

LESSONS FOR THE PHILIPPINE LEFT

Eduardo C. Tadem

"My God, we missed out again." – Ed de la Torre

Amidst the euphoria generated by the hasty departure of erstwhile Filipino strongman Ferdinand Marcos and the ascension into the Presidency of popular opposition leader Corason C. Aquino on 25 February 1986, the forces that could claim to have struggled the longest and sacrificed the most in terms of lives lost and members imprisoned ironically stood on the fringes and found themselves reduced to a marginal status within the broad anti-fascist movement.

The Boycott Line

This was the ultimate result of the policy of the dominant groups within the legal Left to boycott the 1986 Presidential elections. Their present umbrella organization, the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (BAYAN), arrived at the decision after weeks of internal debates which saw an initially lame and tentative policy of "non-participation" (a euphemism for an inactive boycott) gradually give way to the more hardline position of active boycott. The policy was arrived at based on the principle that elections under the Marcos regime cannot possibly become a vehicle for the dismantling of the dictatorship, much less the transformation of society.

The above view was obviously the result of a traditional and orthodox attitude of Left-wing groups in the Philippines toward the electoral process. On the other hand, as the succeeding discussion attempts to show, Philippine Left groups which applied this general principle to the 1986 "snap" polls

did so in disregard of historical circumstances. In the process, they grossly misjudged the overall political climate and underestimated the level of militancy of the masses.

Electoral and Martial Law Politics

It is true that Philippine elections have always provided very limited space for militant struggles. In pre-martial law days, these exercises have always been the turf of traditional politicians and their carnival-like campaigns. The two major political parties never offered the people a choice because they would merely echo each other's elite-centered programs and were thus considered two sides of the same coin. That the electoral process was a futile exercise came to be a generally accepted judgment among many Filipinos. This view prevailed despite the fact that, from a bourgeois democratic point of view, Philippine elections functioned properly as a means of introducing changes in the national leadership on a regular basis. In this manner, a democratic political facade successfully masked the existing undemocratic economic structures.

The martial law era deprived the electorate of this token exercise for 12 years. During this period, the only means of expression on the part of the populace were street demonstrations and other semi-legal forms of protest. However a crippling economic crisis beginning in the early Eighties brought about by corruption and mismanagement and a political impasse resulting from the 1983 assassination of returning opposition leader Benigno Aquino, Jr. forced Marcos to grant concessions towards reviving pre-martial law electoral jousts.

Electoral Revivals

The May 1984 Batasan (Parliament) elections was the first of these revivals. Although boycotted by all Left groups and other progressive and nationalist organizations (the "cause-oriented" groups), that occasion saw an awakened citizenry troop in large numbers to the polls and elect opposition candidates to more than 30 percent of the Batasan seats. The campaign styles of the various opposition candidates, however, hardly differed from pre-martial law antics and saw very little participation on the part of the mass of voters. Thus, from the perspective of mass-oriented politics, the 1984 elections lacked the element of popular participation as the masses were simply passive receptors of political propaganda. Though it was well known that the Batasan would be a mere showpiece of the administration since Marcos retained his emergency legislative powers (the infamous Amendment 6), the voter turnout on election day was one of the highest ever in the country's history. This showed that people still saw in the electoral process a chance to express their dissatisfaction with the regime, even if, at heart, they were probably not too optimistic that genuine change could come about.

official recognition as the dominant opposition party (DOP), was largely built on the spontaneous and exuberant outpouring of support from the large masses of the Filipino people. For the first time, a Presidential campaign revolved around activities normally associated with Left-wing political expressions - street marches, rallies, and demonstrations.

It must also be pointed out that a large number of those who supported Aquino's candidacy were veterans of the "Parliament of the Streets" which came into being in the aftermath of the August 1983 assassination of Benigno Aquino, Jr. This collective historical experience of having to take to the streets countless of times to demand justice for victims of the dictatorship and for Marcos himself to step down would greatly influence the style of Aquino's electoral campaign. It goes without saying that Cory herself had often marched and demonstrated with her supporters during these past years.

