Democracy and the Philippine Left

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"God, we missed out again!"
— Ex-President de Leon, upon being released from prison and disappeared over the mountainsides of his home province in the calm of February 1986.

For many decades one of the most important political themes in the Third World prescribed communist-guided political struggle in order to implement bourgeois revolutionary changes similar to the historical ones in Europe. Independent nation states should be created and former agrarian reform as well as industrial development. However, at least from the mid-sixties and onwards, this thesis was losing ground in Asia. The Indonesian communist were massacred. The Vietnamese did win, but most of the other similar movements were forced to retreat. During the late seventies and early eighties, the Philippines was actually one of the few countries in Asia where the revolutionary left still expanded.

The so-called "national democratic" movement ("democratic") in the sense of being anticolonial) comprised the main force. It was led by a similarly labelled clandestine front, a new Macau-oriented Communist Party, and its rural-based New People's Army. [2] The immediate target was the authoritarian and increasingly despotism regime of President Marcos whose base was identified as imperialism and semi-feudalism. In 1983, the economic and political crisis of Marcos's staked development was accentuated with the militation of the liberal ex-Congressman Benny Aquino, Jr., Marcos's chief political opponent among the "middle-class". Many analyses spoke of an emerging revolutionary situation.

Were these expanding "national democrats" about to show that the dynamics of similar aspirations elsewhere in Asia were not caused by basic inadequacy of mainstream Marxism but were related to "revivification" and clumsy implementation, since it seemed possible to solve the problems by learning instead from Mao and the insurrections in Latin America? Or was the Philippines an exception proving the rule? Drawing on studies of the problems of the Left in Indonesia, and on initial comparisons with India, I was at this time personally inclined to think that the Philippines I was told about had only fallen behind — and that the radical opposition was already about to miss the train by boycotting the 1984 elections which was then on its agenda. [3]

The train did not depart in 1984. Instead, a little more than one and a half year later, when President Marcos had to call for snap elections to ascertain his mandate, the strong and still expanding national democratic movement ran into a blank wall by calling for another boycott of what was bound to be another sham-election, after which people were expected to realize that outright revolutionary struggle was the only real alternative. [4] Most people and cause-oriented groups instead rallied behind Mrs. Aquino in a massive attempt to win the elections. And when Marcos's manipulations and weaknesses became all too obvious in February 1986, the combined effect of lasting US support for the regime, defections within the military leadership, interventions of Cardinal Sin to create a miracle, and huge popular manifestations made Manila, among other places, almost ungovernable. Marcos had to flee the country. While the national democratic movement seemed almost irrelevant, other sections of the radical Left were unable to step into his shoes of power.

A few months later even the national democratic hardliners had to admit that their boycott decision had been at least a major tactical blunder," while many others within the radical Left claimed that it was only the tip of the iceberg which indicated more fundamental problems in the predominant communist interpretations of Marxism.

The Left taken by surprise

A fall explanation for why the Left lost the initiative in 1986 is of course beyond the scope of this paper. Instead, what I might be able to contribute is a study — based on my previous
The Mainstream 'National Democrat'  

Background and basic thesis

Most of the movements in Asia with a "national democratic" orientation grew out of the anti-colonial struggle, as for instance in China, Vietnam and Indonesia. The movement in the Philippines, however, is mainly a product of student activists who turned against a "revisionist" old party during a period of revolutionary optimism in the late twenties and early thirties, and managed to include some remnants of the old peasant-based national liberation army. Thus, even though the third largest Communist Party in the world, the PFI in Indonesia, had just folded miserably and was almost eliminated, and the old Philippine Communist Party was on the retreat, students in Manila had instead become increasingly radical. It is illustrative that Jose Maria "Joma" Sison, one of the most important student leaders in the Philippines, was the one responsible for the contacts with Jakarta, communicating mainly with those who tried to introduce Maoist ideas. [9]

Moreover, in the Vietnamese revolution advanced and the Great Chinese Cultural Revolution at its peak, Sison did very much the same as Jusuf Adjarjou, a member of the former Indonesian politburo and later on head of a delegation to China. They both employed old radical Marx writings as Blueprint when interpreting the historical development of their countries, reviewing previous communist policies, and outlining new political strategies [10].

From this point of view, the old PKP had turned the national and democratic revolution, especially through its downgrading of the significance of the semi-feudalism in the rural areas. This had paved the way for compromises with the regime to grab power which were not based on the mobilization of the majority of the population, the peasants. [11]

While most Communists maintained that the Philippines was not yet fully independent and liberated from imperialism, a main difference was that Sison, et al. were more eager to uphold the thesis that the power of the imperialists, the so-called compradores, and the bureaucrat-capitalists, rested with the landlords.

[12] Neither the so-called national bourgeois forces [13] nor the small working class was strong enough to confront these enemies. Any consistent attempt to promote real social change must instead be built on the contradictions between the landlords and the most numerous subordinate class in the country, the peasantry. Those with good reasons to oppose imperialism, semi-feudalism, etc., could and would then rally behind a broad national democratic front. They could fight against all forms of struggle, be it legal or illegal, as long as they served the interest of the national democratic cause. [14] But since a prerequisite for the most basic exploitation - the semi-feudal relationship - was private monopoly of land and the use of extra-economic forces against poor peasants, the peasants had to resist this repression and enforce land reforms through armed struggle. A properly led peasant-based guerrilla movement would be able to initiate a prolonged people's war, liberate various areas, [15] and finally, encircle the compradors and bureaucrat-capitalist puppets in the cities. [16]

Moreover, those who rallied behind the broad front were assumed to be interested in anti-imperialism and anti-feudalism, but their positions, as well as that of the peasants, were often unstable, making them potentially sensitive to compromises. It was therefore necessary that the project as a whole be led by a party with a program that was based on the working class, since the working class in itself could only be firmly approaching the commitment national democratic revolution. [17]

Accordingly, Joma Sison and a handful of associates set out to found the New Communist Party of the Philippines in early [1960].

Thereafter, the young urban activists had not found or formed a guerrilla army to lead. They themselves were approached by an equally young commander with the name of Bertoldo "Bim" Bucayo, an unusually well-educated son of a poor revolutionary tenant in Tarlac, Central Luzon. Bucayo was virtually born into the old Huk guerrilla movement, which fought feudal oppressors, the Japanese occupying forces, and US-created "counter-guerrilla" groups. He had become commander, responsible for education, then finally broke away from the increasingly corrupt Huk leadership. Bim and his group were thus not only experienced armed peasants, but also possessed some romantic revolutionaries with firm roots in the struggle for national liberation. They did not look for enlightened leaders but for alliances with workers, students and progressive liberals such as Bernardino Aquino. [18]

Dante's group was transferred into the New People's Army in late March 1969. Dante also became a member of the highest organs of the new party. But during the following six year period he worked mainly in the mountain ranges, organizing and arming guerrillas from all over the country - while Joma Sison was charged with the central ideological leadership on the basis of the theories outlined above. In 1976 Dante was arrested, followed by Sison in 1977. But the movements that they created were solid enough to not only survive, but also to expand swiftly during the increasingly despotic Marcos regime.

