

# **The Philippine Political Spectrum - A Brief Presentation of the History of the Philippine Left**

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**The method of presentation will be in the period of the appearance of the political parties in the country. The focus is on the different revolutionary groups. This document is for discussion and therefore open for comments.**

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## **The Establishment of the Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas (PKP)**

In November 7, 1930, the Communist Party of the Philippines. (PKP of 1930) was established. This date was also the 13<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the October Revolution in Russia. This was the result, among others, of contacts and series of dialogues between the Philippine Trade Union leaders and militants with Tan Malaka a representative of the Communist International (Comintern) from Indonesia.

In 1932 the Legal Marxist Party - Socialist Party of the Philippines was founded. Around this period the individuals and organizations identified with the PKP had encountered security problems with the government.

It was in 1935 when the PKP became a member of the Comintern of the 3<sup>rd</sup> international (1919-1943) but prior to this (October 1932), the PKP was banned by The Philippine Supreme Court where five (5) of the nine (9) judges were Americans. The situation gave limited options to the PKP so it went underground.

In 1937 the PKP was legalized in response to the threat of fascism in Germany and Japan. The bourgeois government (Commonwealth government) under the Americans wanted a broad front to confront the threat of fascism. It was also the directive of the Comintern led by J. Stalin to the leadership of PKP. A key figure (James S. Allen) from the Communist Party of the USA (CPUSA) had visited the country to help implement the Comintern directive. The directive was to form United Front with the bourgeois government (Commonwealth) to fight against fascist nations like Japan in Asia. It was during this period that PKP personalities who were jailed earlier with the government were released.

In 1938 there was a Merger of the PKP and Socialist Party and they had adopted PKP as their official name.

In the same year, the PKP became part of the Popular Front in preparation for municipal elections in 1940. In 1946 the PKP participated in the presidential elections under the Democratic Alliance; the PKP did well during these elections. It was able to elect Six (6) Mayors in Luzon.

During the Second World War, the PKP had organized an armed group to fight the Japanese invaders. They had established the Hukbalahap (People's Army against Japan) in 1942. The PKP together with the Armed Forces of the Commonwealth government and US imperialist led the struggles against Japan for the next 3 years. This gave them (PKP) the opportunity to expand and consolidate its members in the working class and the peasant movements.

In 1946, the PKP participated in the presidential elections as mentioned earlier within the Democratic Alliance coalition. They were able to have 4 members elected in Congress. Their presence was a big threat at the time especially to the US because the Congress had to vote for the Parity Rights. These rights would allow the American Investors the same rights with the Filipino investors.

In 1948. PKP was banned again by the government. It began mobilizing the armed fighters they had formed earlier to fight the Japanese invaders this time the fight was directed against the Philippine Government.

In early 1950 the PKP founded the Peoples' Liberation Army -PLA (Hukbong Magpapalaya ng Bayan - HMB) - It had started with the 10,000 fighters and expanded to other areas in Luzon and intensified the armed struggle to seize political power from the bourgeois government. They had used the famous saying ... "see you in Malacañang (Seat of Government of the Republic of the Philippines) .." in boosting the morale of their fellow fighters and revolutionaries.

In the same year, the entire secretariat of the central leadership of the PKP was arrested including its Sec Gen (Jose Lava)

- The Armed Struggle (AS) led by the PKP had suffered heavy losses in the fight against the government and the US imperialist.

In 1954, the armed struggle was practically over and the PKP had shifted to the peaceful (legal and illegal) actions. But it had maintained an armed guerrilla force called - Bagong Hukbong Magpapalaya ng Bayan (BHMB) - New Peoples Liberation Army (NPLA). It was based on the PKPs analysis that the legal forms of struggle to confront the problems in Philippine Society at that time would be insufficient. The government was so corrupt and ineffective that reforms which would not bring about substantial change in the country's system would not be effective.

During this period, there was already clear sign that the PKP had difficulties in accommodating and adjusting itself organizationally to new situation in the country and in the world.

### **The Period of the "Reestablishment" of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP)**

The cold war period had impacted the developments and splits of the communist movements in the country. It had even become worst because of the ideological and organizational discourses between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and China.

In November 30, 1964, Jose Maria Sison who was part of the Central Committee of the PKP, founded the Kabataang Makabayan (KM) (Patriotic Youth) with Nilo Tayag. This was their main task from the PKP leadership. The date of its establishment was the birthdate of Andres Bonifacio, the leader of 1896 Philippine revolution and this is to symbolize the continuity of the first Philippine National Democratic Revolution. KM became the youth section of the PKP. On January 30, 1968, The Samahan Demokratiko ng Kabataan (SDK) or an Association of the Democratic Youth, was established after a split from KM on the issues of Organizational and Internal Democracy. It had actively participated in Launching mass actions against graft and corruption practices in the government. During the First Quarter Storm (FQS) of 1970 SDK, under the Leadership of S. Carlos Jr. and A. Hilario, became united again with KM in their mobilizations against the fast becoming dictatorial tendencies of Marcos. Among the SDK's prominent leaders were G. Olivar (who later became a government official) and B. Tiamzon (who became the Chair of the CPP inside the country). SDK dissolved itself in 1975 on the ground that the new situation required new tactics, new forms of struggle and new forms of organization. Earlier SDK and KM were both banned by the Marcos fascist regime in 1972. In its Seven years' (1968-1975) existence it (SDK) had contributed a lot in sustaining the struggle against the dictatorship and its impact could be seen beyond this period especially in the establishment and strengthening of the CPP in its works in both the rural and urban areas.

