a common understanding of the history and national situation of the peasantry and formulate an economic and political program of action for the peasant movement.

In suppressing the national and democratic rights of the Filipino people, US imperialism has retained domestic feudalism and superimposed on it the requirements of monopoly capitalism. Further on, the fascist dictatorship of the big comprador-landlord clique has grown out of foreign and feudal domination.

The fascist dictatorial regime of the US-Marcos clique has deepened the agrarian and semifeudal character and consequently the dependence of the economy on the unequal exchange of local raw materials (mainly agricultural) and of finished products from abroad. The colossal amount of domestic resources extorted from the people and of funds borrowed from abroad have been used to provide superprofits for the multinational firms and banks and feed the greed of the bureaucrat capitalists who are basically big compradors and landlords.

Under a bogus land reform program involving essentially the promotion of the fixed land rent system, and a few negligible land sale contracts between landlords and tenants through the mediation of the Land Bank in rice and corn areas, the land problem has worsened as never before.

The ruling clique has forced the massive transfer of land to its members from landlords out of power, owner-cultivators, the national minorities and the public domain, in general. The few token land transfers to rice and corn tenants now in default of their instalment payments because of land overprice, the rising costs of production and deeper indebtedness are nothing in comparison to the land acquired by the Marcoses, Romualdezes, Cojuangcos, Benedictos, Floirendos and so on, as well as the extensive land contracted out to foreign and local agri-corporations.

The monopoly of Philippine agriculture by the US-Marcos ruling clique has been achieved through the bureaucrat capitalist monopoly of political and military power; acquisition or control of the most extensive lands, state and private banking and financing facilities, domestic and foreign trade of all major agricultural products; and the collection of special levies for private manipulation; the use of local and foreign funds for agricultural infrastructure; ownership of major agricultural mills, transport and storage; import and wholesale of agricultural equipment and

agricultural chemicals; etc.

The peasants and farmworkers have suffered the most from the rapid concentration of landownership in the hands of a few; the unceasing rise of land rent in real terms; scarcity of farm jobs and depressed farm wages; usurious rates of interest from banks and private money lenders; the downward pressure on the prices of farm products; the skyrocketing of prices of basic consumption goods and agrichemicals and other imported inputs; rising irrigation fees; manipulation of trading monopolies and so many kinds of direct and indirect levies imposed by the regime.

Being a mere agrarian adjunct of the world capitalist system, the Philippine economy is forced to submit to the plunder by foreign multinational firms and banks. All kinds of imported supplies related to agricultural infrastructure have inflated prices while Philippine agricultural export prices are depressed well below production cost in the world capitalist market. The deficit in foreign trade and balance of payments keep on rising and the imperialist banks act as the most unconscionable usurers on earth.

All Philippine export crops are in a state of depression. The farmworkers in Negros and elsewhere are starving. Even production of food staples has been gravely affected by the scarcity of foreign exchange needed to import agricultural inputs on which production has been made so dependent.

The “miracle rice” program has never really produced any surplus for export. Take into account both the token export and massive import of rice over any relevant number of years. Increases in rice production have not increased the income of peasants but have sunk them deeper into debt because of the ever spiralling prices of imported agricultural inputs.

Agricultural chemicals have also damaged the naturally beneficial properties of the soil; and pesticides in particular have killed off the fish and other sources of protein in streams and irrigation canals; caused the deterioration and death of farm animals; and spawned a new breed of pests immune to chemicals.

The peasantry is suffering not only from the crisis of feudal and semifeudal exploitation but also from vicious acts of fascist terror. Land-grabbers use military, police and paramilitary units to drive peasants off the land under the pretext of counterinsurgency. The fascists are indiscriminately killing peasants, looting and burning their homes wherever peasants rise up to assert their rights and interests.

The gravity of the present stage in the chronic crisis or the approaching death of the ruling system can be clearly seen in the countryside. Because of the rapid concentration of land in the hands of the few, the dispossession of the peasants of their holding (including homesteads and ancestral communal lands and even tenancy rights), massive unemployment of agricultural workers, there is a colossal increase in the magnitude of surplus labor in the countryside. But there are no industries to absorb this surplus.

The inevitable result is accelerated expansion and intensification of the people's war combining armed struggle, agrarian revolution and mass base building among the peasant masses. It is not surprising at all that the proletarian revolutionary party, the people's army and the organs of democratic power, the underground peasant associations and other mass organizations are rapidly growing in the countryside.

Under the order of US and US-controlled lending agencies including the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, the fascist dictatorship has been calling on foreign and local corporations to further grab land from the peasant masses. But what crops can now be profitably planted for the gluttoned world capitalist market; what corporations can invest in the countryside without having to reckon with the pre-emptive US-Marcos monopoly of Philippine agriculture; and what long-term advance can any agro-corporation gain in the face of a rapidly growing armed peasant movement?

The ruling system is dying because it has shunned industrialization as the lead factor in genuine economic development and it can only succeed in inciting the peasant masses to wage armed revolution by further exploiting and oppressing them.

To work truly for the emancipation and social upliftment of the peasant masses, Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas must arouse, organize and mobilize them for a united struggle against the fascist dictatorial regime of the US-Marcos clique against US imperialism, domestic feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism.

The peasant masses must be the main force of the national democratic movement led by the proletariat, founded on the basic worker-peasant alliance and including all other patriotic and progressive forces, especially the urban petty bourgeoisie and the middle bourgeoisie.

There must be a national united front relying mainly on the workers and peasants, winning over the urban petty bourgeoisie and the middle bourgeoisie, and taking advantage of the contradictions within the comprador big bourgeoisie and landlord class in order to isolate and destroy the fascist dictatorial regime of the US-Marcos clique.

Within the larger context of the national united front is the anti-feudal united front led by the proletariat relying mainly on the poor peasant and farmworkers, winning over the middle peasants and neutralizing the rich peasants and enlightened landlords in order to isolate and destroy the despotic power of evil landlords, most especially fascists. The membership of peasant associations and alliances must be drawn from poor peasants and farmworkers and middle peasants. In patriotic organizations that are broader and reflect the national united front, rich peasants, enlightened landlords and other patriotic elements in the countryside can join the poor peasants, farmworkers and middle peasants.

The problem of feudal and semifeudal exploitation cannot be solved in a profound and lasting way without the political struggle and victory of the peasant masses against the fascist regime and against the local tyrants. Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas must use all possible legal means to prevent the people's enemies from using their political and military power to put down the peasant masses.

The key objective of the peasant movement is to achieve genuine land reform — essentially the breakup of feudal land-ownership and the redistribution of land to landless tillers. The monopoly of agricultural land; credit; mills and agricultural equipment; supply of seeds and agricultural chemicals; and domestic and foreign trading must be done away with.

A strong clamor must be raised for the free redistribution of land — all ill-gotten lands in the hands of fascists and local tyrants, regardless of crop; most lands leased to agri-corporations and fake ranches under pasture leases; excess portions of plantations and ranches (relative to market); much of logged over land; and so on.

Tenants must receive their individual share of the land. Union cooperatives of farmworkers can take over management of certain portions of plantations. Settlers must be secure in their individual ownership of homesteads. So must be ethnic minorities in their ancestral-communal and individual ownership of land.

Land must be redistributed to every peasant family unjustly evicted from their piece of land. Land for redistribution can be made available by confiscation of land from the fascists, despotic landlords and other land-grabbers; by expropriation from enlightened landlords willing to invest their proceeds in industries; and by simple distribution of excess portions of plantations and ranches to cooperatives of farmworkers and other tillers; and again by simple distribution of tillable public lands to old and new settlers and to national minorities.

The vast majority of land reform beneficiaries will become owners of their share of land. But to achieve economies of scale, production and other types of cooperatives must be developed. And each stage of cooperation can be raised to a higher one. Land reform should lead to higher productivity.

The maximum goal of land reform is the distribution of land at no cost to landless tillers. But if this is not yet possible in a comprehensive or big way, because the reactionaries are still powerful, a peasant alliance like Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas must be satisfied for a while with working for the minimum goal of rent reduction, elimination of usury, raising farm wages, improvement of prices for farm products paid to the peasants, demanding subsidies directly beneficial to the peasants, lowering prices of agricultural inputs and irrigation fees, and elimination of levies that are ultimately passed on to the peasants.

Wherever possible and depending on the strength of the peasant movement, certain lands owned by fascists and evil landlords can in effect be confiscated; or certain lands can be expropriated at a fair price agreed upon by the landlord and peasants. Certainly, legal work can always be done to guarantee to settlers the ownership of their homesteads and to national minorities of their ancestral-communal and individualized lands.

The peasant associations in the alliance must promote higher production through labor exchange, mutual aid and cooperation. Farming, sideline occupations, such as the production of organic fertilizers, animal husbandry, fishing, forestry, handicrafts, food processing and so on, should also be promoted and encouraged.

Production, credit, marketing and other kinds of cooperatives can be developed in the main line and sideline occupations. Farm and other kinds of wages can be basically settled among the barrio residents under the auspices of the peasant association. Any kind of dispute, which is a contradiction among the people, can be settled through arbitration.

At best, the peasant association must be the main support and promoter of democratic self-government in the barrio. Such a government must function to serve the interests of the peasants and the entire people in the barrio in the spheres of mass organizing, mass education, livelihood, health, arbitration, self-defense and so on.

The peasant association must be a major component of the national democratic movement and the democratic coalition government at every level — barrio, municipality, district, provincial, regional and national. The national peasant alliance must see to it that the peasant masses are adequately and competently represented at every level.

Going back to the key question of land reform, I would like to point out that it is a necessary complement to national industrialization; while national industrialization is the leading factor of economic development, land reform and the resultant higher agricultural production are its indispensable basis.

Land reform induces the peasants to raise agricultural production for food and industrial processing and creates a larger domestic market for industries. National industrialization will ensure the supply of consumer and production goods for the peasants, raise the standard of living and their productivity and expand industries in order to absorb the growing labor force in the country, especially in the countryside.

It is therefore absolutely necessary for the KMP to call for national industrialization together with land reform so that the socioeconomic base for an independent, democratic, just prosperous and progressive society can be established.

Land reform and national industrialization are the substantial bonds of the basic worker-peasant alliance and the entire urban petty bourgeois and middle bourgeois alliance.

I am confident that KMP will grow in strength and win great victories in mobilizing the peasantry for their own political and economic benefit and for the comprehensive advancement of the struggle for national liberation and democracy.

Long live Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas!

Unite to dismantle the fascist dictatorial regime of the US-Marcos clique!

Fight for the rights and interests of the peasantry!

Push forward a program of genuine land reform!

Long live the national democratic movement!

Long live the Filipino people!

# ***Impact of Imperialist War and Terror and Further Strengthening of the People's Movement***

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**Address to the Asian Peasant Coalition**

**2<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly, Bandung, Indonesia**

**December 19-21, 2006**

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ON BEHALF OF THE INTERNATIONAL League of Peoples' Struggle (ILPS), I extend most cordial greetings of solidarity to the Asian Peasant Coalition on the occasion of its 2nd General Assembly. We congratulate you for all your achievements since the First General Assembly in advocating genuine agrarian reform and all measures for the benefit of the peasant masses and the rest of the people against the various forms of exploitation and oppression imposed by the imperialist powers and the local reactionary classes.

We welcome the militant call: Fortify the Struggle for Genuine Agrarian Reform! Fight Imperialist War and Terror! Further Strengthen the Peasant Movement in Asia and the World! We wish you great success in your current assembly. We are confident that you will be able to sum up your experience, draw lessons from it and set forth the tasks for advancing further. We wish you to win greater achievements in the difficult struggles that lie ahead.

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to address your assembly. I appreciate the fact that the Asia Pacific Coalition is a formidable combination of peasant associations and related entities and that you play an important role in the struggle against imperialism and local reaction. I am therefore deeply pleased to make an input on "The Impact of Imperialist War and Terror and Further Strengthening of the Peoples' Movement."

## ***Imperialist war and terror***

Since the end of the 19th century, the entire world has become the economic territory of monopoly capitalism. There is no part of it that is not in one way or another a field of investment, market, source of raw materials or sphere of influence for the imperialist countries. Outside their borders, the imperialist powers have dominated peoples and nations either as colonies, semi-colonies or dependent countries.

Imperialist domination is imposed through aggression and other forms of violence and with a certain degree of assistance from puppet forces. The US crossed the Pacific Ocean to slaughter 1.5 million Filipinos in order to conquer the Philippines and keep it as a base for grabbing a share of imperialist domination over China. As a newly-risen imperialist power and a late comer in the acquisition of colonies, the US declared war on Spain in order to grab its colonies, like Puerto Rico, Cuba and the Philippines, even as the people in these countries were already succeeding in their national liberation movements.

An imperialist power is by nature violent and aggressive, both in subjugating and oppressing entire peoples and nations and in engaging in economic competition and political rivalry with other imperialist powers. The growth in economic and military strength of any imperialist power or group of imperialist powers upsets the existing balance of forces among the imperialists and can lead to an inter-imperialist war to redivide the world. Humanity has gone through two world wars that have cost the lives of tens of millions as a result of the crises of overproduction in the world capitalist system and the bitter rivalry of the imperialist powers over economic territory. At the same time, the inter-imperialist wars have generated conditions for the rise of socialism and national liberation movements.

As a result of World War II, however, the US emerged as the No. 1 imperialist power. It spearheaded the Cold War and maintained an anti-communist alliance among the imperialist powers and puppet governments against the socialist countries and the great wave of national liberation movements. For this purpose, it used its economic and military power, the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, bilateral and

multilateral trade, financial, economic and military treaties and agreements.

US imperialism carried out aggression, economic blockades and military encirclement. It carried out the largest wars of aggression, to kill four million people in Korea and six million people in Indochina. It directed client regimes and supplied them with the military materiel to wage war on the people and on other countries. It masterminded the military coups and dictatorships in the name of anticommunism in Asia, Africa and Latin America from the 1950s to the 1980s. In the interest of the American, British and Dutch oil companies, it instigated the Suharto military clique in Indonesia to topple the Sukarno government and massacre 1.5 million Indonesians.

While using aggressive methods of containment, US imperialism engaged in economic and diplomatic maneuvers to induce the growth of the forces of modern revisionism and capitalist restoration within the socialist countries. It employed neocolonialism to co-opt the newly independent countries and make them dependent on foreign loans, direct investments and military assistance. It gave the largest US market accommodation to the exports of Western Europe, Japan and other economies deemed to be in the frontline against the socialist countries. In the process, it undermined its own manufacturing capacity for exports and gave lopsided attention to military research and production.

From the 1970s onwards, the US and the world capitalist system were strained by the recurrent crisis of overproduction, the phenomenon of stagflation, rising military expenditures, frustrated wars of aggression and the rising resistance of the peoples of the world. But the trends of capitalist restoration in socialist countries and neocolonialism in the newly-independent countries worked against the revolutionary forces taking advantage of the crisis of the US and world capitalist system. Ultimately, all the Soviet bloc regimes and the Soviet Union itself disintegrated. China also became integrated into the world capitalist system.

Since 1991, the US has become the sole superpower lording over the world. It has proclaimed a "new world order" and has carried out ideological, political, economic, military and cultural offensives against the cause of socialism and national liberation. It has promoted the notion of capitalism and liberal democracy as "the end of history". It has trampled upon the principles of national sovereignty, the equality of nations, real democracy based on the people, social justice and development. In the name of "free market globalization", it has pushed denationalization, privatization, liberalization and deregulation for the benefit of the imperialist-owned multinational firms and banks at the expense of the working people, women, children and the environment.

The US has become ever more arrogant, quick to make and carry out threats, in herding its imperialist allies towards war and in imposing itself on client countries. It interferes in the internal affairs of other countries through such methods as withholding or releasing loans and supplies, reducing or increasing market accommodations, exerting military pressure or carrying out outright military intervention and aggression. It demonizes as "rogue" those states that defend their national sovereignty and independence and by so doing seeks to intimidate all countries to stay under its sway.

In the last 16 years, after the end of the Cold War and collapse of the Soviet Union, US imperialism has led large-scale wars of aggression, such as those against Iraq, Yugoslavia and Afghanistan. In the process it has collected substantial spoils of war, including sources of oil, military bases and stations, military supply contracts and contracts for the "reconstruction" of the countries ravaged by US cruise missiles and other weapons of mass destruction. The people have suffered great loss of lives and property from the worst form of terrorism, the wars of aggression, unleashed by US imperialism and its cohorts.

The US is the No. 1 aggressor and terrorist of the world today. It has used the September 11 attacks to misrepresent itself as the champion of antiterrorism and to terrorize the people of the world. The terrorist acts committed by such small private terrorist groups as the Al Qaeda and the Abu Sayyaf, are condemnable for inflicting death and injury solely or mainly on the civilian population. But their terrorism pales in comparison with the super-terrorism of the US. US terrorism in Iraq alone has caused the death of 1.5 million people, including that of 700,000 children in the period of 1991 to 2002, and more than 655,000 people in the period of 2003 to 2006.

The US has used the September 11 attacks as a pretext to drum up war hysteria, step up military production and



curtail the democratic rights of the American people and other peoples. It has invoked the 9/11 attacks to carry out acts of aggression against countries asserting national independence. It has emboldened repression and state terrorism against the people waging revolution and the nations fighting for liberation. It uses the "terrorist" label on all anti-imperialist forces and thus rationalize all sorts of barbarities inflicted upon them.

Under the Bush regime, the so-called neo-conservatives have been able to put into practice their Project for a New American Century. This sets the line for the US to make use of the full spectrum of its power, especially its high-tech military superiority, to undertake pre-emptive wars in order to cut down any "rogue state" or any potential US rival. The US thus seeks to maintain supremacy over all countries and peoples and enforce its "democracy" and the "free market."

### ***The Peasant Masses in the Third World***

The peoples of the third world countries have suffered the most from the crisis of the world capitalist system since the 1970s. The imperialist countries have passed the burden of the crisis on to their client countries, the semi-colonies and dependent countries. Thus, it is also in these countries where the struggle for national and social liberation is most intense. It is in these countries where revolutionary armed struggle is raging and strong mass movements are advancing.

The crisis of overproduction in the imperialist countries has further aggravated the overproduction of raw materials by most semi-colonies and dependent countries as well as the overproduction of low value-added semi-manufactures by a few of them. This has resulted in either the closure of the bankrupted enterprises or bigger overproduction and export of bigger volumes of the same goods at lower prices in the global market.

The crisis of overproduction, the chronic budgetary and trade deficits and mounting debt burden result in the worst working and living conditions for the people. The worst conditions of mass unemployment, low incomes, impoverishment and deprivation are found in the semi-colonies and dependent countries. Here, the majority of the people live on less than two US dollars a day. In most third world countries, the main problems are landlessness and the feudal and semifeudal exploitation of the peasant masses who compose the majority of the population.

The forces and relations of production in agriculture in semifeudal economies are backward. The big compradors and landlords are dictated upon by foreign monopoly capitalism and driven by their own reactionary class interest to oppose genuine land reform and national industrialization. These two economic measures are complementary. Land reform is a way for liberating the peasant masses economically, socially and politically, encouraging them to produce more food for the country and raw materials for industry and becoming a major source of capital and an expanding market for industrial products.

The "land reform programs" decked out by the big comprador-landlord regimes in semicolonial and semifeudal countries are bogus and tokenistic. In the case of the Philippines, various methods are used to block genuine land reform, such as limiting its scope to certain crops, like rice and corn, allowing the landlords to retain land and to distribute it to his children and children-in-law through fake personal or corporate sales.

In cases where the government expropriate the land for distribution or where the government mediates the sale of land between the landlord and the tenant, the latter is made to pay what is supposed to be the fair market value of the land and such value is arbitrarily raised in any arrangement by which the tenant pays in instalments for the land. Tenants rarely succeed in completing payments for the land and are ultimately evicted or returned to tenant status. In cases where the peasant masses clear and cultivate public land, they are subjected to eviction by various types of landgrabbers, including bureaucrats, military officers, longtime landlords and foreign agri-corporations.

Since the promulgation of the 1987 constitution under the Aquino regime, it has been constitutionally established that land can be sold by landlord to tenant, only if the former agrees to do so voluntarily and the latter agrees to pay the fair market value as "just compensation. The landlord can also escape land reform by inveigling the tenants and farmworkers to accept the "stock distribution option" by which they become petty stock owners in an

agricultural corporation in which members of the landlord family owns more than 95 per cent or more of the stocks.

The fake land reform in Hacienda Luisita in the form of stock distribution, the cases of overpriced expropriated land for redistribution to tenants and the long running flow of reclassifying rice and corn land as other types of land for the purpose of exemption have completely exposed the bankruptcy of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP). Since the time of Aquino, the reactionary government has junked the principle of social justice by regarding land reform as a real estate deal in the "free market". The Hacienda Luisita massacre and the subsequent assassinations of the leaders and members of the farmworkers and peasant organizations manifest the utter failure of the stock distribution option and other sham measures of land reform under the CARP and the so-called free market globalization.

Under the banner of "free market globalization", the presidential successors of Aquino have completely ignored the need for land reform and national industrialization and have merely prated about providing the "land reform beneficiaries" with the financing for the production and marketing of farm products. The local ruling classes of big compradors and landlords are happy with the World Bank prescription of "market-assisted land reform" that makes this a mere real estate transaction. This has served to preserve land monopoly and favor land concentration, including the reconcentration of land previously awarded to or being amortized by peasants.

With the so-called "free market globalization" many third world countries are driven to importation of agricultural products from other countries. The big compradors and high bureaucrats benefit from this as well as from the export of agricultural products. But the overall result is the ruin of local agricultural production due to imports of surplus agricultural products, especially from the imperialist countries and other well-mechanized and well-subsidized sources. China, which has become a net importer of food, is a well-known case of a country which has dismantled socialist agriculture and sacrificed self-reliant agricultural production in favor of agricultural imports, semi-manufacturing principally for foreign consumer markets and yielding expanses of land to real estate developers and speculators.

The burden of the crisis is laid on the shoulders of the peasants and farmworkers. These toilers are subjected to further social degradation as a result of ever more virulent forms of feudal and semifeudal exploitation. "Free market globalization" imposes terrible suffering on the peasants and farmworkers of Southeast Asia, South Asia and China and thus cause deep social discontent among them and drive them to rise up against those who monopolize the land and reduce them to conditions of feudal and semifeudal exploitation. We are all aware of the growing wave of concerted peasant mass actions in Asia, both in the form of legal protest actions and armed resistance.

The crisis engendered by foreign and feudal exploitation, particularly under the policy of "free market globalization", drive the imperialist owners of plantations, big compradors and landlords to evict peasants, fire farmworkers, bust peasant associations and farmworkers' unions and unleash other oppressive actions. The local puppet regimes work against the rights and interests of the peasants and farmworkers and carry out violent campaigns of suppression, using military, police and paramilitary forces as well as private goons against the communities and associations of peasants and farmworkers.

Among the local reactionary regimes in Asia, the Arroyo regime has been most notorious in cheering the Bush global war of terror and has used it to beg for US military intervention and assistance and carry out a ruthless and murderous all-out war policy against the Filipino people, especially the toiling masses of workers and peasants. More than fifty per cent of the victims of the well-documented extrajudicial killings are peasants. The number of peasant victims run into tens of thousands if we take into account those illegally detained, tortured, murdered and forced out of their homes and farms through arson, bulldozing, bombings and artillery fire by the military, police and private security agencies.

### ***Further strengthening the people's resistance***

While the attention of the world is riveted to the us wars of aggression related mainly to oil and gas resources in

the middle east and central Asia, the cleverest of the strategists of the imperialists and local reactionaries in Asia are well aware of the frustrations and increasing misery of the peasant masses under "free market globalization". They fear the high potential of the peasant masses for armed revolution. They are aware of the durability and steady growth of people's war in the Philippines, the dramatic growth of people's war in Nepal and India and the yearly outbreak of thousands of peasant uprisings in various parts of China.

The same strategists are concerned about the fertile conditions for protracted people's wars for national liberation and democracy, with the crucial participation and support of the peasant masses. However, the prevailing reaction of the imperialists and the local reactionaries to such conditions is not to carry out any genuine and thoroughgoing land reform but to conduct in the name of anti-terrorism campaigns of suppression against peasant unrest and resistance.

For instance, in the Philippines, the US and Arroyo regime have practically terminated the peace negotiations between the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) and the Philippine reactionary government in favor of an all-out war policy. They would rather spend lives and huge amounts of resources on military and police campaigns of suppression than carry out honest-to-goodness land reform, national industrialization and other bourgeois democratic reforms. The imperialists and the local reactionaries know no bounds for their greed and their violent determination to preserve the semicolonial and semifeudal ruling system. They leave no choice to the broad masses of the people but to wage armed revolution.

The peasants and farmworkers need to organize themselves and wage militant resistance to defend themselves and assert their rights. They have to struggle for the people's national sovereignty and democratic rights and for genuine land reform and national industrialization. They must join up with the rest of the people in advancing the struggle to achieve national and democratic power necessary for carrying out comprehensive land reform, pursuing national industrialization and undertaking other reforms to promote the people's livelihood and well-being. For these reforms to be carried out, the rule of the big compradors and landlords who act as puppets of imperialism must come to an end.

The imperialists with the collaboration of their puppet regimes will do everything, including direct military aggression, to prevent the people from achieving their goal of national and social liberation. They will block the countries and peoples from breaking free of the imperialist system of exploitation and oppression. The big compradors and landlords oppose national and social liberation because this would mean an end to their privileges and parasitic existence. The imperialists and their puppet regimes brand the people's revolutionary movement and even the forces of the legal opposition as "terrorist" in order to justify state terrorism and armed counter-revolution.

The people have to strengthen their unity in a patriotic and democratic united front, which encompasses the workers, peasants, petty-bourgeoisie and national bourgeoisie, with the basic worker-peasant alliance as the foundation. They have to wage all forms of struggle in order to establish a truly national and democratic state. Only with such a state can they carry out genuine land reform and national industrialization and solve the problems of exploitation, massive poverty and underdevelopment that afflict many third world countries.

The people of every country in the third world must rely mainly on their own strength to achieve national and social liberation. But they can also draw additional strength from as well as lend their own through international solidarity among peoples waging a common struggle against imperialism and all forms of reaction in all continents and countries. In this connection, the International League of Peoples' Struggle is constantly dedicated to build an international anti-imperialist and democratic movement for the national and social liberation of the peoples of the third world.

The Asian Peasant Coalition is a highly important framework for various forms of cooperation among the peasant movements in Asia that are struggling for urgent basic social reforms. It is a framework for raising the level of consciousness, organization and mobilization of the peasant masses. You can learn valuable lessons from each other's struggles, thus strengthening both your coalition and its individual members. Your coordinated campaigns and actions against the onslaught of imperialist and feudal forces contribute to the over-all weakening and

eventual defeat of the imperialist system of exploitation and oppression.

Once more we in the International League of Peoples' Struggle wish you the utmost success in the hard struggles ahead against imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism and for the national and social liberation of the exploited and oppressed peoples in the countries of Asia and other parts of the world.

# ***Land and Justice for the Peasants and Farmworkers of Hacienda Luisita***

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**November 16, 2009**

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TODAY, THE WORKING people of the world are launching various forms of protest actions to mark the International Day of Action against Trade Union Repression. This provides a meaningful context for commemorating and protesting the massacre of striking peasants and farmworkers in Hacienda Luisita in Tarlac province in the Philippines in 2004. The working people of Hacienda Luisita exemplify the plight and struggle of the working people of semicolonial and semifeudal countries, who still comprise the majority of the world's population.

Hacienda Luisita is the vast 6,000-hectare tract of land in Central Luzon owned by the wealthy and powerful Cojuangco family to which former Pres. Corazon "Cory" Aquino belonged. It stands as a bulwark of feudal and semi-feudal exploitation and oppression within the context of the world capitalist system. It demonstrates how the big comprador-landlords exploit the working people and wield state power to oppress them. It exposes as a sham the so-called "comprehensive agrarian reform program" that the Aquino ruling clique had launched since the 1980s.

Earlier the Cojuangco family bought Hacienda Luisita from the Spanish Tabacalera corporation with a loan from the government in the 1950s. The loan was granted with the provision that a major portion of the land (2000 hectares) would be distributed later on to the peasants, within the frame of the government's "land reform" program.

The Cojuangco family not only failed to distribute the designated portion of the land, it maneuvered to keep it and used violence to suppress those who demanded land reform. In 1985, a trial court ruled that the lands be distributed to the peasants, but 1986 saw the ascent to the presidency of Aquino. The Aquino regime crafted an agrarian reform program which was riddled with so many exemptions, including one called the Stock Distribution Option (SDO) that was used to exempt Luisita from land distribution.

In this context, we can fully appreciate the significance of the strike launched by Luisita peasants and farmworkers in November 2004. They were protesting the P9.50 take-home pay per day at the hacienda — a result of the Stock Distribution Option scheme hatched by the Cojuangcos and the landlord class to gain legal exemption from the fake agrarian reform program being implemented by the government. They were also protesting the dismissal of 300 workers from the hacienda's sugar refinery, an act intended to bust the local union which was then becoming militant.

Before and during their strike, the peasants and farmworkers of Luisita — with the active support of patriotic and progressive mass organizations and alliances throughout the country, and with the help of alternative media — won the attention and sympathy of the working people of the country and the world. Many among the urban petty-bourgeoisie in the Philippines were shocked to learn about concrete forms of feudal exploitation and oppression that were persisting in the countryside. The working people of the Philippines and the world applauded and encouraged the working people of Luisita.

The Cojuangcos, the big comprador-landlord classes, and the reactionary state were all shamed by the justness of the calls of the Luisita peasants and farmworkers. They reacted swiftly and viciously to the strike. Patricia Sto. Tomas, then labor secretary of the US-backed regime of Mrs. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, issued an Assumption of Jurisdiction order on the issue, ordering the strikers to go back to work and authorizing the deployment of military and police forces to dismantle the strike. Gen. Hermogenes Esperon, Jr., who was widely believed to have been promoted to his post for helping Mrs. Arroyo cheat in the 2004 elections, was the military's chief of staff.

The military and police forces went to the hacienda, bringing tanks, tear gas, and high-powered rifles. The Luisita peasants and farmworkers stood their ground. With their unity and militance, they repelled various attempts at breaking the strike. Thousands upon thousands of workers, peasants and farmworkers, together with their women

folk, locked arms and pushed away with their bodies the military and police who were armed with shields. After reaching the ground, canisters of tear gas thrown by the military were immediately covered with soil. A farmer, speaking to the military, summed up their spirit: “Since you are already killing us, we might as well die fighting.” These could only have aroused fear and panic in the hearts of the oppressors.

In the afternoon of November 16, 2004, after the strikers promised in a negotiation with military and police officials to lay down the pieces of wood they were holding for defending themselves and to defend the strike with just their bodies, the military and police forces opened fire. A few minutes of gunfire left Jhaivie Basilio, Adriano Caballero, Jhune David, Jesus Laza, Juancho Sanchez, Jaime Pastidio and Jessie Valdez fatally wounded. Some of them could have been kept alive, but hospitals in Cojuangco-dominated Tarlac refused to admit patients from the hacienda. Calling for land to the tillers, they died fighting for the just cause of the peasants and farmworkers of Luisita and the country.

The owners of the hacienda, the reactionary government and the bourgeois mass media tried to spread the canard that it was the Luisita farmers and farmworkers who started the violence and that it was fighters of the New People’s Army, who started the shooting. Their propaganda could not stand up to the truth of the audio-visual evidence taken by progressive film makers who covered the strike. The bursts of gunfire came from the ranks of the military and the police. Subsequently, death squads of the military went on a spree killing strike leaders and supporters, including a bishop and a city councilor.

While the touters of the reactionary justice system in the Philippines often cite the adage that “justice delayed is justice denied,” justice has clearly been delayed and has been denied to the peasants and farmworkers of Hacienda Luisita. Five years after the massacre, no one has been punished for the crime. There are many victims, but none of the criminal perpetrators is imprisoned. Investigation of the cases has been proceeding at snail pace, and the only significant development is that de facto president Arroyo, her labor secretary Sto. Tomas and the military butcher Esperon have been removed from the list of those charged. The ones remaining on the sham charge sheet are the police and military officers who tested positive in paraffin tests. But they are scot-free and biding their time.

The power of the labor secretary to issue Assumption of Jurisdiction (AJ) orders remains in place — despite the graphic demonstration by what happened in Luisita of its lethal consequences for working people. After the massacre, the labor secretary issued AJ orders for numerous workplaces in Central Luzon, thus facilitating the militarization of that region. Since it was approved as part of the Labor Code in 1989, the AJ has been used as license to suppress workers’ actions in workplaces throughout the country. It is being imposed even before a strike is initiated — when collective bargaining negotiations end in deadlock or when notices of strike are filed before the government.

Pressured by the strike and the widespread condemnation of the massacre locally and internationally, the Presidential Agrarian Reform Council (PARC), in December 2005, revoked the Stock Distribution Option (SDO) scheme being implemented in the hacienda and placed the lands previously under the SDO into the “compulsory coverage” scheme of the government’s agrarian reform program. The Hacienda Luisita management, losing no time, filed for a Temporary Restraining Order in January 2006 against the resolution. In June 2006, the Supreme Court issued a TRO and ordered the PARC and the Department of Agrarian Reform to implement the revocation of the SDO.

Seeing the opportunity in this deadlock, and knowing that waiting for government intervention will get them nowhere, the peasants and farmworkers of the hacienda took the initiative and launched their “kampanyang bungkal” or campaign to till, which called on all working people of the hacienda to plant crops that are necessary for everyday nourishment, such as rice and vegetables, and can be sold for added income, such as fruits. With the participation of more than a thousand families, the hacienda land, which used to showcase sugarcane, now boasts of golden fields of rice. The campaign caused an improvement in the lives and livelihood of the working people of Luisita.

The Cojuangco family, however, has not given up on the fight to own the Luisita lands. Last December 2008, emboldened by the passage of a law extending the government's anti-peasant agrarian reform program — which still contained the SDO as one of the (non-)distribution schemes — the Hacienda Luisita management issued a memorandum to the peasants tilling the 2,000-hectare portion of the hacienda which ordered them to stop using the lands for whatever purpose. After a public clamor directed at Sen. Benigno “Noynoy” Aquino III — a member of the Cojuangco family who's running in the 2010 presidential elections — the Hacienda Luisita management was forced to backtrack.

Now, the Hacienda Luisita management is carrying out what it calls an “enlistment” of peasants who would become the “beneficiaries” of agrarian reform in the hacienda — as if it were the authorized body to implement agrarian reform in that area and as if it were authorized to do so despite the TRO. It is complaining of “illegal tillers” encroaching upon the hacienda, who are actually the working people of Luisita. It is also undertaking land-use conversion schemes in various parts of the land. The creation of a vast highway that passes through the hacienda is being seen as an opportunity to increase the value of hacienda land and an opening to commercial uses of portions of the hacienda.

Five years after the massacre, the struggle of the Luisita peasants and farmworkers for justice, including the junking of the Assumption of Jurisdiction power of the labor secretary, and land continues. They deserve the full support of the working people of the Philippines and the whole world. We hope that our International Day of Action against Trade Union Repression and the fifth anniversary of the Hacienda Luisita massacre will be an occasion for working people everywhere to discuss and raise the issues of trade union repression in their work places and countries. We should not allow trade union repression to weaken our ranks and spirit. It should goad us to fight back and gain strength through struggle.

We have to continue and intensify our struggle not just against trade union repression but also against the forms of feudal and semi-feudal exploitation which are aligned with the world capitalist system. Let us keep in mind that monopoly capitalist control of global agriculture and the food system has now created a global famine afflicting over a billion people for the first time in world history.

The struggle of the Luisita peasants and farmworkers is instructive. It is only through the militant struggle of working people that they can gain strength and aim for their national and social liberation. We may win victories in our struggle for reforms within the present world capitalist system but these will continue to be at risk until we, the people of the world, are strong enough to overthrow the exploiters and oppressors.

# ***Message of Solidarity and Support for the National Lakbayan in the Philippines***

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**January 17, 2010**

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WE OF THE INTERNATIONAL League of Peoples' Struggle (ILPS) are in firm solidarity with Anakpawis (Toiling Masses) and Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (Peasant Movement of the Philippines) in carrying out the National Lakbayan (caravan and long march) for Land and Justice from the southern and northern regions of the Philippines to the national capital in ten days, from January 12 to 22.

We applaud and congratulate you for resolutely and militantly organizing this unique mass undertaking which traverses more than 1,000 kilometers. We are elated that this mass mobilization has started from the south in Davao City on January 12 and from the north in Tarlac City on January 16.

We strongly support the broad masses of the people, especially the peasants, farmworkers and fisherfolk, who are involved in this historic event. We eagerly await the convergence of the caravans and long marchers in front of the Department of Agrarian Reform on January 21 and the march to Mendiola, near the presidential palace, on January 22. We agree with all your objectives.

