

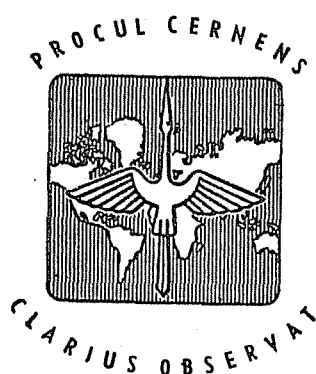
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OCCASIONAL PAPERS

AGRARIAN UNREST AND PEASANT ORGANISATIONS IN THE
PHILIPPINES

Gerrit Huizer

Working paper, not for quotation. The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not imply the endorsement of the Institute of Social Studies. (No. 17, February 1972).



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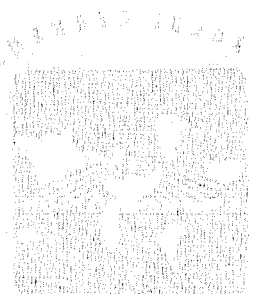
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AGRARIAN UNREST AND PEASANT ORGANISATIONS IN THE PHILIPPINES

Gerrit Huizer^{*}

Peasant Movements before World War II

The growth of peasant organisations in the Philippines should be seen in a historical context. Similar to Latin America, the Philippines were colonised by the Spaniards who utilised and strengthened the existing feudal-type power structure. The Spaniards inter-married with the families of the local chiefs and created the class of so-called caciques.¹ The peasants revolted on several occasions. After a (largely agrarian) revolt in 1898 that threatened to overthrow the colonial regime, the Americans took over the Philippines from Spain, without fundamentally changing the cacique system. The frustration of the peasants was made more acute as the Americans emphasised the need for democracy and education without helping to realise these ideals.

The tenants, who formed the majority of the farm population particularly in the densely populated areas of Central Luzon, depended almost completely on the landlords, frequently renting even their buffalo and houses from them and in some areas paying a tenancy rate as high as 90 percent of the harvest. Permanent indebtedness was common. A 1933 government report calculated that the average income of tenants in the Bulacan province was about half the actual average living costs.²

One factor which caused serious deterioration of the peasants' conditions was the influence of commercial agriculture, introduced under American colonial rule. An increasing amount of land was dedicated to commercial crops, particularly sugar and tobacco, which could be exported to USA with considerable tax facilities. A tendency of concentration of landownership was a result. In addition, a more business-like approach was introduced on the new plantations, simultaneously modifying the patronal

* Most of the material summarised in this paper was collected by the author while working with I.L.O., before joining the Institute of Social Studies.

1. "The Peasant War in the Philippines. A Study of the Causes of Social Unrest in the Philippines - An Analysis of Philippine Political Economy", Philippine Social Sciences and Humanities Review, Vol. XXIII, No. 2-4, June-December 1958, pp. 376 & 385 ff.

See also David R. Sturtevant, Philippine Social Structure and its Relation to Agrarian Unrest (Ph.D. Thesis, Stanford University, 1958).

2. Quoted in Jack D. Salmon, "The Huk Rebellion", Solidarity, Vol. III, No. 12, December 1968, p. 4.

relations existing on the traditional estates. Many landlords became absentee. The paternalism that had helped to maintain some appearance of benevolence in the old system disappeared and landlords became hated strangers.³

The average tenancy rates (percentage of harvest in cash or kind to be given to landlord) rose from 38 to 60 percent between 1903 and 1946. Especially in Central Luzon, Nueva Ecija and Pampanga, the situation of the inquilinos (cash tenants) and peasants under the kasama system (share-croppers) became unbearable. A 1936 Fact Finding Survey of the Philippine Labour Department noted:

"The hacenderos oblige the inquilino to construct camarines, houses, dikes, ... without compensation. When a hacendero believes that it is necessary to construct a road within the hacienda, build a warehouse or construct a dyke, he collects what he calls a bugnos. Those who do not give contributions are expelled from the hacienda."⁴

It is not surprising that in Central Luzon peasant resistance became most strong and effective once peasant organisations came into being.

"Land-grabbing" was an additional source of serious frustration among the peasantry, i.e. large owners claimed adjacent smallholdings and won their case in the courts because of their influence and means to pay lawyers. As was noted:

"This well-concealed system of 'land-grabbing' contributed greatly to the elimination of small ownership and thousands of once independent and self-sufficient farmers were reduced to tenants and landless farm labourers."⁵

Several local and more or less spontaneous protest uprisings of peasants took place, such as the 1923 Colorum movement in Mindanao and the 1931 Tangulan uprising in Central Luzon. These movements were badly organised. The Sakdal movement, also in Central Luzon had more impact. It became a political organisation with considerable strength (50,000 members) and influence (many elected local officials, one governor and three National Assemblymen). This movement was defeated and dispersed after an uprising in 1935.

Partly as a result of such movements a tenancy regulation law was enacted, and in 1939 a Tenancy Law Enforcement Division was created that

3. Erich H. Jacoby, Agrarian Unrest in Southeast Asia (Bombay, Asia Publishing House, 1961), pp. 199-201.

See also W.G. Wolters, De Huk-Opstand (unpublished thesis, University of Amsterdam, 1967).

4. Quoted in "The Peasant War in the Philippines", op.cit., p. 389.

5. Erich H. Jacoby, op.cit., p. 201.

tried to improve the situation until prevented by the Second World War.⁶ Government reports of that time show that efforts were undertaken in the fields of health and education as well as general measures to improve the economy of the country, but without fundamentally solving the contrasts in the rural areas. These became more and more open conflicts, particularly when peasants began to organise more systematically with the help of socialist and communist leaders and concentrated on electoral struggle and labour union tactics.

As long ago as 1919, a sharecroppers' union had been created by a communist leader, Jacinto Manahan, which in 1924 adopted the name Katipunan Pambansa ng mga Magbubukid sa Pilipinas (National Union of Peasants in the Philippines), KPMP. In the following years, the main leaders, Juan Felco and Mateo del Castillo, were directly or indirectly related to the Communist Party, and their organisation was later forbidden for that reason. However, it maintained strong roots among the peasants.

In 1920, a socialist party leader, lawyer and wealthy landlord in Pampanga, Pedro Abad Santos, created the Aguman Ding Maldong Talapagobra (League of the Poor Labourers), AMT, which became strong in the Pampanga area by organising strikes and protest demonstrations. An important collaborator who helped Abad Santos to spread his movement was Luis Taruc, a peasant's son who had enjoyed some education. Such voluntary collaborators visited the villages, organised meetings and explained the purpose of the organisation. Taruc describes his approach, that he learnt by trial and error, as follows:

"... I first sounded out the people about their problems and grievances, and then spoke to them in their own terms. Instead of carrying out a frontal assault on the ramparts of capital, I attacked a case of usury here, an eviction there, the low crop rate elsewhere. These were things which our organisation could fight, and around which the people could win small, but enormously encouraging victories.