It should be noted, the women had been actively participating in the peasants' struggles in the rural areas and in the democratic issues in the urban areas as well. Many of them had leadership role in the formation of the new organizations and Party.

The youth movement rallied the people against the Vietnam War and the corrupt politicians. Sison and the leadership of the PKP did not agree with each other on the Strategy and tactics of the Party (PKP). At that period the PKP gave stress on the legal and aboveground forms of struggles after its armed group was seriously weakened by the Philippine Armed Forces. Sison and some young members of the PKP would insist that only the armed struggle with the strong-armed organization could bring the revolutionary struggle to victory. At that time the latter was already influenced by the experience in China. The conflict would eventually lead Sison to break away from the PKP.

The intensification of the mass movements led by the students, youth sector and the toiling masses and the workers against the re-election of the President Ferdinand E. Marcos and the blatant corruption of his government has spread-out in many urban centers. The support of the Marcos regime to the US invasion of Vietnam had added to international solidarity aspect and the militancy of the massive mass movements.

On Dec 26, 1968 - (75<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Chairman Mao Zedong) the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) was established. It was founded on Marxist - Leninist Mao Zedong thoughts based on experiences of the Youth, workers and the peasant movements.

The year 1968 was known as "The First Great Rectification Movement" of the newly established Party where the criticisms of the old party were the basic content of its founding document. It was influenced by the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China. The political line in the struggle for a National Democratic Revolution was defined in two stages consisting of National Democratic and Protracted Peoples' War to be followed by the Socialist Revolution. This was mainly based on its analysis that the country is basically semi-feudal and semi-colonial.

- In the founding Congress of the CPP in 1968, the 13 members (one not physically present) had presented their own summing up of the old party's ideological, organizational and political errors. The CPP had accused the old Party's leadership as politically opportunist and ideologically revisionist. Their program to correct these errors were through the launching of the First Great

Rectification movement through the Party document "Rectify Errors and Rebuild the Party" in 1968. It was also during that year when the Programme for Peoples' Democratic Revolution was written as its guide for their political works.

After the CPP's establishment, the PKP Leadership sought to eliminate and marginalized Sison and his group. However, the reorganized CPP had a larger base and renewed political line that attracted thousand to join its rank. The new Party was able to provide organizational framework and filled in the ideological gaps for those militants and activist radicalized by the fascist Marcos regime. Many of this new recruit were not even Marxist Revolutionaries.

- The old party's leadership (PKP) was oriented towards Moscow (the Soviets) while the young leadership of the CPP was oriented towards Mao's China. The latter would call the Soviet Union a revisionist socialist country.

The PKP of 1930 became as pro-government supporters after being pardoned by President Ferdinand Marcos. They supported the government in its land reform programs, an attempt for land collectivization and the Democratic revolution from the centre envisioned by Marcos.

Currently, the PKP is considered a Minor Party and was lately led by Pedro P. Baguise and issues publication - *Ang Kumunista* and is currently edited by Antonio Paris.

It would be very important to understand that in the early part of the 60's, there was a trend in the Catholic Church of opening itself to new and fresh ideas from the secular world after the historic ecclesiastical event of the Second Vatican Council (1962-66). It had impacted very much in development in the Catholic Church (85% of the Country's Population) in terms of its concept of the Church as People of God as well as its practices as guided by the new social teachings of Vatican II.

Around this period the teachings and practice of the Catholic Church in Latin America - Liberation Theology - had greatly influenced a number of priests, sisters, and religious in their Pastoral works especially in the rural areas.

Both the II Vatican Council and the Liberation Theology had profoundly influenced the Church in the Philippine, especially in Mindanao where just before the declaration of Martial Law in the Philippines, there were already the pastoral practice of Building Basic Communities where discussion of the causes of social inequities, poverty and social justice had been integrated to the day to day teachings and lives of Christian communities.

The Church people had deeply influenced the radicalization of many sectors in the country and one of them was the peasants and their rural movements. It is good to know that the establishment of peasant movement in Cold War era led by the US imperialist was to isolate and debase the communist movement in its rural base.

The Federation of Free Farmers (FFF) had been established earlier on October 25, 1953 by J. Montemayor and some Catholic Lay people and the Jesuits in the Ateneo de Manila after the breakup of the PKP led peasant movement during the term of President R. Magsaysay. The peasant federation was set up with an anti-communist orientation.

FFF was formed to debase the PKP with its roots among the peasantry. The federation was composed of Agricultural tenants, owner cultivators, agricultural laborers, fisherfolks and poor settlers. It had increased its membership in several provinces by mid-60. The teachings of the Church on social justice was integrated into its educational activities. At the end of 1971, its members had reached 128,560 in 43 provinces. It had 43 provincial Chaplains, 18 Sisters and 33 Bishops, Father E. dela Torre an SVD became its national Chaplains. It had Father Z. Agatep and

Father L. Jalandoni as provincial Chaplains among many others.

Just before the declaration of Martial Law in 1972, the FFF with J. Montemayor as its President was showing clear signs of truly reactionary and had expressed his strong support for President Marcos and his programs.

The progressive block led mostly by young members and religious had taken control of the FFF and elected Charles Avila and Victor Gerardo Bulatao as some of its key leaders. Accordingly, they still put Montemayor as its President to neutralize the Marcos persecution of its members.

A big split happened when after the declaration of Martial Law, Montemayor had expelled all the progressive blocks in the leadership and appointed himself as one man dictator of the free federation of farmers. He then openly supported Marcos' Martial Law and its so called agrarian reform program.

