



# The NDF Program and the CPP Program for a People's Democratic Revolution: Umbilical Cord Or Lifeline?\*

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The connection between the National Democratic Front (NDF) and the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) is no secret. It was the CPP that gave birth to the NDF in 1973. By the early 1980s, however, the NDF or more accurately, the NDF Program, began to give expression to ideas that diverge from mainstream thinking within the CPP. A decade later, an attempt by a section of the CPP leadership to organize a 'return to basics' has created a massive gulf between the NDF Program and the Party Program. How this happened tells a major part of the untold story of the national democratic (ND) movement. How it will be resolved will determine the future of the movement.

The NDF is the main underground political organization of the national democratic movement. It is composed of 14 mass organizations of workers, peasants and farm workers, women, youth, the people of the Cordillera, health workers, artists and other cultural workers, radical Christians, teachers, and the Communist Party of the Philippines and the New People's Army (NPA).<sup>1</sup> These organizations are at various stages of development ranging from the *Kabataang Makabayan* (KM, Nationalist Youth) which was founded in 1964, to the CPP in 1968, to the two underground worker's organizations which exist only in skeletal form. Also within NDF ranks are 'organs of political power,' shadow governments at various stages of development from the barrio, municipal, and in a few areas, provincial levels.

The NDF was founded on April 24, 1973, the day the first draft NDF Program was released. But the founding congress of the NDF and the formalization of the NDF national structure did not happen until July 1990, 17 years later. In the interim, the program served as the focal point of the national democratic movement. The various ND underground organizations and the organs of political power were gradually established in the course of the last 17 years, slowly accumulating an organizational base for the formalization of the NDF nationally at its 1990 founding congress.

The CPP is the dominant organization within the NDF. Although a few non-party individuals were involved, the NDF Preparatory Committee that formulated the 1973 draft program was organized by the CPP. All of the ND underground mass organizations, with the possible exception of the Christians for National Liberation (CNL), were organized by Party cadres. The NDF territorial base and the organs of political power that are gradually being built at various levels throughout the country are the political expression of guerrilla zones and bases built by the Party.

But the NDF is not the CPP with a glossy cover. 'Front' does not mean 'facade.' The NDF can only be understood within the context of the CPP's attempt to deal with the complex theoretical and organizational problem of building a united front. Of the three 'magic weapons' of the national democratic revolution -- the Party, the army, and the united front -- the last has proven to be the most difficult to build. To see the NDF as a 'facade' of the Party would not only be playing into government propaganda but would be simplifying a tremendously rich and complex process. CPP ideas about what the NDF should be have evolved over time. Today, there are continuing disagreements on the issue.

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The CPP has had great difficulty dealing with the NDF because it is the main arena where the CPP can go outside of itself to build from a secure core to the organizational and theoretical uncertainties outside. The way the CPP has dealt with united front work has certainly played a role in the shaping of perspectives. Theory affects practice, but practice, in turn, has affected theory. The establishment of NDF national and international structures after the 1990 NDF Congress has generated an organizational dynamic that will affect the pattern and pace of NDF development. But most of this is closed from the outside world for understandable reasons. What can be examined more extensively is the theory that underlies this organizational process, at least that embodied in the CPP<sup>2</sup> and the NDF Programs.

## Socialism and National Democracy

The contrast between these two programs is supposed to be the logical expression of the two stages in the national democratic revolution -- the national democratic stage and the socialist stage -- and between the NDF as a national democratic organization and the CPP as a socialist organization. The 1968 CPP *Program for a People's Democratic Revolution* (PPDR) states that:

At this stage of Philippine history and world history, it no longer suffices to have the old type of national democratic revolution. The era of imperialism has long invalidated the leadership of the bourgeoisie...The class leadership in the Philippine revolution is now in the hands of the working class.

While the old democratic leadership of the bourgeoisie no longer applies to the Philippine revolution at this historical stage, the working class and the Communist Party of the Philippines cannot accomplish both democracy and socialism at one blow. While on a world scale socialism has already taken firm roots with the People's Republic of China as its bulwark, the Party must first achieve a new type of national democratic revolution, a people's democratic revolution in the concrete semi-feudal and semi-colonial conditions of the Philippines, before reaching the stage of socialist revolution...

The immediate and general programme of the Filipino people and the Communist Party of the Philippines is a people's democratic revolution and the long-term maximum program is socialism.<sup>3</sup>

This was reaffirmed in both the 1987 and 1992 revised draft CPP programs. The 1987 draft states that:

The Party holds the perspective that upon the total victory of the people's democratic revolution it shall become possible and necessary to carry out socialist revolution and construction. Further on, the achievements of socialism shall be the basis of building communism.<sup>4</sup>

There is no attempt to conceal the socialist perspective here as some have accused the CPP of doing. The division of the CPP alternative into a national democratic and a socialist stage is not only explicit in CPP documents, it is consistent with traditional communist theory dating back to the 1920s. What is problematic is the vagueness of the transition from national democracy to socialism, specifically on how long the national democratic stage will last, and what changes need to be achieved during that stage before a transition to socialism can be effected.

The 1968 CPP PPDR lists 'proletarian revolutionary leadership' and the 'worker-peasant alliance' as "the most important *links* between the stage of the people's democratic revolution and the stage of socialist revolution."<sup>5</sup> The 1987 PPDR states that "...upon the *total victory of the people's democratic revolution*, it shall be possible and necessary to carry out socialist revolution and construction."<sup>6</sup> Neither of these formulations precisely identifies *when* a transition will be made. This was not done until the 1988 CPP anniversary statement which pointed out that "[t]he national democratic revolution is now being carried out. Upon basic completion of this *through the seizure of political power*, the socialist revolution can commence." (italics mine)

The 1991 draft PPDR states: "The Party firmly holds on to its perspective of carrying out socialist revolution and construction upon the total victory of the people's democratic revolution."<sup>8</sup>

This formulation raises a number of fundamental questions. The NDF Program is not only a program for the *seizure of political power*, it is a program for governance. Its political program outlines the steps to be taken for the formation of a democratic coalition government and guidelines for its economic policies. Does this part of the NDF Program become inapplicable after the seizure of political power?

Within ND ranks, this vagueness has led to jokes saying that the ND stage will last only 10 minutes because that is how long it takes to read a proclamation ending the ND stage. Outside of ND ranks, this vagueness feeds into mistrust of the NDF. Accusations of CPP concealment of its socialist program is based on the fact that while the CPP's socialist perspective is explicit, the CPP's program



of government and socialist construction is not spelled out in detail. In particular, left groups who are in coalition with ND groups ask if the ND's willingness to work within coalitions will be replaced by one-party authoritarianism after victory.

The question of how long the ND stage will last *after the seizure of political power* requires an answer from the CPP leadership. But it cannot be said that the NDF Program is just a pretty packaging for the CPP's real Program. An examination of the evolution of the NDF Program will show that it represents the cumulative result of many serious debates within ND ranks in the course of almost twenty years. Much of this debate occurred within CPP ranks.

The CPP's openness to innovation in the NDF Program is based on a distinction it makes between 'ideological' and 'political unity.' 'Ideological unity' means acceptance of Marxist-Leninist ideology including the Marxist-Leninist 'viewpoint' (framework for social and political analysis) and 'standpoint,' a willingness to act politically in favor of the interests of workers and peasants, the most oppressed classes in the Philippines. Ideological unity with this framework means that one can become a member of the CPP. 'Political unity' means simply, agreeing with the NDF Program and being willing to work for its implementation. Since the NDF is to be a coalition of several classes, each with its distinct ideological stance, 'proletarian' (Marxist-Leninist) ideology cannot be imposed on the NDF. The CPP, as a result, has been more open to the introduction of new ideas in the NDF Program than into its own program: the PPDR<sup>9</sup>

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## The NDF Program

NDF ideas on the nature of Philippine society, on the alternatives it offers, and on strategy and tactics, have slowly changed. Only future historians can trace the full range, scope, and nuance of these changes. It is difficult to trace these changes in the NDF through the NDF Program alone because it is such a formal document and it is impossible to recreate the debates that went into specific changes in its content. But precisely because it is a formal document -- providing an explicit map of what the NDF says it will do in the future -- studying the evolution of the NDF Program provides a useful window into the character of the NDF as an organization.

The introduction to the 1988 draft described the Program as:

...the framework in which these people's organizations unite, cooperate, and carry out their own specific programs. It is also on the basis of this program that the NDF seeks out and develops mutually beneficial relations with other revolutionary and progressive forces in the Philippines and abroad, whether they be individuals, organizations, movements, or political parties.<sup>10</sup>

The document then goes on to say that the draft was changed:

...to reflect recent historical developments, the concrete lessons that have been learned from years of struggle, and a deeper understanding of the requirements for achieving a nationwide victory and building a national democratic state.