Contentwise, an unequivocal anti-fascist stand highlighted Cory Aquino's campaign. Remembering the eight years of imprisonment her own husband suffered as a political detainee under Marcos, she promised to free all political prisoners once elected. One independent-minded BAYAN leader remarked that if only for her forthright stand on the detainees, Cory deserved full support.



Joe Roca

The 1986 Polls and Popular Politics

It was up to the 1986 snap Presidential polls to introduce the missing element of popular participation and turn the campaign into a gigantic mass-oriented movement. Ms. Corazon Aquino, widow of Benigno Aquino, became the rallying symbol of the people's desire for change. The battle cry of "Tama Na! Sobra Na! Palitan Na! (We've had enough! We want change!) reverberated throughout the archipelago among the record crowds that greeted Cory Aquino wherever she went. Many cause-oriented groups, including Left-leaning ones, joined the Cory bandwagon in the spirit of anti-fascist solidarity with the more traditional Liberal Party of Jovito Salonga and the UNIDO of Salvador Laurel. The Aquino campaign, though benefiting from UNIDO's machinery, logistics, and

The Left Splinters

The boycott position taken by the BAYAN-led Left groups met with stiff opposition from among their ranks. A number of militants chose to set aside the boycott call by either joining NAMFREL or campaigning for the opposition in their personal capacities. Some youth organizations reportedly were strong proponents of participation. In Mindanao, BAYAN mass leaders had already started campaigning for Cory Aquino when the decision to boycott was made. Sources say that, in this case, the official policy was simply ignored since to follow it would result in isolation from the masses.

In addition, many of the cause-oriented groups which had boycotted the 1984 parliamentary elections decided to participate this time. Non-BAYAN Left organizations under the

umbrella of the Independent Caucus (IC) rejected the boycott call and opted to support Ms. Aquino. The Caucus may be seen as representing Philippine Left groups that are consciously pursuing a non-sectarian and more open-minded approach to the struggle. Incidentally, the IC goes beyond BAYAN's alternative of a "national democratic society" and proposes a "Philippine type of socialism". BANDILA (Bansang Nagkakaisa sa DIWA at Layunin), a coalition of Social Democratic groups, also decided to participate. The Movement for Philippine Sovereignty and Democracy (KAAKBAY), which is headed by the highly respected nationalist and former Senator Jose Diokno, likewise threw its support behind Aquino. These and other cause-oriented organizations, totalling 61 in number, banded together in a loose alliance which they christened the Nationalist Bloc. However, since the Bloc had a smaller mass base than BAYAN and did not assert itself enough during the campaign, it was not to play a major role in determining Aquino's main political program. For example, it was unable to prevent the watering down of a previously tough stance of Ms. Aquino on the US military bases. Nevertheless, these groups properly positioned themselves and avoided being marginalized in the process.

Isolation of BAYAN-Led Left

Because it adopted a boycott position and went against the mainstream of the anti-dictatorship struggle, BAYAN and its affiliate groups found themselves isolated from the massive rallies and demonstrations during both the electoral campaigns and the protest actions organized afterwards.

The boycott campaign never got off the ground. There were no massive popular actions similar to those that characterized the May 1984 poll exercise. BAYAN was decimated at both the national and regional levels as mass leaders actively supported the opposition ticket. Marchers in a "Lakbayan" (People's March) from provinces around Metro Manila were reportedly refused drinking water by residents who thought that the boycotters were paid Marcos agents. In another instance, a boycott vehicle cruising the Kamuning area in Quezon City unfortunately arrived at the area where a KBL motorcade was stoned by residents only minutes before. Once again thinking that this was another Marcos gimmick, the people lobbed a few stones at the boycotters' jeep. The largest crowd the boycott movement could gather was a dismal

5,000 in Plaza Miranda on February 3. One disheartened mass leader who attended the rally observed that everyone there knew each other and questioned the wisdom of mobilizing and convincing those who were already organized.

The marginalization of these Left groups was so intensely felt from within that two days before the elections, an alliance called "Tanggol Karapatan" (TAPAT) was hastily put together with the objective of "monitoring human rights abuses" on election day. This was an attempt by those who had remained unconvinced of the boycott position to break away from the isolation they were experiencing. TAPAT, however, was criticized by some of its members for taking a passive stance during the polls, not exerting efforts to safeguard the ballot, and not making sure that the will of the voters will be accurately reflected in the canvassing of results. It was understandable, though, for TAPAT to confine itself to simply documenting instances of human rights violations since most of its leaders and members had to toe the official boycott line.