Many of the young men and women and the religious people including the Priests and Nuns who were expelled from the FFF became active organizers and leaders of the revolutionary movements in the different parts of the country. Some of them would even become martyrs like Father Z. Agatep of Northern Luzon and Father F. Navarro of Southern Mindanao. Father L. Jalandoni became key figure in the National Democratic Front led by the CPP.

The extreme situation and the brutal persecutions of the Marcos regime had pushed these committed religious, clergy and nuns to seek more progressive and revolutionary options outside the framework of the institutional Church. It was the CPP and the National Democratic Struggle it led that filled in this gap. The CNL's vision and call had been the transformation of the Churches in the national democratic framework. In fact the Mao's famous motto of "...serving the people.." had been considered by these committed religious people as integral part of their vows to serve the people of God especially the poor, deprived, oppressed and exploited. Some of these Church people would say that they were not recruited by the CPP because they sought to be with National Democratic Revolution. They said, they had been "recruited" by the fascist Marcos regime to join the revolutionary underground movement.

The Christian for National Liberation (CNL) was established in February 17, 1972. Father E. dela Torre became its key figure and CNL became the largest organization within the NDF. In fact, the CNL had been instrumental in the formation of the NDF. The women national democratic organization called "Malayang Kilusan ng Bagong Kababaihan" (MAKIBAKA) was one of the leading organizations which helped initiate the formation of the NDF.

Last April 24-26, 2017, the CNL had launched its 8<sup>th</sup> National Congress somewhere in a Moro area in Mindanao. This time it became obvious the less and less participants/members have come from the Catholic Church.

## **The Communist Party of the Philippines, New Peoples' Army and the National Democratic Front (CNN)**

- The CPP was founded in 1968, the NPA on March 29, 1969, and the NDF on April 24, 1973.

The New Peoples' Army (NPA) was founded by Bernabe Buscayno (Commander Dante) and Lucio Manlapaz. They were both provincial leaders of the old HMB. KM had become the youth section of NPA and several members of SDK had attended the first NPA military training in Isabela in 1971. Both youth groups had helped in the formations of NPA units in different parts of the country. It was

formed with only 72 red fighters and 3 to 4 dozens of weapons. They conducted its Armed Struggle (AS) based on the Strategic line of Protracted Peoples War. The government estimated their strength as of 2015 to 3,200 red fighters and in the 2016 & 2017 to be more than 5,000 red fighters.

- The CPP was banned until 1992 when the Philippine government had treated the CPP with the NPA as illegal organizations. The Anti-Subversion Act of 1957 (R.A 1700) was lifted during the administration of President Fidel Ramos - a former general. The CPP (on paper) became legal starting 1992.
- The NPA collects revolutionary taxes as part of its tasks to the Peoples' Revolutionary Government. It has established its Guerilla fronts (GFs) in 71 out of 81 provinces in the country. The CNN has engaged the Philippine government in an off and on peace negotiations.
- Currently, both the Party and the NPA are not only banned but considered by the Duterte government as terrorists. It was also considered as such by the US and some European Countries.

A year before the arrest of J.M. Sison - the founding Chair of the CPP (1977) -, the CPP in a brief discussion with a former MNLF officer (batch 90 with N. Misuari in 1971 military training in Malaysia, Thailand border) who became a CPP cadre in the middle of 70's drafted and later approved in 1976, the CPP program for the Moro Struggle for National Self Determination. According to this official program, the CPP respects and supports the Moro Struggle for Right Determination under an oppressive system. The defined political tasks would be to establish and build alliance with the Moro National Liberation Front and its Bangsamoro Army (MNLF/BMA) and to have independent Moro works. This means that the Party would organize the Moro Masses while it was working for an alliance with the MNLF.

It would be different with its works with the Cordillera people and other Indigenous Peoples. The CPP had considered these Minority Nationalities as integral part of its National Democratic Revolution and its strategy of peoples' protracted war (PPW) with its principle of surrounding the cities from the countryside. It has never considered that the Cordillera and the Indigenous Peoples (CIPs) have their own right to self-determination and therefore, stresses would be given to the building of the Party led Provisionary Revolutionary Governments (PRG's) rather than building and strengthening their (CIPs) respective indigenous Political Structures (IPS) as integral part of the National Democratic Movement.

This strategic neglect would later result to splits like in Cordillera there were the establishment of Cordillera Peoples Democratic Front (CPDF) and the Cordillera People's Liberation Army (CPLA).

In the case of the Indigenous Peoples, the CPP's political works have never included the recognition of the former's Traditional Governance and Justice System. It has been obvious that the IPs are needed by the CPP because they are mostly found in the rural areas and very suitable to compose its main armed force in the New Peoples' Army and could decisively help in the PPW's surrounding the cities from the countryside.

## **The Fast Unfolding Events of the Period and its Impact on the CPP's Theories and Practice**

In 1981, the CPP's leadership had declared that its protracted peoples' war had reached a higher level from the early sub stage of the strategic defensive into the advance sub stage of the strategic defensive. It had defined the requirement to fully fulfil this development such as the intensification of its tactical military offensives and raise them into higher level of command (Company formations),

launching broad and massive mass mobilizations in the main cities and town centres. It had also emphasized the basic requirements of building guerrilla bases in the defined strategic areas of the archipelagic country. There was a stress on building Provisional Revolutionary Governments (PRGs) in the countryside with the NDF serving as core centre and coordinator of the basic masses and allied sectors. The functions of the PRGs, among others, is to render basic social services. In fact this has been the CPP's justification of collecting revolutionary tax. It has been part of their (CPP) claim of belligerent status.

