

1953 - 2003

FFF 1991 N

Gintong Kasaysayan



tungo sa

Gintong Kinabukasan

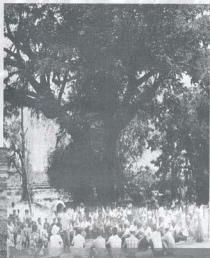
FEDERATION OF FREE FARMERS (FFF)
50th Anniversary
Souvenir Program



The anniversary logo is a combination of elements representing the spirit of the FFF peasant movement. The two circles symbolize the Federation's rich yesteryears and its promising future, both of which are linked together by a pathway. This path is a reminder that the institutional wisdom the FFF shall employ in its journey to the future finds strength in its historic struggles in the past. The *palay* stands for the movement's progress, collective strength and prosperity - as seen in its broad membership base and the structures it has instituted for the betterment of the peasant sector. The handshake symbolizes the spirit of brotherhood or *kapatiran* that pervades the ranks of the farmer-members of FFF. The carabao, meanwhile, is the animal reminiscent of fields and paddies, the farmer's workhorse - sturdy, robust, and unfaltering like its master. Similarly, the plow is the farmer's primary tool, symbolizing his hard work and sweat in toiling for the nation. The three mountains, representing Luzon, Visayas and Mindano, stand for the wide foothold of the Federation throughout the Philippines. The laurel is the emblem of heroism and triumph, fashioned in a cradling position to symbolize its nurturing role in the movement. Finally, the Crown and the Cross, which denote the FFF's foundation day on the Feast of Christ the King, also evoke how deeply entrenched the movement's philosophy is in the social teachings of the Church.

"We shall teach the masses the mysteries of the Sacred Host
but we must first begin with a grain of rice. We shall teach them
the lessons of the Cross. But we must first begin with the plow."

- FFF Founder and President Jeremias U. Montemayor
Commencement Address to the 1954 Class of the Ateneo de Tuguegarao






FFF - A GOLDEN JOURNEY

At the heart of this country lies the farmer
- humble despite his vital national role
yet firm in his social task.

Quietly, he toils every day for the country.
And for many years, he kept his silence,
his voice hidden in the cracks of the soil he plows.

The success of the Federation of Free Farmers (FFF)
lies in motivating the farmer to liberate himself
from the chains of injustice. Fifty golden years into its history,
the FFF, one of the country's largest peasant organizations,
has given the Filipino peasantry hope in uplifting the depressed
conditions in the countryside.

The FFF is anchored on the principle that the farmer is the backbone
of the nation; his work on the land is central to the economy.
Despite their huge contributions to the country, however, farmers often fall prey
to abusive landlords and traders. Thus, the FFF promotes the philosophy
of total human development by helping the farmers acquire
the legal help, political strength, economic power, and religious conviction
that would help bring about their freedom from bondage and servility.



For the FFF, self-reliance is the key to a solid organization of peasants, by the peasants, and for the peasants. This framework has earned the FFF the sustained support of thousands of peasants and other rural workers.

The FFF has been instrumental in the passage of laws and implementation of programs that aided the peasants in their struggle for social justice. These include the Agricultural Tenancy Act (Republic Act 1199), the Agricultural Land Reform Code of 1963 (RA 3844), and the Code of Agrarian Reforms (RA 6389).

But what gives a unique identity to the FFF is a truly Filipino ideology that is based on Christian social teachings which has been rigorously ingrained in its members.

Against the backdrop of centuries of hardship and poverty affecting Filipino farmers, the history of the FFF is one rich in resistance to injustice and perseverance in achieving lasting reform. With its 50th anniversary theme, *"Gintong Kasaysayan tungo sa Gintong Kinabukasan,"* the FFF sounds the call to renew and continue its spirited journey into the next half-century.



"More than 30 years na ako sa samahan, 1969 ako pumasok. Marami sa mga kasama ko ang namatay na. Pero marami rin sa mga kasama natin buhay pa ngayon pero patay na ang espiritu sa samahan. Pero ako kahit na wala na akong hininga, FFF pa rin ako! Ang sabi ko nga, sana ang Panginoon ang pagkuha sa akin ay 'lump sum' hindi '20-20.' Kasi ang inalis muna Niya sa akin ang paningin ko. Pero maski ganito ako at kung sa mga susunod na seminar ay hindi na ako makadalo, ang espiritu ko ang makakasama niyo. Kahit na patay na ako, FFF pa rin ako."

- FFF member Edito Manco



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Anniversary

2003

GINTONG KASAYSAYAN
tungo sa
GINTONG KINABUKASAN



FEDERATION of FREE FARMERS PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It is with a feeling of great pride and satisfaction that I greet all the members, officers, friends and supporters of the FFF on the occasion of the organization's 50th anniversary since its founding during the Feast of Christ the King last October 25, 1953.

But proud as we deserve to be, we also stand humbled and awed by the great sacrifices and achievements of our predecessors, led by our founder and late President, Jerry Montemayor.

Truly, the FFF has written a glorious history during its first fifty years of existence.

The accomplishments are too many to recount here. Among those that immediately come to mind are the dramatic advances in agrarian reform legislation and the introduction of new concepts and programs prescribing urban land reform, integrated social forestry, sectoral representation in the legislative bodies of national and local governments, and crop insurance, to name a few.


On a quieter though equally important level, we can cite our significant work in organizing cooperatives among our farmers, fisherfolk and agricultural workers, which have increased their incomes and livelihood opportunities.

