

## **On the Occasion of the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the founding of the ILPS**

**Let us join together to consistently uphold democratic, anti-imperialist and internationalist principles, serve the masses in their struggles and build up organised resistance against imperialism and all reactionaries!**

On the occasion of the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the International League of Peoples' Struggles (ILPS) on May 25-27, 2001, we the undersigned founding members of the ILPS, announce to all democratic and anti-imperialist forces across the world that 20 months ago, on 21 Nov, 2009, during a meeting of the ICC (International Coordinating Committee), the highest decision making body of the ILPS between International Assemblies, Prof. Jose Maria Sison, chairperson of the ICC, using the pretext of problems that arose during an IMAR (International Alliance of Migrants and Refugees) event in Athens, claiming that there was a threat of "no confidence" in his chairpersonship, proceeded to dissolve the ICG (International Coordinating Group). Giving no heed to protests by other members of ICC and ILPS office-bearers, chairing the meeting he rejected the right of the ICC to hear or discuss any issues, and negated its authority to hear reports and take the opportunity to resolve any problems. In violation of the fundamental spirit of solidarity which has been the basis of our collaboration, Prof. Sison pronounced a series of measures that are tantamount to the liquidation of the ICC and hence ILPS all together.

After 20 months of patient attempts to reverse and repair the consequences of this undemocratic and abusive behaviour, not being allowed to resolve problems internally, we are now compelled to debate the issues openly. During this period, we have not used the name of ILPS, or used the media channels at our disposal in order not to aggravate matters and allow space to resolve these problems. However, this self-proclaimed group, having issued a communiqué under the name of the ICC to the public on Nov 24, 2009, pretending that all is well, has continued to issue statements. We regard all decisions, statements and memos, since Nov 21, 2009 to be invalid as they are not directed by the ICC that was directly elected by the Third International Assembly of the ILPS in June 2008. Further, we do not regard the events planned for July 2011 in Manila as the "4<sup>th</sup> International Assembly" of the ILPS and as such will not join these events which are only designed to rubber stamp the unilateral destructive decisions staged by Prof. Sison and his associates at the failed ICC meeting in Nov 2009.

In the communiqué issued under name of ICC by the same group, there is a reference to re-election of the Prof. Sison as chairperson and others and that "some" ICC members were not elected and that this meeting put an end to a "sectarian" tendency.

In fact, quite beside the negation of the spirit of consensus and collaboration that had been developed within the ILPS, the said communiqué attacks and undermines the historic legacy of the ILPS, belittling its main founding organisations and their initiatives and tireless endeavours to advance the ILPS, labelling them as "sectarian". Since most of the activities under the banner of ILPS consist of these achievements, it must be clear that these attacks are in fact directed against the achievements of the ILPS and indicate a decided rupture from its historic legacy. Events such as Thessaloniki Resistance 2003, Mumbai Resistance 2004, Resistabul 2004, Anti-Imperialist Anti-Capitalist Forum in Athens in 2006, mobilisations during the Anti-G8 and Anti-NATO summits in Glen Eagle, Scotland and Rostock, Germany, on-going campaigns to close down US military bases, No 2 Displacement 2008, International Campaign Against War on People in India 2009 and countless conferences, symposia and mobilisations are some of the major projects that were led by the very organisations under attack.

Today, this authoritarian and bureaucratic group, organising an event in Manila, hopes to consolidate these undemocratic actions and cover them up by branding them as the “4<sup>th</sup> International Assembly of the ILPS”, without explaining what has happened in the ICC, while members of the ILPS remain largely unaware of this affair.

At this juncture, after a decade of collective efforts, on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of founding of the ILPS, we wish to publicly defend the spirit of the unity that was nurtured and fostered in the ILPS and uphold the achievement of our collective work in struggle against imperialism and reaction that is now being vilified in such unprincipled manner.

ILPS was founded with the full knowledge of the existence of ideological and political differences within the people’s movement in general and most importantly recognised the urgent necessity of unity to fight against imperialism and all reaction. From the outset, mechanisms for discussion and dialogues were put in place to facilitate collaboration and also address differences maintaining consensus and unity. But from the beginning a hegemonist, bureaucratic and a sectarian line was visible. However, we believed that so long as dialogue and mutual respect was held in place any adverse effects of such a tendency could be contained.