It is just to demand genuine land reform and the free distribution of land to the tillers as the solution to the land problem. Land reform must be realized on the strength of the peasant movement and for the purpose of attaining the economic, social and political liberation of the peasant masses. It must not be limited to the confines of reactionary legislation.

The so-called Agrarian Reform Program Extension with Reforms (CARPER) is essentially intended to dampen the peasant demand for land and preserve the feudal and semifeudal forms of exploitation. As in previous bogus land reform programs, CARPER retains the same loopholes and tricks for the landlords to prevent or evade land reform.

It is necessary to bring to national and international attention the local struggles for land and take up the most outstanding cases of land accumulation and land-grabbing at the expense of the peasants and the farmworkers. The people want to know more about the land greed, rapacity and brutality of certain landlord families that dominate the semicolonial and semifeudal ruling system.

Two major presidential candidates, Benigno Conjuangco-Aquino III and Gilberto Cojuangco-Teodoro belong to the same big comprador-landlord clan which owns vast haciendas in Tarlac, Pangasinan, Isabela, Negros, Caraga, Palawan and elsewhere in the country. The land question must be in the agenda of the current electoral struggle. The progressive parties and candidates who espouse land reform deserve support.

It is necessary to expose, oppose and frustrate the escalating militarization of the countryside under the Oplan Bantay Laya of the US-Arroyo regime. The gross and systematic human rights violations perpetrated by the regime are instigated and provided with logistics by US imperialism, especially under its policy of global war of terrorism. The official military, police and paramilitary forces collaborate with the private armies and gangs of foreign monopoly enterprises, the big compradors and landlords.

In their struggle against the imperialists and the local reactionaries, the toiling masses of workers and peasants must engage the active support of the middle social strata and middle forces of Philippine society. It is necessary to heighten the unity of the broad masses of the people and intensify their militant struggle against the rotten ruling system and the rapidly worsening socioeconomic and political crisis.

We the International League of Peoples' Struggle support the broad masses of the Filipino people in their struggle for national independence and empowerment of the toiling masses, development through national industrialization and land reform, social justice, a national, scientific and mass culture and international solidarity against imperialism and war.



We are determined to coordinate the anti-imperialist and democratic struggles of the Filipino people with those of all other peoples of the world in order to help raise to a new and higher level the struggle of humankind for greater freedom, democracy, all-round development, social justice and world peace.

***Wholehearted Solidarity  
with the Farmworkers  
of Hacienda Luisita and All Supporters***

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**April 10, 2010**

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I CONVEY WHOLEHEARTED solidarity to all the farmworkers of Hacienda Luisita and their supporters relating to all their activities in April.

I salute the 300 farmworkers who are attending the Hacienda Luisita Summit on April 10 and 11. I have great confidence that your assessment of the campaign and struggle since the outbreak of the strike in 2004 will be successful.

I hope that you can draw important lessons from the experience and the struggle for genuine land reform would be strengthened anew. It is necessary to set forth the new tasks and to carry these out.

The firm and militant struggle for genuine land reform in Hacienda Luisita is a brilliant example for all the landless tillers in the Philippines. This struggle should be continued until complete victory.

I gladly support the forthcoming 5-day Lakbayan (march) of the farmworkers of Hacienda Luisita from Tarlac to the national capital region from April 19 to 23.

The call should be made to the entire nation for the immediate and unconditional free distribution of land to the 10,000 farmworker beneficiaries of Hacienda Luisita. Expose once more the massacre resulting from the collaboration of the Arroyo regime and the Cojuangco-Aquino family and fight for justice for the victims.

It has come to our knowledge that a big amount of money has been collected by the corrupt Kamag-anak Inc. from their fellow big comprador-landlords and from US and other foreign enterprises to finance and ensure the victory of the campaign of Noynoy Aquino for the presidency.

If Noynoy would become president, he would certainly use the power of the state to frustrate and suppress the rights of the farmworkers in Hacienda Luisita. He will continue the stock-option swindle made by Cory Aquino to cheat the farmworkers and block genuine land reform.

Even now, Aquino and his family and their managers and lawyers are saying that they have many means and reasons for frustrating land reform. They are already indicating that if Noynoy Aquino would become president, his wishes would be followed in taking advantage of reconversion and reclassification and liquidating the farmworkers involved in the stock distribution option.

It is an important duty of the farmworkers of Hacienda Luisita and the entire people to expose and oppose the deception, violence and corruption of Noynoy Aquino and his family in frustrating land reform and continuing treacherously to usurp and control Hacienda Luisita.

Right now, we must vigorously fight the greed and cruelty of the Aquino family. Thus, we prepare well to fight if Aquino becomes president because of the money of the imperialists, despite his empty record in congress and the senate.

If Noynoy would become president, the Filipino people would be further exploited and oppressed. All of us would continue to suffer the policies dictated by the imperialists, like the policy of neoliberal globalization and "global war of terror." The crisis wreaking havoc on the lives of the toiling masses and the middle forces would continue. The suppression of human rights, especially those of the workers and peasants, would continue.

Fight for the rights of the farmworkers of Hacienda Luisita!

Always remember the massacres perpetrated by the Cojuangco-Aquino family from the Mendiola massacre to the Hacienda Luisita massacre!

Carry out genuine land reform for the peasants and farmworkers!

Uphold national independence, democracy, development through land reform and industrialization, social justice and just peace!

Long live the toiling masses and the entire Filipino people!

# ***On the Year of Rice Action against the 50th Year of the International Rice Research Institute***

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**April 12, 2010**

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THE INTERNATIONAL RICE Research Institute (IRRI) is a notorious arm of imperialism. When we were in the Philippine countryside organizing the peasants in the 1970s, IRRI was extending its clutches over agriculture and systematically wiping out traditional rice varieties in the Philippines. The World Bank-sponsored Green Revolution paved the way for IRRI in the Philippines during the Marcos dictatorship.

The WB acted like a mob boss. It initially shelled out US\$1 billion for the program to get Philippine agriculture “addicted” to agrochemicals that were part of the new IRRI-designed farming package. Eventually, agrochemical transnational corporations (TNCs) raked in superprofits like druglords marketing chemical inputs though they clearly knew that they were harmful to users, in this case, the Filipino peasants.

We should not be deceived by the self-projection and posturing of IRRI. It is no different from those who commit crimes against the people. Actually, it is worse as it exists to exploit the world’s peasants, destroy the environment and kill those who are regularly exposed to agrochemicals. We should not be enticed by the techno-babble of the so-called scientists of IRRI, promising impossible productivity levels as if their genetically-engineered rice varieties are magic pills for the hungry world.

IRRI’s explanations for its products do not intend to enlighten poor peasants but to confuse them and compel them to use expensive and deadly agrochemicals, consequently condemning them into indebtedness and eventually to further landlessness. The most important objective of the IRRI is to pave the way for the TNCs to make superprofits.

It is very heartening to see that numerous groups have united in calling for the abolition of IRRI. Fifty long years or five decades are more than enough proof that the IRRI is useless in solving the problem of hunger in the world. The IRRI has exposed itself as a bane to the world’s agriculture.

The development of traditional varieties that are not dependent on agrochemicals marketed by TNCs is a breakthrough for the human civilization. We in the International League of Peoples’ Struggle applaud the groups who advocate sustainable agriculture using traditional and indigenous seed varieties. But sustainable agriculture can only be widely adopted if it is part of a genuine land reform program.

Rice is a crucial means of life and freedom, thus, it should be protected from genetic manipulation or bastardization by IRRI and other pseudo-scientific institutions. Peasants should struggle for food security and against the programs of these imperialist-controlled institutions. No country can claim true independence or sovereignty if it cannot produce its own food.

We should uphold food security and self-reliance, the exact opposite of “market-oriented” agriculture that monopoly capitalists impose on semifeudal societies with the help of puppet governments. Food security also lies at the heart of Genuine Land Reform and therefore social transformation.

Therefore the Asian Peasant Coalition’s rice campaign and Year of Rice Action is fully supported by the International League of Peoples’ Struggle (ILPS). ILPS member-organizations are at the forefront of struggles for food security and against imperialist depredations in agriculture.

Long live Year of Rice Action!

Fifty years of IRRI is enough!

Close down IRRI now!

Struggle for Genuine land Reform and Food Security!

Down with US imperialism!

***Solidarity Message  
to the Asian Peasant Coalition Caravan***

April 12, 2010

ON THE OCCASION OF the Culminating Caravan of the Asian Peasant Coalition (APC) to mark the 7th year of militant struggle for Genuine Land Reform in Asia, we of the International League of Peoples' Struggle (ILPS) send our warmest greetings and congratulations to each of the member organizations from Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines and Sri Lanka.

The world's peasants are confronting a new challenge. Monopoly capitalists are unrelenting in exploring new ways and means to further extract superprofits from the exploitation of peasants and workers throughout the world.

The monopoly capitalists recognize that land is an indispensable asset for the production of food and other raw materials for industry. Thus, they are now taking over vast tracts of land in Africa, Asia and Latin America for the cultivation of food and agro-fuels as well as the extraction of timber, minerals and other resources for export to imperialist countries. They are strengthening their monopoly control over all the world's productive resources at the expense of the lives and livelihoods of the people and the health of the planet.

They are aided by puppet regimes which have sold and continue to sell out their own people's national patrimony and future in exchange for kickbacks that are measly compared to the superprofits raked in by their imperialist masters. They are displacing millions of peasants who depend on these lands for their livelihoods and existence and have been nurtured on these lands for generations.

About 45% of the world's population make their living directly from agriculture. In Asia and Africa this figure reaches up to about 80% of the population. We need to organize the peasants, farmworkers and the rest of the people in their millions to resist imperialism's incursions and struggle for genuine land reform and national industrialization.

The contradiction between imperialism and peasants is history in the making. We should strengthen our forces in order to bring us closer to the dawn of a new era for the world. For the peasantry, the struggle for land is the struggle for life and liberty. Hence, millions of peasants in semifeudal or feudal societies have embraced armed struggle in the countryside as the principal form of struggle. This is combined with legal forms of struggle.

Large numbers of peasants go to the streets to call for genuine land reform, and patriotic representatives within the reactionary state machineries fight for the democratic rights and interests of the peasantry and the people. They drum up the fundamental issues of the peasantry and exposing the anti-national, anti-democratic, corrupt and bankrupt socioeconomic and political system. The peasant masses demand that this system be dismantled and replaced by a new and democratic one.

Asia comprises the majority of the world's population. If the peoples of Asia defeat imperialism in their own countries, then we are so much closer to liberating the entire world from the horror of imperialism. Thus, the Asian Peasant Coalition is faced with a great responsibility and enormous challenge.

If the APC could unite the billions of Asian peasants, then we would reach the early dawn of a new era of freedom, democracy, development, social justice and peace. We know that this is a gargantuan task for several generations to accomplish. But we can strive to score significant victories in our own generation.

We call on each and all of APC member-organizations to strengthen unity and cooperation. As imperialism maneuvers and draws up new plans for further exploiting and oppressing the peoples of the world, we should think of creative and effective ways to accomplish our goals.

We of the International League of Peoples' Struggle assure the APC of all-out support. We should fortify the global

worker-peasant alliance and unite all oppressed, anti-imperialist and democratic forces to achieve our goals. We face a brighter future after each day of arduous and successful mass work among peasants and the rest of the people.

Long live the Asian Peasant Coalition!

Struggle for genuine land reform!

Down with US imperialism and all its reactionary puppets!

# ***Strengthen Unity for Genuine Land Reform***

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## **Message of Solidarity with the Rural Poor in Southern Tagalog**

**April 26 to 27, 2010**

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ON BEHALF OF THE INTERNATIONAL League of Peoples' Struggle, I gladly convey my solidarity with all the rural poor in Southern Tagalog and all their organizations participating in the conference called All-Rural Poor Summit in Southern Tagalog. We sincerely congratulate all the delegates and guests.

In connection with effective preparation of the conference, we commend the machinery led by KASAMA-TK and the Farmers Research Institute in Southern Tagalog (FIRST) and their assisting institutions and organizations. We admire the enthusiastic cooperation among KASAMA-TK, LUMABAN-TK, PAMALAKAYA-TK, BALATIK, SUMA-MAKA-TK, Friends of the Rural Poor, PALAY, ACTIVE, RMP-AMRSP, CRA, DEFEND-ST, SENTRA and other entities.

The theme of the conference is timely and important: Strengthen Unity! Promote the Agenda of the Rural Poor for Genuine Land Reform! We have great confidence that you can accomplish your agenda and set the long-term and urgent tasks based on your analysis of the history and circumstances of the land problem and your experience in the struggle of the rural poor.

Throughout the history of the semicolonial and semifeudal society, the landlords have ceaselessly seized lands and exploited and oppressed the peasants and farmworkers. They impose high land rent and high interest on loans, press down the wages of farmworkers, lower the price of purchases from farmers and increase the price of goods sold to them.

Due to extreme exploitation and oppression, the rural poor struggle against the landlords and the entire ruling system. The ruling classes always respond with bloody suppression, using the military, police, paramilitary and private armed goons as well as with deception in the form of bogus land reform.

With the passage of time, the bogus land reform of the ruling classes has become more cunning and deceptive. During the time of Macapagal, the promise was to end the entire tenancy system in the production of rice and corn, but many loopholes in the law allowed the landlords to avoid land reform. During the time of Marcos, the loopholes in the law increased further as the bureaucrats and the landlords conspired to raise the value of the land and make it impossible for farmers to pay the full amortization.

During the Aquino regime, the so-called Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) was even worse than that of Marcos. It upheld the sinister principle of voluntary sale of the land by the landlords, setting a so-called just compensation, meaning current land prices in the market, stock distribution option or the distribution of shares in corporations controlled by landlords and conversion or reclassification of land from agricultural to non-agricultural, such as residential, commercial, industrial and ecotourist. The so-called conversion was used as a means to nullify the Certificates of Land Ownership Award (CLOA), the Certificates of Land Transfer (CLT) and the Emancipation Patents (EP) distributed by the Marcos regime.

Conversion and the deceptive stock distribution option continue in the form of the CARP Extension with Reforms (CARPER). One provision stipulates that the landlord shall be the one to recognize the tenants. If a landlord does recognize someone as a tenant, he can evict that one from the land. This means dissolution of the minimal tenurial right.

The grim situation of land monopoly by a few landlords continues, even as 70 percent of the peasants do not own land. It is deplorable that in Batangas, 91 landlords own or control 71,813 hectares and in Quezon, 211 landlords, 561,626 hectares. In San Francisco, Quezon, only 48 landlords hold 20,000 hectares. In Bondoc Peninsula, thousands of hectares are in the hands of each of the Reyes, Tan, Murray, Matias and Cojuangco families. Throughout



Southern Tagalog landlords owning hundreds of hectares each are common.

As a result of the policy of neoliberal globalization dictated by the US to the puppet regime, Philippine agriculture is subject to GATT and WTO; the land is laid open to the influx of foreign agricultural and mining corporations giving priority to production for export, ruining food production for the people and making the country dependent on food imports.

Jobs in the countryside are scarce. At the same time, there is no national industrialization to generate employment. Thus unemployment is widespread. Some 10 percent of our people are forced to leave our country, leaving their family behind. They seek their fortune abroad with scarce or no guarantee of proper wages and rights.

The International League of Peoples' Struggle upholds your call to immediately implement the Peasants' Agenda. Genuine land reform must be implemented and the Genuine Agrarian Reform Bill (House Bill 3059) must be enacted and the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program Extension with Reforms (CARPER) or RA 4700 must be thrashed.

Agriculture in the country must be strengthened. Land use conversion or reclassification must be stopped. Agriculture of the country must be removed from the scope of the World Trade Organization. Agriculture in rice, coconut, sugar cane, coffee and other products must be developed. The prices of agricultural products must be raised and subsidies to farm production must be given. The militarization of the countryside and the abduction, torture, killings and forced evacuations must be stopped. We must oppose the criminalization of peasants in agrarian cases. We must demand the release of political prisoners.

The International League of Peoples' Struggle also upholds your calls for emergency assistance and allowance to the farmers affected by El Niño. Your proposals for a moratorium on the payment of land rent by peasants whose farms have been damaged, cancellation of interest on debts, compensation per hectare damaged and grants of equipment to legitimate peasant's and fishermen's organizations affected by the fish kills and Red tide.

Debts resulting from very high service charges for irrigation must be cancelled. The privatization of water like Angat dam, the construction of new megadams like Laiban Dam and the grant of water rights and permits to businesses such as large mining, golf courses, and other enterprises making wasteful and harmful use of water must be stopped. We know how brutal is the Arroyo regime in launching Oplan Bantay Laya I and II.

We know who are the big landlords and the repressive apparatus of the reactionary state that uses force to suppress the peasants and farmworkers and the movement for genuine land reform. We must also expose such special agents of landlords as AKBAYAN, UNORKA, PAKISAMA, PARRDS, PARAGOS, PAMBUKID-KA, KASAKA-TK, KMBP, CARET, AR NOW, CENTRO-SAKA, PEACE Foundation and others.

In connection with the upcoming elections, it is appropriate for you to identify and assist patriotic and progressive candidates, parties and coalitions that promote genuine land reform. It is also appropriate for you to expose the traitors and reactionaries who carry the interests of the landlords and who use violence and deception to suppress the rural poor and the movement for genuine land reform.

We understand why many favor the nationalist and progressive program of the Makabayan Coalition and the bilateral alliance of Makabayan and the Liberal Party, the presidential tandem of Manny Villar and Loren Legarda, the candidates Satur Ocampo and Liza Maza for the senate and Anakpawis and other progressive partylist groups.

We also understand why many are disgusted with candidates like Noynoy Aquino and Mar Roxas. They boast of themselves as puppets of US imperialism and followers of the policies of neoliberal globalization. They are not only representatives of the classes of big compradors and landlords, but they also have blood debts to the working classes and are ready to shed the blood of the working people. Aquino is directly involved in the Hacienda Luisita massacre and subsequent killings.

The crisis of the world capitalist system and the ruling system in the Philippines will certainly intensify. If pro-imperialist and anti-working people candidates like Aquino and Roxas will reign in the Philippines, the struggle of

the toiling masses and the Filipino people for national and social liberation against imperialism and reactionary classes certainly intensify. The revolutionary movement will certainly advance.

The International League of Peoples' Struggle wishes your conference to be highly successful and be your key to major advances in the struggle for genuine land reform.

Long live the rural poor of Southern Tagalog!

Advance land reform together with national industrialization!

Long live the Filipino people!

# ***Fight for Land Reform, Justice and Freedom***

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## **Message of solidarity to the Kilusang Magbubukid**

**ng Pilipinas on its 25<sup>th</sup> founding anniversary**

**July 24, 2010**

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WHOLEHEARTEDLY I AM in solidarity with the leaders, members and the supporters of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas in celebrating its 25<sup>th</sup> founding anniversary. It is important for the entire nation that we celebrate the continuous struggle of the peasant movement for genuine land reform, to honor the peasant martyrs who have sacrificed their lives and to strengthen the spirit and movement of the leaders and members for justice and freedom through land reform against the semicolonial and semifeudal ruling system.

I consider as a great honor that in July 1985 I was invited to give a message of solidarity to the first national congress of the KMP despite the fact that I was still detained in Fort Bonifacio. I am even more greatly honored by giving again a message of solidarity now because of the many victories that you have harvested in the last 25 years of struggle and sacrifices for advancing the peasant movement and land reform and the general struggle of the people for national liberation and democracy against imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism.

It is commendable that KMP has a high level of political consciousness and has won significant victories, mainly in asserting the rights of the peasants over the land that they till. I salute you for the continuous expansion and consolidation of your organization at various levels. I admire the KMP for having 65 provincial chapters and 15 regional chapters in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao.

Your struggle against the policies dictated by US imperialism and carried out by the Arroyo puppet regime is astounding. You have opposed the policy of neoliberal globalization, especially its laying aside of land reform, destruction of food production for the people and the bargaining away of land and natural resources to foreign corporations. You condemned the policy of imperialist aggression and state terrorism masquerading as war against terrorism. And you have vigorously opposed the real terrorism of Oplan Bantay Laya and the intervention of US military forces under the Visiting Forces Agreement.

KMP has courageously fought the laws, policies and programs that aggravate the exploitation and oppression perpetrated by the landlord class and foreign corporations. You have intensified your resistance in response to the assassinations, massacres, torture, unwarranted arrests and detention and the displacement of the peasants from their homes and land. You have effectively fought not only the barefaced enemy but also the special agents that sneaked into the KMP and whipped up factionalism.

It is gratifying that the Alyansa ng Magbubukid ng Gitnang Luzon (Alliance of Central Luzon Farmers-AGML) and the Asembleya ng mga Manggagawang Bukid [Assembly of Farmworkers] have prepared your gathering inside Hacienda Luisita. Several times I stayed in some barrios there in the years from 1968 to 1972. This was the period of building the new Communist Part of the Philippines and the New People's Army in the province of Tarlac. This was also the period of organizing the Pagkakaisa ng mga Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (Unity of Farmers of the Philippines-PMP).

It is meaningful that a thousand representatives of the regional and provincial chapters of KMP are now gathered inside Hacienda Luisita in order to hold a celebration with the theme: Twenty Five Years of Persevering Struggle for Land, Justice and Freedom. You are proving that the peasant movement is firm and militant and is advancing despite cruel acts of suppression by the reactionary government and by landlords.

In this hacienda, in 2004 and 2005 events burst out to call the attention of the people in our country and in the whole world about the exploitation and swindling of the peasants by the landlord class, the just and courageous

struggle of the peasants and the massacre and subsequent killings that were the collaborative work of the Cojuangco-Aquino family and the Arroyo regime.

Now that Noyon Cojuangco-Aquino is the president of the reactionary government, the power of the state and the instruments of violence and deception are now directly in his hands. During the electoral campaign, Aquino said that he would continue the stock distribution option swindle under the CARPER (Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program Extension with Reforms). His family continues to frustrate land reform through corporate tricks and other cruel and deceptive tactics.

At any rate, you are prepared to fight for land reform, justice and freedom. In the face of so great a challenge, it is necessary for you to raise the level of your political consciousness, accelerate the strengthening of your organization and engage in mass mobilization to advance the cause of land reform.

Like the Arroyo regime, the Aquino regime is a running dog of US imperialism. Aquino is now the chief representative of the pro-imperialist classes of big compradors and landlords. He is continuing the evil policies dictated by the US and carried out by Arroyo. Rabid implementers of the policies of neoliberalism and terrorism who were previous adjutants of Arroyo are now the adjutants of Aquino in betraying the Filipino people and violating national and democratic rights and interests.

Under the current Aquino regime, the problems of landlessness, poverty and hunger will become graver. Aquino has no interest in land reform and national industrialization. The bloody suppression of the people will be intensified. Despite the grave economic crisis, the bankrupt reactionary government and scarce resources for social services, Aquino stated in his inaugural address that he would give what the military and police ask for. He indicated that he would double the strength of the military and police forces as the population had doubled since the time of Marcos.

In his first military command conference, he ordered the military to give priority to so-called counterinsurgency — in fact, state terrorism. Thus, the criminal officers and armed personnel of the state continue to engage in gross and systematic human rights violations with impunity. The Aquino regime is subservient to the US-dictated policy of counterinsurgency or state terrorism. The most important elements of this policy is the strengthening of the reactionary military and the pretenses of the reactionary government at clean and efficient governance, delivery of social services, wishing for economic development and other types and methods of deception.

Pretending to wish for peace negotiations is a minor concern. Aquino has already declared that the priority of the military is so-called counter-insurgency. Defense secretary Gazmin has said that the revolutionary forces must surrender and thus peace negotiations are not needed. Chief of staff General David has also said without qualifications that the plan of the military and government is to decimate the revolutionary forces in three years' time. This is a very emphatic warning and challenge to the Filipino people and the revolutionary forces.

It is clear that like the Arroyo regime the Aquino regime wants to destroy the revolutionary movement of the Filipino people and perpetuate the rotten ruling system of the big compradors and landlords under US imperialism. On the other hand, we see that the people and the revolutionary forces are well-prepared to fight the escalation of exploitation and oppression as a result of the worsening of the crisis of the domestic ruling system and the world capitalist system. The revolutionary forces have declared their resolve to raise the people's war along the line of new democratic revolution from the strategic defensive to the strategic stalemate in the next five years.

With its own integrity as a legal mass organization, the KMP must raise the national and democratic consciousness of the peasant masses and must promptly and earnestly face up to the many issues churned by the crisis at the global, national and local levels. The recruitment of members must be accelerated and must bring the number of members to the millions. Members must be recruited and local chapters must be formed (where there are none) through meetings to explain the constitution and program of KMP. The organized masses must avail of campaigns to persuade the unorganized masses to become members of the KMP and become a firm part of the peasant movement.

I am certain that with the simultaneous celebrations of the 25th founding anniversary of the KMP at the national, regional, provincial and barangay levels you will be able to raise further the fighting consciousness of the peasants for their rights and interests, you will be able to put forward proposals and plans regarding education, organization and mobilization and you will be able to amplify support from various sectors in the countryside, in the entire country and the world.

# ***Consolidate your Gains, Strengthen Asian Peasant Unity and Intensify the Struggle***

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**Keynote address to the 3<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly**

**of the Asian Peasant Coalition (APC), Sri Lanka**

**January 23-24, 2011**

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I WISH TO CONVEY TO the Asian Peasant Coalition (APC) the warmest greetings of solidarity and reiteration of support from the International League of Peoples' Struggle. I thank you for inviting me to be the keynote speaker of your 3rd General Assembly. I feel doubly honored as I recall having been the keynote speaker of your 2nd General Assembly in Bandung in 2006.

We congratulate you for striving to unite and mobilize the peasant masses to struggle for their rights against the imperialist and domestic forces that deprive them of land, exploit them and oppress them. Your coalition stands as a developing bulwark of the hundreds of millions of peasant masses in Asia.

We congratulate you for the significant achievements that you have won since the last assembly. You have gained a certain level of strength to serve as the basis for expanding and further strengthening your ranks. The forces that your coalition and the peasant masses confront are becoming ever more rapacious and repressive.

As the theme of your assembly precisely demands, it is imperative that you consolidate your gains and strengthen Asian peasant unity, persevere in the struggle for land and national sovereignty and intensify the resistance against imperialist globalization and war. Landlessness in Asia and violations of peasant rights are intensifying at an alarming rate over the last ten years as a result of the policy of neoliberal globalization.

The persistence of this policy has aggravated the economic, financial and social crisis and has prevented any real economic recovery in terms of production and employment in both the imperialist and underdeveloped countries. The crisis is driving the US and the corporate giants to make up for the declining rates of profit in the imperialist countries by intensifying exploitation and oppression and by raising further their superprofits in the underdeveloped countries.

The corporate giants in the US and other imperialist countries are engaged in land-grabbing in collusion with corrupt domestic bureaucrats, big compradors and landlords, emboldening the traditional landlords to engage in further land accumulation and are preventing genuine land reform by drumming up the market as the way to solve the land problem. The foreign and domestic vultures are preoccupied with exploiting the natural and human resources and providing cheap raw materials and docile labor for the imperialist corporations.

The persistence of feudalism and semifeudalism, characterized by landlessness among the peasant masses and aggravated by the intrusions of foreign agro-corporations, and the consequent lack of comprehensive and well-balanced industrial development are the fundamental reasons behind the widespread state of poverty and hunger among Asian farmers and other people in the rural areas who live on less than US\$1 a day.

You are correct in pointing out that neoliberal policies have inflicted extreme suffering on the people. These policies include the reduction of subsidies in food, agriculture and social services as part of Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs); the constraints imposed by the Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) and Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) in favor of TNCs; the integration of agriculture under the World Trade Organization's (WTO)/Agreement on Agriculture (AOA); and large-scale corporatization of agriculture.

The lack of genuine land reform and industrial development under the banner of national sovereignty is further pushing down the agrarian economies in Asia. There is a crying need for genuine agrarian reform and free land distribution and for agricultural cooperativization. But schemes of land concentration by a few have run fast

ahead. They include the Compulsory Acquisition of Land, Special Economic Zones and so many other land-extensive projects not only in corporate agriculture but also for mining, logging, tourism and real estate speculation.

The imperialist countries collectively and bilaterally impose their policies on the puppet states in Asia at the expense of the peasant masses, farmworkers, peasant women fisherfolk and other rural producers. They use agencies like the IMF, the World Bank, ADB and WTO, and regional trade formations like APEC and ASEAN to perpetuate their dominance.

When multilateral trade agreements fail, like the Doha Round and the 6th WTO Ministerial Meeting in Hong Kong, the US and other centers of world capitalism pursue bilateral talks in the form of free trade agreements (FTAs) and the so-called 'Aid for Trade' which was supposed to complement the Doha Agenda.

We in the ILPS admire and highly appreciate the victories that the APC has achieved since 2003 in waging struggles for genuine land reform and defending human rights against repression, state terrorism and imperialist wars. You have accumulated strength by raising the level of consciousness, organization and mobilization of the peasant masses in Asia. You have acted effectively in a collective way as an alliance as well as individually in the different countries where your members are.

You have launched fact-finding missions, exchange programs, coordinated researches, workshops, forums, tribunals, mobilizations, petition signing, dialogues, conferences, solidarity missions and other enlightening activities. You have carried out mass campaigns for genuine agrarian reform against tremendous odds and difficulties. And you have learned from each other's struggles by exchanging ideas and experiences and engaging in various forms of practical cooperation. We are therefore confident that you have the basis for advancing further.

We salute all the peasant masses, their organizations and their leaders that have resolutely and militantly waged mass struggles for their political, economic, social and cultural rights. We join you in acknowledging and celebrating the peasant struggles and victories in India, Bangladesh, Nepal, the Philippines, Indonesia and Malaysia. We have read reports about these in your website and in your briefing paper. We suggest that you include in the scope of your study and work the peasant masses of China, Indochina and possibly Central Asia.

We in the ILPS are proud that from July 2009 to April 2010, APC and ILPS Commission No. 6 cooperated in sponsoring the "Asia-wide Peasants' Caravan for Land and Livelihood" with the theme "Stop Global Land-grabbing! Struggle for Genuine Agrarian Reform and Peoples' Food Sovereignty." The caravan culminated in the Philippines on April 11, 2010 with 12 international participants coming from 9 countries in Asia. We consider that the 3rd general assembly is highly important and consequential. It serves as the venue to evaluate your work, to discuss, to brainstorm and to strengthen perspectives, strategies and collective action for your future work in the whole of Asia and in your respective countries. We are hopeful that the assembly fulfils all its objectives.

It is a requirement for the next harvest of victories and for your long-term advance that you evaluate the work of APC (and its secretariat) and highlight its assessment points to guide its work ahead; unify your ranks on the practical application of principles and framework in your struggle for genuine agrarian reform as well as your networking, alliance and solidarity building; to consolidate and strengthen APC leadership, membership and its secretariat to effectively fulfil its mandate and tasks; and come up with a general program of action, thrust and directions and a common Asia-wide campaign.

I take this opportunity to invite the Asian Peasant Coalition and all its organizations to send delegations to the Fourth International Assembly of the ILPS to be held in Manila from July 7 to 9. You shall be able to present your just cause before Commission No. 6 and the plenary, to draw up a resolution on land reform and peasant rights and integrate it with the general resolution and with the over-all struggle of the people of the world and to network with various delegations representing people's organizations on a global scale.

# ***Message to the 4<sup>th</sup> National Convention of Anakpawis Partylist***

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**Translation from Tagalog original, April 26, 2012**

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I CONVEY PATRIOTIC and militant greetings to the leaders and members of Anakpawis Partylist on the occasion of it's 4th national convention. This gathering of hundreds of delegates representing the working people in various regions, provinces, cities and municipalities is gratifying.

The growth in strength of your party is noticeable. I salute all of you for all your past achievements and your preparations through this convention to further strengthen your party for the coming elections next year and the entire scope of your program for the next five years.

Your convention is a good opportunity for you to sum up your experiences, learn lessons and set the new tasks for your advance towards a higher level of unity and capability. Your theme is timely and appropriate: Advance Working People, Strengthen Yourselves, Serve, and Triumph!

Your party plays a very important role. You represent the working people — workers, peasants and fisherfolk — who comprise the majority of the population and you strive to express their demands and aspirations through the mass movement and electoral struggle and for them to have representatives inside Congress.

It is a big anomaly that the big compradors and landlords who comprise a miniscule minority of the population (less than one percent) have the bigger number of representatives in Congress and other branches of government. Nevertheless, even if the maximum number of your representatives your party can have in Congress is limited to three, having a voice there is significant as these can cooperate with other nationalist and progressive representatives.

It is good that the voice of the working people breaks the silence or lies of the reactionary representatives that the fundamental rights and welfare of the working people and the entire Filipino people. The working people should use the opportunity to criticize the attack dogs of US imperialism and the representative of the exploiting classes in their own backyard that is the Congress.

The representatives of your party should struggle with the enemies of the people inside Congress and more importantly outside through campaigns and other actions regarding important issues. Inside Congress, there are limitations on the representatives of the working people. But outside of Congress, the opportunities are wider and greater to fight for the national and democratic rights of the working people and the Filipino people.

Your convention is a good opportunity to clarify the present situation. The crisis of the global capitalist system and the local ruling system is grave and intensifying. The crisis buffets the working people and the middle social strata in the form of widespread unemployment, landlessness and homelessness, the fall in profits, the rise in prices of basic goods and services and other manifestations of the spreading and deepening poverty and difficulty in life.

Under the neoliberal policy of the imperialist globalization, the extraction of profit and the accumulation of capital in the hands of the monopoly bourgeoisie is accelerating in the form of the decline of wages and cutbacks in social services. Whenever the crisis of overproduction arises, this is obscured by huge debts and the monopoly bourgeoisie and financial oligarch further earn huge profits.

Eventually, the huge loans to the corporations and consumers in the imperialist countries fail to work. Production falls and unemployment increases. The state extends big loans to the banks and corporations. But this does not resuscitates the economy because the loans are used to payback previous loans. Now, the imperialist states themselves are hit by a grave financial crisis.



The situation in backward, agrarian and semifeudal countries like the Philippines is even worse. The imperialists pass on to them the burden of the crisis. The exports of raw materials and semimanufactures (assembly of electronic semiconductors and others) decline. Even overseas employment starts to fall. Unemployment and decline in wages is now widespread, while the rise in the price of oil and other basic goods and services are increasing rapidly.

The current Noyoy Aquino regime is no different or even worse than the Arroyo regime in exploiting and impoverishing the working people. It worships the neoliberal policy and rejects the policy of national independence and national industrialization and land reform. The bureaucrat capitalists led by Aquino are exceedingly corrupt. They are in cahoots with the imperialists, the big compradors and the landlords in exploiting the workers and peasants.

Aquino has said there will be no poor if there is no corruption. He slaps himself. The number of the poor increases and it is true that the corruption of the Aquino regime is increasing and spreading. The Aquino and Cojuangco families and their few collaborators monopolize infrastructure and energy projects, land-grabbing and mining concessions. For the longest time, they insist on the price of 10 billion pesos for Hacienda Luisita. The coco levy funds extorted by Marcos and Danding Cojuangco are being denied to the coconut farmers.

The Aquino regime is no different or is even worse than the Aquino regime in terms of oppression and violations of human rights. The Aquino regime tolerates the illegal detention, torture and extrajudicial killings committed by the Arroyo regime and new crimes are being committed through Oplan Bayanihan. Up to now more than 350 political prisoners languish in jail, while Aquino has long ago released the more than 400 military prisoners.

The Aquino regime does not respect the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Philippines. It follows subserviently the orders of the US imperialists and submits to the increase of US military forces, their free use of the land, air and marine areas of the Philippines. The US and the Aquino regime collude in increasing the number of military exercises and in baiting China and the DPRK thus giving the US the reason to use the Philippines as a launching pad for maintaining US hegemony in East Asia.

I am aware that your party needs correct and clear direction not only for the next elections in 2013 but also for the entire period from 2012 to 2016. You need a program that covers the next five years and that lays down the policies and forms of action to implement the program.

Among the policies should be the promotion of national sovereignty and independence, expansion of democracy by empowering the working people, the development of the Philippine economy through national industrialization and genuine land reform, the promotion of patriotic, scientific and pro-working people culture and education; and an independent and peaceful foreign policy.

These policies should be disseminated and implemented by means of campaigns and informative activities and political education that expands and consolidates your own organization as a party and through mass mobilizations on burning issues.

In connection with information and political education, there should be researches and pamphlets on long-term and immediate issues, a dynamic website, audio-visual materials that easily explain the party and its issues, and frequent seminars and forums in institutions, places of work and especially in communities.

Regarding organization, you should be prompt in recruiting members and in building chapters and leading committees. Study sessions and convention on various levels is part of consolidation. Consolidation work is also expansion if you are able to attract those interested. Consolidation work is also expansion because it is through these that members and leaders are honed in organization work.