It is not difficult to understand that differences in the background, experiences, and perspectives of these two leaders created some personal and political friction. [19] The "inflexible leader" was in favor of a "limited boycott" in 1966 and still holds on to Mao's ideas of an anti-feudal peasant uprising [20], while the "armed peasant-leader" propagated "critical participation" and for sometime he made use of the new "democratic space" to criticize peasants and a most successful cooperative against the onslaught of capitalism. [21]

Democracy of minor importance

I shall now argue that while this background and these basic choices, which were still being applied in the mid-eighties, did not prevent national democrats from applying the increasingly widespread opposition to Marcos, it was quite natural for them to reject this opposition's preoccupation with peaceful democratic means, and to instead suggest boycott. [22]

According to the national democratic historicists, the problem of changing the society were unanswerable since not even the minimum prerequisites for a democratic process were present. Most basic rights to organize and express opinion were lacking. Electoral frauds were not clean and its propaganda were extremely unevenly distributed. Final decisions in particular prevented the majority of the citizens from casting their votes according to their real opinion. Washington would never in any case accept that progressive forces made substantial gains in the Philippine. All these preconditions for democracy must be fought for by confronting the ruling classes before democratic movements could be relied upon. There was thus even no need to talk about issues such as the overwhelming problems that any progressive government would have in implementing its policies.

In a way Sison has summarized all these by saying that we could invite the others for elections in our liberated areas and then see who would win. [23] At the same time, however, did he ever open up to questions as to whether there would be minimum democratic prerequisites also for "the others" in these areas. And even if the national democrats were eager to demand, for instance, basic civil and political rights, and as such presumably appreciated them, the actual implementation of these rights in order to reach long term goals won, as we know, not instrumental within the framework of their strategy of armed struggle. Moreover, the explicit thesis about the need for enlightened leadership based on the national democratic program implied that democratic rights and rule often did not make sense for the movement itself. The limits of internal democracy is a history in itself. There had not been even a second congress of the party. [24] But also most attempts at building various front organizations and coalitions have failed because it was basic for the national democrats to lead them. [25]

Finally, in addition to what we have already said about the national democrats being reluctant to employ democratic means against the Marcos regime, it also followed from their thesis that it was either unfruitful or simply impossible to struggle for democratic rule. There were two main reasons for this.

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The politics of the mode of production

The questionning of the national democratic thesis on the primary need to fight "semi-federalism" continued during the late seventies and early eighties within the framework of a Philippine version of an international discourse on modes of production which was then in vogue. [30] While this was often most abstract and formalistic, the political implications were less convoluted.

Democracy and the expansion of capitalism

Law, et al. had arrived at a radical nationalist position. [31] Those inspired by the neo-Marxist Latin American and African dependency school emphasized later on the spread of an underdeveloping capitalism. The giants were present, but share-hopping and similar forms of tertiary relations were on the retreat. Rural and urban labor as well as other subordinated groups became increasingly important. "Semi-federalism" was no longer there. The bourgeoisie forces acted limited within the framework of "dependent capitalism." This called for broad popular struggles with socialist perspectives. The only alternative developmental path was authoritarian states-led economic growth. But Marcos was about to fail his attempt on the latter. [32]

Many of the scholars and activists attracted by these perspectives had hard personal experiences from authoritarian patterns related to the old as well as new Communist Party. Other sympathizers had a background among social democratic and often Christian groups. It was thus natural to demand for democratic rights and rule within and among the radical movements themselves. Still others were engaged in voluntary action and development groups which they claimed were indispensable to a democratic system that was not only for the elite, and which should also include people's participation in addition to their representation. [33] Moreover, such groups would not be able to exist without rather extensive civil liberties. Given the background of many of those attracted by neo-Marxist perspectives and the special character of the post-colonial groups it was finally natural to consider the possibilities of employing efficient anti-violent forms of struggle. [34]

The neo-Marxists were initially preoccupied with validating the thesis on the expansion of capitalism and underdevelopment. Much of the general democratic orientation and preferences among many neo-Marxists then lacked a powerful theoretical and analytical foundation. Later on as the increasing importance of the state in third world development became more and more obvious, neo-Marxists in most countries tried to go beyond previous theoretical and economic perspectives. In Philippine seminars room scholar began to talk about "the relative autonomy of the state." [35] All political structures and transformations were not directly determined by the basic class forces. There was some room for political maneuvering without first having to take over state power.

To the extent that such insights had some political importance, they did, of course, allow for more careful analyses. But it is important to remember that the thesis about a special degree of "relative autonomy" in the third world was mainly substantiated by first, the common inability of any of the dominating classes to develop as the ruling force, and second, by extensive, formerly colonial, state institutions. [38] From this point of view it was the balance of class forces that was vital, rather than questions related to the monopolization of political regulation and resources. Americas colonial role had more or less been quite different from, for instance, Dutch or British. Inherited state apparatuses were less important than in Indonesia or India. [39]

Issues related to demands for democratic rule of the state and its resources were therefore not on top of the agenda. This was in fact demonstrated by discussions on how to supplement basic struggles against the dominating classes by also fighting for positions in the arena and within institutions that were "relatively autonomous." Decisions among the neo-Marxist to first boycott the elections in 1984 but then to go for critical participation in 1986 seem to have been based mainly on studies of the political conjuncture, including the possibility of winning some state apparatus in the hands of the people as possible against the regime -- in addition to studies of to what extent reasonable preconditions for a democratic process were available or at least could be fought for. Struggle with democratic means could of course for democratic costs was not considered a reliable alternative. Military intervention was expected to be unavoidable. [40]
Democracy and remains of feudalism

Among the mainstream national democrats, the predominant reaction to the challenge may very well have been that the grassroots downgraded the importance of their over-all themes and adapted their concrete tactics to complicated and highly different contradictions in various regions and sectors. But in addition to this, some leading national democratic scholars took upon themselves to defend and further develop the old perspective in face of those rejecting the notion of semi-feudalism, etc. These national democratic scholars apply an extremely narrow definition of capitalism, and thereby involve all the new transformations which, thus, are not pure capitalism, to take shelter under the old umbrellas of "semi-feudalism," thereby helping to confirm the orthodoxy.

According to Ricardo Ferrer the essence of capitalism is that the "mechanism of reproducing property rights over means of production is the intervention at the level of economy via accumulation and/or innovation."[41] Markets are present in the Philippines, and so are generalized commodity production and capital-wage labor relations. But the capitalists are not productive. Moreover, a lot of extra-economic force is made use of, and various raws are extracted. Ferrer even maintains that feudal laws of motion are decisive within the framework of Western monopoly-capitalism.[42] The main political implication is that the basic thesis of the national democrats is still valid. But does not Ferrer's emphasis on extra-economic forces monopolized control of regulation and essential conditions of production, the extraction of rents, etc., make struggle for political democracy especially important?

Basically his answer is negative. The main reason for this is the predominance of feudal laws of motion, which must still be fought against by the oppressed through broad alliances with so-called progressive capitalists and farmers (who are, unfortunately, difficult to separate from the bad guys).[43]

When challenged by my alternative conclusion that "feudal remnants" have proved decisive for the rapid expansion of capitalism, to which, in general, Indonesia -- implying a strategy of anti-monopolist through democratization, rather than anti-feudalism in favor of capitalism [44] -- Ferrer does not think that it is capitalist laws of motion which are at work. He also adds that in any case those who monopolize public regulation and resources have no base of their own which can be fully undermined by democratization. All usual, one must instead hit at their "real" foundation among the powerful landlords and private capitalists [45].