Aquino's Mass Support

Cory Aquino, of course, drew mammoth crowds. A "miting de avance" at the Luneta Park on February 4, 1986 attracted an estimated 2 million participants. In areas where the Left was supposedly strong, e.g., in the Bicol region and in Davao City, tens of thousands of residents came out to show their support for Ms. Aquino. Bicol actually gave Cory her highest winning vote margin among all regions. Everywhere she went, record crowds would enthusiastically greet her. Aquino became a symbol of the people's aspirations for liberation from a repressive order and a catalyst for the unity of all opposition currents.

The New Militants

During this brief period, the center of the anti-fascist struggle quickly shifted from the highly-organized BAYAN-led Left groups to the loosely-knit "moderate" camp (whose extraordinary vigilance was uncharacteristic of truly moderate organizations) and the large number of unorganized masses who spontaneously responded to the anti-fascist call. The 500,000 volunteers belonging to the National Citizens Movement for Free Elections (NAMFREL) and thousands of poll watchers and inspectors of the opposition party and other

M. Boynton



EDSA, 24 February 1986.



NAMFREL volunteers: religiously guarding the ballots.

citizens vigilante groups staked their lives and braved the harassment, intimidation and terrorism of the State in their attempt to ensure fair and free elections. As an Aquino spokesman wittily described the confrontations: "The KBL and its goons were armed to the teeth while we were armed only with our teeth." Their steadfastness in battling the naked brutality of State power turned them into heroes overnight worthy of esteem and respect from all progressive forces in the country.

The militant vigilance displayed by NAMFREL and opposition party volunteers on February 7 and the days after and the tremendous support extended to them by thousands of people who camped in at municipal halls all over the country in order to guard the ballot boxes were exemplary displays of people power. The government, the ruling KBL party, and the military establishment unleashed hordes of armed goons to harass and terrorize the vigilantes but failed to dampen the latter's militance. For the first time in the country's long history of conflicts between the people and State power, the "moderate" groups whose main call was the seemingly non-threatening slogan of "clean and fair elections" bore the brunt of fascist repression, an honor previously accorded only to "more militant" Left-wing organizations.

Historical Initiatives and Limitations

For the greater part of Marcos' 20-year autocratic reign it was the dominant groups within the Philippine Left that had provided the continuous momentum to propel the democratic struggle both in the countryside and the cities. The sacrifices made by their leaders and mass members are already inscribed in the country's long history of popular struggles which dates from the colonial period. Many lives have been laid down, horrible tortures were undergone in the hands of military interrogators, and years of incarceration followed afterwards. Repression, however, only firmed up the Left's resolve. With no other significant popular movement emerging during this time, it rapidly increased its following throughout the country and assumed the de-facto leadership of the struggle. All other opposition forces, from independent Left groups to the elite political parties, recognized that participation of the more

dominant Left groups was essential and necessary if the struggle against the Marcos dictatorship was to succeed.

While this growing force constituted a headache for the Marcos regime and despite projections of "strategic stalemate" being achieved within two years from 1985, it was the objective opinion of independent observers that there was really no immediate threat to the regime's power. Besides, from the perspective of a large majority of the population, the Left option was not particularly attractive. Deeply felt anti-Communist sensibilities nurtured through Western-inspired propaganda since the American colonial era constituted a major stumbling block. Left-wing groups in the urban centers did little to correct such misapprehensions by frequently protesting that they were simply "nationalist and democratic-oriented organizations" and denying any radical inclinations.

Furthermore, man-in-the-street notions of the Left were strengthened by organizational styles that alienated other groups and propaganda campaigns that were often reduced to unimaginative and trite sloganeering. By 1985, these Left forces had successfully built mass following among workers, peasants, students, and religious in the course of aggressive expansion moves. Overall, however, these organized masses comprised relatively small percentages of the total for these sectors. In addition, the large and influential middle class was hardly tapped.