I had to prove to the people that our organisation and its leaders were of them and close to them. I sat down with them in their homes, shared their simple food, helped with the household chores. I walked in the mud with them, helped them catch fish, crabs and shell fish, worked with them in the fields. It was not hard for me, nor was it new to me. I was merely rejoining my own people. In their turn, the people would go out of their way to feed and to accommodate the AMT leaders.

Within three months I had organised my whole area."⁷

Taruc describes two types of strike that were used during the formation stage of the organisation as the "classroom for the workers":

6. Jack D. Salmon, op.cit., pp. 6-7.

7. Luis Taruc, Born of the People, An Autobiography (New York, International Publishers, 1953), pp. 37-38.

- (1) One was to support petitions demanding 50-50 sharing of the crop, or an end to extreme usury practices such as paying back three to five times when one cavan (46 kg.) of rice had been borrowed, or an end to practices of servitude. If the landlord rejected the demand, a strike was organised and work on the fields was suspended. Picketlines to stop others from doing the work were set up.
- (2) The other type of strike was defensive, to protect tenants against intimidation and eviction which was tried upon them when they joined the AMT. Sometimes the AMT people had to fight the private armies of the landlords or the police if these tried to carry out the eviction by force.

The peasant organisations generally used non-violent methods: demonstrations, sit-down strikes, allowing mass arrests and communal goal-going, etc. Dramatic stage presentations and other cultural activities were used to teach the peasants about the labour struggle, and to turn the strikes into public manifestations. By 1938 the AMT had 70,000 members who participated to some extent in the organisation.⁸ The socialist peasant organisation had a good chance to develop during the 1930s when the communist KPMP was officially prohibited. Landlords organised armed groups, such as the so-called "soldiers for peace", to oppose and clash with the socialists, causing considerable violence in the rural areas of Central Luzon. When the socialists were also prohibited to hold meetings, the organisers used any kind of gathering, such as Protestant religious meetings, to make propaganda for the peasant cause.⁹ When the Socialist and Communist parties merged in 1938 the AMT and KPMP also got together in one organisation.

Struggle against Japanese Occupation: the Huks

In reaction to the Japanese occupation, the merged peasant organisations created on March 29, 1942, the People's Army against the Japanese, or Hukbalahap (Hukbo ng Bayan Laban sa Hapon). The aims of the Hukbalahap movement were expressed in a manifesto emphasising the opposition to, and expulsion of the Japanese, cooperation with the Allied armies, the apprehension and punishment of traitors and collaborators, complete independence for the Philippines and the establishment of a democratic

8. Ibid., pp. 38-45.

9. Eyewitness reports are quoted in Alvin H. Scaff, The Philippine Answer to Communism (Stanford University Press, 1955), p. 19.

government with land reform, national industrialisation and guarantees for a minimum standard of living.¹⁰

The peasant organisation then accepted military aims. Many peasants carried arms for the first time, forming squads of approximately 100 men each; the armed struggle against the Japanese was initiated. The armed units operated in areas around the homes of their members. Support was organised in the villages through the Barrio United Defence Corps (BUDC) to guarantee the supply of food and other necessities. The BUDC councils that were created as the resistance movement spread, brought forms of democratic decision making to villages that had been traditionally dominated by the caciques, and also formed local governments in areas controlled by the guerilla forces. This system functioned particularly well in areas where the peasant organisations had gained strength before the war. The Huk movement rallied many people and became so strong that it controlled large areas of Central Luzon where the Japanese could not enter.

Many landlords who collaborated with the Japanese and lived in the towns had their lands and harvests confiscated by the Huks. Landlords who supported the Huk movement remained on their land, but had to be content with fixed rents. In some provinces Huk leaders were elected as governors in December 1944.

This blow against the traditional land tenure pattern had certain consequences for the whole social climate in the Philippines:

"Under the circumstances, it was therefore natural that post-war efforts to reimpose the traditional agrarian institutions should meet with bitter and often violent opposition in areas where the situation was critical. Nor was it surprising that leadership for the agrarian dissidents should be supplied by Communists, who had played a key role in resisting the Japanese."¹¹

Huk Resistance after World War II

Although the efforts of the Huks considerably facilitated the liberation of the Philippines by the American army, relations between the Huks and that army were never good. It was feared that the Huks, if given the chance, would radically change the social order in the Philippines. Within the Huk movement different views existed on this topic. The moderates, who proposed

10. Jack D. Salmon, op.cit., p. 12.

11. Frances Lucille Turner, Magsaysay and the Philippine Peasantry, The Agrarian Impact on Philippine Politics, 1953-1956 (University of California Press, 1961), p. 4.

collaboration with the Philippine Government in exile headed by Osmeña, took the lead. After the war the Huks formed a popular front with several other groups, such as the Democratic Alliance and the National Peasants' Union, and supported Osmeña in the April 1946 election against Roxas, a former collaborator with the Japanese who was supported by the US Supreme Commander, MacArthur. However, Roxas won the elections with a slight majority. In the Central Luzon area the popular front obtained many votes and seven Democratic Alliance candidates were elected to the House of Representatives. When these men, among them Luis Taruc, were not allowed to take their seats, the Huks lost confidence in the effectiveness of the legal approach and refused to turn in their arms when requested by the Roxas government. After a Huk leader was kidnapped and assassinated, violence flared up; the Government reacted with a military campaign in which villages suspected of sympathy for the Huks were burned, and many inhabitants killed.¹²

It was reported that, as a result of the terror campaign, the government forces lost support among the population and the Huks grew stronger:

"Within a few months the Huk had grown by leaps and bounds. Every time a peasant was arrested and tortured as one of our suspected supporters able-bodied men from his barrio fled to the hills. They would rather join the Huks than suffer the same fate. For every barrio woman raped by undisciplined and demoralised soldiers or civilian guards, more peasants, including women, would be driven by hatred and indignation to join the rebels. For every barrio looted and burned to the ground by troops carrying out their superiors' scorched-earth policy, a new Huk unit was founded."¹³

A few months before he died in 1948 Roxas outlawed the Huk organisation, but his successor Quirino, tried to negotiate an amnesty since the former policy of armed repression had failed. Efforts were started to achieve reconciliation. The minimum demands presented by the Huks were mainly on behalf of the peasants:

- (1) division of estates and resale to tenants with government assistance;
- (2) migration from overcrowded to less crowded areas;
- (3) laws establishing fair sharing of crops by landlords and tenants;
- (4) curbs on usury; and
- (5) a minimum wage scale.¹⁴

12. This campaign is described by Luis Taruc in his autobiography, op.cit., p. 240 ff.

13. Luis Taruc, He Who Rides the Tiger, The Story of an Asian Guerilla Leader (New York: Praeger, 1967), p. 38.

See also Alvin H. Scaff, op.cit., p. 28: "This indiscriminate terrorism turned the people against the government and strengthened the Huk movement."