And we continue to have our own representative in Congress through our party-list organization, the ABA (*Alyansang Bayanihan ng mga Magsasaka, Manggagawang-Bukid at Mangingisda*).

But perhaps the FFF's most lasting legacy is the ideology and spirit that has been inculcated in the hearts and minds of all of us. This orientation lives on in a new generation of farmers and social activists within and outside the FFF movement.

Revolutionary concepts on the dignity of the farmer, on property ownership, on leadership, on social justice and political reform. They were, and remain, our sources of inspiration and motivation. They were, and continue to be, the philosophical basis for new legislation, policies and programs of government.

As we meet here today, recalling our colorful past, we know that we cannot rest on our laurels. We must look forward and continue our journey. Inspired by our golden history and refreshed by the friendships and camaraderie renewed after so many years, let us now move on, to an even more challenging and glorious future.


LEONARDO Q. MONTEMAYOR



No. 0350

ANG MAGSASAKANG PILIPINO AY
SIYANG GULUGOD NG BANSA
—JEREMIAS U. MONTEMAYOR

"Kailangang kumilos ng mabisa ang
bataang Magsasakang Pilipino upang
tunay na PAG-ASA ng BAYAN
ANG MALAYANG M...





Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

HON. DIOSCORO A. GRANADA
Congressman

Alyansang Bayanihan ng mga Magsasaka
Manggagawang-Bukid at Mangginginda (ABA)

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MESSAGE

...ion of Free Farmers (FFF) on its Golden
... social, political,
... its fifty



MESSAGE


My heartfelt felicitations to the Federation of Free Farmers (FFF) on its Golden Anniversary!

The FFF has always been at the forefront of the battle against the social, political, economic, moral and, cultural oppression of our farmers and their families. Through its fifty years of existence, it has championed the rights and welfare of farmers and farmworkers by continuously pushing for an agrarian reform and rural development program that would enable the latter to own, directly or collectively, the land they till or receive a just share in the fruits thereof. It has likewise been vigilant in ensuring that laws aimed at the political and economic empowerment of rural workers are fully implemented.

The Alyansang Bayanihan ng mga Magsasaka, Manggagawang-bukid, at Mangingisda (ABA) will forever be grateful at having you as our ally in shaping our government's policies and programs towards the peasantry. Indeed, your unwavering commitment and active participation in advancing the interests of our farmers will continue to inspire us in coming up with better legislation and projects for the benefit of the agricultural sector of our society.

The past fifty years had been very productive for the FFF, I am very confident that with a strong leadership and a more enlightened membership the next fifty years would even be more rewarding.

Once again, congratulations and more power!



HON. DIOSCORO A. GRANADA
Congressman

*Alyansang Bayanihan ng mga Magsasaka
Manggagawang-bukid at Mangingisda (ABA)*

1950



1960



1970



1980



1990



"Yung ideology pala natin, na dito ko lang nalaman, yung Love, Truth and Justice. Yun talaga ang tema ng organization e. Bakit ka nag-join ng FFF? Gusto ko kasi yung katotohanan, pagmamahalan, at hustisya. So kung nasa iyo yung tatlo na iyon... Malawak na ang ibig sabihin noon... Almost complete na. Biro mo sa isang organization, bakit ka nandadaya, e di walang hustisya. Yung dinadaya mo, ibig sabihin noon, wala ka ring pagmamahal doon. At siyempre dinadaya mo, walang katotohanan yung sinasabi mo palagi. Kaya yung Love, Truth, and Justice na pinagtututunan natin, na pinagsesentrohan natin, nandoon na yun talaga. Saan naman galing yun? Kung meron kang pag-ibig, nasa iyo ang Panginoon. Hindi ba sa Panginoon din yung Love, Truth and Justice?"

- FFF member Saturnino Distor

"Ang nakita ko, ang FFF ay dumedepensa sa mga kapus-palad. So parang doon ako nakumbinse. Yung para sa masa kasi. Palibhasa, born mahirap tayo. Yun Ideology ng FFF maliwanag. Hindi katulad ng ibang samahan na seasonal. Samahan lang sila pag may problema. Samahan lang sila pag may ipinaglalaban. Pero FFF sa tingin ko, nung umpisa pa lang e, nakumbinse kaagad ako na ito'y pang habang-buhay. Hindi lang siya pana-panahon. Ang isa pang nakakumbinse sa akin, e yung walang itinatanggi. Kahit na sabihing ikaw ay mahirap, basta nandoon ka sa hanay ng peasant group, welcome ka doon sa FFF. Basta hindi lang siya nag-exploit ng kapwa."

- FFF member Leonilo Binalangbang



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th
Anniversary

The journey of the FFF is made golden by leaps and milestones, ordeals and sacrifices, and an evolving ideology set against a shifting national milieu.

Amid all these changes, the FFF stands unwavering in its adherence to the original principle and values it was founded on – self-development through empowerment and a strong commitment to truth, love, and justice. With 50 golden years into its history, the FFF celebrates the vital crossroads that have marked its growth as a movement.

PIVOTAL JUNCTIONS in the HISTORY of the FEDERATION of FREE FARMERS

Pivotal Junctions in the History of the Federation of Free Farmers

Leaps and Milestones

Jeremias Montemayor establishes the Federation of Free Farmers in San Fernando, Pampanga to provide a radical but peaceful alternative to semi-feudal conditions in the countryside. The FFF issues its manifesto, which calls upon the Filipino peasantry to unite and fight for genuine liberation and development.

53-56. FFF chapters are organized in 28 out of 53 provinces, with a total membership of 40,000.