Regarding mass mobilizations, you should have militant mass actions on burning issues to mobilize your membership, their friends and relatives, colleagues at work and neighbors. The policy of uniting the ranks should be adopted. You should have relations of mutual help and benefit.

I am confident that you will win more and bigger victories strengthening your party and implementing your program for the next five years and that your party will play a big role in advancing the movement for national liberation, democracy, social justice and all-round development.

Long live the Anakpawis Partylist!

Long live the workers and peasants!

Long live the Filipino people!

# ***Advance the Agrarian Revolution and Intensify the Struggle for National Democracy***

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**In Solidarity with the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas on its 7<sup>th</sup> Congress on March 18-19, 2013**

**March 17, 2013**

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THE INTERNATIONAL COORDINATING Committee and the entire International League of Peoples' Struggle (ILPS) conveys its heartfelt greetings and solidarity with the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas on its 7<sup>th</sup> Congress.

We are witness to your brilliant successes. We salute you. The congress is an occasion to sum up your experience, draw lessons and set forth the tasks for further advancing in the struggle and achieving greater victories.

Your theme embodies your determination: "Advance KMP! Fight for land reform! Intensify the struggle for national democracy!" Your call is completely correct and you have our all-out support.

We are happy to know that you are determined to continue to expand and intensify your militant peasant struggle for genuine land reform and against feudal and semi-feudal exploitation. This struggle is within the framework of the over-all aim of the national democratic movement to expand its forces and raise to a higher level the national and democratic struggle.

It is necessary to fully advance the campaign against the CARPER and in favor of GARB. The CARPER must be relentlessly exposed as pro-landlord and the continuation of land monopoly and the concomitant land-grabbing must be opposed. It is also necessary for the regions and provinces to draw up plans to oppose CARPER and other ploys of the US-Aquino regime.

You must put emphasis on local peasant struggles that would clearly expose the rottenness of CARPER. In Hacienda Luisita, you must guard against, expose, and oppose the scheme of the US-Aquino regime to deceive the farmworkers and maintain the control of the Cojuangco family over the land. The struggle against MRT-7 must be continued. It is only proper to revive the legal case and the land issue. You must be vigilant because the case is now at the level of the Presidential Agrarian Reform Council where Aquino (an unabashed cacique) is chairman. You must be good in carrying out this struggle in order to speedily expose the rottenness of CARPER and the US-Aquino regime. The peasant struggles in Hacienda Looc, Batangas; in Isabela where land-grabbing of wide areas of land is involved to give way to a bio-ethanol project; the land in Central Mindanao University in Mindanao and in other places must be given direction and support. The expansion of plantations producing for export and owned by foreign corporations and big compradors and landlords must be opposed. Oppose the land-grabbing of lands that should be owned by the poor peasants. The peasantry and the people must be mobilized against large-scale and widespread mining owned or controlled by foreigners and comprador bureaucrats. They destroy the environment and agriculture, grab lands, cause landslides and poison the rivers and streams. The plunder and export of mineral resources destroy the possibility of national industrialization. The unrestricted logging for export must also be opposed.

It was correct that you set as a major campaign the claim for the more than PhP80 billion fund from the coco levy. This should be returned to the coconut farmers. The current regime must be prevented from stealing it again. The campaign to claim the coco levy must be linked up with the overall struggle for genuine land reform. The exploitation of coconut farmers must immediately be opposed such as the resikada, tara, cheating in weighing, low copra prices, low wages of farmworkers, usury and others.

In the face of the grave economic crisis, it is urgent to oppose exploitation and raise the standard of living of the peasant masses. Within the framework of the minimum program of land reform, you must fight for higher compensation for the cheating by merchants and lowering the rent for machinery and other production expenses.

Due to the policies of the reactionary state of big compradors and landlords regarding logging, mining and

expansion of plantations, the damage wrought by natural calamities like typhoons and floods has worsened. In addition, the state is negligent and does not give sufficient and timely support to victims of calamities.

You must be good at preparing and mobilizing your membership and allied organizations in helping the victims of calamities, wherever it happens not only in the immediate relief operations but in the long-term process of rehabilitation and reconstruction and in fighting the causes that aggravate the damage resulting from calamities.

The peasant masses are the principal victims of such man-made calamities as Oplan Bayanihan. It is in the countryside where the brutal campaigns of suppression and violations of human rights are rampant. The state wants to preserve the feudal and semifeudal system of exploitation. You should be good at documenting, exposing and opposing the criminal attacks of the state in the countryside. Oppose the criminalization of agrarian cases and peasant leaders. You should strengthen your links with organizations that defend human rights and democratic rights.

You are right in your determination to fight the growing military intervention of the US in the Philippines. The stationing of military forces, the frequent Balikatan military exercises and the non-stop entry of US warships are brazen imperialist acts. This is in connection with maintaining the economic domination of the US. It wants to maintain and expand the plantations, mines and other firms owned by it and other foreigners and their local collaborators in the comprador bureaucrats and landlords.

Under the neoliberal policy, the imperialists and their puppets have destroyed our food sovereignty and self-sufficiency. Through the large-scale importation of rice, corn and other food products, our own production in these has been destroyed. The further expansion of plantations of fruits for export and the production of bio-fuel in the country are destroying local food production. Let us fight imperialist control of the peasant harvest, the wages of farmworkers and the prices of farm products. Let us fight the imperialist plunder in agriculture, control of seeds in IRRI, and the propagation of genetically modified seeds and plants.

You must continue and intensify the struggle against the multilateral imperialist agencies, neocolonialism and neoliberalism. Launch a protest action against the upcoming 9<sup>th</sup> WTO ministerial meeting. Fight the maneuvers of US imperialism in the areas of the economy and trade through the WTO and the bilateral and regional agreements such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA) and the proposed EU-RP economic partnership agreement.

It is fine that you are involved in the political education campaign for the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Andres Bonifacio. Celebrate and spread the basic principle of national sovereignty and democratic rights of the people to wage revolution against the foreign and local oppressors and exploiters. Up now, the revolutionary principles of Bonifacio and the Katipunan remain valid.

The US-Aquino regime is forcing the Filipino people to wage revolution. The peace negotiations between the government and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines are deliberately being blocked because the former does not want to talk about the need for national industrialization and genuine land reform.

These reforms that are nationalist and democratic are labeled as ideological and communist. The other obstacle placed by the government is its attitude to The Hague Joint Declaration as a document of perpetual division and saying that the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees is no longer valid.

In the current elections, the Anakpawis party list is relying on you. It is only proper that you should be involved in the processes and issues that affect the rights and interests of the peasant masses. You must guard against the scheme of Charter change, worsening corruption and the intensification of feudal and semifeudal exploitation. You must face every challenge of the imperialists and local reactionaries and use this as an opportunity to sharpen your analysis, strengthen your standpoint, consolidate your ranks, work conscientiously and unite and cooperate with all forces fighting for change.

Amidst the worsening political and economic crisis in our country, the issues of your sector and all other sectors will always arise. In this connection, you should also always raise your awareness, organization and action for the

liberation of the peasant masses and the people.

We in ILPS are proud of KMP for being one of its member organizations. KMP has a brilliant record in the anti-imperialist and democratic struggle inside and outside of the Philippines. The international work of KMP is admirable. The KMP plays a key role in Commission 6 of ILPS and the Asian Peasant Coalition, Pesticide Action Network-Asia Pacific, People's Coalition on Food Sovereignty and other major international organizations.

You must continue the good work in developing the international unity and cooperation of the peasantry, especially in the underdeveloped countries within the framework of the anti-imperialist and democratic struggle of the world's peoples.

Long live the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas!

Advance the struggle for genuine land reform!

Fight the imperialists, big compradors and landlords!

Attain national independence and democracy!

Long live the Filipino people!

# ***Intensify the Global People's Resistance against the WTO and Imperialist Plunder***

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## **Message of solidarity to the People's Global Camp in**

**Bali, Indonesia**

**December 2-6, 2013**

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WE, THE INTERNATIONAL League of Peoples' Struggle (ILPS), convey to all the organizations, groups, and individuals participating in the People's Global Camp (PGC) in Bali, Indonesia our warmest greetings of solidarity in your resistance against neoliberal globalization and imperialist plunder.

We congratulate the Indonesian Peoples Alliance (IPA) for having successfully organized the PGC in close cooperation with an International Coordinating Committee, of which the ILPS is a member. We are highly appreciative of the IPA for having moved forward as a broad campaign platform since January to facilitate and coordinate the various people's responses to the renewed offensive of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and to the imperialist policy of neoliberal globalization in general.

We are elated that the struggle against the WTO and imperialist plunder has served to strengthen the IPA as a broad alliance of grassroots organizations and movements of workers, peasants, women, youth and students, migrant workers, indigenous peoples, professionals, environmental and other advocacy groups coming from the provinces, islands and various ethnolinguistic communities. We support your calls to uphold people's sovereignty, make trade serve the people, end trade liberalization, attain mutual benefit in international trade, reject new unequal agreements and junk WTO.

We are pleased with having cooperated with the IPA and extended various forms of assistance within our capability. It is a duty for all of us to exert our best in building the unity of the people's organizations and movements against the WTO, particularly its Ninth Ministerial Meeting. We are all seriously concerned that this meeting is aimed at pushing further the neoliberal offensive of the imperialist powers led by the United States and European Union. New trade-related deals are being crafted to reinforce previous agreements to further open and subject to plunder the national economies and patrimonies of Third World countries.

The US-led WTO and the imperialist G-8 at the core of G-20 are trying in vain to deceive the people that the way out of the current global economic crisis is to abide by the neoliberal framework of trade and investments and to further expand and enforce it through the so-called Bali Package, which covers facilitation of unequal trade, LDC issues and agriculture. This package is also linked to so-called post-Bali issues, like the International Technology Agreement and Trade in Services Agreement. The neoliberal framework continues to aggravate the crisis it has caused in the first place.

The imperialist powers are making a futile attempt to delude the third world countries that the way out of the crisis and underdevelopment is to follow Indonesia as a model for supposedly graduating to middle-income status and being on the way to joining Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa (BRICS). In fact, Indonesia is an example of a country that remains semicolonial and semifeudal, agrarian and underdeveloped, so because of the wanton imperialist plunder of its natural resources and the overload of imported manufactures.

It is laudable that the People's Global Camp has arisen as an instrument of the people of the world for counteracting the imperialist propaganda and rejecting the WTO and its so-called Bali Package of deals. The PGC can fully serve as a democratic venue for collective learning, analysis and action against the neoliberal economic policy and against the WTO. It is designed to encourage all participants to conduct their self-organized activities and to converge in plenary sessions where they can forge common goals and define the alternative to the pseudo-development model propagated by the imperialist powers.

The multifaceted crisis of the world capitalist system continues to deepen and worsen. The imperialist promoters of neoliberal globalization are misrepresenting as solutions the furtherance and aggravation of the same old policies and mechanisms that in the first place generated the multiple crises (economic and financial, social, energy, food and climate).

The monopoly banks and firms are bailed out with public money and continue to enjoy tax cuts, gilded contracts, subsidies and guarantees, while the workers and other people suffer high rates unemployment, labor flexibilization, wage and benefit cuts, rising costs of living, indirect taxes in basic commodities and the unceasing rounds of austerity measures which reduce public employment, social benefits and social services in education, health and housing. The conditions of mass unemployment, poverty and gross inequality are worsening.

We welcome the PGC plenaries on such broad concerns as the multiple crises (socioeconomic, energy, food and climate) and the neoliberal offensive; militarism and wars of aggression; the Indonesian peoples' struggles; and people's resistance around the world, and the thematic and sectoral workshops or conferences. We are confident that all participating groups, including ILPS member-organizations, will contribute to the success of these plenaries and workshops.

We look forward to the PGC calling for system change. We must demand the end of the unjust system that generates crisis and uses it to further exploit and oppress the people, plunder the environment, impose unfair and unequal trade agreements and deepen the neocolonial relationship of the imperialist countries and the underdeveloped countries and thereby further accelerate the accumulation and concentration of wealth in the hands of the monopoly bourgeoisie at the expense of the working people and the underdeveloped countries. We must aim for genuine, all-round and well-balanced development in which the people are the agents of change and are the beneficiaries. We must overcome imperialist and class exploitation and all accumulated and current social, economic, political, cultural and environmental injustices. We must oppose and stop the few from monopolizing productive assets and using these to further enrich themselves by exploiting and oppressing the working people.

Justice requires that all forms of class exploitation and discrimination are ended. In the relation of countries, the imperialist powers must be stopped from imposing economic, financial, trade, social, political and security policies to keep the majority of countries grossly exploited, impoverished and underdeveloped.

We are hopeful that the Global People's Parade at the start, the Solidarity Night, and the Global People's Assembly and Global March will enhance the unity and militancy of all PGC participants. We wish fervently that the PGC continues with the militant tradition of people's resistance during WTO ministerials in the form of street mass actions, as in Cancun, Seattle and Hong Kong. We have called on all member-organizations of the ILPS to participate in the Global Day of Action against WTO and neoliberal trade, by conducting simultaneous in-country actions and demonstrations on December 6.

May the PGC resonate to inspire the people of the third world to fight for their national sovereignty, national patrimony and development against the accumulated and new impositions of the imperialist powers through the WTO and other multilateral agencies. As the crisis of the world capitalist system worsens, the anti-imperialist movement of the people will grow stronger.

We take this opportunity to express admiration for the fast growing anti-imperialist and democratic movement of the Indonesian people. We are ever hopeful that the 250 million Indonesian people will rise as a bulwark of national independence, democracy, social justice and development. We thank the Indonesian People's Alliance for hosting the People's Global Camp in opposition to the WTO and imperialist plunder.

## ***KM@50: Continuing the Advocacy for Genuine Agrarian Reform***

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**February 21, 2014**

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I AM GLAD THAT THIS year, NNARA-Youth is leading the campaign “KM@50: Continuing the Advocacy for Genuine Agrarian Reform” in recognition of Kabataang Makabayan’s stand on the issue of agrarian reform. It is but fitting for NNARA-Youth to lead the campaign since it is a mass organization of youth and students that is in solidarity with the peasantry’s call for genuine land reform.

NNARA-Youth has the capability of undertaking various activities that would project the peasants’ struggle to the biggest number of youth and students and eventually draw them into this struggle. The campaign also presents an opportunity to expand the NNARA-Youth’s membership and strengthen the organization.

It is an honor for me to participate in the launching of the first series of activities that feature simultaneous propaganda actions and programs at UP Diliman, UP Manila and PUP. A discussion on KM’s history and its stand on genuine agrarian reform is a fitting climax of the activities.

Since the beginning, KM’s constitution and program have identified the working class as the vanguard class and the peasantry as the main force in undertaking the people’s democratic revolution against the ruling system of big compradors and landlords controlled by US imperialism.

The main content of the democratic revolution is the implementation of agrarian revolution which is the peasantry’s foremost need. This is the means through which they can achieve socioeconomic and political liberation. The Filipino people can only attain national freedom and progress if the peasantry is liberated through genuine agrarian reform simultaneous to national industrialization.

Since the beginning, the peasant youth have been a big, important and decisive part of Kabataang Makabayan. During KM’s establishment, links were established through peasant associations in Central Luzon and Southern Tagalog. Thus, it became easy for the urban-based youth to go to the countryside to integrate with the peasantry, including the youth through social investigation and mass work to arouse, organize and mobilize them for their rights and interests.

Macapagal’s Agricultural Land Reform Code that promised to dismantle the old tenancy system was enacted at about the same time KM was founded. The law was full of loopholes enabling hacenderos to evade the eradication of the tenancy system and landlordism. In terms of rhetoric, Macapagal’s agrarian reform looked better than the previous land reform programs from Quezon to Garcia where haciendas were bought and sold at high prices or where the landless were simply encouraged to establish homesteads in the still existing frontiers.

In the second half of the 1960s, the Marcos regime became more brutal in the face of the intensifying crisis of the ruling system and against the protest actions of the youth and the people. KM tightened its links with the peasantry and prepared against Marcos’ scheme of becoming a fascist dictator. Many KM activists became cadres and members of the Communist Party of the Philippines. In November 1969, thousands of KM members and 15,000 peasants converged in front of Congress.

When Marcos imposed a fascist dictatorship nationwide, KM’s membership grew in the countryside. They joined the Party and the people’s army. They helped implement genuine land reform as an integral part of people’s war, in relation to armed struggle and mass work. They belied and assailed the Marcos regime’s renewed pretensions at land reform.

As before, only rice and corn lands were covered by land reform. Marcos’ Code of Agrarian Reform was even more pretentious than Macapagal’s. A formula was laid down ostensibly to establish the price of rice or corn lands and make the payment of amortization by peasants easier. In fact, the government was in cahoots with landlords in



making valuations against the peasantry's interest.

Also, because of the high retention limit for hacienderos, the latter were able to transfer portions of vast tracts of land to their children and other relatives. Another loophole was to remove lands from the rice and corn category. Corporations could be created for the export of agricultural products and officially convert land to commercial or residential use.

After the Filipino people overthrew the fascist dictatorship, the haciendera Cory Aquino also made a pretense at agrarian reform. The Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) of 1988 retained the loopholes in the law to enable landlords to evade land reform, as before. Aquino committed worse deceptions against landless peasants. The 1987 constitution made just compensation for landlords a principle in accordance with market prices.

Aquino created brazen loopholes for Hacienda Luisita and other haciendas — the stock distribution option. Corporations were employed to raise the value of stocks held by landlord families, enabling them to retain control of the haciendas and distribute small shares of stock to the peasants so the latter would remain farmworkers doing the bidding of haciendero families. The Aquino-Cojuangco clan's corruption was exposed when it committed fraud and used violence against the farmworkers. Up to now, this family continues to employ various tactics to swindle and coerce the peasants.

Until its lapse in 2009, CARP not only failed to resolve but even aggravated the peasantry's problem of landlessness and their feudal and semifeudal exploitation. The Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas and the peasant masses called for genuine land reform. But the reactionary regime and the landlord congress repudiated the Genuine Agrarian Reform Bill (GARB). Instead, CARP's effectivity was extended until 2014 using the name CARP-Extension with Reforms (CARPER).

As much as possible, the enactment of GARB should be advanced. But if such legal efforts fail, do not wallow in hopelessness. No matter what obstacles the reactionary powers put up, you and the broad masses of the people must intensify your campaigns to arouse, organize and mobilize until the ruling system is defeated and the people's democratic revolution achieves victory. Those of you who are in the legal movement for genuine agrarian reform know that even as the reactionary state of big compradors and landlords thwarts and prevents genuine land reform, revolutionary action for genuine agrarian reform advances in the countryside.

Once urban-based youth activists advocating genuine agrarian reform grow in number, they can follow the example of the cadres and members of Kabataang Makabayan who went to the countryside and conducted social investigation and mass work and eventually joined the revolutionary Party and the people's army to implement agrarian revolution to the fullest, from its minimum to its maximum level.

The cadres and activists of Kabataang Makabayan in the countryside await you. They want to be assisted in implementing the minimum program, which includes the reduction of land rent, the eradication of usury, the raising of farmworkers' wages, raising the prices of agricultural products and improving agricultural production, among others — up to the implementation of the maximum program, which includes the confiscation of land from hacienderos and the free distribution of land to the peasants.

It is fine that even while you are in the university, you already have an understanding of the problems of the peasantry and the solutions that should be applied. Go to the countryside to learn further from the peasantry about their conditions, problems and needs. You can temporarily stay in the countryside to begin your study. You can also continuously and permanently work in the countryside.

As long as you have strong links with the countryside, you will not be afraid of joining the struggles in the urban areas. I say this in relation to planned protest actions against the puppetry, exploitativeness, corruption, brutality and mendacity of the Aquino regime. Dare to oust this despicable regime. Be courageous in resistance because whatever brutality this regime perpetrates, you now have an iron bastion in the countryside, among the peasants and farmworkers waging revolution.

## ***Recall Successes and Brilliant Lessons***

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### **Message to the 3rd Congress of the Provincial Peasants' Alliance in Aurora, October 25-26, 2014**

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I EXTEND WARM GREETINGS and solidarity to the leadership and membership of the Organizing Committees of the Peasant Farmers in Aurora (PAMANA) on the occasion of its 3rd Congress, in celebration of your successes in the past year and in commemoration of historic achievements and brilliant lessons in the 29 years of the working people's struggle in the province of Aurora.

PAMANA is commendable for leading the current peoples' struggles against widespread land-grabbing under the pretext of development projects such as the APECO (Aurora Pacific Economic Zone and Free Port Act), Sabang Eco-Tourism Authority in Baler (SETA) and other so-called "development projects" of the Angara family and advertising the province in the name of ecotourism.

Angara and his corrupt ilk are despicable in illegally using the DAP51 and PDAF (discretionary funds available for members of congress designed to allow them to fund small-scale infrastructure or community projects) in their private resorts and properties, bogus NGOs and the like. In a video documentary by Malou Mangahas of GMA 7, former Sen. Edgardo Angara admitted that he used a part of the PDAF in his Artist Village located at his resort in Dicasalarin, Baler.

I am aware that from the First Congress, PAMANA put together AKMA, SAMAKA, SKSM and SIKLAB/SAKA as its member-organizations, all taking the line of national liberation and democracy. They seek the liberation of the Filipino people is sought and the realization of democracy through land reform in tandem with national industrialization for the development of our country.

PAMANA is the provincial chapter of the Peasants Alliance of Central Luzon or Alyansa ng Magbubukid-Gitnang Luzon (AMGL), whose national center is the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP), while also being the partner of Pamalakaya in organizing and leading the struggles of the fishermen of Aurora.

PAMANA is indeed significant for consistently, valiantly, zealously and militantly raising consciousness, organizing and mobilizing the ranks of peasants, fishermen and indigenous peoples of Aurora who remained steadfast despite the sharp attacks and attempts of the ruling classes of the province to abolish it.

PAMANA went ahead in getting such organizations as Women's Club, Farmer's Association and PANAMIN among the indigenous people as associates of PAMANA organizations. Willem Geertman led missionary volunteers in the forefront of conducting social investigation and class analysis in the province up to forming progressive organizations and institutions under the direction of the Bishop Julio Xavier Labayen (now Bishop Emeritus) of the Prelature of Infanta.

In 1981, a sectoral consultation was made with Bishop Julio Xavier Labayen and representatives from various villages and towns. In June 1984, a multisectoral consultation was also held, which formed the core groups to focus on forming various organizations in in DICADI (Dilasag, Casiguran and Dinalungan, and Valley Ding (Baler, San Luis, Maria Aurora, Dipaculao and Dingalan).

In January 1985, the Society for the Advocacy of the Youth Initiative (SIKLAB) was formed and in April of that year the Union of the Peasant Movement in Aurora (AKMA). The Association of Peasant Women of Aurora was also formed in November. Women in Aurora (SAMAKA). The Sierra Madre Society (SKSM), and Bagong Alyansang Makabayan-Aurora or BAYAN-Aurora were organized in March 1986.

The organizations continuously progressed and agreed to build the Kilusang Magbubukid Center in Aurora. In 1990, four associations united to constitute the center — APA. In the years 1994 and 1995 a faction attempted to make trouble against the interests of the mass movement. Because of the support of the masses, the rectification movement prevailed and was fully implemented in 1996.

This year, PAMANA was adopted as the center of the Aurora peasant movement. AKMA, SAMAKA, SKSM and SIK-LAB /SAKA were designated as members of PAMANA. These organizations all promote and advance the general line of national-democracy against foreign monopoly capitalism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism.

It is important to commemorate the history of PAMANA's struggle from the creation of its sectoral associations in 1985 and to grasp the lessons and successes. These can provide the guiding light on analyzing the current local and national conditions, summing up experience, responding to challenges, setting tasks, and the 3-year action program.

It is fine that now you are launching the PAMANA History Primer. Discuss and adopt the amendments to your Constitution. Make timely resolutions about issues and tasks. Elect your new leadership with the determination and capability to lead activities and advance of PAMANA. In anticipation I am extending my congratulations to the prospective leadership.

I have great confidence that your Congress will succeed and be a decisive key for ever bigger victories of PAMANA arousing, organizing and mobilizing the toiling masses, and advancing to a new and higher level the struggle for national liberation and democracy.

## ***Message of Solidarity to AMBALA on its Summit***

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**August 15, 2015**

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I HAVE THE HONOR TO convey militant greetings of the International League of Peoples' Struggle (ILPS) to the Alyansa ng Manggagawang Bukid sa Asyenda Luisita (Alliance of Farmworkers in Hacienda Luisita, AMBALA) on the occasion of its Summit this August 15 to 16.

We of the ILPS congratulate you for your steadfast struggle and the victories that you have so far won against the most powerful big comprador-landlord family in the country. The whole world knows about the great Hacienda Luisita strike and about AMBALA as the broadest association of the toiling masses in Hacienda Luisita rallying for genuine land reform and justice.

The people of the world have the highest sympathy for you for suffering the worst forms of oppression and exploitation, including the deceptive use of the stock distribution option for a long time, the infamous Hacienda Luisita massacre and the series of murders, such as those of United Luisita Workers Union leader Tirso Cruz, Central Azucarera de Tarlac Labor Union leader Ricardo Ramos, Alyansa ng Magbubukid sa Tarlac leader Marcelino Beltran, Anakpawis leader Victor "Tatang Ben" Concepcion, Bayan Muna-Tarlac leader Flor Collantes, Tarlac City Councilor Abel Ladera, Bishop Alberto Ramento and Fr. William Tadena who stood up and supported you.

The people of the world have the highest appreciation for you for having persevered in the struggle for land and justice and for having won substantial victories despite the rise of Benigno Aquino III to the highest position in the US-dominated government of big compradors and landlords and despite the impunity and promotion of officers liable for the Hacienda Luisita massacre and the aforesaid murders.

We support the summit in its resolute aim and effort to consolidate the peasant communities in the ten barangays of Hacienda Luisita and to prepare them better for bigger and more challenging struggles ahead in the face of the scheme of the Cojuangco-Aquino family and its accomplices to escalate its attempts to enclose, seize, grab and reconcentrate the land and frustrate the toiling masses in Hacienda Luisita.

As you have exposed and denounced, lies, deception, militarization, threats, harassment, and continued impunity are the ways by which the president of the puppet republic and his family have used to violate your basic rights to land and justice. They use complicated and sophisticated schemes to attack you and deprive you of the land. But AMBALA has succeeded in uniting you as a collective force and leading you to win further socioeconomic and political victories.

There is a lot more to be done in order to win greater victories. We are confident that your summit will succeed in consolidating your victories and drawing up the plan and tasks for obtaining greater victories. You must obtain more victories not just for yourselves in Hacienda Luisita but also for the rest of the toiling masses and our nation. It is inspiring that AMBALA has joined the national campaign for genuine land reform and national industrialization and has committed itself to the advancement of the national democratic struggle of the Filipino people.

Long live AMBALA!

Advance the struggle in Hacienda Luisita!

Mabuhay ang mga magsasaka at manggagawang bukid!

Victory to genuine land reform and social justice!

Long live the Filipino people's national democratic struggle!

# ***Message of Solidarity to NNARA-Youth on its 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary***

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**September 19, 2015**

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WE, THE INTERNATIONAL League of Peoples' Struggle, express our warmest greetings of solidarity to the National Network of Agrarian Reform Advocates–Youth (NNARA–Youth) as it celebrates its 20<sup>th</sup> founding anniversary.

We highly appreciate that you are making a meaningful and purposeful celebration by holding a National Council Assembly with the theme, “BIGWAS: Dalawang Dekada ng Pakikibaka para sa Tunay na Reporma sa Lupa at Pagbasag sa Pyudalismo” and undertaking a series of workshops on speakers training, theater work, propaganda writing and social media guides.

We congratulate you for all your achievements since your founding in 1995 by a group of students from the Development Studies program of the University of the Philippines (UP) Manila. Your chapters are now in UP Diliman, UP Los Baños, Polytechnic University of the Philippines, and in other schools, universities and communities in Isabela, Cagayan, Negros, Davao and the CARAGA region.

NNARA–Youth has become the most outstanding mass organization of peasant youth and students who support the struggle of the landless farmers for land, economic and political rights, and progressive economic development. You have been successful in your efforts to educate, organize, and mobilize the youth, in the rural and urban areas, to integrate and march with the peasants for pro-people policy making, in people-centered production and political campaigns, and to spread a nationalist, scientific, and mass-oriented culture.

We commend you for maintaining a multifaceted approach in engaging the youth in your advocacy by conducting direct organizing through integration programs, education and research programs, carrying out campaign and advocacy programs and maximizing all possible ways and means to lead the youth in treading the path to advocacy for genuine land reform and all the rights and welfare of the peasants. You have used well all available channels of information and education, including the traditional and latest devices of communications.

We are confident that your National Council Assembly will be able to assess and evaluate your accumulated and recent experiences, recognize your achievements as basis for further advance and overcome shortcomings, learn lessons from both positive and negative experiences and set forth the tasks for further strengthening your organization and making greater contributions to the advancement of the peasant struggle for land within the framework of the national democratic movement.

The main content of the struggle for democracy in the Philippines is the fulfilment of the peasant demand for land. It is through genuine land reform that the peasant majority of the people are liberated economically, socially, politically and culturally. Land reform must be carried out in conjunction with national industrialization to establish and strengthen the basis for agricultural cooperatives and mechanization of agriculture and preclude retrogressions to feudal and semifeudal forms of exploitation.

The Filipino peasant masses have been victimized for so long by bogus land reform programs of reactionary regimes. The high valuation of the land and the lack of support for production and the proper sale of products have always predetermined the failure of reactionary land reform programs. From one reactionary regime to another, the peasant masses fall prey to all forms of land reconsolidation by landlords, corrupt government officials, agri-corporations and swarms of merchant-usurers.

The US-Aquino regime continues to escalate the exploitation and oppression of the people under the neoliberal economic policy and the national military campaign Oplan Bayanihan. The peasant masses suffer most from the lack of national industrialization and land reform and from the dumping of foreign surplus agricultural products

on the people. The growing number of peasant youth are being forced to take low-income odd jobs in farms and in urban slums. The regime has no answer to the growing poverty, unemployment and social unrest in the countryside but to launch brutal campaigns of military suppression.

The growing number of toiling masses, without land to till and without industrial jobs, and the dependence of the Philippine economy on foreign debt, portfolio investments, import-based consumption, raw material exports, unstable semi-manufactures, call centers, upscale private construction and the export of a big part of the labor force are manifestations of a disintegrating semicolonial and semifeudal system and are increasingly favorable conditions for waging revolution.

We stand united with the NNARA-Youth in understanding and acting on the demands of the Filipino people for national independence, democracy, social justice, real economic development, a patriotic, scientific, progressive and pro-people culture and international solidarity with all the peoples and forces of the world that are fighting for national liberation, democracy and socialism against imperialism and reaction.

# ***Advance the Interests of the Peasantry and the People***

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## **Solidarity with KASAMA-TK on its 7<sup>th</sup> Congress**

**November 28, 2015**

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AS CHAIRPERSON, I GLADLY extend the solidarity of the International League of Peoples' Struggle (ILPS) to the Katipunan ng mga Samahang Magbubukid sa Timog Katagalugan (Association of Farmers in Southern Tagalog, KASAMA-TK) on the occasion of your 7<sup>th</sup> Congress. It is only proper to celebrate and consolidate your victories! Greatly intensify the militant struggle for genuine land reform and national democracy!

You have maintained KASAMA-TK as a large national democratic organization. You have reaped a bounty harvest of victories from the Sixth Congress on November 23, 2005. You have overcome the two anti-peasant and brutal regimes, the US-Arroyo regime that launched Oplan Bantay Laya and the US-Aquino regime that launched Oplan Bayanihan.

You have achieved your primary aim in fighting for genuine land reform and the rights of the peasantry in the face of intensifying feudal and semifeudal exploitation, imperialist plunder of agriculture, and fascist attacks, especially the militarization in the countryside.

The victories you have achieved in the region are the result of untiring struggle to promote, defend and advance the democratic rights and interests of the peasantry and the people. You built up the peasant movement in order to advance the struggle for land reform and change the abject condition of the peasant masses within the framework of the struggle for national freedom and democracy.

The solution to the land problem is the main content of the people's democratic revolution. In the three decades since the founding of KASAMA-TK, it served as a ray of hope and spark for change in the countryside and the whole region. You persistently advanced the interest of the peasantry and the people. The militant struggles waged by KASAMA-TK have strengthened the organization to achieve significant victories. You have expanded and consolidated in different areas. Your victories in the mass movement of the peasantry are the result of the coordinated regional campaigns and leadership in the local struggles of the chapters of KASAMA-TK. You reaped the support from different sectors, set up alliances not only on peasant issues but on national issues as well.

The US-Aquino regime and the regimes before it have failed to crush your organization. It was clear that you opposed and militantly fought the anti-peasant policies and programs of the government. You succeeded in stopping the third extension of the anti-peasant Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) while persistently pushing for the proposed Genuine Agrarian Reform Bill (GARB) as a clear alternative and solution to landlessness. You also resolutely fought against the proposed Charter Change (Cha-cha) that would have worsened land-grabbing in the countryside.

Because of the strength attained by some chapters of KASAMA-TK, you have boldly implemented genuine land reform. Proofs of these are the occupation of land with collective farming under the lead of your local chapters. You have repeatedly exposed and opposed the fascist attacks against the peasantry. Your contributions to the ouster movements and promotion of societal change are now etched in history.

The long experience of KASAMA-TK is rich in lessons. You have proven that with a strong organization you are able to overcome internal weaknesses and face the attacks of the enemy. Based on the experience and strength that you have attained, you have the capability to face and cope with challenges.

The problems of landlessness, hunger, and poverty remain and continue to intensify under the US-Aquino regime. The economic and political crises have worsened under the neoliberal policy. The burden of crisis is passed on to the shoulders of the peasantry and the people in the countryside. The monopoly and control of vast lands and

haciendas by the big compradors and landlords and local and foreign agro-corporations have further intensified. You have effectively unmasked and exposed the pretensions of the anti-peasant US-Aquino regime and caused its isolation.

More than ever, you must advance and fulfill the tasks of KASAMA-TK. Further carry out the main objective of genuine land reform, the dismantling of the monopoly in land, and distribution of land to the peasant tillers. The problem of feudal and semifeudal exploitation cannot be solved without the political struggle for national freedom, democratic power of the toiling masses and industrial development in conjunction with land reform.

You must firmly and militantly raise the national democratic consciousness of the peasant masses, and resolutely carry out the anti-feudal struggle that is closely linked to the anti-imperialist and democratic struggle of the people. The necessary foundation of national freedom and democracy is the alliance of the peasantry and the working class.

We are one with you and support your aim to use the 7<sup>th</sup> Congress of KASAMA-TK as a means to further consolidate the regional organization of the peasantry, highlight the local mass struggles and victories resulting from collective action, paying tribute to the martyrs and heroes of the organization, and further strengthen the unity of the toiling masses together with the different sectors.

Long live KASAMA-TK!

Advance the peasant movement for genuine land reform!

Long live the national democratic movement of the Filipino people!



# ***Intensify the Struggle for Genuine Land Reform***

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**Message to the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas**

**on its 8<sup>th</sup> National Congress, Legazpi City, Albay**

**July 12-13, 2017**

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WE IN THE INTERNATIONAL League of Peoples' Struggle extend our warmest solidarity to the leaders and members of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP or Philippine Peasant Movement) on the occasion of its 8th National Congress.

It is most important and necessary to fulfill your call: "Achieve Victory! Further Expand and Consolidate KMP! Intensify the Struggle for Genuine Land Reform!"

We are glad that in your Congress, you will be reaffirming your Four-Year Program of Action, amending your Constitution and Bylaws and electing your national leadership.

We expect you to be discussing thoroughly the Philippine peasant situation, and draw lessons from your struggles and campaigns in order to expand the KMP's reach, membership and influence and consolidate its existing branches.

We are happy to see gathered the peasant leaders from your 15 regional branches in 65 provinces as well as advocates of land reform and KMP allies at the opening of your National Congress.

Your congress will be fruitful because you are armed with invaluable lessons from three decades of activism. We are aware that since July 24, 1985 up to the present, the KMP has remained the biggest national democratic organization of the peasantry.

The KMP has gained further strength as it defended the rights and welfare of the peasantry, a process that could not be hindered even by relentless attacks and repression from despotic landlords and their military minions, the killings of KMP peasant activists, leaders and members and the blatant violations of the rights of the peasantry.

We are aware that since your 7th National Congress in Cebu in 2013, you have been able to launch important national and local struggles for genuine land reform and you have achieved important victories that benefited millions of peasants, farmworkers, women, youth and indigenous people.

The KMP and its branches have launched heroic and daring actions to defend and promote the rights of peasants to land and other just demands, including raising the prices of agricultural products, reducing land rent, raising farmworkers' wages and putting a stop to feudal relations in production. Among the KMP's actions are protests, conferences, barricades and camp-outs. At the national level, KMP's branches launched anti-feudal struggles and campaigns. Through these actions, the KMP gained the support of various sectors and was able to disseminate information to the broad public about the wretched conditions of Filipino peasants.