National democratic divisions

Serious disagreements were also present within the mainstream national democratic movement. As the popular opposition against Marcos increased in the mid-seventies, many young and often intellectually, leading members of the Manila-Rizal party committee suggested that they should not have to wait for the rural revolution to unfold before they themselves staged urban insurrection.[46]

The extent to which this perspective was inspired by neo-Marxist arguments about capital expansion is an open question. The committee members were of course more eager to situate themselves within the framework of the mainstream movement even referring to recommendations from Sison for decentralization operations in accordance with the local situation. Viewed thus the best thing to do in the central urban area was to stimulate and influence the broad opposition movement against Marcos's dictatorship.

It was instead the way in which the Manila-Rizal cadre went about doing this that brought them into sharp conflict with the highest party organs. The Manila-Rizal leaders gave priority to broad "anti-fascist" struggle for democratization against Marcos's dictatorship. They claimed that the democratic rights and means which were present or could be developed, including the electoral process, should be used as much as possible, despite the fact that many decisive preconditions for a democratic policy were lacking. As elections were due in 1978, the Manila-Rizal activities thus entered into agreements with other leftist and liberals (including the Aquilinos), proposed critical participation in the electoral process, and thereby even spoke about the possibility of getting rid of Marcos.

The orthodox leaders, including Sison[47], maintained that the Manila-Rizal committee settled for "light opportunism" policies, helped legitimate Marcos's rule, and created illusions about how one could change society. The assertion on broad urban "anti-fascist" struggle departed from the necessary emphasis on rural-based armed struggles against feudalism and imperialism.

A last minute straight-forward order from the party leaders to instead boycott the elections was thinly negated by the Manila dissidents. The extent to which this dispute contributed to the miserable results is impossible to say. The elections were in any case efficiently rigged. The progressive front did not make any gains. Some thousands of Manila proletarians but no huge masses of angry people took to the streets in order to form their own parliaments, and mainstream national democrats who claimed that they had been victimized said out to purge their opponents.

While it was thus obvious that struggle for democratization by peaceful and democratic means made sense for the Manila-Rizal leaders in a short-term perspective, these considerations were hardly based on alternative conceptualizations which make the issue of democracy instrumental to reaching long term aims. The Manila-Rizal committee emphasized "anti-fascism" but did not really negate the basic importance of struggle against "feudalism" and imperialism. Their argument was rather that the best way for the national democrats to reach out to wide sections of the population with such revolutionary propaganda was to participate in joint mass campaigns. As people gained their own bitter experiences they would be prepared to listen to the national democrats. There was also an opportunity to divide the ruling elite by keeping the channels open to those against Marcos. And it should be possible to mobilize moral and material support for the rural armed forces through contacts with dissatisfied administrators, politicians, and businessmen. In addition to this it is interesting to note that in an internal trial against the Manila-Rizal activists after 1978, the party leadership accused theings of Mao, while the dissidents made frequent use of what the leaders had said about the need to apply efficient tactics and make use of all means in order to mobilize and organize people before the time was right for a revolution.

From discussions with scholars with good knowledge about these debates, as well as with Sison[48] my own conclusion is that much of the alliances and policies suggested by the Manila-Rizal committee would have been quite similar if "only" the party had been in a high position and the national democratic perspective had been imposed as a framework. In the face of the 1984 elections, the party leadership central, for instance, started alliances with similarly moderate forces -- with conditions enabling national democratic cadres and
sympathizers to enforce a boycott decision. [49] And only when the leaders later on failed in doing the same within the framework of the previously managed coalition called BULAKAN was it natural to take a principled stand in 1986.

The party leadership was able to limit the direct effect of the controversies in the late seventies to Greater Manila and was able to purge those directly involved. But the critical perspectives survived and developed into two directions: one emphasizing insurrectional perspectives, another stressing so-called popular democracy.

The "insurrectionists"

In the late seventies and early eighties the national democrats and their New People's Army extended drastically in the south, in Mindanao. [50] Reckless penetration of capitalism within fishing, timber, shipping, and agrif-business had generated drastic socio-economic changes. Many people in rural areas had been uprooted and spent parts of their lives as migrant laborers trying to find jobs in the urban areas. The guerilla movement flourished and their armed actions spread to the cities. Leaders of the National Democratic Front [51] were also able to stimulate and influence many of the various cause-oriented groups - not least during the boycott of the 1981 elections - in the rapidly growing city of Davao with its large slum areas.

This movement gained further momentum after hanging on to the broad popular protest after the assassination of Ninoy Aquino in August 1983. The leaders saw a revolutionary situation emerging in which it should be possible to combine rural and urban struggles, given the eruption taking place in the cities. This ran counter to much of the orthodox revolutionary thinking that had been inspired by Maoism. Some inspiration came instead from the successful Left in Nicaragua and the experience in El Salvador. In late 1983 and early 1984 the Mindanao leaders suggested in vain that the radical democratic movement as a whole should consider a fast track to power by applying an insurrectional perspective. [52] In Mindanao, they were able to develop successful so-called people's strikes - the walong bajos.

The concept of "people's strike" was an attempt to go beyond the traditional workers' strike with roots in industrialized societies. The "people's strike" was a protest by workers in third world countries who work in administration and education and more or less "informal" sectors of transportation, service, trading etc. could add their form of work stoppages such as blocking roads and participating in demonstrations, rallies, etc. to paralyze the government.

To some extent, people's strikes were successfully called also by other party organizations in the country. The insurrectional perspective has become one of the major opposition tendencies within the national democratic movement. However, in Mindanao and especially in Davao, this tendency is very weak, with many local leaders, especially in urban slum areas, eventually get out of hand as attempts to support the main mobilized protests and work stoppages with armed actions developed into an extended kind of fighting. This slowly came to an end in 1985 when a new and highly professional armed military, organized [53] was able to stabilize the situation by making the selective enforcement of law and order with the addressing of certain problems that people had raised against.

Moreover the national democrats has become more aware of the situations happening in Manila, including Marcos' snap elections. To what extent then did democracy make sense to the "insurrectional" leaders?

Obviously the "insurrectionists" suggest a "critical participation" in the elections. In a 1986 press conference for the election the national democrats in Mindanao had been the only ones to have to associate with the broad population opposition against Marcos. The main criticism is that deciding on what to do in clear-cut terms, the way it was not possible to contribute to a successful insurrection. This could generate a dual power of power between the moderate progressives and the revolutionary forces. The latter would finally win since the above should be able to parey the rating of all the country, remaining events in different countries. It is therefore that - by making of whatever freedoms that were already there or could be created - did thus make sense in a short-term perspective in order to pave the way for a more meaningful kind of power growth. From this insurrectional point of view the central party leadership took its decision of boycotting elections because its prerequisites with a Maoist proscribed people's strike was assumed increasing the opacity of the urban revolutionary situation. Accordingly, the EDSA "revolution" was a last insurrectional opportunity. [54]

However, one should also discuss the extent in which the concept of "people's strike" was based on ideas of local popular rule and cooperative efforts in, for instance, neighborhood. Within the Latin American discourse about radical transformation, such efforts have at least gained some importance. [55] In the Philippines, on the other hand, this was hardly touched upon by a leading ideologue like Vil lajos, despite frequent references to Latin American experiences. Neither does it seem to have been seriously practised, for instance, in the Davao slum areas where the killings took serious proportions and people quickly changed loyalties. The foremost national democratic stronghold of Agno even became a homely of anti-communist vigilantes in 1986. [56] And the abortive attempts at introducing people's strikes in Manila by drawing on small groups of activists hardly indicate a special interest in introducing popular rule and cooperative efforts in various districts and sectors.

