

# **Nationalism and National Liberation. From the Marxist tradition to the Struggle for Self-Determination of the Bangsamoro**

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## **NATIONALISM AND NATIONAL LIBERATION**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

*"...the duty of the International can and should be, not to abolish national peculiarities but to promote international unity in national diversity...and that only the abolition of capitalism and the introduction of socialism will make it possible to abolish national oppression..."* Otto Bauer, 1924.

In the current global situation in which the neoliberal offensive of the global capital has been dominating the affairs of the world and its people, talking about nationalism and national liberation seems to be irrelevant. And this is despite the serious problems and severe crises that indicate that the current stage of neoliberal globalized capitalism is a failed project.

But the historical collapse of the really existing socialist countries before the turn of the century seems to put more burden on the shoulders of the current generation of progressives and revolutionary socialists to build a development paradigm in the current context of the struggle for democratic bourgeois reforms as necessary and integral part of the overall struggle for national and

social liberation and the building of international socialism. Progressives and revolutionaries of these generations seem to fear more the historical failures of the past rather than be inspired by the vision of a viable alternative of the future.

It is very important, however, to point out that the so called “irrelevance” of nationalism or the struggle for nationalism has been blamed by some authors and revolutionaries more to Marx and Engels for their failure to give theoretical guideline on the National Question. They were expecting Marx and Engels to provide concrete historical context for the struggles for national liberation of peoples from both the so called advanced and developing countries. The fact that the development of capitalism even to its current phase, does not necessarily lead to the assimilation of smaller and weaker nations into bigger and stronger nation but may also lead to the reawakening of the latter nations and intensify their struggles for right to self determination which can be in a form of cessation or separation from the bigger nation is worthy to be seriously considered.

It is very important to note that the historical trend shows that capitalism has developed in different countries or even within a given country in a very uneven manner directly affecting the development of peoples therein. It is an integral part of capitalist logic that development is faster in areas where it can extract profits to the maximum. Profits and more profits which can be generated dictate which market to concentrate and there is where usually one can find the lowest production costs and always the highest profits for the capitalists.

It is very obvious however that capitalism in its present form has, in a fastest manner, united the global economy and its market that the concept and the function of nation-state have been rendered hollow and irrelevant. Neoliberal policies and programs for global implementation have been decided by the unelected and unseen people hidden behind multi-lateral institutions. The unevenness and backwardness or combined development of capitalism between and among peoples and within different countries and the most undemocratic manner in which global capital has governed the affairs of the world serve as the main if not the decisive driving force for the intensification of the struggles for nationalism and liberation today. The weakening of the nation-state has a direct immediate and strategic impact on the dominant class from both oppressor and oppressed nations which in turn is encouraging national liberation movements to take advantage of the opportunity to their own interest. It offers a rare situation for Marxists and progressives today to integrate the class content of the struggle for right to self determination of the dominated nations and establish international unity among the oppressed classes from both oppressor and oppressed nations.

It is therefore, very important for us today as progressive development workers, revolutionaries and socialists to understand the concrete historical context of the current struggle for nationalism and national liberation to contribute in achieving liberation for and with the oppressed peoples and nationalities ensuring that it can only be sustainable and genuine if it is ‘socially liberative’ as well.

Marx, Engels and other revolutionaries had provided us with theoretical tools based on their concrete historical situation and surely they are limited to these circumstances. We should therefore not deal so much on what they were not able to do but what they had achieved during their period.

To better understand the fast and widespread rising of nationalism in different forms and characters in different countries, it is best to put them in concrete historical context and the current realities and developments in the neoliberal phase of the capitalist globalization.

## **I - Marxist Concept of a Nation**

Marx and Engels concept or idea of a nation was very much influenced by their period and the philosophy which they were trying to develop as revolutionaries. They live in an epoch (nineteenth century) still marked by the formations of national states in Europe (Germany, Italy, Poland, Hungary, etc.) which indeed influenced their view.

They (Marx and Engels) were trying to visualize the place of nations in the future communist society and at the same time trying to answer questions of the day regarding the nation's place and role in the unfolding events in history towards the communist society.

It is also very important to note at this stage that Marx and Engels were not really concerned as the Philosophers of Ancient Greece had been with a purely moral aspiration but with a political project on a world historical scale that would result from revolutionary upheaval which only thru a communist revolution that history becomes wholly world history.

Their writings especially during 1844-1847 period more or less constituted an idea rather than an accomplished theory on the national question. This fact made a limitation of their theoretical elaboration, but at the same time it protected them against the danger of a rigid and normative definition of a nation. Such formulation had influenced a lot the Russia workers movement especially in Lenin but at the same time had been the object for misinterpretations.

At this point, one can deduce from their writings a concept of a nation as a historical formation linked to the rise of the capitalist mode of production and crystallized in a political superstructure - the national state.

This evolving concept was believed to be based on their belief that they lived in an epoch dominated by bourgeois cosmopolitanism and by the advent, in the near future, of a socialism transcending national conflicts.

On the document, *Communist Manifesto* (1848), authored by Marx and Engels, cosmopolitanism and internationalism tend to fuse. The internationalization of the capitalist mode of production and the formation of the world market are seen as a process which has given a cosmopolitan character to production and consumption in every country, establishing a universal interdependence of nations and creating a world literature. This presentation of the revolutionary role of capitalist mode of production in an economic system that would increasingly unify the world materially and spiritually and suppress the basis for national conflicts certainly led the authors of the *Manifesto* to somehow neglect the importance of the national question.

Such formulation certainly created debates and profound discussion on how Marx and Engels neglected the importance of the national question. Issues like Communism would really want to abolish countries and nationalities came to emerge and presented negatively in the frame of the debates on the national question. During this period they tried to formulate a theory in response to the burning issues on nation-states. They argued that the workers have no country and one can take away from them what they have not got.

Marx and Engels had formulated these theses that (1) that national state belongs not to the proletariat but to the bourgeoisie and (2) the material, economic, social and political conditions of the proletarians are the same in all industrial countries.

Marx had emphasized that the proletarians must first seize power within the framework of a national state but this separate proletarians' national state will be only a transitional stage towards the

future classless and stateless society since the construction of such a society is possible only on the international scale.

It is clear that the proletarians must first of all acquire political supremacy and must rise to the leading class of the nation, must constitute itself as a nation, it is so far, itself national though not in the bourgeois sense.

