

# ASIAN EXCHANGE

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## Abstractions and Directions: People's Responses to Economic Liberalization



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and  
Directions:  
People's Responses  
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Liberalization

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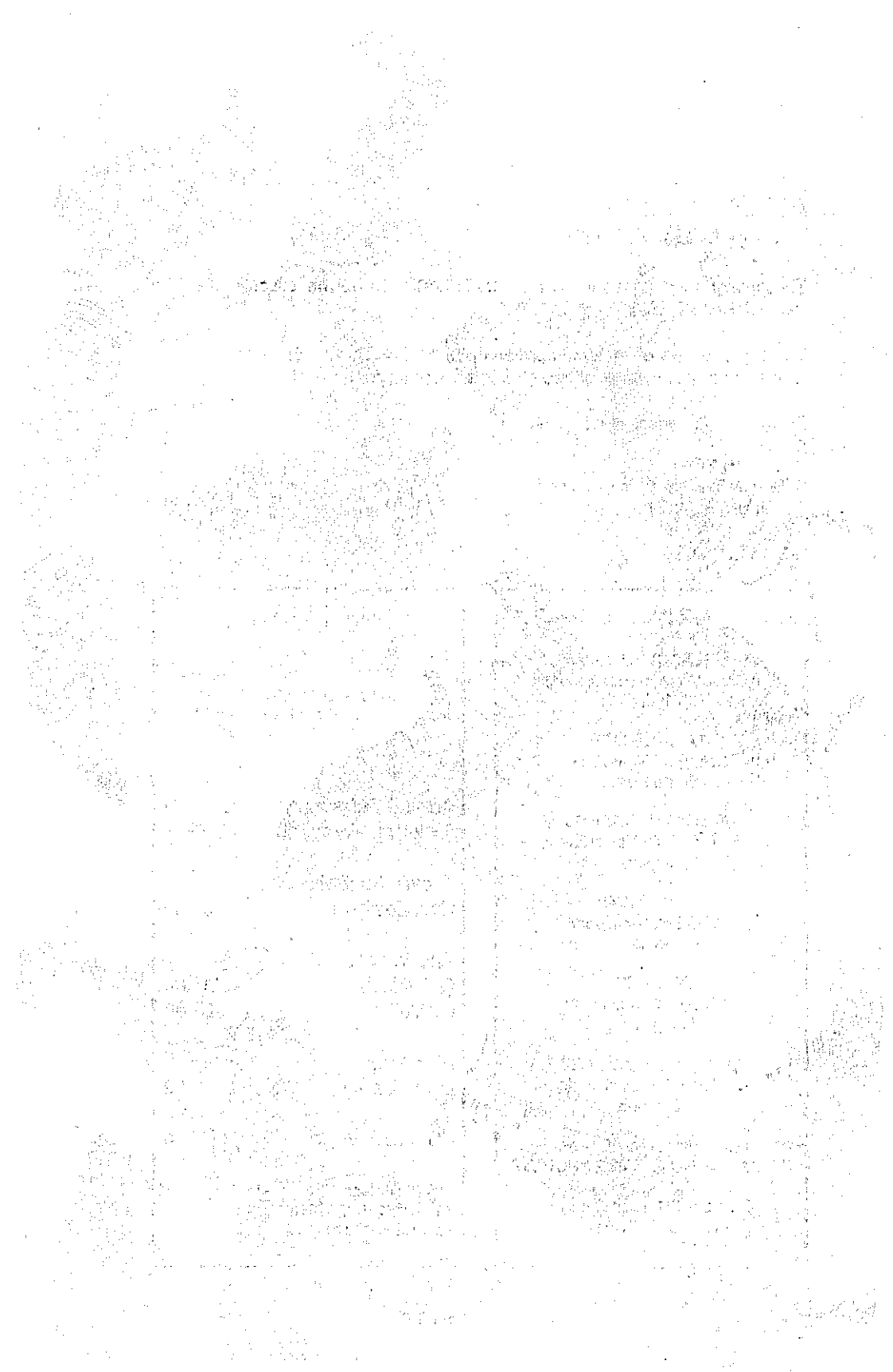
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# INTRODUCTION

Neng Magno

**E**veryday people take positions on issues that concern them immediately and concretely. Many times over, these positions are taken as unimportant daily events undefined by a general understanding of a phenomena. But when people share their experiences -- their sorrows and their celebrations, their regrets and their dreams -- they start to view events from the same window. The act of identifying oneself to a group or to a cause and taking action with the same rigour and passion is both social and political. At this instance, the individual becomes a part of a broader milieu.