14. Jack D. Salmon, op.cit., pp. 18-19.

A 70-30 Rice Share Tenancy Act was soon promulgated, but implementation was very defective and no truce between the government and the Huks resulted.

Armed Huk resistance flared up again, gaining increasing strength between 1948 and 1950. The leadership of the Huk movement seriously considered the possibility of overthrowing the government by armed force, and the name HUK was changed into HMB (Hukbong Mapagpalaya ng Bayan, or People's Army of Liberation). Some of the leaders, including Taruc, only half-heartedly agreed with this change in approach which was made mainly for doctrinal reasons.

Repression of the Huk Movement

The show of force that the Huks gave by occupying several towns and besieging others, scared the government into reorienting its policies with help from US advisory teams.¹⁵ There was a cleaning-up in government ranks and Ramon Magsaysay became the new Secretary of Defense in 1950 to reorganise the army, and modify its approach. The Philippine Constabulary (PC) was integrated into the Army and personnel were shifted to ease tensions. Cases of abuse were investigated and arbitrariness punished. Magsaysay's experience in the guerilla during the Second World War and the pressure from the US advisory missions contributed to a new approach.¹⁶

In an overall survey of the rural Philippines undertaken at that time, the case-study report regarding the surveyed barrio in Central Luzon gives an impression of the conditions prevailing in that area. The surveyed barrio, considered as typical, was San Pedro in Pampanga (about 13 kilometers from San Fernando) with a population of 2,182 people in 373 families. It was noted:

"This desperately poverty-ridden barrio offers an ideal locale for dissidents and strong sympathizers to rebellion. With 95 percent of those engaged in agriculture landless, with 40 percent of the males in the labor force unemployed, and with population pressure on resources aggravated by the addition of approximately 50 families evacuated from the village across the river, the social situation in this barrio is charged with explosive possibilities. For this reason it is patrolled by heavily armed members of a battalion combat company stationed in San Simon and by 30 temporary policemen."¹⁷

15. Luis Taruc, He Who Rides the Tiger, op.cit., pp. 67-99, about the whole period.

16. Frances Lucille Tarner, op.cit., pp. 6 and 19.

17. Generoso F. Rivera and Robert T. McMillan, The Rural Philippines, (Office of Information, Mutual Security Agency, Manila, Philippines, Oct. 1952), p. 65.

The new approach implied that specially trained guerilla combat units were sent to the Huk controlled areas, while popular support for the Huks was undermined by promises of effective reforms.

Within the army, an Economic Development Corps (EDCOR) was established to settle captured Huks with their families on the scarcely populated island of Mindanao, together with other settlers. Huks who surrendered were sent to these areas and given facilities to become independent farmers under relatively favourable conditions. This programme was extended after Magsaysay was elected president in 1953. It became the National Resettlement and Rehabilitation Administration (NARRA) which, by the end of 1958, had resettled about 20,000 families.¹⁸ One observer noted about this programme:

"The EDCOR administration makes no sweeping claims of success. Colonel Mirasol said, 'We don't take for granted that the job is done when a settler is happy, or when he is prosperous. The real task is to see that he is weaned away from communist ideas. We cannot always judge a settler by what he says and does. The best spies make the best collaborators.' Through an intelligence system the settlers are classified as red, white, or blue. The reds are those who must be watched; the whites are safe and harmless; the blues could be trusted with firearms in an emergency. The EDCOR bends its efforts to moving individuals along the course from red to blue."¹⁹

The 1953 presidential campaign of Magsaysay and the reforms that were promised, particularly land distribution, also helped to appease the peasants. The possibility for a peaceful solution of agrarian and other problems seemed to emerge. Divisions of opinion between Taruc and the more doctrinaire leaders over this and other issues came into the open. Taruc surrendered in March 1954 on President Magsaysay's pledge of amnesty, a pledge which was not kept. The peasants took up a wait-and-see attitude and the Huks had to withdraw because of decreasing peasant support after Taruc's surrender and the increasing effectiveness of the army.

Rural Reconstruction and Small Reforms as a Reaction

It was in this period of 1952-1954 that several institutions and programmes were created to deal with the peasant problem in some way or other, as an alternative to the violent struggle in which the peasants had become involved.

One of these programmes was the Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement, a private community development agency sponsored by Dr. Y.C. James Yen of the Joint Sino-American Commission on Rural Reconstruction (JCRR). This Commission had been active in Mainland China before 1949 and after that

18. Erich H. Jacoby, op.cit., p. 224.

19. Alvin H. Scaff, op.cit., p. 81.

carried out rural development activities in Taiwan to prevent the growth of communist influence. The Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement was called in by President Magsaysay to help in the pacification and counter-insurgency activities in the centre of the Huk movement, the municipality of San Luis in the province of Pampanga. Here Luis Taruc had been born and had been most active in organising the peasants. A number of specially trained village level workers were stationed in San Luis to try to win the confidence of the people and to wean them away from supporting the Huk rebels. Considerable resources for housing, road construction and other community projects were made available. Between 1953 and 1966 about 59 million pesos were spent in San Luis which has approximately 14,000 inhabitants spread over several villages.

Some of the large estates were distributed among the tenants as part of this programme. This area of Pampanga province was the first to be declared officially a land reform area, but the reform was implemented only locally and with considerable delay. President Magsaysay often visited San Luis to hear the peasants' complaints. Members of the armed forces who were stationed in the area were severely punished if they misbehaved. The whole approach was called "psychowar", and community development formed an integral part of it.²⁰

Since the reform programme was not extended beyond a few strategic cases, the peasant struggle flared up time after time and a considerable nucleus of Huk guerillas remained active.²¹

The peasant unrest, of which the continuous Huk activities were an expression, was concentrated mainly in Central and South Luzon and particularly in those provinces where the majority of the farmers were tenants. In 1948, this was in Pampanga (88 percent of the farmers being tenants), Nueva Ecija (75.3 percent), Bulacan (66 percent), Tarlac (65.6 percent), Cavite (64.1 percent), Bataan (63.2 percent), Batangas (54.3 percent) and Zambales (53.9 percent).²²

That only large-scale land reform would be the appropriate answer to the Huk movement, was even seen by high government officials:

20. Interviews with PRRM workers and villagers in San Luis, Pampanga, June 1970.

21. Official estimates in 1957 were: a 19,000 membership, and an armed strength of 500; See also "Huks attacked in five provinces", article Washington Post, 23 December 1967.