National differences and antagonisms between peoples are daily more and more vanishing due to the development of the bourgeoisie, to freedom of commerce, to the globalized market and to the uniformity of the mode of production.

The supremacy of the proletarians will cause them to vanish still faster and the united action of the leading civilized countries at least, is one of the first conditions for the emancipation of the proletarians. The bourgeoisie has started the process of the disappearance of the national differences and antagonisms and the proletarians will complete and even perfect it.

At this stage, it seems that the abovementioned thesis of Marx and Engels came from a free trade optimism but their other writings clearly showed their belief that it is impossible to have a solution to the national contradictions within the framework of capitalist mode of production.

They further clarified that, it is not the bourgeoisie as such – but the large scale industry which eliminates national barriers by the creation of a new class, radically international – the proletariat – while the bourgeoisie of each nation still retained separate national interest. The large scale industry created a class which in all nations has the same interest and for which nationality is already DEAD.

For the authors of the *Manifesto*, only the proletarians, as a universal class which is no longer national and which has common world historical interests can lead to the establishment of a universal society where national differences will be overcome.

Furthermore, the proletarians in all countries have one and the same interest, one and the same enemy and one and the same struggle. The great mass of proletarians is by their very nature free from national prejudices and their entire disposition and movement is essentially humanitarian and anti-national. It is only the awakening proletariat can bring about fraternization between the different nations. For Marx and Engels (in the early stage of their writings), humanitarian and anti-national conception was called cosmopolitanism.

From this perspective, nation appears as a stage in the historical development of humanity which cannot accede to a higher stage of universality.

What the nations have done as nations, they have done for human society, their whole value consists only in the fact that each single nation has accomplished for the benefit of other nations. One of the main historical aspects in the framework of which mankind has accomplished is its development and therefore after industry in England, politics in France and philosophy in Germany have been developed, they have developed for the world. And their world historical significance, as also that of those nations, has thereby come to an end.

At this juncture, it will be very important to note that there was a significant change/s from the early Marx to the later Marx, where points regarding the disappearances of nation will take place after the stage of capitalist mode of production will come to an end. The later Marx, similar to Lenin later on would try to give emphasis on the subjective aspects of the class struggle by the working class in affecting substantial change towards classless and stateless society effecting the withering away of the State which will fully be achieved in the International scale.

## **II - The Role of National Self- Determination in the Struggle for Socialism**

World capitalism has been creating incredible inequalities and brutal differences in life conditions of peoples between the centre and periphery of the system. It is only the complementarity and reciprocal relations of the struggles in different nation-states can generate internationalist solidarity.

Understanding the dialectical relationship between internationalism and national rights for revolutionary socialists is extremely important since the international unity of the exploited can only be built on the recognition of the national rights and in particular the right to self determination of all peoples.

While the democratic right to self determination is indispensable, concretely applying it to territories and areas where nations and peoples are thoroughly mixed without setting off battles, massacres and ethnic cleansing, seem to be next to impossible. It is therefore imperative to profoundly understand the concrete historical context and present realities of the dynamics of the development of peoples in different nations so as to have coherent and rational framework for the struggles of right to self-determination of nation and building of socialism.

Among revolutionary thinkers and workers including Marx, Engels, Trotsky and Stalin, Lenin had a more coherent and systematic revolutionary strategy for the workers' movement based on the slogan of national self determination. It had proven effective during workers' struggle against capitalism in Russia at that period and had helped positively in the workers' movements in other countries especially during the imperialist phase of capitalism.

It will be good to study theories and experiences of other revolutionaries during those times before we will thoroughly deal with Lenin's theory and practice on the national question.

One of the revolutionaries who had been involved with the national question but differed very much with Lenin was Rosa Luxemburg. She belonged to the radical left current with the Party - the Socialist Democratic Party of the Kingdom of Poland (SDPKP) - in the politics of Poland especially with her bitter debates with the Socialist Party of Poland (SPP).

For R. Luxemburg, Poland could only have territorial autonomy because of the close link between the Russian and Polish proletariats and their common destiny. She even campaigned that the unifying political struggles of the proletariat should not be supplanted by a series of fruitless national struggles. She strongly believed that Polish independence was the aspiration of the feudal Polish nobility and not the working class. She based mainly her position from purely economic point of view. Her main theses regarding the national question were:

- 1) The right to self-determination is an abstract and metaphysical right.
- 2) The support for the right to secession of each nation implies in reality support for bourgeois nationalism for a nation as a uniform and homogenous entity does not exist.
- 3) The independence of small nations in general and Poland in particular is utopian from economic point of view and was condemned by the law of history.

Rosa Luxemburg's theories on the national question developed between 1893-1917 are based on four fundamental theoretical, methodological and political errors; firstly, her economic approach of the national question in Poland. For her since Poland is economically dependent on Russia, she could not be politically independent. This was the economic tendency therefore the political tendency of

Russian proletariat to unite with Polish proletariat. Secondly, for R. Luxembourg a nation was essentially a cultural phenomenon, she was supportive in abolishing the national oppression and allowing free cultural development but refused to countenance separation or right to political independence. She did not understand that the denial of the right to form an independent nation-state is a concrete form of national oppression. Thirdly, she only saw the anachronistic – petty bourgeois and reactionary aspects of national liberation movements and did not grasp the revolutionary potential against tsarism (and later against imperialism and colonialism). She failed to understand the complex and dual nature (contradictory dialectics) of this nationalist movement within Russia. She did not understand the revolutionary role of the non proletarian allies of the working class, the peasantry and the oppressed nations. She saw Russia's revolution as purely working class and not led by the working class as understood by Lenin. Fourthly, she failed to understand that the national liberation of the oppressed nation is not only a demand of the utopian reactionary and pre-capitalist petty bourgeois but also of the masses as a whole including the proletariat and that therefore the recognition of the Russian proletariat of the nations to self-determination was an indispensable condition of its solidarity with the proletariat and the oppressed nations.

Leon Trotsky, a leading member of the Russian Socialist Democratic Labor' Party (RSDLP) and the contemporary of Lenin, became interested on the national question after 1914. His concept was expressed when he wrote an article on "The War and the International in 1914 during the early stages of the First World War" which was intended against Social Patriotism. He had a historical economic approach in dealing with the national question. For Trotsky the World War was a product of the contradiction between the productive forces towards a world economy and the restrictive framework of the nation-state. For Trotsky this situation would eventually lead to the collapse of the nation-state but not the disappearance of nations but it would only be able to exist in the future as a cultural, ideological and psychological phenomenon. Furthermore, he strongly believed that the ending of the economic independence is not synonymous with the disappearance of the nation-state as a political entity. Like Luxembourg, Trotsky would reduce the nation either to economics or to cultural aspects and thus lost sight of the political aspect of the problem.