This issue of the Asian Exchange is a compilation of papers and discussions from the Conference-Workshop on Social Movements in Asia with the theme "New Directions, Paradigms and Perspectives" held last June 1995 in Hong Kong. Paper presenters from South Korea, Thailand, Philippines and India initiate a process of reflection on the people's responses to the phenomena of newly industrialising countries or NIChood. Local Hong Kong and some regional organisations' thinker-activists participate in the discourse.

The participants are from a diverse backgrounds of activism. We see people categorising themselves as student activist, social activist, political activist, cultural activist, human rights activist, feminist, trade unionist, community organiser, migrant worker organiser, ex-political prisoner,

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development worker, academic, grassroots, regional secretariat, programme officer, researcher etc. All have lifelong experiences and insights clearly putting forward their stakes in the exercise.

The forty participants come from at least ten Asian countries. They represent different sectors, issues and concerns; generations in the social movements and varied perspectives of resistance and alternative. Some maintain the structuralist tradition yet others dare to tread post-modernist conceptualisation. Still, each comes with the willingness to share, reflect and clarify directions beyond the socialist ideal in this juncture of experimentation.

The two-day conference-workshop is an intense battleground of ideas and experiences, of more questions to answer, of challenges and counter-provocations, of integrating local practice and transborder abstractions, of the need for praxis and grand narratives. As we will see in the papers and the discussions which succeeded each, the concerns are broad and diverse. The thread which strings the discussions is the need for integration, for an overarching framework, for new strategies, for clear ideals.

South Korea was able to gain the so-called industrialisation, modernisation and development with the authoritarian government's single mindedness and sheer determination. The social movements are taking a two-pronged approach: encourage popular participation and broaden the playing field of the civil organisations in state policies and programmes. The call for democracy and re-unification of the two Koreas in the context of a state-centered capitalist direction echoes the same phenomena in many countries in the Post-Cold War.

India presents a mosaic of people's initiatives mainly through indigenous forms and with very minimal intervention either from the state or the NGOs. The paper provides a broad view of people's responses to NICHood on the different issues, sectors and states with emphasis on people's shared experiences and ideals. From the dalits or untouchables, to environmental causes, to women's assertion, the responses to the state's economic liberalisation and opening to the global market are as broad and as diverse as the country itself. It is worth noting however, that the state's directions toward market-orientedness and the social movements' challenges will in many ways affect the rest of the sub-region.

The second generation NICs is exemplified by Thailand. It follows the same tract of the East Asian dragons where the state is the major player in pushing for industrialisation and market-competitiveness. It is notable that the democracy movements in the 1970's onwards influence the people's

response to this phenomena especially with the growth of people's organisations (POs) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) which significantly affect the processes within the country.

The Philippines is actively undertaking market-oriented reforms especially by breaking down monopolies and energising the stagnated economy. From almost three decades of dictatorship and a tumultuous transition to democracy, the country has to work from a corrupted government and a frustrated populace. NIChood takes a different face with a semblance of democracy and popular participation reflecting the long history of people's resistance against authoritarianism and the already flourishing people's alternatives. The state which is continuously seeking credibility, the ideological differences amongst the social movements and the broad experiences in people's initiatives provide the context to the case presented. The case is of particular interest for various reasons: cooperativism has different meanings to different ideologies and movements, the case is from Mindanao (Southern Philippines) which represents a certain attitude of people out of Manila (the center of government), and it goes beyond small-scale people's initiative by playing the market while keeping distance from the state.

Interestingly, while the established set of knowledge and language of the social movements represent a certain level of growth, it also speaks of how the social movements use and replicate mainstream valuation (linearity of thoughts and rationality in structures) to the alternative experience (diversity and spontaneity of initiatives and movements). The use of language and the construction of concepts show how people in the alternative are bringing old norms, middling the transition and generating new ways of confronting change.

For example, we speak of empowerment and alternative while we still view power as state power. Being out of state power which is the "mainstream", we continuously see ourselves as an alternative. Alternative has become a marginalised and alienated conception of power and participation. In many ways, we now see that organisations and movements have achieved a position of negotiation and consensus whether within or without of the state machinery. There is always the challenge to clarify and strengthen our own conception of power and empowerment and of initiative and alternative.

