

Poems by Sison

The Guerrilla Is Like a Poet

*The guerrilla is like a poet
Keen to the rusle of leaves
The break of twigs
The ripples of the river
The smell of fire
And the ashes of departure.*

*The guerrilla is like a poet.
He has merged with the trees
The bushes and the rocks
Ambiguous but precise
Well-versed on the law of motion
And the master of myriad of images.*

*The guerrilla is like a poet.
Enrhymed with nature
The subtle rhythm of the greenery
The outer silence, the outer innocence
The steel tensile in-grace
That ensnares the enemy.*

*The guerrilla is like a poet.
He moves with the green brown multitude
In bush burning with red flowers
That crown and hearten all
Swarming the terrain as a flood
Marching at last against the stronghold.*

*And endless movement of strength
Behold the protracted theme:
The people's epic, the people's war.*

Prison Poetry

Rain and Sun on the Mountains

*When thunder and lightning are over,
Cold dark clouds seem to dissolve
The mountains into an ugly murk.
But behind the dismal sight,
Rain soaks the earth, floats detritus
And pours life into the creeks and rivers,
Amidst the howling of the winds,
The trees and bushes at the heights
Are in deepgoing nourishment.
So are the crops on the plains.*

*Then the sun breaks out of the gloom
To give warmth to the mountains,
To keep the roots of the woods
More firm on the ground.
The green splendor of all foliage
Shines and is celebrated
By the wild singing of the birds
And the happy antics of the beast.
In the cool breeze, the sunset shafts
The limpid thirst-quenching waters.*

*If there were only rain and storm,
The mountains would turn into mud.
If there were only sun and drought,
The mountains would turn into dust.
The sun is resplendent against the rain.
The rain is refreshing against the sun.
Grasping the long-term rhythm of the seasons,
Their testiness and cumulative grace,
The mountains maintain their majesty
And proclaim their mastery over calamity.*

5 July 1978

The Central Plains

*I love the green expanse of ricefields,
The sunlight that strikes it reveals
The myriads of golden beads.
I love the sturdy stand of the canefields,
The sunlight that strikes it reveals
The golden wands of sweetness,
The breeze sweeping the plains carries
The rhythm of toil of peasants and farm workers.
I love the clangor on the road and in shops
As workers make do with some machines.
I love the blue mountains yonder;
They evince hope to all the toilers.*

From a Burning Bush

*The voice of the people thunders forth
From a burning bush in the mountain,
Unite to overthrow the rule of terror
And the three gods of exploitation.*
The lightning tongue of the fiery bush
Crackles and carries the flames
Over the rolling hills and meadows
To the expectant valleys and plains.
More burning bushes rage and roar,
Boldly break out into fields of flames
And send up high flying scrolls
From the fields of stubble that blaze.
Lightnings smite the tower of idols.
The flying scrolls enter the apertures
And invite the flames from the stubble
To close in on the roots of the tower.*

15 July 1978

* feudalism, bureaucrat-capitalism, imperialism.

Against the Monster on the Land

*For centuries the monster on the land
Has gorged himself with flesh and blood.
Now he wields a brittle rusty sword
And still casts a spell with a cross.*

*We go with the children of wrath
And prepare a trap across his path
A net of vine holding a carpet of leaves
Covers the pit full of bamboo spears.*

*When he stumbles in the hungry hole
And raves and writhes among the poles,
He shall see the children of the soil
Casting upon him buckets of flaming oil.*

*The night shall flee from the flames.
These shall rage until the break of day
And merge with the glory of the sun.
The monster shall have been gone.*

*His sword shall break by a hammer blow
On a rock from which a sweet spring flows.
The fragments of the swords we shall gather
To fashion new things by the hammer.*

*The children of the soil shall be freed
Of yoke and terror in their country.
They shall stand against any monster
And win by wit and engulfing number.*

*The festival of the children of the soil
Is the festival of all children of toil.
We joyously sing and dance with them
As the ancient monster comes to an end.*

17 March 1978

In the Dark Depths

*The enemy wants to bury us
In the dark depths of prison
But shining gold is mined
From the dark depths of the earth
And the shining pearl is dived
From the dark depths of the sea.
We suffer but we endure
And draw up gold and pearl
From depths of character
Formed for so long in struggle.*