Thus it is both a program that is continually being enriched by the actual practice of the masses in revolution and our vision of a future in which the revolutionary state shall be able to marshal the resources of the nation in transforming Philippine society as it marches forward into the 21st century.<sup>11</sup>

Considerable effort has gone into making the drafting of the NDF Program a truly popular and participatory process. Security conditions limited participation in the drafting of the 1973 program and the 1977 elaboration. Starting with the 1982 draft, concerted effort was made to integrate more people into the process. The draft was discussed in NDF units in various parts of the country and abroad. Hundreds of copies were circulated among allies. The 1985 draft was introduced with a paragraph stating that:

The NDF is issuing this revised draft program based on comments, criticisms, and suggestions gathered from various allied political forces, organizations, groups and individuals on the 1982 draft



programme. Towards the ratification of the programme soon, we enjoin all revolutionary mass organizations, comrades, allies, and friends to seriously study the programme and forward further suggestions for enriching and improving it.

The NDF Program has indeed undergone many changes since it was first issued on April 24, 1973 by the Preparatory Committee for the NDF, a small group organized by the CPP. The Program included ten points -- single sentence declarative statements soliciting support for the struggle against the Marcos dictatorship -- outlining an alternative and a strategy for achieving victory. The Program was re-issued on November 12, 1977, four years later with elaborations on the ten points. In January 1982, a new draft program was circulated within NDF ranks and among several hundred NDF allies. This draft was never finalized because the unit preparing the draft was disbanded as a result of government arrests and because some NDF leaders felt that the new draft 'emasculated' the 1977 program. A new draft program was issued in January 1985 and was closer to the 1977 program in language and political content. The downfall of the Marcos dictatorship a year later required further changes. It was not until July 1988 that a new draft program, this time containing 15 points, was issued to NDF cadres for comments. This draft, with extensive changes, but with the spirit of the program intact, was submitted to the NDF founding congress in July 1990. This draft, now containing 12 points, was approved by delegates with a few changes.

The evolution of the NDF Program will be analyzed thematically in order to get the full range of changes. Four themes will be examined: economic program, political program, international relations, and the definition of the NDF role. Five drafts will be examined: the 1973 draft and 1977 elaboration will be taken as one, then the 1982, 1985, 1988, and finally the 1990 draft approved by the founding Congress. Other official NDF statements and position papers will be brought into the analysis when they can help clarify the program.

## **Economic Program**

The 1990 NDF economic program is based on a radical rejection of the economic strategy of the government since independence up to President Aquino's term. At the same time, it provides the best example of how far the NDF has moved away from the classical Marxist-Leninist framework. This framework included central planning with a minor role for private enterprise -- collectivization and mechanization of agriculture in order to accumulate the greatest possible surplus for the rapid development of basic industries. The NDF

Program for a 'mixed economy' contravenes many of these basic tenets and incorporates the most recent ideas of progressive economists. But it is clear from the way the Program has evolved that there are continuing debates within the NDF on how far away from the classical model of socialist construction the NDF should go. The word 'socialism' was mentioned only once in the 1973 Program and not at all in subsequent drafts.

The 1990 NDF Program states that:

[t]he people's democratic republic shall build an independent and sovereign economy based on a program of national industrialization and modernization of agriculture. The economy will be a mixed economy consisting of private, cooperative, and state sectors. The private sector will continue to play a significant role in the development of the economy even as the cooperative sector is expanded and the state assumes the leading role.

The development of agriculture will provide the basis for the industrialization process by making available a large amount of agricultural surplus, which used to be appropriated by a parasitic landlord class, to support the needs of industry. Agricultural growth will increase the purchasing power of the rural population and thus expand the domestic market for industrial and consumer products.

National industrialization shall break up the present colonial pattern of trade based mainly on the export of agricultural and extractive raw materials, the importation of finished goods and capital, and the re-export of reassembled or repackaged industrial imports.<sup>11</sup>

Although the elements of the NDF economic framework are scattered throughout three or more points because the emphasis of the Program is on the struggle and calls to action, when taken together, they form a coherent economic framework.

On agriculture:

Agriculture shall become the base of the economy, providing food and other necessities to the people as well as raw materials for industry.

Agricultural cooperation shall be vigorously promoted. The process of cooperativization and mechanization shall be accomplished in stages and in connection with the development of industry.<sup>12</sup>

The state plan for rural industrialization shall utilize the expansion of rural markets and agricultural modernization to increase manufacturing activities in the rural areas and create greater employment opportunities there.



On industrialization:

The state shall adopt policies that will rapidly improve the country's productive capacity and expand its means of production. A principal thrust shall be the systematic development of the capital goods and engineering sectors of the economy.

It shall undertake or promote the establishment of heavy industries such as base metals, petrochemicals, and others. It shall also undertake or promote the establishment of the machineries, transport equipment and other industries that produce basic and intermediate raw materials for industrialization and agricultural modernization.

The development of these industries shall be programmed in accordance with the availability of domestic resources, markets and technological capabilities.<sup>13</sup>

On planning and markets:

State economic planning shall be instituted to prevent destructive imbalances in the economy and to promote well-balanced growth among heavy, medium, and light industries, between heavy industry and agriculture, and between capital accumulation and consumption.

A proper mix between centralized and regional development shall be maintained so that the benefits of economic progress may be evenly spread out geographically.

Economic planning under the people's democratic republic shall ensure the active participation of all democratic classes at various levels and shall take into account the domestic resource and technology base as well as the operations of the market.<sup>14</sup>

Monetary and fiscal policies:

To ensure social control over the process of investments and capital accumulation, banking and other financial institutions and vital sectors of the export-import trade shall be nationalized...

Monetary and fiscal policies shall be adopted to ensure the effective utilization of domestic savings and scarce foreign exchange...Restrictive monetary policies dictated by the imperialist controlled IMF and similar institutions shall be abolished. No foreign loans inimical to national interest shall be incurred.

All onerous taxes, especially those which have placed heavy burdens on the working people and low income sectors, shall be lifted. The state shall adopt a progressive system of taxation in consideration of the people's level of income and production. State

revenues shall be augmented by income from nationalized and expropriated enterprises.<sup>15</sup>

#### Foreign trade and investment:

Trade and other forms of economic relations with all countries shall be promoted on the basis of equality and mutual benefit...The state, whenever possible, shall engage in barter or counter-trade with such countries as are willing and able to do so.

Foreign investments shall be allowed where these may provide the country with the least costly access to needed technology, products, and markets as defined by specific economic plans.<sup>16</sup>

#### Ecological concerns:

One of the more 'modern' concerns expressed in the 1990 Program is that of ecological sustainability. This was started in the 1982 draft. Although the allocation of a specific point for ecology in the 1988 draft was dropped in the 1990 Program, NDF sources argue that this was done in order to express these concerns in various parts of the Program.

The state shall pursue a comprehensive and balanced national policy for the country's natural resources and their all-round exploration, conservation, and development.

National industrialization shall be pursued with due regard to the protection and efficient utilization of the country's renewable and non-renewable resource base. The state shall likewise implement a parallel policy of environmental protection, pollution control, and sustainable development.<sup>17</sup>

Ecologically sound farming practices shall be promoted to ensure that agricultural production will be sustainable.<sup>18</sup>

Production of seed varieties, fertilizers, pesticides, and other agricultural inputs, agricultural machineries, and consumer products suited to local conditions shall be promoted.

The depletion, pollution, and destruction of marine resources, especially by transnational firms and foreign fishing fleets shall be stopped. These resources shall be protected, rehabilitated, and developed to benefit Filipino fisherfolk in particular and the people in general.

#### Ways and Means

The implementation of this economic program will, of course, depend on the success of the national democratic revolution. "With its rich and abundant



natural resources and a large industrious and educated population, the country shall achieve economic and social progress once the fetters of imperialism, feudalism, and bureaucrat capitalism are completely broken."<sup>19</sup> Key to this process will be the nationalization of foreign and monopoly capitalist economic power. Although the logic of nationalization is defined only in the 1985 draft, the same logic applies to the detailed program outlined in the 1990 Program.

Nationalization represents the collective determination of the Filipino people to assert their economic independence, transfer control of the fundamental means of production and distribution from a handful of foreign monopolists and their allies to the people, break the import-export character of the present semi-colonial and semi-feudal economy, hasten national industrialization and agricultural modernization, and gear the economy towards promoting the people's livelihood in an all-rounded way.<sup>20</sup>

In the 1990 Program, the particulars of this process include:

As a rule, direct investments and profit-making assets of the US, Japan and other big foreign capitalists, especially those in the vital and strategic industries, shall be nationalized.

Where necessary, the manner of compensation, as well as any possible exemptions to this policy, shall be the subject of negotiations based on the national interest...