22. Frances Lucille Turner, op.cit., p. 12.

"Yet, one cannot question the validity of the objectives which the Huks presented to the government. The PKM, which was the Huk farmers' organization, presented to the government in 1948 a program for agrarian reform. The organization asked for the end of tenancy and its replacement by leasehold. They also asked for rural cooperatives and credit facilities for farmers and, finally, they asked that the government expropriate the big landed estates and sell them to the tenants, particularly in Pampanga, which was at the time the center of the Huk movement. It couldn't have been otherwise, for more than 80 percent of the farmers of Pampanga were tenants."²³

In 1953 the Agricultural Tenancy Act was promulgated, but was rarely implemented and only in those areas where Huk resistance was most acute, such as San Luis, Pampanga. Several other less radical means were tried to sue away the peasants from supporting the Huks.

The Federation of Free Farmers: Reaction of the Church²⁴

Efforts to counteract Huk influence were also undertaken by the Federation of Free Farmers. This organization was created in 1953 by a group of Catholic laymen headed by Jeremias Montemayor, a lawyer and lecturer attached to the Institute of Social Order in Manila which had been created by Jesuit priests in order to orient the social action of the Catholic Church, particularly in the field of unionisation. With its support a Catholic labour union, the Federation of Free Workers (FFW), was created in 1950. Some of the FFW leaders went over to the Federation of Free Farmers after the experimental creation of a FFW tenants' association in an area in Pampanga. During the early part of 1953, Montemayor had experimented with an Association of Free Farmers in Bisocol, Pangasinan, the province where his relatives own some estates. During a conference in October 1953 the FFW tenants' association of Pampanga and the association of Bisocol were merged into the Federation of Free Farmers. The first president was Montemayor and two FFW leaders became vice-presidents, self-appointed in consultation with the advisors of the Institute of Social Order. This is explained by Montemayor as follows:

"Let me explain precisely in what sense the leadership of the FFF is self-appointed. It will be recalled that before 1952, the Huks of Central Luzon were so strong that they were able to challenge the government itself. They were strong because they had mass support. They had succeeded in capturing the leadership of the peasant population. But in 1952, they

23. Conrado F. Estrella, The Democratic Answer to the Philippine Agrarian Problem (Manila, Solidaridad Publishing House, 1969), p. 13. (Mr. Estrella is presently Minister of Land Reform.)

24. Part of the historical data on the FFF are derived from Sonya Diane Cater, The Federation of Free Farmers, A Case Study in Mass Agrarian Organisation (Data Paper No. 35, Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, Ithaca N.Y., May 1959).

were practically lacking. Many of their leaders were either dead or in prison. Thus a leadership vacuum had been created among the peasantry.

Someone had to fill that vacuum. Our farmers could not do it themselves. They were still desperately poor. Most of them had no education whatever. On top of that they were now utterly confused and disillusioned. Realising this, we organised the FFF to fill the leadership vacuum. No one else was doing it except the communists, and if we failed to fill the vacuum the communists would again. So we beat them to it. We appointed ourselves."²⁵

Initially the growth of the FFF was considerably facilitated by the open and active support given by President Magsaysay. FFF topleaders had easy access to presidential offices where concrete cases of farmers' problems and complaints were resolved with priority. They were generally local problems which did not have much impact on government policy as a whole. In a relatively favourable climate the FFF enjoyed a rapid growth to over 36,000 members in March 1957, particularly in Central Luzon. After the death of Magsaysay in March 1957 things became less easy, but FFF was able to consolidate and structure its organisation.

Although the members were officially expected to pay dues, this rule was not often maintained.²⁶ The FFF was sustained for years by a monthly subsidy of 2000 pesos from the Asian Foundation, a monthly subsidy of 1000 pesos from President Magsaysay's Peace and Amelioration Fund and gifts from the Church. In August 1957 the FFF was officially registered partly under pressure from the Asian Foundation, by submitting its constitution and certifying to the election of its national officials. There were no real elections among the membership but elections took place in the 13-member National Policy Board.

According to the FFF Constitution a leader need not necessarily be a member of the FFF before his appointment or election as leader or official, but he becomes a member automatically when he enters the organisation. He also does not need to be a religious person, but his "moral character" is considered important and the fact that he is "no positive atheist, irreligious person, communist or fascist". Also, clearance by the Military Intelligence Service is required.²⁷

In the early years of the FFF, contact between leaders and the base was problematical, as Montemayor noted:

25. Jeremias U. Montemayor, "The Free Farmers Re-examined," Philippine Studies, Vol. 8, No. 2, April 1960, p. 422. This article is a reaction to some of the criticisms of FFF expressed in Sonya D. Cater, op.cit.

26. Tarner, op.cit., p. 96.

27. Constitution of the Federation of Free Farmers (Article IX, section 1-4, mimeogr., March 1970).

"It is true, and we would be the first to admit it, that the leaders of the FFF have not yet achieved sufficient contact and integration with our peasantry. The majority of our farmers do not understand our movement thoroughly as yet, do not realise that it is really their movement. Nevertheless we are working at this and making steady progress. In short, the FFF is not yet a completely popular movement, although all our efforts are directed towards making it so."²⁸

At the barrio level, FFF Barrio Locals (or Hacienda Locals) exist in different parts of the country. At this level officials are often elected by the members although the local parish priest has considerable influence. Generally, meetings are held only when a higher level FFF official (municipal or provincial) comes in order to communicate something to the membership. In later years gradually more decision power was given to lower ranks, great emphasis being given to leadership training programmes as a way to strengthen and spread the organisation. A Leadership Formation Course was regularly held for periods of five weeks in the National Leadership Formation Centre in Mamatid, Cabuyano, Laguna.

Many local (barrio as well as municipal) leaders and members have benefitted from these courses. They were particularly prepared to know their rights and the ways to channel complaints when the peasants' rights were not recognised or impinged upon by the landlords. In many cases the awareness of basic civil and agrarian rights was strengthened by personal visits of FFF leaders to the barrio organisations. The authority of the national leader encouraged the people to doubt or even oppose that of the local landlord which was traditionally strong in the Philippines.

Particularly interesting became the programme in which urban youth, mainly students, were engaged in four-week summer workcamps in the villages. Groups of 6 to 15 students lived in a village and taught peasants about their rights, surveyed village problems, and helped in technical, recreational and religious projects. During public FFF demonstrations in Manila or other towns, student sympathisers often played an important role. Several of the present higher level leaders of FFF have come from the ranks of the students who participated several years in these workcamps.