In the mid 80's an especially after the assassination of former senator B. Aquino by the dictator, all the above mentioned requirements had been substantially implemented. The most significant among which was the massive mass movements which had been raised to higher levels like the peoples' strikes (Welgang Bayan) in Mindanao.

Many cadres (especially in Mindanao) had been discussing what would be the next higher stage after these kind of political struggles. In many areas in Mindanao, free distributions of lands with corresponding land titles signed by the NDF/PRG were given to the farmers. In fact, this was CPP's concrete expression of contesting political power with the government in the countryside. Because of these very dynamic developments, several cadres were even thinking of what would be the next possible level or stage in the current advance sub stage of strategic defensive of the PPW. The CPP's leadership would define it as Strategic Counter Offensive (SCO) the last stage of the strategic defensive. With the intensification of the revolutionary mass movements in the rural but especially in the urban areas, there were serious discussions of concretization of the PPW in the specific condition at that period when the dictatorship was becoming more and more isolated. In fact even before the assassination of former senator B. Aquino in 1983, there were programs initiated by the central leadership of the Party regarding the three strategic combinations in the intensification of PPW like; the combination of armed struggle and political struggle, combination of rural and urban areas and combination of struggles in the domestic and the international levels. Although there was still stress on the primacy of armed struggle but other arena were considered as important if not decisive in given situation and the dynamism of a given period.

In the middle of 1982, a Party Conference called Mayflower was held in Mindanao initiated by Edjop as head of the Mindanao Party Commission, to discuss among others the distinct nature of the struggles for Self Determination of the Bangsamoro and the IPs. Edjop had made a concrete research of the Basic Characteristic and Problems of the Bangsamoro and the IPs at the time. This was a concrete attempt to review the 1976 Party's position and policy regarding these subjects.

The leadership's position (3 out of 5 Execom members) to boycott the snap elections in 1986 was a clear sign that the Party's leadership had either become out of touch of the fast and dynamic situation or they had stubbornly held on to their classical understanding and position on PPW concept. The latter must be the reason for the Party's leadership of failing to take advantage of the opportune moment like the peoples' uprising in EDSA as their (People) reaction after the dictator cheated in the snap election. The simple reason was that in the stage of strategic defensive the Party believed that it could not make any action that could result in the sudden change/shift in the position of power and progress into strategic offensive because it (Party) could not sustain the possible requirements needed to defend the gain/victory it could have achieved.

Before the first Peace Negotiations (1987) between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the National Democratic Front (NDF) representing the CPP/NPA among others, Corazon C. Aquino the new President had released all the political prisoners including J. M. Sison. Some of the released prisoners, like H. Morales and E. dela Torre had theorized that in launching the National Democratic Revolution towards the setting up of National Democratic Society (NDS), there should had been certain requirement before a higher stage could be fulfilled. This was

in the context of the so called EDSA Peoples' Power uprising. A popular democratic stage should be achieved and practiced in the process in order to broaden and strengthen the peoples' participation in the revolutionary mass movements in general and in the National Democratic Revolution in particular. This concept of participatory and direct action by the peoples in attaining democratic and structural changes in the society was at first called - New Politics and was still viewed by H. Morales and E. dela Torre as necessary part of the national democratic revolution. Later, they coined the term popular democracy to describe this part of the unique process. The Latin American experience especially in Nicaragua had helped in the understanding of the word Popular Democracy or "POPDEMS".

In the 1990's internal criticism about mistakes in the mid-1980's had led to the Second Great Rectification Movement (SGRM). It was formally launched in 1992 and largely completed in 1998. It was made to appear that the SGRM launching was to correct the errors that caused the internal purges of the movement in the middle of 1980's mainly in Mindanao that killed hundreds if not thousands of its members on an allegation of being "deep penetration agents" of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippines intelligence community.

It should be noted that the CPP-NPA and the NDF (CNN) at the middle of the 80's expanded very fast (membership of CPP at that time was around 30,000 and 90,000 full time activists). The NPA had already raised its organizational and command levels to company formations (more than 20 companies at the time). The NDF had also acted as the Core body in the revolutionary provisional government in the rural areas which reached the municipal levels. In fact, it (NDF) had begun to assert its identity as a distinct but related to the CPP. It had launched its first ever NDF Congress in 1990 where for the first time profound discussions were held on the CPP and NDF identities. In its less than 100 delegates, only one participant was not a party member at that time.

In its election of officers, it was not the Chair of the CPP who was elected as the NDF Chairperson. The CPP Chair was elected as Vice Chair of the NDF to give emphasis on the important role of the CPP in the United Front works.

In addition, in the 1980's especially after the assassination of Ninoy Aquino in 1983, the Marcos dictatorship was in its most isolated situation and that the revolutionary mass movements were at its peak. These political struggles were led by the CPP and its ND activists where Mindanao was leading in these political mass mobilizations. The people's strikes (Welgang Bayan) where the level of struggles and were continually sharpen to higher forms.

During this period, more Mindanao cadres became members of the leadership bodies of the party like in the Political Bureau (Politburo) and the Executive Committee (Execom) of Central Committee.

These developments led Sison to conclude that the fast expansion of the Party works in Mindanao were the results of opportunism and revisionism: These subjective conclusions were seen in the whole document of "Reaffirm Our Basic Principle and Rectify Our Errors". The conclusions in the document were not the product of thorough summing up of the Party's experiences (1981 -1991) especially the summing up from Mindanao.