Foreign loans that overburden and sabotage the Philippine economy, deepen the country's underdevelopment, and direct local resources into unproductive channels shall be canceled...Where possible, such loans shall be renegotiated to do away with their obnoxious features and arrive at terms beneficial to the country.<sup>21</sup>

All vital and strategic industries such as banking, energy, steel, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, and telecommunications now owned and controlled by imperialist interests and their comprador and bureaucrat allies shall be nationalized...Non-vital industries similarly owned or controlled by imperialist interests or their allies shall be partially nationalized and operated on a joint venture basis by the state and national capital, or shall be turned over completely to capable Filipino entrepreneurs...

Private monopolies, oligopolies or cartels over sources of raw materials and markets, especially those serving imperialist interests and those created on the basis of bureaucratic privilege, shall be dismantled.<sup>22</sup>

Special attention is given to agrarian reform:

Comprehensive agrarian reform shall be completed under the people's democratic republic for all arable, aquaculture, livestock and grazing lands with due consideration to ancestral lands of the Bangsa Moro and indigenous peoples...

Rich peasants shall be allowed to retain their land. They will, however, have to gradually rely more on their own labor power rather than on hired labor. Moreover, they shall be encouraged to utilize their surplus capital for other economic enterprises...

Plantations owned and controlled by transnationals or their business allies among the comprador big bourgeoisie shall be taken over by the state. These capital-intensive and large-scale farms shall be run by the state or cooperatives of agricultural workers...A flexible policy shall be adopted with respect to other capitalist farms, to be determined by the size of the farm, the type of crop, and the attitude of the owners towards the revolution...

Refining, processing, and marketing of agricultural products shall be undertaken by the state, by agricultural cooperatives, by joint state-private or private firms, in accordance with the type of crop, its relative importance to the national economy and the people's livelihood, other factors specific to the product, and capabilities of the sector concerned.<sup>23</sup>

The Program envisions an economic role for state enterprises that is far larger than what even a national democratic state will likely be able to accomplish. The Philippine experience on state enterprises is not exactly positive and even if it is argued that these enterprises would operate under a qualitatively different state, the experience of socialist countries in most parts of the world does not say much for the efficiency and productiveness of state enterprises either. More than anything else, this part of the NDF Program is an expression of NDF opposition to the existing system of capitalist enterprises. The problems of state enterprises in socialist countries is pushing these countries to try new frameworks, but for

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character of the present system is much more real. The framework envisioned in the NDF Program, moreover, is already qualitatively different from that of most socialist countries. Even the use of the phrase 'mixed economy' is already closer to the experience of the most recently liberated states such as Nicaragua and



Zimbabwe than to older socialist countries. The possibility of contracting private firms to manage state enterprises is another innovation. The role of private enterprises are carefully affirmed in the program.

The government shall guarantee the right to own the means of production and of consumption obtained through land reform, honest labor and entrepreneurship, skill, inventiveness and intellectual merit. This right to own the means of production carries with it the social responsibility of using such ownership for the common good.<sup>24</sup>

...state policies and laws shall be instituted to encourage private entrepreneurs to contribute positively in developing the nation's productive forces and capital resources. Likewise, other forms of economic enterprises such as cooperatives, family-based units, and popular enterprises shall operate alongside state enterprises. The state shall, either directly operate or utilize the services of capable private entities in operating state enterprises subject to the requirements of efficiency and growth. The formation of workers councils shall be promoted in all enterprises in order to develop their management capabilities, and shall be given opportunities to run state enterprises in accordance with the above requirements.<sup>25</sup>

### **Social Policy**

One aspect of socialist economic policy that the NDF has affirmed is the extensive social services.

Upon the overthrow of the reactionary government, it is anticipated that inflation, scarcities of some goods, production breakdowns, speculation, and other ills that attend the decline and final collapse of the puppet regime will be carried over into the early years of the new government.

The new government shall take swift and decisive steps to control and solve these problems by judicious use of political power and by reviving production and the delivery of social services as soon as possible as the new state passes through a period of reconstruction and rehabilitation. The full recovery and subsequent development of the economy would provide the conditions for the full implementation of the policies of the new government regarding the delivery of social services.

The new government's social policy will aim to redistribute the benefits of economic growth with priority given to the socially disadvantaged classes and sectors. It shall promote social justice and enhance the dignity and quality of life of the people. Social services shall become an integral part of the long-term economic and social development of the nation.

The new government shall take the lead in providing social services. It shall mobilize people's organizations and agencies, private and church institutions, firms and individuals in the work of reconstruction and rehabilitation and the delivery of social services. The social services system shall promote self-reliance and people's participation.<sup>26</sup>

### **Evolution of the Economic Program**

The 1973-1977 draft program, for the most part, is devoted to a scathing critique of the Marcos dictatorship and to defining the tasks of various social classes in the revolutionary process. The basic outlines of the NDF economic program were laid out in the 1973-1977 draft but only in skeletal form. The 1973-1977 draft is the only draft that makes explicit reference to socialism; none of the other drafts even use the word. The last two sentences of the program say: "We are also enthusiastic over the rise of the proletariat as a revolutionary force in all parts of the world. We are certain of the socialist future of mankind."<sup>27</sup>

This basic outline is retained in the 1982 draft but with more direct language and simpler format. Thus, "[t]he people's coalition government shall have this general economic policy: the maximum participation of the whole people in developing a self-reliant, progressive and balanced economy, and the just sharing of its fruits. It shall guarantee full employment, safe working conditions, and continually improve the people's livelihood."<sup>28</sup> The importance of the 1982 draft lies in its introduction of several new ideas that are carried over into later drafts.

(1.) One important idea is that of the need for balance in economic development.

In general, there shall be a dynamic balance between these areas of the economy: central and regional economy; large-scale and medium/small-scale industries; heavy and light industries; industry and agriculture; production for export and for the domestic market; domestic capital formation and foreign borrowing; self-reliance and the import of technology.<sup>29</sup>

(2.) The 1982 draft is the first to introduce ecological concerns.

The government shall protect natural resources and develop them along a policy of maintaining ecological balance.<sup>30</sup>

(3.) On Social policy:

As a general policy, the people's coalition government shall seek a substantial increase of social services, especially housing, social



security and social relief. This shall be the joint effort of the government and people's organizations.<sup>31</sup>

(4.) On Women's issues:

There shall be a program to combat the social evils of sex-tourism, prostitution and drug abuse...The people's coalition government and the people's organizations, particularly women's organizations shall promote the social equality of men and women.<sup>32</sup>

The 1985 draft contains the first detailed description of the NDF's alternative economic program, one that is continued into the 1990 Program. While the political program and strategy and tactics outlined in the 1985 draft are, in many ways, a throwback to the ideas of the 1973-1977 program and a retreat from the more imaginative formulations of the 1982 draft, the economic program continues, and in a number of areas even advances, the formulations of the 1982 draft. It introduces the idea of state economic planning to prevent imbalances in the development process that the 1982 draft raises, then explicitly says that "it shall utilize market forces to complement the state plan."<sup>33</sup> On agricultural cooperatives, it says that "[t]he process of agricultural cooperativization shall be accomplished in stages and in connection with the development of industry."<sup>34</sup> The draft also introduces the need to limit military expenditures.<sup>35</sup>

One of the earliest ideas of socialist economics, and one generally abandoned in the eighties by Third World progressives, is the primary importance of setting up a steel industry. The 1985 draft states that "[h]igh priority shall be given to developing the steel industry as the backbone of the country's industrialization program."<sup>36</sup> But in the next point, a few pages later, it states that "[t]he new government shall see to it that investments in light industries run ahead of those in heavy industries, in order to provide more consumer goods, generate more employment, raise the people's living standards, and pool more capital at a rapid rate."<sup>37</sup>

Of all the drafts, the 1988 version has the most extensive, coherent, and well-thought-out sections on the economy. It devotes six separate points to economic issues, three more than in the 1990 draft. The sequence of the points is logical and easy to follow from Point 5, which defines the national democratic economy in general terms, to the subsequent points elaborating on policy structures for agriculture, industry, ecology, workers rights, and then back again to general social policy.