FFF works out the resettlement of 2,500 landless families through the National Resettlement and Rehabilitation Administration and the Land Tenure Administration.

FFF contributes to and supports the enactment of the Agricultural Tenancy Act (Republic Act No. 1199). The law, among others, strengthens the security of tenure of tenant-farmers and institutes a 70-30 sharing scheme in their favor.

FFF signs a pioneering master contract with landlord association Ding Macabalen of Concepcion, Tarlac. Though weakly implemented, the contract aims to regulate tenancy relations between FFF members and their landlords.

Ordeals and Sacrifices

One of the first cases of Jerry Montemayor as a new lawyer is a tenancy case involving his own mother and her tenants in his hometown in Bisocol, Alaminos, Pangasinan. The founder ends up defending the tenants against his own mother.

53-65. The FFF pioneers face many difficulties. Organizing peasant farmers has been associated with the subversive movement or with corrupt operators out to take advantage of farmers desperate with land-related problems. Working as volunteers, the leaders of the Federation have to spend time away from their families and to sacrifice their own money to do organizing work in the barrios.

The FFF's first national office is part of a World War II-damaged building at the back of the old Ateneo law school along Padre Faura, Manila.

Many farmers see the organization as a provider of legal and other services and do not see the necessity of sustaining it financially.

Ideological Stance

The first leaders of the FFF are imbued with the Christian principles of service to the farmers and dedication to a noble cause. They endeavor to offer a Christian alternative of thoroughgoing but non-violent reform.

National Milieu

Early 50s. Agrarian unrest grips the rural areas, especially in Central Luzon. Soon, however, President Ramon Magsaysay will break the back of the HUK rebellion with a combination of military and socio-civic initiatives and reforms.



Since the Spanish colonizers installed a feudal system of agriculture, Filipino peasants experience decades of oppression and injustice.

1953

1954

"The mind of the farmer now lies smoldering in disillusionment. But his spirit has not been broken. He looks around for a new hope, a new leadership."

*- FFF Founder and President Jeremias U. Montemayor
Commencement Address to the 1954 Class of the Ateneo de Tuguegarao*



Jeremias U. Montemayor, despite hailing from the landlord class, pioneers a peasant movement.



FFF President Jeremias Montemayor, together with FFF officers, meet with President Ramon Magsaysay in Bicol to thresh out peasants' problems.

Pivotal Junctions in the History of the Federation of Free Farmers

Leaps and Milestones

Ordeals and Sacrifices

Ideological Stance

National Milieu

Late 50's to early 60's: FFF expands into the Visayas, especially in Negros and Panay islands. It organizes strikes and other mass actions among the *sacadas* (seasonal workers), who are working in sugarcane plantations in Negros, to protest against their exploitative conditions. Some *hacenderos* call the FFF as "Fire, Fire, Fire" for allegedly burning their sugarcane.

The Junior Free Farmers (JFF), FFF's youth arm, is established.



FFF members picket before the Victorias Milling Company in Victorias, Negros Occidental to protest its maltreatment of sugar workers who, under the company's milling agreement, were deprived of their legally mandated shares in milling proceeds.

FFF files a class suit against Victorias Milling Company, Asia's biggest sugar mill, and some 600 sugar planters in Negros Occidental to nullify the respondents' milling agreement, which deprived some 30,000 sugar workers of their mandated share in milling proceeds under the Sugar Act of 1952 (R.A. No. 809). The amount the workers seek to recover in the "Swindle of the Century" case reaches P500 million, the largest in Philippine judicial history.

President Diosdado Macapagal appoints FFF President Jeremias U. Montemayor as member of the presidential committee that will draft the proposed Agricultural Land Reform Code. The bill becomes law (R.A. No. 3844) on August 8, and (among others) converts sharehold tenants into lessees on a "proclaimed area" basis and created the Land Bank of the Philippines.

Early 60's. As the leaders gain experience in dealing with the peasantry, they realize social welfare activities and legal services are not enough to achieve lasting reform. The FFF must also engage strongly in socio-political action. Towards this end, they begin to reach out to other sectors, particularly the religious and the studentry. Grounded in the social doctrine of the Catholic Church, FFF leaders begin to apply these teachings to national concerns, such as the role of farmers in Philippine society, social justice, agrarian reform, economic development, and farmers' empowerment.

Early 60's. While the Philippines ranks second to Japan in economic development, semi-feudal conditions fester in the countryside.

President Macapagal prevails upon Congress to enact the Agricultural Land Reform Code.

1958

1963

"July 1958, dumating dito si Dean Montemayor... Nagpaliwanag doon kay Mang Peping Crisostomo. Ang father ko, magsasaka. Nakinig. Hanggang sa susunod na linggo nag-schedule uli ng meeting. Naanyayahan ako ng father ko na sumama doon. Noong nakikinig ako noon, sinabi ko na mabuting organization ito."

– former FFF Laguna president Deogracias Alcasabas



FFF holds leadership and other seminars as part of its development program.



FFF goes beyond providing its members with legal and economic support by moral guidance in the peasantry's struggle for advancement.

"...Nabago din 'yong isip ng farmer na ang simbahan anti-peasant. Palagay ko, doon din siguro nagumpisa, because of the involvement of the FFF ...doon na nag-umpisa 'yong Church of the poor concept sa simbahan, na yon pala ang correct approach.