From the First International Assembly (FIA – May 25-27, 2001) till the Second International Assembly (SIA – November 11-14, 2004) this dialogue was maintained in a healthy way and consensus was maintained. At the SIA, held in the Netherlands, there were disruptive attempts to impose views that were supportive of China (a restored capitalist and emerging imperialist power) and other reactionary states. Such a line negating the ILPS charter was rejected by the gathering. Although this line was rejected during the Assembly nevertheless it continued to persist.

At this Assembly, the newly elected ICC meeting, elected Prof. JM Sison as the chairperson of the ICC. From the 2nd International Assembly (SIA) till the 3rd International Assembly (TIA) held in Hong Kong, in June 2008, while dialogue and discussion continued to exist and many actions and projects were undertaken, increasingly, there was reference to the ILPS chair as “chief spokesperson” of the ILPS as charter of the ILPS recognises – but more and more the role of the chairperson was being interpreted as the “sole spokesperson” of the ILPS by his associates. This became a problem as increasingly the other officers of the ILPS were effectively demobilised. However, believing that the ILPS is still in a stage of evolving into a mature organisation, we assumed that so long as the line expressed by the ILPS chair was representative of the collective, this issue could be resolved. However, soon after taking up his post, the first signs of departure occurred when Prof. Sison imposed “his method of leadership”. The chairperson establishing his office began to issue statements and directives without consulting with other elected officers representing different member organisations, a trend and practice that continued till Nov 2009. This practice was against Prof. Sison’s own earlier memos and recommendations (issued during 2001-2004 acting as the ILPS General Consultant) that suggested wider consultation and inclusivity of ICC members in preparation of drafts and statements by the ICG and the general secretariat.

In April 2005, on the 50th anniversary of the Bandung conference (1955), the office of the chairperson without any consultation with other office-bearers or members of the ICC issued a statement signed by the chairperson of the ICC that openly declared that the ILPS was “guided by the spirit of Bandung”. In fact up to that moment, the name Bandung, let alone its spirit had never entered our minds or discussion in public, during meetings or in any private meeting. No doubt such views do exist and continue to exist within the ranks of the people movements inside and outside the ILPS. However, many believe that the Bandung Conference was a departure from and alien to the spirit of internationalism, as it confused the front of the workers and other oppressed in each country with the reactionaries and comprador states that took advantage of the anti-colonial and anti-imperialist sentiments of the masses of people to legitimise and consolidate their own

domination and privileged position in each country. As such, the “spirit of Bandung” cannot be regarded as a guide or foundation for an initiative that is based on an alliance of democratic and anti-imperialist mass formations. Beside the undemocratic nature of making such claims as an officer of the ILPS, it simply is not true that ILPS was founded with such a guiding spirit. The very idea of ILPS being part of a “non-aligned” movement that followed the principles of “non interference” and respect for UN charters was in fact alien to the charter of the ILPS. The ILPS charter defines the organisation as an alliance of democratic and anti-imperialist mass formations and as an organisation that is not attached to or extension of any state, party or religious establishment. ILPS was founded on the spirit of tireless internationalism which necessarily meant that peoples’ movements would unite on the basis of “Your enemy is my enemy! Your fight is my fight!” This implies by its very nature that we must engage in active solidarity struggles with each other and other people’s just struggles.

The ILPS was founded on clear principles. Its charter dictates that it is an independent organisation—independent of imperialism and all reactionary governments. ILPS took efforts to distinguish itself from the World Social Forum. Interestingly, propagandists and leading members of social democracy, civil society groups and funded NGOs too, express their pride in the fact that the World Social Forum (WSF) was actually built on the “spirit of Bandung”. Clearly, the WSF was a movement that was built for the purpose humanising imperialism, designed to help contain the rising tide of popular resistance, promote reform, undermine movements for social liberation and blur or mystify the need to smash the imperialist system before a new and a better world could be built. In contrast, the ILPS was built on the concept of the need to unite to provide international support for national and social liberation struggle of peoples of the world against imperialism and all reaction. This was reaffirmed through attaching prime importance to its first topical concern.