The KMP linked arms with various national-democratic organizations in advancing the democratic rights of the people and the nation's sovereignty and patrimony and exposed and opposed neoliberal policies that continue to weigh heavily on the entire people and worsen the feudal and semifeudal exploitation of the peasant masses.

Along with other organizations based in the countryside, the KMP initiated the formation of a broad national movement to advance genuine land reform and the social liberation of the peasantry. It is right for genuine land reform to be linked to national industrialization in order to develop the Philippine economy.

Under current local and global conditions, there is widespread poverty, hunger, injustice, seizures of land and natural resources and repression. Big landlords and gigantic corporations are taking over agricultural and ancestral

lands. There are no policies and programs for genuine land reform. It is the KMP's obligation to fight, advance and attain victory.

Land-grabbing and land-use conversion are a constant and worsening problem for the peasantry and the impoverished countryside. Vast tracts of agricultural lands used for food production are being converted to plantations for export crops, subdivisions and shopping malls, mining areas and other profitable and extractive ventures for foreign and local companies.

The KMP maintains and strengthens its tasks in the arena of international solidarity with peasant organizations and institutions in order to advance the interests not only of the Filipino peasantry but of all peasants worldwide.

Long live the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas!

Implement genuine land reform!

Long live the Filipino people!

# ***Solidarity with the Peasants in Southern Tagalog on the Occasion of the Rural Poor Summit***

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**July 18, 2016**

In the name of the International League of Peoples' Struggle and as its Chairperson, I extend my warmest greetings and solidarity to KASAMA-TK (Timog Katagalugan-Southern Tagalog) and all the participants of the "Rural Poor Summit" at the Peasant Campout on July 18 at the Department of Agrarian Reform, Quezon City.

This is an important opportunity to learn the condition and demands of the rural poor and further strengthen their unity. This is a happy and meaningful gathering of the peasant, farmworker, fisherfolk and indigenous sectors in the Southern Tagalog region.

It is good that the camp-out is being held until July 24 so that you can conduct a series of discussions with the different agencies of government and greet the first SONA of the new president. It is correct to focus on the need to implement genuine land reform in our country. This is decisive and can even be described as a life-and-death issue in our society.

The exploitation and oppression of the peasant sector must end. In contrast to past regimes, President Rody Duterte shows some indication that he wishes some important changes in our society.

Among these indications are the appointment of Ka Paeng Mariano as secretary of the Department of Agrarian Reform and other statements by the president that the needs and demands of the rural poor need to be addressed.

ILPS commends the Katipunan ng mga Samahang Magbubukid sa Timog-Katagalugan (KASAMA-TK) as a regional federation of peasant organizations in Southern Tagalog. It has succeeded in strengthening and invigorating the peasant movement in the region.

KASAMA-TK's line that the peasantry and other rural poor must liberate themselves through their own actions to end feudal and semifeudal exploitation through genuine land reform within a patriotic and progressive framework in conjunction with national industrialization to achieve the comprehensive development of the economy and the whole of society is correct. We are confident that you will further expand, strengthen and mobilize your organized forces and the broad masses of allies in order to fulfill your principles and programs.

Long live KASAMA-TK!

Advance the struggles of the rural poor!

Long live the toiling masses!

Advance the people's democratic revolution!

Long live the Filipino people!

Long live the workers' movement and the entire Filipino people!

# ***Solidarity with People's Camp of AMGL, Farmworkers and other Poor Communities in the Countryside***

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**December 19, 2016**

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AS CHIEF POLITICAL Consultant of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP), I extend my militant and patriotic greetings and solidarity to AMGL and farmworkers, including other rural poor who today suffer worsening conditions of poverty.

We unite and support your launch of People's Campout "Knocking at the Heart and Taking Refuge — The Grief of having no Means of Livelihood and Suffering Hunger" from 19 to 21 of December. The attention of the whole nation must be called to your situation. The broad masses will surely understand your suffering and organizations and institutions will support you.

It is heart-rending that the periods of hardship or famine have intensified and lengthened because even during harvest time you have nothing to reap. Your livelihood is grabbed by greedy landlords-traders-usurers who own and/or operate harvesters. It is terrible that what used to be worked on by 20 farmworkers per hectare is now worked only by three — an operator, the sack-holder for the threshed palay and the sack-sealer.

Its painful result is the widespread joblessness of farmworkers most of whom are landless poor peasants. Even the gleaners of leftover grains have nothing to get and have no livelihood.

It is madness to import and increase harvesters in an agrarian and semifeudal economy with no developed industries to which those rendered jobless in the countryside can shift. Because of their savagery and greed, the landlord-traders-usurers do not realize they are stoking the fires of the revolution as they force the jobless and the hungry to rise up.

From the point of view of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines and based on the program of the people's democratic revolution, genuine agrarian reform and national industrialization must go hand-in-hand. These two are the means by which to provide employment to what we call the surplus population in the countryside.

Land in the hands of the landlords must be distributed free to landless peasants. The best time to mechanize agriculture is when it is related to the peasants' cooperativization. The machines (tractors, seeding machines, irrigation pumps, harvesters, mills, warehouses and motor vehicles) are products of national industrialization.

In the current peace negotiations between the Duterte government and the NDFP, the drafting of the Comprehensive Agreement on Social and Economic Reforms is on the table. It is fine if patriotic and progressive elements from both parties cooperate on genuine agrarian reform and national industrialization and overcome the pro-imperialists and reactionaries who follow the neoliberal policies inside the Duterte government. It is fine if on the issue of land reform Ka Paeng Mariano and the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) could join in the research and drafting of the agreement.

I hope that the People's Campout will be successful, realize its stated objectives and reap bountiful support from the ranks of peasants and all sectors of society.

Long live AMGL!

Long live the peasants and farmworkers!

Uphold genuine land reform and national industrialization!

More victories of the Filipino people for national and social liberation!

***ILPS Condemns Massacre of Peasants  
in Taquaruçu, Extends Solidarity  
with People's Movement in Brazil***

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**April 25, 2017**

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WE, THE INTERNATIONAL League of Peoples' Struggle (ILPS), condemn in the strongest terms the massacre of peasants in Taquaruçu do Norte, Colniza City in the state of Mato Grosso in Brazil on April 20, 2017. Paramilitary groups employed by landlords and land-grabbers attacked the village of Taquaruçu do Norte in the morning of April 10 and strafed the houses of peasants, including women, children and the elderly, resulting in the killing of at least ten and the wounding and disappearance of many others.

The peasants of Taquarucu do Norte have been subjected to all kinds of violence from local landlords and land-grabbers for more than a decade. They have been victims of assassinations, torture and threats by armed goons under the employ of local landlords. The Brazilian state has always turned a blind eye to these atrocities being committed by the landlords against the peasant masses.

The massacre in Taquaruçu is not an isolated incident. White terror has been going on in the Brazilian countryside for a long time and in the years 2015-2016 for instance more than 120 leaders and members of the rural people's movement were assassinated.

The economic crisis that hit Brazil in the beginning of 2014 due to the big drop in the prices of Brazilian exports in the international market forced the ruling classes to boost the production of Brazil's traditional agricultural products for export (soybeans, sugar, coffee and beef) and the extraction of minerals for export (iron ore and crude oil). This has led to an intense "hunger for land" on the part of the vultures in Brazilian society: the landlords, loggers and mining magnates.

Land-grabbing has become rampant in the northern Mato Grosso and MATOPIBA region with the accompanying outbreak of reactionary violence against peasants, the quilombolas and fisherfolk villages. Millions and millions of tons of the products of Brazil's traditional exports are being plundered for practically nothing by big foreign trade monopolies with the collusion of Brazil's landlords and comprador big bourgeoisie.

The Temer government that was brought to power through a US-instigated constitutional coup is now set to lift the restrictions on foreign ownership of agricultural lands that were imposed by the Lula government. If Temer's plan is carried out, foreign companies that had to use dummies to virtually own the land can now do it legally.

With the ultra-reactionary Temer government carrying out more and more neoliberal policies, the rape of Brazil's economy by foreign monopoly firms is bound to intensify, further impoverishing the Brazilian workers and peasants and other toiling people.

Resistance by the broad masses of the people is also bound to grow and reactionary violence will surely be resorted to by the reactionary government against such resistance.

We, the ILPS, express our unity with and support for the progressive people's movement in Brazil in opposing the imperialist and reactionary attacks on the people. We call on all progressive and freedom-loving people of the world to likewise extend their solidarity and support for the Brazilian people in their continuing struggle for national independence, social justice and democracy!

Solidarity with Taquaruçu do Norte villagers!

Punish the paramilitaries and their landlord bosses!

Justice for the victims of massacres in the countryside!

Down with the country-selling maneuvers from the landlord class and all reactionaries submissive to imperialism!

Down with Michel Temer’s puppet regime!

Long live the building of the worker-peasant alliance!

Long live the international solidarity of peoples!

***Consolidate Your Ranks  
and Advance the National Democratic Struggle***

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**Greetings to PAMANTIK-KMU on its 10th Congress Cabuyao City, Laguna, October 12-13, 2017**

**October 12, 2017**

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I AM PLEASED TO CONVEY liberating and militant greetings to the Workers Unity of Southern Tagalog-May First Movement (PAMANTIK-KMU) on the occasion of its 10th Congress. I am happy that the commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the October Revolution is part of your program.

Your rich experience and your victories in the struggle to defend the workers' democratic rights, uphold genuine, militant, and anti-imperialist unionism and achieve genuine freedom, national sovereignty and full democracy are admirable.

We all take pride that PAMANTIK-KMU has fulfilled its mandate to be the regional union center of Southern Tagalog since its establishment on March 29, 1985. In the current Congress, you can sum up your experiences and draw lessons to clarify your tasks and advance the struggle to new and higher levels.

I am sure you will elect an experienced, competent and wise leadership that relies on the membership in implementing your program. The theme of your Congress is correct and timely: "Further consolidate our ranks! Reject legalism, economism and conservatism in the labor movement! Expose and combat the fascist and neoliberal attacks of the US-Duterte regime! Further advance the national democratic struggle with a socialist perspective!"

We must strengthen our ranks through consolidation and expansion and through militant struggles and broad united front against the puppet, cruel, neoliberal and corrupt US-Duterte regime and the entire ruling system of big compradors and landlords in order to advance the national democratic revolution and onward to socialism.

Use legal methods of struggle, but do not indulge in legalism. Fight for immediate economic demands such as a fair wages and regular employment, but use all methods in the political struggle. Repudiate conservatism and be militant, creative and daring in struggle.

We now face a de facto fascist dictatorship. Ruthless in its use of violence and intimidation in confronting the patriotic and democratic forces. The regime controls the so-called super-majority in Congress and majority in the Supreme Court. Deceptive in its use of fake statements and promises without any intention of fulfillment. Brutal in using state terrorism against the poor and against revolutionaries.

The Duterte regime is determined to implement and formalize the fascist dictatorship. He has already obtained from the Supreme Court the dismissal of plunder cases against Gloria Macapagal Arroyo and other allies and the confirmation of his martial law proclamation in Mindanao, and he can use this as the basis for the proclamation of martial law nationwide. He can also obtain from Congress and the planned Constitutional Assembly the "federal" system of the state as a pretext for a fascist dictatorship.

Prior to the Constitutional Assembly, he has already obtained from Congress the postponement of the election of barangay councils and youth councils. Thus he will have the privilege of selecting officials of the barangay and youth councils to control the "ratification" of the new constitution. Added control over the masses are the Movement for Change, Masa Masid and Citizens National Guard.

The Inter-Agency Legal Action Group (IALAG) has been re-established in the form of the Inter-Agency Committee on Legal Action (IACLA) to use in accusing the enemies of the regime of trumped up crimes and to cover up the killings and forced disappearances committed by the military and the police. The killings under Oplan Tokhang will be expanded and the prize per head for every person killed raised from 50 thousand pesos to 100,000 pesos.

In the last election, Duterte said he would push for industrialization to develop the Philippines and so that there

would be no need for workers to leave the country to find employment. Later on, he also said that he would build industries on an island in the Philippines for foreign enterprises and he would kill KMU unionists should they unionize.

Duterte also pledged to stop the endo or contractualization system of less than six months. When he came to power what he wanted to impose on the working class was worse than endo, the extension of time or increasing work quota.

The promise of industrialization got buried in another promise of wanton construction of infrastructure projects dependent on huge Chinese loans. These loan will be bloated by overpricing of supplies and the entry of Chinese contractors and workers into the Philippines. Because the expected US\$167 billion loan would not be paid, the traitorous Duterte regime has put on stake the oil and gas deposits in the West Philippine Sea worth trillions of dollars.

As NDFP Chief Political Consultant in the peace talks, I witnessed Duterte's deceit against the revolutionary movement. On May 16, 2016, he promised the amnesty and release of more than 400 political prisoners in compliance with the GRP-NDFP Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law. In less than a month, he reneged on his promise and said political prisoners would not be released until the end of peace negotiations.

Just as Duterte took office as president, it was already noticeable that his economic team members are rabid pushers of US neoliberalism. Thus Duterte's economic policies are no different from those of Aquino which are contrary to national industrialization and genuine land reform.

Duterte's national security team are rabid pro-imperialists and anti-communists. Duterte follows their advice to sabotage the peace negotiations with the NDFP because this is the order of their imperialist masters from Washington.

Duterte did not listen to the People's Agenda presented by BAYAN . Also when reminded that if he really wanted an independent foreign policy, he should dismantle the treaties, agreements and arrangements that binds the Philippines as a client or subservient state to the US and other imperialist countries. It turns out that what Duterte wants is not a truly independent policy but more imperialist masters.

Duterte's appointment of some patriotic and progressive in his Cabinet was only a temporary deception. He has no interest in an effective connection of the Department of Agrarian Reform under Ka Paeng Mariano to the promise of agrarian reform through the Comprehensive Agreement on Social and Economic Reforms. In fact, Duterte is a double faced tool of his landgrabbing fellow oligarchs in Mindanao—plantations, logging and mining owners destroying the livelihood of the poor, and the environment.

In the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations, we noticed the worsening demands of the US-Duterte regime. First, it reneged on the promise of amnesty and release of more than 400 political prisoners. Second, it wanted to put ahead of all issues the issue of long-term ceasefire for GRP to get the surrender and pacification of the revolutionary movement. It turns out that the regime has no interest in social, economic and political reforms to solve the root causes of the civil war.

However, the GRP and the NDFP still tried a temporary ceasefire that lasted for more than five months from August 2016 to February 2017. We saw that from the start of Duterte's presidency he wanted to fool the revolutionary movement. He continued Aquino's Oplan Bayanihan until the end of 2016 and as early as January, launched Oplan Kapayapaan. The military offensives against the revolutionary movement continue nationwide.

Duterte wanted to tie down the revolutionary movement to a ceasefire while the AFP, PNP and paramilitary forces are free to attack the revolutionary forces and the communities. Whenever Duterte throws a tantrum against the NPA, he brutally orders bombings and other offensives against communities.

Duterte committed excessive provocations when he proclaimed martial law throughout Mindanao and ordered the



destruction of Marawi City. It turned out that the NPA and other revolutionary forces are the target of the regime in the greater parts of Mindanao. Defense secretary Lorenzana and AFP chief of staff Año themselves said the NPA are targets.

Duterte also repeatedly threatens to proclaim martial law nationwide. This is how the revolutionary movement ascertained that the Duterte regime has no interest in peace negotiations but rather in the military suppression of revolutionaries and others opposed to it. The revolutionary forces also saw Duterte's scheme of merging martial law with the methods of Oplan Tokhang and Oplan Dobol Barrel Reload to launch massacres against the revolutionary forces and the communities.

Duterte wrongly thought that he has already terrorized the Filipino people with his fake war on illegal drugs. But here is where the regime experienced its first big defeat. The problem of illegal drugs was not solved, but even expanded in the three or six month and even in the one year extension on his promise to solve the drug problem. The problem worsened because Duterte's son is the biggest drug smuggler and drug lord in the Philippines. Duterte himself is the number one protector of big drug lords and the number one drug addict by his use of the drug fentanyl.

Not only did Duterte fail in the promise to end the problem in a short time through violence but he also exposed himself as the No.1 inciter and commander of mass killings of suspected drug addicts and pushers. Duterte gained worldwide notoriety as a rabid killer while the number of drug users even increased from 1.8 million during the Aquino regime to seven million under Duterte, according to foreign secretary Cayetano.

Duterte's second mistake was the policy to reject negotiations with the Maute and Abu Sayyaf groups that wanted to talk. Duterte simply decided to bomb and raze Marawi City with the help of US imperialist troops. He thought that the Bangsamoro and the Filipino people would be terrified and that he would have the basis to impose martial law on the Philippines whenever wanted.

Duterte's third mistake is the three-time withdrawal from the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations and evident exertions to suppress and end the revolutionary movement through sheer violence. This is Duterte's biggest mistake: conducting three wars simultaneously. These are generating the growing protest actions of a broad united front.

Duterte will not last long in power under conditions of intensifying socioeconomic crisis, the drop in the people's employment and income, the increased taxes, rising prices of goods, lack of social services, increasing funds for the military and police, corrupt bureaucrat capitalists like Duterte, and foreign enterprises and banks that always draws superprofits and interests.

The so-called opinion poll surveys on trust and satisfaction of Duterte is falling fast because of his policy of violence and corruption, blatant lying and intimidation. His space for maneuvering is narrowing due to the grave crisis of the local ruling system and the world capitalist system.

Conditions in the Philippines are becoming more difficult. These bode heightened oppression and exploitation of the Filipino people. But the same also incite them to fight for their national and democratic rights and interests. The ILPS expects that as a result of your Congress, the leadership and membership of PAMANTIK would be strengthened to advance the national democratic movement towards socialism.

Long live PAMANTIK-KMU!

Long live the national democratic movement!

Long live the Filipino people!

**Message to the Visayas Long March 2017**

**October 17-20, 2017**

I warmly greet all of you who are participating in Visayas Lakbayan 2017. I am gratified to be in solidarity with you for land, just wage, justice, and peace. Fine that many of you are farmers and fisherfolk from different parts of the Visayas and converging in Cebu City to hold the Visayas Rural Poor Summit and Camp-out against Hunger and State Repression.

I am also gratified that you are celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Great October Revolution in the framework of the worldwide celebration under the initiative of the International League of Peoples' Struggle. This is related to the Visayas Long March as the October Revolution has proven that social liberation can be achieved based on the alliance of the workers and the peasants. The way has been cleared for the victory of the revolution through the protest actions against hunger and state repression.

The Visayas Long March 2017 is exemplary as the people's action to insist on their right to life and livelihood, which is being trampled and violated by the US-Duterte regime. It is fitting to fight the intensification of people's poverty in the countryside brought about by the neoliberal policy regime. This has further pushed the country's economy to backwardness and given way to the all-out war that kills the peasants, fisherfolk and civilians as in Guihulngan.

It is fitting for the working class to unite with other social classes and sectors to advance the struggle for national sovereignty, democracy, development through land reform and national industrialization. We wish to achieve all patriotic and progressive social changes towards a just and lasting peace.

The Visayas has wide and fertile lands for various types of crops. Peasants are 75% of the population. The food for the people are their product but they themselves suffer hunger and are mired in intense poverty. The mode of production is deliberately backward and feudal.

Ninety percent of the peasants do not own land. Eighty percent of the land is owned by big estates. The landlords suck up 70% to 80% of the product as land rent. The peasants are always buried in debt, due to usury, especially because they are made responsible for production expenses. The government does not support free irrigation and technical services. Thus, the peasants do not have any chance to free themselves from the vicious cycle of landlessness, debt, poverty and hunger.

In his election campaign, Duterte promised change, but this is all a lie. He continued Aquino's neoliberal policy that now further intensify the suffering of the peasants. The bloody Tokhang against illegal drug, Oplan Kapayapaan against the revolutionaries and the Bangsamoro have resulted in mass killings and human rights violations among the ranks of the peasants and other people. Duterte promised to distribute public land, free irrigation service, abolition of short-term contractualization, wage increases, elimination of red tape and corruption, free education and more budget allocation for social services. But after one year, these promises have all turned out to be lies.

Duterte turned his back on his promise of national industrialization. He turned to the promise of wanton building of infrastructure dependent on loans from China and the raising of taxes. These infrastructures result in the conversion of wide agricultural lands into non-agricultural uses, dislocation of homes, destruction of livelihood and with the working people trapped further in more dire conditions.

Land use conversions are a plague the peasants and the Filipino people under the Duterte regime. This means that the monopoly of land in the hands of landlords and foreign and local corporations, loss of food security, increased prices of basic commodities, destruction of the environment and dislocation of peasants and other rural poor.

In Bohol 45,000 hectares have been allocated for palm oil plantation but the peasants proved that they would become farmworkers here not earning enough for their survival. Thus, the peasant organization, non-governmental organizations and the local government units fought and stopped the planned plantation.

In Negros Island, the majority are farmworkers in sugar estates. They earn eight to 17 pesos per day, which not enough to buy one kilo of rice during dead months. During the milling season, they earn 1,000 to 1,500 pesos in 15 days of work, too little compared to the 80,000 pesos the estate owner earns per hectare.

The reactionary government does give any support to the workers to increase their earnings. The majority of them have no other source of income. Only a few go to other haciendas or go to the cities to be able to work and receive wages well below the minimum.

The conditions of the fisherfolk are also dire. The mode of production is backward, dispersed and small-scale. The big and foreign fishing ships are prevalent; they intrude into municipal fishing grounds. The average fish catch of small fisherfolk is only five kilos because they do not have modern fishing equipment. What they earn is well below the estimated living wage ( the supposed designated daily necessity of a 5-member family). Many fisherfolk are forced to go abroad to be able to work with an average wage of 2000 pesos per day.

The DENR, DILG, DND, DPWH and DOST had a joint memorandum in 2004 designating no-build zones along seashores supposedly because of strong typhoons, flooding and landslides. But the real intention was to evict the fisherfolk residents and give the land to so-called special economic and eco-tourism zones. The memorandum is being implemented in Eastern Visayas, Panay Island and Northern Cebu.

By turning to the right, Duterte has become dependent on more than 60 military officials whom he appointed to important government positions. He dismissed patriots whom he appointed such as Gina Lopez, Judy Taguiwalo and Paeng Mariano. He is now surrounded by his fellow US puppets and oligarch compradors and landlords.

Instead of attending to the roots of poverty and conflict through genuine land reform and national industrialization, Duterte is waging three wars against the people: poor suspected drug addicts and pushers, revolutionaries and Moro people. These have resulted in mass killings and destruction.

More than 14,000 became victims of the war against illegal drugs. In the war against the revolutionaries and the people, communities are bombed, community organizers, mass movement organizers, are killed after they are vilified and called rebels. Eight leaders of local progressive organizations have been killed within only two months. Peasant leaders are harassed and terrorized. This has created a climate of fear. Policemen are clearly the perpetrators.

In Bohol, Hugpong sa Mag-uumang Bol-anon (HUMABOL) is a target for harassment. From February, eleven cases of human rights violations aside from many unlisted cases. These crimes were perpetrated by 47th IB PA and the PNP with the help of the Countryside Development Program-Purok Power Movement ng gobyernong pribinsyal so-called counter-insurgency program of Oplan Kapayapaan.

Members of 87th IB camped in many communities in Western Samar, committed harassments and sexual misconduct on teenagers. They damaged the livelihood of the local residents who were forced to leave their farms.

Duterte intends to proclaim martial law in the whole country and formalize an already de facto fascist dictatorship. Even now, he already has a monopoly of power and ruthlessly imposes state terrorism. He supposedly has a supermajority in Congress and a majority in the Supreme Court. He craves to be a unitary dictator as president of a fake federal government system.

It is already clear that Congress will constitute itself into a constitutional assembly to ram through the amendment of the 1987 Constitution. Like Marcos, Duterte will use the climate of military terror and his control of the Comelec and barangay officials also to ram through the ratification of a fascist constitution.

It is fitting for the peasants and fisherfolks to assemble in the cities to show their unity and strength against the

evil policy and scheme of the fascist US-Duterte regime and express their complaints and demands. Expose and fight the puppetry and violence of the regime. Link with the broadest masses of the people for social, economic and political reforms.

It is just for the people of the Visayas to take a stand against the anti-people and fascist rule of the US-Duterte regime. The objective of the long march to expose the sufferings imposed on the people of the Visayas, which mirrors the conditions of the entire Filipino people.

Advance the struggle for national freedom and democracy.

Stop the killing of peasants!

Dismantle the hacienda system!

Stop land-use conversion!

Stop martial law at state fascism!

Stop the oligarchy of the big hacenderos and compradors!

Stop the neoliberal policy of the US-Duterte regime!

Struggle for genuine agrarian reform and national industrialization!

## ***Duterte Is Engaged in Bogus Land Reform, He Is Doomed in the Most Ignoble Sense***

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January 14, 2019

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THE FILIPINO PEOPLE and their revolutionary forces would applaud any government that carries out genuine land reform, which is well explained by the Revolutionary Guide to Land Reform of the Communist Party of the Philippines and by the NDFP Draft Comprehensive Agreement on Social and Economic Reforms.

But certainly the Duterte regime is not engaged in any genuine land reform by distributing mere pieces of paper to some 13,000 people that require them to pay the unaffordable price for 24,000 hectares in Central Mindanao, even if by installment.

The long-running record of the reactionary government in land reform is that more than 95 percent of supposed land reform beneficiaries ultimately cannot pay for the land assigned to them and lose it to merchant usurers, landlords, bureaucrat capitalists, big comprador companies and foreign corporations.

The New People's Army is cherished by the people, especially the peasant masses because it defends and guarantees the genuine land reform being carried out by the revolutionary movement led by the CPP.

Revolutionary land reform includes the minimum program of reducing land rent, eliminating usury, raising farm wages, improving farm gate prices of agricultural produce, raising agricultural production and creating sideline occupation, and promoting rudimentary cooperation.

Revolutionary land reform also includes the maximum program of distributing land for free to the landless peasants, building cooperatives in stages, providing support from the people's revolutionary government, raising production and capital construction and setting prices favorable to the agricultural and other products of the peasant masses.

It is not the NPA but the Duterte regime that is doomed in an ignoble sense because of his distribution of mere pieces of paper misrepresented as land reform. The ignoble end of Duterte is assured by his gross and systematic crimes of tyranny, treason, mass murder of people (including the peasants and the indigenous), corruption and deceptions.

In many areas today, the peasants and the indigenous people are being subjected to bombings, mass murders on mere suspicion and forced evacuation in order to allow the corrupt government officials, landlords and the mining, logging and plantation companies to grab the land.

The New People's Army and other revolutionary forces of the people are indestructible because they serve the people and are carrying out the program for people's democratic revolution against the three evil forces of foreign monopoly capitalism, domestic feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism, which the Duterte regime and its armed minions are dishonorably and maliciously serving through campaigns of suppression and butchery.

# ***Boldly Expand and Consolidate UMA in the Face of Escalating Fascism***

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## **Keynote Address to the UMA 4<sup>th</sup> National Congress**

**March 18, 2019**

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THANK YOU FOR INVITING me to keynote the 4<sup>th</sup> National Congress of Unyon ng mga Manggagawa sa Agrikultura (UMA). I feel highly honored and delighted by this privilege and task.

I salute and commend you for all your achievements in arousing, organizing and mobilizing the farmworkers and landless peasants from northern Luzon through the Visayas to southern Mindanao.

I fully agree with your thematic call for UMA to expand and consolidate itself among the landless peasants and farmworkers in the face of the escalating trend of fascism. You must perform your political, organizational and campaign tasks as you defy state terrorism, which the Duterte regime has unleashed to make more land available for plunder by foreign agri-corporations and the local big compradors, landlords and bureaucrats.

### ***Forms of state terrorism***

Duterte's overall purpose is to do away with all kinds of opposition in order to establish a full blown fascist dictatorship. He prepares for this by rigging the May 2019 elections to get the necessary number of senator and keeping the option of imposing on the people martial nationwide martial law whether formally proclaimed or de facto.

He is hell-bent on railroading charter change to a bogus kind of federalism that concentrates powers in his hands as fascist dictator and that allows him to handpick his regional and provincial political agents from among his fellow big compradors, landlords and bureaucrats.

He is after absolute power in order to amass personal wealth and protect himself from his criminal liabilities as a traitor selling out the sovereign rights and national patrimony to both US and China as imperialist powers, inciting the reactionary military and police to engage in mass murder and engaging in the most scandalous forms of corruption.

The Duterte regime is well aware that the countryside is the main battleground of his counterrevolutionary side of oppressors and exploiters on one side and the revolutionary forces and the majority of the people on the other side. The land and natural resources are the big prize for the foreign and local exploiters.

Thus the regime has deployed the main units of the reactionary military and police in the countryside in order to seek the destruction of the revolutionary forces and to be able to dispose of the land and natural resources for the benefit of foreign corporations and the local reactionary forces and at the expense of the poor peasants, farmworkers and the indigenous peoples.

The armed minions of the regime are perpetrating all kinds of barbarities: bombing communities, massacres, extorting from the people, destroying the crops, forcing the people to evacuate and burning or occupying their homes, schools and other social facilities.

The methods of Oplan Tokhang in urban poor slums are being applied in the rural communities under Oplan Kapayapaan. The people are called to meetings and made to sign attendance sheets. Then, these are misrepresented as lists of surrenderers and subsequently used by the military to murder anyone at will for cash rewards.

As in the case of Atty. Ben Ramos and many UMA and KMP organizers, social activists who advocate human rights, just peace, land reform, higher wages for the farmworkers, respect for the ancestral domain of the indigenous peoples and the protection of the environment are being red-tagged and being framed up for murder as "terrorists".

## ***Imperialist plunder through agribusiness venture arrangements***

I am glad that back to back with your congress, you are holding a conference on imperialist plunder through the expansion of plantations under agri-business venture arrangements (AVA). The expansion of plantations has deprived millions of peasants of land and impoverished them and yet 1.6 million hectares more are being targeted for plantation expansion, especially in Palawan, Bohol, Ilocos and Negros.

This AVA scheme has previously facilitated unequal and false partnerships between agri-corporations and agrarian reform beneficiaries. The AVAs have taken the form of joint ventures, lease contracts, build-operate-transfer deals, management contracts and production, processing and marketing agreements. These have been extremely favorable to agri-business transnational corporations like Dole Philippines, Sumitomo Fruit (Sumifru) and Del Monte. Now a bill has been filed to institutionalize AVAs in land reform areas.

The AVAs have practically taken away land from the agrarian reform beneficiaries in large areas as well as the ancestral domain of indigenous peoples only to be used for mining, logging and plantations for export. And of course, there is the notorious method of “conversion” involving the reclassification of land subject to land reform to land for export-crop production, commercial, residential, shopping malls, tourist facilities and other non-agricultural purposes.

Ka Paeng Mariano has complained that during his short stint as DAR secretary Duterte frustrated his efforts to declare a moratorium on “conversions” and to determine how much land is still available for land distribution to the landless peasants and farmworkers under the projected Comprehensive Agreement on Social and Economic Reforms (CASER) in the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations.

Duterte is engaged in gross deception when he claims to have distributed 60,000 hectares recently. In fact, he has been distributing documents requiring recipients to pay the unaffordable amortization fees before they can own the land. The bitter truth is that more than 90 percent of so-called beneficiaries under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) have been unable to pay for the amortization fees in the last more than 30 years.

Land reform so-called under the US colonial regime or under any regime of the semicolonial and semifeudal, has always been bogus because land is bought at a high price satisfactory to the landlord but the supposed agrarian reform beneficiary is obliged to pay for the consequently high redistribution price and is without assistance from the state to raise the level of production and to get fair prices for his produce at the farm gate.

Thus, the agrarian reform beneficiaries become prey to all sorts of predators, such as the ubiquitous merchant-usurers and rich peasants who aspire to become landlords and landlords who wish to re-accumulate land. And of course the biggest vultures are the foreign agri-corporations and the local corporations owned by big comprador-landlords and corrupt bureaucrats.

So long as there is no genuine land reform coupled with national industrialization, the problem of landless peasants and the increasing ranks of farmworkers competing for ever fewer farm jobs with less wages, will persist. The mounting surplus rural population is being driven to take odd jobs in both urban and rural areas. Without national industrialization, those exploiters who earn surplus income will channel it to big comprador-landlord operations and land accumulation.

## ***Concluding comments***

It is important that in your Congress you renew your determination to expand and consolidate UMA in the face of the trend of fascism and the brazen acts of state terrorism and in the subsequent conference on Agribusiness Venture Arrangements you study and understand how more shrewdly in economic and legal ways the TNCs and local exploiters are aggravating the land problem and ruining the social and natural environment under the neoliberal policy regime of unbridled greed.

It is ironic and painful for the Filipino people to live in an agrarian country but have to suffer scarcity and rising prices of food staples from agriculture because the neoliberal policy is to favor agricultural production of palm oil,

rubber, bananas and pineapples for export and the importation of food staples. This policy is ruining the food sovereignty and self-reliance of the Filipino people and the livelihood and lives of millions of peasants and farmworkers.

We expect a further aggravation of the chronic crisis of the semicolonial and semifeudal ruling system, inflicting greater suffering on the oppressed and exploited workers and peasants but driving them to wage various forms of revolutionary struggle, especially the form of struggle that can bring about ultimately the end of the oppressive and exploitative ruling system. The imperialists and the local oppressors and exploiters have only themselves to blame for the growing strength and advance of the armed revolutionary movement.

We are confident that the broad masses of people will achieve victory in the new democratic revolution and build a social system that realizes national sovereignty, democracy, social justice, economic development through land reform and national industrialization, a patriotic, scientific and pro-people culture and international solidarity of all countries and peoples for peace and development.

Long live the Union of Agricultural Workers!

Long live the peasants and farmworkers!

Long live the Filipino people and the Philippine revolution!



# ***Message of Solidarity to Sama-Samang Artista para sa Kilusang Agraryo (SAKA) On its 2<sup>nd</sup> Year General Assembly***

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**June 25, 2019**

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AS CHAIRPERSON OF THE International League of Peoples' Struggle, I wish to convey warmest greetings of solidarity to the leadership and members of Sama-samang Artista para sa Kilusang Agraryo (Association of Artists for Agrarian Reform - SAKA) on the occasion of its second founding anniversary and Second Year General Assembly. In so short a time, you have come to be known nationwide for your advocacy of genuine land reform and rural development.

We appreciate highly your commitment to arouse, organize and mobilize the artists and the creative and knowledge workers and muster their creativity, their talents and skills to serve the peasant movement. You have made a noble decision to help the most numerous exploited class in the Philippines in the struggle to realize their democratic rights to life, to food, to decent work, to justice, to land and self-determination.

We recognize that your innovative strategies, methods of production and platforms for action respond to the needs and demands of the peasant masses and that your constant struggle for artistic freedom finds common cause with their struggle for freedom from feudal and semifeudal conditions within the framework of the Filipino people's struggle for national and social liberation.

The peasant masses, including the indigenous people and farmworkers who are largely land tillers, produce the food for the entire people and yet find themselves in dire straits in obtaining sufficient food and other basic necessities. Thus, they need to engage in organized actions, occupation protests, and collective cultivation activities. They uphold fundamental human rights and civil liberties.

It is correct that you have worked closely with peasant organizations of the movement for national democracy in popularizing the demand for genuine agrarian reform and re-imagining forms of democratic participation beyond traditional politics bound by the ballot. You have achieved much in carrying out the mandate to raise the visibility of the peasant struggle.

You have done so through online and on-ground campaigns, hosting educational forums and discussions, organizing solidarity cookouts, and — most notably — launching the Bungkalan LAND (Learning and Demonstration) project that sparked renewed interest not only in organic agro-ecology but in collective farming as both a viable and creative means of political action.

Through its volunteer illustrators, writers and comic artists, SAKA has raised public consciousness of peasant killings, most recently the massacre of 14 farmers and farmworkers from Negros island. Its creative products have underscored and generated the just demand for the redistribution of land to poor farmers, civil vigilance, and fair investigation of human rights violations.

We share with you the optimism that, on the basis of your accomplishments, you will bring further to the forefront of creativity, experimentation, and artistic practice the demand for free land distribution, national industrialization, and people-led democratic development. May your assembly achieve the utmost success in carrying out the following tasks:

1. Take stock of the heroic efforts preceding SAKA's establishment, especially the successes of the people's struggle for land, justice, and life. Be critical of the reactionary government's bogus land reform programs and the persistence of feudal and semifeudal conditions of exploitation and oppression.
2. Strengthen your participation in creating the conditions that will shift power from the landlord class to the peasant class, to move the control of land from the hands of transnational corporations and their partner compradors to those of the workers who participate directly in production.