– former FFF National Chaplain Fr. Pio Eugenio, SVD

Pivotal Junctions in the History of the Federation of Free Farmers

Leaps and Milestones

Ordeals and Sacrifices

Ideological Stance

National Milieu

1964

The FFF, together with other national farmers and farmworkers organizations, sets up the Philippine Council for Agrarian Workers (PCAW). Jeremias Montemayor is elected President.

The Free Farmers Cooperative, Inc. (FFCI) is founded as the FFF's economic arm.

Jeremias Montemayor's book, *Ours To Share*, seeks to apply Catholic social teachings to Philippine socio-economic conditions. Together with another book, *Philippine Socio-Economic Problems* (published in 1971), they become the "bible" of many social activists.

1966



FFF presses for the farmer's ownership of land, as manifested in the involvement of its president in the drafting of the Agricultural Land Reform Code.

66-72. The involvement of young activists and the religious brings new vigor, ideas and resources into the organization. As the FFF expands rapidly, it has to deal with a mushrooming list of legal and organizational problems and challenges. In the early 70s, the divide between the so-called "technocrats" and some veteran leaders becomes more pronounced.



Student volunteers heavily participate in the mass activities of FFF

"Malaking bagay 'yong entry ng Federation of Free Farmers.
Kasi what is spirituality kung wala kang witnessing.
Kung wala kang ginawa sa kapwa mo? What is your spirituality?
Almost nothing. That is what gives meaning to life."

- Imelda de la Cruz
pioneering teacher of Maryknoll High School in Sigaboy, Davao Oriental



Through the FFF, the notion
of a Church for the poor
becomes more concrete.



Through its religious programs,
FFF espouses spirituality as the
bedrock of existence.



"Sabi ni Fr. Pio (Eugenio), 'Pag-aralan mo ito, itong Bible na ito...
heto pa ang karagdagan.' 'Ano yan?' 'Mater et Magistra.'
'Baka di ko maintindihan yan?' 'Hindi, Tagalog yan.'
Binasa-basa ko 'yong Bibliya at 'yong papal encyclical
na 'Mater et Magistra.' Nakita ko sa Bibliya na 'yong trabaho ko
sa una kong samahan, malayo pala sa katotohanan.
At 'yong ginagawa ng FFF, nakita ko sa 'Mater et Magistra'.
Eto pala ang linya ng FFF!"

- Former FFF Rizal President Miguel Cruz
Taken from his speech to the Workers for Christ the Worker (WCW)
in Bayambang, Pangasinan in 1986

Pivotal Junctions in the History of the Federation of Free Farmers

Leaps
and
Milestones

Ordeals and Sacrifices

Ideological Stance

National Milieu

The Federation starts conducting the 35-day Leadership Formation Course (LFC) for organizers. At the same time, it intensifies its orientation work among religious, youth and other sectoral allies.

FFF joins the International Catholic Rural Association, based in Rome, Italy and the International Federation of Plantation, Agricultural and Allied Workers (IFPAAW) based in Geneva, Switzerland.

FFF starts organizing in Davao Oriental, then in other areas of Mindanao. Hundreds of pre-membership seminars, called mini-LFCs, are held, resulting in a strong mass base in the South.

Late 60s. The FFF has developed a fairly comprehensive ideological platform, which is incorporated into its Leadership Formation Course, its mini-LFC, pre-membership seminars and other educational activities.

Late 60s. Following Vatican II reforms, the Church in the Philippines shows greater interest and involvement in social action.

There is an increase in mass demonstrations and other forms of unrest especially among youth and peasants, culminating in the declaration of martial law.

FFF's two-month picket before the Bureau of Lands in Agrifina Circle resolves many long pending land cases, resulting in the distribution of thousands of hectares of public and private lands to members. Responding to FFF demands, President Ferdinand E. Marcos creates the Presidential Coordinating Committee on Social Justice and Agrarian Reforms (PCCSJAR), which institutionalizes an inter-agency approach to action on critical land disputes. The PCCSJAR is the forerunner of the Presidential Action Committee on Land Problems (PACLAP) and the Commission on the Settlement of Land Problems (COSLAP), which are later on also created upon the insistence of the FFF.



FFF's two-month demonstration in Agrilina Circle results in the distribution of thousands of hectares of lands to farmers.

"You felt that you were doing something very relevant for the country."

- FFF student-volunteer Sally Munsayac-Bulatao



FFF President Jeremias U. Montemayor meets with Kbi Rho youth members led by leader Manuel Arejola (with headband) during the Agrifina Circle demonstration in 1968. At left (with dark glasses) is Noel Mondejar, head of the Local Affairs Department.

"Tinuro sa amin ni Dean na maging consistent ka sa principles mo. Kung sasabihin mo na pagka pula, pula, hindi maka-violet. Hanggang ngayon, I'm trying to live up to it. Kasi nakita namin eh. Sa mga paglalaban namin sa mga land cases, walang compromise. Ang dami-dami naming napa-titulo - sa Quezon, sa Mindanao...!"

- FFF officer Asuncion Nacario

Pivotal Junctions in the History of the Federation of Free Farmers

Leaps and Milestones

Ordeals and Sacrifices

Ideological Stance

National Milieu

66-72. Numerous demonstrations, pickets and other mass actions are undertaken by FFF and allied groups throughout the Philippines. In the remote Anakan Lumber Company logging area in Gingoog City, Misamis Oriental, several hundred FFF members and their family members stage their version of "people power" by lying in front of the company's bulldozers to prevent the demolition of their homes and farms. A number of FFF organizers are assassinated, such as Pedring Aquino of Doctlong 1st, San Clemente, Tarlac and Lucio Abello of Matalom, Leyte.