In establishing an FFF organisation in a village the role of the parish priest was often crucial. He made the entrance of an organiser acceptable to the people in his parish. Since an increasing number of parish priests became favourably inclined towards the establishment of FFF, the organisation has recently spread into many areas, particularly in Mindanao.

28. Jeremias U. Montemayor, op.cit., p. 423.

In not a few cases the parish priest travelled with the FFF recruiter in his area; at mass meetings that were organised to make propaganda for the FFF the priest contributed often by saying mass or showing through his presence that the FFF organisers had ecclesiastical approval.²⁹ Mass rallies were often planned to coincide with local fiestas that were widely attended by peasants.

Moderate Strategy of FFF

It often happened that a case of injustice committed against the peasants was taken up as a cause around which the people felt the need and motivation to join the organisation. A principal method by which the FFF tried to win the peasantry was through legal defense mostly against abuses of the landlords. About fifteen fulltime and parttime lawyers in the FFF helped members with their cases. Initially, it was tried with help of the lawyer and the local priest to come to a satisfactory agreement between the peasants and the landlord over a problem; if this did not work, a suit was filed at the courts and the lawyers helped to carry this through.

"Most of the cases involve the ejection of tenants, cropsharing, as well as the recognition of the legal relations between landholder and tenant. Among the farm workers, most of the cases have to do with wages and other rights provided for by the labour laws. In the case of settlers and small landholders, most of the cases involve the issuance of land titles."³⁰

It was in conformity with the Philippine pattern that the FFF dealt in its bargaining activities with a great many cases, particularly complaints. FFF lawyers generally took action while the people awaited the results, after having taken the risk of joining the FFF to look for legal help.³¹ Initially, these risks were considerable, such as eviction or threats to that

29. In almost all photographs of local events of FFF one can notice the presence of a priest and/or a religious sister.

30. Kalipunan, FFF leaflet.

31. The way in which things are done in the Philippines also applies to some extent to the FFF. Carl H. Landé notes in Leaders, Factions, and Parties, The Structure of Philippine Politics (Monograph Series No. 6, Southeast Asia Studies, Yale University, 1965), p. 2: "The heavy reliance placed upon dyadic relationships, both vertical and horizontal (i.e. between unequals and equals), and the relatively slight use made of organised groups capable of pursuing common goals helps to explain the strong emphasis in the Philippines on the pursuit of particular rewards, including exemption from the application of laws, and the relatively slight interest in the achievement of categorical goals, such as general legislation."

effect. Leaders and organisers have been frequently threatened and intimidated in efforts to stop their action.³²

This has also happened recently, local government officials being frequently involved and using their power to oppose the FFF. Cater noted: "Opposition likewise stems from local politicians or government officials who, in most instances, are also landholders. As an illustration, the former Mayor of Lubao, Pampanga, stated publicly that he would not permit FFF organisational activities within his jurisdiction. In blatant denial of the freedom of assembly guaranteed under the Philippine Constitution, the Mayor called a meeting of barrio lieutenants and landlords and ordered them to ban all FFF assemblies. When his ultimatum was not enforced he sent armed guards to police the barrio areas. The history of the Federation is replete with cases such as this."³³

It was also part of the opposition tactics of landlords to denounce the FFF as a communist organisation so as to scare people and to give local authorities justification for counteraction. In some cases the army acted locally against FFF people; this later had to be nullified by the intervention of Montemayor's relatives who had high positions in the Armed Forces. On some occasions, FFF organisers had to be protected by the Armed Forces when local officials and landlords forced them at gunpoint to leave an area of Central Luzon. On the whole, the FFF's approach was sufficiently anti-communist to obtain the support of the Armed Forces, and efforts to coordinate with the Psycho-War Office of the Armed Forces have been sometimes attempted.³⁴

Only gradually over the years did FFF start to tackle problems on a national scale, initially on a piecemeal basis. In order to appease the peasants' land hunger to some extent, FFF undertook a few efforts at land settlement, collaborating with the government's National Resettlement and Rehabilitation Administration (NARRA). These efforts toward the basic aim of the FFF, "the ownership of family-size farms by each FFF member", were not very successful. FFF propagated the NARRA's efforts among its membership and helped to select able peasants. Altogether only about 300 FFF families were relocated as part of this programme. Little was achieved in the acquisition

32. Information derived from interviews with several persons involved in these problems. An interesting case story of the threats and other tactics used by landlords to oppose the creation of an FFF local can be found in Edward M. Gerlock, M.M., A Proposed Methodology for Understanding Culture applied to a Small Town in Mindanao (M.Sc. Thesis, Asian Social Institute, Manila, 1969), pp. 282-312.

33. Sonya D. Cater, op.cit., pp. 51-52.

34. Ibid.

of farm lots. One successful case, a dispute over about 3000 hectares in barrio Plaridel, was solved in favour of the petitioning peasants after President Magsaysay personally intervened in 1954. This remained for many years an FFF showpiece.³⁵

The FFF published a booklet, Land to the Tiller, drafted by its former religious advisor, Fr. Mauri, and containing numerous more or less radical suggestions regarding a possible agrarian reform; however, it undertook initially very little political pressure or action to influence the drafting of the various land reform bills. Later, FFF President Montemayor became a member of the Presidential Committee set up by President Macapagal to draft the 1963 Agricultural Land Reform Code.

The Land Reform Issue

Although there was a great deal of talk about the need for effective land reform, the actual situation continued to deteriorate during the 1950s, as can be seen from the statistics.

Table 1.^{*} Percentage Distribution of Farm Operators, by Tenure Class, Philippines

Tenure class	1903	1918	1939	1948	1958	1960
All farms	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Full owners	80.7	77.7	49.2	52.6	49.8	44.7
Part owners	-	-	15.6	10.0	10.2	14.3
Tenants	19.3	22.3	35.1	37.3	39.8	39.3
Farm managers	-	-	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1
Others	-	-	-	-	-	1.0

35. Ibid., pp. 87-97.

* Data supplied partly in an undated mission report by L.C. Arulpragasam, partly compiled from various sources, and partly from E.H. Jacoby Man and Land (London: Deutsch, 1971).