On the contrary, the "insurrectionists" simply developed the set of political maneuvering and the grabbing of state power in a given revolutionary situation, without relying too much on social theories and analyses of fundamental driving forces - per contra which in turn would have made it possible and relevant to discuss if aims like democratic rule made sense, or at least consider when and how revolutionary situations could emerge (and disappear).

The "popular democratic"

As I have already pointed out, the Most- inspired communist thesis adopted in the Philippines presented an anti-imperialist, anti- feudal revolution which would be led by the Party based on common interest among the workers, peasants, and the so-called national, as well as petty-bourgeoisie. When the new Communist Party and the New People's Army had been consolidated in the mid-seventies, it came to issue a multiclass National Democratic Front (NDF) under communist hegemony. [57]

For obvious reasons these thesis did not automatically appear and the various organizations which more or less represented their aspirations were not particularly eager to enroll themselves under communist rule, unless they were already domesticated or initiated by the communists.

In the late seventies the united front program was therefore more attractively designed. It was, for instance, stated that nationalistic private businessmen would have nothing to fear and that all persons would be granted democratic rights under a national democratic coalition government. [58] If one knows, the distinct Manila-Rizal party committee even managed to initiate close cooperation with progressive "counter" forces in the 1979 elections. But as we all know, this project was effectively blocked by the orthodox party leadership.

It was only in 1980 that a party-authored dynamic attempt was made to develop efficient united front work. Its propelling force with excellent contacts was Filomar "Boy" Morales, a celebrated former executive secretary under Marcos and the head of his prestigious Development Academy which he had directed when he was to be acclaimed as the "only outstanding young men" in 1977. Another, though in exile after five years of detention, was Father Elid de la Torre who was inspired by Latin American liberation theology. [59] He had initiated the militant Christians for National Liberation and had participated in the first attempts to build the NDF.

On the one hand, the NDF was solids anchored by MORAKKO, et al. within the national democratic movement. Its key leaders were included in a coordinating committee. The New People's Army was relieved from much of its political work and the NDF took responsibility for local organization and action by systems or so-called sectional organizations of the workers, peasants, women, etc. Morales suggested moreover that the 1981 presidential elections should be boycotted. On the other hand the new NDF leadership also tried to open up the Front to others, despite the fact that party leaders still demanded that those joining meet accept all the basic national democratic thesis. This proved difficult and priority was given to strengthen mines contacts and joint actions with independent organizations and most influential oppositions of Marcos' authoritarian regime - leftist as well as liberal and more national. This paved the way for broad political alliances.
on and successful campaigns influenced by the NDF against the Marcos regime and its attempts to gain some legitimacy. But Morales was arrested in 1982 (as was de la Torre upon his return from exile) and the promised start came to an end. The NDF was subordinated to orthodox party leaders. When huge masses of people staged frequent angry demonstrations and formed more and more opposition cause-oriented groups after the assassination of Ninoy Aquino, the national democrats definitely tried to hang along. Flexible writings came from the detained Sison. But generally speaking, the national democrats were once again eager to force their perspective upon others. Inside prison Morales and de la Torre were able to exchange views with certain other prominent radicals, including the dissident revolutionary Dr. Nemesis Pedrero, and the leading socialist Mariano Canojo. Morales' and Torre's previous attempts at trying to develop a framework for broad coalitions thus continued, while a new and extended perspective was labelled "popular democracy." Their prison study-circle produced a series of "Plural Paper" [57] and the ideas gained some influence among the various contesting oppositional forces, including the Aquino government [58].

An important first step was to set aside some of the differences between, for instance, armed national democrats, socialist, and liberal forces, which were simply imagined or only important in a long-term strategic perspective—and to identify instead what conflicts between the political groups prevented efficient united action, under the present concrete conditions of a authoritarian regime and for a trustworthy government. A major argument was that the basic actual conflict had to do with the sort of democracy that should replace the dictatorship. Renovation of the previous "elite democracy" with more or less hidden alternation of various factions of the elite in holding government power stood against varying attempts to give people a real choice between many parties and projects, or "popular democracy." [59]

Despite the fact that the "popular democrats" emphasized "anti-fascism," their concept of "popular democracy" was intended to be different from the uncoordinated so-called popular forces "from below" in Europe during the thirties and forties [60]. Nor was it identical with the notion of "people's democracy" [62] which indicated the dominant role of many classes (rather than, for instance, proletariat or bourgeoisie hegemony). [62] "Popular democracy" implied something more: the importance of autonomous organizations in addition to parties, state, and government, and participation in addition to representation, making pluralism essential. [63]

According to the popular democrats, three different political lines were contending for influence over the present movement in the mid-eighties: those emphasizing pressure politics through enhanced protest, those suggesting that there was also a need for elections, and those suggesting that in addition to pressure politics and elections there was a decisive need for armed uprisings. The vital question was thus how could these efforts converge and effectively get rid of Marcos's authoritarianism, while at the same time enhancing the attempts to build popular democracy? [64]

First, the united front must be characterized by popular democratic principles. For instance, there should be parties and leaders representing different class-interests as well as groups or councils with people who participated in the transformation of society. These actors should be autonomous, treat each other with mutual respect, and join in influence according to the balance of forces both in terms of organizational capacity and in terms of being able to mobilize broad popular support. The attempt to form a broad coalition of centrist and Left-oriented forces against Marcos—"KATUMID"—was seen as a step in the right direction a month before the devastating formal founding congress of the rival coalition [65].

Second—and this was started in early 1988—elections must be turned into the "technical focus." This was compatible with all the three political lines, with no one having to give in. For instance, those in favor of pressure politics could simply add elections, while the armed national democrats could, for a certain period of time, stress on one of the minor components of their comprehensive strategy, elections. [66] Moreover, those who wanted to go beyond the restoration of elite democracy could thereby (a) prevent attempts to isolate the radical Left (by first provoking a bourgeois decision and then invest in reasonably what was possible), and (b) strengthen their alliance between the "middle and the Left" (c) enhance the bargaining power of the radicals vis-a-vis the traditional elite, and (d) allow people themselves, including those who supported the traditional opposition, to learn from their own political experiences and later on favor more radical policies. [66]

It is thus obvious that many decisive factors of democracy made sense for at least one natural democratic tendency before the "EDSA" revolution. [69] Many minimum prerequisites for democracy did not exist and in some cases elections had to be boycotted, but there were also ample opportunities to use existing liberties to fight for more democratic rights.

Similar statements have been made by the 1997 Manila-Rizal activists. But the "popular democrats" had more to say about a slightly different political situation: autonomous organizations and people's participation in addition to representation were most important, there should be a multi-party system, and pluralism should characterize relations within the Left as well. On the other hand, the "popular democrats" paid little interest to the potential importance of the struggle for democratizing central public resources. This may be related to the lack of analyses of how resources in general were controlled. They had consistently abstained from tackling long-term perspectives and basic analyses of driving social forces since this might have blunted the more urgent "anti-fascist" unity. Moreover, various democratic rights and certain forms of rule were definitely instrumental in developing appropriate frameworks for popular coalitions, cooperation, participation, checks and balances, etc. But aside from identifying movements that might gain tactical emphasis to elections, the popular democratic analyses were not comprehensive and deep enough to say much, if anything, about what social forces could be primarily interested in enforcing the attractive democratic framework in a longer perspective.

Rethinking?