In addition, Mindanao's so-called purges just followed the pattern of the earlier purges in Southern Luzon and Samar.

Obviously, these developments (internal and external) had created favorable opportunities for the CPPs to re-evaluate and make some major organizational and ideological changes to reinvigorate its political works. Instead it had considered these new developments and changes fit to its classical thinking and had continued its revolutionary tasks in the old ideological and organizational

frameworks. The CPP had acted in the manner of the old PKP in resolving these current contradictions. It seems that the Party had become insecure of the new and very dynamic developments and was not able to adjust itself especially after the fall of the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and the Capitalist direction of China at the time.

This was the start of the Second Great Rectification movement (SGRM).

The SGRM resulted in series of splits with the party and the New Peoples' Army. Taking into account the nature of the Party and its relationship with the aboveground or legal machinery, the splits in the Party resulted also in the splits in all legal and aboveground machinery.

Most of the splits in the CPP occurred in the post-1992 period. After JMS wrote the Document Reaffirm Our Basic Principles and Rectifying Errors (Dec 26, 1991) - The CPP Central Committee supported and approved Sison's Document and Policies in July 1992 "10<sup>th</sup> plenum".

And just as the PKP had tried to isolate and eliminate the newly established CPP in the late 60's, the CPP tried to hunt and eliminate the leaders of those who split from it in the 1990's. Many of the leaders were already assassinated or neutralized.

The Major Regional Party Territorial Committees and Commissions which declared autonomy or independent from the CN in the post-1992 period.

- Regional Committee of Manila and Rizal with its Armed Component the Alex Boncayao Brigade of the New Peoples' Army. The biggest CPP territorial formations in terms of members (5,000) at that time.
- The Visayas Commission and many branches of the Regional Leadership in the Party's territorial committees in the islands of Panay, Negros, and Samar. They were also joined by large groups of the NPA including the battalion size formation in Samar (the only battalion size formation in the whole country) at the time.
- The Central Mindanao Regional Party Committee with its full NPA formations.
- Parts of the Western Mindanao Regional Party Commission but none of its armed component.
- The National Peasant Commission
- The National United Front Commission
- The International Commission especially in the Domestic Front but also many of its International Department.
- Majority of the rank and file of the 1<sup>st</sup> National Democratic Front Congress. They called themselves "Verdaderos". They had written the central leadership of the CPP about their criticism about the 1991 documents of JMS.

In the last part of 1990's (1997) the last major split in terms of territorial scope happened in Central Luzon Regional Party Committee CLPC. In the early stage of the SGRM, the CLPC leadership had supported the program and policies of Sison but later had a disagreement in the application of tactics in the rural mass movement. They decided to split.

Earlier on, Series of meetings and dialogues between and among representatives of territories and commissions of different lines of works had meet and exchange ideas about the implications of the

Reaffirm document to the Party and revolutionary movements. In fact sometimes in 1993, the leadership of the CPP (Execom) had sent a representative to have a dialogue with those who were opposing the document of JMS. It was agreed in that discussion that the Central Committee of the CPP would call another plenum to review the above mentioned document. They had suggested that it would be called 10<sup>th</sup> Plenum part II. A formal letter was made to the Execom of the CPP which would be personally carried by the Execom representative. Nothing had been heard again from the said representative. Later, his criticism and self-criticism (CSC) was published in the CPP official paper-Ang Bayan. The CSC was centered on his agreeing that the document Re-Affirm was correct and could never be reviewed. It was learned that he was detained for sometimes until he was fully enlightened and recovered from his weakness and mistakes.

In the last quarter of 1994, the different territorial party bodies under regional party committees who did not agree with Sison's conclusions and the 10<sup>th</sup> plenum of the central committee met somewhere in Central Luzon to discuss the ways to achieve ideological unity. It was attended by representatives from MRRC, VISCOM, and Regional Committee from Panay, Negros and the CMR. The armed component was also well represented in the Ideological Summit. This gathering was called Ideological Summit.

There was a serious discussion on the Rectification documents and Basic ML principles and the launching of Congress of a New Party.

Around these periods, other Party Committee and Commissions had been consolidating themselves and tried to set their respective post-CNN directions. These are the UFC, National Peasant Commission, and International Home front Bureau. They had published a book which was a compilation of all the Party documents from Sison's group and those who split from it. It is called the "Red Book".

In 1998, the major territorial Party Committees launched the 1<sup>st</sup> Party Congress of the Revolutionary Workers Party - Philippines with its new Armed Component - The Revolutionary Proletarian Army - Alex Bongcayao Brigade (RWP-P/RPA-ABB). The Congress was held in the guerrilla base of the CMR territory. It was attended by more than 100 delegates from the MR-KR (small part) especially from the ABB, Visayas Commission, Panay, Negros and the CMR Territorial committees. It was guarded by a battalion armed component of the CMR.

Earlier, The Central Luzon Party Committee established the Marxist - Leninist Party in the Philippine (MLPP) with its New People's Army component transformed into Revolutionary Peoples' Army or Rebulosyonaryong Hukbong Bayan - RHB. Generally, they followed the ML-Maoism line of thoughts. In fact, they had supported the Sison group in its policies and program regarding The Great Second Rectification Movement. They have the same analysis with the Current Philippine Society and the same political line of the national democratic revolution. They differentiated themselves with the CPP mainly in tactics in the implementation of its political works particularly in CL Context.