Table 2. Percentage Distribution of Far Area, by Tenure Class, Philippines

Temure class	1903	1918	1939	1948	1958	1960
All farms	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Full owners	75.6	73.6	55.1	61.5	55.5	53.2
Part owners	-	-	12.1	8.6	9.8	14.7
Tenants	24.4	26.4	25.1	27.1	26.5	25.7
Farm managers	-	-	7.6	2.7	8.2	4.7
Others	-	-	-	-	-	1.7

In the Agricultural Census of 1960, tenures of farm properties were classified as follows:³⁶

Table 3. Temures of Farm Properties, 1960

	No. of Farms (000's)	Area of Farms (000 ha)
Full owners	967.7	4,133.3
Part-owner - part-tenants	310.9	1,139.9
<u>Tenants (all types)</u>	864.5	2,000.2
Cash tenants	13.5	547.0
Fixed-produce tenants	34.1	88.9
Share tenants	745.4	1,677.8
Cash and Share tenants	10.8	34.1
Cash and fixed-produce tenants	0.7	3.7
Rent free tenants	29.8	55.9
Other tenants	<u>30.1</u>	<u>92.7</u>
Managers	2.5	365.3
Other forms of temures	20.5	133.7

Pure tenants thus constituted about 40 percent of the total number of the farmers. Together with part-owner/part-tenants, they constituted about 54 percent of all farmers. Most of them were share tenants, generally holding from year to year.

With regard to crops, farms were classified in the 1960 Census as follows:³⁷

36. From A.N.Seth, "Land Reforms in the Philippines" (an evaluation), (FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Far East, Bangkok, January 1969), p. 14.

37. Ibid.

Table 4. Classification of Farms (in thousands)

Rice	1,041.8
Corn	378.8
Sugar	17.8
Abaca	36.0
Tobacco	22.9
Cocomut	440.2
Others	428.7
Total	2,366.2

In areas where the share-tenancy system prevailed, unrest occurred frequently. An official report noted about this situation:

".....in the Philippines the evils that have surrounded the system of share-tenancy have grown to such a magnitude that, in several instances in the past, led to hostilities and armed conflicts between the landed elite and the peasantry. The share-crop or kasama tenancy system deprives the farmer of a just share in the produce; makes his tenure insecure; exposes him to usurious practices and to perpetual indebtedness and forces him to be idle after the few months spent on the farm. Expressedly or impliedly, the ills of Philippines agriculture have been attributed to the share-tenancy system."³⁸

It was for this reason that the abolition of share tenancy became a foremost objective of Philippine land reform legislation.³⁹

The 1963 Agricultural Land reform Code stipulated that the initial stage of the land reform programme would be the transformation of share-tenants into lease-holders as a first step towards further transformation into owner-cultivators of a family-size farm. Under the fixed hold system, the tenant would become the actual operator of a plot and would pay a fixed annual rental, which would not exceed 25 percent of the average normal harvest during the three years preceding the date the leasehold would be established.

According to June 1971 data, made available to me by the National Land Reform Council during a visit to Manila, the process of agrarian reform, i.e. transforming sharecroppers into lease-holders who pay a fixed rent of approx. 25 percent of the yearly yield, has grown very slowly, covering only a small percentage of all share-croppers/tenants

38. "The Philippine Land Reform Programme" (Country Paper, Ru: WLRD-C/66/5, World Land Reform Conference, Rome, 20 June-2 July, 1966), p. 1.

39. Ibid., p. 3.

Registered leaseholdings	9,956
Pending registration	4,609
Compromise ⁴⁰	7,574
Oral agreement	24,536

The number of cases in which tenants have been evicted or intimidated by landlords so as to prevent them applying for leaseholding arrangements is considerable but could not be specified. It is probable that there are many more tenants and share-croppers than present statistics indicate. This fact and its implications can only be verified through case studies or sample surveys. Some of the reasons for slow implementation of the reform legislation were due to weaknesses of the law itself. Montemayor, who helped to formulate the law, later realised that it was too elastic and left much to be desired.⁴¹ In a recent publication Montemayor notes:

"....the Philippine land reform program is one of the softest land reform programs that have been undertaken after World War II. First of all, the program has no definite timetable. It has no deadline whatsoever. The pace of the program, therefore, depends almost entirely on the policies of every administration. Secondly, the retention limit given to the landlords is among the biggest in the world. It is 75 hectares, compared to 1.5 hectares in Japan and 3 in Taiwan. In other words, no matter what happens, the landowner shall be able to keep for himself at least 75 hectares of his agricultural land. Thirdly, the requirements of expropriation as well as the schedule of priority of the lands to be expropriated are such that under present circumstances, no large scale program of land redistribution will be possible."⁴²

Other considerations were that, although money had been appropriated for various projects under the Code, its availability was often seriously delayed. Montemayor also noted the continuing "cultural resistance" of influential circles, including government officials and the clergy, against land reform.⁴³

40. The term compromise, as it appears in the data supplied by the National Land Reform Council, apparently means a written agreement.

41. Intervention by Montemayor at FAO-ECAFE-ILO Seminar on Land Reform in Asia and the Far East, Manila, 1-12 July 1969.

42. Jeremias U. Montemayor, Philippine Socio-Economic Problems (Manila: Book Store, 1969), pp. 154-55.

43. Ibid.; see also the statement by MacFabian, Secretary-General of the Filipino Agrarian Reform Movement (FARM) at the Joint FAO-ECAFE-ILO Seminar on Land Reform in Asia and the Far East, Manila, July 1-12, 1969.

Radicalisation of the FFF

The strong influence of the landed elite in the local and national courts and in the agencies dealing with agrarian problems, meant that only very few reform or dispute cases found an easy solution. At times, special pressures were necessary to allow legal procedures to follow their due course. In reaction, and influenced by the increasing number of more radical young leaders, the FFF later started to organise public demonstrations, in which numerous individual cases were brought together and given wide publicity, and in which student sympathisers played an important role. A whole series of individual cases was solved after a spectacular demonstration staged in Manila in September-November 1969. This consisted of a marathon picket lasting almost two months in a park (the Agrarian Circle) in front of the Bureau of Lands and sometimes in its lobby. The picket was started on September 11, 1969 by a group of 60 FFF members and students who had formed the Federated Movements for Social Justice and Reform (FMSOJR) headed by two top-leaders of the FFF and a Catholic student leader. They had many documented cases that had remained unresolved for a considerable time, and which they invited the competent authorities to discuss.

The cases included: (1) land titles of some 100 families in Lechiria, Calamba, Laguna, that had been pending for 10 years; (2) foreshorelands elsewhere in Laguna which had been occupied by 500 families for a considerable time but which had been allegedly titled to others; (3) 300 families who cultivated 4,000 hectares inside a company's pasturage area complained that security men of the company had bulldozed their houses no less than three times to evict them; (4) farmers in Los Baños, Laguna, complained that President Marcos' promise to them to reduce irrigation fees had not been met; (5) farmers of the Bulacan area protested that their rice-fields had been flooded and damaged because of a dike constructed by a large landholder in the area; (6) a case in Los Baños, Laguna, of threatened ejection of peasants from land that they had cultivated for 25 years but to which they did not have legal title; and similar cases of land grabbing and unaccomplished promises.