Then came the snap-elections and the EDSA "revolution." As we have said, democratic means and demands had not been specially relevant within the radical Left.
Those who suggested at least alternative tactics were either imprisoned or severely weakened. The prominent attempt to establish BAYAN as a broad coalition of popular opposition forces had failed. The radical Left could do little but watch how more or less bourgeois forces and even the Church (both of which in theory were bound to fail in any progressive undertaking), managed to quiet and manipulate widespread and explosive interests in democratic rights and rules (which in Left theory no classes were primarily interested in anyway) and got rid of Marcos, using all means at their disposal (except armed struggle). But how did the radicals read what they saw? Did they develop previous analyses further and did their views on democracy change?

"Democratic space" or business as usual?

Previous diatribes within the radical Left, including the popular democrats and an alliance of socialists called BEIGD [70], who had opposed the boycott and acted in favor of critical participation in the elections, left the door open. In their view [71], the EDSA "revolution" had overthrown much of Marcos's authoritarianism and created a "democratic space" which had to be defended and used as much as possible. Meanwhile the armed struggle should be terminated, while the capacity to rapidly resume could be kept intact. The new government was facing a clear-cut social basis. Many forces were now competing for best possible positions. The radical Left should offer critical support to progressive factions within, and aspects of the new administration, and try to make use of these. A Conservative front which had deserted from the Marcos regime for opportunistic reasons had to be obstructed. Radical people should try to work within the administration and also against it. Most important, and the most important interests and organizations among various sections of the population, worker-cooperatives, community organizations, etc., could now be even more active. There were, for instance, united actions among peasants and tenants who, by themselves, tried to enforce agrarian reform [72]. The popular initiatives should not primarily be brought under the umbrella of, for instance, the national democrats, but instead be supported and radicalized. The "people power" which was expressed at EDSA could thereby be institutionalized and serve as a firmer and more radical base for a more progressive coalition government.

These and similar arguments in favor of urgent democratic action to develop a basis for real democratic rights and rules were confronted with skepticism by the leading mainstream national democrats. There was a general naivety among them to take any firm decisions on these. A large scale debate on aims and means had emerged out of the daunting boycott decision [73].

This was one of the reasons why the full capacity of the radical Left to make use of the new and wider room for maneuver and to influence the new regime could not be utilized. Four years later, Strom, among others, admitted that a lot of opportunities "to work with Cory but also with the lower levels of RAM" [74] were lost. "She still did not have much organizational following in 1986 and we could have offered some in exchange for our own gains... For instance, we could have helped her against Emilio. Dade had the bil of contacts and could have helped me. But the boycott decision took so long [4] times," [75] Other reasons why the radical Left mainly remitted a spectator even after EDSA won the very decisions which the mainstream popular democrats slowly arrived at. The general secretary Salas resigned and the boycott decision was, after some months, recognized as a "tactical blunder." But even the most ardent democratic issues which could be published by Pratika, a theoretical journal of the National Urban Committee of the Communist Party, included anything more than a superficial recapitulation of previous arguments all defeated. The "insurrectionalism," as we know claimed that the snap elections and EDSA had been lost opportunities. But even as a tactical situation soon dwindled they had little to offer for the time being. And when radical arguments in other articles were rather close to those advanced by the "popular democrats" they were, as in 1978, merely references to Lenin's Stalin's and Dimitrov's more moderate means for tactical purposes, especially why revolutionary situation exists [76].

On the other hand, according to the thodion national democrats, nothing serious could actually have happened in February 1986. The whole affair was simply a quack within the elite where some factions had come fed up with Marcos's way of governing the country and the deep economic crisis, and had been wary of the possibility that the national democrats would take over. Some of these orthodox national democrats even maintained that Washington had masterminded the whole affair [77]. No basic socio-economic changes had taken place. The oil ruling class was still in place. The new government did not signal any qualitative change [78].

However, many mainstream leaders kept a comparatively low profile and "gave Aquino a chance." For instance, negotiations between the National Democratic Front and the new government had started in August, and a ceasefire was agreed upon in November. Special difficulties arose with these negotiations. Those in actual control of the remaining armed forces did not take part. Also, it was hard for the national democratic representatives to base themselves on a firm political line which was still under review [79]. But the main and general problem was rather that the new government never "got a chance." If the national democratic leaders believed in their own argument that no real changes had taken place in February 1986, the new government would not be able to change much if anything. So why then give Aquino a chance if she could not take it?

One answer could have been that the national democratic leaders were really serious both in giving Aquino and some of her associates a "chance" as individual leaders and in formulating the national democratic thesis that no real socio-economic changes had taken place. But this implied that there was a need to mobilize and trade alternative "crisis" support for Aquino so that she would get a real option to challenge the dominating classes. Such support was not offered by the mainstream national democrats only by much lesser power light headed democrats.

A more plausible answer, therefore, is that the national democratic leaders who should get a chance but rather the vacillating national democratic sympathizers and many of Aquino's followers who must be able to discover that the new situation could not change anything. This would be the task for the new revolutionary situation ends [76].

In conclusion, the government of the radical Left could thereby be institutionalized and serve as a firmer and more radical base for a more progressive coalition government.

Consequently, the progressive forces within Aquino's administration could not rely on alternative social forces in their attempts to counterweight demands from the armed forces, landowners, national and international private business, and others. But despite the fact that the rightward drift of Aquino's administration was to a certain extent a self-fulfilling prophecy of the mainstream national democrats, they claimed to be vandalized and began to speak up with self-confidence again. Strom, for example, stated that "the replacement of Marcos by Mrs. Aquino has not rooted out the fundamental causes of fascist dictatorship, has not solved the deepening crisis of the semi-colonial and semi-feudal system and has kept the ground fertile for social unrest and armed revolution... The new government represents exactly the same class interests (as Marcos) — those of the comprador big bourgeoisie and the landlord class..." [80] That this thesis was totally incoherent with the negotiations against the Aquino government for not doing anything progressive did not mean much.

The most brutal dispersal of a peasants rally in central Manila in the end of January 1987 [81], which left eighteen people killed, was followed by the suspension of the peace talks on the part of the national democrats after which the door was finally closed.

Another election debate

However, voices of dissent continued to sound off against the national democrats. Just a few days before the Mindanao massacre and declarations, continued peace talks and broad unity against "fascism and imperialism" had been most forcefully ad\ **A**vo
ced from within a national democratic framework. The Philippine concept of popular democracy could be legitimized as a "sabbage in the national democratic struggle" by recalling the European communist tradition of initiating Dimitrov's so-called "popular front" to defeat "the great monopoly fascists" against fascism before it was possible to go ahead with more advanced means and aims [82].

Moreover, the party organ BAYAN spoke vehemently about the senatorial and congressional elections scheduled for May
1987, and seemed to rule out any form of participation [93], the national democratic leaders decided to participate indirectly through a new legal party that was formed in 1986 by, among others, Sison, his wife, the Partido ng Bayan (Pnb), the organization Volunteers for Popular Democracy (Vpd), and certain groups within Ba'tan—they formed the Alliance for New Politics [94].

Petrovsky noted that the national democratic leaders Partido ng Bayan seemed to be a way of elevating the movement from purdah to a fuller participation in elections. Having established the party, most of the activities would instead be able to concentrate on actions among peasants and workers and other sections of the population as well as the armed struggle, while the dialogues would be left alone with at least a formal chance to prove their point. [95]

The results were extremely depressing. Hardly anyone was elected, not even to the Congress. The overall analysis of the election results revealed a drastic return to the pre-marital law period of "captive democracy" (Rito Ben Anderson's notion) [96]. Most of those elected belong to prominent business political "families." The radical Left was in no way ready to replace the "elite democratic" with popular democracy. There was also some fraud, harassment (including the assassination of the chairman of the Pnb), and army offensive against the stronghold. Organisations which enabled the military to control the voting in many radical strongholds [97].