Mass activities form part of the FFF's political action program.

1970

Pope Paul VI appoints Jeremias Montemayor together with then Karol Cardinal Wojtyla (now Pope John Paul II) as Consultor, and later Member, of the Pontifical Council for the Laity.



Jeremias U. Montemayor at a meeting of the Pontifical Council of the Laity. Karol Cardinal Wojtyla (now Pope John Paul II) sits second from left.

FFF establishes the Dilag ng Kalipunan, its women's arm, and helps organize the Federation of Free Teachers (FFT).

The FFF enters the electoral arena. Three FFF leaders became Constitutional Convention delegates. Scores of FFF members join the local elections.

1971

FFF leaders Camilo Sabio and Gaudioso Buen of Davao and Timoteo Ruben of Misamis Occidental are elected delegates to the 1971 Constitutional Convention. FFF leaders play a key role in setting up a political party, the Kapisanan ng mga Malayang Mamamayan (KAMAYAN), which fields several hundred candidates in the 1971 local elections.

Detained for the "occupation" of Department of Justice Secretary Vicente Abad Santos' office are FFF Secretary-General Charlie Avila, Vice President Eddie Vinita, Barangay chapter President Estoy dela Peña and Fr. Ed Garcia at the Western Police District in 1971.



Pivotal Junctions in the History of the Federation of Free Farmers

Leaps and Milestones

Ordeals and Sacrifices

Ideological Stance

National Milieu

As a result of the FFF-led 84-day picket before Congress, the Code of Agrarian Reforms of the Philippines (R.A. No. 6389) and its financing statute (R.A. No. 6390) are enacted. R.A. 6389 converts the entire country into a "land reform (leasehold) area," and creates the Department of Agrarian Reform.

President Ferdinand Marcos signs into law in 1972 Presidential Decree 27, or the Tenant Emancipation Act, in Malacahang



FFF, together with the Philippine Association of Free Labor Unions (PAFLU) and the Philippine Confederation of Trade Unions (PHILCONTU), form the national labor-peasant alliance, *Kapulungang Anak-Pawis ng Pilipinas* (KAPP).

FFF and its allied organizations publish *Toward a Filipino Ideology*, which presents the detailed philosophy and program of the movement.

President Marcos signs into law the Tenant Emancipation Decree (P.D. No. 27) on October 21, in the presence of FFF leaders in Malacahang.

72-74. Following the proclamation of martial law, many FFF chapters (especially in Mindanao) shift their attention to organizing self-financed and self-managed cooperatives.

The declaration of martial law results in the arrest of many FFF leaders in the provinces. The FFF leadership works overtime to secure their release.

There are reports of members burning or burying their FFF membership booklets or T-shirts because of fear of harassment by the military and the Constabulary.

The changed political situation exacerbates the earlier tensions within the FFF. Although the FFF National Policy Board (NPB) has taken a stance of "critical collaboration" with President Marcos, a small but influential group of officers want the organization to be more critical of, or adversarial to, Marcos.

The FFF movement's philosophy and program are formalized in the document, *Toward a Filipino Ideology*.

72-81. Throughout the martial law era, the FFF remains consistent in its role of upholding peasants' rights and interests especially in the area of land reform, cooperative development, and political representation.

Under the FFF's policy of "critical collaboration", it supports policies and programs assisting farmers (e.g., PD 27) but denounces abuses and other irregularities in government (military/Constabulary wrongdoings, imposition of Samahang Nasyon program, coconut levy scam, etc.).

The FFF enters into linkages with other peasant and labor groups in order to have a stronger voice and protection vis-à-vis government.

This period also ushers in a dramatic upsurge in FFF's economic activities through the organization of cooperatives.

Martial law is declared on September 21.

1972



Farmers learn the basics of business through the Free Farmers' Cooperative, Inc. More importantly, FFCI is able to instill in the members the value of self-reliance.

"Filipinos in general knew only one kind of group business enterprise - the corporation (aside from the partnership)... By contrast, a cooperative is supposed to have much more numerous members, specially coming from the poorer sectors of society."

- FFF Founder and President Jeremias U. Montemayor

Pivotal Junctions in the History of the Federation of Free Farmers

Leaps and Milestones

Ordeals and Sacrifices

Ideological Stance

National Milieu

1973

73-82. FFF is instrumental in the issuance of various laws such as P. D. No. 316 and subsequent amendatory laws (penalizing harassment/ejectment of tenant-farmers), P.D. No. 946 (prescribing new rules of procedure in agrarian courts), Letter of Instructions No. 474 (mandating zero-retention in tenanted rice/corn lands under certain conditions), L.O.I. No. 1260 (establishing the Integrated Social Forestry Program), P.D. No. 1467 (establishing the Philippine Crop Insurance Program), Executive Order No. 561 (creating the Commission on the Settlement of Land Problems), and E.O. 621 (creating the Bureau of Rural Workers under the Department of Labor).

Things come to a head during the NPB meeting in Palo, Leyte when several board members/leaders are arrested by military agents on grounds of national security. The NPB grants "emergency powers" to the president, Jeremias Montemayor, and ratifies his decision to separate some 20 officers from the FFF. This development is negatively received by several erstwhile supporters of the FFF.

Externally, the martial law regime pushes the nationwide organization of pre-cooperative associations called Samahang Nayon, which some FFF leaders interpret as part of an over-all plan to weaken or eliminate farmers' organizations potentially or actually opposed to Marcos. The FFF takes the lead in working with other cooperatives and peasant organizations to preserve their autonomy and existence.