- The NUFC established the Partido Proletaryado (PPD) or the Proletarian Democratic Party. Their political works are generally expressed in their legal and aboveground machinery like a mass movement.
- The Peasant Commission members separately formed or joined other groups like the PPD and some had established the ML study group and the formation called PADAYON.

## **Further Ideological, Political and Organizational Changes and Development**

One of the first political projects that the RWP-P had engaged after its Congress was the Peace Talks with the becoming unpopular administration of President Joseph E. Estrada in 1999. And in spite of big deficiency in democratic discussions on the content and process of the talks the majority of the leadership of the party signed the Peace Agreement with the Estrada government in 2000. In 2001 Estrada was ousted from power so also the signed peace agreement with the leadership of the RWP-P/RPA-ABB.

The whole leadership of the Mindanao component of the RWP-P did not agree with the way and the content of the Peace Agreement and democratically discussed such with the Leadership of the RWP-P. The latter had stood unchanged with the Peace Agreement with the Estrada government. In the middle of 2002, the Mindanao Component of the RWP-P split and formed the RWP-Mindanao with the armed component renamed into Revolutionary Peoples' Army. The RWP-M had engaged the Philippine government in a Peace talks a year after the split. The RWP-M had already launched their second congress in 2011.

Meanwhile, organizational developments and changes had happened in the different territories and commissions:

- The MRRPC had split into different groups, the leadership of ABB Partisan component joined the RWP-P/RPA-ABB. On the other hand, the majority of the party members of the former Manila-Rizal Regional Committee had established the Partido ng Manggagawa ng Pilipinas (PMP) or Workers Party of the Philippines. It was headed by the late Popoy Lagman and the Party has focused its political works with the workers and the students. It has maintained its clandestine method. A part of the former Alex Bongcayao Brigade (ABB) and Urban Partisan Unit of the former Manila-Rizal Regional Party Committee had established the Armadong Partisado ng Paggawa (APP) or Armed Partisan of the Workers. The latter has been operating in the main urban centers and the neighbouring Provinces. The Socialist Party in the Philippine (SPP) was established with some old PKP members and from some members of the MR Region.
- The PPD had mainly worked aboveground and created or joined other legal formations. Many of them joined PADAYON - mainly a venue for ideological discussions of individual members of the old CNN and its Commissions.
- There had been initiatives to have a common framework to unite the different political groups (legal as well as illegal) like in 2003 a broad legal formation was founded - The Laban ng Masa (LNM). Different representations from various political groups including those who had not been part of the national democratic tradition like the Bukluran ng mga Sosyalista sa Isip at sa Gawa (BISIG) or Association of Socialists in Principles and Actions - had attended the founding assembly of the LNM. It was active in its early formation but slowly died down in the following years.
- After the 2001 split of RWP-M from the RWP-P, the latter had split themselves into two more groups. This time with more stress on the territorial areas like MR component with some members in Panay formed the group and gravitate around the legal formation ALAB-KATIPUNAN. It has been learned that one of the reasons for the split with the old RWP-P is the division of the resources they had gotten when they signed the Peace Agreement with the government. Now the latter (AK) has divided into 2 formations, the Areya Progresibo and the other one retained the name Alab - Katipunan formation.
- The Negros group of the RWP-P has focussed its works among others in the electoral arena. They have one representative in the House of Representatives with the Party-List ABANG LINGKOD.

- The PPD become part of the Laban ng Masa and has continued with its legal formation and struggles. The PPD become part of the Sanlakas Formation and Partido ng Manggagawa. The latter has focused its political works with the working class (with all its sub-sectors) and the youth sector. It has been relatively successful in its electoral and parliamentary works. It operates mainly in the main urban centers of Manila and some parts in the Visayas and Mindanao. The former had focused its works in the multi-sectoral groups, peasantry, youth and women. They also have political works with the different lines of works like electoral and mass movements mainly in the urban centers of the country.
- In 2016, some groups from LNM, Sanlakas and the Sosyalistang Partido ng Pilipinas (SPP) had formed the Partido Lakas ng Masa (PLM). The Party has focussed in political works with the members, youth, and multi-sectoral groups and engages in Social Movements in both democratic and social issues.
- Some CPP Cadres who opposed Sison in the early 1990's joined electoral groups like the AKBAYAN. This is a broad electoral formation composed of cadres and members from the Bukluran ng mga Sosyalista sa Isip at Gawa or BISIG (a split from the Partido Demokratikong Sosyalista ng Pilipinas (Socialist Democratic Party in the Philippines) or the PDSP). Aside from the Makabayan Block or the Nationalist Block in Congress, AKBAYAN has been successful in the electoral arena (relative to other groups). This is especially during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Aquino Administration when AKBAYAN became part of the Ruling Coalition. Some of their cadres even become part of the Executive Body of the Government. Earlier, AKBAYAN has some members of the National United Front Commission and the International Department (Home Front) formed the women's group - SIGLAYA. Currently, AKBAYAN has one member in the House of Representative and one member in the Senate.

The abovementioned Series of splits have shown the unending dynamism of the formations and reformations of the political parties in the Philippines.

Both the international and the domestic situations have greatly influenced and played an important role in the formations and the establishments of political parties in the country. Aside from the intensifying attacks of the Neo-Liberal Capitalists on the Progressive Movement, the dynamics and the eventual failure of the Socialist Model have deeply affected the developments of the revolutionary movements of the country.