3. Reaffirm your commitment to the national democratic revolution, started as the anti-colonial struggle led by Andres Bonifacio and the Katipunan and renewed as the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal struggle that upholds the Filipino people's right to self-determination — the right to determine and develop our national and human resources for our own needs and development.

Long live the artists and cultural workers of SAKA!

Long live the peasantry, the national minorities and the farmworkers!

Fight for genuine land reform and the development of the countryside!

Long live national freedom and democracy!

Long live the Filipino people!

**Message on the 33<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary of the Mendiola Massacre**

**January 22, 2020**

Dear Advocates of Land Justice and Peace!

I convey to you warmest greetings of peace and solidarity on the occasion of the 33rd anniversary of the Mendiola Massacre and the holding of a forum on land justice and peace to be followed by candle lighting in honor of the 13 peasants who were martyred and all others who were wounded, beaten up and abused by the reactionary military and police officers under the first Aquino regime.

I salute and congratulate the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP), Tanggol Magsasaka, and Rural Missionaries of the Philippines, in cooperation with PATRIA and CLAMOR and the Movement against Tyranny, for successfully organizing this commemorative event. You are among the most respected organizations concerned with land justice and peace.

***The Mendiola massacre and its aftermath***

The Mendiola massacre of January 22, 1987 was a grievous crime perpetrated by the reactionary military and police officers in order to put the Aquino regime in violent opposition to the peasant masses and the land reform movement and in order to sabotage prospective peace negotiations between the Manila government and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines.

At the time of the massacre, the negotiating panels that had earlier forged the agreement to hold ceasefire between the armed forces of the reactionary government and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines, starting from November 22, 1986, were already preparing the substantive agenda for the peace negotiations to follow the ceasefire.

The Aquino regime did not investigate and did not hold accountable the military and police officers responsible for the massacre. Instead, she used the massacre as pretext for unsheathing the sword of war and ending the prospect of peace negotiations. A strategic campaign plan was immediately unleashed, with more peasants being massacred.

Since then, the NDFP has been confronted with the phenomenon of a regime publicly wishing in its early months to have peace negotiations with the NDFP only to end these eventually upon the ruling clique's consolidation of power or upon the open resistance of military officials to peace negotiations.

As a result of the NDFP negotiating in Manila under the surveillance of the reactionary military and police, NDFP negotiators, staffers, technical assistants and CPP and NPA personnel exposed to their enemy subsequently became subject to abductions, torture, indefinite detention and death in the National Capital Region and other regions where ceasefire rallies were held.

When Aquino approached the NDFP again for possible peace negotiations in 1989, the NDFP had to insist that the peace negotiations had to be held in a foreign neutral venue, free from surveillance and punitive actions by the military and police of the regime. Eventually, the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees would require a foreign neutral venue for peace negotiations.

It is important for me to recall the circumstances and aftermath of the Mendiola massacre in connection with my task of discussing the prospects and challenges in the pursuit of a just and lasting peace. We must learn from history in order to avoid the pitfalls of the past and to do what is possible and necessary as much as we can to achieve a just peace for the benefit of the people.

***Current challenges and prospects***

To discuss the current challenges and prospects in the pursuit of a just and lasting peace, I need not review the long history of peace negotiations from one regime to another since 1992. It suffices for me to say that in the 27 years since The Hague Joint Declaration, not more than two years have been used by the negotiating panels to meet and work in compliance with the substantive agenda of the peace negotiations.

The ruling politicians and their military subordinates have frequently delayed or stopped the peace negotiations for long stretches of time in compliance with the interests of US imperialism and the local exploiting classes of big compradors and landlords. They have used the peace negotiations at the minimum as an occasional tool for propaganda and at the maximum as a device for seeking the fragmentation of the revolutionary movement and the surrender of the revolutionary forces.

Thus, they keep on staging sham localized peace talks as a substitute for real peace negotiations between duly authorized negotiators of the GRP and NDFP. These fake localized peace talks do not involve any duly-authorized representative of the CPP, NPA or NDFP. Military assets and fake surrenderers pose as NPA surrenderers and the corrupt military officers pocket the public money that is supposed to go to surrenderers.

Last December 5, 2019, Duterte publicly announced that he wanted the resumption of the peace negotiations and ordered Secretary Bello to meet me in Utrecht. I agreed to meet him because it is the consistent policy of the NDFP to be open to peace negotiations despite such previous bitter experiences as the ceaseless all-out war operations of the Duterte regime even during ceasefire periods and, of course, the continuing termination and prevention of peace negotiations by Duterte's own presidential issuances.

My meeting with Secretary and Nani Braganza in December was productive. We agreed on the reciprocal unilateral ceasefire from December 23, 2019 to January 7, 2020 as a goodwill and confidence building measure for the resumption of peace negotiations. We also agreed on the desirability of the release of the sick and elderly political prisoners, especially the political consultants, on humanitarian grounds and in the spirit of Christmas and the New Year.

We further agreed that Secretary Bello and Braganza would come again to Utrecht to prepare for the formal meeting in Oslo to resume the peace negotiations by reaffirming all joint agreements since 1992, by superseding the presidential issuances that have terminated and prevented the peace negotiations and by taking up the Interim Peace Agreement which includes the general amnesty and release of all political prisoners, the mutual approval of the articles on land reform and national industrialization in Comprehensive Agreement on Social and Economic Reforms (CASER), and the coordinated unilateral ceasefire agreement.

Even before the reciprocal unilateral agreement ended, a series of officials (national security adviser Esperon, defense secretary Lorenzana, DILG secretary Año and the peace process adviser Galvez) made public statements opposing the peace negotiations by the duly-authorized panels of the GRP and NDFP. They claimed that such negotiations are unnecessary because they are already succeeding with their fake localized peace negotiations, because the CASER was a violation of national sovereignty and that reforms, if still needed, can be done without peace negotiations with the NDFP.

The second and third weeks of January have passed. Secretary Bello and Braganza have not returned. Instead, Duterte earlier invited me to go to Manila to give up the legal protection that I enjoy as a political refugee, betray my principles and surrender myself to a butcher regime. The malicious intent of the invitation is to end the prospect of resuming the peace negotiations. Thus, I have said in a recent assembly for peace that prospects for peace negotiations during the Duterte regime are close to nil or already nil.

### ***Continuing openness of the NDFP to peace negotiations***

Notwithstanding the continuing termination and prevention of peace negotiations by the Duterte regime, the NDFP continues to be open to peace negotiations even with the Duterte regime. The crisis of the ruling system is rapidly worsening and the clamor of the people for peace negotiations is rising together with their call for the ouster of the Duterte regime. This power-crazed regime might still have a lucid moment before its end.

If the Duterte regime remains intransigent and refuses to negotiate with the NDFP, there is nothing that the NDFP and the peace advocates can do but to let the people do their best in ousting the regime or stopping it from staying in power beyond 2022 under its scheme of fascist dictatorship through charter change. It is understandable why the Duterte regime is averse to peace negotiations of social, economic and political reforms. These run counter to its traitorous, tyrannical, murderous, plundering and mendacious character.

We can look forward to a new administration of the Manila government that is willing to negotiate with the NDFP. All the work and agreements that have been accomplished in previous peace negotiations remain on record. They can be the foundation for the resumption of peace negotiations. Likewise the peace advocacy now is not wasted because it continues to promote the people's desire for peace negotiations as the way to a just a lasting peace through social, economic and political reforms.

Peace negotiations are urgently needed in order to confront the feudal and semifeudal problems that afflict the peasant masses and farmworkers. There are the traditional landlords who exact high rent from tenants and the merchant-usurers who pay low prices for farm products and charge high for the commodities that they deliver. Even so-called land reform beneficiaries have been deprived of their allotted land through indebtedness and through bureaucratic reclassification of the land as outside of land reform.

There are modern corporate vultures, foreign and local, that grab land from the peasant masses and indigenous peoples in order to open or expand plantations, logging areas, mines and real estate projects. They give starvation wages to both agricultural and non-agricultural workers. Most of these corporations pollute and damage the rivers and streams and degrade the environment at the expense of the peasant masses and farmworkers.

The National Food Authority is supposed to assure the farmers of a stable market for their produce and reliable income from their production of rice and other staples. But it is in cahoots with merchant cartels in manipulating prices in the local market and in facilitating the importation of food products at the expense of the peasant masses. At the same time, under the so-called TRAIN program, excise taxes on fuel and other basic commodities are raised to inflate prices and make these unaffordable to the peasant masses.

The Duterte regime is responsible for the aggravation of the feudal and semifeudal problems that the peasant masses suffer. Even if there were peace negotiations, the regime would block their demands. But while there are no peace negotiations, the peasants, indigenous people and farmworkers need to wage various forms of struggle in order to demand and work for genuine land reform, free land distribution, and thereby strive for the peace and justice that they have long fought and died for.

Wherever possible, they can carry out land reform by themselves, combat exploitation by landlords and merchant-usurers, engage in various forms of cooperation and raise production in agriculture and sideline occupations. They can also fight the corporate land-grabbers, break up their land monopoly and assist the farmworkers in obtaining higher wage as well as the small contract growers in getting better payments.

The time will certainly come when the national democratic movement shall have reached such a high level of strength that a new administration of the GRP would be willing to negotiate with the NDFP. In anticipation of this, the NDFP can continue to muster its own personnel and other organizations concerned to continue working and improving on the current draft of the CASER and making it more realizable than ever.

As it is, the Comprehensive Agreement on Social and Economic Reforms (CASER) can be the basis for genuine land reform and for mobilizing the support of the peasant masses and the entire Filipino people. It is a noble purpose that you aim to gather the broadest sectors of land reform and peasant rights advocates, Church-based and religious organizations, members of the academe, civil libertarians and multi-sectoral groups.

It is a moral imperative that the majority of the people who are poor peasants, lower middle peasants and farmworkers must benefit from genuine land reform and thereby achieve economic and social liberation. The coupling and interaction of genuine land reform and national industrialization are necessary for achieving economic development and rising above the morass of gross underdevelopment, high unemployment, inequality and mass

poverty.

So long as there is no genuine land reform, the ground will be exceedingly fertile for the people's democratic revolution through protracted people's war. The poor peasants, lower middle peasants, farmworkers and the rapidly growing surplus rural and urban population will continue to be the main source of Red fighters for the New People's Army.

In the absence of both genuine land reform and national industrialization, the broad masses of the Filipino people have no choice but to wage a revolutionary struggle for national and social liberation against the semicolonial and semifeudal ruling system.

Long live the peasant masses and farmworkers!

Fight for land justice and peace!

Resume the peace negotiations!

Adopt and carry out social, economic and political reforms!

Long live the Filipino people and the national democratic movement!

# ***On the Land Problem, Peasant Class and Agrarian Revolution***

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**Special Course on the Peasant Movement National Democratic Online School, Mga Serye ni Tito Jo**

**July 5, 2020**

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## ***1. WHO ARE THE FARMERS and what is their significance in the Philippine society?***

JMS: In English, one can play loose with synonymous terms like peasant, farmer or planter for someone who tills the land or in Tagalog, magsasaka, magbubukid or magbubungkal, in the same manner as you may alternately use the word worker, laborer or wage-earner for someone who sells his labor power and gets wages.

But from the time of Marx to the present in class analysis, in the English language, the word peasant is used instead of farmer. The word peasant has the nuance of being serf in medieval or feudal times or being in the main landless and poor tillers of the land. The word farmer carries the nuance of being the owner of the land he tills or farms. Even landlords and farm capitalists sometimes call themselves farmers or planters but never do they call themselves peasant.

We notice that the Philippine reactionary government uses the word farmer to conjure the illusion that its bogus land reform program is a success and that the predominantly poor peasants, among the peasants of various social strata, have disappeared and have become owner-cultivators or owner-farmers. There is a deliberate attempt to diminish drastically or even make the peasant class disappear not only linguistically but also statistically.

In an earlier study session, I have pointed out that the Philippine reactionary government has reduced the peasantry to only 22.9 per cent of the labor force of 45 million being in agriculture and the rest are in the service sector at 58 per cent and in industry at 19.1 per cent. With 77.1 per cent considered as working class, that makes the peasant class quite a small minority. The truth is that the industrial proletariat is far smaller than the peasant class but the reactionary economists and statisticians detach the traditional seasonal farmworkers and odd jobbers from their peasant base.

The understatement of the size of the peasantry and the undervaluation of the share of agriculture at only 7.4 per cent of GDP are calculated to conjure the illusion that the Philippines has become a newly-industrializing economy and that the diminution of the peasantry has drastically reduced the ground for maneuver in the protracted people's war in the new democratic revolution. We cannot rely on the false categories and false estimates of the reactionary government. Original social research must be done to establish the facts.

The Philippine reactionary government takes advantage of the fact that the neoliberal policy has bloated the service sector with extreme and unsustainable debt financing for private construction and the importation of non-reproducing equipment and consumer manufactures and dishonestly counts as employed in the service sector the great mass of odd jobbers from the surplus rural population in the so-called informal economy. And practically those recognized as peasants are merely the family heads as if they were workers individually registered and employed by non-agricultural enterprises, as the diminished number of regulars and the far greater number of casuals or 5-month contractuels.

The peasant class, mainly the poor and middle peasants, is highly significant in the Philippine society because it comprises the biggest socioeconomic class and provides the food for itself and for the whole country and certain products for local processing and for export. It is the largest bloc of the most exploited and oppressed people and it is still the base of most of the urban and rural odd-jobbers and unemployed who have increased in number due to the lack of industrial development and the dwindling of regular employment in every sector of the economy. The peasant class is so important because it is the main force of the people's democratic revolution through people's war in the countryside until the revolutionary forces become strong enough to seize political power in the

cities.

*2. Can you discuss the different strata within the peasantry? There are farmers who have managed to own a few hectares of land and who have a more comfortable life than the poor farmers. How did these different strata emerge?*

JMS: There are three strata of the peasant class: the poor, middle and rich peasants. The poor peasants do not own land or have inadequate land and have to become tenants of the landlords and augment their income by being farmworkers seasonally for the upper strata of the peasantry and for the plantations or do odd jobs in the urban areas. The middle peasants in the main own and till enough land for their own subsistence, although the lower middle peasants also serve as farmworkers for others or do urban odd jobs. The rich peasants own more than enough land for their subsistence but they still till the land and hire farmworkers as well as use their surplus income to engage in trading or small-scale enterprise or buy additional land.

The fact that the poor peasants are the majority of the peasants indicates that they have originated from the feudal system and that they continue to exist because of the persistence of feudal and semifeudal relations of production and conditions in the countryside. Even when the landed estates of landlord families become fragmented from generation to another, the landlord class persists because some of the heirs expand their inherited shares and new landlords keep on arising and expanding their estate through purchase and the alienation of land from the public domain. The middle and rich peasants exist for various reasons but are generally manifestations of the transition from feudal to semifeudal conditions or the combination of both. The rich peasants are sometimes called the rural bourgeoisie for owning property and using its surplus income to hire labor and engage in some small enterprise and side occupation or in moneylending.

*3. One of the main problems that the peasants face is the problem of land ownership. They don't own the land that they till. What is the origin of this land problem and how bad is it?*

JMS: Even before the coming of Spanish colonialism, aside from communal land ownership, there was already private ownership of land by the ruling families in the Islamic sultanates in southwestern Mindanao and in the patriarchal slave system in other parts of the archipelago. The aliping sagigilid and aliping namamahay were put to work on the land by their owners. There were those who acted as tenants as well as those who worked on certain lands for the benefit of landlords in exchange for rations or crop share.

But the Spanish colonialists were the ones who systematically imposed feudalism on the widest scale. It started with the encomienda system, which was a grant of extensive lands to the Spanish conquerors and bureaucrats for the purpose of tribute collection. The churches also accumulated land where they were established. But the largest church lands owned by the Spanish religious orders arose in connection with the production of export crops, such as tobacco, hemp, sugar, indigo and so on. At the same time, the domestic ruling class of landowning families called the principalia increased their landholdings as domestic and foreign trade expanded from the late 18th to the 19th century.

The system of haciendas was established during the Spanish colonial period. The land reform undertaken by the US colonial regime against friar estates was just enough to promote a semifeudal economy and allow the peasants to move freely. Although the land reform was carried out with the avowed purpose of distributing land to the tenants, who could not afford the redistribution price, the land ownership shifted only to the landlords and certain corporations. And the money paid to the religious corporations were invested in the big comprador Bank of the Philippine Islands.

*4. What forms of exploitation and oppression do the farmers experience through this land problem?*

JMS: The main form of exploitation in the feudal system was the exaction of rent by the landlords from the tenants and making the latter perform menial service to landlord families and unpaid labor on certain occasions, such as church and community festivities. Because the arable lands were already designated or titled as private property of the church or certain families, the impoverished landless peasants had to become tenants or farmworkers on the land of the landlords and the rich peasants.



The religious corporations and the landlords were notorious for abusing their political power by grabbing the land even of the freemen or freeholders of land. The colonial state also required the peasant masses to render polo y servicio (public works) or else pay fines. And the triumvirate of the parish priest, gobernadorcillo and the civil guards made sure that the landless peasants could escape their service of forced labor.

*5. Who are the main feudal landlords and how did these feudal landlords accumulate and monopolize these lands?*

JMS: First, among the native population, the religious corporations and native landlords had political power and could arbitrarily grab land from the powerless peasants. Second, the landlords bought more land at dirt cheap prices with the rent paid by tenants. Third, they engaged in merchant-usury operations by which the indebted peasants lost their land. The feudal forms of exploitation have extended to current times.

The gobernadorcillos always came from the landowning families (principalia). They could arbitrarily claim, title and put under tax declaration any large area of land legally considered as royal or public domain. This practice of land-grabbing has continued until now under various guises, such as pasture leases preparatory to privatization, logging concessions, forest management agreements and so on.

*6. The agriculture in the Philippines is still backward. Why are the landlords and the government not interested in developing tools and machinery to improve the way of farming? And how does this affect the farmers?*

JMS: So long as there is no genuine land reform or agrarian revolution and no national industrialization, the landlords will continue to exist, keep on accumulating land with the rent paid to them and retain the backward technological level of agriculture. There is no other way for most landlords to do but keep on collecting rent and practising usury and using their income to accumulate land. They have no interest in raising the technological level of agriculture as the landless peasants abound as cheap source of labor power.

However, the biggest landlords engage in export-crop production in plantations and become big comprador bourgeois by performing the role of trading and financial agents of foreign monopoly capitalism. They own haciendas as well as export-import companies and banks like the Ayalas and Cojuangco. You will notice that the biggest comprador bourgeois are also the biggest landlords or have huge interests in haciendas.

They adopt some amount of mechanization but they do not go so far as to use harvester combines because there is an abundance of the traditional seasonal farmworkers, they thus save on capital outlays by using the extremely cheap labor power of the farmworkers and they are also afraid that social discontent would burst out if these farmworkers are displaced by machines without any industrialization to absorb the displaced.

*7. How do Landlords, Big Business Owners and Imperialist Agri-Corporations team up to further profit from the exploitation and oppression of the peasants and farmworkers?*

JMS: The teaming up of the landlords, the big compradors or big business owners and the imperialist agri-corporations is most amply manifested in the operation of haciendas by the landlords for the production of export crops for sale to the imperialist agri-corporations. The landlords get their profits from the exploitation of the peasants and farmworkers. They have big comprador export-import trading firms to realize profits from trade with the foreign agri-corporations. With their foreign exchange income from the sale of export crops, they import to the Philippines foreign manufactures for profitable sales to domestic wholesalers. They also own the big comprador banks for making the letters of credit in export-import transactions and thereby earning interest.

*8. What ways do the landlords use to maintain their monopoly of land?*

JMS: In the history and current circumstances of the Philippines, the landlords acquire and maintain their monopoly of land by having political power in localities and higher levels of the reactionary government. First, they can gain control over vast tracts of land from the public domain under various legal pretexts and then acquire private ownership of the land under the pretext of having developed them. Second, they have devised inheritance laws so that land ownership is passed on from generation to another within the same family and through inter-marriages of cousins and with other families. Third, the income drawn by the landlord from land is used to acquire more

land.

9. *How do imperialists benefit from feudal exploitation of the farmers and what is its role in preserving feudalism?*

JMS: The imperialists benefit from the feudal exploitation of peasants and farmworkers by buying the cheap export crops from the landlords and selling the manufactures to the big comprador-landlord trading firms. Aside from collaborating economically, the imperialists and landlords also do so militarily. The imperialists provide military support to the big comprador-landlord-bureaucrat-capitalist state and the landlords rule the localities and provide the political base for said state. The imperialists are the sources of the weapons used by the reactionary state in the futile campaigns to destroy the revolutionary movement and preserve the feudal and semifeudal system of exploitation.

10. *What kind of policies and attitude does the government have in resolving the land problem?*

JMS: The reactionary state or government is the class rule of the big compradors, landlords and bureaucrat capitalists. They are fundamentally against genuine land reform aimed at solving the land problem. They keep on carrying out one bogus land reform after the other but it is because the land expropriated from certain landlords is overpriced and the poor peasants cannot afford to pay for the exorbitant price of the land. The land usually end up in the hands of landlords and other entities who acquire the land for real estate development and other non-agricultural purposes.

11. *The Republic of the Philippines have created policies and institutions that they say will help the farmers. For example, the CARP and CARPER, DENR, DAR. Do these policies and institutions really help farmers?*

JMS: These policies and institutions do not carry out or promote genuine land reform and rural development for the benefit of the peasant masses. They benefit the landlords, big compradors and bureaucrat capitalists.

*Follow up Question: Does this mean the government of the Republic of the Philippines are part of the problem of the Farmers that further oppress and exploits them?*

JMS: The reactionary government belongs to the landlords and other exploiting classes and is therefore a big problem to the peasant masses because it is the instrument of the landlord class for ensuring the oppression and exploitation of the peasant masses.

12. *How is the struggle of fisherfolks related to the struggle of the farmers?*

JMS: The struggle of fisherfolks is related to the struggle of the peasants. The fisherfolks are subject to exploitation and oppression by owners of fishpens who play a role similar to that of the landlords and by owners of fleets who act like hacienda owners and farm capitalists. Sometimes, peasants also augment their income as fisherfolks in rivers, lakes and marine coasts and suffer the same exploitation and oppression suffered by fisherfolks.

13. *Can you discuss how the a. Military, b. Church, c. Justice System, d. Reactionary Associations contribute to the exploitation of the peasant class?*

JMS: a. The military and the police are bound by the state to protect the landlords against the peasant demanding genuine agrarian or land reform or fighting for agrarian revolution. They target the peasant leaders and activists in counter-revolutionary campaigns of suppression.

b. The church is an institution that owns land and is socially close to the landlords who are its big donors. Many of the church leaders are conservative and support the landlords even as many of them are progressive and support the peasant masses because these are poor people who deserve social justice.

c. The justice system is based on laws designed to serve the interests of the big comprador-landlord state and the exploiting classes of big compradors and landlords.

d. Reactionary associations are instruments of the landlord class and other exploiting classes. They uphold the privilege of the landlord class to exploit the peasant masses.

14. *The Farmers in Hacienda Luisita for example have exhausted all their means to fight for their lands. They have filed cases in the Supreme Court, conducted mass protest, joined dialogue even with the late Danding Cojuangco, and have also suffered a terrible massacre called Hacienda Luisita Massacre. Despite of this, almost all of them still do not have their own land. These struggles are experienced not just by the Hacienda Luisita Farmers but also Farmers all over the country. What choice do you think they have left and how can we, regular citizens, help them with their struggle?*

JMS: The farmers in Hacienda Luisita must continue to fight for their rights and interests legally and politically. I would not be surprised if some of them join the armed revolutionary movement in order to be able to undertake effective actions against those who frustrate or violate their rights. The revolutionary movement can be expected to support the struggle of the peasants and farmworkers in Hacienda Luisita and elsewhere. We can and should support their struggle by exercising our freedom of speech and assembly in their favor.

15. *What is the solution to the land problem?*

JMS: The revolutionary movement offers the best solution to the land problem in the Philippines. The Communist Party of the Philippines declares in its Program for a People's Democratic Revolution that the main content of the democratic revolution is to satisfy the peasant hunger for land through agrarian revolution. It provides two stages in the agrarian revolution.

The first stage is to carry out the minimum land reform program where the revolutionary movement has just started to take roots among the peasant masses. It means reducing the land rent, eliminating usury and reducing interest rates, raising farm wages, setting fair prices for farm products at the farm gate and raising production in agriculture and sideline occupations. However, whenever already possible, the land grabbed by landlords and corporations can be seized and returned immediately to the peasants and indigenous communities. The land of despotic landlords can also be confiscated and distributed free to the peasants.

The second stage is to carry out the maximum land reform program where the revolutionary forces, especially the people's army, and the organized masses through their local organs of political power have the capability to do so on a wide scale. It means realizing the agrarian revolution. It consists of confiscating the land, distributing it free to the peasant masses and raising production by rudimentary cooperation among the households in a community. The reaction of the landlord is expected to rise. And the people's court is ready to try despotic landlords with blood debts.

16. *How do we unify the different strata under the peasant class?*

JMS: There is a general revolutionary line for the anti-feudal united front to unify the peasant class. It is for the working class and the CPP to rely mainly on the poor peasants and farmworkers who need the agrarian revolution most, win over the middle peasants and neutralize the rich peasants in order to isolate and destroy the power of the landlord class, especially the despotic ones who use violence against the peasant masses. Care is taken not to offend but not to kowtow to the rich peasants. They are allowed to keep their extra land if they comply with fair requirements. A distinction is also made between despotic landlords who commit crimes against the people and enlightened landlords who comply with the policy of land reform or agrarian revolution of the revolutionary movement.

17. *What is the agrarian revolution and how is it being waged?*

JMS: At the moment, the first stage of the agrarian revolution is being carried out in most areas of the revolutionary movement. But land grabbed by landlords and corporations from the indigenous communities and the poor peasants are returned to them. And the land of despotic landlords is confiscated from them and distributed free to the poor peasants. It is in the second stage of the agrarian revolution when the land is confiscated from all landlords and is distributed free to the poor peasants and the lower middle peasants.

The agrarian revolution is made possible by the people's war along the line of the people's democratic revolution.

# ***Message of Solidarity to the KMP on its 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary***

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July 25, 2020

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DEAR COLLEAGUES IN Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas, I extend my militant greetings and solidarity with you on the 35th anniversary of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP-Peasant Movement of the Philippines). It was a great honor for me to be able to give a message of solidarity at the establishment of the KMP although I was still in prison but looking forward to the overthrow of the Marcos fascist dictatorship.

It is fitting on this occasion for you to celebrate your anniversary and the accumulated victories in struggle, consolidate the unity and action of the peasantry for land and justice, defend the victories achieved in the struggle, fight and defeat impediments for continued advance, such as the Duterte regime's terrorism law.

The principal task and content of the democratic revolution in our country is responding to the grievances of the peasantry against landlessness and feudal and semifeudal exploitation. This is the priority in the realization of democracy, social justice and economic development.

Up to now, the peasantry is the largest block of the basic productive force although the imperialists and local reactionaries minimize the number of peasants and the value of agricultural products. The industrial sector of the economy is run by the imported machinery and the service sector bloated by borrowing under neoliberal policy, is unsustainable.

Democracy and economic development will not prosper if there is no just and genuine land reform accompanied by national industrialization in a unified program. Without implementing such a program, unemployment will rise and those treading the path of the new democratic revolution through people's war will increase.

Duterte's enormous treachery of Duterte is his rejection of the offer of the National Democratic Front for a program on genuine agrarian reform and national industrialization as the basis for a just peace to be funded by the income from the country's natural wealth of gas and oil in the exclusive economic zone of the West Philippines Sea estimated at USD26 trillion.

Duterte chose to betray the people and did not pursue the victory of the Philippines in the Permanent Court of Arbitration in accordance with the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea during his four years on the throne. Instead, he chose to sell the people's sovereign rights to China and like a beggar asked for high-interest loans for infrastructure projects of inflated value. China bans and uses force on Filipino fisherfolks fishing in their own sea.

Duterte's main interest is the accumulation of power and its use in plunder within the ruling system of big compradors, landlords and corrupt officials. His obsession is to be a fascist dictator and have a license to plunder like his idol Marcos. Therefore, he blocked the peace talks so that he can carry out state terrorism and complete the fascist dictatorship.

Duterte is concurrently a puppet to two imperialist masters because of his greed for power and plunder. Despite his pretensions of an independent foreign policy, he rode on Oplan Pacific Eagle-Philippines to be able to continue receiving military equipment from the US. At the same time, he wants to continue making money from Chinese loans and from allowing the entry of drugs and casinos in collusion with Chinese criminal triads.

Because Duterte treaded the path of neoliberalism and fascism, he accelerated the aggravation of the crisis of the ruling system. He bankrupted the economy and his own government due to the rapid accumulation of superprofits by the foreign monopolies and big compradors, the corruption and pouring money to the military and police. Simultaneously the crisis of the local ruling system and the global capitalist system are further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Due to intensifying oppression and exploitation, the Filipino people are further resisting the Duterte regime and the entire ruling system. Because of the regime's blatant and rampant crimes, it has been isolated to a corner and has become a narrow target of the broad united front of workers, peasants, middle strata and anti-Duterte conservative forces. The movement to oust Duterte is growing stronger and he is even riper for ousting when he further uses state terrorism and fascist dictatorship.

Long live the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas!

Implement genuine agrarian reform and national industrialization!

Long live the peasants and farmworkers!

Advance the national democratic movement!

Long live the Filipino people!

***The Semifeudal Mode of Production  
in the Philippines in the Light  
of International and National Developments  
in the Past Three Decades***

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**Webinar co-sponsored by the Congress of Teachers and Educators for Nationalism and Democracy and Kilusang  
Magbubukid ng Pilipinas**

**October 3, 2020**

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DEAR FELLOW EDUCATORS, peasant activists and all webinar participants, warmest greetings of solidarity to all of you! Thank you for inviting me to speak in this webinar on the semifeudal mode of production in the Philippines in the light of national and international developments. I appreciate most highly the Congress of Teachers and Educators for Nationalism and Democracy (CONTEND) and the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas for co-sponsoring this webinar and inviting me as speaker.

It is timely and fitting to discuss the subject of semifeudalism and focus on the major role of the peasant masses and agriculture in the Philippine economy and society within the Peasant Month. The peasant masses are still the most numerous class in the Philippines and they work on the country's principal means of production, the more than 13.5 million hectares of agricultural land. They are a decisive factor in the economic development and fundamental social transformation of the Philippines. The main democratic content of the new democratic revolution is the solution of the land problem, the satisfaction of the peasant hunger for land.

I propose to describe the semifeudal mode of production in the Philippines, the national and international factors that have caused this basic character of the Philippine economy, the crucial importance and consequence of describing this economy and the prospect of changing it through social and economic reforms or the revolutionary overthrow of the ruling system.

The question of semifeudalism is not a new one. Filipino national democratic activists have been seriously studying the country's basic problems of imperialism, feudalism, and bureaucrat capitalism since the late 1950s and early 1960s. Inspired and guided by Marxist-Leninist theory, particularly by Mao's works on Chinese society and revolution, and being mindful of the Philippines' own history and current circumstances, many of us undertook in-depth research and published essays on the country's long-standing agrarian problem and its links with neo-colonialism.

These were reflected in my essays compiled into the book *Struggle for National Democracy*, and later in *Philippine Society and Revolution*, which helped activists grasp the crucial role of semifeudalism and the peasantry as the main force in the people's democratic revolution. Throughout the 1970s, this understanding was further validated and deepened through regional and rural social investigation reports, and thus served to guide the national democratic movement in expanding and consolidating nationwide, especially among the peasantry.

But as the Philippines entered the decade of the 1980s, there emerged the erroneous line among certain CPP cadres that the Philippine economy was no longer semifeudal but industrial capitalist. Thus, although I was still in Marcos prison Julie and I collaborated to update our knowledge of the Philippine economy, debunk the Marcos-inspired and Trotskyite-driven notions about the country being already industrial capitalist, and reaffirm the basic conclusions about the semifeudal mode of production.

***1. The semifeudal mode of production in the Philippines***

We call the economy or mode of production in the Philippines semifeudal because it consists of certain forces and relations of production. The forces of production include the people in production and their means of production. The relations pertain to the ownership of the means of production, the organization of production and

the distribution of the product.

As used by Marxists in the materialist study of history and political economy, these are precise terms and categories that describe the level of socioeconomic development of particular societies. But as these are verifiable and measurable by social science, I am confident that many historians and political economists in the bourgeois academic milieu have also become familiar with these, and use them to some degree to better understand the Philippines' historical and current conditions.

The agriculture, industry and service sectors of the Philippines are all dependent on the importation of capital goods as well as intermediate goods in varying degrees in order to operate. These include mechanical, electro-mechanical and electronic equipment, fuels, chemicals and agricultural inputs. They are required to optimize production in the semifeudal economy.

The importation of these capital goods is paid for by the exportation of certain agricultural crops, mineral ores, semi-manufactures and cheap labor in the form of live men and women. These exports are however never enough and there is a perennial and growing trade deficit which is paid for with mounting foreign debt and direct investments which only entrench and worsen the problem.

So long as the aforesaid capital goods at the core of the Philippine forces of production are not reconstituted and harnessed to produce capital equipment, do not regenerate themselves and build a robust domestic capital goods industry, then there could be no genuine industrialization that will emerge from the present neocolonial pattern of trade.

The Philippines lacks an industrial foundation and cannot be considered industrial capitalist, despite the baseless claim of bourgeois economists that it has become a newly-industrialized country. It has rich mineral resources but these are merely extracted and exported to industrial capitalist economies. It has not developed metallurgy beyond the stage of primary processing or the mere extraction of mineral ores and it has no capacity for producing steel and other basic metals, machine tools, precision instruments and other basic means of industrial production.

All sub-sectors of the industry sector (mining and quarrying, construction, refining of imported crude oil, assembly of cars and ships, electronic assembly, production of cement, chemicals and fertilizers, garments, industrial food and beverage processing, reshaping of imported plates, tubes and rods of steel and other metals, and so on) are grossly dependent on imported electromechanical equipment, fuel and components prefabricated abroad. In recent decades, imported industrial inputs began to include digital-tech tools dependent on expensive software and other heavily protected "intellectual property" such as patents, which are controlled by imperialist firms to prevent unauthorized technology transfer.

What is passed off as manufacturing in electronics and transport equipment (cars, trucks, motorcycles and ships) is merely assembly of finished parts and components from abroad. What is passed off as shipbuilding is mainly welding of parts prefabricated abroad. What is passed off as steel industry is merely the reshaping of imported metal plates, tubes and rods.

All these kinds of semi-manufacturing or processing are run by foreign monopoly firms. These are privileged to have export processing or special economic zones, which are used for tax evasion and for smuggling not only knockdowns but also complete products, especially cars and motorcycles. The tax privileges are granted to foreign investors as incentives for them to reexport their products and sell a certain amount of seconds to the local market.

The imperialists, their puppets and other apologists of neoliberal policy also make the superficial and false claim that globalization is opening up alternative paths to industrialization by allowing backward countries to jump-start economic growth by leveraging their local advantages in labor, services, strategic natural resources and location, and even as tourist and tax havens — all in partnership with imperialist countries.

Since the Asian financial crisis of 1997, there has been a sharp reduction in the assembly of semiconductors for re-export. Recently the so-called shipbuilding by Hanjin in Subic has been closed down. The re-assembly of

Japanese cars and motorcycles has also been drastically reduced. The crisis of overproduction in the entire world capitalist system is relentlessly assaulting this floating kind of industrial enterprises that have their foundation outside of the Philippines.

The imperialists have increasingly relied on digital speed-ups in product redesign, rapid retooling, and use of robotics in automated handling and containerization in endless attempts to reconfigure their “global supply chains”. But with the use of the digital equipment from the most developed countries the crisis of overproduction becomes worse on a global scale, further discouraging the Filipino puppet leaders to take the path of national industrialization.

But to conjure the illusion of the Philippines as a newly-industrialized country, the World Bank statistics for 2019 understate the GDP share of agriculture at 7.4 percent and its employment share at 22.9 percent, overstate the share of industry at 34 percent and its share of employment at 19.1 percent; and the share of the service sector at 58.6 percent and its employment share at 58 percent.

However, the GDP share of the industry sector has supposedly declined despite its rise relative to the GDP share of agriculture. This decline is due to the reduction of semi-manufacturing of semiconductors and assembly of vehicles as a result of global overproduction and stagnation, the rampant smuggling out of mineral ores and logs, and the smuggling of all kinds of manufactures through the export processing zones, customs and the Philippines’ long coastline.

The shares of GDP and employment of what are the basic productive sectors of agriculture and industry are supposed to have declined since 1980. But the shares of GDP and employment of the service sector are supposed to have grown rapidly due to increased activity in trading and finance, business processing operations, tourism, the export of cheap labor amounting to 12 million or 26 percent of the total labor force of 45 million and the “employment” or odd-jobbing of 40 percent of the labor force in the informal sector of the economy.