Serious Miscalculations

It was the unorganized masses from the middle and lower classes that responded to Cory Aquino's crusade to unseat Marcos. Boycott adherents completely miscalculated the extent of grassroots and middle-class support for Cory Aquino and the manner by which such support would be expressed in a popular anti-fascist mass movement. Unless one resorted to more unkind explanations this can be the only acceptable reason for the inability of the BAYAN-led Left to transcend a traditional analysis of the electoral process. It may well be that its leaders unrealistically projected the sentiments of their mass members to the entire people. As one Central Luzon peasant leader asked: "Who were the targets of BAYAN's

boycott movement? Its own members or those who have yet to be organized?" As it turned out, the Aquino-led mass movement emerged from among the populace who had not been reached or moved by the Left's politicalization drive.

Self-Criticism

A spokesman of CENTRUM (Center for Nationalist Trade Unions in Mindanao) which is affiliated with BAYAN through its mother federation, KMU (May First Movement), has admitted to this writer that the boycott call was a "tactical error" which resulted in BAYAN and fraternal groups "abdicating the mantle of leadership of the anti-fascist movement". He identified three tendencies which dominated BAYAN during this crucial period: "1) tailism—lagging behind the masses; 2) dogmatism—misapplying general principles to specific situations; and 3) sectarianism—being closed to new ideas".

The CENTRUM spokesman also revealed that, due to lack of time, there was no democratic consultation with its members when KMU formulated the boycott decision, which, according to him, was made as early as November 1985. Indicating a probable cause for BAYAN's "misreading of the political situations", he said that the coalition "has ceased to function as a united front and has simply become an alliance of National Democratic groups".

Failed Expectations

It took sometime before the impact of the popular movement built around Cory Aquino would jolt the boycott people into realizing their tactical error. The day after the elections, the chairman of KMU, who is also a top BAYAN official, issued a press release which prematurely conceded the elections to Mr. Marcos and said, in so many words, that the boycotters have been vindicated. This "I told you so" and "We were right all along" attitude incensed Cory's supporters and may have lost for the boycotters any chance of being welcomed back into the mainstream of the mass movement.

Apparently, BAYAN leaders thought that the expected election irregularities and terrorism would cause an exodus of people from the "moderate" ranks into the "more revolutionary" groups. Also anticipated was widespread disenchantment of the millions who voted for Cory who would then swing their support from the electoral parties to the Left groups. Neither of these happened.

What occurred instead was a closing of ranks both among the organized and unorganized opposition supporters, the majority of whom were "moderates" with a small minority espousing radical and Left-wing views. Instead of a polarization, these forces became consolidated and were able to transform themselves from an election-centered movement into a wholly mass-oriented "Parliament of the Streets". While the most active component of this new force was initially the urban middle class, organizations and individuals from the workers, urban poor, and peasantry eventually gave their all-out support. In the February 16 "Tagumpay ng Bayan" (People's Victory) rally at the Luneta Park, which was prece-

ded by street marches from 12 different points throughout Metro Manila, 2.5 million people gathered to express their confidence in Ms. Aquino's leadership and vowed to continue the struggle to topple Mr. Marcos by means of a civil disobedience movement.

OMEGA/MP. & MS.





The Elite Politicians

Relevant to a radical analysis of the elections was the fact that the elite opposition parties such as the UNIDO, Liberal Party, PDP-LABAN, Mindanao Alliance, Nacionalista Party (Laurel Wing), etc., were, to a large extent, marginalized or subsumed under the umbrella of this unstructured new movement. All of these parties have been separately battling the Marcos regime using conventional strategies and tactics for many years now and had failed to generate popular enthusiasm for their cause. This also showed popular distrust of the traditional elite parties. It is generally accepted that if it were UNIDO President Laurel who had faced Marcos in the polls, he would not have generated the same enthusiastic response from the masses as Aquino had. In the end, it took a combination of widespread disenchantment with the Marcos order and the charismatic leadership of a non-politician like Cory Aquino to unify these parties and at the same time transcend narrow political perspectives and directly reach out to the people.