The social movements, taking its roots from a socialist tradition, have been dominated by class-based organisations such as the peasants and workers. The flourishing of other movements particularly of the women and gender; and ecology and sustainable development, both of which cut across

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classes, have been largely marginalised. Thus, these movements grew out of the "mainstream and dominant" alternative. There is an urgent need to take these growth seriously. The social movements have a lot to learn from the de-construction of the feminists and the environment activists. The challenges being forwarded and the reconstruction of new ideologies and practise of these movements are opportunities for reflection and change in the social movements.

There are more lessons and insights which can be culled from the discussions. The exchanges on "un-social movements" which is a post-modernist approach to see what goes beyond or outside of the movements to better understand the inside, "hammock" which is a loose and open arrangement instead of the tight network for interaction, the integration of scholars-activists or thinkers-doers, "subverting the subverted consciousness", non-party and transborder alliances, self-criticism and self-clarification, the song lines of the aborigines and the theorising of the learned etc. are all symbols which linger even beyond the conference.

This compilation is an attempt to put into print and to disseminate what transpired in the two-day exchange. Not all interesting parts are captured in the documentation of the proceedings. We have to painfully cut parts for editorial reasons. Hopefully, the readers will find ways to participate in this process of reflection and renewal and to continue the discourse. There are more questions to be answered and probably more songs to be sung.

# **Social Movements in Korea: Retrospects and Prospects<sup>1</sup>**

Hee-Yeon Cho



**A** new political and social environment confronts Korean social movements. The breakdown of the socialist system, the shift from a military regime to the 'civilian' government, and the economy's transformation from a developing system to a developed one are some aspects of the new environment. In view of these changes, the target models of social movements, the method of the opposition, its issues and other relevant matters need to be re-examined.

This paper explores, first, the changes in the political regime and the developments within Korean social movements during the past 30 years. Second, it examines the recent democratic transition and the resulting changes within social movements. Lastly, the paper suggests some points of reflection on the theory and practice of past social movements in Korea, and offers some views concerning aspects of the movements that need to be reformed.

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<sup>1</sup>The first draft of this paper has been prepared for the workshop-conference on "New Directions, Paradigms and Perspectives" sponsored by Asian Regional Exchange For New Alternatives (ARENA) in Hong Kong on June 27 and 28, 1995. The draft was revised into this final paper in consideration of comments. I am grateful for all those involved in organizing and sponsoring the conference.

## **The General Outline of the Change of the Political Regime and the Historical Development of Korean Social Movements<sup>2</sup>**

In relation to political changes, the period after independence from Japanese colonialism in 1945 can be divided into four sub-periods.

### **First period (from 1945 to 1953)**

This period saw an intense struggle over the direction of the independent nation-state. At this time, the social forces in Korea were divided along the lines of the external conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union. As a result, Korea was divided into the socialist North and the dependent capitalist South. I define the regime established in South Korea as the 'pro-American, anti-communist, dependent regime'.

### **Second period (from the end of the Korean War to the 1950s)**

After the Korean War, South Korean society was shaped by a civilian authoritarian regime. In this period, the social movements were deactivated by the effects of the War. But the regime soon collapsed due to widespread corruption and the people's strong resentment against the unjust elections. This was known as the April 19th Revolution of 1960.

After the revolution, the ruling system was considerably weakened. Under this new environment, radical movements, for example 'the Movement for Reunification', were intensified. Due to its weakness, the regime could not effectively suppress the radicalized social movements. It was at this point that the May 16th military *coup d'état* intervened to replace the weak government with a new authoritarian military regime which was to prove itself even more repressive than previous governments. The coup thus marked the emergence of the rightwing military dictatorship in Korea.

### **Third period (from the military coup to the emergence of the civilian government)**

This could be called a period of economic growth under a dictatorship. The oppressive regime justified and maintained itself in the

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<sup>2</sup>See Hee-Yeon Cho, "A Study on National Democratic Movements from the 1950s to the 1970s", Hee-Yeon Cho ed., *The History of Korean Social Movements* (Seoul: Juksan, 1992).

name of modernization, which was often billed as an 'exodus from absolute poverty'. The democratic movement however rejected this justification and fought for both democracy and equality.