## Political Program

In much the same way as the economic program, the NDF political program is built on a radical critique of existing political structures. To the NDF, these structures are anti-democratic because representative institutions and the exercise of democratic rights are circumscribed by the economic oppression of the majority of the people. Thus democracy will be achieved only "upon the victory of the national democratic revolution, [when] a people's democratic republic will be established. State power is seized from the imperialists and landlord-comprador rulers and secured by the democratic classes, sectors and peoples."<sup>38</sup> In addition, "history's lesson is clear. The fundamental individual freedoms as well as the expanded human rights in the political, social, and economic spheres can only be realized and can only flower under a condition of national freedom and class freedom for the oppressed classes."<sup>39</sup>

The 1990 Program sets out the steps for establishing a democratic government in some detail:

In the period before the formal establishment of the democratic coalition government at the national level, a political consultative conference may be convened, with the NDF acting as one of the major convenors. This would be a conference of representatives of all allied patriotic and democratic classes, sectors, the Bangsa Moro, minority peoples, and political forces elected by their respective parties and organizations. The political consultative conference shall form a National Revolutionary Council. The National Revolutionary Council shall be accountable to the political consultative conference until such time that a regular state machinery is in place.<sup>40</sup>

In local areas, the Council will work through the "organs of democratic power that evolved in the course of the struggle." These bodies are explained as having been established "[a]fter decades of people's war, [when] zones of revolutionary power have been established and continue to expand throughout the country. Within these zones, people's revolutionary assemblies, councils, and committees defend and advance the people's gains and take on certain functions of government from barrio and municipal levels to higher levels. These revolutionary organs of political power are the seeds of the new government which the NDF envisions."<sup>41</sup> Since these local 'organs of political power' are being set up at the initiative of the NDF, the program assures the participation of other political groups:

The political consultative conference must see to it that the organization of this council (the National Revolutionary Council) is



accompanied by the broadening of representation in the organs of democratic power created at all levels in the course of people's war...

If necessary, these organs may be modified during the political consultative conference. All democratic political parties, groups, classes, and individuals shall, in the spirit of democratic pluralism, participate in the decision-making processes and execution of state affairs.

...soon after total victory, the Council shall administer the election of a constituent assembly that shall draft the constitution of the Peoples' Democratic Republic. (PDR). After ratification of the Constitution, general elections shall be held, and the PDR inaugurated. The Council shall cease to function after the establishment of the regular state machinery and organs of government.<sup>42</sup>

The form of government will be determined by an elected Constituent Assembly, but the NDF believes that:

[I]n its Constitution and practice, the PDR shall have the character of a genuine modern-day republic that is a united front of all democratic classes. All power in the PDR resides in the people who have the sovereign power to elect their officials and to recall them from office.

The people shall exercise state power through a system of people's congresses at various levels, the highest being the National People's Congress.

The system of people's congresses shall adopt a system of genuine universal and equal suffrage, irrespective of class, nationality, sex, creed, property, party affiliation, or education. This system gives full expression to democracy with full powers vested in the people's congresses at all levels.

The Program then expresses the NDF's preference for centralized government:

At the same time, it guarantees centralized administration and leadership: the governments at each level exercise centralized management of all the affairs entrusted to them by the people's congresses at the corresponding level and by the central governmental authority.

In a separate point in the Program, the NDF lays out an extensive list of 'people's democratic rights.' These rights are set within a framework of the Filipino people's history of struggle and internationally recognized human rights.

It was during the struggle against the fascist dictatorship that the struggle for democratic rights gained more profound meaning and scope, drawing strength not only from our people's militant and heroic struggles, but also from the worldwide struggle for human rights.

Indeed the struggle for human rights permeates the history of various nations and peoples of the world. These rights which humanity has fought for over the centuries are now generally recognized by all nations and are enshrined as the Universal Declaration of the Bill of Rights of the United Nations.<sup>43</sup>

The fundamental rights that are subsequently listed include economic and social rights, in addition to the political and civil rights usually listed in political documents.

(1.) Political rights: free speech, free press, freedom of thought and expression, right to free association and assembly, universal suffrage through secret ballot, protection against arbitrary arrest, including the right to due process, guarantees against torture, solitary confinement and other inhuman forms of detention and punishment, right against self-incrimination and right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty, right to equal protection of the law and right to the writ of habeas corpus.

(2.) Economic rights: workers' right to strike, workers' preferential right to manage publicly-owned enterprises, private property rights, universal and free education, delivery of basic services, including health care and the right to intellectual property, minority peoples' rights to their ancestral lands and the natural resources in these lands. "No one shall be denied the right to work and equal pay on the basis of gender or sexual preference, civil status, minority status and creed."

(3.) Social rights: freedom of religious belief and practice, free choice of domicile and movement, women's rights, gay rights, academic freedom, freedom of artistic expression, minority peoples' right to practice their own culture.

### **Evolution of the Political Program**

The NDF political program evolved roughly along the same lines as the economic program but with its own unique twists and turns. The very first point in the 1973-1977 draft calls for "...the establishment of a coalition government based on a truly democratic system of representation."<sup>44</sup> In this government, "there should be no monopoly of political power by any class, party, or group. The degree of participation in the government by any political force should be



based on its effective role and record in the revolutionary struggle and on the people's approbation." Soon after victory, "a committee of civilian leaders highly respected by the people for their patriotism, civil libertarian stand, and consistent opposition to fascism and puppetry should assume the reins of government. This committee should pave the way for genuinely popular, free, and honest elections within a year's time from the overthrow of the fascist dictatorship."<sup>45</sup> "It shall be the task of the coalition government to draft and issue for ratification a new constitution on the basis of the national and democratic interests of the Filipino people."<sup>46</sup> Point 3 calls on people to "[f]ight for the reestablishment of all democratic rights of the people, such as freedom of speech, the press, assembly, association, movement, religious belief, and the right to due process."

The 1982 draft began the process of elaborating on the concept of a coalition government that culminates in the 1990 Program. It introduces the idea that the NDF would initiate the process of building organs of political power in liberated areas and "...when a significant part of the Philippines and the Filipino people have been liberated from enemy rule, the [NDF] can help establish a provisional revolutionary government."<sup>47</sup> It affirms the point that "[n]o single political group shall monopolize political power. Every participating force can ensure this by persevering in the continuing struggle, thus gaining political support from the people. The precise structures of such a coalition government shall be designed through mutual consultation by the participating forces."<sup>48</sup> The 1973 program's formulation of democratic rights is repeated without elaboration. The most interesting contribution of the 1982 draft is its formulation of the relationship between the state and civil society. "National independence and democracy," the draft says, "shall thus be the joint responsibility of a people's coalition government that represents the people's interests and of the people themselves in their various organizations."

The 1985 draft lays out the process for the formation of a "People's Democratic Republic" from a political consultative conference to a revolutionary council, to a constituent assembly, elections, and the formal inauguration of a new government. This is the framework that is carried over into the 1990 Program. It elaborates on democratic rights under a new government, saying that "all the basic democratic rights contained in a liberal democratic constitution shall be embodied in the constitution of the people's democratic republic." One of the rights specified for the first time is "...the right to individually own the means of production and consumption achieved through land reform, honest labor and entrepreneurship, skill, inventiveness, and intellectual merit."

While these are significant steps towards a truly democratic political program, the 1985 draft also contains distinctly authoritarian elements. Representation in government is limited to "workers, peasants, the urban petty bourgeoisie, and the national bourgeoisie"<sup>49</sup> In another part of the program, academic freedom is circumscribed by a provision which says that "[t]he new government shall see to it that teachers and students of the social sciences correctly comprehend the laws of development of Philippine history and society, and learn how the basic problems of our people can be solved." In the same vein, "writers and artists should be encouraged to create moving and relevant works which reflect social realities and the people's struggles."<sup>50</sup> While 'encourage' is less strong than "shall see to it," the stifling of artistic freedom in socialist states as a result of government efforts to promote 'socialist realism' does create strong grounds for concern.

These elements were removed or altered in the 1988 draft. There is no qualification attached to the system of representation. New elements which advance the democratic content of the political program are introduced.

In its constitution and other guiding principles and political practice, the PDR shall uphold the essential elements of a genuine modern-day republic: people's sovereignty, political pluralism, and national independence. It shall also uphold the principle that all political authority emanates from the people. This includes the right of the people to govern themselves directly and through representatives selected by them for any level of government, and to establish and undertake local, organized means to run their affairs. The military shall be subordinate to the people or their duly-elected governing authority. Popular means of supervision of government at all levels of public administration and a system of recall shall ensure the overall accountability of government to the people.

Aside from the establishment of a more representative form of democracy where the various sectors of the people shall be represented according to their numbers, the PDR shall also encourage and promote more direct forms of democracy such as workers' councils, people's councils and the like, to mobilize the direct participation of the people at all levels, especially the basic level, in the political, economic, cultural, and social affairs of the country.<sup>51</sup>

Democratic rights are introduced by saying that:

The DCG shall put in place of the landlord-comprador political system, consequent to the attainment of national freedom for the entire people of the Philippines and its various nationalities, a new democratic system that shall promote, fully expand and guarantee



the democratic rights of the people, especially the most oppressed and most deprived of their rights under the present system. In working towards the realization of this new democracy, which shall not only include but go beyond the limits of liberal democracy, those democratic rights previously applied only to the elite either by law or social conditions will be broadened and enjoyed by the greater number of the people.<sup>52</sup>

Specific restrictions, or at least potential restrictions, on academic freedom and freedom of artistic expression are replaced by a more general statement on culture. "Once in place, the democratic coalition government shall develop and propagate a culture that promotes nationalist consciousness, a liberating, progressive, and pro-people outlook, and that harnesses the fullest potential of the nation and the individual. It shall foster and promote this people's culture through the educational system, the arts, the mass media, and direct campaigns among the people."<sup>53</sup>

On artistic expression, the DCG:

...will encourage the adoption of a popular orientation, social relevance and revolutionary content and the development of creativity and quality of form in the arts, enhancing their contribution to the social and cultural liberation of the people.<sup>54</sup>

While the program continues to express preference for certain kinds of artistic 'content,' by bringing in 'creativity and quality of form' it takes a progressive stance on the old debate on 'form and content.'

