

## **RADICAL POLITICS: FROM RED TO GREEN**

With socialism becoming an even murkier proposition in an increasingly borderless world, environmentalism has emerged as the unifying theme linking newly emerging visions of an alternative future. The socialist idea was a by-product of the larger ideology of industrialism. It was an offspring of the nineteenth- and twentieth-century romance with the nation-state. As nations dissolve into firms, the crisis of the socialist vision becomes more fundamental than merely the proven incompetence of central planning and state subordination of productive forces. Ecology has proven to be surer ground on which the struggle for social alternatives could be built.

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Alexander R. Magno

In this issue of *Kasarinlan*, we bring together a number of papers dealing with the emergence of environmentalism both as a subject of inquiry and as the starting point of a new mode of political engagement.

In the first paper, Francisco A. Magno provides an overview on the growth of Philippine environmentalism. He cites the weak Philippine state as a major factor contributing to ecological degradation and sees the devolution of power to the communities as a possible way of reversing the environmental crisis.

Julio C. Teehankee surveys the role of non-governmental organizations in the struggle against deforestation. His survey centers around the crucial political struggle to pass a ban on logging. The debate on the bill proposing a total logging ban reveals much about the configuration of forces in Philippine society.

## **REINVENTING DEMOCRACY**

Democracy is always clearer in theory than in practice. It is always easier to critique existing institutions for falling short of the democratic ideal; harder always to work the raw material of historically-derived social conditions and political cultures to actualize the "best practicable" democratic practice.

As the political rigidities of the Cold War period give way to new institutions and new social forces, the democratic question needs to be posed afresh. The fixed (and obsolete) dualities of capitalism/socialism, democracy/authoritarianism and elite-rule/popular empowerment have ceased to be fecund sources for meaningful insight into contemporary issues.

It is never comfortable to part with old certainties. But it is a necessary leap. Comfort in this case comes at the cost of political and ideological inadequacy. As in all explorations, however, the task of re-configuring old categories does not necessarily affirm preconceptions. It might, in fact, invite too many tenuous propositions. This might not be convenient for the existing "progressive" political formations. Political movements, as we know, thrive on ideological certainties, never on loosely-held hypotheses.

In the Philippines today, the progressive movements have become deeply divided between those who insist on the "reaffirmation" of old doctrines and those who feel compelled to ply the uncharted waters of a novel political condition. Within the Filipino Left, in particular, the emerging principal line of division is between those who continue to abide by the hierarchical, statist, and

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