Korean development under the military regime could be characterized as follows: (1) state-centric or state-initiated development, (2) outward-oriented, export-oriented development, (3) development promoted by the power of the military authoritarian state, and (4) political and economic exclusion of the Korean people. The Korean model was the effect of a specific combination of the internal factors and the external factors of the time. The significant internal factors were, among others, the affluence of a skilled work force, the weakening of the old ruling class through the Land Reform and the Korean War, and the strong demand for economic growth.

The more important external factors were (1) the change of the Third World policy of the U.S. which aimed to build an economic base for anti-communism to Third World countries through modernization, (2) the increase in the financial fluidity of the international finance market, and (3) the attempt of the transnational corporations to change the international division of labor.

The Korean development model is a successful one if measured exclusively in terms of economic growth. But it has many subsidiary ill effects which makes it vulnerable to criticism. The model's success was built on labour oppression, gross human rights violations, and inequalities between classes and regions. In this context, it is necessary to seriously review the Korean model while rejecting its premise of economic growth as the only objective of society.

It is this paper's view that the economic growth accompanying the Korean model occurred only in very specific historical conditions which could not be realized in general conditions. Some say that the Korean model was accomplished by authoritarian leadership. I don't agree with that opinion. Korea achieved economic growth not because of the dictatorship, but in spite of the dictatorship.

Under the military regime, social movements developed through three stages. In the first stage, in the 1960s, social movements were based on liberal ideas. In the 1960s, the dependent and undemocratic nature of the military regime was not fully exposed. The military regime was able to maintain the minimum procedures and mechanisms of formal democracy. In this stage, social movements had limited popularity and organizational base. The issues raised by social movements were restricted to political issues, for example unjust elections, long tenure of political power, etc. They seldom included class issues and people's issues.

But this trend changed beginning with the 1970s. In the early part of the decade, the internal contradictions and ill effects of the growth strategy were emerging. The self-immolation in 1971 by Tae-II Chon, an industrial worker protesting military rule, signified an important change of the situation. Park Chung Hee's long reign through the third unjust amendment of the Constitution intensified the opposition against his regime. The democratic movement and the student movement, the main forces among Korean social movements, started paying attention to workers' conditions and the peasant situation. However, although various social movements were intensified and popularized, the movements as a whole remained at the level of 'populist' organisations.

The gradual increase of the people's struggle and the intensification and popularization of student movements drove the Park regime into an enduring political crisis, and ultimately to the 'October 26th Incident' in which one of the closest officials to the president, Kim Jae-Kyu, assassinated President Park. This incident brought out into the open the internal conflict within the power structure between the hard-liners and the moderates over the measures to be taken in response to wide resistance of the people that peaked at the 'Pusan-Masan Uprisings' on October in 1979.

Because of the high economic growth in the 1970s, the necessity of democratization was not clear to general public, but in the 1980s it became obvious to the ruling blocs as well as to the people. Although Park's regime had, in Gramscian terms, the least 'consent' needed to preserve the regime, Chun Doo Hwan's regime, which emerged after suppressing the moderates' coup (October 26 Incident) and people's resistance (Kwang-Ju Uprising) by sheer military might, lost even the least consent and could maintain itself in power only by coercion.

The 'Great Road' towards democratization started during Chun's regime. The period from the early 1980s to the emergence of the civilian government can be defined as the period of transition to democracy. During this time the ruling blocs and the opposition camp struggled over the direction of Korean democracy, as was the case in the Independence period in the late 1940s. There were possibilities for both a 'radical democratization' from bottom and a 'conservative democratization' under the ruling bloc's hegemony from the top.

### **Korean Social Movements in the Transition to Democracy in the 1980s**

The Korean transition can be characterized as a compromise type of transition. This came about due to several factors: (1) the opposition forces

could not obtain state power through their non-compromising resistance, and as a result power was transferred to those who were close to the ruling authoritarian forces, (2) some constituents of the old authoritarian forces formed an important part of the new ruling forces, and thus, (3) the old military-authoritarian groups and figures became important actors during the whole period of transition. Because of these reasons the compromise type faced the danger of minimal reform, while the non-compromise type offered maximal reform. Generally speaking, the transition to democracy began when the 'liberalization'<sup>3</sup> policy was initially adapted, and the transition ended when the new 'democratic' government emerged. The democratization process in Korea in 1980s consisted of three distinct phases: the preparatory phase,<sup>4</sup> the initial transition phase, and the follow-up transition phase.