Nothing, however, was able to do better. [98] The national democratic movement as a whole may have been rather serious about using the elections for propaganda purposes. In the senatorial elections (where the notion as a whole serves in a consultancy) this may not have been a matter of dispute. For instance, one of the dissidents who ran as a candidate for the senate, Bernabe "Dicte" Bunao, claims that he himself could not listen but not necessarily vote for him [99]. However, he is far from alone in adding that several of the candidates for the Congress could have won if the full capacity of the movement had been mustimized in support of the candidates and democratic politics. [100]

To begin with, the forces of the Left were inexperienced and used to boycotting elections. Not even all loyal followers cast their votes. But the real failure was on the open market. The organisation of the campaign was poor even in terms of supporting the candidates, getting people to register, and organizing them to protect and count the votes. And certain contesting candidates were able to buy their way into sections of the national democratic movement which tried to mobilize resources for the real struggle.

Secondly, it was probably even more important that the "new politics" candidates (at least) were only sure about trade promises and not reliable promises on what to deliver in realistic choices to win. The price which poor and fought voters would have to pay for this "radical" candidate did not win could not be substantiated. The national democrats who fought (underneath) in the fields or capitalistic workplaces were more interested, in instance, favorable relationships with the local police and some "private contributions" than access to governmental and bureaucratic positions and democratic rule of public resources. The well established political machines and socio-economically deeply rooted patron-client relationships were the "keys to a first class life and won the day.

The outcome was a loss for the Left, for orthodox national democrats may have lost hope. They seemed victorious in the party leadership closed the internal debate in early August 1987. While the remaining dissidents in general held the popular democratic party were barely -criticized, certain decisions may have been made to those who had urged urban insurrections. Rural as well as urban officials who were initiated into life were sure to印象 those who were instead exposed makers as leading as well as vulnerable followers of severe hardships, internal weaknesses, isolation, and outright nationalist terrorism by semi-private vigilante armies (especially during 1986-1989) [91].

While the orthodox leaders resented the predominance, the legendary founder of the New People's Army and one of the candidates for the senate, Commander Donga (who has been most skeptical over the policies but had tried to work from within) came out openly with his critique. Among other things, he was against the emphasis on armed struggle, advocated political parties within the framework of the "democratic space," suggested that the development of capitalism had created new important contradictions, and most of all, rejected all forms of dogmatism [92].

It was not only national democratic politicians who grabbed for their gains. At the end of August, the first really serious coup attempt against Aquino by anti-reformist officers, who had must have launched this in the police after the elections [93] forced the legal Left—which had just tried to adjourn a popular transport strike ignited against the regime were from them on incopeable of doing much more than watch Aquino adjust her stuff and policies to the right.

New strikes in democracy?

While staging new drastic offensive against the regime, the mainstream national democrats also engaged themselves in nationwide provincial and local elections in early 1988. There were cases where local populist groups succeeded in boosting progressives candidates. But generally speaking the previous attempts to initiate "new politics" seem to have been replaced by widespread adjustments to what was so obvious in the May 1987 elections—a clear consensus toward the retention of captive democracy. The national democrats now played the game, and joint traditional and political families continued to score victories—provided that they had come to some kind of agreement in terms of money, various supplies including weapons, etc. with more or less powerful and well-known revolutionaries in their respective areas [94].

When discussing how the national democrats might approach the coming elections in 1988, Sison as well as Luis Jalandoni of the NDFP are eager to emphasize "the need to build regional and local alliances and do what is possible within the system, like in the local elections of 1987." [95]

Empowerment

In the face of the electoral failures in 1987 and 1988, the restoration of captive democracy, the revival of domestic national democrats, frequent coup attempts, and a general government cutting rightwards, out of the priorities of the popular democrats has been to help vulnerable people "empower" themselves through their own development initiatives, thereby becoming reasonably autonomous citizens—a basic pre-condition for a more genuine democracy. [96]

This is thus a conscious attempt to combine development efforts and political struggle. Strikes, militant and sometimes armed strug- gles, pressure politics, etc., are fine. But the emphasis on such methods presuppose that one first must grab political power, then economic power, and finally all these powers to make people fully capable of governing themselves and the country. If, on the other hand, serious efforts are made to help people do some labor for themselves (and not only for others) in terms of joint development efforts, they should already at present become able enough to participate as reasonably autonomous citizens who can stand up for themselves in a more democratic struggle for radical change of society. In other words, the international discourse on the "liberation of a society against the state," and the role of so-called non-government organisations in general and populist movements in particular (with or without "grass" perspectives), has become increasingly important for the popular democrats as have the large sums of money available for such projects in the development-aid market.

Much energy has for some time been spent on initiating and simulating various development projects, including education and popular cooperation, among local community groups and community organizations as well as within trade unions. The popular democrats cannot protect these activities or, for instance, get rid of a landlord by the use of arms. And their followers, who are usually from the middle class, may be less conscious than the guerrillas soldiers. But the popular democrats can deliver certain goods—at least partly through their access to development funds—and they do address people's livelihood problems in concrete local settings. They can also, in the general debate, put forward grand visions about alternative development strategies.

The idea is of course that these projects and movements should become self-sustained within a reasonable period of time and conse- quently boost the local people's confidence. This will then, among other things, undermine...
a good deal of the basis for cacique democracy. People themselves will be able to form and govern parties rather than the other way around. And the same holds true for the organs of the state at various levels. Similar perspectives and practices have even deeper roots and quantitative importance among many socialist-oriented groups and community organizations. While the popular democrats turn mainly to local activists affected by the national democratic perspective, socialists and social democrats reach out to those influenced by their concepts.

But one cannot stop here. In the Philippines as in India or Indonesia and elsewhere, almost every political force, including religious institutions and some business factions, have created their own environment of so-called NGOs. And every cluster has its international financiers and patrons of various kinds, with various special interests, such as the undermining of the state or other political forces. [9] Even President Aquino herself has recently made an attempt to bypass the senate, congress, and parts of the central administration, by turning directly to various local governors, mayors, old as well as new NGOs, thereby getting hold of the international development funds directed to the NGOs, drawing on some of their success stories, and reviving her popular "people-power" heritage in the 1992 elections.[100]

Finally, the whole process has created huge markets with good opportunities for not only "organic intellectuals" but also, and perhaps mostly, for more or less devoted, often missionary-minded, and entrepreneurial middle class development agents with relevant experiences and insufficient education. [101]

This is not to say that the genuine efforts to create foundations for popular democracy are hopelessly undermined from the very beginning. But there is definitely a need for closer studies of the decisive interests involved, both among those who try to "stimulate" and their "targets." The most serious problem is perhaps the fact that the theoretical and analytical framework adhered to by the radicals rarely generate such concerns and studies.

For instance, the concept of "civil society against the state" does not help much when attempting to answer questions such as under what conditions different features of democracy become instrumental for various groups and political forces. [102] This is so because the actors may be interested in a "democratic space" wide enough to allow their "business" to continue without being repressed or regulated by an unfriendly state. But what about the democratization of existing public administration and resources? Why about extending democratic role to state resources which are now privately controlled?

Moreover, if funds are available overseas, it may be more important to go to a workshop in Amsterdam than to join those fighting political monopolization of credits in Manila or the provinces. And to what extent are people really "empowered" and the process sustainable? Are those who are eager to sustain progressive development projects look for the best possible partner? What shall these do in ways they cannot even start a union or a cooperative because of threats or taken repression?