10 April 1978

The Coming of the Rain

*Gathered by the oppressive heat
Heavy clouds darken all beneath.
But thunder and lightning proclaim
A new season of growth in the rain.
The wide wind and deepening stream
Race from the mountain to bring
The message in a more intimate way,
The coming of the rain to the plains.
The trees raise their arms to the sky
And dance in a movement so spright.
The bushes raise and blend their voices
With the trees in song and laughter.
The wind sweeps away the fallen leaves
And fans the spark on the stubbly field.
The flames leap and whet the thirst
Of the earth so eager for the water thrusts.*

15 June 1978

(Untitled)

*I have walked mazes of pain
But I have not despaired
I know countless others have suffered my fate,
Others who have fought injustice and oppression;
And countless more shall
Until the rule of classes over the masses
Shall have been banished.*

*Did Prometheus who dared defy the gods
To give fire to the people
And was punished bound to a rock
Despair as he watched the vultures
Waiting to gorge on his flesh?*

*He could not have if he had the vision
That though the gods were powerful
He had given the people
In the future mastery of the fire
The knowledge and power
To banish the same gods
He had defied.*

*Would that my vision too
Give me the strength to live each day
Though fraught with pain in some serenity
For what is my pain
Compared to that of deprived millions!*

*Prometheus lives in every man
Who ever seeks great knowledge and freedom
The gods die and are forgotten.*

21 January 1978

(Untitled)

So you're kept shackled and chained!

My anger burns, burns, burns!

There is no fire as blue

Fueled as it is by my pain;

For I can shed no tear

To cool the flame.

I can laugh though

At the powers that be

Who prove themselves unworthy

Of their humanity.

They keep you in shackles and chains

But your word they cannot

And it shall be!

8 August 1978

In Praise of Martyrs

We praise to high heavens

And for all the time

The heroes who die

In the battlefields

In the hands of the enemy,

In the torture chamber

And against the wall.

In these bloody places,

The struggle is sharpest

And the meaning of one's life

Is tested in one crucial moment.

Courage to the last breath

Makes the martyr live beyond death.

9 December 1977

What Makes a Hero

*It's not the manner of death
That makes someone a hero.
It is the meaning drawn
From the struggles against the foe.*

*There is the hero who dies in the battlefield,
There is the hero who dies of hunger and diseases,
There is the hero who dies of some accident,
There is the hero who dies of old age.*

*Whatever is the manner of death,
There is a common denominator
A hero serves the people
To his very last breath.*

10 December 1977

A Furnace

*When it was December,
I compared my cell
By midnight to a freezer
And by midday to an oven.*

*Now that it is summer
I compare it to hell,
But because of its cuteness,
I also call it a furnace.*

*Tis a seething furnace
For tempering steel
And purifying gold,
Tis a comforting metaphor.*

15 March 1978

The Woman and the Strange Eagle

*The sea roars mightily around us,
Urging us to let a new life bud.
The woman on our boat is in travail,
Our vigorous rowing must be of avail,
We can ride on the giant waves.*

*Yet a strange eagle shuts out the sun.
Its talons of steel drip with blood;
Its wings stir the wind and darken the skies;
It has diamantine devouring eyes;
Shreds of flesh are in its razor bite.*

*But look, it has a wound of its own.
Hurry up, aim the sharpened arrow
And bend our strong narra bow.
We despise the eagle's accursed shadow
Cast on the woman and the boat.*

*We shall not drift in darkness.
We know our seas and islands well.
Our will is firm and we know the way.
We can prevail against this bird of prey.
As our neighbors have done in the fray.*

*The landward east wind is in our favor;
We cannot get lost in our labor.
Look at how the red sail is blown
And how the red lamp glows in gathering storm.
We shall surely reach our port.*

*The child of darkness and the tempest,
The child of this suffering woman,
Shall be born in a strong house
Well-lighted and firm in the ground.
Her pangs shall be her joy without bounds.*

*From the rockspring, we shall fetch
Water that is purest and sweetest
To bathe the child and slake the mother's thirst.
We shall give her honey and fruits
So her milk shall be rich and abundant.*