It has been a common understanding and practice that the formation of a new organization is an improvement of the old one with all the lessons learned from the past mistakes. The formations of several organizations and parties in the country have resulted to weaken the old ones and later the disappearance of others. This fact does not mean that the old party that they left behind was right but it simply means that the processes of correcting and rectifying the weaknesses and errors they have initiated have not been consummated and they ended up committing and repeating the same mistakes and weaknesses in the process of building new formations.

The CNN has played an important role to weaken and eventually cause the ouster of the dictatorship. But it definitely had encountered problems in raising further the political consciousness of the toiling masses from its anti-fascist into the anti-imperialist level. This weakness has continued to manifest (not only from the CPP) because the campaign against fascist regime and its remnants are not sustained so that the son and namesake of the late dictator is almost back in the mainstream politics. It has subtly came in to power again using the billions of dollars stolen from the people while the revolutionary organizations and movements are busy with their dynamics and infightings. Currently, the son of the Dictator is a step away from power with the obvious support (overtly and covertly) of the current administration. It will soon be revealed that the full nature of a fascist regime in the country has come back very much alive and ready to eliminate those who oppose them.

It should be taken into account that the CNN had been instrumental in the development of the best and brightest activists in the movements especially during the dark days of Martial Law.

There has been less appreciation by the CNN Leadership regarding the impact of the Post-USSR fall and China's shift to Capitalist direction to the country under the context of the Neo-Liberal stage of globalized capital.

## **The Global and National Developments and its Impact on the Bangsamoro Struggle for Self Determination**

The Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) was founded in 1971 - a split from the traditionally controlled Mindanao Independent Movement (MIM). It has been headed by Nur Misuari a Tausug (ethnic tribe) who studied and taught in the University of the Philippines in the 60's together with Jose Maria Sison. He (Misuari) was influenced by the activism and Militancy of the student movement during the period. The MNLF aimed to separate Mindanao, Sulu, and Palawan from the Manila centered government led by the people coming from the majority nationality. MNLF calls this Manila Colonialism and considered it as its main problem. The MNLF's understanding of the national oppression has evolved through the years.

Before the establishment of the MNLF, Nur and some young members (known as a group of 90) got their military training somewhere in the jungle between Thailand and Malaysia courtesy of the Muslim Traditional Leaders from the MIM who requested the OIC for help and the latter paid mercenaries to render the Military Training for the young moro recruits.

After their establishment and with the financial and logistical support from some members of the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC), Nur and his new group launched military offensives against the Philippine government throughout the South Central parts of Mainland Mindanao and the islands of Sulu and Tawi-Tawi.

These MNLF military offensives among others were used by Marcos to declare Martial Law in the Whole Country in 1972.

The fascist method of suppressions and the intense military attacks by the government troops made Misuari to transfer his base in the Middle East. This move had made him and the MNLF vulnerable to the pressures of the OIC and the Marcos dictatorship.

As a result, in 1976, the MNLF and the Philippine government signed a Peace Accord called - Tripoli Agreement. There was a long ceasefire which further made the MNLF exposed its vulnerability to the government agents. From then on the old tactics of divide and rule policy was applied to the MNLF by the government. The Tripoli Agreement was implemented according to the government's interpretation and framework and the OIC had collaborated with the Marcos regime in neutralizing the militancy of the Moro Struggle led by the MNLF. It should be noted that some member countries which belong to the OIC, have also the same problem of National Movements in their respective countries.

In 1981 the MNLF suffered an organizational set back with the split which called itself as the new MNLF. Later, it became the Moro Islamic Liberation Front or the MILF. It was headed by Salamat Hashim the former deputy of Nur Misuari for International Affairs when they were both based in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. The MILF membership was mainly coming from the Maguindanao tribe. It has operated in many areas in South Central parts of Mindanao.

In 1987, a new group was formed out of the remaining MNLF. It called itself the MNLF Reformist Group. It was headed by Dimas Pundatu coming from the Maranao tribe and operated in the Lanao provinces.

In the latter part of 1992, the MNLF headed by Nur Misuari signed another peace agreement with the Ramos government (2<sup>nd</sup> signing of a peace agreement). And in the early part of 1993, the MILF began their own peace talks with the government which until now under five (5) presidents has not come into conclusion.

Meanwhile, Nur Misuari joined the government of President Ramos. He participated in the election under the banner of the Ruling Party (LAKAS-NUCD) and won as governor of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) based on the 1987 New Philippine Constitution (R.A.6734). His (Misuari) autonomous government did not present a change in the local governance as an autonomous region. Instead, it was heavily riddled by graft and corruption issues. The majority of the Bangsamoro basic masses did not get the benefit and feel the genuine change in their lives under MNLF's governance.

The MNLF led ARMM headed by Nur was so corrupt and ineffective that the Manila government supported a coup which resulted in the split of the MNLF. A Council of 15 replaced Nur in the leadership of the MNLF and the ARMM. Doctor Farouk Hussien was elected ARMM governor and Muslimin Sema, a former Secretary General of the MNLF Nur group was elected as the New Chairman of the MNLF and was elected as Mayor of Cotabato City. The OIC did not support this move by the Council of 15 against Misuari but had not done anything to correct the MNLF. But it still recognized the MNLF headed by Nur Misuari as the sole legitimate representative of the Moro People.

The change in the Philippine governments (from Ramos to Estrada) did not really make any substantial changes. The Council of 15 of the MNLF had continued the implementation of the Peace Agreement with the new government. A very traditional religious cum politician from the Maranao tribe (Mutilan) was elected governor of the ARMM. During those times, Misuari runs as governor in Sulu in a local election and lost miserably. A clear sign of his becoming very unpopular.