Trotsky explicitly proclaimed the right of nation to self-determination as one of the conditions for peace between nations which she contrasted with peace of the diplomats.

Joseph Stalin a contemporary of Lenin and Trotsky, and also a leading member of the RSDLP (Russian Socialist Democratic Labor Party) had been tasked to do a comprehensive work on the national question in the early 1900s. His works "Marxism and The National Question" had differed very much from Lenin but had big impact on revolutionaries in many countries especially on later part of the Third International period.

The main points which Stalin had developed and which Lenin distanced himself and even categorized them as unMarxist before he died were the following;  
First, the concept of national character of common psychological makeup or psychological particularity is not Leninist. This idea is coming from OTTO BAUER an Austrian Marxist but was criticized by Lenin. The idea of a national psychology has more in common with a certain superficial and pre-scientific folklore than with Marxist concept of the national question.

Second, Stalin tried to define a nation by stating that it had to have complete characteristics of common language, territory, economic life and psychic formation that an entity would be called a nation. He presented a very dogmatic, restrictive and rigid requirement of which if one is not present one cannot call such entity as a nation. Third, Stalin had explicitly refused to allow the possibility of the unity or association of national groups scattered within a multinational states. Hence, the impossibility of unity into a single national union groups that have grown so distinct.

Lenin, on the other hand, vigorously defended the freedom of association, including the association of any communities no matter what their nationality in any given state. And lastly, Stalin made no distinction between the Great Russian tsarist oppressive nationalism and the nationalism of oppressed nations. He glaringly rejected both the warlike and oppressive nationalism of the tsars from above and the wave of nationalism from below. Stalin did not only fail to make any distinction between nationalism from above and from below but he aimed his most severe criticisms at social democrats in oppressed countries who had not stood firm in the face of the nationalist movements. For Lenin, the difference between the nationalism of the oppressor and the oppressed nations is absolutely decisive.

V. Lenin was one of the leaders and founders of the RSDLP. One of his greatest contributions in the World Revolution is his concept on the national question during the period of Imperialism. His starting point in working out a strategy on the national question was the same with R. Luxemburg and Trotsky which was proletarian internationalism. But he stood higher than his contemporaries because he understood better the dialectical relationship between internationalism and the right of the national self determination.

He understood that first, only the freedom to secede makes possible free and voluntary union, association, cooperation and, in the long term fusion between nations; second, that only the recognition by the workers' movement in the oppressor nation of the right of the oppressed nation to self determination can help to eliminate the hostility and suspicion of the oppressed and unite the proletariat of both nations in the international struggle against the bourgeoisie.

The a priori here is that the conscious proletariats of the oppressor nation has a certain level of organization and that since its support of the struggles to self-determination to the oppressed nation which includes the bourgeoisie of the latter, it brings with the support the obligation to ensure that the proletariat in the oppressed nation is organized and bring their democratic demand to the struggle for national liberation.

Furthermore, Lenin profoundly grasped the dialectical relationship between national-democratic struggles and the socialist revolution and showed that the popular masses (not just proletariat but also the peasantry and petty bourgeoisie) of the oppressed nation were the allies of the conscious proletariat.

In relation to the case of Russia, it was only in April 1917 that Lenin had adapted the strategy of permanent revolution. During this period, Lenin began to see the national liberation struggles of oppressed nation within the Russian empire not only as a democratic movement, but as an ally of the proletariat in the Soviet Socialist Revolution.

Lenin, unlike many of his contemporaries, always put politics in command. Others saw only the economic, cultural and psychological dimension of the problem while Lenin had stated clearly that the question of self determination belong wholly and exclusively to the sphere of political democracy that is to the realm of the right of political secession and the establishment of an independent nation state.

Lenin had emphasized strongly that "An autonomous nation does not enjoy rights equal to those of a sovereign nation". His aim was democracy and international unity of the proletariat which both requires the recognition of the right of nations to self determination.

Again for Lenin, recognition of national rights is an essential condition for international solidarity, in so far as it permits the dissolution of suspicions, hatred and fears which set nation against each other and nourish false nationalism, chauvinism and xenophobia.

And without the right to divorce – to have a separate state – there can be no truly free marriage – unity or federation among nations.

And, it would be good to emphasize here that there is a need to study concretely the condition/situation of the people/nation struggle for nationalism where as in some cases the bourgeois has the obvious role in aspiring for nationhood and does not or block the active participation of the great majority of the oppressed people in a given territory. In short the support for national liberation is not abstract or metaphysical.

The support of Revolutionary Parties to the struggle for Right to Self-Determination of People/Nation should always be integral part of the Solidarity with the democratic forces to ensure their interest in the struggle of the nationalist liberation as well as the social liberation aspirations of the dominated/oppressed class of the nation struggling for Right to Self-Determination. The struggle of the Right to Self-Determination of the dominated nation/people should be an integral part of the struggle for socialism of the dominant nation. And together their victory will mutually help each other towards fuller victory for socialism.

### **III - The Classes and the National Movements**

Many of the debates among revolutionary Marxists on aspects on the national question have been settled by history. The case of Poland for instance which R. Luxembourg referred to as petty bourgeois utopianism had become a nation-state after the First World War (1918). The non-historic Czech nation, which was destined to disappear because of its lack of national vitality (according to Engels), had become the dominant nation in post 1918 Czechoslovakia and had its own separate state today.

Events after the October 1917 Russian revolution would show to us that the concept of nation is not simply a collection of abstract, external criteria. It is very important to consider the role play by the subjective elements such as the consciousness of a national identity and a national political movement. These so called subjective elements have been the concrete product of historical and collective experience of communities of people like oppression and persecution. This means that right and self determination must have a wider and broader application, it must relate not just to secession but to the national entity itself.

Nobody can claim that he or she or they as revolutionary vanguards can have list of objective criteria for determining whether a community or people constitute a nation or not but the community itself.

Revolutionary Marxists today face issues on national question in complex situation like aspects of national, colonial, religious and ethnicity are combined and interfaced. Cases like the continuous armed conflicts between Israel and the Palestinians, Christians and Proletariats in Northern Ireland and the struggles of the Bangsamoro in Mindanao, Southern Philippines.