The 1990 draft takes a step backwards on these issues. While not explicit, there is a potential limit on representation in the statement that "in its constitution and practice, the PDR shall have the character of a genuine modern-day republic *that is a united front of all democratic classes.*" (italics mine.) The phrase 'political pluralism' has been replaced by 'democratic pluralism.' In the sometimes arcane language of Marxism-Leninism, what these changes mean is that only workers, peasants, and the petty and national bourgeoisie can participate in political life. Revolutionary enemy classes, 'landlords,' and the 'comprador bourgeoisie' will be disenfranchised. This formulation contradicts formulations elsewhere in the program abjuring discrimination on the basis of class in electoral participation.

The 1990 draft also resurrects the old formulation on socialist culture as "national, scientific, and mass culture" in the 1973-1977 draft. New terms are used -- "national, progressive and popular" -- but the content remains the same.

Artists and religious people within the NDF take exception to the statement that the new culture will be "[p]rogressive because it upholds the scientific outlook and methodology, and opposes feudal thinking, superstitions, and ideas which keep the Filipino people in a world of ignorance and unfounded beliefs, values, practices, and prejudices and which render them resistant to liberating change." The use of the phrase "scientific outlook and methodology" seems to indicate that Marxism would be imposed as a state ideology.

### **Womens' Rights**

One distinctly positive element in the evolution of the NDF Program is the way women's issues have been taken with increasing seriousness starting with the 1982 draft.

Cutting across all classes and sectors, Filipina women are raising the issues of their distinct oppression, within the common oppression they suffer with Filipino men. Peasant women, women workers, and middle class women are struggling not only against the traditional problems they have faced, but the additional degradation that the regime's tourism program has brought.<sup>56</sup>

There shall be a program to combat the social evils of sex-tourism, prostitution and drug abuse...The people's coalition government and the people's organizations, particularly women's organizations shall promote the social equality of women and men.<sup>56</sup>

In the 1985 draft, one paragraph was devoted to the issue.

The democratic coalition government shall address and take steps to remove the distinct forms of oppression women have faced and shall ensure equal opportunities for them as well as their equal participation in all spheres of social life. The new government shall rally the people's organizations, particularly the women's organizations, into taking active roles in this undertaking.<sup>57</sup>

The 1988 draft took a quantum leap by devoting Point 14 to "[a]dvance the revolutionary emancipation of women in all spheres." It provides the first elaborate description of womens' oppression in the Philippines.

Whether in the workplace, in the fields, or at home, women suffer distinct forms of hardship and discrimination. Rural women perform myriad unpaid tasks; or, when hired as fieldhands, they get lower wages than men. Young peasant girls are sent to work as servants in order to pay off the family debts, denied the right to continue schooling, and married against their will. Many are forced to become prostitutes. Working women, on the other hand, receive lower wages and salaries than men and fall victim to sexual



harassment by their male superiors. They are penalized in various ways for bearing and rearing their children.

Even when they possess superior capabilities, they are discriminated against in terms of promotion and appointments. On top of this, women are expected to do all the household chores and take care of the children. In the political sphere, women are discouraged (if not outrightly excluded) from exercising their right to participate in decision-making, since they are expected merely to echo the views of their male partners.<sup>58</sup>

"To advance the liberation of women, the NDF aims to engage their full participation in the national democratic revolution."<sup>59</sup> After victory "[t]he NDF shall undertake a massive education program regarding the women question and concrete measures to correct these inequities against women, within the revolutionary movement and in various spheres of life. Pervasive values and discriminatory practices including all forms of sexism, especially those promoting sexual violence and exploitation, shall be actively opposed. Full participation and representation of women in decision-making bodies shall be ensured... The DCG [democratic coalition government], through constitutional guarantees and legislation, shall ensure the recognition and protection of women's rights in all fields of endeavor. All laws that discriminate against women shall be repealed."<sup>60</sup>

One specific law that will be enacted is the right to divorce, a significant commitment in a Roman Catholic country where, to this day, divorce is not allowed. The DCG shall also ensure that "women shall be provided programs, support structures, and mechanisms to break the bonds of their social confinement and isolation. Significant attention shall be given to support programs for abused women, maternal health care, skills development, and specific organizations for women."

The 1990 Program retains all of these provisions and strengthens them by including women's issues in the points on democratic rights,<sup>61</sup> agrarian reform,<sup>62</sup> and culture.<sup>63</sup> In the main point, the relationship between women's liberation and the national democratic revolution is defined more carefully.

Only by overthrowing foreign and feudal rule, and later on, smashing other social structures that buttress patriarchy, can the basic condition for the liberation of women be established... On the other hand, only by taking up the cause of emancipation of women -- motivating, encouraging, and supporting our women as they unshackle themselves from the bondage of the home and tradition -- can the revolution fully unleash the mighty force of women in the task of liberating our nation and society. The liberation of women is thus a key component in the liberation of the whole nation.<sup>64</sup>

This task, moreover, has to be undertaken within revolutionary ranks. "The participation of women in the revolutionary movement provides conditions for the liberation of women. But the pervasiveness of patriarchy makes it incumbent on all revolutionaries to combat it even within the revolutionary movement."<sup>65</sup>

## United Front

The 1990 Program does not define the functions of the NDF in detail. It only says that "the NDF seeks to foster unity, cooperation and coordination of all forces, organizations, groups and individuals who are committed to the cause of national liberation and genuine democracy."<sup>66</sup> In Point 1, it defines the composition of the united front.

The main forces of the united front are made up of the workers, the peasantry, fisherfolk, the lower stratum of the middle class, including most of the intelligentsia, and the broad masses of the Bangsa Moro, Cordillera, and other minority and indigenous peoples. They comprise the overwhelming majority of the population and are the most exploited and oppressed and thus are the most desirous of revolutionary change.

Even the better off -- the upper stratum of the middle classes in both rural and urban areas such as middle-level proprietors and businessmen, and highly-paid professionals -- are also stifled and oppressed by the ruling system. Together with the toiling masses and the lower stratum of the middle class, they are significant in the struggle for the overthrow of US and landlord-comprador rule and the establishment of a national democratic order...

Some individuals from the upper classes can become enlightened and espouse nationalist and democratic ideas and can be gradually drawn into the united front. Under certain conditions, some sections of these classes can contribute directly or indirectly to the struggle as the united front concentrates its attacks against the most rabid, most powerful and most hated enemies of the people.<sup>67</sup>

The Program itself does not specify what the NDF will do or is doing. This is done only in the NDF Constitution which was also approved at the July 1990 Congress. The Constitution states that "the NDF shall provide mechanisms for coordination of general political struggles, and shall support and coordinate major sectoral political and economic struggles."<sup>68</sup> In addition "[t]he NDF shall serve as a national framework for the emerging organs of democratic political power until such time as the Provisional Revolutionary Government (PRG) shall have been established."<sup>68</sup> This is further explained in the *Liberation*:



The NDF has been providing assistance in establishing, developing and consolidating these local organs of governance. Until such time as the PRG shall have been established on the national level, the NDF assumes political leadership over these organs of governance and in a sense, links them with one another. Also prior to the establishment of the PRG, it is the NDF that shall assume functions such as diplomatic work and peace negotiations with the Philippine government.<sup>69</sup>

In Point 2 of the 1990 Program, it is stressed that a PRG "may be set up" in "the period approaching victory." This is left deliberately vague in order to coun-

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**"In much the same way as other parts of the program, the definition of the NDF role has evolved from one focusing almost exclusively on its role in the revolutionary struggle to one focused on its role in governance."**

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nate the new government. The NDF would be only one of the 'major convenors' of the political consultative conference that will organize the new government. In addition, the organs of political power built up by the NDF during the period of struggle "...may be modified during the political consultative conference."<sup>70</sup>

In much the same way as other parts of the program, the definition of the NDF role has evolved from one focusing almost exclusively on its role in the revolutionary struggle to one focused on its role in governance. The 1977 draft does not even specify which social classes should be part of the united front. It is only in Point 6, the economic program, that the draft identifies four classes and their tasks in the economic struggle. Using standard CPP terminology, these classes are identified as: the 'worker masses,' the 'peasant masses,' the urban petty bourgeoisie, and the national bourgeoisie. On the NDF, the draft states that:

[t]he NDF is a framework or channel for the unity, cooperation, and coordination of all national democratic forces...We conduct our own propaganda, organizational work and mass campaigns and at the same time promote the revolutionary efforts of all actual and potential components of the NDF. In this way, we contribute directly to the armed revolution and underground resistance as well as extend support to particular organizations in the revolutionary mass movement.<sup>71</sup>

It is only in the 1982 draft that a more comprehensive listing of groups in the united front is made. Apart from workers and peasants, the draft lists student youth, the intelligentsia, specifically lawyers, cultural and media personnel, public and private school teachers, health personnel, church people, Filipino entrepreneurs and other managerial personnel, government employees, women and minority groups.<sup>59</sup> This change was the result of the rapid expansion of mass organizations, legal and underground, during this period. Interestingly enough, it is only the 1982 draft that specifies the political role of these mass organizations: "National independence and democracy shall thus be the joint responsibility of a people's coalition government that represents the people's interests and of the people themselves in their various organizations."<sup>72</sup> Later drafts only mention integrating mass organizations in development planning.