FFF conducts pre-membership seminars.

1974

FFF becomes a founding member of the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP). Jeremias U. Montemayor is elected one of the vice presidents.



Meeting of FFF members.



FFF and NCFO President Jeremias U. Montemayor together with Minister of Agrarian Reform Conrado Estrella, Minister of Agriculture Arturo Tanco, Minister of Labor Blas Cople, and NCFO Secretary General Manuel Rotea watch as Prime Minister Cesar Virata sign a document.



PC-INP Chief Fidel V. Ramos address the joint DAR-AFP-DJ-FFF Seminar on Agrarian Reform.

Pivotal Junctions in the History of the Federation of Free Farmers

Leaps and Milestones

Ordeals and Sacrifices

Ideological Stance

National Milieu

1975

75-80. A nationwide revitalization program is carried out through refresher seminars for members and leaders and social awareness seminars for other sectoral groups (including the police and the military). In these seminars, dialogues between farmers and government representatives are held to present and secure action on members' concerns.

The FFCI decentralizes and becomes the Federation of Free Farmers Cooperatives, Inc. (FFFCI).



FFF President Jeremias Montemayor presides over farmers - government dialogue during Leadership Refresher Seminar (LRS) in Victoria, Negros Occidental in 1977. At right is laurentino D. Bascog, FFF Western Visayas President.

1978

FFF gives advise and support to Col. Virgilio David, military supervisor of the Philippine Coconut Authority, who exposes the coconut levy "scam".

Jeremias U. Montemayor is elected Assemblyman, representing Region I, to the Interim Batasang Pambansa (IBP).

1979

FFF lawyer Camilo Sabio files an impeachment case against Supreme Court Justice Antonio Barredo in connection with the FFF's "Swindle of the Century" case against Victorias Milling Company.

The martial law government initiates the organization of another group based on agrarian reform beneficiaries, apparently in reaction to FFF's growing criticism of the defective implementation of agrarian reform.

Interim Batasang Pambansa is inaugurated under a semi-parliamentary system.





Jeremias U. Montemayor chairs meeting to discuss agrarian cases. To his right is Atty. Jose Santos of the Bureau of Agrarian Legal Assistance.



Mass graduation of Membership Refresher Seminars' participants in Maigo, Lanaos del Norte in 1979.



Pivotal Junctions in the History of the Federation of Free Farmers

	Leaps and Milestones	Ordeals and Sacrifices	Ideological Stance	National Milieu
1980	FFF is founding member of the National Congress of Farmers Organizations (NCFO). Jeremias Montemayor is elected its first President. NCFO later on forges a Solidarity Agreement with TUCP.			
1981				President Marcos formally lifts martial law, but retains stand-by legislative powers.
1983				Senator Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino is assassinated, lighting the fuse of national upheaval.
1984	A national plebiscite approves an amendment, introduced by Assemblyman Montemayor, to the Constitution, mandating the State to formulate and implement agrarian and urban land reform and housing programs.	Jeremias Montemayor loses re-election in the Batasang Pambansa elections due to "junking".		
1986		Jeremias Montemayor declines the invitation to nominate — on behalf of the peasant sector — President Marcos as Kilusang Bagong Lipunan candidate in the snap presidential elections. The FFF takes a neutral stance in the elections.		The "People Power" revolt at EDSA brings Cory Aquino into power.
1987		Jeremias Montemayor runs, and loses, in the senatorial elections as an opposition candidate.	FFF adopts a policy of greater organizational self-reliance.	87-92: A new Constitution is approved. The Aquino administration is wracked by several coup attempts.

Jeremias Montemayor seeks a Senatorial seat during the 1987 elections.

"Lupa, ito'y mahalaga.
This belongs to God the creator.
Binuo, pero he entrusted it to the people
who can work closely with nature.
Kailangan, in harmony with nature.
Do not go against nature!"

- FFF Davao member Felicisimo Patayan



Through FFF, farmers develop skills and enhance knowledge of farming





Self-reliance is further developed through FFCI's business initiatives.



FFF facilitates the speedy transfer of technology to Filipino rural workers.

Pivotal Junctions in the History of the Federation of Free Farmers

	Leaps and Milestones	Ordeals and Sacrifices	Ideological Stance	National Milieu
1988	The NPB chooses to implement a more self-sufficient posture by capitalizing on internally generated resources instead of relying on external assistance. The situation is aggravated by business difficulties encountered by a number of FFFCI affiliates.			The "Mendiola Massacre" prods the Aquino administration and Congress to fast-track the passage of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law (R.A. No. 6657).
1990	FFF leader Alfonso V. Laguna is appointed to the Board of Administrators of the Cooperative Development Authority by President Corason Aquino.	<i>President Corason C. Aquino with members of the FFF.</i>		
1991			Jeremias U. Montemayor plays an active role in the Plenary Council of the Philippines - II. He underscores the fundamental role of lay persons and their organizations in reforming and developing Philippine society.	
1992	President Fidel Ramos appoints FFF Secretary-General Leonardo Montemayor as Peasant Sector Representative in the House of Representatives (Ninth Congress).			A peaceful transition marks the ascent of Fidel Ramos as President.
1994	FFF deplores "uneven playing field" under the World Trade Organization and airs doubts that government can adequately fund "safety nets" during the Senate debate on ratification of the GATT-Uruguay Round Agreements.	<i>Jeremias U. Montemayor with President Fidel Ramos, who later confers the Presidential Golden Plow award on the FFF.</i>		After intense debates, the Senate ratifies the GATT-Uruguay Round Agreements and Philippine membership in the World Trade Organization.
	President Ramos confers Presidential Golden Plow award to the FFF for outstanding contributions to the agrarian reform program.			