And today, Revolutionary Marxists face dual challenges/questions with regards to the national question: First, do we deny the legitimacy of the nationalist movements because we consider them as petty bourgeois and divisive of the working class and to proclaim abstractly against them the principle of the necessary unity between proletariats of all nationalities, races or religions and the Second challenge/question to us is to espouse uncritically the nationalist ideology of these movements and condemn the dominant nations en bloc, without distinction of class as “reactionary nations” – nations to which the right to self determination is denied. Or we simply prefer not to distinguish the existence of nationalism from above from nationalism from below.

The task facing revolutionary Marxists today is to avoid these two extreme challenges/questions and



discover – through a concrete analysis of each concrete situation – an authentically internationalist course which draws its inspiration from the nationalities policy of the Comintern when it was led by Lenin and Trotsky (1919-23).

One of the greatest contributions of Lenin in the struggle for national self determination is the differentiation of the nationalism of the oppressed or from below and the nationalism of the oppressor or nationalism from above. This clearly draws the class content of a democratic struggle for nationalism. It ensures the decisive role of the working class as well as the other oppressed classes (peasantry and the petty bourgeois) in ensuring the national struggle for social emancipation of the working class and all the oppressed people from all forms of exploitation and oppression.

The recognition and concrete support extended by the working class of the dominant/oppressor nation to the struggle of the national self determination of the oppressed nation is actually helping the democratic and the oppressed classes of the latter to strengthen its solidarity with the working class of the former nation and on this basis international solidarity of both oppressed classes in both nations can eventually lead to both democratic and social liberation of the two nations and can successfully plant the socialist seed in such country.

The international task of the conscious proletariat of the dominant nation is to help and support the struggle to self-determination of the dominated nation and build trust with the proletariats of the latter in order to strengthen the unity of both proletariats of the two nations to fight the bourgeoisie of both the dominated and the dominant nations. This is the best way to rally the non-proletariats in both nations to struggle and gain concrete democratic victories for the betterment of lives of all oppressed and exploited people in both nations. This is also to ensure the democratic content of the struggle to right to self-determination of nation towards socialism.

And at this stage, it is very important to reiterate that although the struggle for the Right to Self-Determination of people is their democratic right, it should be fully achieved or struggled upon by the people themselves so as to raise the levels of their consciousness as a nation and sustainably expressed in their national political movement toward self determination.

#### **IV - The Struggle for Self-Determination of the Bangsamoro Revolutionary Fronts in Mindanao, Philippines**

Currently, the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GPH) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) peace panels had just concluded their 30<sup>th</sup> Exploratory Talks in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. It would be 38<sup>th</sup> exploratory talks now (July 13, 2013) but the contents do not have substantial changes as of this writing. In fact, the GPH is trying its best to get/gain positive points here so that the President can include the result to his July 22, 2013 State of the Nation Address (SONA) but putting pressure on the MILF. In their (Government of the Philippines-GPH and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front-MILF) joint statement, they identified the positive developments of the talk especially in the discussion on power and wealth sharing through the creation of Technical Working Committees (TWCs). They also condemned the latest attacks by the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) to the different villages in the province of Maguindanao to derail the peace talks. It is expected that the final signing of peace accord is in the offing in a very near future. Initiatives have been started already with regards to Constitutional Change from both houses of Congress and from the certified allies of the current administration in Congress precisely to prepare for constitutional accommodation of the peace accord.

Sixteen years ago today, the government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the Moro

National Liberation Front (MNLF) had signed a final peace agreement. The peace agreement between the GRP and the MNLF is the second agreement that was signed, the first one was signed in 1976 or twenty years earlier and famously known as the Tripoli Agreement. The 1976 peace agreement was signed by the GRP under the Marcos dictatorship and the 1996 peace agreement was signed between the GRP headed by President Fidel V. Ramos a former general and the Chair of the MNLF, Nur Misuari (who also signed the 1976 Tripoli Agreement in behalf of the MNLF).

Thirteen (13) years after the Tripoli Agreement (1976) and during the period of President Corazon C. Aquino (the mother of President Noyonoy Aquino) a law Republic Act (RA) 6734 creating the Autonomous Region for Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) was integrated in the 1987 Philippine Constitution but after several years that the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) had splitted from the MNLF. After the signing of the final peace agreement between the MNLF and the GRP in September 1996, the RA 6734 was amended and became RA 9054. It had defined the nature and characteristics of the Autonomous Region for Muslim Mindanao where the key players were given by then the Ramos administration to the MNLF headed by Nur Misuari who ran unopposed in a regional election in 1997 as governor of ARMM under the ruling party (Lakas NUCD). In November of 1996 or less than three months after the signing of final peace agreement between the GRP and the MNLF, the government opened up talks with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the stated main objective is to resolve the Bangsamoro problem. For almost sixteen years now that talks have not reached anything except agreements in principle. Meanwhile, the MNLF have been divided several times effectively weakening their position in pursuing the fulfillment of the incomplete implementation of the agreement. The MILF has been divided too even before the signing of an agreement with government. The Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighter or BIFF which accused the MILF current leadership to be too compromising with the government. After creating the BIFF, the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Movement (BIFM) was formed as a political front of the BIFF under the leadership of Ombra Kato, the former commander of the MILF Base Command 105.

And as if history is repeating itself because while the GPH had been talking to the MILF this week in Kuala Lumpur it (GPH) is also talking to the MNLF (again) for the follow up of the 1996 Final Peace Agreement. While all of these were happening the BIFF had been launching offensives in different areas in the ARMM. It seems that there are related to the topic of Wealth Sharing between the GPH and the MILF. The message is clear that the MILF is not the only force in the area and therefore they can demand higher share.

Meanwhile, it should be recalled that the government of President Benigno Aquino (PNoy) had enacted another law RA 10153 to postpone the May 2011 ARMM election to 2013 synchronizing with the national elections and gave authority to the President to appoint the Executive and Legislative bodies of ARMM. The law (RA 10153) specified that its purpose is to have the present set up of ARMM to act as transition mechanism for the “new” autonomous set up as a preparation for the expected result of the talks to constitutionally accommodate the MILF – that is if the aforementioned talks will not go nowhere. But already, both houses of Congress have announced that they want to have some amendments to the country’s constitution so that economic policies can be changed favourable to the foreign businesses and intentionally hiding the accommodation agenda for the MILF. PNoy has distanced himself from this congressional initiative but both leadership of the houses are identified with the administration and definitely such initiatives are not just circumstantial to the current phase of the GPH-MILF peace talks.