*In the brightness of day, we shall gather
The reddest of roses and all fragrant flowers
And fill the natal room with them.
It shall be a day we can never forget,
A joyous day of victory for all our kindred.*

5 March 1978

A Cool Breeze

*A cool breeze blows into prison
It refreshes the body and warms the soul.
It caresses, kisses and whispers,
"In prison, there is worthy struggle."
The breeze carries the scent of the red flowers,
It is part of the great irresistible wind
of struggle sweeping all the islands.
Everywhere the message is to fight and win.*

14 December 1977

Wisdom From a Comrade

*A Red fighter had died in battle
And his sweetheart was grieving.
A comrade went over to her and said,
"He was my best pal and I am also sad
But I am happy too and proud of him
For he was to the end a revolutionary
And nothing ever can change that."
She wiped off her tears and smiled,
When I heard those words and saw her eyes,
I felt the wisdom flow into my soul.*

14 December 1977

Nothing More Beautiful

*I decided a long time ago
That if I were imprisoned
I would do as Comrade Ho,
To write revolutionary poems.*

*The movement was on the rise
When he was put behind bars.
As he sang of the grain of rice
Made pearl white, he never lost touch.*

*I think of all the reasons
That in due time I shall be out.
I am sure that the passage of seasons
Will further shed from victory any doubt.*

*Meanwhile, there's nothing more beautiful
Than to sing songs of freedom,
Songs of the people's struggle,
To fight tyranny and boredom.*

*A spirit as active and free as mine
Can never be entombed in a cell.
I shall continue to rise
In defiance of the somnolent bell.*

30 November 1977

(written while in prison)

Victory belongs to the people

The following is the complete text of a message August 6, 1977, from José Ma. Sison, founder of Kabataang Makabayan, a militant student organization now active underground, outlawed by the U.S.-Marcos dictatorship like most organizations fighting for national democracy.

Two months later, on November 10, 1977, Sison was captured by security agents in San Fernando City, La Union province, 200 miles north of Manila. This message was therefore the last statement of this revolutionary leader before his imprisonment.

As founding chairman of Kabataang Makabayan, I wish to extend the most heartfelt revolutionary greetings to the rank and file of Kabataang Makabayan.

I understand that Kabataang Makabayan is reinvigorating itself, especially at this time that the democratic student movement is resurgent. Among striking students, the name of this organization has become a fighting watchword.

There is truly a need for the reinvigoration of Kabataang Makabayan. There has to be a secret organization to link the apparently local youth organizations in schools, communities and other places.

Such an organization should consistently promote the line of the national democratic revolution among the youth. Without this organization, the various struggles of the youth would become narrow local struggles that do not flow into one powerful revolutionary movement.

The history of Kabataang Makabayan is glorious. It is linked to the great revolutionary tradition of the Filipino people. Since its founding on November 30, 1964, it has consistently promoted the national democratic line in word and deed among the youth.

School for Cadres

This organization has been a militant school for cadres in the

revolutionary struggle against U.S. imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat-capitalism. In the forefront of the anti-fascist, anti-feudal and anti-imperialist struggle are many alumni of this school.

I urge all members of KM to take seriously their membership in this organization. In the first place, it is a serious matter to join an underground revolutionary organization at a time that a fascist dictatorship is reigning over the land.

As a member of KM, you can immediately contribute to the people's effort to overthrow the fascist dictatorial regime of the U.S.-Marcos clique and to take definite steps forward in the long-term struggle to complete the national democratic revolution.

I am certain that more and more youth that are trained in revolutionary struggle by KM will eventually find their way into the ranks of Proletarian revolutionaries and Red fighters, as long as their hearts and minds are truly with the toiling masses of workers and peasants.

Three Revolutionary Virtues

At any rate, I wish to point out to all members of KM the three virtues of revolutionary militance, perseverance and vigilance. These must be developed through practice.

All KM members must be active in arousing, organizing and mobilizing the youth and linking them to the broad masses of people on the national democratic line. Mass activities must be continuously carried out to involve an ever increasing number of youth.

A progressive stand must be taken on issues that pertain to the specific interests of the youth and to the general interests of the people, especially those of the toiling masses. *Kalayaan* (the KM's newspaper) and, of course, leaflets and pamphlets must be put out. A broad front must always be made in order to isolate the enemy and trounce him most effectively, especially in open mass activities.