The continuing delay in solving the cases caused 2000 college students to join the picketers on the thirteenth day and a march to the presidential palace was undertaken. They took the guards by surprise, managed to enter the palace, to get the President out of a ceremony, and had the interview for which they had been waiting.

A special government action committee was nominated on the spot to deal with the cases presented. The picket in front of the Bureau of Lands continued its pressure. Students continued to participate in the action, staging rallies, helping in the publicity by mimeographing daily bulletins. The picket was suspended on November 8, 1969, after most cases had been settled. As a last concession, the President created a Presidential Coordinating Committee for Social Justice and Agrarian Reform (PCCSJAR), of which Under-Secretaries of several departments and also the three leaders of the picket action became members. This committee was to hold a day-long public session every two weeks to deal with similar cases to those that had been the reason for the whole action.

It was clear that such shows of "political bargaining power" as this sit-in moved government agencies more readily into action than the presentation of individual cases, as was previously done. The action meant a breakthrough for the FFF toward a more militant approach. Recently, some of the young student leaders who helped to organise this successful action have become top-leaders of the FFF. The increasingly serious land tenure problems reflected in the demands of the Agripina Circle action, the greater militancy of FFF and of its leaders, may well explain its recent rapid growth after many years of comparative quiescence.

It is not only as a result of more experience and the entrance of younger leadership that FFF now tends to take a more extreme stand than in the past. The assassination of eight local FFF leaders in the province of Laguna between 1957 and 1970 has had a radicalising influence.⁴⁴ The need for "punitive defence" as a legitimate and morally acceptable means of self-defence has been recognised by Church Authorities.⁴⁵ In some cases, landlords have been threatened with reprisals if the assassination of local leaders continued. The intransigence of the rural elite strongly contributed to changing the rather moderate FFF toward greater militancy.

MASAKA, (Malayan Samahang Maksasaka, Free Farmers' Union)⁴⁶

Another reason for the radicalisation of FFF was the increasing competition with other, more extreme peasant organisations, which attracted FFF members in

44. The most recent case of an assassinated FFF leader was that of Federico Aquino, president of the San Clemente chapter of FFF, shot on March 9, 1971.

45. From conversations with top-leaders and moral advisors of FFF.

46. Data from interviews with Felixberto Olalia and several local leaders of MASAKA.

areas where the land reform issue led to increasing unrest but where FFF pressure in favour of reform was only moderate. In 1959 the Agricultural Tenancy Act of 1953 was amended to include an article prohibiting landholders from interfering with the formation of peasant organisations among their tenants. This gave old-time peasant leaders the courage again to start organising among their former base, but landlords and police continued to harass them.

The Agricultural Land Reform Code promulgated in 1963 by President Macapagal reconfirmed this article of the Agricultural Tenancy Act. A landholder (agricultural lessor) was prohibited:

"To discourage, directly or indirectly, the formation, maintenance or growth of unions or organisations of agricultural lessees in his landholding, or to initiate, dominate or interfere in the formation or administration of any union or organisation."⁴⁷

An organisation which grew rapidly was the MASAKA. This was created in November 1964 by Felixberto Olalia, a former leader of the PKM (Pambansang Kaisahan ng mga Magbubukid, the National Peasants Union) which had been a mass organisation of peasants of the Communist Party until its prohibition in March 1948. In the PKM and in the Communist Party in the war and post-war years, socialists and communists who before the war had had independent mass organisations were merged. The PKM supported the activities of the Huk guerilla movement.

A few months after the MASAKA had been registered in the Department of Labour, it had established itself in 13 provinces of Central Luzon. In addition to the old-timers, some FFF members joined MASAKA in the following years. MASAKA leaders were more radical in their demands for prompt solution of complaints and cases of injustice that for years had been pending in the courts and this greater militancy appealed to the peasants. On some occasions demonstrations and other methods of protest were used to obtain quick response from the courts or agencies.

By 1968 there were 65,000 MASAKA members in Central Luzon. The organisation's basic unit is the barrio council out of whose members town councils and provincial councils are formed, and at the top is a national council. Many cases are dealt with at the local level and it is a policy to try to negotiate with landlords with help of the Agrarian Reform Council in so-called conciliation meetings. Whenever landlords oppose legal procedure with more or less violent means, MASAKA leaders do not hesitate to respond

47. Agricultural Land Reform Code (Republic Act, No. 3844), August 8, 1963, section 31 (5).

in a similar fashion and "do things underground". Some MASAKA leaders are convinced that it is impossible to work through the present system and that this will have to be overthrown before an effective land reform programme can be obtained.

On April 9, 1969, the MASAKA split over this and other issues. At a Convention in Cambiao, Nueva Ecija, where about 1000 delegates were present, a new board of directors was chosen which did not include Felixberto Olalia. Romerico Flores became the new president, but many groups continue to recognise Olalia as president. In spite of the division, activities at the village level continue more or less the same concerning the basic problems that peasants have to face when trying to benefit from the land reform programme. Student groups have occasionally helped the peasants by participating in their rallies in provincial towns, but the MASAKA appears not to need students as local organisers; this is contrary to the FFF, which operates mostly in areas with little organisational tradition. Frequently, an effective agrarian reform implementation coincides with the presence of a militant MASAKA group in municipality of barrio, particularly in Nueva Ecija and Bulacan.⁴⁸

One method used by local peasants, supported by MASAKA, was to refuse to harvest under the 50-50 share system and to picket the land if the landlord tried to bring in hired labour from elsewhere. Land reform officials appeared pleased with such actions since they helped to avoid long-lasting court trials against illegal action by landlords. The first step of the reform, the introduction of lease-hold instead of sharecropping, is facilitated in this way as landlords give up their opposition.

Inner division, and official suspicion and intolerance of MASAKA's radical stand, has prevented the organisation from having much impact at the national level. The central land reform agency, wishing to gain more influence in the overall administrative structure of the country, looks for support to FARM, a new organisation, less radical than MASAKA but more dynamic than the FFF.

The Filipino Agrarian Reform Movement (FARM)

Before the FFF embarked upon it, the strategy of "political bargaining" through demonstrative action and publicity had been tried with considerable success by the Filipino Agrarian Reform Movement, headed by Luis Narciso as

48. Interviews with officials of the Land Authority.

president and Mac Fabian as Secretary-General. This movement was formed in 1959 by a group of intellectuals, newspapermen and professionals who were interested in land reform and exercised pressure in its favour through publicity, congressional hearings, conferences, press releases etc. In January 1969 they started to organise popular support through mass meetings in towns in their own areas, mainly in Tarlac and Pampanga provinces. In the provinces of Central Luzon, four regional radio stations were used regularly to instruct the peasantry.