This early, signs of constitutional accommodation like the MNLF, are already becoming visible with the outcome of the GPH and MILF talks.

The abovementioned and the succeeding narratives are intended to serve as historical framework of the peace talks between the government and the Moro revolutionary fronts which have opted to

resolve their struggle for national self determination on the negotiating table and the government's framework in the engagements with the Moro fronts.

For almost fifty years of the Bangsamoro struggles and more than one hundred fifty thousand lives lost, millions of people dislocated, billions of properties destroyed and priceless opportunities lost, one has to ask if all these efforts and sacrifices are really worth it at least in terms of the concrete gains achieved especially of the basic Bangsamoro masses. At this point it is very important to take into account the role of the different sets of leadership of the different revolutionary fronts with regards to the gains and victories as well as the opportunities lost and threats which have unfolded their way in the protracted process of negotiation as the main stress these fronts have opted. It is also very important to have a glimpse to the class background of the key responsibilities on the leadership of the Fronts. And it will be helpful to know the attitude and role of the Bangsamoro ruling class in the different processes of the peace negotiations.. Lastly, but definitely not the least, is the attitude of the Fronts regarding the struggles for self determination of other non-Moros specifically the Indigenous Peoples or Lumads.

On the other hand, it is very important to know the constant framework used by the government in dealing with the different Moro fronts. One can easily notice a consistency of the government peace framework towards the struggle for self-determination.

Having said this, we have to look on the nature of nationalism the fronts have been struggling for self determination. In the process we have to know the role of the masses and democratic forces within the Moro people in whose name the fronts have struggled for self determination.

And in the last part, we will try to analyze in whose peace that they (Fronts) want to achieve, "peace among the diplomats or negotiators or peace among nations and peoples."

The struggle against colonial power by the Moros has started more than five hundred years ago. The economic, political and social structures of the Moros then had reached higher level especially in the southern part of the Philippines vis-à-vis in the central and northern parts of the country. So the opposition against colonial powers specifically against the Spanish occupation was very strong in the southern part of the country. The Spanish colonizers gained footholds in key areas in Mindanao but they had never gained full control of the interior areas occupied by the fighters of the Moro Sultanate defending their territories. The colonizers had used religion and the religious Christian missionaries to help in the colonization of the inhabitants including the non Moros and Moros as well in these areas. During this period, monotheism was already predominant within the sultanate since Islam was already introduced centuries earlier by the Muslim traders and missionaries to the area. The Islamic faith had helped in the resistance against the colonizers who made use of religion (Christianity) to further their colonial interests. The remnants of the Spanish churches and fortresses can still be seen even today in key areas of Mindanao especially along the water routes e.g. Tamontaka in today's Datu Odin Sinsuat Municipality, Dulawan the present day Datu Piang both part of Maguindanao province and Pikit part of North Cotabato to mention a few.

The struggles against the Spanish colonizers were led by the Sultanate in the south and by the intellectuals in the North. The latter, was the generation that was the product of the new class which emerged in the new system of economic, social and political structures imposed by the Spanish colonizers e.g. encomienda and hacienda systems. Agricultural crop production intended for the needs of the colonizers and their countries and not for the local needs or the colonized inhabitants. Some families from such generation had sent their sons to study in Europe (the colonizing country such as Spain) and were influenced by the prevailing thoughts of equality, fraternity and liberty. These students and intellectuals brought back these new ideas to the country and led the struggles under the leadership of Katipunan against the Spanish colonizers at the same time of the struggles

were continued by the Moros in the southern part.

At the eve of the defeat of the Spanish colonial power in the country at the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century, the new colonial power, United States of America came in to fill in the vacuum of the Spaniards in a historical buy off also known as Treaty of Paris in 1898. The defeated colonizer sold the territory they never fully subjugated to the new colonizer. And the rest would be a painful and bloody history of the new colonial brutality and occupation to neutralize and defeat the struggles for national liberation of peoples from the north to the southern part of the country.

In the 1930's, with the Sultanates of Maguindanao and Sulu effectively neutralized and rendered ceremonial and the leadership of the Katipunan and the local revolts literally decimated while the new working class movement (the Communist and Socialist Parties of the Philippines merged in 1938) had still on its early stage, the United States Imperialist power had consolidated the young national bourgeois class to form a colonial government. The first constitution of the country was formed in 1935 has been patterned letter by letter to the US constitution. The process was actively participated by representatives of the new ruling classes of the dominant nationality and the Moro people from the mainland of Mindanao as well as from the islands like in Sulu.

The life of a new national government was disrupted when the Japanese imperial power had tried to attack and subjugate the whole country and its people. A national united front for the defense for the fatherland was organized together with the defeated US army and also the Moro fighters who joined with the Filipino forces from the North and the central part of the country including the newly merged Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas (Communist Party of the Philippines), to put strong and credible guerilla warfare against the Japanese occupying forces. It is important to note that the old Communist Party was playing an important role based on the call of the Third International (post Lenin/Trotsky period) to defend the Fatherland against fascism. The Hukbalahap (Hukbo ng Bayan laban sa Hapon or Army of the People against the Japanese) was formed on this purpose.

After the Second World War the new Republic of the Philippines (1946) was formed with the new bourgeois and ruling class from the North to the South participating. The US imperialist power had ensured its influence in all spheres of life of the Republic by enshrining it in the Constitution.

The development of industrialization of the country was ensured by the US imperialist to fit the role which the imperialist power would want the colonies to play. It had to make sure that it supplied the foreign colonizers with raw materials and to receive the goods coming from the latter. This kind of import oriented and export dependent economy made a one sided development for the foreign interest with the development of the new national bourgeoisie making sure that their policy is implemented and the development and orientation of the political superstructure – the nation-state had been tasked to do just this policy.

Peasant unrests and uprisings in the North and Central parts of the country were superficially solved by transferring these people to the South – Mindanao – the new place of hope and fulfillment of the peasants to own the lands they till become a reality according to government propagandists. In all these struggles which had happened mostly in the northern part of the country, the Communist Party of the Philippines (PKP) in most part were playing a decisive role against the US imperialist and the puppet government. In the 50s, the US imperialist thru the puppet government had made sure that the PKP would be defeated and annihilated if they refused to surrender. In response, the HUKBALAHAP was transformed into Hukbong Magpapalaya ng Bayan or HMB building a strong peasant army and almost defeated the puppet government if not for a direct but covert imperialist intervention.

