

## A Polarization of Discourse

The deepening rifts within the Filipino communist movement could not possibly spare the National Democratic Front (NDF). The Front, theoretically, is a coalition of distinct forces allied in the common pursuit of 'national democracy.' In practice, and much closer to the Maoist conception of a party-led 'united front' comprising 'progressive classes,' the NDF has been an instrumentality of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP-ML).

For many years, the NDF has been largely a shell. Its identity as an organization distinct from the CPP has been more seriously cultivated abroad, as a method for reaching out to progressive support groups sympathetic to the Philippine struggle but reluctant to deal with a communist party. Thus, the NDF 'International Office' has been more consistently functioning than any of the Front's domestic organs.

On April 23, 1993, on the occasion of the NDF's founding anniversary, indications of an open organizational break within NDF ranks surfaced when two separate celebrations were held in Western Europe. The 'reaffirmationist' minority in Europe, led by Luis Jalandoni and Jose Ma. Sison, organized an anniversary program in Brussels. The 'oppositionist' majority, led by Byron Bocar, held theirs in Utrecht, Holland. The documents emerging from the two events reveal an interesting polarization of discourse on the condition and perspective of the revolutionary struggle in the Philippines.

On the same day, a group claiming to represent the majority of the NDF National Council based in the Philippines released an anniversary statement sharply critical of the 'Stalinist' tendency within the CPP. The group -- subsequently referred to as the 'verdaderos' -- disagreed with the decision taken during the 10th CPP Plenum held last year to revise the NDF Constitution arrived at during the Front's 1990 Congress. They called for upholding the decisions of the 1990 Congress, especially those concerning the organization of the NDF as a 'federative center' giving substantial decision-making powers to its constituent movements.

From the  
**TWS**  
Desk

Alexander R. Magno

The polemics between the Maoist faction within the CPP and the so-called 'verdaderos' unveil fundamental disagreements on the nature of the revolutionary project, the vision of an alternative society, and the importance attached to pluralist democracy.

It must be pointed out, however, that this line of ideological fission is only one of several. There are other centers of opposition within the communist movement evolving a 'Marxist-Leninist' critique of the 'Stalinist' and 'Maoist' deviations of the faction associated with the 'rectification movement' led by one 'Armando Liwanag.' We hope to cover this dimension of debate in the future.

Because other progressive groups and movements in the broad Filipino left-wing community are keenly interested in following the debate, *Kasarinlan* decided to devote the main section of this issue to the polemics between the 'rectification movement' within the CPP and the various new voices arising from the ranks of the NDF. The polarization of the discourse is best appreciated by an even representation of the opposing camps.

For this section, we reproduce both the anniversary statement of the 'verdaderos' group and Luis Jalandoni's 'official' statement. We have also included here a translated version of the CPP Executive Committee memorandum critical of the 'verdaderos' (repeating basically the charges made by Armando Liwanag against the leaders of the 'opposition') and the reply to charges written by a leading cadre of the dissident NDF faction.

Another source of divergent opinion within the NDF is represented by the 'vision statement' prepared by the NDF members based in the United States. To provide an analytical overview to this emerging line of debate, we included Joel Rocamora's paper on the NDF program.

Apart from the section on the NDF, we publish in this issue two conceptual papers relating to the broader discourse of the Filipino left. Rizal Buendia's paper looks into the issues of ethnic identity, self determination, and human rights -- concepts that continue to remain problematic in the main body of Marxist writing. Kenneth Bauzon's paper explores the divergences between Islamic, Liberal, and neo-Marxist modes of explanation.

Rosario Ballecas' paper inquires into the contexts of Filipino labor migration to Japan. It is a paper that should keep this collection close to the ground. While revolutionaries and assorted advocates of social alternatives attempt to settle their conceptual difference, tens of thousands of Filipinos are forced into economic exile by the hard facts of real existence.