FARM gained considerable impact and bargaining power by organising a spectacular Land Justice March from Tarlac province to the Presidential Palace Malacanang in Manila, on April 28, 1969. This march had been carefully prepared during many rallies in the towns and villages of Tarlac and Pampanga, and looked as if it could become a massive but peaceful demonstration of peasant discontent, as never before seen in the Philippines. A group of about 2,000 peasants headed by Luis Narciso, Mac Fabian and former Huk leader Luis Taruc, was to start in the town of Tarlac and it was foreseen that thousands of peasants would join the march on the way to Manila. During the months of March and April 1969, preparations were made to rally the able-bodied men who could stand the three-day, 120 kilometer march to Manila. Each participant was to carry four Kilos of rice for his maintenance underway. While the campaign was being organised FARM leaders received offers of bribes and several kinds of threats in order to halt them in their efforts.

The demands expressed in a manifesto were the following:

- (1) to declare the entire Luzon area as a land reform district (a first step in the implementation of the land reform code);
 - (2) the National Congress should allot more money for the Land Bank for the purchase of estates;
 - (3) to give back to the people the reserve lands of the Clark Airbase;
 - (4) to give free houseplots to all so-called squatters in the country.
- Other demands referred to making the judicial system responsive to the demands of peasants; the waiving of rentals of government lots occupied by squatters, and the issuance of titles to peasants who live and work on government lands.

Most of the demands that did not need congressional action were granted immediately by President Marcos. Rather than allow thousands of peasants march to his palace in Manila, the President went by helicopter to Camp Aquino, 7 kilometers from Tarlac, to meet the 2000 peasants whose march had just started. All 64 municipalities of Central Luzon were declared land reform area and 30 million pesos were to be made available to effectuate

this proclamation. The money was to be used to buy land for resale to the tenants or to help tenants to transfer from the hated system of share-tenancy to lease-holding, as laid down by the Land Reform Code. In all municipalities that were declared land reform areas, share-tenancy was to become automatically illegal.

After the proclamation and the acceptance of most of the demands by the President, the march was disbanded. The slogans carried included such statements as "A Filipino is never a squatter in his own country", "Give public lands to the landless only!", "Cultural Centre 50 million pesos, land reform 0" (referring to a considerable government investment in the construction of a Cultural Centre in Manila).

A marathon sit-in rally in front of the National Congress was organised to exercise pressure for those demands that could not be granted by the President but needed congressional action. Groups of peasants, ranging from six to 300 or even 1000 men, sat for 93 days drawing public attention to their demands while Congress was in session. A 30-day permit for his demonstration was obtained from the municipal government and later extended. The demonstration had less impact than the march but set an example to similar events such as the Agripina Circle sit-in.

Many local followers of FARM joined the Land Reform Farmers' Associations, created with the help of farm management technicians of the Land Reform Project Teams in all areas that were officially declared land reform areas. The function of these associations was to help implement the land reform process.

The association of tenants who were to benefit from land reform was necessary because of opposition by the landlords. The first step after a region has been proclaimed a land reform area is to abolish share-tenancy on a fifty-fifty basis and to replace it with a lease-hold arrangement in which the farmer gives 25 percent of the harvest to the landlord but personally cares for the input and management of the plot with the help of farm management technicians of the Project Teams. The policy of the landlords is to deal with their tenants individually, trying to make arrangements that are less favourable to the tenants. Strong pressure and some intimidation is often applied to tenants to prevent them insisting on their new rights. In order to overcome this opposition, the land reform employees organise potential beneficiaries into groups. Cases are then brought groupwise to court or to the other competent authorities, accompanied by proper support and instructions. Unpleasant experience has made this

necessary: the first tenant to become a lessee as part of the land reform programme, Jeronimo Asto, was assassinated three days after winning his case in 1967. In compensation, his widow was given a job in the Land Authority.

During a first experimental one-week training course organised by the Land Authority, in which leaders of FARM, MASAKA and the new Land Reform Farmers' Associations participated, the Federation of Land Reform Farmers' Associations was created on 12 May, 1970. Local FARM groups and a number of irrigation associations, cooperatives and other local groups merged with the Land Reform Farmers' Associations into this new Federation. Mac Fabian Secretary-General of FARM became president of the Federation. This happened after provincial federations had been formed out of the various municipal and village level organisations in several provinces in which the land reform programme was effective.

New Tensions

New land tenure problems have recently appeared. In several less densely populated areas of the Philippines, large estates are expanding in ways that give the peasantry little esteem for the legitimacy of the present property legislation. In the new settlement areas, the so-called land lease system is creating considerable discontent and is one of the items of the present Constitution of the Philippines that are proposed to be considerably modified in the new Constitution. The present Constitution provides that any citizen may apply for a pasture lease of 2,000 hectares of unoccupied land. This offers great possibilities for aspiring landlords. To ensure that certain tracts of land become unoccupied, settlers are often dislodged either by the local police or by private armed guards in the service of the landlords. As Father Mauri of the Institute of Social Order reported recently:

"The writer has seen in Negros alone three areas been cleared of settlers by armed guards, one with help of an airplane, the areas covering 15,000 hectares. The lease is then granted for a nominal fee for 25 years. The next step is to invite people, included those, who refused to migrate from the land, to cultivate the land as rice or corn tenants. Very seldom can you see any cattle around."

After the 25 year-lease, the landlord has priority to buy the land from the government under very favourable conditions. Father Mauri concluded:

"A great number of such ranches of 2,000 hectares each are granted every year. While the land released to the tenants in the last seven years since the passage of the new Land Reform does hardly reach the size of one such ranch. As a conclusion, it is not unfair to say that if a thorough study

were made of the way the estates were acquired many of them could rightly be expropriated with any compensation."⁴⁹

The frustration among the Filipinos regarding the slow and ineffective implementation of land reform has created a climate in which more radical action to support peasant demands has become necessary. For several months during the summer of 1971, representatives of the various organisations maintained a sit-in before the parliamentary building in Manila where debates were in progress on how to improve the land reform legislation and to make the Land Authority more effective. A drive to involve more and more peasants in the organisations has been initiated, in which Luis Taruc, old-time leader of the Huks, is participating. Taruc was released in 1969 after 15 years imprisonment.

It may well be that if the Philippine government does not accelerate the land reform programme, as desired by the peasants as well as by the officials of the land reform agency, serious unrest may grow again and the remaining active groups of the Huks, now reorganised into the People's Liberation Army, may again rally increasing but now well-organised support.

49. Hector Mauri S.J., Pattern for Revolution in the Philippines. Part II, Land to the Tiller. The Green Revolution (Manila: Institute of Social Order, 1970, mimeogr.), p. 7.