

## Jose Maria Sison, Revolutionary Internationalist and Founder of ILPS

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*We all mourn the passing of **Jose Maria Sison**, Chairman Emeritus of the International League of Struggle since 2016. He is the great leader and driving force in building a worldwide anti-imperialist front led by the revolutionary proletarians to build socialism. He is ILPS personified because he conceptualized, mobilized and organized the ILPS in 2000 and was its indefatigable chairman for ten years.*

In the midst of US imperialist triumphalism with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1994 and the end of the Cold War, imperialism launched a political-ideological offensive exemplified by Francis Fukuyama's declaration of capitalism's victory as the 'end of history' – that class struggle is passe replaced by identity politics, that communism and militant struggle by the masses are passe.

Joma heralded the fightback, releasing the article "Stand for socialism against modern revisionism" clarifying that the path of the onward march for socialism has never been clearer with capitalist restoration as a result of revisionism while the worldwide crisis of monopoly capitalism further deepened. Amidst the ensuing debate amongst revolutionary proletarian parties and organizations he pushed many of them to take the forward path of anti-imperialist and democratic struggle in their countries, and build international coordination of militant mass struggles.

But launching ILPS was not an easy task as the visionary goal of starting with the formation of ILPS as a formation of mass movements and peoples' organizations separate from

political parties met with another round of two years of debate. Its founding in 2000 has proven the timely but difficult work of struggling against the US empire. But it has grown into the largest, most active and militant international movement against imperialism and reaction worldwide.

As a Marxist, Joma has always underscored the revolutionary cause and interest of the proletariat and the masses of the people. Beyond the theoretical and ideological debates in the international communist movement, Joma never lost sight of the focus of the people's struggles, the need to arouse, mobilize and organize the masses in their millions to fight and end imperialism. ILPS has the urgent and critical role to mobilize the mass struggles of the proletarian and semi-proletarian masses, along with other middle forces of the peoples across the world, especially in the semi-feudal and semi-colonial countries of the imperialist periphery.

ILPS is key in building a broad international anti-imperialist united front where mass organizations not only express international solidarity to fight imperialism within different countries but also collaborate internationally in different projects. ILPS develops activities and programs for education and training to raise the capacity of mass organizations in different countries, and advancing them to develop and build their own proletarian revolutionary parties.

Joma has always been a hands-on revolutionary. In ILPS he took charge in the whole process of founding ILPS, seeing through the launch and first assembly, became chairman when Ka Crispin Beltran took ill, and continued performing part of its work as Chairman Emeritus in 2016. He was indefatigable – producing more than 200 statements per year, directed the preparation of meetings, monitored the conduct and run of campaigns and ensured the trouble-shooting when problems cropped up.

Of course, Joma is much more than ILPS. Jose Maria Sison provided comprehensive leadership to the national democratic revolution in the Philippines – the people's war, the democratic mass movement both rural and urban, the broad united front and the elections, the peace talks, and the revolutionary movement of the overseas Filipinos. Joma also was also heavily involved in the building of the international solidarity movement overseas from inception, besides building proletarian internationalist coordination leading to the formation of the ILPS and the broad international antiimperialist united front. We all miss him – his leadership, wisdom, his masterly grasp and wielding of the power of Marxism. He is unbelievable and unparalleled in these times.

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