Increasingly, the office of the chair continued to issue contentious statements expressing opinions that perhaps accommodated the views of a section of the ILPS but not the views of the whole organisation. This continued till after the Third International Assembly where relations were becoming more difficult. Increasingly, the office of the chairperson rather than acting as representative of the collective views of the ILPS was acting unilaterally as the sole authority that expected and demanded that others follow without criticism.

In January 2009, the ILPS chairperson without consulting any member of ICG and against the advice of the general secretary and particularly, without consulting the vice chair for external affairs dispatched a member of his staff to participate in the “Beirut conference” (called the “International Forum for Resistance, Anti-Imperialism, Solidarity between Peoples and Alternatives”). This was to be a representative of an organisation in the Philippines who would also double up as a representative of the ILPS at this conference. Without a doubt, this conference, which was hosted by an affiliate of Hezbollah (Party of God) in Lebanon, was designed as a public relations exercise of the Iranian foreign ministry. A representative from Hezbollah opened the meeting and amongst the list of participants are the representatives of Ministry of Information from Iran.

In February 2009, this issue was cause for heated discussions at the annual meeting of the ICC where vice chair for external affairs and other members of the ICC opposed and rejected the report of representative from the office of the chair that had attended this conference, forestalling the intended ICC endorsement of this surprising and unauthorized engagement with the Beirut Conference by Prof. Sison.

Quite beside the undemocratic attitude adopted by the chair in lack of consultation and taking advice, this was another sign of his imposing a line that was alien to ILPS, a line that blurred the boundaries between people and their enemies.

Barely six months before Beirut Conference, in June 2008, during its plenary session, the Third International Assembly of the ILPS, approved a resolution marking the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the massacre of 18,000 political prisoners in Iran, in the summer 1988, by the reactionary regime of Islamic republic. The resolution also pledged ILPS's full support for the rising tide of struggle amongst workers, students, women and national minorities in Iran. Yet the ILPS chair was sending his representative to an event to portray this reactionary regime in good light for the international public opinion.

The Communiqué issued by Prof. Sison and his associates in the name of the ICC on Nov 24, in order to cover up their undemocratic behaviour and justify their actions, accuses the members of the ICC who are demanding thorough discussion of political issues and the general line, the development of policies with consensus, adherence to the democratic process and the accountability of ILPS officers, of "confuse(ing) ideological building of parties with the ILPS as a broad united front of mass organizations along the anti-imperialist and democratic line and misconstrue(ing) united front policy and work as opportunism." These accusations are clearly false, when viewed in the light of the exemplary mass initiatives, over many years, led by the ICC members and organizations which have come under attack.

The undemocratic and autocratic behaviour of Prof. Sison and associates is unjustifiable and is condemnable, whether one is engaged in building a party or an alliance of mass formations in any one country, let alone an international alliance and coordination body of mass formations such as the ILPS.

Thus, the events in Athens and the role that the ILPS Chairperson played in aggravating differences and using his position to vilify others rather than act as an overseer and an arbiter must be seen in the light of such a backdrop of a growing tendency alien to the spirit of ILPS that ended up in the bureaucratic behaviour culminating in the undemocratic and liquidationist decisions at the ICC in Nov 2009.

We are living through one of the worst economic crises of the world capitalist system, which during the last 3 years alone has brought untold havoc to the lives of workers and the oppressed peoples around the world. The all-round ongoing offensives of the imperialist powers and reactionaries against the peoples of the world are unable to contain the rising tide of widespread protests and resistance struggles. The current upheavals and mass mobilisations in the Middle East, as in other places around the world, are a direct product of this crisis and the worsening condition of life for the vast majority of the people of the world.