*Greater than unchaining the farmer
from bonds of oppression is the FFF's goal
of liberating the farmer from dependence on others.
Hence, the FFF pushes for programs that enhance
self-reliance and confidence.*

Pivotal Junctions in the History of the Federation of Free Farmers

Leaps and Milestones

Ordeals and Sacrifices

Ideological Stance

National Milieu

1995

Leonardo Montemayor is reappointed to the House of Representatives (Tenth Congress). President Ramos also appoints former FFF vice president Glicerio J. Tan as Peasant Sector Representative.

Leonardo Montemayor
Sectoral Representative
at a session in Congress



1996

Second edition of *Toward a Filipino Ideology* is published.

1997

FFF and allied groups establish the peasant party-list group, *Alyansang Bayanihan ng mga Magsasaka, Manggagawang-Bukid at Mangin-gisda* (ABA).

Following the appointment of Leonardo Montemayor to the House of Representatives in 1992 and 1995, the FFF prepares for active participation in the legislature through its party-list group, ABA.

97-98. The Asian financial crisis rocks the economy.

1998

ABA places second in the first party-list elections and is represented in the Eleventh Congress by its first nominee, Leonardo Montemayor.

FFF successfully hosts World Farmers Congress in Manila. Leonardo Montemayor is elected Vice President of the International Federation of Agricultural Producers.



FFF hosts the World Farmers Congress.

1999

President Joseph Estrada appoints Raul Montemayor as Board Chairman of the Philippine Crop Insurance Corporation.

President Estrada awards Presidential Golden Plow Award to Jeremias Montemayor.

President Joseph Ejercito Estrada confers the Golden Plow Award on Jeremias U. Montemayor for his trailblazing efforts in agrarian reform.





"While the smaller and lower sectors and individuals should be allowed and encouraged to do what they can do for and by themselves, yet there are certain essential tasks that cannot be performed by any of them acting singly or separately... The principle of Solidarity is an antidote to the evils of individualism and separatism."

- from "Toward a Filipino Ideology"



FFF spreads its cause to other workers through alliances. These alliances have further nurtured the plight of the peasantry.



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Pivotal Junctions in the History of the Federation of Free Farmers

Leaps and Milestones

Ordeals and Sacrifices

Ideological Stance

National Milieu

2001

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo appoints Leonardo Montemayor as Secretary of Agriculture. Dioscoro A. Granada, ABA's number two nominee, assumes Montemayor's congressional seat.



President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, with Secretary of Agriculture Leonardo Montemayor, inspects new strains of rice at the IRR1.

President Joseph Estrada is unseated, following an aborted impeachment trial and EDSA II "people power" demonstrations. Gloria M. Arroyo assumes the presidency.

2002

Ruben Presilda is elected new FFF president, following the death of Jeremias Montemayor.

FFF founder Jeremias U. Montemayor dies on June 9.

Leonardo Montemayor is suddenly removed as Agriculture Secretary on November 30.

2003

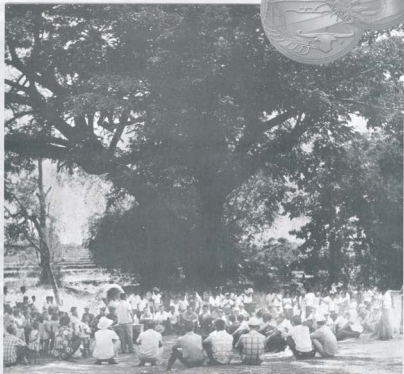
Leonardo Montemayor is elected FFF president.

The ABA enters into coalition with the urban poor party-list organization, *Adhikain at Kilusang Ordinaryong Tao* (AKO).

The Supreme Court orders the proclamation of the ABA as one of the winners in the May 2001 party-list elections. Dioscoro Granada is proclaimed ABA representative in the Twelfth Congress.



After fifty years of genuine service for the peasantry, FFF celebrates the fruits of its golden journey.



"The FFF is an organization set-up by farmers as an instrument which they can use to solve their own problems... because the FFF was established by the farmers, is maintained by the farmers, and is directed by the farmers... This means that it is the farmers themselves who will work out and bring about their own liberation."

- FFF Founder and President Jeremias U. Montemayor

IN MEMORIAM



Abraham
Gleyo



Alfonso V.
Laguna



Alfonso
Molarto



Alfredo
Tolentino



Amadeo
Isabelo



Diego
Melillo



Edgardo
M. Viriña



Fedencio
Tadé



Feliciano C.
Emperador



Feliciano
R. Matienzo



Guillermo
Salonga



Hildita
Sario



Jaime
Montemayor



Jeremias
U. Montemayor



Jimmy
Calleja



Laurentino
D. Bascug



Melanio
Titan



Miguel V.
Cruz



Miriam
Estrada



Modesto
Capunitan



Pío
Crisostomo



Ricardo
Abetación



Salvador
Cambare



Sixto
Molunas



Victor
Austria



Arcadio
Lorenzo



Buenaventura
S. Granada



Calixto M.
de la Peña



Ceferino
Garcia



Demetrio
de la Cerna



Fermin
Garcia



Francisco
Estrada



Gamaliel
'Bobong'
Aquino



Gerry
Esguerra



Gualberto
Perez



Jose
Bulaun



Jovencio
Romblon



Juanito
Basubas



Macario
Diamsay



Pablo
Aquino, Sr.