Mainstreaming and integration of all peoples in this colonial set up by US imperialism was made

possible thru Religion and Education. And the Moro and the non Moro peoples in Mindanao were not spared with this policy and program. Their political set up like the Sultanate and Indigenous Power Structure were in a subtle manner becoming powerless and the western concept and method of resolving conflicts and governance were taking over. In the main, the ruling class of the Moro and the non Moro peoples had participated in these explicit and implicit processes in the exploitation, marginalization and integration of their people to one nation-state framework of the dominant nationality and its own ruling class.

The ruling class of the Moro people reacted seriously when their interests (both economic and political) were directly threatened. In the late sixties, when the puppet Philippine governments were exposed and became unpopular, a new nationalist movement headed by the newly established Communist Party (CPP) in 1968 and intellectuals were fighting for the national and democratic interests. In some of these movements, the Moro intellectuals were actively involved.

During this period there was, somehow, a convergence of interest of the traditional political leaders and the intellectual Moro professionals and students to fight for the people's national interests. Thus they formed the Mindanao Independence Movement (MIM) in 1969. In the later period of same year the first batch of young Moro intellectuals and students were sent to Malaysia to have military training. It would be followed by several batches later. It is very important to note that the first batch of trainees was headed by the Nur Misuari a Moro professional teaching in the University of the Philippines and who got involved in activism together with Jose Maria Sison who became the chairperson of the new Communist Party of the Philippines.

The Islamic countries which financed the military trainings of the young Moro fighters hired British mercenaries and tapped Malaysia to host the activities. It should be remembered that a year before (1968), there was a Jabitah massacre where young Filipino Muslim recruits were massacred by the Philippine military when they refused to go on mission to infiltrate Sabah for the interest of the Philippine government. This mission is called as OPLAN MERDEKAH, which was intended to get back Sabah from Malaysia. Hence, Malaysia was more than willing to host the military trainings of the young Moros against the Philippine government.

Together with Nur Misuari were the sons of prominent ruling families of the Moro people. And with its Islamic connection in the Muslim countries the MIM got financial support notably from Libya and Saudi Arabia where Hashim Salamat was studying and became active in the national struggle.

The foreign donors were not actually at ease with the Moro traditional leaders leading the young movement because they might collaborate with the puppet government in the process as history would prove it. Obviously these donors were convinced by the argument of the young intellectuals and students to give the financial support directly to them. With this arrangement the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) was formed in the late sixties and early seventies. It was mainly composed of young intellectuals who had studied in the universities inside and outside the country. At early stage, there were several sons of the ruling class of the Moro people but later they were the first ones to give up and go back to the mainstream or to the government. Revolutionary and guerilla lifestyles were too much for them to sustain.

During this period a consciousness for a truly national identity was beginning to form and consolidate. Before this, the Moro people were those independent ethnic groups found in different areas/territories in Mindanao. The territories which were once comprised the Sultanates of Maguindanao and Sulu had effectively weakened, disorganized and disintegrated. The MNLF had started to help in consolidating a national consciousness among the Moro people and start a national political movement of the struggle for self determination. This was done outside the traditional political structure and led by the non-traditional intellectuals.

The political movement headed by the MNLF aimed at political secession from the Philippine nation-state arrangement. The national oppression perpetuated by the majority nationality referred to as those Christians in Luzon and Visayas who controlled the national government personified this kind of oppression which the MNLF also called as Manila colonialism. The active role of US Imperialism in the puppet government and orientation of the bourgeoisie were never factored in.

The main form of the struggle which was directly and indirectly supported by the Islamic countries (mostly members of the Organization of Islamic Countries - OIC) was armed struggle and had combined guerilla and conventional warfare on the ground.

President Ferdinand E. Marcos declared Martial Law in 1972 to effectively suppress and neutralize the young movements led by both CPP and MNLF. A loose coordination was established between the two groups in fighting the same enemy.

The massacres and massive dislocations of the Moro civilians made the OIC to aggressively help both overtly and covertly the MNLF. They even facilitated the escape and having a safe base of Nur Misuari in their respective counties.

The intervention of the OICs had dual effects to the MNLF. First, it helped the organization survive and be projected in the international level and second it also helped the MNLF become very dependent on them. In fact the impact of this arrangement was the neglect of the MNLF leadership of consolidation works of its forces and continuously raising of their political consciousness to understand their struggle for nationalism.

The MNLF leadership was literally forced to sit down by the OICs with the Philippine government to have peace talks in mid 1970s. The talk led to the so called Tripoli Agreement in 1976. Disagreements and divisions among the leaders of the MNLF broke up after the signing of the agreement. As a direct result of these political uneasy arrangements disorientation and demoralization seeped in among both leadership and rank and file within the organization. Surrenders of some of the leadership had occurred making easy for the dictatorial government to inflict serious damage to the organization. Never again did the MNLF reach the high level of struggle after the Tripoli Agreement. The main stress of the weakened leadership of MNLF became the peace negotiations where the Marcos government had an upper hand and controlled set up. It was a political trap which the bourgeois leadership of the MNLF took and the direction of the process from that time on is the mainstreaming of MNLF to the nation-state arrangement of the Philippine government. The 1996 final peace agreement was just the formalization of this process of political accommodation and mainstreaming.

The division which had occurred within the MNLF was obviously the result of the serious weakness with regards to the internal organizational consolidation. It was also a direct result of external interventions both by the OICs and the Philippine government through massive and intensified militarization of the latter against the ground forces of the MNLF and peace negotiation with the foreign based leadership of the MNLF with the active cooperation of the host countries of the OICs. The abovementioned reasons made the divide and rule tactics of the Marcos dictatorial government a success in weakening and neutralizing the struggle for national liberation of the Moro people led by the MNLF. In fact, the basis for the MNLF division was along the ethnic differences and particularities. The national consciousness of a bangsa or nation was not consolidated and never consummated and ethnic conflicts and division had dragged down the Moro people once again. Eventually, the Maguindanao ethnic group formed the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) whose leadership was composed mainly by the intellectuals and professionals of the Maguindanao tribe. The MNLF reformist group formed their own separate organization and was headed by the Maranao professional and intellectual members of the Maranao ethnic group. And this made the original

MNLF as headed by the ethnic group in Sulu called the Tausugs to negotiate with the government while other groups negotiating separately.