Regional uprisings of the widest sections of the masses of peoples has led to the toppling of some long-time puppets but has not led to a decided rupture and break from the imperialist system. While various imperialist powers unite to contain the spontaneous mass uprisings and suppress the revolutionary struggles of the peoples of the world – resorting to violence, aggression and war – they continue to contend with one another to expand their spheres of influence, domination, and re-division of the world.

It is under such conditions that reactionaries everywhere attempt to utilise the just struggles of the masses of people to consolidate their position. US imperialism, the worst violator of democracy and people's rights at home and abroad portrays itself as the champion of democracy. Reactionaries of all sorts tied with thousand strings to the imperialist system portray themselves as "anti-imperialist" and anti-American hegemony. Without a doubt the victory for the cause of national and social liberation of the people everywhere lies in unwavering opposition and consistent struggle against all imperialist powers and all reactionaries. Clearly, the struggle for democracy is inseparable from the struggle against imperialism and reaction.

Only a clear and consistent line, following democratic and anti-imperialist principles, is capable of providing the firm basis for the unity of the people's movement. In May 2001, the ILPS was founded on these very principles and values. Today, more than at any time in the past there is an urgent need for dialogue, discussion and collaboration, to realise the principled internationalist unity of democratic and anti-imperialist forces across the world. Only in this way will we be able to bring much needed support and solidarity with the front line of the peoples struggle across the globe, and facilitate an effective framework for unity in struggle in the more difficult conditions.

As founding members of ILPS representing mass organisations in our countries in different global regions and as directly elected officers of the ILPS we reaffirm our commitment to serve these high objectives, build on the achievements of the ILPS, its charter and founding spirit. We take full responsibility for our own short comings and weaknesses for allowing such deprecating, divisive attitudes and lines to take hold against the interests of the ILPS and the global peoples' struggles.

We pledge our commitment to take steps reaching out to all people's mass formations to rebuild the unity of the democratic and anti-imperialist forces based on the positive experiences and achievements of the ILPS underpinned by the unwavering spirit of internationalism and active solidarity in our struggles against imperialism and reaction everywhere. On this occasion, drawing lessons from this experience, we also collectively resolve to fight to end undemocratic, bureaucratic and authoritarian ways of functioning in people's organisations. We invite all democratic and anti-imperialist forces to join us in this endeavour!

In solidarity,

**GN Saibaba** – Revolutionary Democratic Front (RDF) – India

*Deputy Chairperson of ILPS ICC (TIA), Regional Coordinator for South Asia*

**M Arkolakis** – Committee Against Military Bases and Dependency of Greece – Greece

*Vice Chairperson for External Affairs (FIA, SIA and TIA), Regional coordinator for Europe*

**A Riazi** – Democratic Anti-imperialist Organisation of Iranians in Britain – Iran

*General Secretary (IIC, FIA, SIA and TIA)*

**E Brunner** – Umut Publications – Austria

*Deputy General Secretary (TIA)*

**R Scarlatelli** – Brazilian Centre for Peoples Solidarity, CEBRASPO – Brazil

*Member ICC (FIA, SIA and TIA), Regional Coordinator for Latin America*

**H Gulum** – Belidiye Is 2 Nolu Subesi (Civil Servants Union) – Turkey

*Member ICC (FIA, SIA and TIA)*

**D Norberg** – Collision Course Media, US

*Member ICC (alternate SIA, TIA)*

**Kali Akuno** – Malcolm X Grassroots Movement (MXGM) – US

*Member ICC (SIA, TIA)*

**Y Gunes** – Federation of Workers from Turkey in Holland (HTIF, Member of ATIK) – Netherlands

*Member ICC (TIA)*

**A Genc** – Federation of Workers from Turkey in Germany (ATIF, Member of ATIK) – Germany

*Member ICC (SIA, TIA)*

**Prof K R Chowdry** – Vistapan Virodhi Jan Vikas Andolan – India

*Member ICC (TIA)*

**C Perperidou** – Class March – Greece

*Alternate member of ICC (SIA, TIA)*

02/07/2011

Contact: [info@ilps2001.com](mailto:info@ilps2001.com)

Sent through: [info-bureau@lists.ilps-news.com](mailto:info-bureau@lists.ilps-news.com)

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