The 1982 draft also begins the process of differentiating between the NDF's role in coordinating political struggle and building organs of political power.

The (NDF) is a united front for armed struggle, for overthrowing enemy rule. It is also a united front for building the people's political power: the various people's organizations and government organs... Even before nationwide victory, when a significant part of the Philippines and the Filipino people have been liberated from enemy rule, the (NDF) can help establish a provisional revolutionary government. The (NDF) welcomes the participation of other political forces in establishing this provisional revolutionary government, including those serving under the present government who choose to serve the people.

The introduction to the 1985 draft contains an interesting self-description.

The NDF is made up of Filipino nationalists, democrats, progressive Christians and church people, national minority autonomists, women's emancipationists, socialists, communists, and other genuine patriots here and abroad, representing a wide variety of political and ideological trends. Membership in the NDF is entirely voluntary, and no single political party or group will be allowed to dominate the organization or monopolize the decision-making processes in its leading and subordinate bodies."<sup>73</sup>

The 1985 draft's description of class forces in the united front is retained in subsequent drafts and was adopted in the 1990 draft with minor changes. The 1988 draft is not substantially different from either the 1985 or 1990 drafts.



## Minorities

One part of the united front that has received special attention in all draft programs is that of the role of Moros, the mainly Muslim inhabitants of the southern part of the Philippines, and the Igorots of the northern Luzon Cordillera highlands. The 1973-1977 draft devoted Point 8 to minority rights.

The national minorities have the right to liberate themselves from oppression and determine their own destiny. The right to self-determination includes the right to secede from a state of national oppression or choose autonomy within a state that guarantees the equality of nationalities.

It is our stand that all national minorities, big or small, should enjoy autonomy and be accorded special guarantees for their accelerated progress. Their struggle is not merely for "cultural autonomy" but for all-round progress with due respect to their special characteristics.<sup>74</sup>

The special attention given to the Moro people can be explained by the fact that starting in 1972, they were in revolt against the Marcos regime. In 1973, the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) had a bigger armed group than the NDF and its participation in the NDF would have greatly strengthened it. In 1976, however, the MNLF entered into negotiations with the Marcos government and has not engaged in much military activity since then. It was also during this time that NDF organizations grew rapidly in Mindanao. It was among these cadre that some doubt began to be expressed about whether the NDF should affirm the Moro people's right to secession. These sentiments were reflected in the 1982 draft which removed the affirmation of Moro rights to secession.

As a general policy, the people's coalition government shall promote the unity and equality of all peoples and nationalities of the Philippines, no matter how big or small...It shall recognize the right of the Bangsa Moro and other ethnic minorities to self-determination. It shall promote autonomous political rule among them and ensure their active participation and representation at various levels of government... Land rights of the ethnic minorities shall be safeguarded. Their right to economic development shall be promoted according to a policy that takes into account their specific identity as a people and the need to compensate for the historical discrimination against them...Their language and culture shall be protected against forcible integration and assimilation, while providing opportunities for their cultural interaction and development.<sup>75</sup>

The 1985 draft returned to the 1977 formulation. The democratic coalition government "...shall recognize the right of the Moro people to self-

determination, including their right to secede from a state of national oppression.<sup>76</sup> The 1988 draft used the same language, but it also began the process of finding a compromise between the demands of the Mindanao NDF organization reflected in the 1982 draft and the principle expressed in the affirmation of the Moro people's right to secession.

At the same time, the NDF promotes the unity, equality, and brotherhood of all peoples, nationalities, and indigenous groups within Philippine society...

Through revolutionary struggle against the US imperialists and their local clients, all the people in the Philippines shall achieve a working unity within the context of a bigger nation founded upon real independence from imperialist rule, democracy based on the alliance of the basic masses and patriotic classes, and genuine autonomy for indigenous groups. Within the framework of a firmly united and bigger nation, all the peoples, nationalities and indigenous groups in the Philippines shall realize a higher level of national security and achieve a more comprehensive and thoroughgoing development based on a nationally integrated economic system.<sup>77</sup>

This compromise is made explicit in the 1990 draft.

The right to self-determination includes the right to secede, more so under conditions of national oppression. The Bangsa Moro raised the banner of secession in its struggle against the US-Marcos dictatorship. Under a democratic Philippines where the equality of peoples and nationalities is guaranteed, the Bangsa Moro is urged to take the valid and viable option of a genuinely autonomous political rule.<sup>78</sup>

## International Relations

The most important point on international relations is clearly that of changing relations with the United States. The importance of American dominance in Philippine life suffuses the whole program. All but one of the drafts (1988) devoted a separate section to relations with the US. All drafts call for the abrogation of existing military treaties with the US, dismantling US military bases, nationalizing foreign and especially American-owned strategic industries, canceling fraudulent loans and renegotiating other loans.

There is also continuity in calling for the adoption of an 'active, independent and non-aligned foreign policy.' The 1990 draft elaborates on



this by saying that "the new government shall establish diplomatic and economic relations with all countries irrespective of ideology or social system. In developing these relations, the principles of mutual respect for each other's sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity, mutual benefit, and resort to peaceful resolution of inter-state conflicts will be followed." While saying this, the Program makes a distinction between different countries: "The new state shall seek to develop close and warm relations with Third World and socialist countries as well as productive and mutually beneficial relations with capitalist countries."<sup>79</sup>

The 1990 Program also commits the new government to support the movement to "establish a just international economic order" and other initiatives such as the Non-Aligned Movement; to adhere to the UN Charter and "uphold and conform to its decisions and resolutions" and "push for the realization of a zone of peace, freedom and neutrality in Southeast Asia where nuclear weapons and foreign military bases are prohibited." Particular attention is also given to protect the rights and address the problems of all migrant Filipinos abroad.<sup>80</sup>

During the period of struggle, the NDF identifies with the worldwide anti-imperialist movement. "Our people's war is part of and supportive to the worldwide struggle against imperialism being waged by national liberation movements, revolutionary parties, governments and countries, as well as by working people in capitalist and imperialist countries...The Philippine revolutionary forces can best contribute to the advance of national liberation, social emancipation and peace by winning our own revolutionary struggle."<sup>81</sup> The only significant change from the 1973-1977 draft to later drafts is the removal of derogatory references to the Soviet Union. Starting with the 1982 draft, all references to the Soviet Union as 'social imperialist' and 'hegemonic' were removed.

Finally, international solidarity is defined as "...based on the fundamental principle of self-reliance, but we also need expanded international support -- moral, political, and material -- from peoples and revolutionary forces abroad, especially in the face of escalating US intervention and possible all out aggression...In no instance, however, will we become so beholden to any foreign entity as to consider sacrificing the sovereignty, national independence and democratic rights our people are fighting so hard to attain."<sup>82</sup>

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**"[T]he NDF program in practice has been the main venue for debates on what an alternative society should be within CPP ranks and in the national democratic movement as a whole. As such, the contrast between the PPDR and the NDF program is less one between an 'open' and a 'concealed' program than between two perspectives within the CPP itself."**

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### **The CPP and the NDF**

The NDF is at the same time less and greater than the national democratic movement. It is supposed to encompass all ND organizations including the CPP. But to understand it better, it may be useful to distinguish between the NDF as an organizational structure and as a political concept and program. As an organizational structure, the NDF is definitely smaller and has lesser capability than the CPP. The establishment of its national organizational structure after its founding congress in July 1990 has been very slow. It only has a skeletal structure in the provinces. As a political concept, however, the NDF has the potential to be greater than its parent, the CPP. As this analysis of the evolution of the NDF Program shows, the creativity and imagination of the national democratic movement has been crystallized in the NDF Program. While CPP formulations remain frozen in 1960's language and concepts, the NDF Program has incorporated the issues

developed by the ND mass organizations in the course of the struggle. This is true not only with 'new' issues such as women's rights and ecology, but also in the way that the political and economic program has been shaped.