Shifting of Gears

Sensing that the political protest current was now beginning to pass them by, the boycotters had earlier changed their tune and, using organizations not openly identified with BAYAN (such as TAPAT and a breakaway faction of the August 21 Movement), joined the chorus of indignant voices expressing outrage at the conduct of the polls. At the same time, however, BAYAN would continue to issue arrogant statements echoing the line previously espoused by the KMU chairman. But even BAYAN, which is reportedly controlled by hardliners, could not remain forever impervious to popular

sentiments. A few days before the "Tagumpay ng Bayan" rally, Cory Aquino gathered together 250 people from various organizations and political parties which supported her Presidential bid in order to formulate a detailed program of non-violent struggle. BAYAN leaders, through its secretariat, tried to solicit an invitation to the meeting but were politely refused.

Triumph of the People

The massive and popular anti-dictatorship movement formed in the wake of the February election finally did battle with the armed troops of Marcos and emerged victorious after only three days and four nights of peaceful but highly-charged confrontations in the streets of Quezon City and Manila. The Enrile/Ramos-led military rebellion, begun on the night of 22 February, initially had only 800 men at its command and, holed out in two adjacent military camps, would have been annihilated without the support of at least 2 million people who came out and formed human barricades around the two camps. The next day, when advancing tank-led loyalist troops failed to intimidate the people and instead returned to their camps, Marcos's hold on the military started to crumble and the defections began. From then on, the rebellion grew with the support and protection of a militant civilian population. Two days later, in the evening of 25 February, with 90 percent of his once-loyal armed forces now with Enrile and Ramos, Marcos fled the Presidential palace for Clark Air Base and left the country on a US Air Force cargo plane. Corazon C. Aquino became the country's seventh President and the first one to come to power on the shoulders of a popular mass movement.

Rude Awakening

Now rudely awakened by the swift turn of events, BAYAN leaders immediately hailed Marcos's fall and congratulated Aquino. Some even went as far as pledging support for the new government. Two days before Marcos' exit, the group's secretary general was seen calling on Defense Minister Enrile at the latter's rebel headquarters in Camp Crame. *Business Day* (27 February 1986) quoted an unnamed BAYAN official as admitting that they "failed to anticipate the enthusiastic response of the people to the candidacy of Mrs. Aquino" and therefore erred "in analyzing the situation and the tactics to be used in the legal struggle".

On March 6, 1986, the BAYAN National Council met in an emergency session and agreed to adopt a policy of "vigilant and principled support" towards the Aquino administration (*Malaya Middy*, 7 March 1986). In a resolution read by national chairman Lorenzo Tañada (who had earlier taken a leave of absence to campaign for Aquino), the group said that "it will participate in all of Ms. Aquino's programs, especially those geared towards the dismantling of Marcos's dictatorial structures" but will "take issue on any deviation of Presidential policies that do not serve the people's interests".

Whether such a policy could gain unanimous support from its leadership and rank-and-file remains to be seen. The more doctrinaire elements are expected to uphold the position previously taken and oppose any compromise with what they would categorize as a "bourgeois government". This faction is currently propagating the absurd view that the events during the days immediately leading to Marcos fall were brilliantly engineered by the US Central Intelligence Agency and that "mock battles" were staged to lend credibility to the Enrile-Ramos rebellion.

BAYAN, however, at this stage, is suffering from a credibility gap. This newly announced policy, and the principle on which it is based, is diametrically opposed to the boycott position the organization took on the elections. Unless BAYAN wishes to leave itself open to the charge of "political opportunism", the group should provide its mass

