

FILIPINO PEASANTS: CONTINUE THE REVOLUTIONARY TRADITION OF 1896 AND STRUGGLE FOR GENUINE FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY!!

THE basis for any genuine national independence from foreign domination is the fulfillment of land equity and basic industrial development. But our country has been consigned by Spanish colonialists, American imperialists and their local lackeys to remain a backward largely agricultural economy as it was four centuries ago. There is absolutely no reason why the people can celebrate nationhood with this state of affairs, especially today, June 12, which has been repeatedly exposed as the day one hundred years ago when bourgeois factionalists under Aguinaldo grabbed the credit of the revolution and glorified the surrender and engagement to a foreign power instead of independence.

We must always remember that only the critical mass of the landless peasantry who led more than 200 localized revolts gave the 1896 revolution its national form to defeat the combined military, economic and cultural domination of Spain. These reflect the democratic demand for land of the peasantry and closely linked with the aspiration of the entire Filipino people to free themselves from the dictates of foreign power. Hence, it is an anti-colonial and anti-feudal bourgeois democratic revolution.

The gains of three centuries of resistance were sadly reversed by the class betrayal of Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo who exemplifies subservience of the elite to US imperialism.

The massacre of 200,000 Filipino peasants and brutal hamletting of rural villages by American forces restored land monopolies of traditional landlords side by side with new seizures for cash crop plantations. Since then, peasants, fishers and farmworkers keep rising in pocket revolts to address the basic hunger for land and freedom.

This year, the incumbent US-Ramos regime, its successor and their comprador-landlord clients are splurging millions of pesos on pretentious pageantry and flag waving to celebrate one hundred years of foreign domination. These useless exercises, however, will fail to hide the fact

that the same fundamental problems of landlessness that prompted the oppressed majority to revolt still dominate the country, the problems that are many times worse, complicated and requiring revolutionary solutions. The main characters still fight the same conflicts in two cases that come to mind. In Tartaria, Silang, Cavite, the vast tracts of farms that the turncoat Emilio Aguinaldo expropriated while posing as chieftain of the revolution remain the estate of his descendants. The heirs arrogantly pursue this claim and for decades harassed and tried to evict the peasants who have made the lands productive. Last year, unknown assailants massacred a peasant leader and his family in this town, just as Bonifacio was treacherously eliminated.

Meanwhile, the lands left by the American occupation forces in Clark was sold off by Ramos to foreign corporations eager to pave millions more square feet of floor space for export processing zones, amusement parks and malls, at the expense of thousands of peasant settlers earlier displaced by the Pinatubo eruption.

These two are only notable examples of how comprador-landlords and the bureaucrat capitalists on their payroll systematically deny from the peasant class the right to land and life. In Batangas, Western Samar, Bukidnon, South Quezon, Central Mindanao and many other provinces, militant peasants fighting big business interests have become living examples that prove the total failure of the vaunted Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program and the success of land monopoly.

The peasant class still comprise 70%, a large majority, of the oppressed Filipino people and feudal agrarian relations are still the prevailing backward economic structure of the Philippines. Virtually the entire peasantry has no legal right to the land they till. The few who were awarded certificates are being cheated with cancellations by the treacherous top bosses in the Department of Agrarian Reform to allow landlords and foreign investors to convert farms into commercial estates.

The communal grounds of the fisherfolk-peasants have been further usurped by big capitalists and compradors with the new Fisheries Code of 1998, while in the uplands, national minorities who are also peasants are being divested of their ancestral domains through the Mining Act of 1995, the Indigenous People's Rights Act and the Integrated Protected Areas Law.

Being the majority confers upon the peasant class the inevitable duty to join the new revolutionary struggle for basic social changes that were left unsettled in the first national democratic revolution started by Andres Bonifacio in 1896.

The Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas is confident this program will arouse, organize and mobilize peasants to be part of this renewed national movement of achieving genuine land reform and national industrialization, the two basic pillars of national freedom.

A genuine agrarian reform will break land monopolies of the big landlords, compradors and foreign corporations and distribute these to the landless peasants. Farms will be mechanized to achieve self-sufficiency in raw material supplies for industries, food and clothing, while peasants and fisherfolk will be formed into cooperatives. The resulting strides in incomes and material well-being will unleash human labor for powering the basic integrated industries that makes things we truly need. Overall economic growth and progress will free the Philippines from being the unwilling dumping ground of the surpluses from imperialist countries. The peasants can only realize the unfinished revolution to its inevitable end by sustaining the basic alliance with urban workers, and making sure the leadership remains steadfast with the working class and not again be grabbed by the bourgeoisie.

Together with the masses of national minorities, youth, students, small traders and professionals, we reject as fiction the centennial of

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"independence" being spread by the government and call on the Filipino
people to carry on the unfinished revolution of 1896 and struggle for
genuine independence from imperialism, feudalism and beaurucat capitalism.