Although some CPP leaders sometimes speak of the NDF Program as "*pang-UF lang*" ( for united front purposes only), the NDF Program in practice has been the main venue for debates on what an alternative society should be within CPP ranks and in the national democratic movement as a whole. As such, the contrast between the PPDR and the NDF Program is less one between an 'open' and a 'concealed' program than between two perspectives within the CPP itself. Neither can it be seen as the difference between programs for two separate stages because most of the PPDR in fact applies to what is properly a 'national democratic' stage and many parts of the two documents are almost exactly the same. The contrast is more in overall tone, one set by differences on several key elements.



The NDF economic program carefully lays out a plan for a mixed economy where the state sector would only be one of several sectors. The state sector would be the most powerful, but the cooperative and private sectors would also occupy significant economic spaces. In the 1987 PPDR, the state sector appears all encompassing and would include "all major financial institutions, major sources of raw materials and energy, all heavy and basic industries, major lines of domestic and foreign trade and all nationalized enterprises." The cooperative sector is relegated to the economic activities of "peasants, fishermen, handicraftsmen and the like." The private sector will consist of "petty commodity producers and patriotic entrepreneurs and merchants."<sup>83</sup>

These formulations are repeated in the 1991 PPDR draft. In addition, the draft says:

Upon the basic completion of the national democratic revolution through the seizure of political power, socialist revolution and construction shall commence. Public ownership of the means of production shall become dominant and state economic planning will direct the development of a well-balanced socialist economy. However, there shall be transitional concessions to certain positive forms of private enterprise.

After the socialist transformation of industry and the entire economy, the Party shall ensure that there is no retrogression into private ownership of the means of production. Otherwise the restoration of capitalism will occur and the foreign and domestic bourgeoisie will again exploit and oppress the people.<sup>84</sup>

The assertion of what sounds very much like a traditional, socialist centrally-planned economy is matched in the political sphere. While the NDF Program says that "[a]ll democratic political parties, groups, classes and individuals shall, in the spirit of democratic pluralism, participate in the decision-making processes and the execution of state affairs;"<sup>85</sup> the 1987 PPDR says that "[t]he people's democratic state is *under the leadership of the working class*, founded on the basic alliance of the working class and peasantry and includes such other democratic classes as the urban petty bourgeoisie and national bourgeoisie."

The 1991 PPDR draft takes this further when it says that "[t]he Party *as the ruling party, in representation of the working class*, shall form the government as a coalition or united front of all democratic classes." Again, later in the document, "as the ruling party representing the proletariat and

people and constitutionally committed to the historic mission of building socialism, the Party shall uphold and employ the principle of democratic centralism to further develop the intimate links between the Party and the State on the one hand and the broad masses of the people on the other hand..."<sup>86</sup> The phrase 'one-party state' is not mentioned anywhere, but 'working class leadership,' 'democratic centralism,' and especially 'ruling party,' are close enough.

Without explicitly saying so, it is clear that the 1991 draft PPDR upholds the now discredited concept of a one-party socialist state. This is not to say that the CPP should not aspire to be the leading party in a future government; what is problematic is the continuing suspicion among its allies that it wants to make its leadership permanent by organizing a state that would effectively exclude other political parties from contention. Such fears are strengthened by other parts of the PPDR. The point on culture, for example, says that "while freedom of thought and religion shall be respected, proper safeguards shall be taken to keep this freedom from being systematically employed to resist the people's democratic revolution or hurt the people's interests."<sup>87</sup> Another paragraph raises the spectre of Stalinist thought control: "The courses of study and study materials in the social sciences, philosophy, law, arts and letters and so forth *shall be cleansed* of pro-imperialist, feudalism, fascist, and other pernicious biases and misinformation."<sup>88</sup> (italics mine) This formulation is repeated in the 1991 draft.

### Hardline Counterattack

In much the same way as the debate on strategy and tactics within the CPP, there has been a tendency towards pragmatic accommodation in the debate on the democratic content of the NDF political and economic program. The evolution of the NDF Program shows a distinct 'two steps forward, one step back' pattern with the 1982 and 1988 drafts being the drafts that took the biggest steps forward. The trend, however, is to clear it away from Stalinist conceptions of socialism, from a one-party totalitarian state towards political pluralism and socialist democracy, from a centrally planned economy to a mixed economy.

This trend was affirmed -- given greater legitimacy -- with the approval of the NDF Program at the founding congress of the NDF in July 1990.



While changes have been made in the NDF Program, the CPP's basic framework on these issues as embodied in the PPDR has remained the same. This should not be interpreted to mean conflict between the NDF and the Party, since the task of shaping the NDF Program has been almost completely in the hands of party cadre. What it means is that there is disagreement among party leaders on the nature and future development of the NDF. While the 1968 PPDR has the kind of legitimacy vested in a document approved at the founding congress of the party, subsequent drafts represent the opinion of its drafter. And this is one more arena of disagreement within the party. Interestingly enough, close textual analysis seems to indicate that all three drafts were written by the same person.

In a paper dated December 26, 1991, the founding anniversary of the CPP, someone under the pseudonym Armando Liwanag<sup>89</sup> launched an attack on the NDF Program approved at the 1990 NDF congress.

There are those who erase from the history of the NDF the role and initiative of the Party in the formation of the NDF and who eliminate the leading role of the working class in the united front. Upon the elimination of the proletarian leadership, the democratic revolution envisioned would be nothing but a recycling of the old liberal revolution and the passing hegemony of petty bourgeois formations and ideas on behalf of today's exploiting classes. In fact, *the program of the NDF has been overwritten and diluted several times under the wrong notion that even after the seizure of political power (the basic completion of the new democratic revolution), the goal is still to build the 'national democratic society' and not the socialist society under the influence of the (now failed) Sandinista program of multi-party democracy (no socialist revolution) and 'mixed economy' (no socialist construction) and the policies of revisionist*

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**"There are those who erase from the history of the NDF the role and initiative of the Party in the formation of the NDF and who eliminate the leading role of the working class in the united front. Upon the elimination of the proletarian leadership, the democratic revolution envisioned would be nothing but a recycling of the old liberal revolution and the passing hegemony of petty bourgeois formations and ideas on behalf of today's exploiting classes."**

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*regimes, whose cornerstone is the elimination of the leading role of the working class.*"<sup>90</sup>(italics mine)

The December 26, 1991 anniversary statement also launched an attack on the organizing framework of the NDF which has for years been premised on the idea of a federation of national democratic underground organizations with the CPP and the NPA.

There have been proposals and attempts to erase the working class leadership and the leading role of the Party in the united front, to subordinate the Party to a specific formation of the united front and deny the independence and initiative of the Party and its allies...Rather than have a federation...which puts the Party and the NDF leadership on a potential collision course, the relations of cooperating organizations within the NDF framework should be consultative and consensual as should be the case in a united front.

In contrast to NDF formulations which specify that "...no single political party or group will be allowed to dominate the organization or monopolize the decision-making processes of its leading and subordinate bodies" the 1991 draft PPDR states that "the leadership of the working class, through its revolutionary Party, is *absolutely necessary* in the united front for the national democratic revolution."(emphasis mine)

Liwanag's attack on the results of the 1990 NDF Congress is part of his larger project of forcing the ranks of the CPP to 'return to basics.' His main instrument, the paper "Reaffirm Our Basic Principles and Rectify the Errors" is devoted mostly to issues of strategy and tactics, the area of inner party debate which has generated the most division. The debate on the nature of socialism and on the interpretation of the collapse of socialist regimes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union has not generated as much attention within CPP ranks. An attempt to start the debate in the *Ang Bayan*, the official organ of the CPP, was apparently stopped.<sup>91</sup> Liwanag picked up the debate, but from a radically different perspective in his essay "Stand Against Modern Revisionism" published in January 1992.<sup>92</sup> In this essay, Liwanag dismissed the Great Purge of the 1930s as 'arbitrariness' and the Stalinist police state as an error of 'bureaucratism.' He ascribed the collapse of the USSR to 'revisionism' -- to the abandonment of the economic and political framework established by Stalin.

It is this framework which is being confronted centrally in the current debate on the nature of the crisis of socialism. If the side which focuses on authoritarian economic and political structures as the main factors in the



crisis of socialism wins the debate, then the theoretical gulf between the CPP program and the NDF Program can be easily bridged. If the side which insists on 'revisionism' as the main problem wins, the differences on these issues will continue and probably intensify with unforeseen organizational consequences. It is not certain that the gap between the NDF potential as embodied in its program and its actual capacities will be bridged soon, if at all, in the distant future. It is possible that the future development of the NDF may be circumscribed by the pace and pattern of change within its parent organization, the CPP. If that happens, the course of change may then shift to a political formation broader than the current NDF. The question then becomes as that posed by the title of this paper: *Is the connection between the CPP and the NDF an umbilical cord that needs to be cut? Or is it a lifeline without which the NDF will die?*

## ENDNOTES

\*This article first appeared in *Debate, Philippine Left Review*, No. 5, December 1992.