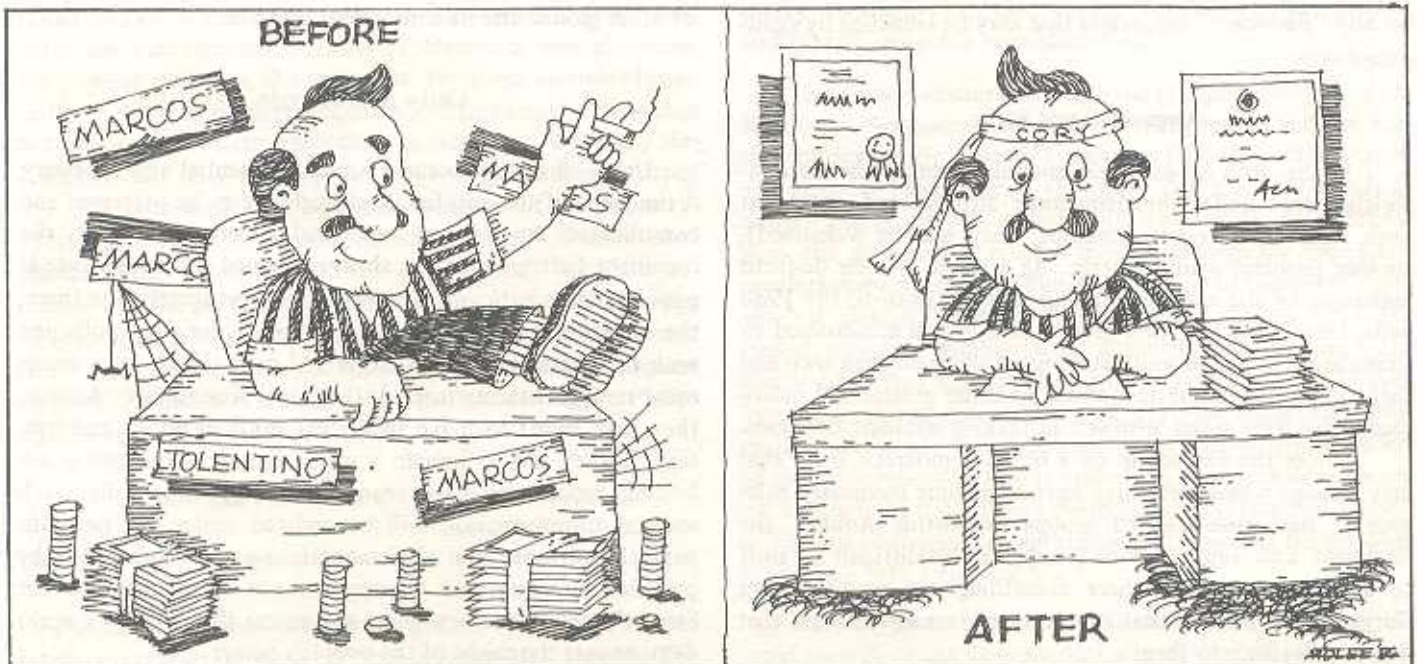
members and the people a more thorough and self-critical explanation of the rationale for the 180-degree turnabout.

Overcoming Mistrust

For those willing to work with new administration under an anti-fascist and democratic agenda, an immediate problem is overcoming the mistrust that Cory's supporters harbor against BAYAN. After all, the Nationalist Alliance for Justice, Freedom, and Democracy (NAJFD, a BAYAN affiliate) had labelled Cory a "puppet of US imperialism" during the campaign. Such unfortunate statements coupled with the sanctimonious attitude on the part of the boycotters make it more difficult for any *modus vivendi* between the two forces to take place. Previous experiences of working together under various united-front-type alliances have left many wounds still unhealed. These past attempts at unity all broke down because of what is perceived as a tendency of the groups that now form BAYAN to dominate the alliance and dictate on other organizations. Left-wing supporters of Cory who are at heart sympathetic with their comrades on the other side of the fence could act as go-betweens, but even they admit that the task is a difficult, if not impossible one, given the above history.

The Issue of Imperialism

A second major dilemma for the BAYAN-led Left is whether it should temporarily set aside the major issue of US imperialism in order to help complete the democratic revolution. The departure of Marcos only created conditions for democratic processes and institutions to be set up but the thorough dismantling of the entire authoritarian apparatus built up over the last 13 years will take some time. Many of those who were major props of dictatorial rule have shamelessly gone over to the new government after the outcome was already clear. Corrupt and known Marcos bootlickers entrenched in the Batasan, government offices, and local govern-



ments are resisting popular calls to resign and are invoking the legalities which formed the framework of the deposed dictatorship.