Noel
Mondejar



Onofre
Lalisan



Paulino
Casas



Pedring
Aquino



Perfecto
Mejares, Sr.

Without Pictures

Arnulfo Ganub
Cornelio Buiza
Herminio Bautista
Mansueto Mamon

Romulo Lopez
Teofilo S. Loag
Tito Manlangit
Fr. Zacarias Agatep

PROGRAM

Morning

- | | |
|-------|---|
| 8:00 | Mass |
| 9:00 | Opening Ceremonies (National Anthem, Welcome Address) |
| 10:00 | Lecture on Agrarian Reform |
| 11:00 | Trivia Question/Game/Raffle |
| 11:30 | Lecture on Coconut Levy |

Lunch

- | | |
|-------|--|
| 12:30 | Entertainment and Regional Presentations |
|-------|--|

Afternoon

- | | |
|------|-----------------------------------|
| 2:30 | Lecture on Party List System |
| 3:30 | Trivia Question, Games and Raffle |
| 4:00 | Lecture on GATT-WTO |
| 5:00 | ABA-AKO Launching |



Evening

- 6:30 Invocation
 National Anthem
 Testimony - Edito Manco
 Testimony - Dioscoro Granada
 Song - Grace Nono
 Testimony - Grace Nono
 Song - Grace Nono
- 7:00 Arrival of President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo
- 7:15 Welcome Address
 FFF Audio Visual Presentation
 In Memoriam (A Tribute to Deceased FFF Leaders)
 Book Launching of Jerry Montemayor's Biography
 Introduction to the President
 Words from Her Excellency, President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo

Dinner

- 8:00 Singing Contest, Entertainment and Games
 Grand Raffle



MANIFESTO of the FEDERATION of FREE FARMERS

Beloved Tiller of the Soil:

You are the most important worker in the world. You produce the food and the force that cause the buildings in the towns and cities to rise, the wheels of industry to turn, the carriers of trade to run, the hand of government to sway, and the pen of learning to move - nay, that cause life itself to go on in this world.

Specially you, farmer of the Philippines! You are the most important person in the country. Because of the absolutely essential nature of your task as well as by virtue of your numbers, you are the backbone of the nation.

If you are sick, the nation cannot be healthy; if you are ignorant, the nation cannot be informed; if you are destitute, the nation cannot find contentment; if you are a slave, the nation cannot be free; if you grieve, the nation cannot be happy.

Many people, however, do not see this important truth, or seeing it, nevertheless refuse to act upon it. Thus, your primary importance is often belittled and your rights disregarded - to the great misery of the nation. For the sake of the nation, therefore, as well as for your own sake, your importance must be recognized and your rights respected. You must be made healthy and informed and contented and free and happy, so that the nation will also be healthy and informed and contented and free and happy.

Acting alone, you cannot bring this about, for you are weak. But if you unite with all the other tillers of the land you will bring it about in no time, for then you will have not only truth and justice on your side but also the irresistible strength of numbers. You must therefore unite under a common purpose, and act with system and coordination so that you will be able to accomplish your common end in the best possible manner.

This is your paramount end - to attain eternal happiness with God in Heaven. But for you to attain this, you must live, as God wants you to live on this earth. On this earth God wants you have enough food to eat, decent clothes to wear and a roof over your head. God wants you to raise and educate your sons and daughters in health and reasonable comfort. God wants you to live well, and living well, serve Him well.

But you do not live well. No matter how hard you work, you do not have enough food to eat. You do not have decent clothes to wear. You do not have a decent house to live in. Your children are sick. Your children are unschooled.

This is the motive that impels us - that we may, in so far as God has placed it in our power to do, help put things in the order God wants them to be, and thus merit His love and mercy.

Tiller of the soil, since it is your task to produce food for men to eat, you are entitled to all that is necessary to enable you to produce sufficient food for all.

Tiller of the soil, you are a human being created in the image and likeness of God. Hence, you are entitled to all that is necessary for a life in keeping with your dignity as a human being.

In order to produce enough food and live with dignity, you must own sufficient land and adequate tools with which to work the land. This is your basic need and we shall direct all our efforts to the satisfaction of this need as our ultimate objective. The accomplishment of this objective would involve, among other things, the settlement of idle lands of which we have so much in our country, the adoption of modern tools and modern means of production, such as mechanization, fertilizer, irrigation, seed selection, pest control, and the establishment of home industries. But all these will necessarily take time. Hence, you must have patience and faith in God who always crowns an honest man's effort with the wonders of His bounty.

Meanwhile, besides the fact that you may not own the land which you cultivate and that the crop that you produce in your field may not be sufficient to meet your needs, your life is made difficult by the greed and oppression of some other people who take advantage of your poverty and weakness.

We shall uphold and defend your rights against oppression and injustice.

In pursuing our legitimate ends we may be met with opposition and even hatred. We shall never lack courage and constancy. But it is good for us to remember that there are many people who truly love us; and it will benefit us more to think of the kindness of those who love us, than to brood over the oppression of those who hate us.

So we shall not look upon anyone as our enemy, but we shall regard all as our brothers, redeemed by the blood of a common Savior, confronted with common problems and faced with the common task of making this earth a prosperous and happy place to live in. We shall, therefore, promote cooperation rather than conflict, harmony rather than discord, love rather than hate.

Farmers of the Philippines, unite!
United, you can lift your eyes with hope - for the future is in your hands.

October 25, 1953