<sup>1</sup>The member organizations are: the Christians for National Liberation (CNI), an organization of church and lay people; Kabataang Makabayan (KM, Patriotic Youth); Katipunan ng mga Gurong Makabayan (KGM, Association of Patriotic Teachers); Katipunan ng mga Samahang Manggagawa (KASAMA, Federation of Labor Organizations), federating organizations of the 'semi-proletariat and urban poor'; Pambansang Katipunan ng mga Magbubukid (PKM, National Association of Peasants); Rebolusyonaryong Kongreso ng Kilusang Unyon (RKKU, Revolutionary Congress of Trade Unions); Artista at Manunulat ng Sambayanan (ARMAS, Artists and Writers for the People); Makabayang Samahang Pangkalusugan (MSP, Patriotic Health Association); Cordillera People's Democratic Front (CPDF), an alliance of various ethnic groups in the Cordillera region of northern Luzon; Makabayang Kilusang ng Bagong Kababaihan (MAKIBAKA, Patriotic Movement of New Women); Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP); the New People's Army (NPA); Lupon ng mga Manananggol Para sa Bayan (LUMABAN, Council of Lawyers for the Country); and Liga ng Agham Para sa Bayan (LAB, League of Science for the People). (Source: National Democratic Front (NDF) brochure published by the NDF International office in the Netherlands.

<sup>2</sup>The "Program for a People's Democratic

Revolution," (PPDR), one of the founding documents of the CPP, was approved on December 26, 1968. See Appendix, "1968 Program for a People's Democratic Revolution," in the "1991 Draft Program and Constitution of the Communist Party of the Philippines," Central Publishing House, CPP, April 1992. (Also found in CPP, "Onwards to Victory: Programme for a People's Democratic Revolution, 1987," reprinted in *Philippine Development Forum*, Vol. 1-2 (1989).

This pamphlet mainly contains the 1991 proposed revised draft of the PPDR which has to be approved by a Party congress before it officially replaces the 1968 version.

An earlier revised draft was published in 1987 but was never taken up formally since there had been no Party congress since 1968.

<sup>3</sup>CPP, "Onwards to Victory: Programme for a People's Democratic Revolution, 1987," reprinted in *Philippine Development Forum*, Vol. 1-2 (1989), p. 7.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 46

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 7

<sup>7</sup>See *Ang Bayan*, 1988(?)

<sup>8</sup>Communist Party of the Philippines, "The 1991 Draft Program and Constitution of the Communist Party of the Philippines," (NDF Office, Netherlands; Central Publishing House), p. 7.

<sup>9</sup>See Introduction of 1988 NDF Draft Program (printed version), p. 5.

- <sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*
- <sup>11</sup>Point 7, 1990 NDF Draft Program, p. 23
- <sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 21.
- <sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, p.24.
- <sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 26.
- <sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 25.
- <sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*
- <sup>17</sup>Point 8, *ibid.*, p. 26.
- <sup>18</sup>Point 6, *ibid.*, p. 21.
- <sup>19</sup>Point 7, *ibid.*, p. 26.
- <sup>20</sup>1985 NDF Draft Program, p. 13.
- <sup>21</sup>Point 5, *op. cit.*, p. 21.
- <sup>22</sup>Point 7, *ibid.*, pp. 23-24.
- <sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 21-23.
- <sup>24</sup>Point 4, *ibid.*, p. 19.
- <sup>25</sup>Point 7, *ibid.*, p. 24.
- <sup>26</sup>Point 8, *ibid.*, pp. 26-27.
- <sup>27</sup>1973-77 NDF Draft Program, p. 42.
- <sup>28</sup>"Economic Program," 1982 NDF Draft Program, p. 6.
- <sup>29</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 7.
- <sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*
- <sup>31</sup>*Ibid.*
- <sup>32</sup>*Ibid.*
- <sup>33</sup>Point 8, 1990 NDF Draft Program, p. 15.
- <sup>34</sup>Point 7, *ibid.*, p. 11.
- <sup>35</sup>Point 8, *ibid.*, p. 15.
- <sup>36</sup>Point 8, 1985 NDF Draft Program, p. 14.
- <sup>37</sup>Point 9, *ibid.*, p. 16.
- <sup>38</sup>Point 2, *op. cit.*, p. 14.
- <sup>39</sup>Point 4, *ibid.*, p. 18.
- <sup>40</sup>Point 2, *ibid.*, p. 15.
- <sup>41</sup>Point 2, *ibid.*, p. 14.
- <sup>42</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 15
- <sup>43</sup>Point 4, *ibid.*, p. 18.
- <sup>44</sup>1973-77 NDF Draft Program, p. 19.
- <sup>45</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 21.
- <sup>46</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 20.
- <sup>47</sup>1982 NDF Draft Program, p. 4.
- <sup>48</sup>*Ibid.*
- <sup>49</sup>1985 NDF Draft Program, p. 8.
- <sup>50</sup>Point 10, *ibid.*, p. 17.
- <sup>51</sup>Point 4, 1988 NDF Draft Program, p. 14.
- <sup>52</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 13.
- <sup>53</sup>Point 11, *ibid.*, p. 28.
- <sup>54</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 29.
- <sup>55</sup>"Our Immediate Tasks," 1982 NDF Draft Program, B.16, p. 13.
- <sup>56</sup>Social, Educational, and Cultural Program," *ibid.*, p. 8.
- <sup>57</sup>Point 5, *ibid.*, p. 10.
- <sup>58</sup>Point 14, 1988 NDF Draft Program, p. 34.
- <sup>59</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 33.
- <sup>60</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 34.
- <sup>61</sup>Point 4, 1990 NDF Draft Program, p. 20.
- <sup>62</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 23.
- <sup>63</sup>Point 9, *ibid.*, p. 30.
- <sup>64</sup>Point 11, *ibid.*, p. 33.
- <sup>65</sup>*Ibid.*
- <sup>66</sup>"Introduction," *ibid.*, p. 1.
- <sup>67</sup>Art. 2, Sec. 7, 1990 NDF Constitution.
- <sup>68</sup>Art. 2, Sec. 9, *ibid.*
- <sup>69</sup>"Unity and Struggle," *Liberation*, 18(4) (July-August 1990), p. 13.
- <sup>70</sup>Point 2, 1990 NDF Draft Program, pp. 3-4.
- <sup>71</sup>1973-77 NDF Draft Program, pp. 12-13.
- <sup>72</sup>1982 NDF Draft Program, *ibid.*, p. 6.
- <sup>73</sup>See Introduction of 1985 NDF Draft Program, p. 3.
- <sup>74</sup>1973-77 NDF Draft Program, pp. 38-39.
- <sup>75</sup>1982 NDF Draft Program, p. 8.
- <sup>76</sup>Point 11, 1985 NDF Draft Program, p. 17.
- <sup>77</sup>Point 13, *op. cit.*, p. 32.
- <sup>78</sup>Point 10, 1990 NDF Draft Program, p. 32.
- <sup>79</sup>Point 12, *ibid.*, p. 35.
- <sup>80</sup>*Ibid.*
- <sup>81</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 34.
- <sup>82</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 34-35.
- <sup>83</sup>1987 PPDR Draft, *op. cit.*, pp. 17-18.
- <sup>84</sup>Communist Party of the Philippines, "The 1991 Draft..." *op. cit.*, p. 25.
- <sup>85</sup>1990 NDF Draft Program, p. 15.
- <sup>86</sup>Communist Party of the Philippines, "The 1991 Draft..." *op. cit.*, pp. 21-22.
- <sup>87</sup>Point 8, 1987 PPDR Draft, *op. cit.*
- <sup>88</sup>*Op. cit.*, pp. 18-19.
- <sup>89</sup>Armando Liwanag is a pseudonym identified in the past pronouncements as that of the Chairman of the Central Committee of the CPP. In this paper, Liwanag identified himself only as a member of the Central Committee. *Kasarinlan*, 8(1) (Third Quarter 1992).
- <sup>90</sup>Similar criticism was made in "Reaffirm Our Basic Principles and Carry the Revolution Forward," CPP Statement on its 23rd Anniversary, December 26, 1991, in *Rebohusyon*, No. 1 (January-March 1992), p. 11.
- <sup>91</sup>"Where to Socialism?" and a reprint of excerpts from Joe Slovo, "Has Socialism Failed?" in *Ang Bayan*, 21 (11) (January-February 1991).
- <sup>92</sup>Armando Liwanag, "Stand Against Modern Revisionism," *NDF Pamphlet Series*, No. 7.