Obviously, the political and economic vestiges of authoritarianism are still present and need to be completely weeded out. This is, undoubtedly, a major task and Aquino appears determined to accomplish it. Barely a week in office, she had already started to dismantle the repressive structures of the dictatorship by restoring the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus and retiring 22 overstaying and Marcos-loyalist generals. Equally important, Aquino has fulfilled a campaign promise by freeing all political prisoners including Communist party founder Jose Ma. Sison, alleged National Democratic Front Chairman Horacio Morales, former New People's Army chief-tain Bernabe Buscayno (the famous Commander Dante), and alleged NDF leader Fr. Ed de la Torre. Filipino progressives should actively assist in the further democratization of society, working either within or outside of government.

For the BAYAN-led Left as well as all other Left groups and the Philippine nationalist movement in general, the anti-imperialist struggle has been the single most important aspect of the movement for political and economic change. All other issues have always been regarded as secondary. Under the Marcos dictatorship, because of continued American economic and military support, it was easy to combine both the anti-imperialist and the anti-fascist aspects. However, because of the extraordinary circumstances under which Aquino came to power, the issue of imperialism may have to play second fiddle (for the first few months, at least) to the task of continuing the anti-fascist struggle and completing the tasks of the democratic movement. The assumption is that, under a liberal democratic government the Left will have better chances of conducting its politicalization work and expanding its ties with the masses. Without the issue of fascism standing in the way towards articulating its long-term program for societal transformation, it can then devote its energies to presenting directly to the people its socialist program and in the process counter-act any "Red-scare" campaigns that may be launched by right-wing forces.

Organizational Style

If the BAYAN-led Left should subsume the anti-imperialist issue under the democratic struggle and decide to work with other forces (assuming they will be welcomed), another problem would emerge. As a result of their de-facto leadership of the anti-dictatorship struggle prior to the 1986 polls, these particular Left groups have grown accustomed to formulating programs and planning activities on their own and then simply extending invitations to other groups and individuals who were never involved in making strategic decisions.

Under the the set-up of a broad democratic front that may emerge where they may have to assume secondary roles vis-a-vis the cause-oriented groups supporting Aquino, the dominant Left organizations would find it difficult to shift to a decision process where everything will require either Cory's imprimatur or that of the newly emerged forces that owe no allegiance to them.

Healthy Tendencies

At the same time, they will have to contend with a deeply-ingrained paranoia which automatically takes hold of other cause-oriented groups whenever BAYAN or like-minded groups enter the scene. Though understandable, such attitude has to be reoriented towards discriminating between the doctrinaire hardliners and the more flexible and open-minded elements. The latter faction forms the nucleus of what may hopefully turn into a less rigid and ideologically more vibrant Left movement in the Philippines. Such tendencies must be supported and nurtured by all other cause-oriented groups, especially the Left-oriented ones.

Realignment of Forces

This proposed realignment of forces will not be easy to forge as events have shown in the initial positioning of various groups in the first days of the Aquino presidency. Most of the cause-oriented groups that comprised the Nationalist Bloc have constituted themselves into a new alliance called Lakas ng Sanbayananan, also known as Cory Aquino's People Power (CAPP). The new coalition's aim is to consolidate all the mass organizations that supported Aquino and form itself into a citizen's power bloc that will organize and expand on the grassroots level and provide mass support for the democratization process. The alliance has decided that, for the meantime, the BAYAN-led Left would not be invited to join, even as the door is kept open for future working arrangements.

BAYAN sympathizers in the least one of LAKAS' member organizations are uneasy about this exclusion and want to immediately broaden the coalition's membership and its ideological representation. The Left, however, is represented in LAKAS through the Independent Caucus. LAKAS' organizers fear that the early entry of BAYAN into the alliance even before it is consolidated might cause an exodus of other groups and its consequent break-up.

Unity And Struggle

Unity of all democratic forces is essential and necessary if the gains of the anti-fascist struggle are to be preserved and consolidated. In previous years and largely by default, the dominant Left groups have always assumed the leading role in popular democratic mass struggles. Unfortunately for them, the situation has changed radically since the snap polls and with the center of a much larger and more potent mass movement now gravitating towards the forces around Cory Aquino, they may have to make significant shifts in policy and strategy if they are to remain a major factor in the newly unfolding process of socio-economic change. Hopefully, such societal transformation will be realized under the new dispensation. If not, then all democratic and Left forces must be prepared to reconvene an oppositionist "Parliament of the Streets" and lead a new mass movement that will once again demonstrate the might of the people's power.