• A New Democratic People's Project from Tarlac

In a discussion about the problems of combining people's own development efforts with democratic political struggles, the largest popular cooperative effort in the country merits special attention.

Probably the most important base for the powerful national democratic movement grew out of the poor tenant with their leader Commander Dante.[103] In the late 1970s, against Japanese imperialism, Philippine landlords and warlords and post-colonial authoritarianism. In the early 1980s they formed the New People's Army. At present, however, the same peasant and the same leader are instead busy both the groundwork for what may perhaps become a New Democratic People's Project. [104] Dante still claims that oppression under feudal landlords and the Marcos regime were for many years so mundane that people simply had to fight illegally, and defend themselves through armed resistance. But in the early eighties, and after the assassination of his friend Ninoy Aquino in 1983, the situation started to change. From his prison cell Dante argued in vain for, among other things, the participation of the communist-led movement in the snap elections.

After his release Dante returned as an*

he was personally hit by the violence he sought to avoid, [104] and when the dogmatic leadership closed the internal national democratic debate, Dante spoke out openly [105] and felt that politically he had to start from scratch in Tarlac, where people would also protect him.

Dozens of militant struggle against the feudal landlords in Tarlac had compiled Maa- ok to initiate a minor land reform in areas where same and rice were grown. Many of the old sharecroppers were now independent small farmers. As far as they were concerned the anti-foodstuff struggle for land has ever, for all practical purposes. Instead, they were now exposed to all the disadvantages of capitalism.

The plots were small, and they had no access to support from politicians and bureaucrats. The farmers were therefore not able to acquire the effective production inputs which businessmen sold or rented at good profit for the latter. After the harvest, mill owners and others charged exorbitantly. Middlemen bought cheaply and sold dearly. Most of the farmers were heavily indebted. The workers were given miserably low pay. And of course
Everyone could harvest their own fields, but the harvest should then be stored collectively, and be sold only at the farmers' own terms, preferably with no middlemen involved. The cooperative could take care of as many bags as were needed to repay the loans, and then ask for new money. Later they could invest in their own mill and in other processing. This, in turn, would give the workers better wages and more jobs.

The peasants shook their heads in disbelief, thinking of all the unsuccessful cooperatives that smart businessmen and politicians had tried to start. For more than two decades, a number of them had been trying to form an association from one group of farmers. But Daante had been able to gain unquestionable confidence among perhaps 500 peasants since decades of dedicated work among them. If for nothing else, they joined out of loyalty, while the garrisons in the nearby mountains kept their farmer commanders in peace. [109]

The next item on the agenda was now not merely to avoid being obstructed by the state, but to get access to usable credits. Like Ninoy Aquino, the present governor of the area chose a love-and-hate relationship with Daante and his peasants. In the presidential palace Corazon Aquino probably neither dared nor wanted to move against a man who had been the friend and protector of her assassinated husband during the 1970s.

Late in 1988 the project could be launched. When I arrived in Tarlac about a year and a half later the 500 suspicious peasants had become more than 4000 enthusiastic. Their plots, which are still individually owned, comprise more than 3000 hectares. [107] The success of the project can largely be credited to its enrollment by 2000 hectares smaller, but is of course endowed with more capital. The cooperative is the largest in the country. Production has increased rapidly. The main crop is rice, and beans harvested are stocked collectively until the purchasers offer acceptable prices. Even these harvest-time workers who are employed by the farmers themselves get better pay under the supervision of the cooperative. The farmers have been able to repay their previous loans and are not interested in new loans. The state credits to the cooperative have even been repaid ahead of schedule. As a result they have been able to get even larger loans from a government which lacks its own suc- cess stories and is doing its best to exploit those of Daante. [109] Inside and outside this country even conservative columnists and business newspapers write使劲ly and admiring articles about the cooperative.

There are of course also problems (much as a great deal of the natural harvest should be collected or how much to pay the employed people - the cooperative). But above all, the cooperative suffers from growth pains growing problems of organization and leadership among other things. More and more people want to join. Schools need to be started as soon as possible. The drought is getting stronger and there is famine digging for water which in the future may be pumped up by windmills rather than by expensive electricity or diesel. When I was there, the priority was given to the new rice mill, which was inaugurated later on in April.

More than seventy elected local leaders cooperate in some twenty groups with the cooperative coordinator and one technician in each group, constituting the basis of the central leadership. Internal democracy is developing according to the speed at which the peasants themselves recognize the advantages of cooperation. To prevent infiltration there is a requirement that those who are employed by the cooperative must have a local base. Those who are to run the new mill will also own shares in it, thereby strengthening their own interest in its effectiveness.

In the main office - with a few volunteers at some of the cooperative's empty factory halls - which has been rented cheaply and is used mostly as a warehouse - we discuss the future development and lead into the development of the Left. Finally, I ask Daante whether he has abandoned political life. Has he become merely a progressive social worker, leader with good contacts or a management director for a farmer's cooperative? Does he for this reason not want to exploit the success story in Tarlac as mayors, governors or congressmen in the elections in 1992? What about the socialism of the project and its project reor- dard as a model for other regions in the Philippines.

Daante is conscious of the fact that Tarlac is unique in some respects: the farmers own their land, he himself is a seasoned leader who can now act quite openly, and they do not get considerable credits (which the cooperative will repay immediately due to his productivity on the other hand, the prejudices are extraordinary). The land was not their property but the state, but they forced the change. The leadership grew with the struggle. Now is today's room for maneuver a gift from heaven, or a product of hard work. Tarlas is not the only place where this kind of thing can be done, Daante says. I am not so short-sighted as to ignore the example of the many new private enterprises founded because of the state's interest in the region and state. What we want is that they can also form broad popular defense organizations. Then he adds that in the other hand, the people will be given to us and will instead be nationalized.

Daante's big idea is that people do not become revolutionaries in Tarlac or anywhere else by receiving propaganda, but only through their own personal experiences. Now, when the room for maneuver is so much greater than under Marcos, one has to work hard and fast together with peasants to achieve as much as possible "water existing perfections of production." Only when the peasants are themselves convinced with the unavoidable land opposition from powerful businessmen, politicians and bureaucrats will they be able to develop the common political struggle. And only then can I conclude how I should proceed myself. I am not even sure how this process has been advised by the time the elections are held.

How important is the struggle for democracy? Daante believes that most of the point is to see the fact that their freedom and possibilities to cooperate, as well as to political pressure and consequently accurate administration which can fix the laws on favorable terms, are independent of demand for political rights and the democratic state administration. Those who are equal should be equal. Further on in my work have the right to fight for - not only joint state administration, but also the democratic state administration. Those who are equal should be equal. Further, the democratic state administration. Those who are equal should be equal. Further, the democratic state administration. Those who are equal should be equal. Further, the democratic state administration. Those who are equal should be equal. Further, the democratic state administration. Those who are equal should be equal. Further, the democratic state administration. Those who are equal should be equal. Further, the democratic state administration. Those who are equal should be equal. Further, the democratic state administration.
socialists and nationalists, as well as followers of the old Communist Party -- have for some time been able to meet, and in an atmosphere of mutual respect, hold discussions about what concrete issues some or all of them should be able to cooperate on. [110]

All these have favored broader actions in questing such as the 1. 5 basis, the huge Philippine debt and its consequences for common people, human rights, and a genuine agrarian reform. One could also mention the successful attempts by popular democrats in the provinces to get a broad following and respect among the fighting parties for a concept of "people's zones." [111] Finally, it is not impossible that some kind of agreement among the various progressive forces can be reached as they face the 1992 elections.