All KM members must be tenacious through the twists and turns of revolutionary struggle. They must recognize that they are engaged in a protracted struggle to defeat not only the Marcos fascist dictatorship, but also the forces behind it — U.S. imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat-capitalism.

Revolutionary studies must be promoted to enable the youth to become revolutionaries throughout their lives. Political work must be linked to ideological work. Going by the name of "School for National Democracy," study groups must be organized. Those wishing to advance in their revolutionary studies must always be encouraged.

All KM members must hate and belittle the enemy strategically.



But tactically they must always be alert to the enemy and thwart his viciousness and wiles. They must learn underground methods and outwit him by combining legal and illegal struggle.

The local chapter of KM must be under cover of one or several legal organizations. Identities and illegal activities of members must be well protected.

There should be a leadership at every level. The staff at the highest level of KM must deploy properly the members of the organization for the creation of youth mass organizations and therefore more KM chapters and for working with and learning from the toiling masses of workers and peasants.

KM members in one place can be assigned to other places, including other provinces, for social investigation and mass work on a long-term or short-term basis. It is worthwhile to point out that KM since its founding has been able to help in a big way in the nationwide

expansion of the revolutionary movement.

The Gathering Storm

There is a gathering storm in Manila-Rizal. Like the upsurges of the workers' strike movement, the reinvigoration of KM and the resurgence of the democratic student movement are part of the gathering storm.

The storm that will pound at the enemy will involve greater masses of workers and students than at any time in the past and will surpass the first quarter storm of 1970. This storm will consist of repeated gigantic street demonstrations, each of which shall be directly participated in by hundreds of thousands of marching workers and youth.

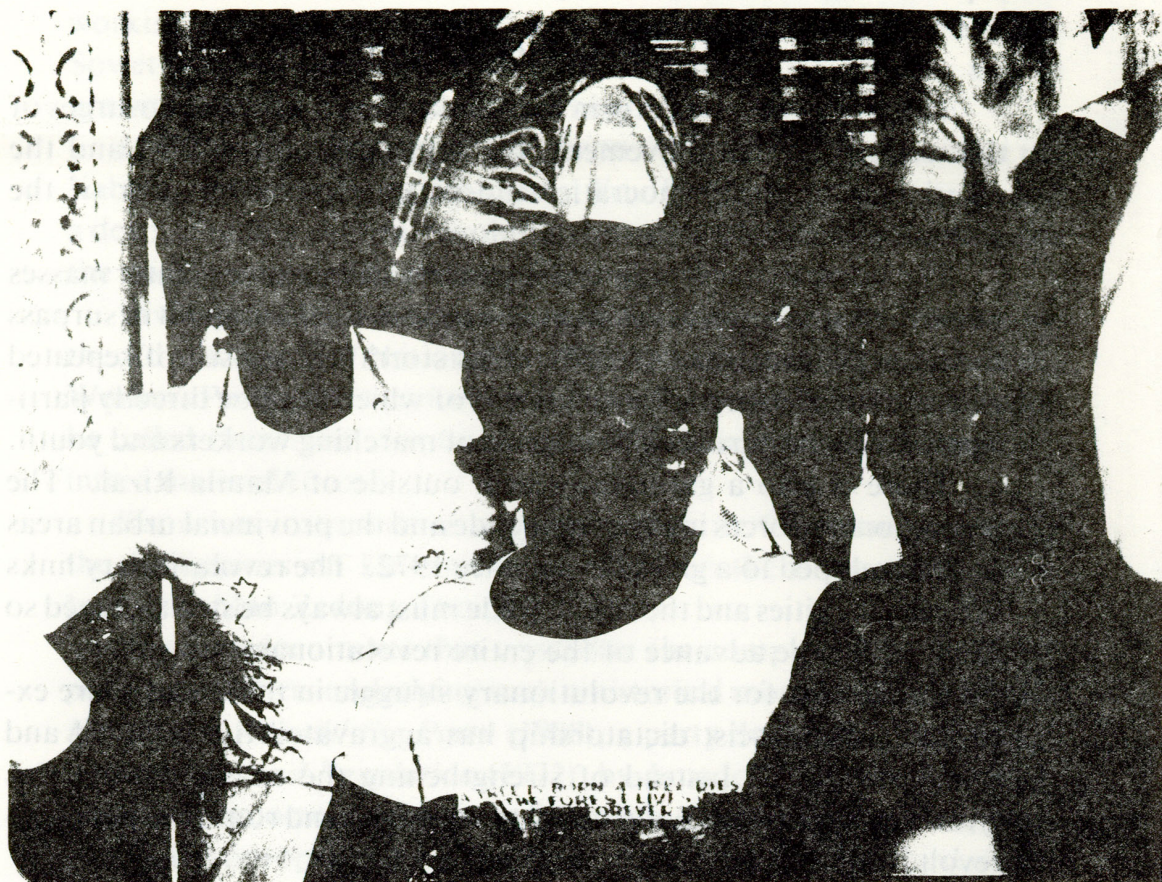
There is also a gathering storm outside of Manila-Rizal. The revolutionary forces in the countryside and the provincial urban areas have developed to a great extent since 1972. The revolutionary links between the cities and the countryside must always be strengthened so as to secure the advance of the entire revolutionary movement.