The extremely bloated service sector of the Philippine economy is not the outcome of an industrial capitalist economy. Rather, it is the extension of an agriculture-based comprador capitalism exporting some commercial crops, mineral ores, prettified handicrafts and cheap labor by the millions; and always begging for foreign loans to cover the deficits in trade and balance of payments due to the inadequate income from raw-material exports and the foreign exchange remittances of the documented and undocumented Filipino migrant workers.

In the other direction, the same comprador capitalism extends its import operations into consumer-driven local commercial and real estate operations, including tourism and travel. What we see is the grotesque image of an agriculture-based and big comprador-oriented economy with an extremely bloated service sector induced by imported consumer goods, neoliberal credit and public debt. This pattern of a semifeudal economy is not peculiar to the Philippines but is seen in many other backward countries as confirmed by UN statistics.

The share of agriculture is easily understated by the bourgeois economists and statisticians because the reactionary government does not take into account what the peasants and farmworkers consume from their own labor and what they produce in handicrafts, forestry, swidden farming, hunting, backyard animal husbandry, fishing and other sideline occupations to augment their incomes from tilling the soil. The peasant products remain within the household or within informal local markets, and thus circulate beneath the radar of bourgeois statistics.

The number of peasants is also understated. Only the family heads and the children of 15 years and above are merely estimated, disregarding the fact that the entire family (except the toddlers) work as a productive force. In the statistics of the reactionary government, family members other than the family head are lumped together under the supra-class category of “unpaid family workers.” In fact, the traditional seasonal farmworkers who are not attached to any degree of farm mechanization are still members of poor and lower middle peasant households even as they are discounted as peasants in the estimates of the reactionary government’s statisticians.

Despite the misrepresentation of the Philippines as a newly industrialized country and the deliberate understatement of the peasant population, the reactionary government’s bourgeois economists and statisticians admit



that the rural population is more than 60 percent of the total Philippine population and that the Philippine economy is still agriculture-based but in the process of becoming newly-industrialized. The urban areas of Manila-Rizal, Central Luzon and Southern Luzon swell with most of the country's odd-jobbers either dwelling in urban slums or commuting daily from nearby rural villages.

This official estimate of the Philippine Statistics Authority that the rural population is 54.7 percent of the total population is most questionable and requires ground-level validation and recomputation, because the Philippine Statistics Authority uses a mechanical definition and superficial criteria for classifying barangays as "urban." According to government guidelines, for example, a barangay with at least five establishments employing at least 10 employees each — say, a rice mill, two agricultural supply stores, and two poultry farms — and at least five facilities (e.g., a trading post, a plaza, a chapel, a school, and cellphone signal) two kilometers or less from the barangay hall is already considered an "urban barangay."

The gravity of the underdeveloped, agrarian, pre-industrial and semifeudal character of the Philippine economy is well manifested by the chronic severity of unemployment, underemployment, and overseas work as shown by official government statistics. Based on 2019 annual labor and employment estimates, 72.9 million of Filipinos are considered "of working age" (15 years old and over), but only 44.7 million is counted as the labor force. Thus, over 28 million are of working age but "not in the labor force".

Among those excluded from the labor force are an estimated 9 million of these who are at school and another 19 million of working age and fully unemployed, including those working overseas, officially estimated at only 2.2 million. Most are out of school youth, housekeepers (mostly women), and others who have stopped looking for work for various reasons. In the formal labor force, some 2.23 million are fully unemployed, and another 5.9 million are underemployed (defined as "employed but looking for more hours of work").

Thus, the total unemployment, including underemployment, reached more than 27 million as of 2019. This is 60.4 percent of the total labor force of 44.7 million. This is even worse than the other internationally circulated official figures of 10 million or 22 percent of the total labor force of 45 million are unemployed and another 12 million of documented and undocumented migrant workers or 26 percent, amounting to 48 percent. All types of unemployment have further spiked to higher levels this year due to the Covid-19 lockdowns.

The gravity of the underdeveloped and semifeudal character of the Philippine economy is underscored by the fact that a huge chunk of the labor force have to separate from their families to seek jobs abroad. It can be assumed that those who seek and take jobs abroad do so because of job scarcity in the Philippines. They are as much unemployed by the Philippine economy like those many employables who take odd jobs in the so-called informal economy or who have given up looking for a job in their own country.

If the Philippines were truly a newly-industrialized country, as South Korea and Taiwan and some Southeast Asian countries had been in the 1970s and 1980s, there would even be a labor shortage in the Philippines. It is not possible for the Philippines to have become industrial capitalist or newly-industrialized economy because never has the reactionary government implemented genuine land reform and national industrialization in any period, be it in the period of foreign exchange controls and acclaimed promotion of import-substitution industries in the 1950s or in any later period in which the economic policy would become even more adverse to national industrialization in the Philippines.

As the basic productive sectors, agriculture and industry, decline and the population grows, the reserve army of labor (the unemployed) grows and struggles for odd jobs in both rural and urban areas and those who can speak English hanker for jobs abroad. Frustrated with failure to get adequate employment, the growing mass of unemployed can also be an abundant source of revolutionary activists and Red fighters. The revolutionary movement can never run short of recruits in the face of the worsening crisis of the domestic ruling system and the world capitalist system and the declining opportunities for employment.

The relations of production describe best the semifeudal character of the Philippine mode of production. The chief ruling class is no longer the traditional rent-collecting landlord class of feudal times. It is the comprador big

bourgeoisie, which is the chief financial and trading agent of foreign monopoly capitalism and owns the big banks, export-import companies, shopping malls, construction, real estate companies and the like. At the same time, it owns the largest haciendas and related agribusinesses, including livestock and poultry farms, fishing fleets, agri-forestry schemes and stocks in mining companies to assure itself of primary commodities for export in exchange for the manufactures that it imports.

The comprador big bourgeoisie is often called the big comprador-landlord class to emphasize its semifeudal character, its hybrid character as merchant capitalist and feudal owner of haciendas. It engages in manufacturing but it imports the majority of its means of production, the fuel and most major components of the total product. It uses some amount of mechanization in its haciendas but continues to use the cheap labor of seasonal farmworkers and collects from the widespread traditional rent-collecting landlords a large amount of agricultural surplus for local processing, domestic trade and export. It has the biggest amount of bribe money to determine the big comprador character of the high bureaucrat capitalists as well as the results of elections at the national, regional, provincial and city levels.

According to the latest figures, the 30 biggest of the comprador big bourgeois in the Philippines are as follows with their corresponding amounts of wealth in billions of US dollars: 1) Sy siblings with 13.9, 2) Manuel Villar with 5, 3) Enrique Razon Jr. with 4.3, 4) Lance Gokongwei & Siblings with 4.1, 5) Jaime Zobel de Ayala with 3.6, 6) Andrew Tan with 2.3, 7) Lucio Tan with 2.2, 8) Ramon Ang with 2, 9) Tony Tan Caktiong with 1.9, 10) Lucio and Susan Co with 1.7, 11) Mercedes Gotianun with 1.5, 12) Ty Siblings with 1.4, 13) Vivian Que Azcona & Siblings with 1.34, 14) Isidro Consunji & Siblings with 1.3, 15) Roberto Ongpin with 1.2, 16) Soledad Oppen-Cojuangco with 1.15, 17) Ricardo Po, Sr. with 1, 18) Iñigo Zobel with 990 M, 19) William Belo with 900 M, 20) Robert Coyiuto, Jr. with 890 M, 21) Edgar Sia II with 700 M, 22) Dennis Uy with 650 M, 23) Campos Siblings with 600 M, 24) Dean Lao with 500 M, 25) Jacinto Ng with 490 M, 26) Tan, Jr. with 350 M, 27) Delfin J. Wenceslao, Jr. with 340 M, 28) Tomas Alcantara with 300 M, 29) Manuel Zamora with 280 M and 30) Carlos Chan with 260 M. As individuals, the biggest compradors show only the tip of the immense wealth accumulated by their families and family-based business blocs. They have interlocking interests and interlocking directorates in the biggest comprador firms. They engage in syndicates, mergers, swaps and intermarriages.

The biggest of the comprador firms are as follows: 1) SM Investments Corp. and Subsidiaries, 2) Ayala Corp. and Subsidiaries, 3) Top Frontier Investment Holdings, Inc. and Subsidiaries, 4) San Miguel Corp. and Subsidiaries, 5) Ayala Land, Inc. and Subsidiaries, 6) SM Prime Holdings, Inc. and Subsidiaries, 7) BDO Unibank, Inc. and Subsidiaries, 8) Aboitiz Equity Ventures, Inc. and Subsidiaries, 9) San Miguel Food and Beverage, Inc. and Subsidiaries, 10) JG Summit Holdings, Inc. and Subsidiaries, 11) Aboitiz Power Corp. and Subsidiaries, 12) Alliance Global Group, Inc. and Subsidiaries, 13) Metropolitan Bank & Trust Co. and Subsidiaries, 14) Bank of the Philippines Islands and Subsidiaries, 15) Manila Electric Corp. and Subsidiaries, 16) Metro Pacific Investments Corp. and Subsidiaries, 17) Lopez Holdings Corp. and Subsidiaries, 18) Tangent Holdings Corp. and Subsidiaries, 19) LT Group, Inc. and Subsidiaries, 20) First Philippine Holdings Corp. and Subsidiaries, 21) DMCI Holdings, Inc. and Subsidiaries, 22) PLDT Inc. and Subsidiaries, 23) Globe Telecom, Inc. and Subsidiaries, 24) GT Capital Holdings, Inc. and Subsidiaries, 25) First Gen Corp. and Subsidiaries, 26) Land Bank of the Philippines and Subsidiaries, 27) Megaworld Corp. and Subsidiaries, 28) Filinvest Development Corp. and Subsidiaries, 29) International Container Terminal Services, Inc. and Subsidiaries and 30) Semirara Mining and Power Corp. and Subsidiaries.

While the big compradors are based in Metro Manila and other major cities, the far more numerous rent-collecting traditional landlords and related merchant-usurers, land speculators and promoters of contract growing are based in the countryside, including the minor cities and less urbanized poblaciones. The traditional landlords retain their dominance in the localities with their ownership of most of the agricultural land and related agrobased assets (e.g. rice mills, warehouses, trucking and the like), their command over the votes of their tenants, farmworkers, other employees and their dependents and consequently their pre-eminence in the local reactionary governments. They are the base of most of the dynasties at the regional, provincial and municipal levels.

All land reform programs undertaken by the US colonial regime and by the Philippine semicolony or neocolony

have proven to be bogus because of loopholes in the law for landlords to evade expropriation and because the redistribution price for the expropriated lands is unaffordable to the tenants because the reactionary government officials connive with the landlords to raise the expropriation price for their corrupt mutual benefit at the expense of the tenants. Eventually, the expropriated land falls into the hands of old-running or newly-rising landlords (from the ranks of bureaucrats, rich peasants, merchant-usurers and professionals) when the land is auctioned off.

At any rate, any kind of bourgeois land reform goes back to renewed land accumulation by a few in the absence of national industrialization as outlet for investing the landlord income from the agricultural surplus. In semifeudalism, there is a vicious cycle of comprador capitalism and feudalism in the absence of a determined and systematic policy of implementing genuine land reform and national industrialization in combination and coordination.

## ***II. Factors against industrial capitalism in the Philippines***

The natural economy of feudalism characterized by local or regional self-sufficiency was eroded in the 19th century, especially in the transition from the Manila-Acapulco galleon trade to the more expanded Philippine-European trade after the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869. The capitalist commodity system of production and exchange within the use money spread as result of crop specialization in either export crops (hemp, tobacco, sugarcane, coconut and the like) or food staples (rice and corn) for domestic consumption and the accelerated growth of towns and inter-island trade.

In the period of its direct colonial rule and with such devices as the Payne-Aldrich Act, the US made sure that the Philippines paid taxes for its colonial status and remained a profitable source of raw materials and market for surplus manufactures. It developed further the semifeudal character of the Philippine economy by expanding agricultural production for export, opening the mines, building more roads and bridges and establishing the public school system. It carried out land reform to break up the large Spanish friar estates but the poor tenants could not afford the redistribution price and these estates passed on to the native and mestizo big comprador-landlords and to the many more traditional landlords.

In the transition from feudalism to semifeudalism since the 19th century. It was inevitable for handicrafts and pre-industrial manufacturing based on the processing of local raw materials with the use of hand tools to develop further under the stimulus of inter-island trade. In the US colonial period, machinery for large scale production in food and beverages, textile and shoe manufacturing, cordage, paper and others were imported and inspired the small national bourgeoisie and its advocates to aspire for national industrialization and nationalization of the economy.

Up to the Commonwealth period, Quezon did not engage in genuine land reform but promoted the resettlement of the landless as well as the land speculators from the land-scarce regions to the frontier regions, especially Mindanao and the Cagayan Valley. There were merely token land expropriations where landlord-tenant conflicts were intense. Palliative laws against usury and excessive rents in tenancy on rice land were also enacted but carried loopholes or impossible requirements (e.g. the landlord-dominated municipal councils had to approve local application of the law) that prevented implementation and were easily circumvented.

Never has there been any serious plan or effort by the US colonial regime nor the semicolonial puppet Filipino regime, from Roxas to Duterte, to build the industrial foundation of the Philippines and complement it with genuine land reform. There has never been any plan to develop metallurgy, especially of iron and steel, beyond the level of extracting the mineral ores of the Philippines for export or to build the machine tool industry for the industrialization of the Philippines beyond the level of repairs, reconditioning and producing minor parts of imported machines. There has also been extremely limited processing of locally available materials to produce construction materials (aside from cement, logs and bricks), industrial chemicals and pharmaceuticals.

After World War II, the Philippines became a semicolony. The US made sure to grant nominal independence only if the Filipino puppet leaders headed by Roxas signed the US-RP Treaty of General Relations making the Philippines subservient to the US economically, politically, culturally and militarily. US corporations and citizens

retained their property rights and were guaranteed so-called parity rights or equality with Filipinos in the exploitation of natural resources and in the operation of public utilities and all types of businesses. The US made the overt threat that it would not pay for war damage compensation if it did not get its so-called parity rights.

The reactionary government officials, academics and press pundits hoped that the Philippines would be rehabilitated and developed with the use of US and Japanese war damage payments. They spoke of building new and necessary industries especially under the auspices of the Rehabilitation Finance Corp. (RFC), other state banks, and the National Development Corporation. But the larger fact was that the US companies became the main beneficiaries of war damage payments and loans from the US Export-Import Bank which were used to rebuild their trading firms and their subsidiaries manufacturing household consumables from locally available raw materials.

The US monopoly firms swamped the country with its surplus goods and pushed the national bourgeoisie to the margins. When the rehabilitation funds were depleted by paying for the reconstruction of US firms and for imported consumption goods by 1949, the US allowed the Philippine puppet government to adopt a policy of foreign exchange controls within the framework and control of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and the US Export-Import Bank.

The foreign exchange control was later prettified at best by President Garcia as an instrument for favoring Filipino businessmen in the name of developing the Philippine economy with “import-substitution” industries under the so-called “Filipino First” policy. He renamed the RFC the Development Bank of the Philippines in 1959. He had economic nationalists in his cabinet. However, the declared good intentions of Garcia did not result in the industrialization of the Philippines.

At best, the efforts of nationalist economists and business groups created some space for certain light and intermediate local industries to supply some domestic needs but were still dependent on imported machinery and subject to licenses and patent rights held by foreign companies. Even beyond the Garcia regime, the “Filipino First” policy also inspired the Filipino big comprador takeover of the Meralco in 1962 and the PLDT in 1967 from their American owners. But of course, the equipment and fuel for generating power would continue to come from US companies.

Soon enough the US scrapped the foreign exchange controls by having Macapagal elected President in 1961 and using him to adopt the decontrol policy, reaffirm the Laurel-Langley Agreement and promote “free enterprise”. At the same time, Macapagal still wanted to present himself as being interested in the industrial development of the Philippines. Thus, he launched his land reform program and the showpiece Iligan Integrated Steel Mills Inc. (IISMI) in northern Mindanao with funding mainly from Japanese banks and steel monopoly firms.

The Agricultural Land Reform Code of Macapagal was touted as surpassing the land resettlement programs and token expropriation of feudal estates undertaken by all previous regimes supposedly for the purpose of land reform. It was even hyped as the final death blow to feudalism. Despite the brave words of declaring land tenancy as anathema to public policy and economic development and formally abolishing land tenancy, the land reform program proved to be bogus as it carried loopholes, limited to rice and corn land, was underfunded by Congress and required the land reform beneficiaries to pay the redistribution price that they could not afford, especially when crop failure occurs due to natural disaster or serious illness hits the peasant family.

The Macapagal regime promoted the entry of foreign investments, especially in mining, logging and plantations for the purpose of export. The IISMI flopped eventually as the Japanese creditors and steel makers made the firm import finished steel plates, rods and tubes from Japan for mere reshaping. The Iligan project became known eventually as a beauty parlor that merely curled metal plates to make galvanized iron sheets for the roofs of Philippine buildings and homes.

The economic technocrats of Macapagal echoed the US economist Walt Rostow and boasted that the Philippines was already on the “take-off stage” of economic development. They were most enthusiastic about the designs and feasibility studies for infrastructure projects under the auspices of the World Bank. With Macapagal failing to win a second term, it would be Marcos taking advantage of the said designs and feasibility studies.

By the 1960s, Japan had recovered from the devastation of its industries and was enjoying an industrial boom. It was brimming over with surplus goods to dump on the Philippines, which received these, together with the surplus goods from the US. The reactionary wisdom then was not to industrialize the Philippines because its so-called comparative advantage was in selling mineral ores, logs and bananas to Japan. The same anti-industrial thinking persisted even when the US and Japan agreed in the 1970s to allow capitalist-style land reform and on that basis industrialize Taiwan and South Korea as front-liners and show windows against the socialist industrialization of China and North Korea.

The Marcos regime showed no interest in land reform but allowed the so-called reform program of Macapagal to run on until he put forward his own bogus agrarian reform program to replace it in 1971. Marcos made it appear that his program would also sweepingly transfer all the rice and corn land of the landlords to the tenants with the simple formula of determining the average production of the previous three years and letting the tenants pay by instalment to the Land Bank 25 per cent of such average production for a number of years to acquire the land. But as in the Macapagal land reform program, the government bureaucrat and landlord connived in the computation of production values against the tenants.

The Marcos regime was blatantly against land reform and national industrialization. It was mainly interested in pork barrel corruption of unprecedented colossal proportions. It seized on the neo-Keynesian line of the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to build roads, bridges and ports to enhance the infrastructure for exporting mineral ores, logs and plantation crops and importing construction equipment and materials and consumer goods. The infrastructure projects were overpriced and were contracted to Marcos crony corporations. The war damage payments from Japan were exhausted and huge amounts of foreign loans were incurred from Japan, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the World Bank.

The Marcos regime touted the infrastructure projects and some eleven corporations supplying financial and engineering services and some local construction materials like cement, rocks, wood products and the like as instruments and outcomes of national industrialization. Major banks were hyped as universal banks providing not only commercial credit but also loans for industrialization. In the late 1970s, the export processing zones for reassembly and fringe processing were also celebrated as the “cutting edge” of industrialization.

The Marcos regime started to fall into financial trouble in 1979 because of excessive spending and borrowing for infrastructure projects and tourist facilities. His crony construction companies were also scrambling for a share of contracts in the construction projects fueled by petro-dollars in the Middle East. Exactly at this time, when Marcos was in trouble with his pork barrel economics, some elements headed by Ricardo Reyes within the leadership of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) concurred with the Marcos propaganda misrepresenting the Philippine economy as industrial capitalist and spread the subjectivist line that the Philippine economy was no longer semifeudal.

This subjectivist line resulted in undermining the general line of people's democratic revolution through protracted people's war and in bringing about Right opportunism in the so-called New Katipunan program of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) and much worse in several Left opportunist lines which were pushed by Trotskyite elements in Metro Manila and Mindanao and touted urban insurrectionism as the lead factor in the armed revolution, without the necessity of protracted people's war.

Where the biggest damage to the revolution occurred, the line of people's strikes in urban areas and intensified city partisan warfare was pushed in combination with the premature formation of larger New People's Army (NPA) units to serve as mere adjuncts of the urban actions in certain regions. The line prematurely and unnecessarily exposed the urban underground of the revolutionary movement and pushed the people's army to create too many military companies and to neglect the deployment of enough platoons and squads for keeping and expanding the mass base.

After the downfall of Marcos in 1986, the Cory Aquino regime (1986 to 1992) was overburdened by the foreign debts that had been incurred by Marcos. And yet, following US and IMF diktat, it preserved the dictator's onerous

Presidential Decree 1177 imposing automatic appropriation for debt service payments and adopted the policy of paying for odious foreign debts, like those incurred for the showy but ill-conceived Bataan nuclear power plant that had been cancelled for gross anomalies in financial, technical and environmental calculations.

The Aquino regime shifted to increased domestic public borrowing. It also complied with the neoliberal policy of the US by adopting the policy of import liberalization; meaning to say, expanded importation of foreign manufactures. With much less foreign loans to finance grandiose infrastructure projects and conjure the illusion of development, the semifeudal character of the Philippine economy became more exposed than ever under the presidency of Cory Aquino.

Despite the strong clamor from an unprecedented alliance of peasant organizations with strong support from middle forces, the haciendera Cory Aquino preserved the reactionary tradition of imposing a bogus land reform law. The constitutional commission that she created put into the 1987 Constitution the provisions making expropriation of land subject to the prior voluntariness of the landlord and offering stock options to farmworkers in incorporated export-crop haciendas like her Hacienda Luisita.

And of course, as in the case of all reactionary regimes, the reactionary Congress of big landlords and comprador bourgeois, limited the appropriation of funds for land reform and worsened the exploitation of the masses of peasants and farmworkers. Since the end of the Cory Aquino regime, there has been no substantially different land reform program initiated by any of her successors. Land-grabbing by agri-corporations, bureaucrat landlords and traditional landlords has become worse from year to year at the expense of the indigenous communities and poor peasants.

It was during the term of Ramos (1992 to 1998) when the US and its imperialist allies, especially Japan decided to loosen up commercial credit for financing private construction in an unprecedented way in the whole of Asia, including the Philippines. In the same period, the US. further ensured the hostaging of the Philippine central bank to the US-dominated global private central banking cartel via Republic Act No. 7653, the New Central Bank Act in 1993.

The money flowed to the construction of high-rise office and residential buildings and tourist facilities from 1994 onward until the Asian financial crisis of 1997. In conformity with neoliberalism and with the supposed comparative advantage of the Philippines in raw-material production, the Ramos regime did not undertake any basic or heavy industrial project that had any semblance of building the industrial foundation of the Philippine economy.

Instead, in line with privatization under the neoliberal policy, he sold off the productive assets of state corporations, including the already decrepit Iligan Integrated Steel Mills to a Malaysian-Chinese company, just to finance housekeeping operations of his government, increase military appropriations in the name of “modernization” and reduce the budgetary deficit. Public assets like the former US military bases (Clark, Subic and John Hay), the Fort Bonifacio reservation, and the Manila Bay reclamation projects were also thrown wide open to real-estate development for tourist and other non-industrial business facilities.

The Asian financial crisis of 1997 devastated not only the erstwhile private construction boom but even the semi-manufacturing of semi-conductors and garments. These would be revived after a few years later but this time subordinated to China as the final platform of reassembly prior to the export of the products to the US and other Western markets. The “economic tigers” of Southeast Asia became emaciated kittens. The succeeding Estrada regime (1998 to 2001) was unstable for lack of public funds and was overthrown for raiding the social insurance systems for government and private employees in corrupt lending schemes to his cronies.

China became the main partner of US imperialism in promoting and taking advantage of the neoliberal policy of imperialist globalization. Once more there was a rising industrial capitalist country, a gigantic one at that, which made it easy for the reactionary policy makers and economists in the Philippines to invoke so-called comparative advantage as a reason to stay underdeveloped and semifeudal and to shun national industrialization. Sure enough Chinese manufacturing firms as well as US, Japanese and other foreign companies in China would enjoy dumping their manufactures in the Philippines.

The Arroyo (2001 to 2010) and Noyonoy Aquino (2010 to 2016) regimes were bound by the neoliberal policy of imperialist globalization. They did not undertake any project for the industrialization of the Philippine economy. But they “improved” the financial standing of their administrations by benefiting from quantitative easing of credit by the US Federal Reserve System and the consequent flow of portfolio investments or speculative capital from the US and other foreign hedge funds, raising the value-added tax, by taking more foreign loans and of course by taking advantage of the growing foreign exchange earnings from overseas contract workers and call centers.

Since Duterte became president in 2016, the Philippine economy has deteriorated from year to year. And certainly, no genuine land reform and national industrialization have been undertaken. Duterte has boasted that he can distribute land to the landless peasants all by himself but in fact land-grabbing by agri-corporations and landlords has worsened under his regime. Worse, the victims of land-grabbing are subjected to bombardments and violent eviction. At the same time, neither the US nor any other imperialist power has offered anything to the tyrant that would result in industrialization of the Philippines as was done decades ago in Taiwan and South Korea.

Duterte himself admits that he knows best how to kill people to solve problems and that he knows nothing about economics except the pork barrel kind of economics of which his idol Marcos had a mastery for plundering the economy. Thus, the centerpiece of Duterte’s economic plan is to beg China for high-interest loans for overpriced infrastructure projects to be undertaken by Chinese contractors, Filipino-Chinese subcontractors and a predominantly Chinese work force.

But now, wonder of wonders, there is a new campaign by counter-revolutionary elements, including Trotskyites and pseudo-socialist clerico-fascists, to claim that the Philippines is industrial capitalist rather than semifeudal or big comprador capitalist. Their ulterior motive shows when they claim that the people’s democratic revolution through protracted people’s war is a futile exercise and might as well be liquidated.

But the CPP and the entire revolutionary movement assure them that easily more than 60 percent of the Philippine population is still in the countryside. This is a far cry from the less than 30 percent peasant population of a definitely industrial capitalist country. The poor and middle peasant masses as the big ally of the working class are still there to provide the widest possible social and physical terrain for maneuver in a protracted people’s war.

### ***III. The people’s democratic revolution or reforms through peace negotiations***

Since its founding on December 26, 1968, the CPP has put forward the Program for a People’s Democratic Revolution on the basis of the critique of the Philippine society as semicolonial and semifeudal. The US granted nominal independence to the Philippines in 1946 but retained it as a semicolony through the US-RP Treaty of General Relations and subsequent treaties, agreements and arrangements subordinating the Philippines to US hegemony economically, politically, culturally and militarily.

The Philippine economy remains semifeudal, dominated by US monopoly capitalism and its major allies and subordinated to the world capitalist system but run directly by the comprador big bourgeoisie, the landlord class and the bureaucrat capitalist class. The comprador big bourgeoisie is the chief financial and trading agent of the foreign monopolies but has its own landed, mining and manufacturing interests, keeps an alliance with the traditional rent-collecting landlords and casts its influence on bureaucrat capitalists that have never decided at any time to carry out genuine land reform and national industrialization.

The national bourgeoisie has weakened from its relatively stronger position before World War II. This is because of the flood of surplus consumer products from the US, dependence on US trade policies and the depletion of foreign exchange by 1949, the neo-Keynesian policy of foreign borrowing for infrastructure projects, the flood of surplus manufactures from Japan and the newly-industrialized countries elsewhere in East Asia, the neoliberal economic policy and another flood of surplus manufactures from China. The national industrialization of the Philippines has been effectively stopped within the framework of the IMF, World Bank, WTO, ADB, Asian Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

The Philippine Chamber of Industry (previously formed to promote the goal of industrialization) has been

dominated by big compradors. The spokesmen of the national bourgeoisie in the Philippine Senate (like Senators Lorenzo Tanada and Jose W. Diokno) have disappeared. Both Houses of Congress have become entirely pork barrel-mind-ed, limited to thinking of economic development only in terms of graft-laden infrastructure projects. With the enactment of laws favoring foreign investments since the late 1960s, the enterprises of the national bourgeoisie were squeezed out. They persevere to a limited extent in the processing of food, tobacco, cotton, plant fibers, wood, leather and other locally available materials.

On behalf of the Filipino working class, in basic alliance with the peasantry, the CPP has taken the lead in advocating agrarian revolution and national industrialization within the context of the people's democratic revolution with a socialist perspective. This revolution seeks to break the grip of foreign monopoly capitalism on the Philippine economy and to deprive the exploiting classes of big compradors, landlords and bureaucrat capitalists of the power to control the economy.

It is timely and of decisive importance that the CPP and the revolutionary movement are underscoring the need for genuine land reform and national industrialization because the neoliberal policy of the imperialist powers and client states is unravelling. This policy has let loose the unbridled greed of the monopoly bourgeoisie of the imperialist powers and has subjected the proletariat and peoples of the world to the worst forms of exploitation and oppression and wars of aggression in certain parts of the world. This is generating one crisis of overproduction after another on a worsening scale.

The imperialist powers, their magnates and wizards have failed to solve the ever-worsening crisis of overproduction and the prolonged stagnation of the world capitalist system that followed the global financial crash 2007-2008. Before they can solve this crisis, another one that is worse has come on top of it. It has been further aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

This health crisis has triggered lockdowns and social panic across the world. It has devastated economies and has thrown people out of their jobs and other means of livelihood. And worst of all, counter-revolutionary states have taken advantage of the crisis to repress the people and the monopoly bourgeoisie to take multibillion-dollar giveaways from central banks, couched as "bail out loans" and "stimulus packages", and evade responsibilities to their mass of employees.

The crisis of the world capitalist system has become so severe that the US and China, who were main partners in the implementation of the neoliberal policy of imperialist globalization, are increasingly at odds with each other. The US accuses China of having cheated it with its two-tiered economy of state capitalism and private capitalism, use of state planning to achieve strategic economic and military goals. The US also decries China's use of state subsidies and currency manipulation to favor Chinese enterprises and the theft of US technology from US companies and research laboratories. The two biggest imperialist powers are in a process of decoupling and entering a new Cold War.

In all imperialist countries, the monopoly bourgeoisie is shaken by the worsening crisis of the world capitalist system. It is worried to death by its own inability to overcome the crisis and its fear of the rise of revolutionary mass movements among the workers and the people against escalating austerity measures and repression. Desperately, it is encouraging and supporting ultra-reactionary movements of fascist, chauvinist, racist, anti-migrant, misogynist, militarist and anti-environmentalist character. It is actively trying to coopt people's initiatives and movements and even fleshing out a strategy of tension and distraction through its long-leash sleeper assets among the Al-Qaeda /Abu Sayyaf/Daesh/ISIS-type terrorist cells to outflank, hijack, deflect and emasculate the growing revolutionary outrage of the world's peoples.

Millions of Filipino migrant workers in more than 100 countries are now threatened by the worsening crisis of global capitalism and by the rising ultra-reactionary movements, especially in the imperialist countries. Many of them have already been thrown out of their jobs because of the tightening of rules by host governments against them and by the lockdowns and shutdowns due to the COVID-19 pandemic. There is now a drastic reduction in the foreign exchange earnings of the migrant workers and their repatriation in increasing numbers is becoming a



major problem.

Meanwhile in the Philippines, the semifeudal economy is reeling from the decline of both the agriculture and industry sectors and the unsustainable bloating of the service sector and the public debt. The service sector and public debt bubbles are already in the process of implosion. The tyrannical Duterte regime aggravates the situation by mishandling its response to the COVID-19 pandemic and by taking advantage of it to grab more powers. Duterte and his fellow crooks in the top echelon of the bureaucracy and military engage in the most brazen and outrageous forms of plunder. Thus, the crisis of the ruling system has worsened rapidly and is generating the most favorable conditions for mass protests and the people's war for national and social liberation.

As the inter-imperialist contradictions of the US and China are sharpening, the Duterte regime is desperately trying to serve two conflicting imperialist masters. It is still keeping the treaties, agreements and arrangements that make the US the most dominant imperialist power in the Philippines in an all-round way. In return, the US is relying on the Duterte regime to carry out an anti-communist military campaign of suppression against the revolutionary movement and to make a charter change to allow US corporations unlimited ownership of Philippine land, natural resources, public utilities and all types of businesses.

At the same time, Duterte has allowed China to build seven military bases in the exclusive economic zone of the Philippines in the West Philippine Sea in violation of the UN Convention of the Law of the Sea and the 2016 final judgment of the Permanent Arbitration Court in favor of the Philippines against China. It has allowed China to own a number of Philippine islands through Chinese casino operators, control the national power grid, erect cell towers in Philippine military camps and assist the reactionary armed services (AFP and PNP) in developing its communications system.

Duterte commits all these acts of treason in exchange for bribes for taking out high interest China loans for over-priced infrastructure projects to be undertaken by Chinese contractors and their own work force. He tries to benefit not only from official transactions with China and its state banks and corporations but also from shady relations with Chinese criminal syndicates engaged in the smuggling of illegal drugs and other contraband, in online gaming and casino operations and in illegal Chinese immigration under the cover of casino employment and tourism. Corrupt Chinese officials are also using these criminal operations of Chinese triads for laundering and stashing their bureaucratic loot abroad.

In the face of two conflicting imperialist powers trying to dominate the Philippines, with the collaboration of the exploiting classes of big compradors, landlords and bureaucrat capitalists, the CPP and the revolutionary movement of the Filipino people expect the chronic crisis of the semicolonial and semifeudal ruling system to worsen at an accelerated rate. They are therefore more than ever determined to carry out the people's democratic revolution through protracted people's war. They are resolved that the people's democratic revolution can be completed and the socialist revolution can be started only upon the overthrow of the imperialist-supported big comprador-land-lord class dictatorship.

In the course of the people's war, agrarian revolution can be carried out in substantial areas in the country. But the agrarian revolution and other socioeconomic transition measures can be completed and the socialist transformation of the economy can be carried out in earnest only after the nationwide seizure of political power by the proletariat in alliance with the peasantry and other democratic social strata.

By wielding state power, the proletariat shall be able to take over the commanding heights of the economy; meaning to say, take out the Philippine central bank from the global private central banking cartel of the big banksters and transform it into a genuine public central bank, control the existing industries, the sources of raw materials and the communications and transport lines, carry out socialist industrialization and complete the agrarian revolution in conjunction with the collectivization and mechanization of agriculture.

But while the people's democratic revolution through protracted people's war is still in progress, the CPP has agreed with its revolutionary allies within the NDFP and with further allies and peace advocates outside of the NDFP frame to engage, whenever possible and advantageous to the people, in peace negotiations with the

reactionary government to address the roots of the civil war with basic social, economic and political reforms in order to lay the basis for a just and lasting peace.

The main purpose of peace negotiations, the substantive agenda and the methods of negotiating and agreeing have been set forth in The Hague Joint Declaration of 1992. More than ten agreements have been mutually approved, including the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees, the Joint Agreement on Reciprocal Working Committees and the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL). Even the GRP and NDFP versions of the Comprehensive Agreement on Social and Economic Reforms (CASER) have been fully drafted and have led to substantial tentative agreements by the Reciprocal Working Committees of both sides.

But the US imperialist officials and the most reactionary economic and military interests have been behind the scenes prompting the Philippine president to use the demand for indefinitely prolonged ceasefire in order to block the progress of the peace negotiations, to paralyze the revolutionary movement and to stop the negotiations altogether. It is now obvious that every president has used the peace negotiations to consolidate his or her political position within the first year of rule and to try to wangle an indefinitely prolonged ceasefire to paralyze the revolutionary movement and steer the wider public discourse away from addressing substantive issues.

But why do the CPP and NDFP continue to entertain the offer of peace negotiations by every incoming president of the reactionary government? Were the CPP and the NDFP to rebuff such offer they would appear as the belligerent party in the eyes of a great number of people and the broad range of peace advocates. They would be playing the role of the ultra-Leftist, infantile communist or the crazy Trotskyite who poses as pure and perfect proletarian revolutionary, isolated from the masses and helping the enemy appear as the lover of peace. It is the wise policy of the CPP and NDFP to avail of the peace negotiations as a way of presenting the program for a people's democratic revolution, urging all patriotic and democratic forces to explore the paths to a just and lasting peace, and letting the enemy side unfold its anti-national, anti-democratic and anti-people character.

But is it entirely impossible for the adversaries in a civil war to negotiate and agree on a truce? It is not impossible. It has been demonstrated twice in the history of the Chinese revolution that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the Guomindang (GMD) could negotiate and agree on a truce in order to fight a third party, first against the northern warlords and then against the Japanese invaders. The CCP and the GMD even tried to negotiate in order to avert the resumption of the civil war after the defeat of Japan. But goaded and backed by the US, the GMD reactionaries decided to carry out a civil war which they lost in 1949.