During this period the consciousness of national identity of Moro people and the national political movement started by the original MNLF for a national struggle for self determination was stunted and co-opted and began to disintegrate again.

The formation of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front which had started after the Tripoli Agreement but was only formalized in the late eighties was a manifestation of the failure of internal consolidation of the MNLF and the intense pressures from the other countries (OICs) and massive Philippine military assaults on the ground.

The stress put on the Islamic aspect was to differentiate the opposition of the MILF founder, Hashim Salamat (acted as foreign minister of the MNLF during the Tripoli Agreement) from the stress on the nationalist aspect put up by Nur Misuari who was accused as non-religious and very secular. This kind of orientation immediately attracted the support of OIC individual members like Saudi Arabia and the MILF because official member of the Muslim Brotherhood because MNLF was still recognized by the OIC as the only legitimate representative of the Moro people.

The MILF started a movement to unite the Moro people especially the 13 ethno-linguistic groups into one national consciousness and identity thru Islam and from the Sunni tradition like its principal patron, the Saudi Arabia and the Muslim Brotherhood which recently won the elections in Egypt after Mubarak.

In the later stage, MILF defines the Moro people and their ancestral domain/homeland as those who are natives or original inhabitants of Mindanao and its adjacent islands including Palawan and Sulu archipelago at the time of conquest or colonization of its descendants whether mixed or of pure blood. It is revealing here that the basis for Bangsamoro nationhood is on the superficial and mechanical aspects rather than the historical and collective experience of people whose consciousness as distinct people and identity is a result of the process of a national political movement towards achieving political objective. The definition does not even consider the individual and collective acceptance or non-acceptance of people to become or not become part of the nation and identifying themselves with the struggles for social and national liberation.

The abovementioned description was reinforced by its slogan of "one nation, one faith" the fear of external imposition of one's faith to others. In fact, it will be ironic to even think that the struggle for national liberation as led by the MILF to resolve the national contradiction and the national oppression with its own kind of oppression even during the period of its struggles.

It is worth noting that the MILF has never considered and recognized the rights of the Indigenous Peoples (IPs) as distinct people with distinct history and ancestral homeland and therefore a distinct aspiration. Their definition states clearly that the IPs are part of the definition of Bangsamoro and their ancestral domains are also integral part of the Bangsamoro homeland as mentioned above.

It is very obvious that the Philippine government through its negotiating panel does not point out this objective reality out amidst the most logical results of such framework will invite another level of conflicts. From its nation-state framework, this is favorable so the government can effectively rule the divided peoples. But most importantly, genuine struggle for the democratic right to self-determination and its direction will be determine by the broadest participation of the people in whose name the struggle has been launched and sustained. The respect and support of other democratic forces can be realized if in return their democratic rights and aspirations are respected and supported. The truth about a nation which oppresses other nation cannot be genuinely free will be tested in the concrete situation of the Bangsamoro and the Lumads.

As things stand today, one can have a glimpse of what will be the nature of political arrangement

which can be reached by a compact peace agreement between the GPH and the MILF. In one of the mutually agreed principle, it is stated that the present set-up of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), which is the product of series of peace agreements if the MNLF since 1976, 1989 and 1996 with previous governments, is not acceptable and therefore should be replaced. It is obviously a blatant way of saying that the previous talks between the government and the MNLF are a failure but the reasons for such failed project have never been mentioned. Nevertheless, it is like saying that the laws created for the constitutional bases for the existence of the political entity called ARMM should be replaced or amended. Clearly, it is not saying on something on the framework behind the government's position of enacting such laws in the past which will be the same framework in having another arrangement albeit different actors.

It should be pointed out that the government has been an active participant in these failures because it (government) wants to manifest today that it is the MNLF which is at fault why the project failed. The so-called tripartite review of the 1996 peace agreement and its implementation between GRP and MNLF while there is an on-going talks between the government and the MILF is more to please the OICs rather than understanding the reasons behind the failures and correcting them. The importance of objectively identifying the reasons of the failed peace project between the government and the MNLF will have great implication for the success of the current peace process between GPH and the MILF. For instance, it is very clear that the government has been consistent in its one nation-state framework and so far one can clearly see that this framework has been the one utilize by the government in all the peace processes including the present one. If there are changes, they are just in the forms or shape but not in substance. The GRP or the GPH has never changed its position and its framework in any peace negotiations – that is Constitutional accommodation and mainstreaming of revolutionary groups. It has not gone “out of the box” solution in dealing with the different national liberation movements.

It is therefore very imperative to learn lessons from the GRP-MNLF peace process in order not to repeat the same failures.

In the experience of the MNLF with regards to the role of the International bodies and mechanisms, the manner and characteristics of the level of the International interventions should be moderated especially by the MILF. Dependency on the abovementioned bodies should be avoided. The tempo and substance of the talks should be dependent on the capacity of the MILF to engage. It is very difficult to gauge the reasons and sincerity of the International bodies in their engagements with the talks but one thing is sure that they are there not without interest of their respective governments of their countries. Malaysia for instance has been consistently involved in the talks even during the times of the MNLF and now as the third party directly engaged in the talks has its own interest in Sabah. This is the obvious reason why the MILF has never touched the issue of Sabah in their claim of the ancestral domain of the Moro people. All stakeholders should be very critical on the involvement of this International bodies because more likely their framework is not different from the nation-state framework of the Philippine government because they need for instance the mechanisms to develop the very rich resources in Mindanao and create a viable market for their neo-liberal globalized economy. Besides if they will be involved in the political outcome of the national liberation of the MILF, they can be tasked to do the same by the oppressed people and ethnic groups in their respective countries. The role of the US should be contextualized in its regional interests especially with the rising influence of China and the corresponding threats in the balance of power in the changing geopolitics in this part of the world.

The setting up of a new autonomous political entity should not only be new in terms of replacing the old people in the ARMM or adding new structures but building mechanisms and infrastructure for political and economic empowerment of the broadest section of the people in the specific identified areas. The political set-up should be inclusive and will be more than the structure of the MILF and



pluralist in its framework. In fact, MILF should redefine itself in this changing context and therefore it will have different role in the new political entity.