However, those tendencies should not be overestimated. There are not only problems of differing analyses, strategies, and tactics. Everyone concerned carries along some bad experiences amassed over the years. Moreover, it is important to remember that coalitions are built mainly on rather short-term questions, focusing on demands rather than alternatives, and relating to traditional pressure politics, primarily in the capital. Therefore, as the 1992 elections approach, one cannot be sure that the alliances are compatible with the efforts to "empower" people and develop bases for more genuine democracy. The coalitions may instead be adjoined to the ways of the 1986 local elections in which sections of the Left related to the best possible patrons within the existing framework of cacique democracy.

Conclusion

The experience from communist-led political struggles in Indonesia and India indicate that various forms of appropriating surplus through the monopolization of mainly public, controlled, and cooperatively managed conditions of production -- often in combination with privately owned resources -- which usually are external in relation to the units of production (for instance credits and irrigation) had been difficult to take into proper consideration with the use of preposterous Marxist theories. These characteristics may be labelled political rent-capitalists. One can study them without abandoning Marxism, by extending the analyses of the means of production to include also additional vital conditions of production. If these dynamics of production, vital, a lot of people should have a major interest in struggling for democratization although they may vacillate between democratization and privatization. [112]

Clearly, the Philippines is much different from both Indonesia and India. The role of the colonial and post-colonial state, to take one example, has been much less decisive in the Philippines, despite Marcos's attempts at state-managed development, and his cramming. In just this way my brief study of the Philippines allows for systematic comparisons with above conclusions about neglected rent-capitalist features in India and Indonesia. However, it seems to me that the main reason why it was difficult for almost all sides of the radical Philippine Left to foresee the growing importance of the struggle for democracy that its basic theoretical and analytical perceptions allowed for the identification of main sources of power outside of national political sphere.

In the beginning of this article optimistic democracy was defined as the actual capacity of the adult citizens to exercise in various forms equal effective rule over resources which they hold in common without undermining the minimum prerequisites for this rule.

Democracy was not vital according to radical Philippine analysis and ideologues. The essential prerequisites for democracy -- the "social capacities, to exercise, equal effective rule" -- were lacking. They had to be found. However, this could rarely be done by legal, peaceful, and democratic ways and for this reason the limited rights and liberties available. For others, the essential resources in the society were not even formally public, in private hands. Even if the organs of the state had publicized at least some public resources, had been reasonably democratically governed, it would not necessarily have created significantly better prerequisites for democracy. Nor would it have demystified the dominating classes. Imperiling, big capitalist creditors, landlords, etc., who were in command of the real sources of power -- these instead have to deplazed head on.

This is not to say that all political analysis were equally square. But even most of the dissidents employed short-term tactics. A perspective in support of the above-mentioned basic views when arguing in favor of a "new" immediate, critical participation in an election. They wanted to start from the actual struggle of consciousness among the people and lay them over by step by step or they wanted to create a revolutionary situation, or they recommend struggle over the control of "relatively democratic" institutions, and so on. [113]

On the other hand, the more independent analysts who gave priority also to the creation of autonomous organizations, popular participation in addition to representation, equalization and condition-building etc., and who have added the "empowering" ourselves. [114]


The Communal Party of the Philippines (CPP) was formed by members of the old Philippine Communist Party (PCP), which had compartmented with Marcos and student activists, and was founded as an independent organization. Officially, however, on Mar's birthday, December 28, 1968, as was the New People's Army (NPA), which was based on members of the Huk guerillas movement who divorced from an increasingly corrupt government. The National Democratic Front (NDF) was affiliated in 1973 and formally established in 1986.

It was suggested that this should not be the only form of democracy. However, I believe that the principles of this form of democracy may be economically devastating is quite something. Other, democracies do not solve all problems.


7. For instance, the "negotiations" with the government, but see also the agreement between the CPP and the government, signed in August 1995 (Report by the CPP-NPA Peace Panel, The Philippine Journal of Sociology, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1993).

8. For instance, in 1995, the CPP-NPA agreed to a "code of discipline." The code is the code and is working as a sort of a constitution, and a way to avoid the old conflicts.


10. See for instance the "nego on the Left" in turn, but see also the agreement between the CPP and the government, signed in August 1995 (Report by the CPP-NPA Peace Panel, The Philippine Journal of Sociology, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1993).

11. For instance, interviews with the former general secretary of the CPP, Jesus Lara, March 14, 1992, and with Jonas Scan, May 8, 1992.

12. See Interview with the former general secretary of the CPP, Jesus Lara, March 14, 1992, and with Jonas Scan, May 8, 1992.


15. See Interview with the former general secretary of the CPP, Jesus Lara, March 14, 1992, and with Jonas Scan, May 8, 1992.

16. For instance, in 1995, the CPP-NPA agreed to a "code of discipline." The code is the code and is working as a sort of a constitution, and a way to avoid the old conflicts.

17. See Interview with the former general secretary of the CPP, Jesus Lara, March 14, 1992, and with Jonas Scan, May 8, 1992.

18. For instance, in 1995, the CPP-NPA agreed to a "code of discipline." The code is the code and is working as a sort of a constitution, and a way to avoid the old conflicts.


20. For instance, in 1995, the CPP-NPA agreed to a "code of discipline." The code is the code and is working as a sort of a constitution, and a way to avoid the old conflicts.


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23. See Interview with the former general secretary of the CPP, Jesus Lara, March 14, 1992, and with Jonas Scan, May 8, 1992.

24. For instance, in 1995, the CPP-NPA agreed to a "code of discipline." The code is the code and is working as a sort of a constitution, and a way to avoid the old conflicts.

25. See Interview with the former general secretary of the CPP, Jesus Lara, March 14, 1992, and with Jonas Scan, May 8, 1992.

26. For instance, in 1995, the CPP-NPA agreed to a "code of discipline." The code is the code and is working as a sort of a constitution, and a way to avoid the old conflicts.

27. See Interview with the former general secretary of the CPP, Jesus Lara, March 14, 1992, and with Jonas Scan, May 8, 1992.
Lessons from the Democratic Struggle in the Philippines
(Quarterly Review, 6, 1995)


5. For instance, Prof. Alex Mago's views on relative autonomy and the Philippine Autonomous States (University of the Philippines, Department of Political Science, 1992).

6. Other voices, with personal political experiences, have raised doubts about this conclusion. Interview March 12, 1992.

7. For a more elaborated discussion on this and other attempts to approach the decade see the first volume of my What's Wrong?


11. Interview March 25, 1990


13. See the two volumes of What's Wrong.

The Road to NIC: The Philippine Experience

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Democracy not even nationalistic. But the dream of NIC: The Phillippine Experience is more than a dream. It is a roadmap for the empowerment and improvement of the Filipino people. The NIC model is based on the principles of democracy, social justice, and economic growth. The NIC countries, including the Philippines, have shown that it is possible to achieve significant progress in these areas.

The NIC model is not without its challenges. One of the main challenges is the need for sustained investment and policy reforms. Another challenge is the need for the NIC countries to continue to improve their institutions and governance. Despite these challenges, the NIC model remains a powerful example of what can be achieved through sustained effort and commitment.

In conclusion, the Philippines has the potential to achieve the NIC model. By focusing on education, infrastructure, and economic growth, the Philippines can become a NIC country and benefit from the many advantages that come with this status. The NIC model is not just a dream, but a roadmap for progress and prosperity.