Is it possible for the Philippine reactionary government to be led by a president or party that is patriotic and progressive enough to engage in serious peace negotiations with the NDFP to address the roots of the armed conflict, agree on social, economic and political reforms and thereby lay the basis for a just and lasting peace? Such a possibility depends on the objective conditions (especially certain domestic and international factors that would hinder or enhance the peace process) and on the character and ability of said president to persuade the big compradors and landlords to take the chance of carrying out land reform and national industrialization as done previously in certain countries.

Among the presidents of the reactionary governments, Duterte was the most loud-mouthed about seeking a just peace with the revolutionary movement. But he was merely pretending. If not for his small-mindedness and short-sightedness, if not for his sheer stupidity and cowardice to stand his ground against a rabidly pro-US and anti-people AFP, he could have proceeded with the NDFP in forging the CASER in order to carry out land reform and national industrialization on a self-reliant basis with the further assurance of income from the oil and gas resources, with an estimated value of US\$26 trillion, in the exclusive economic zone of the Philippines in the West Philippine Sea.

But he has preferred to "lay aside" in his own words the 2016 judgment of the Permanent Arbitration Court in favor of the Philippines in accordance with the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. His recent posturing at the UN General Assembly does not change this fact. Instead of playing his cards well to advance national sovereignty,

he has acted as a traitor by letting China violate the sovereign rights of the Philippines and build seven artificial islands to serve as military bases, destroy the marine environment and claim the marine and mineral resources that belong to the Filipino people. He is still hoping to get huge amounts of bribes from the overpriced infrastructure projects and high-interest loans amounting to US\$24 billion, that were promised by China.

There are ultra-reactionaries, especially those with a militarist mind-set, who say that they do not need any peace negotiations with the NDFP to achieve peace and to develop the Philippine economy through genuine land reform and national industrialization. But indeed, if left to themselves, they will continue to follow the dictates of their imperialist masters and the local reactionary interests and they will only drive the broad masses of the Filipino people to wage armed revolution and overthrow the semicolonial and semifeudal ruling system.

The CPP and the NDFP have always given a fair chance to every reactionary government from that of Cory Aquino to that of Duterte to prove that the revolutionary movement is seriously interested in peace negotiations for the benefit of the Filipino people. Peace negotiations have always been broken because US imperialism and the local ultra-reactionaries have always wanted to turn these into surrender negotiations at the expense of the revolutionary movement and the people or at least to cause confusion among the ranks of the revolutionary movement and the people.

But they cannot break the revolutionary will of the CPP and the NDFP and the Filipino people. This will is well expressed in the Program of the People's Democratic Revolution and is further applied in the documents and drafts already made in the interest of the Filipino people in the course of the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations. The CPP and NDFP are always open to joint agreements with any force so long as these do not violate revolutionary principles and they spell out mutually agreeable policies for basic social, economic and political reforms that improve the situation and lives of the Filipino people and lead to the goal of a just and lasting peace in a Philippines that is independent, democratic, socially just, developing in an all-round way, prosperous and in solidarity with the people of the world against imperialism and all reaction.

# On Semifeudalism

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## Questions from the Jose Maria Sison School

February 8, 2021

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1. *AT PRESENT, THERE are still those who subscribe to the line of Felimon "Popoy" Lagman that the Philippines is capitalist. This argument is in the document "Semifeudal alibi for protracted war" of Lagman that attacks the semi-colonial and semifeudal analysis. In the document, it is stated that it is not necessary to have a big population of workers to call a country capitalist such as Russia whose population of workers was only 1%. What can you say about this?*

JMS: Popoy Lagman and his followers are wrong to assume that the Philippines is already industrial capitalist to counter the character of Philippine society as semicolonial and semifeudal and to deviate from the general program of the people's democratic revolution through the strategic line of protracted people's war, and in promoting urban insurrectionism.

It is true that the semifeudal economy is capitalist in the sense that the mode of commercial production is dominated by money. But the Philippines is not yet industrial capitalist, it is still semifeudal capitalism. The Philippines does not yet produce basic metals and chemicals and machine tools. These are still imported, in exchange for exported raw materials and semi-manufactures. In sum, the economy is still agrarian and pre-industrial.

The ruling classes are big comprador capitalists and landlords, not industrial capitalists. The big compradors are the main agents of foreign monopoly capitalism in finance and trade. Often, the big compradors are also big landlords because their foundation is production and export of agricultural products and other raw materials. The more precise term is semifeudal rather than the broad term capitalist. The economy of the Philippines today is more similar to the economy of China before its revolution rather than the pre-revolution Russia.

In the time of Lenin, Russia had industrial enclaves that produced iron, oil, tractors, ships and railways although these enclaves are like small islands in an ocean of feudalism. Industrial capitalism had already sprouted in Russia. Of the 125 million population of Russia in 1917, around 26 million belonged to the working class. In a conservative estimate, 15 million of workers were in factories, construction, mines and railroads. Lagman was wrong when he said that only 1 percent were industrial workers.

2. *Do you have an assessment of the pseudo-progressive formations in the Philippines, particularly the Trotskyite organizations? At present the narrowest target is the US-Duterte regime. Is there space for alliance with Trotskyite formations even only at the level of bringing down the narrowest target? Or support for similar groups as Popoy Lagman's, such as Leody de Guzman when he ran for senator? Or even in attacking neoliberalism such as counter-contractualization? How do we correctly relate with these counter-revolutionaries?*

JMS: According to the Trotskyites themselves, they have various factions. You must study well their differences. As long as any Trotskyite group fights the Duterte regime, let them speak and act but we must be vigilant and ready to counter their wrong words and actions. Presently, the Trotskyites, like Joseph Scalice, John Malvar, World Socialist Web Site and the Fourth International, are very active in attacking genuine communists and revolutionaries in the Philippines.

The Trotskyites have the characteristic of acting ultra-Left or too revolutionary to upstage genuine communists. They would state that the view of the economy being semifeudal is passe. They assert it is industrial capitalist because of the export-oriented industrialization policy of Marcos and more so with the development of the global supply chain under neoliberalism. Read and criticize the writings of the Trotskyites on Philippine economy, from Ricardo Reyes, Walden Bello and Popoy Lagman up to those of Scalice and Malvar.

Since the Philippines is now supposedly industrial capitalist, socialism should be the immediate line of the revolution and not go through the new democratic stage. But the Trotskyites also say that socialism is not possible in

one country. Supposedly, one must first rely on the murky permanent revolution of Trotsky and on the signal of the anti-communist Fourth International.

To put one over the communists and genuine revolutionaries in the Philippines, the Trotskyites insist that Duterte became president because of the support of the CPP for him during the 2016 elections. They say the CPP is an enabler. And the alliance with Duterte or the peace talks is surrender and cooperation with him. The Trotskyites characteristically make intrigue in the futile hope that they would benefit from it. They have none of the character of communists who correctly and diligently fulfill their tasks in the fields of ideology, politics and organization.

*3. In the book Philippine Society and Revolution, it is clearly stated that the Catholic Church is the most zealous defender of the landlord class. The present pope, Pope Francis, has issued progressive statements. In an article written by Trotskyite John Malvar entitled "Communist Party of the Philippines embraces Catholicism", it attacked the statement of the Interim NDFP Chairperson of the Negotiating Panel Julie de Lima where there is the accusation that "it does not fight for the interest of the working class, but that of the bourgeoisie, that it strengthens the religious belief of the masses, and acknowledges that the church is a liberating force." Their accusation is "It has subordinated the interests of workers to the needs of the Catholic Church." What can you say about this? How do we correctly relate with the Catholic Church in general and a Pope with progressive posturing, in particular?*

JMS: As a historical institution and in the present Philippine society, the Roman Catholic Church should be held responsible for being an instrument of colonialism, supportive of the reactionary state and the exploiting classes and has a characteristic of a big comprador and big landlord. The Church is a big investor in the Bank of Philippine Islands.

Notwithstanding, the inspiration of Gomburza and the Aglipayans on the Filipino people cannot be underestimated. Many priests and nuns joined the Philippine revolution in the past and at present. The Christians for National Liberation of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines has an important role in supporting the new democratic revolution, the downfall of the Marcos fascist dictatorship and in advocating human rights and just peace, even now against Duterte's tyranny.

Since the decade of the 1960s, there has been a change in the policy of the Catholic Church for a modern constitution. It promotes ecumenism up to dialogue and cooperation with non-believers. There is a good influence of the liberation theology among the Catholics and Christians in the Philippines.

The Trotskyite John Malvar is malicious in saying that just because the interim chairperson of the NDFP Negotiating Panel praised the good words of Pope Francis and the good deeds of Catholic bishops, priests and nuns and other Christians on human rights and just peace, the CPP has renounced its materialist viewpoint and revolutionary principles and embraced all the doctrines of the Catholic Church.

John Malvar is no different from Joseph Scalice in mendacity and distortion. They do not understand the meaning of broad alliance in the field of politics. Whenever CPP enters into an alliance, they always say that it gives up its integrity, independence and initiative and surrenders itself to the philosophy, politics and economic interests of the ally. The Trotskyites are sectarians. They want to isolate or separate the working class from the broad masses.

*4. The rise in the price of commodities, particularly the price of pork, is so severe and the inflation rate continues to rise in general. What can solve these problems?*

JMS: The first step is to kick out Duterte from power. But this is not enough for there is no guarantee that inflation and corruption inside the ruling system would be stopped. Revolution is needed to change the whole system.

The destruction of agriculture, retardation of the industry of the Philippines, unemployment, lack of income by the toiling masses and the government's domestic and foreign debt, are excessive. Thus, there is inflation because the country lacks production and funds to import basic necessities such as rice and meat.

*5. In rural areas in some provinces, the use of machinery in production, like the "reaper", is supposedly spreading and this results in greater disemployment among the ranks of the farmworkers because it is used for harvesting palay. What steps*

*can the farmworkers take to stop this? In a socialist society, mechanization of agriculture is important. But in the context of a semifeudal and semicolonial society, such technology is more harmful. Could the poor peasant class use this technology for his benefit while fighting for genuine land reform?*

JMS: The reaper, tractor and other machineries are imported from other countries. When the use of such machineries becomes widespread, it means many farmworkers would lose their jobs because there is no real industrial development that makes use of the surplus population in the countryside.

Thus, there is an increase in the number of floating people without regular jobs in the countryside and cities. Discontent becomes widespread and the desire for revolution grows stronger. We cannot stop the use of agricultural machinery. We should fight the reactionary government for impeding the Philippines' own industrial development.

Unlike the capitalist system, mechanization in agriculture is a result of industrialization. And potential rural job losses due to mechanization is compensated by employment through growing industrialization in the socialist economy.

*6. The Marcos crony Danding Cojuangco has passed away. What would happen to the haciendas he owned and what about the issue of coco levy? Will the farmers be more hopeful that they will win in their struggle?*

JMS: The more than 25 haciendas and other wealth of Danding Cojuangco will just be divided among his heirs. And the coco levy have long been fraudulently manipulated by Cojuangco, Duterte, Calida and the Supreme Court. They took measures to deprive the coconut farmers of the coco levy fund.

*7. Duterte is branded as the Massacre King. Of all the past presidents, is Duterte the most cruel to the farmers?*

JMS: Duterte is the true massacre king. He has surpassed the documented record of Marcos for killing 3,000 during his long rule. Duterte killed more than 33 thousand so-called drug suspects and several hundred workers, peasants, youth and women activists. That is 11 times the number killed by Marcos.

Because of the supposed anti-terrorist law, Duterte and his armed cohorts have a license to kill more. I just wonder why until now, very few or almost nil is the retribution against the monsters, especially the most evil of them. But I will not be surprised if in the long run bigger retributions or justice will be rendered on behalf of the victims.

*8. What can you say about the impending candidacy of Sara Duterte for the presidency? Duterte has stated several times that he would not allow his daughter to run.*

JMS: Duterte is just play-acting that his daughter Sara does not want to run. That is also what Duterte did in 2015. Sara herself is also pretending that she does want to run but there is already a flooding of tarpaulin saying "Run, Sara, Run".

Duterte has not entirely given up his plan of a fascist dictatorship through charter change, fake federalism and pseudo-revolutionary government. But the presidential run of Sara is his reserve to continue his dictatorship and dynasty.

# ***Genuine Agrarian Reform***

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## **Questions from Anakbayan Europa NDLine Online School**

**Answers by Jose Maria Sison**

**August 22, 2021**

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*FOREMOST, WE WOULD like to highlight the historical failures of pushing forth “genuine assets reforms and genuine assets redistribution in the Philippines, precisely why the “foolish old man” continues to level the playing field in order for the next generation to have a strong foundation of building up a true Filipino Nation.*

*A historical assessment on all the Agrarian Reforms be that a scheme involving so-called “Land Redistribution” along with the technical Agrarian Support Systems (ASS), should be discussed in this part of the NDline Online.*

*1. What is your general appraisal of the agrarian condition vis-à-vis property relations in the Philippines from past to the present?*

JMS: The old feudal landlord-tenant relations still persist and prevail in most parts of the country even as semifeudal relations have also grown in which the big comprador-landlords own large estates in which they hire and use a few regular s in combination with a large mass of seasonal s who come from poor peasant families. A large part of the growing surplus rural population also take seasonal jobs in the mining areas and urban areas.

More then 60 percent of the peasantry in the Philippines are still poor peasants doubling as seasonal farmworkers because of inadequate income from their allotted farm lots. The bourgeois land reform laws adopted since the Commonwealth period have always carried specific provisions allowing the persistence of the old feudal landlord-tenant relations. So-called land reform beneficiaries cannot afford to pay for the entire redistribution price of the land and are usually bankrupted by illness and crop failures.

Even where token land reform projects have been undertaken on landed estates or in resettlement areas, there are always provisions of the bourgeois law on land allowing the landlords, the merchant-usurers and real estate corporations and land speculators to accumulate and reconcentrate land in their hands. In order to evade land reform, landlord families can also incorporate themselves as owners, distribute the land among family members to take advantage of the existing maximum land retention limit or use the leasehold system, growers’ agreements and even fake cooperatives.

*2. It seems that all governments past and present had spent efforts in order to respond to the agrarian questions in the country. But could you give us a historical appraisal on the specificities of Philippine government programs that highlight how government wasted time and money in the earlier share tenancy and land resettlement programs that never resulted to genuine assets redistribution but only aggravated the problems of property relations. I am referring to such programs as: a. Land reform under US colonial administration before the Commonwealth in 1904.*

JMS: Land reform under US colonial administration before the Commonwealth in 1904 by buying at the price of US\$7.2 million the major part of the friars estates, amounting to some 166,000 hectares (410,000 acres), of which one-half was in the vicinity of Manila. The land expropriation allowed US companies to buy some amount of land for their use but was supposed to be for resale mainly to Filipinos tenants. But the mostly poor Filipino tenants could not afford the redistribution price. Thus, only the wealthy Filipino leaseholders and landlords ultimately became the buyers of the land.

The token land reform was calculated to usher in semifeudal conditions, with wealthy landed Filipinos and Spanish mestizos becoming big compradors owning haciendas, trading companies and banks. The system of corvee labor was abolished and peasants were allowed to leave their villages in order to resettle elsewhere and become workers in plantation and mines. The US colonial administrations improved the infrastructure system to facilitate

its investments and built the public school system to reeducate the Filipinos and expand the bureaucracy for serving US monopoly capitalism.

*b. ACT 4054 – The Philippine Rice Share Tenancy Act (1933)*

JMS: ACT 4054 – The Philippine Rice Share Tenancy Act of 1933 was merely to promote the well-being of tenants in agricultural lands devoted to production of rice and to regulate the relations between them and the landlords. Basically, it sought a 50–50 sharing of the crop, regulation of interest to 10% per agricultural year, and guarantee the tenurial right of the tenant against arbitrary dismissal by the landlord. It was a palliative intended to appease the peasant masses who were becoming restless because of extreme landlord exploitation.

At any rate, many landlords registered much of their rice land as raw land for the purpose of tax evasion in collusion with the assessors. On registered rice land, the landlord together with his overseer reduces the production figures and increases on paper the landlord's contribution in order to reduce the 50 per cent that is supposed to go to the tenant. The act was not automatically of nationwide application but was subject to the approval of a majority of the landlord-dominated municipal councils in a province. Such approval was never done in any province, this peasant unrest became exacerbated.

*c. Commonwealth Act No. 441 (1939) NLSA – National Land Settlement*

*Administration (1939)*

JMS: Commonwealth Act No. 441 (1939) NLSA – National Land Settlement Administration of 1939 created the National Land Settlement Administration whose objectives were (a) To facilitate the acquisition, settlement and cultivation of lands whether acquired from the Government or from private parties; (b) To afford opportunity to own farms to tenant farmers and small farmers from congested areas, and to trainees who have completed the prescribed military training.

This act provided for the establishment of token land resettlement project areas and migration of landless peasants to such frontier areas, especially in Mindanao, but in fact promoted the seizure and occupation of large areas of land by traditional landlord families and by foreign and domestic corporations interested in plantations, logging and mining. The indigenous communities and poor peasant settlers were victimized. At the outbreak of the Second World War, the resettlement amounted to only 65,000 hectares.

*d. Rural Progress Administration (RPA) under Commonwealth Act No. 678 in 1939*

JMS: Quezon created the Rural Progress Administration Administration under Commonwealth Act No. 678 in 1939. The purpose was to promote small land ownership and to improve the living conditions and the general welfare of the rural population. The Commonwealth government had the authority to negotiate with the owners of large estates for the purpose of acquiring such estates or parts thereof, through lease for a period not exceeding twenty-five years, with option to purchase the same within the same period, under such terms and conditions as may be advantageous to the public interest.

The government was to have the power to organize cooperative associations to manage the estates acquired; to grant said cooperative associations credit facilities; to engage in such activities as may be necessary to promote the welfare of the members of the said cooperative associations; and to promulgate rules and regulations to carry out the provisions of said Act. The RPA was overtaken by World War II and remained a plan without much reality.

*e. RA 34 (Roxas Administration)*

JMS: Republic Act No. 34 the Philippine Rice Share Tenancy Act of 1946 under the Roxas Administration) set a 70-30 sharing arrangement between tenant and landlord, with 70% of the harvest going to the person who shouldered the expenses for planting, harvesting and for the work animals. It also sought to reduce the interest of landowners' loans to tenants at not more than 6%.

The act could not be implemented effectively because of the weight of traditional practice and the landlord



together with the overseer prevailing over the tenant. Thus, the ground for peasant war continued to be fertile.

*f. LASEDECO – Land Settlement Development Corporation (1950)*

JMS: Executive Order No. 355 created the Land Settlement and Development Corporation with the following powers, duties and functions: (a) To facilitate the acquisition, settlement and cultivation of agricultural lands; (b) To afford opportunity to own farms to tenant farmers and small farmers from congested areas, to graduates of agricultural schools and colleges, to trainees who have completed the prescribed military training, to veterans and members of guerrilla organizations, and to other persons as may be determined by the Board of Directors with the approval of the Secretary of Economic Coordination; (c) To encourage migration to sparsely populated regions, and facilitate the amalgamation of the people in different sections of the Philippines; and so and so forth. The act was just an elaboration of and adding gloss to the previous law on land resettlement.

*g. Bell Mission Report, Robert S. Hardie Commission and the Mutual Security Agency created by the Mutual Security Act (1952)*

JMS: In connection with the Bell Mission Report of 1952, land-tenure specialist Robert Hardie released his report regarding the Philippine land problem on tenancy and recommended its abolition. But it made land reform dependent on the decision-making of the big comprador-landlord puppet state, on a policy direction of capitalist development and the framework of incentives from the US and world capitalist system. Thus, feudal tenancy and the land problem in general have persisted to this day within the semifeudal economy.

*h. RA 1160 National Resettlement and Rehabilitation Administration (NARRA)*

JMS: Republic Act No. 1160 of 1954 abolished the LASEDECO and established the National Resettlement and Rehabilitation Administration (NARRA) to resettle dissidents and landless farmers. It was aimed mainly to provide home lots and farmlands to so-called rebel returnees and retiring government soldiers in Isabela, Palawan and Mindanao. The act was essentially similar to Nos. 2 and 4 above, despite the psywar hype that Magsaysay defeated the peasant war in the Philippines with the NARRA projects. The opportunist lines of the Lava brothers in the leadership of the old communist party had caused the disintegration and defeat of the revolutionary movement.

*i. ACCFA – Agricultural Credit and Cooperative Financing Administration*

JMS: Republic Act No. 821 of created the Agricultural Credit Cooperative Financing Administration (ACCFA) to provide small farmers and share tenants loans with low interest rates of six to eight percent. But the funds available was scarce and was mere palliative in relation to the land problem and the needs of the peasants. The ACCFA favored the bureaucrats and landlords and could not displace the more widespread usury system of the landlords and merchants. It augmented and complemented the private usury system. In the worst cases, the bureaucrats faked the loans to fictitious borrowers and then burned the ACCFA offices and documents.

*j. FACOMA – Farmers' Cooperative Marketing Associations*

JMS: Farmers' Cooperative Marketing Associations (FACOMAs) were established to operate as a voluntary business organization among farmers (producers of agricultural products including tenants and landlords) for the purpose of marketing farm products and/or buying farm supplies and implements collectively for the members' direct benefit. The mix-up of the corrupt bureaucrats, landlords, merchants and tenants worked against the masses of tenants. Corruption was rampant, especially when the same agricultural products being traded were subject to pricing according to classification, like tobacco from Class A to E.

*k. EDCOREconomic Development Corps*

JMS: The EDCOR was initially created in 1950 by Proclamation 375 to reserve for settlement and development purposes of the Economic Development Corps (EDCOR) of the Armed Forces of the Philippines certain parcels of the public domain. It became the basis of Magsaysay's NARRA projects for resettling so-called rebel returnees and

isolating or “hamletting” them with active and retired soldiers of the AFP as guards.

3. *Could you also distinctively make your appraisal on the following programs from President Magsaysay to President Macapagal's administration? I am referring to such programs as the: Agricultural Tenancy Act of 1954 or the following:*

a. *RA 1199 – Leasehold and Share Tenancy Act (1954)*

JMS: RA 1199 – Leasehold and Share Tenancy Act (1954) sought to improve leasehold and share tenancy relations and safeguard the security of tenure of the tenants or in other words keep intact the traditional feudal relations. For the purpose, it created the Court of Agrarian Relations.

b. *Filipino First Policy and the Import Substitution Strategy with President Garcia?*

JMS: This Filipino First Policy was mainly directed against the Chinese merchants in retail trade. And the import substitution strategy meant establishing reassembly and repackaging enterprises under royalty and licensing agreements with foreign monopoly firms. During the Garcia regime, land reform meant nothing more than security of tenancy rights and token resettlement projects.

c. *RA No. 3844 Agrarian Land Reform Code under Diosdado Macapagal?*

JMS: RA No. 3844 Agrarian Land Reform Code of 1963 under Diosdado Macapagal carried a very bold preambular declaration that landlord-tenancy relations were against state policy and were being abolished in favor of an agricultural leasehold system but it also carried specific and effective provisions in the opposite direction, limited “land reform” to rice and corn land and promoted export-crop plantations which gave up most of the best land in Mindanao to foreign agri-corporations (like DOLE, Del Monte and the like) at the expense of the Lumad and the poor peasant settlers.

4. *How would you assess Marcos Administration's PD 27, followed by President Corazon Aquino's RA No. 6657 Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law (CARL)?*

JMS: Like Macapagal's Agricultural Land Reform Code, Marcos' PD 27 (decreeing the emancipation of tenants and promising them ownership of five hectares if un-irrigated and three hectares if irrigated pretended to abolish or break up the old landlord-tenancy relations in rice and corn land. The decree set the formula for valuation of the land at 2.5 times the average annual crop in the three previous years. The tenant was supposed to pay for the land to the landlord in fifteen (15) years of fifteen (15) equal annual amortizations.

The problem about determining the average annual crop was that the landlord and the agrarian reform bureaucrat usually connived against the tenant and made it so high that the land price became unaffordable, especially when illness or crop failure beset the tenant family. The bogus land reform program was bound to fail. The average land size of five hectares if un-irrigated and three hectares if irrigated was against the much lower actual average of land available for land reform.

The Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law (CARL) of Aquino was even worse. It was subject to the new constitutional provision that the landlord must be willing to sell his rice and corn land, thus limiting the scope of the bogus land reform. Land devoted to other crops, especially the export-crop plantations, continued to be exempted from land reform. And the landlords could further evade the CARL by incorporating the ownership of the land and by making lopsided lease agreements with the farmworkers.

5. *What do you think of RA No. 9700 Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program with Extension and Reforms (CARPER) which was forwarded during Benigno S. Aquino's administration?*

JMS: RA No. 9700 Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program with Extension and Reforms (CARPER) is not any fundamentally different from CARL and CARP. The bottom line is that the continuing bogus land reform program of the reactionary government has resulted in more than 90 percent of so-called land reform beneficiaries being unable to pay installment payments to the Land Bank. They have been vulnerable to re-selling the land to local bureaucrats, landlords and merchant-usurers. And they are vulnerable to bureaucratic decisions of “conversion”,

which means reclassifying the land as outside of land reform and saleable to others, including real estate speculators and landlords.

*6. What exactly is the status now of the so-called Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) under the Duterte regime? Is it true, as claimed by Duterte, that land distribution to the landless peasants is being speeded up in order to counter the ongoing peasant war in the Philippines? Is it also true, as proclaimed by his Department of Agrarian Reform, that “landlords and capitalists” no longer “hold sway over vast tracts of agricultural lands”?*

JMS: Longtime peasant leader of Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) and former agrarian reform secretary Rafael Mariano has belied the claims of Duterte and his running dogs in DAR that the land problem is already being solved and that landlords and agri-corporations are no longer lording over the peasant masses and farm-workers. He describes CARP as a bogus, inherently flawed, and failed land reform program.

He explains that a genuine agrarian reform program foremost assures the free redistribution of vast private agricultural landholdings to farmers, as stipulated in the Genuine Agrarian Reform Bill (House Bill 239). He points out that CARP does the exact opposite by charging beneficiaries with amortization, and disqualifying and ejecting those who cannot. The private agricultural lands, composing 92 percent of DAR’s scope of land acquisition and distribution, are now being subjected to “conversion” and made available for resale to landlords and corporations.

To deflect attention from such betrayal of the landless peasants, Duterte has now focused on the promise of distributing government-owned land by issuing Executive Order (EO) No. 75, series of 2019, which directs DAR “to acquire all lands devoted to or suitable for agriculture, which is owned by the... Government... for the purpose of eventual distribution to qualified beneficiaries.” But the identification of covered lands depends entirely upon the discretion of government agencies.

Mariano exposes the fact that the CARP provides comprehensive exemptions from expropriation, that it covers only a total of 5.43 million hectares, or just 44%, not even half, of the 12.4 million hectares total croplands nationwide and that it has in fact made easier the “conversion” or reclassification of agricultural land beyond the scope of land reform. The process of providing documentary requirements for land-use conversion has been shortened from six months to just one month.

The KMP chairperson Danilo Ramos asserts that the Duterte regime has not and cannot make any dent on the land concentration in the hands of the few landlords and corporations. He points that with its wanton killing, terrorism, and red-tagging against farmers and land reform advocates, the regime is undeniably anti-peasant and anti-land reform. He therefore calls for the end of the Duterte regime as soon as possible.

*7. What about the latest RA No. 11203 Rice Tariffication Law?*

JMS: RA No. 11203 Rice Tariffication Law liberalizes the importation, exportation and trading of rice, lifting for the purpose the quantitative import restriction on rice. It is used by the Duterte regime to favor the importation of rice from other countries at the expense of the local farmers. At the same time, the National Food Authority brings down its buying price of locally produced rice, which ensures the bankruptcy of the farmers.

These coordinated actions favor the domestic Chinese rice traders and importers like the Villars. Upon the bankruptcy of the farmers and even some traditional landlords, the big compradors like the Villars in cahoots with Duterte buy up the land. The Philippines has become the largest rice importer in the world and the Duterte regime has ruined the food sovereignty of the Filipino people.

*8. What was the impact of genetically modified rice, such as the so-called miracle rice since the time of Marcos, on the land problem and the need for agrarian reform? What is going to be the impact of the so-called golden rice?*

JMS: The so-called miracle rice ran counter to the promised land reform in favor of the tenants and aggravated the land problem. The costs of producing the miracle rice went so high that only the landlords and agri-corporations had the capital to produce them. The miracle rice variety was so genetically engineered as to need an extremely

large amount of agrichemicals from US agri-corporations and plenty of water requiring loans from the World Bank to build the irrigation dams.

The seeds and agri-chemicals (including fertilizers and pesticide) were under the control of the US agri-corporations and distributed by the same imperialist interests (Rockefeller Foundation, Monsanto and Syngenta) are involved in engineering and pushing the golden rice under the pretext of supplying more beta-carotene in the rice which upon ingestion becomes Vitamin A. But what frustrates land reform and aggravates the land problem is the further rise of production costs unaffordable to the tenants and poor peasants. The seeds, agrichemicals and loans for facilities are under the control of the US agri-corporations and big compradors.

The food sovereignty of the Filipino people is further prejudiced and damaged. And when the golden rice is planted, it contaminates and distorts the genes of the seeds of other rice varieties and other plants in the vicinity. While Vitamin A is provided supposedly to prevent eye diseases, it causes dryness of the eyes and causes blindness if people do not promptly get the proper eye drops and treatment.

*9. How do we go about a genuine agrarian reform program in order to arrest the previously dubious programs repeatedly ushered by the bourgeois Philippine state?*

JMS: At the beginning and for as long as necessary, depending on its strength, the revolutionary movement carries out its minimum land reform program of reducing the land rent, eliminating usury and controlling interest rates, raising the farm wages, improving prices of the agricultural product at the farm gate and promoting agricultural production and sideline occupations through rudimentary cooperation of peasant households.

When it is capable of confiscating the land from the landlords on a wide scale, the revolutionary movement carries out the maximum land reform program. It distributes the land equitably and at no cost to the landless peasant households, taking into account the quantity and quality of the land. Cooperation among the peasants is promoted to raise production, improve the irrigation system and other facilities and develop reasonable and fair relations with other sectors of society.

Even while the minimum land reform is being carried out in a certain area, it is possible for the revolutionary movement to take back the land from the landgrabbers by forcible means for the benefit of the indigenous people and the poor peasants. It is also possible to focus on certain despotic landlords and on certain agri-corporations and force them to abandon the land and leave it for the benefit of the poor peasants.

*10. Why should it necessitate a revolutionary mechanism? Is a revolution inevitable in order to achieve genuine assets reforms and genuine assets redistribution?*

JMS: Neither the minimum nor the maximum land reform program of the revolutionary movement is possible in any area of significant scale without the revolutionary party of the proletariat, the strong peasant organization and movement, the worker-peasant alliance, the people's army and its auxiliary forces, the various types of people's organizations and the local organs of political power that constitute the revolutionary government of the workers and peasants. All these revolutionary forces must be developed to realize agrarian revolution as the main content of the democratic revolution.

October 3, 2021

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*1. How do you define food security?*

JMS: Food security means producing and providing enough food (grains, vegetables, meat, fish, oils, salt, sugar and so on) to the people and keep them alive and in good health. The lack, grave scarcity or un-affordability of food, especially the staples (like rice and corn), can be the cause of mass hunger, inflation and social unrest. Thus, food security is a nuanced expression for guaranteeing food self-sufficiency and social stability. The expression, food sovereignty, is also used to stress the nuance that a nation-state has the fundamental right to maintain its integrity, stability and independence by assuring the people with enough food.

Food security is best understood in terms of the threats to food production in the Philippines. The threats include the exploitation and oppression that feudal and semifeudal relations impose on the peasant masses and farm-workers, the absence of genuine land reform and national industrialization, the rising costs of production, bureaucratic corruption, military overspending, import liberalization and dumping of foreign agricultural surpluses, expansion of real estate development, land-grabbing by agri-corporations, expansion of mining, logging and monocrop plantations, the poisoning of the streams by chemicals used in mining and agriculture, soil erosion, more frequent and more severe typhoons, floods and drought due to climate warming and the rapid increase of population and the reserve army of labor (the unemployed).

The Philippines is endowed with plenty of fertile soil, forests and rivers and be easily self-sufficient in food. Moreover, it can produce a large amount of agricultural surplus as a major component of capital accumulation in the classic development of industrial capitalist development. But the neoliberal policy makers ridicule food sovereignty and food self-sufficiency as autarky and in the "free trade" insist on subordinating Philippine agricultural policy and agriculture to the imperialist agri-corporations and banks and to the global supply chains that they control and generate in their favor and at the expense of client-states. They misinterpret food security as something that they decide and from which they can extract superprofits as they please.

*2. What is your assessment of the situation of the sector considered as a country's providers of such food as: rice, corn, and other staples, meat (pork, chicken, beef), eggs, milk, cooking oil, salt, sugar, vegetables, spices and others. Please cite recent concerns.*

JMS: We are a country that is agrarian, pre-industrial and semifeudal and still have a relatively high proportion of agricultural land (124,400 square kilometers) in relation to the current population of 111 million that allows food self-sufficiency for the people as well as the export of certain agricultural products, even as the agricultural land for food self-sufficiency has been historically subjected to decrease by the expansion of land for the production of export crops (sugar, pineapple, bananas, palm and the like) and the deleterious consequences of logging, mines and monocrop plantations in terms of spreading poisonous chemicals, soil erosion and aggravation of typhoons, floods and droughts due to global warming. These are continuing concerns.

But in recent times, especially under the plundering Duterte regime, the peasant masses that produce the food staples are subjected to the following: lack of genuine land reform, high land rent and usurious interest rates, ever rising costs of production (seeds, irrigation fees and agrichemicals), lack of economic and technical assistance to the food producers, manipulation of prices of the food staples and other products and import liberalization of agricultural products which result in undue competition from cheaper imports. The most scandalous development in the relationship of the bureaucrats and merchants at the expense of the peasant masses and farm-workers has arisen during the Duterte regime.

The National Food Authority lowers its buying price, narrows its role to buying only for minimal buffer stocking and allows the merchants to smuggle in the staples to bring down the price of the locally produced staples. It is now targeted for privatization after agreeing to the so-called rice Tariffication, which liberalizes the importation of rice. The bureaucrat-merchant combine allows the merchants to buy cheap the locally produced staples at the growing expense of the peasants from one harvest season to another. Both bureaucrats and merchant syndicates rake in profits from both smuggling in the food staples at the same time buying dirt cheap from the peasant during the harvest season. The net result is the Philippines has become one of the world's top rice importers, importing more than 2 million tons of rice this year and next year. The merchants also make profits with the merry go-round of smuggling out and smuggling in sugar.

In the case of the major export crops and crops for local manufacturing of oils and spices, production is conducted by foreign and domestic agri-corporations by providing sub-human wages to seasonal farmworkers who come mainly from poor peasant families. They are organized as labor gangs under labor contractors or under "workers cooperatives". Even the middle and rich peasants are inveigled to enter into growers agreements whereby they lose their land though the manipulated prices of inputs and products. The big agri-corporations overstate their costs of production and understate the value of the exported products in order to lower their tax liabilities and collect full extent of profits abroad.

### *3. What do you consider as measures of food security?*

JMS: There are possible measures to ensure food security. They are the opposite of the policies and measures that have been adopted by one reactionary regime after another to the detriment of food security and the peasant masses and farmworkers. There must be an authority to ensure regularity of jobs and living wages, build up stocks of staples to assure the people that they have enough nutritious and healthy food and that they are secure from malnutrition, food scarcity and famine; make up for crop failures and shortfalls within calculable scales and periods of time; to guarantee the continuous availability of the staples, satisfactory and fair incomes for the producers and stable prices of the staples; to ensure the availability of feeds for the livestock and certain agricultural products as raw materials for the food, alcohol, tobacco, drug and bio-ethanol manufacturers

### *4. How do you assess the accessibility of food for the Filipino people?*

JMS: We still have more than enough agricultural land and a super-abundance of peasants, farmworkers and fisherfolk. They can produce more than enough food staples and export crops, other agricultural products and fish catch inland and on the sea coast. Maritime fishing is now seriously threatened by China's violation of Philippine sovereign and maritime rights in the West Philippine Sea. I have already cited the many long-running problems that undermine and hamper food production and that can ultimately lead to much graver food scarcity and famine.

There is the problem of food accessibility to the broad masses of the people because of the worsening economic crisis, the rising unemployment, the falling incomes, inflation and mass poverty. The economic policy of the reactionary government has been contrary to genuine land reform and to the production of a growing agricultural surplus for the improvement of the lives of the peasants and farmworkers and for the national industrialization of the Philippines. The big compradors, landlords and corrupt bureaucrats have long preyed upon the peasants and workers by manipulating the trading of agricultural products for domestic consumption. And the foreign agri-corporations and the big comprador-landlords stash away their profits from export crops in foreign banks and use their accumulated capital to import manufactures from abroad.