Conditions for the revolutionary struggle in the country are excellent. The fascist dictatorship has aggravated the political and economic crisis. Instead of strengthening the ruling system, this tyrannical regime has only served to weaken it and rouse the people to revolt.

The crisis of the world capitalist system is worsening without let-up. The attempts of U.S. imperialism to pass the burden of this crisis to the Filipino people are engendering revolutionary resistance. All that needs to be done is to enlarge and strengthen the subjective forces of the revolution. KM is one subjective force that must grow in strength and do its share in the entire revolutionary effort.

Upon the growth of the revolutionary forces, the crisis of the ruling system cannot but become worse. Victory belongs to the people in the end.

— *KM Founding Chairman, José Ma. Sison*
6 August 1977



At the center of the picture is JOSE MARIA SISON.

Ten Point Program of the National Democratic Front, Philippines

1. Unite all anti-imperialist and democratic forces in order to overthrow the U.S.-Marcos dictatorship and work for the establishment of a coalition government based on a truly democratic system of representation;
2. Expose and oppose U.S. imperialism as the mastermind behind the setting up of the fascist dictatorship, demand the nullification of all unequal treaties and arrangements with this imperialist power, and call for the nationalization of all its properties in the country;
3. Fight for the re-establishment of all the democratic rights of the people, such as freedom of speech, the press, assembly, association, movement, religious belief, and the right to due process;
4. Gather all possible political and material support for the armed resistance and the underground against the U.S.-Marcos dictatorship;
5. Support a genuine land reform programme that can liberate the peasant masses from feudal and semi-feudal exploitation and raise agricultural production through cooperation;
6. Improve the people's livelihood, guarantee the right to work and protect national capital against foreign monopoly capital;
7. Promote a national, scientific and mass culture and combat imperialist, feudal and fascist culture;
8. Support the national minorities, especially those in Mindanao and the mountain provinces, in their struggle for self-determination and democracy;
9. Punish after public trial the ringleaders of the U.S.-Marcos fascist gang for their crimes against the people and confiscate all their ill-gotten wealth; and
10. Unite with all people fighting imperialism and seek their support for the Philippine revolutionary struggle.



This was an unprecedented demonstration of more than 100,000 Filipinos during the "First Quarter Storm," January - March 1970.

[We thank the staff of UNITY newspaper for their help in the typesetting and layout of this pamphlet.]

Alliance for Philippine National Democracy (UGNAYAN)

The Alliance for Philippine National Democracy (UGNAYAN) is a broad coalition of various groups and individuals in North America opposed to the U.S. - Marcos dictatorship. Its chief task is to rally the peoples of the world in support of the National Democratic Front in the Philippines and its Ten Point Program.

Samahan Ng Makabayang Pilipino (SAMAPI)

P.O. Box 25443
Chicago, IL 60625

Sambayanan (New York City)

P.O. Box 279
Vauxhall, NJ 07088

Association of Progressive Filipinos (Montreal)

Box 314, Pointe-aux-Trembles
Quebec, Canada H1B 5K4

Philippines Research Center

Box 101 Mansfield Depot
Connecticut 06251