- Meanwhile, during this period under the Presidency of Estrada, an "all-out war" was declared against the MILF after he suspended the Peace Talk with the latter.

- The year after, this all-out war (2001) after Estrada was ousted from power, a referendum was held in Mindanao to identify the people and the areas which want to be part of the ARMM. This was part of the MNLF -GRP Peace Agreement earlier, the results of the referendum become the basis for the changing and expanding the ARMM areas. R.A. 9054 had replaced R.A. 6734. This was during the time of President Macapagal Arroyo. The Republic Act (RA) 9054 has expanded the areas covered by the ARMM under R.A. 6734. These areas included the Islamic City of Marawi, Six (6) Municipalities in Lanao del Norte and several Barangays in the Provinces of North Cotabato and Sultan Kudarat.

### **The Protracted Peace Negotiations and its Implications to the Moro Struggle for Self Determination**

In the middle of the Peace negotiations between the Ramos government and the Moro National Liberation Front under Nur Misuari, widespread corruptions and the protracted negotiations led to the formations of several extremists and Islamists groups within the rank and file of the MNLF. All of them had the common denominator of being disgruntled, frustrated and desperate by the Fronts

Leadership who primarily enriched themselves while the Moro Masses and even those Moro fighters were generally neglected.

In the middle of the 1990's (1994-1995) the Abu Sayyaf was founded. Pls, read R. De Silva on Marawi Siege and the Declaration of Martial Law in Mindanao Part 1. De Silva's articles described the four groups which split from the Moro Fronts, (pls go to the ESSF and look for these articles).

But coming out directly from MNLF is a well-known Islamist-Jihadist group called the ABU SAYYAF headed by the Janjalis in its early stage but years later it was headed by Isnilon Hapilon. It has been announced that Hapilon, who headed the siege of Marawi was killed during that brutal 6-month war. It was during the latter's leadership that the Abu Sayyaf had linked itself to the Daesh (Islamic State of Iran and Iraq or the ISIS). In fact, there was a claim that Isnilon Hapilon was made the Emir of the ISIS in South East Asia.

In a similar situation, there are three (3) groups which came (splits) from the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) mainly; the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) in 2008, the AKP 2009 and the Maute Groups 2013. They all came out in different periods but all of them share similar contexts and reasons for splitting from the MILF.

The more protracted the peace negotiations between the fronts and the government, the more extreme the reactions and expression of frustrations are coming from the rank and file of the former. Another basis for the splits is the unilateral framework of the peace agreements covertly imposed by the Philippine government in the different regions on the Moro Fronts.

One of the most important points in the peace negotiations is that a framework should be mutually agreed upon by both parties (revolutionary groups and the government) at the preliminary or pre-substantive phase of the Peace Process. Like the political portfolio or the level of representation by each party. Currently in the MILF-GPH peace talks, it should be cleared that the MILF including the Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Forces (BIAF) have the full representation and authority of their constituencies and the GPH should also represent and bring the full power of the government (not only the executive but also the Legislative and the Judiciary branches as well) in the negotiating table.

In the case of the peace processes between the MNLF and MILF with the different governments after the Marcos dictatorship, the executive which directly negotiated with the fronts always use the other branches of the government (legislative and judiciary) to delay or manipulate the other side of the negotiating panel has always obtained results in its favour.

This simply means that before both panels face each other what they would bring in on the table, especially regarding substantial issues have been already discussed and agreed upon by their respective constituencies.

In the case of the MILF-GPH peace talks, the Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL) is a product of almost 20 years of negotiation with Malaysia as a third country facilitating the whole peace process. The BBL as agreed by the two parties is supposed to lay down the guidelines in building the legal framework of the setting up of the Bangsamoro territory. And to better understand, this is to know why the Autonomous Region for Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) which after more than 40 years (1976-2016) of negotiations the result has been considered as a failed political project by the previous and current governments.

Currently (GPH-MILF Peace Negotiation), the BBL agreed by both sides has been subjected to legislative scrutiny by the Philippine Congress and later will be constitutionally examined by the

Supreme Court. The way both branches of government have been neutralized and politicized by the executive under the present dispensation, it will make another failed political project in the country. It is very ironic that in the last stage of the long peace process and difficult negotiations between both sides, it will be the politicians who will have the final say.

The continuation of these frameworks and approaches by the Philippine government anybody will not be surprised to witness unfinished or protracted negotiations resulting in series of frustrations, desperations, and splits during and in between these gaps.

The Leadership of the Moro fronts are mainly composed of the intellectuals and the petty bourgeoisie of the Bangsamoro. They have understood the nature of the struggle for Right to Self Determination as mainly a National Liberation and not a struggle for Social emancipation as well. The non-involvement of the Moro basic masses in all levels of negotiations will not build a sustainable peace. But most importantly, the exclusion of the interest and welfare of the other peoples in the territory claimed by the Bangsamoro like the Indigenous Peoples (IPs) will bring the peacebuilding process into a divided people creating a favorable atmosphere for the continuation of the social and national oppression in the country. And it should be considered that the Right to Self Determination of Nation/People will not fully be realized if it does not respect the Right to Self Determination of other nations/peoples however small or weak they are.

The Bicameral approval of the Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL) of Congress can possibly bring developments in the MILF areas but can also possibly isolate or neglect the interests and aspirations of the IP's within the core areas identified and covered by the Bangsamoro. An Exclusive Peace cannot definitely bring about inclusive developments in the areas claimed by the MILF.

**R. dl S.**

Manila, Philippines

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