In recent decades, biotechnology and WTO-GATT provisions have become weaponized by the giant imperialist monopolies to further tighten their control of Philippine agriculture and food systems, yet their initiatives have been allowed or even welcomed by succeeding regimes from Aquino to Duterte and their technocrats. Genetically modified crops such as the Golden Rice and Bt-Corn have been touted for their supposed benefits, yet many peasant groups and progressive scientists have exposed and opposed the many adverse impacts of GM varieties on local agro-ecosystems and people's health.

The Duterte years (2016 up to the present) have been particularly terrible for the Filipino people in terms of food security because of so many major programs and policies that further prioritized tourism, real estate development and infrastructure (which are both land-greedy) instead of food production; encouraged big corporate agribusiness that kill off or assimilate small farms; and wreaked havoc on local agriculture and related branches of food production. We only need to mention three obvious examples of this:

First, Duterte's knee-jerk response to the spread of Covid-19 within the country from March 2020 onward was to impose first a Luzon-wide, then a nationwide full lockdown, which it then prolonged and only very gradually loosened up in recent months. In the guise of stopping the spread of the virus, it immobilized the people's daily routines, including much of trade and transport. It set up checkpoints everywhere, made arbitrary requirements for freight trucks to proceed, and literally strangled the flow of farm produce to a mere trickle for many months — leaving so many truckloads of cash crops rotting in the villages, warehouses and by the roadsides, bankrupting so many farmers and small traders, and jacking up most food prices in urban markets. Even now, more than a year later, farm villages and small traders are only beginning to recover some of their losses when they get hit again by new waves of strict lockdown measures. Meanwhile, urban markets are swamped with cheap imported vegetables and fruits from China and elsewhere.

Second, Duterte's technocrats (following the same path as past regimes which supported neoliberal policies from Aquino and Ramos onward) have been allowing the big foreign corporate farm and food interests to weaponize animal epidemics. In recent outbreaks of the avian flu and African swine fever, for example, the regime resorted to harsh over-culling and other restrictions with only minimal support for the affected poultry and hog farmers. The result is that hog and poultry prices have shot up, while the country's poultry and livestock industry has become mortally weakened. Eventually, the aim is to destroy much of the peasant-based or small-scale capitalist character of the local livestock industry and replace it with huge food imports (in certain product lines), and by big foreign-owned corporate farms which tightly control local production through contract-growing agreements (in other product lines).

And third, the Duterte regime has signed into law the Rice Tariffication Act (R.A. 11203) in 2019, which is proving disastrous for many agricultural livelihoods because it encourages the importation of cheap rice from other countries and the pressing down of locally produced rice. Philippine Statistics Authority data show that palay farmgate prices dropped from PhP23 per kilo in September 2018 to a mere PhP15.50 in October 2019. On the ground, palay prices have further dropped to PhP10.00 or less — and these were registered even before the farmer-killing lockdowns from early 2020 onwards. At the same time, the NFA's capacity to buy at cost from local farmers has been much weakened, NFA rice is now being sold at around PhP40 per kilo, from its former PhP27 per kilo.

The Duterte regime has been most abusive in widening the budgetary deficit through bureaucratic corruption, military overspending and overpriced infrastructure projects and has increased the local public debt. It has also widened the trade deficits by importing finished manufactures, especially luxury and military goods, far beyond the value of the exported agricultural and mineral products. The income of the overseas Filipino workers and the growing foreign debt have been wasted by the Duterte regime.

The demand for overseas Filipino workers and their income are now decreasing because of the global economic depression. Duterte and his neoliberal advisers headed by his finance secretary Carlos Dominguez are utterly stupid and short-sighted. They have had the illusion that they can resort to domestic and foreign borrowing without end and without adverse consequences to the economy. When he became president in 2016, the total Philippine public debt was only PhP5.9 trillion. Now, it is already PhP11.6 trillion and is expected to rise beyond PhP13 trillion in 2022. This is a huge bubble that is already in the process of bursting to the detriment of the people.

*5. Can you provide context on what is truly a "good food"? On the other hand what are nutritious or healthy food?*

JMS: What I consider good food is what I enjoy eating in the proper proportions of rice, fish and/or meat, vegetables and fruit for dessert. Progressive agro-ecology networks recommend organically or naturally grown food, locally produced and available food, and produced under conditions of fair labor practices. I also agree with the

professional nutritionists in the Food and Nutrition Research Institute and National Nutrition Council of the Philippines which have issued since 2012 the following Nutritional Guidelines:

- 1) Eat a variety of foods every day to get the nutrients needed by the body.
- 2) Breastfeed infants exclusively from birth up to 6 months, then give appropriate complementary foods while continuing breastfeeding for 2 years and beyond for optimum growth and development.
- 3) Eat more vegetables and fruits every day to get the essential vitamins, minerals and fiber for regulation of body processes.
- 4) Consume fish, lean meat, poultry, eggs, dried beans or nuts daily for growth and repair of body tissues.
- 5) Consume milk, milk products and other calcium-rich foods, such as small fish and shellfish, every day for healthy bones and teeth.
- 6) Consume safe foods and water to prevent diarrhea and other food and water-borne diseases.
- 7) Use iodized salt to prevent iodine deficiency disorders.
- 8) Limit intake of salty, fried, fatty and sugar-rich foods to prevent cardiovascular diseases.
- 9) Attain normal body weight through proper diet and moderate physical activity to maintain good health and help prevent obesity.
- 10) Be physically active, make healthy food choices, manage stress, avoid alcoholic beverages and do not smoke to help prevent lifestyle-related non-communicable diseases.

*6. As the Philippines has been heavily import oriented and export dependent, in this setup the food supply from our food sector may not be sufficient to provide for the whole population of Filipino people and always at risk. In waging the democratic revolution, what are the urgent and long term plans to ensure healthy and accessible food supply?*

JMS: The Philippines is still a mainly agrarian country, with the peasant masses constituting at least 60 per cent of the population and with the agricultural land of 124,400 hectares still more than sufficient to provide food to 111 million people, raw materials for local manufacturing and export crop to earn foreign exchange. The level of technology in agricultural production is still low, especially in extensive areas where the carabaos are used as work animals and feudal relations still persist. Even in the modern plantations, there is widespread use of seasonal farmworkers who bring their own hand tools. They are extremely low-paid and treated as beasts of burden.

In the past 40 years, there has been a gradual expansion in the use of small-scale machinery for certain steps in palay production: e.g., hand tractors (Kuliglig, Kubota) in lieu of carabaos; power threshers, and so on. Agri-chemicals have also replaced manual weeding to some extent in the major rice-producing regions. But these machines and chemicals are imported. The most critical steps such as planting and harvesting are still labor-intensive. Even in high-value cash crops such as temperate vegetables grown on mountain slopes, or in poultry and livestock farms and aqua-farms, daily farm work is still dominantly labor-intensive, requiring mobile gangs of seasonal farmworkers using the simplest farm implements. The majority of them, in a fundamental sense, are still part of the peasantry.

Even as it still has generally a low level of technology in terms of using tractors and other machines, irrigation systems, fertilizers and pesticides, Philippine agriculture is capable of producing enough staples for domestic consumption and a significant amount of surplus which has been appropriated by the landlords, big compradors and the foreign and domestic agri-corporations.

The main content of the people's democratic revolution is agrarian revolution. This is ultimately taking away the land from the big landlords and compradors and distributing the land free to the peasants who proceed to develop their cooperatives from one stage to a higher one on the widening scales of the municipality, district and province. Without the exploitative exactions of the landlords and merchants, the peasant masses can raise the



technological level of agricultural production, raise their standard of living and produce a growing amount of surplus for capital accumulation and industrial development.

The strategic objective of the new-democratic revolution is to enable the completion of agrarian revolution and link this with national industrialization and basic socialization of the economy. The working class has a decisive role, through the proletarian-led state, in taking over the commanding heights of the national economy; and in ensuring that industrial development also directly benefits agricultural cooperation through mechanization, establishment of machine tractor stations and provision of consumer and various producer goods. The cooperatives are required to deliver grain quotas to the state but receive payments to raise the standard of living. Agricultural and industrial production are given the highest priority in centralized economic planning, investment and financing that mutually benefit the workers and peasants. The worker-peasant alliance is maintained and further developed from five-year economic plan in the socialist construction.

*7. Is this condition available in the country? Are there any examples from other countries or communities that we can adopt in our country?*

JMS: At the moment, the revolutionary movement has been capable mainly of carrying out the minimum land reform program of rent reduction, elimination of usury, raising farm wages, improving prices of products at the farm gate and raising production in agriculture and sideline occupations. In certain areas in certain periods, the guerrilla fronts have carried out projects of confiscating land from the landlords and taking it back from land-grabbers and promoting rudimentary agricultural cooperation among the peasants and among the Red fighters assigned to agricultural production for the people's army.

Even at the stage of the strategic defensive, within and adjacent to guerrilla fronts, some small and medium-scale enterprises can already cooperate with the people's democratic government and peasant associations to produce good-quality food products, which could enter the wider rural and urban markets and could supply guerrilla units as well. A few examples might be processed and packaged foods and materials derived from native rice and corn varieties, coconut (e.g. Virgin Coconut Oil), muscovado, confectioneries, dried fruits and nuts, medicinal herbs and drinks, and so on. These enterprises could also be encouraged to engage as well in repair, reconditioning and re-purposing of industrial and automotive machinery already available in small towns and rural areas for the use of peasant and fisherfolk associations and other producers' cooperatives in food production and food processing.

Total victory in the people's democratic revolution is needed to complete the agrarian revolution and develop the agricultural cooperatives as well as rural industries to advance socialism. The classic examples of agrarian revolution were those of the Soviet Union in which agricultural collectivization and mechanization were achieved under the leadership of Stalin and of China in which agricultural cooperation led to the establishment of communes and rural industries. In the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Cuba, Vietnam and a number of East European countries, agrarian revolution and agricultural cooperation and mechanization were also carried out.

*8. What could you suggest as a response to the gaps in food security in the country?*

JMS: We need to take the following steps as response to the gaps and vulnerabilities in food security:

- 1) Remove the brutal and corrupt Duterte regime from power and stop it from using public funds to import rice and other food products that we ourselves can produce and thereby raise the prices of staples and other farm products that our peasants produce.
- 2) Repeal the retrogressive laws enacted in recent decades that further opened the country to unrestricted food importation and weakened local agriculture and peasant livelihoods, e.g., Rice Tariffication Law or R.A. 11203.
- 3) Use public funds to rebuild the buffer stocks, promote local agriculture, give the decent income and economic assistance that the peasants and farmworkers need, stabilize the price of their agricultural products and make these accessible to the broad masses of the people.
- 4) Allow the people to get back their jobs and means of livelihood which have been taken away from them by the

excessive restrictions imposed by the Duterte regime and raise the employment and incomes of the entire people so that they can buy the products of the peasants.

5) Stop the military campaigns of the reactionary armed forces which disrupt and even destroy agricultural production and the peaceful life of the peasant masses. Put to work in agricultural production the soldiers of the reactionary armed forces in their own military camps.

6) Resume the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations and accelerate the making of the Comprehensive Agreement on Social and Economic Reforms (CASER).

7) Implement the CASER provisions for agrarian reform and rural development and national industrialization and economic development.

8) Proceed to make the Comprehensive Agreement on Political and Constitutional Reforms.

9) End the armed conflict and realize the just and lasting peace.

10) Implement an independent foreign policy in order to raise resources for development and building the peace.

# ***On Agrarian Revolution and National Industrialization***

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**Questions from Paaralang Jose Maria Sison**

**October 10, 2021**

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## ***1. WHY IS THE DEMAND for land reform bourgeois-democratic?***

JMS: The principal content of the bourgeois democratic revolution is genuine land reform or agrarian revolution. This would fully defeat the feudal system of ownership and this is the key in the advance of industrial capitalism during the period where the ruling class is the bourgeoisie.

But in the period of imperialism and world proletarian revolution, the proletariat could lead the new bourgeois-democratic revolution, complete the seizure of power, thoroughly complete agrarian revolution and cooperativization as part of the socialist revolution.

## ***2. What are good examples of agrarian revolution of other countries? (Can you focus on the experience of the Soviet Union and China?)***

JMS: In the Soviet Union, even during the time of “war communism” or rationing and the New Economic Policy, lands owned by landlords were confiscated and distributed among the poor peasants while private ownership of land by small, middle and rich peasants was still allowed. When the New Economic Policy ended, Stalin started in 1927, the thorough-going construction of socialist industry accompanied by collectivization and the mechanization of agriculture where private ownership of land was completely dissolved.

In China, during the time of recovery and rehabilitation of the economy from 1949 to 1952, the complete implementation of land reform was undertaken especially in areas that were not reached before 1949. During the period of basic socialization of the whole economy, there was synchronization in the completion of the first and second agricultural cooperativization. By 1958, the construction of agricultural communes and China’s intensive industrialization were combined with what was called “walking on two legs” under the Great Leap Forward policy.

## ***National industrialization***

## ***3. What is national industrialization and why is it important?***

JMS: It is the building of heavy and light industries based on a country’s own resources and efforts. It is linked to genuine land reform that would lead the way to a higher level of economy and standard of living for the peasants, enough food for the people and raw materials for light industries and manufacture of consumer goods and means of production.

If we follow the example of China, the principal factor of socialist economy is agriculture while heavy industry is the leading factor (e.g., production of steel and machine tools). In between, serving as the bridge, is the light industry producing consumer goods and producer goods used by the people in their homes, farms and small enterprises. Although the people are primarily self-reliant, the economy is open to foreign trade and cooperation with other countries.

## ***4. In your opinion, does the national bourgeoisie have the material number and strength? If it still has, in what sector of the industry are these concentrated?***

JMS: The national bourgeoisie shrank and weakened because its products made from local raw materials decreased and weakened due to the influx of products from the US, Japan, tigers of East Asia and China, in particular. There are a few manufacturers of food, beverages, drugs, furniture and different household and kitchen wares, clothing, shoes, and manufacture of construction materials, spare parts, motor casings, etc. The national

bourgeoisie in the Philippines has not reached production of basic metals and chemicals, and machine tools for production.

The imperialists deliberately favor the role of the big comprador bourgeois and prevented national industrialization and diminish the national bourgeois, especially under the policy of neoliberal globalization. Therefore, it is easier for the imperialists to extract raw materials from the Philippines and amass bigger profits from the imports of manufactures. The imperialists and their cohorts have even stated that non-industrialization is a comparative advantage for the Philippines.

*5. What will be the role of the national bourgeoisie in the country's industrialization?*

JMS: The aspiration of the national bourgeoisie for the Philippines to industrialize could be promoted, and their experience and equipment could be used as foundation and part of national industrialization. Its use is great if we think of how China was able to build watch factories because it organized the watch repairers as industrial cooperatives during the 1950s.

*6. How will the workers relate to the national bourgeoisie in the period of national industrialization during socialism?*

JMS: The workers shall treat the national bourgeoisie as allies and shall respect their patriotic compliance with socialist policies of the state and cooperation along the line of national industrialization. Their investment in state-private corporations shall be given dividends. After sometime, they could also be given fair interest payments. It is better to have them invest in state-private corporations than for them to bring out of the country their capital and capabilities.

*7. In the context where the national bourgeoisie is given concessions during socialist construction, does exploitation or extraction of surplus value exist under socialism? Would the workers' working hours be shortened?*

JMS: The concessions given to the national bourgeoisie are temporary. The payment of dividends or interest on private capital of capitalists is still profit-taking but these are not as big and as bad as the superprofits of monopoly capitalism of the imperialists and big compradors. In China, the earnings of the enterprises from dividends paid to the national bourgeoisie reached 25 percent of the income of the enterprises, before these were decreased in the form of annual interest payments similar to the annual interest on bank deposits.

*8. How will the state treat the national bourgeoisie during socialism?*

JMS: A period must be set to end concessions to the national bourgeoisie once the public and socialist ownership of the means of production has been completed. If allowed to continue, revisionism could arise. In China, this was apparent when revisionists like Liu, Deng, Peng Dehuai and Chen Yun opposed the policy of the Great Leap Forward to pay interest instead of dividends to the national bourgeoisie.

*9. In what industries or fields of the economy will the national bourgeoisie be allowed? And where will they be limited?*

JMS: It depends on the situation, what are their means of production, where would their capital and capability be needed, there is where they would be allowed to participate through state-private corporations. This is the way for the socialist state to secure and make use of the capital and experience of the national bourgeoisie. But their private capital is subordinate to state capital and they agree with the leadership of the cadres of the Communist Party. The Communist Party must set limits on the concessions to the national bourgeoisie at every period.

*10. How long will the national bourgeoisie be allowed to do business during socialism? What are the factors to be set to end their entrepreneurship?*

JMS: The national bourgeoisie is no longer needed during the period, for example, of the Great Leap Forward in China and during the all-out socialist industrialization such as in the Soviet Union at the start of 1927. But the rights of the national bourgeoisie to live decently on their personal savings and wages or pensions shall continue.

*11. How can we fight the sabotage of the new economy by imperialism and its agents?*

JMS: Since the proletariat holds state power, it will be able to quell any aggression and subversion by the imperialists and their agents. The socialist state will use its power to ensure internal order and self-defense against aggression. This state will pursue a foreign policy of solidarity and cooperation with socialist, anti-imperialist and other countries willing to have diplomatic and economic relations.

*12. Is the development of a section of the industry for national defense needed in the new economy? If yes, what are the specifics that must be developed for research and development?*

JMS: The basic and heavy industries leading the socialist economy are also basis for the production of weapons for national defense. The production of weapons for the self-defense of the masses is not expensive. Weapons for self-defense and mass mobilization thus far more less costly than the imperialist countries' expense on military equipment for aggression. The objective of self-defense and economic development is synchronized with the production of the means of transport on land, sea and air.

Special attention is given to scientific and technical research for developing weapons for self-defense. If the country is not yet capable of producing the most advance military airplanes, it should excel in the production of weapons capable of bringing down imperialist planes use for aggression. As the socialist economy develops, for sure, the capacity to produce weapons for self-defense will also develop.

*13. What will be the role of scientists, technologists and educational institutions in ensuring the two-sided development of the economy, both in agriculture and industry?*

JMS: The scientists, technologists and educational institutions could freely apply their knowledge in ensuring the two-sided development of agriculture and industry. This is made sure in every 5-year plan and that there is flexibility to make adjustments on the current and future plans.

### ***International***

*14. Would foreign investment or debt also have a role? If yes, how do we make sure it would be beneficial and not one-sided like, for example, in the Soviet Union or China?*

JMS: It must be ensured that the decision in the construction and development of the socialist economy is in the hands of the proletarian class and socialist state. If we study the experience of the Soviet Union and China while they were socialists, they developed their economies when they refused the foreign monopoly capitalists to make direct investments and own companies inside the socialist country.

The socialist countries could borrow from other countries and international banks to buy producer and consumer goods from other countries. The debt could be paid through the increased income as the socialist economy develops.

*15. How do we relate with foreign financial institutions such as the IMF-WB upon the seizure of power? What will happen to the country's debt?*

JMS: There must be debt cancellation since foreign loans have worsened the underdevelopment and the plunder of the country's resources. Imperialist companies in the Philippines must also be nationalized. Imperialist states, corporations and banks will surely impose embargoes and sanctions.

We can cooperate with socialist countries and anti-imperialist countries on the bilateral and multilateral basis. Once the Philippine revolution wins, we can count on the anti-imperialist and socialist countries and the resurgence of world proletarian revolution. This is manifested by the rapid worsening of the crisis of the world capitalist system and growing strength of the anti-imperialist and democratic mass struggles.

*16. What are the similarities and differences in the experience on land reform in Russia, China and Vietnam if one talks about the following factors: 1) Length of time; 2) Issue of private and state ownership of land 3) Size of the land awarded; 4) Factors for cooperation/collectivization?*

JMS: The length of time in the implementation of the stages of land reform in the experience of Soviets, Chinese and Vietnamese are diverse. But in general, this is implemented within a period of 10 years from the confiscation of land from the landlords and the free distribution of land to the poor peasants up to the highest level of cooperation or commune as in the case of China.

As the cooperatives develop, the income of the members increases based on their contribution in the form of land and labor. The cooperatives acquire funds and the funds increase. The member could sell his/her land to the cooperative when he transfers residence or get employment elsewhere and is unable to pass on his membership in the cooperative to his closest relative. Private property could be dissolved through mechanization of the collective or cooperative and the transfer of members to industry.

The basis of confiscated land distribution is the household or family. An average size from the total land in a municipality will be awarded to every family and with consideration to the equal quantity and quality of the land to be distributed. The whole cooperative can lay claim to the orchards, fishpond, rice mill, and other machineries and general facilities. It has its own property and source of funds.

Basically, land reform or agrarian revolution has been completed once the ownership of land has been transferred from the landlords to the poor peasants. The development of cooperation means the expansion of the scope, creation of capital construction (improvement of irrigation, roads, etc.), increase of mechanization, building of some rural industries, phasing out of the private ownership of land and reaching the highest level of cooperation and production.

*17. There are ideal models on the issue of industry and agriculture in the history of China. Can you tell us their economic and management breakthroughs and what are the lessons to be learned from these?*

JMS: The Constitution of Anshan shows how to combine the cadres of the Party, workers' representatives and technical experts in the leadership, politics and production. The example of Tachai shows how to run an agricultural commune even under difficult conditions of a mountainous area. The example of Taching shows how the workers in the pioneer oil production implemented revolutionary politics and production in the solution of problems.

*18. What are the similarities and differences in the industrialization of the Soviet Union, China and even Vietnam. How many years before they achieved industrialization?*

JMS: After the seizure of state power by the proletariat and holding it for about 10 years, Stalin started, in 1927, to thoroughly build the socialist industry and collectivization of agriculture. The Soviet Union had an advantage with its industrial enclave in the former society but there was difficulty in being the historical pioneer in building a socialist economy.

In China, after nine years from liberation in 1949, the Great Leap Forward was set in motion to build socialist industry and agricultural communes in earnest and in a big way. Stalin earlier supported the socialist economic plan of China but since 1956 the revisionist regime of Khrushchov became an obstacle. It stopped supporting the industrialization of China and destroyed the blueprints of hundreds of projects.

In Vietnam on the other hand, the building of a socialist economy went through relations with the Soviet revisionists and later on with the Chinese revisionists and the courtship of the imperialists. There was reluctance in some aspects. But it still has a strong stance on national independence and socialism.

*19. Why did the destruction of the people's commune and autonomy of the industries become economic factors in the capitalist restoration in China? What does this have in common with what happened in the revisionist Soviet Union?*

JMS: Capitalism will return the moment the power of the proletariat is lost and the public ownership of the industries and the communes is subjected to the hire-and-fire power of bureaucrats, increase their privileges and eventually adopt the privatization of the assets. This, in essence, is what happened in the Soviet Union and China even though the methods of privatization and dissolution of socialism may vary in certain respects. Under Deng

Xiaoping, the dissolution of socialism in China was faster than in the Soviet Union.

20. *What did Mao want to emphasize in “taking agriculture as foundation and industry as the leading factor” or “walking on two legs”?*

JMS: The economy is unstable and troubles could easily emerge when the masses do not have enough food because there is no solid foundation in agriculture. In addition, agriculture produces raw materials for light industry and also creates the surplus for the accumulation of capital. Heavy industry is the leading factor because it ensures the development of industry in the production of basic metals and machine tools. It is the decisive factor in the industrialization of the whole economy.

21. *What will happen if the state, under the leadership of the working class, does not hold the key and strategic industries in the economy?*

JMS: If the working class does not hold the state power, socialism cannot happen. Capitalism will prevail. The state of the bourgeoisie must be replaced by the state of the proletariat through revolution in order to build socialism.

22. *What will happen to the different lending institutions (from banks, big to small such as micro lending)? Will they be allowed to exist?*

JMS: Chicken feed lending of non-governmental organizations and capitalist banks are not needed. Every economic plan must allocate resources and funds for the development of every sector of the economy, for the fast advance of backward parts of the economy and aiding victims of disasters or catastrophes.

23. *What will be the form of trade under socialism? What will be the priority, will export or import be allowed or disallowed? What will happen to “customs”?*

JMS: There will be domestic trade due to the differences in the class and quantity of the products from different parts of the country. Foreign trade is also needed to earn from the surplus product of the country and to buy materials needed by the country from outside. Customs still has an important use. The corrupt bureaucrats of the current ruling class will have to be removed.

24. *Why is it important to ensure the leadership of the working class over the state for the all-sided development of the economy upon the seizure of political power?*

JMS: The proletariat is the only class that could lead the building of socialism because it is the most progressive class in politics and production. For the first time in the history of humankind, the working class has emerged fully as a class capable of emancipating itself and other exploited classes and capable of building socialism and governing in all aspects of society.

25. *What can you say about the economy at present of Cuba, North Korea, Laos, Nepal, Venezuela and Bolivia if you use the barometer of genuine land reform and industrialization?*

JMS: The DPRK, Cuba, Vietnam and Laos are relatively more advance on the path of socialism. Social-democratic regimes govern Venezuela and Bolivia have adopted social welfare measures. In Nepal, the former leadership of Prachanda has become revisionist.

26. *Specific to Cuba, notwithstanding the long US embargo, why was it able to achieve breakthroughs in biotechnology if you consider that it is capital and technology intensive?*

JMS: Their overcoming the imperialist embargo and achieving breakthroughs in biotechnology prove that the Communist Party of Cuba and the Cuban masses are firmly patriotic and socialist.

### **Additional questions**

27. *As a Third World Country, what is the role and what are the benefits of relating with UN, ASEAN and having other*

*international economic relations? Do we gain from this?*

JMS: While the Philippines is not yet socialist, the Philippine reactionary state is dominated by US imperialism directly and contained within the framework of the ASEAN and other international economic relations. Once the Philippine state becomes socialist, it will be in an independent and a stronger position to assert its rights. It is good to participate in the aforementioned international organizations to avoid isolation, gain knowledge of their situation and make friends of those who could be friends and prevent attacks on the Philippines by the imperialists and their puppet states.

*28. What will be the role of the OFWs in a socialist society? What must be done to encourage them to go home to their own country? Is dual citizenship possible?*

JMS: Even before the Philippines become independent and socialist, we must explain to the overseas Filipinos that their support is needed in liberating the motherland and building socialism. Majority of the OFWs were forced to leave the country and be separated from their families and friends because they could not get jobs in the Philippines. Overseas Filipinos may acquire dual citizenship but they will always cherish and wish to help their fellow Filipinos and motherland.

*29. The US dollar is currently the currency used in world trade. In a socialist state, what is the use of the US dollar?*

JMS: The US dollar is now weakening due to US huge public debt. Whatever is the standing of the US dollar, once the Philippines becomes socialist, it will sell its surplus products to a wider range of other countries to earn whatever currencies they use to purchase their exports.

*30. Why should the urban petty bourgeoisie join in asserting national industrialization and genuine land reform? What is their role?*

JMS: The role of the urban petty bourgeoisie is important because it is where you find the most educated with high knowledge in social and natural sciences and technology. It is influential in our society and when encouraged to grasp Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and the policy of national industrialization and genuine land reform, their support for the toiling classes, revolution and socialism will be of great and decisive importance.



## ***Introduction to Kerima Tariman's Luisita***

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**November 12, 2021**

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IT IS MY HONOR AND privilege to introduce Kerima Tariman's collection of ten poems titled *Luisita*. These poems focus on the Hacienda Luisita massacre of November 16, 2004 that involved (according to official figures) the killing of seven farmworkers, the wounding of 121 adults and children and the arrest and detention of 133 farmworkers. The massacre occurred at the time of the presidency of Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, a long-time political ally of the Aquino-Cojuangco owners of Hacienda Luisita.

The United Luisita Workers Union (ULWU) and the Central Azucarera de Tarlac Labor Union (CATLU) launched a strike near Gate 1 of the Central Azucarera de Tarlac sugar mill on November 6, 2004. The unions demanded an increase in their subhuman daily wage and worker benefits, protested the absurd "stock distribution option" and demanded the implementation of land reform.

Thousands of unarmed farmworkers attended the militant but peaceful daily demonstrations of the strike. But ten days after the start of the strike, the Arroyo regime through Labor Secretary dispatched police and soldiers to attack and disperse the strike. The military utilized tear gas, water cannons, guns, trucks and tanks to carry out the massacre, the serious injury to the people and their arbitrary mass arrest and detention.

In 1957, Jose Cojuangco Sr., bought the Central Azucarera de Tarlac (CAT) and the 6,453-hectare Hacienda Luisita from the Spanish company Compania General de Tabacos de Filipinas (Tabacalera). The hacienda covers large portions of the agricultural lands of Tarlac City, La Paz and Concepcion, Tarlac.

Eventually, the CAT and hacienda were transferred to Cojuangco's Tarlac Development Corporation (TADCO). The rising Tarlac politician Benigno Aquino shifted from the Nacionalista Party to the Liberal Party to become a party mate of then President Diosdado Macapagal and obtain further Central Bank loans for the Cojuangco corporation to complete payments to the Tabacalera.

The terms of the loan agreement required that the portions of Hacienda Luisita not planted to sugar but to rice and other non-export crops amounting to 4915 hectares be subdivided and distributed to the farmers in accordance with the Agricultural Land Reform Code. But the Aquino-Cojuangco family resorted to various political and legal tricks to prevent the land distributions to the poor peasants and farmworkers occupying the land.

Consequent to the political rivalry among the oligarchs, between the fascist dictator Marcos and Benigno Aquino, Sr., the former tried from 1980 onwards to take over Hacienda Luisita on the pretext of land reform and redistributing the land to the farmworkers. But the Cojuangcos were still able to use the courts to prevent loss of their hacienda until the 1986 mass uprising occurred to overthrow Marcos.

During her presidency, Corazon Cojuangco-Aquino, pretended to be for a Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program but in fact she put into the 1987 Constitution such provisions as the principle of voluntary sale by landowner and the stock distribution option to offer the sale of stock shares to the impoverished peasants and farmworkers.

This maneuver set the stage for intensified struggle between the Hacienda Luisita owners and the farmworkers. To make the massacre happen, President Arroyo ordered the Department of Labor and Employment to take jurisdiction over the legal dispute over the ownership of most of Hacienda Luisita and deployed the military with lethal weapons, including tanks and trucks, to brutally break up the strike of the poor peasants and farmworkers.

Kerima Tariman's *Luisita* is one more major testament to her firm commitment as a revolutionary patriot and communist fighter in the service of the toiling masses, especially the poor peasants and farmworkers. For most of her adult life, Kerima (Ka Ella) was present and active in several areas of intense mass struggles as in Cagayan Valley, Tarlac and Negros island where she was martyred at the age of 42 on August 20, 2021, specifically in Barangay Kapitan Ramon, Silay City, Negros Occidental.

Her father Pablo Tariman, who is himself a creative writer and poet, describes *Luisita* as a documentary in poetry. Indeed, Kerima is a master of the poetic method of using the images of persons, things and incidents as emblems of great feeling and meaning and uttering words curtly to signal great passion and meaning in the struggle for social justice. She uses a wide range of literary devices and takes advantage of Filipino as a language that easily gives way to rhyme and rhythm.

In “Sakada”, Kerima presents the seasonal farmworker (sacada) in the context of the backward agrarian, pre-industrial and semi-feudal economy. The sacada comes from the poor peasant family, which is a large vestige of the persistent feudal system, and becomes the seasonal wage-earner in the hacienda.

In exchange for subhuman wages, he creates by his labor the surplus value that allows the big comprador-landlords like the Cojuangcos and Aquinos to enjoy a luxurious standard of living and rake in profits from the export-import trade and operation of banks. She uses the image of the sacada as the emblem of the worst of exploitation in a semi-feudal society.

In “Standard Army Tin”, Kerima skillfully uses the image of the metallic plate in the backpack of the farmworker Pong to signify how farmworkers take their meals on the run and to create the irony that such a humble plate of the poor can save his life by deflecting the fascist bullet away from his spine. She creates the further irony that while he has been wounded and saved from certain death Pong wakes up at the hospital only to faint upon sight of another farmworker dead and covered by blood.

In “Pulang-pulang Puso”(Red, Red Heart), which she dedicates to the family of the massacre victim Juancho Sanchez, Kerima recounts how he had so many comrades and friends visiting his family to express their condolences and ask for his photos as memento until the only photo left is his portrait framed by a very red heart. After so many years of no justice rendered to him by the reactionary state, the only thing of value left to the family is the portrait framed by a very red heart.

In fact during the presidency of Noynoy Aquino, the government committee investigating the Hacienda Luisita massacre blamed the victims despite the overwhelming evidence submitted against the military butchers. Also, Aquino vengefully caused the impeachment of the Supreme Court Chief Justice Renato Corona for the decision of his court to award 4,915 hectares to the farmworkers in 2012.

In “Tililing na Inhinyero (Crazy Engineer), Kerima creates the character of a retired repairman of the sugar milling machine of Tarlac Development Corp of Hacienda Luisita to voice out the fact that hundreds of farmworkers were arrested and handcuffed and that many of them were killed and cremated by the military butchers. The “crazy engineer” is depicted as having been conscience-stricken and eventually deranged. He keeps on crying out that not only seven were killed in the massacre but many more who were cremated in the sugar mill.

In “Kwento ng Kambing”(Goat’s Tale), Kerima also creates the young Luisa who can converse with the goats that tell her about the history of the owners of Hacienda Luisita: how their ancestors misappropriated the funds of the revolution and used these to buy up land in Paniqui, Tarlac, how they were able eventually to acquire Hacienda Luisita and kept it all the while in the time of President Cory Aquino up to the massacre. The goats advise her: “The chains of the tragedy must be broken! Stand up for the toiling masses! Chase after the greedy, selfish criminals! Rise up together, make history!”

In “Sagrado Corazon De Jesus”, Kerima presents Jesus Laza, with white t-shirt that turns Red because his chest has been shot. He denounces Corazon Aquino, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, the family of Imeldita and Lord Duts. There is no hope of Redemption if it depends on the clan of the Santa Santita Imeldita, the patron of Gloria or Lord Duts. And any monster in the Palace! Take hold of destiny! Rise up! Listen to the plea of Jesus in his last breath: Continue the struggle!

In “SDO”, Kerima refers to the stock distribution option that the Cojuangco-Aquino family has used to circumvent the land distribution to the farmers. By this SDO the lords and ladies of the Cojuangco-Aquino family have sentenced the peasants and farmworkers to the following: “Submit to our Design in distributing the land...” “Or else!”

“Pots, pots, pots with content will calm the grumbling stomach.” “Rah, rah, rah and rally cannot do anything!” “Trash the principles!” say the landlord and lady to the workers and farmworkers whom they call stupid and brainless and always saying yes.

In “Kanino Nagsimula ang Gulo,” (From Whom Did the Trouble Start) Kerima unfolds the graphic consequences of the unilateral brutal attack of the military on the striking farmworkers, like the dead and injured farmworkers, the barricade crushed by a tank, the spilled food of the strikers, the twisted bicycles, the scattered slippers without pairs and so on. She points out that the firemen targeted the farmworkers with dirty canal water, the police made baton charges and then soldiers fired at their victims. The massacre was followed by the mass arrests and further brutality.

The farmworkers got fascist attacks for exercising their democratic rights and for demanding better wages and improved working conditions and benefits, for protesting the crazy offer of the stock distribution option and demanding land reform. They were the victims. And they were attacked as provocateurs and the source of trouble by the Cojuangco corporation, the reactionary state, the paid hacks and state investigators. Kerima renders poetic justice in favor of the farmworkers. She tells the truth and in poetic terms that will last longer than the unjust ruling system.

In “Tarlak, Tarlak”, Kerima fills our vision with images of the landscape: boundless plains, scorched earth at the onset of the milling season when the sticky sweat and juice of the fine dust of sugar commingle. This is a time when the farmworkers can look at their feet as if these were their smart-looking cars. They are bored while the *kampilan* (cutlass) is passive and the *sundang* (bolo) is mute during the dead season and they ponder over perseverance in a journey and vow with the heat and cold, the milling season, rain and storm as witnesses never to stray from the movement.

In the final poem, “Ang mga Martir ng Hacienda Luisita” (The Martyrs of Hacienda Luisita), Kerima gives tribute to the martyrs Jhaivie Basilio, Jhune David, Jessie Valdez, Adriano Caballero, Jr., Juancho Sanchez, Jaime Fastidio and Jesus Laza. She gives the highest honor to them as heroes in the common struggle for their just cause. She shows their responsible and endearing qualities as individuals, She condemns the fascist butchers and their big comprador-landlord masters for their brutality in murdering them.

The martyrs and other victims in the Hacienda Luisita massacre have not suffered in vain. They are immortalized by the poems of Kerima Tariman who herself is immortalized by her own revolutionary work, poetry and martyrdom. Martyrs live forever because they always inspire the people to rise up and keep on fighting until the rotten ruling system is overthrown and justice is won for the oppressed and exploited people.

Long live the martyrs and heroes in the Hacienda Luisita massacre!

Long live the memory of Ka Kerima Tariman, their poet!

Long live the Filipino people in their struggle for national and social liberation!