The strengthening and consolidation of this superstructure is very important because there is no independent economic system developed in the Bangsamoro. The neoliberal phase of globalized capitalist economy has made the whole country as one economic entity and part of the global market. The global capital with the active participation of the ruling classes of the dominant and dominated nations in the country has united their interest at the expense of the great majority of the peoples both Moro and non-Moro in the region. The MILF should have at this stage, its own economic agenda and program with all the peoples within the region in mind and that this program will not be part of the current neo-liberal globalized economy of capitalism. Substantive reforms in favor of the majority of peoples should be placed in all economic and fiscal policies otherwise the process of the opening up for the global capital interest the vast natural resources and wealth of the region will just create situation for intense exploitation of both its human and natural resources. This economic framework is very imperative since it has been proven that "an autonomous nation does not enjoy rights equal to those of a sovereign nation". Failure to appreciate such arrangement will be another phase of accommodation and mainstreaming of the MILF and a more radical group and movement will emerge to take over and continue the struggle for right to self-determination in the name of the Moro people.

The role of the basic masses of the Moro people should be decisive in all phases of the peace process. The struggle of self-determination is not only political but democratic as well. The consciousness of a national identity should be translated into a political movement with clear democratic aspiration of the whole communities as represented by the MILF. The active role of the people in the peace process will ensure the sustainability of the success of a political settlement between the negotiators. Periodic but mechanical consultations with the people, who have also been involved in the previous peace negotiations, will not be democratic and sustainable. Participative and transparencies are both decisive aspects in any transformative peace process.

One feature which has played a very important role in the peace process between the GPH and MILF is the role of the non-government organizations or NGOs. One could not see this kind of participation during the previous talks.

NGOs can contribute positively in the success of the peace process like institutionalization of memories of the previous talks and development of skills of the personnel of MILF involved in the talks or in preparation for the eventual signing of a compact peace agreement. NGOs can also generate the needed funds and financial requirements needed for the technical needs of the talks. In terms of enhancing the management skills and machineries in the development of the communities involved. On the other hand, the NGOs can lead the MILF farther away from the basic masses and in the day-to-day struggles for economic and political empowerment of the basic masses of the Moro people.

NGOs tend to deal with projects rather than the needs of the political movement of people in the communities. NGOs generally are not grounded on the actual activities of the communities and therefore do not feel the actual needs of poor people in terms of reducing the level of their poverty even if they (NGOs personalities) attend all kinds of conferences (local and international) on poverty. They become experts in packaging the poverty of the people and making project proposals for them and can make beautiful reports afterwards without substantially touching the lives of the peoples. They have already packaged the peace process and surely the dynamism of the political and peoples' movements will be subtly downplayed and can only have a mechanical end of signing a peace agreement.

Institutionalizing any process will lost its dynamism and vitality. But most importantly it should be

pointed out that NGOs are not neutral, they represent the interests of their donor partners which are usually from the most developed countries which funded institutions which have appropriated the neo-liberal policies in the communities through the NGOs. The NGOs of these type are the implementers of neo-liberal program of global capital from below. In this context, the danger NGOizing the peace process is worth a serious consideration. At this stage, some big NGOs are already eagerly waiting on the signing of peace agreement between the GPH and MILF even if they are aware of the nature of the exclusiveness of the agreement. Already at this stage these NGOs have started to outsource the services to the MILF from the government. Some have even cornered a deal already to business in the name of building and strengthening peace among the Bangsamoro.

The current phase of neoliberal globalization of capital has created one people and one market but also unevenness and backwardness of economic system creating conflicts among and between peoples which all the more intensify the economic exploitation and political marginalization of the majority of people from both dominant and dominated nations/peoples in the country in general and Mindanao in particular. The deteriorating situation has added more fuel to the already burning fire of the national liberation movement such as the MILF. The Lumads in Mindanao just like the MILF has been struggling for self-determination based on historical fact of distinct development of people and the current realities of their own indigenous political structures. In the negotiation with the GPH, the MILF should not only respect but support the Lumads struggle of self-determination. Both their nationalism are coming from the same level and principle. Genuine peace can never be achieved in Mindanao if the democratic rights of all the oppressed and marginalized peoples are not respected and social inequities are not corrected in favor of the broadest section of the peoples.

## CONCLUSION

The struggle of the Bangsamoro for self-determination has been one of the longest national liberation movements in the world. It has started with the Indigenous Political Structure of the Sultanate to the formation of nationalist and revolutionary political organizations which has been the product of the increasing level of consciousness of a national identity. A political movement has been developed and strong religious bonding helped in the collective struggles with its ups and downs in the different stages of the movement.

There have been obvious weaknesses in terms of consolidation of a national consciousness as a nation and its ethnic peculiarities have been used by the government to divide them and weakened their position in the negotiating table.

The role of the International solidarity has been very helpful to the liberation movement especially in the internationalization and projection of its situation and aspiration and the excesses of the government in the suppression of their rights as peoples. Logistical, material, political and financial supports have helped the Moro people in sustaining their struggles but too much reliance on these external factors have made the Moro liberation movement dependent on them and basically neglect the internal needs for consolidation and forego relying on its internal consolidating capacity to further the movement on the next higher stage without the external pressures. One should be very careful with solidarity coming from above they tend, as past experience would show, to be in solidarity more with those nationalism from above practitioners. Solidarity coming from below should be encouraged and developed for they are proven to be genuine and sustainable. The nationalism from below practitioners have the same situation, same aspirations and the same struggles with those who are involved in political movement for social and national liberation and emancipation for all kinds of oppressions and exploitations. Solidarity among the basic masses of the Moro people, Lumads and the toiling masses of the dominant nation will bring the struggle for self-determination into genuine democratic and national liberation. Any genuine liberation movements

should internalize this framework as basic obligation in order not only to attain national liberation but also eliminate the basis of conflicts and antagonism amongst the people we proclaim to struggle with.

The concept of peace which should be agreed upon will not be exclusive. This means that it will include the other peoples' democratic interests in the identified region so that the other non-Moro people will not only be supportive of the right to self-determination struggle of the Moro people, they will even struggle together with them. In order to be sustainable and participative, a successful peace process should get the support of not only the Lumads but the dominant nationality as well. Democratic issues and the nationalism of the broadest number of peoples from both nations and peoples should be struggled together as common good and interest of the people.

**Richard S. Solis**

*\* The document has been enriched by the incorporation of the results of the discussion of the author with the 2013 batch of AGJS. - R.S.*

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