The preparatory phase started when the previous ruling method had become useless and some other drastic measures were needed to preserve the authoritarian system itself. The democratic transition referred to the process of liberalization by the authoritarian regime and the replacement of the current system by 'democratic' or 'pseudo-democratic' forms of political regime.

For the Korean case, I identify the preparatory phase as the period from the 'October 26th Incident' (the assassination of Park Chung-Hee) in 1979 to 'the Appeasement Policy' in late 1983. The initial transition phase lasted from late 1983 to 1987 when the soft military regime was established as a result of 'the presidential election through direct vote by people. The follow-up transition phase is, I define, from the beginning of the Roh Tae-Woo government to the emergence of 'the civilian government', that is the present Kim Young-Sam government in 1993. In the initial and follow-up transition phase, as a new set of rules for the political game had not been established, a struggle to do was initiated. In the initial transition phase, the target of the opposition was the hard military dictatorship, while that in the follow-up phase, it was the soft one, a new form of military regime.

In the transition to democracy, there emerged (semi-)autonomous political and social arenas<sup>5</sup> differentiating themselves from the dictatorial

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<sup>3</sup>G.O.O'Donnell and P.C.Schmitter, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University, 1986) p.7.

<sup>4</sup>D.A.Rustow, "Transition to democracy", *Comparative Politics* 2, No.3 (1970)

<sup>5</sup>Professor Jang-Jip Choi conceptualizes the political arena as the political society, and the social arena as the civil society. In the paper presented in the ARENA conference in June 27-28, 1995, I divided society into three instances, i.e. the state, the political society and the civil society. But in this revised paper I didn't use the categorization. See Jang-Jip, Choi, *The Theory of the Korean Democracy* (Seoul: Hankil Publishing Company, 1993).

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state. Under military authoritarianism, there was little socio-political space to be 'anti-state',<sup>6</sup> and most political and social organizations were dependent on the authoritarian state. But there appeared political parties and social movement organizations which were opposed to the dictatorship. The ideological spectrum of the opposition parties ranged from the conservative to the progressive. The social movement organizations included the people's and 'civil' movements, covered various problems of the society, such as class-related problems, multi-class-related problems, consumption and every day life-related problems.<sup>7</sup>

In the process of transition the pro-governmental organizations which received legal and non-legal support from the government lost their special privileges. In addition, the new parties and other organizations which represented popular interests began to share power in the political arena. The transition process yielded a change in the structure of representation which has been fixed during the military regime, and went beyond the establishment of formal elective rules.

### Social Movements in the Preparatory Phase

"There is no transition whose beginning is not the consequence—direct or indirect—of important divisions within the authoritarian regime itself, principally along the fluctuating cleavage between hard-liners and soft-liners".<sup>8</sup>

Korea is not the exceptional case. The starting point of the preparatory phase began when the conflicts between the hard-liners and the soft-liners over how to deal with the broad resistance of the people against the military regime manifested itself. This was the 'October 26th Incident' when President Park was assassinated. At the last period of the Yushin System, the military regime plunged the country into a vicious circle of oppression and resistance. Park's assassination symbolized conflicts between the hard-liners and the soft-liners over the broad resistance of people, which reached its climax at the 'Pusan-Masan Uprisings' in October 1979. In the uprisings the spontaneous but vehement people's demand was for the end of the military regime. The 'October 26th Incident', called 'the coup in the court', by the moderates in the military regime failed because of the counterattack from the hard-liners (the so-called 'the December 12th Incident').

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p.413.

<sup>7</sup>Hee-Yeon Cho, "People's Movements, the Civil Society, and the Citizen's Movements", Shilchonmunhak 1993, Winter.

<sup>8</sup>G.O'Donnell and P.C.Schmitter, op.cit., p.19.

The new military groups who carried out the counterattack successfully expanded the Emergency Martial Law from Seoul to nationwide and seized state power on May 17, 1980.

The emergence of the ultra-oppressive Chun Doo-Hwan government in 1980 was an exceptional movement compared with the general trend away from authoritarianism in the Third World during those times.

The brutal and bloody repression of the 'Kwang-Ju Uprisings' which opposed the re-emergence of the military forces took away the political legitimacy from the new hard dictatorship and granted the moral and emotional sympathy to the militant opposition movements, which would become more and more ideologically radical. As the December 1995 events in Seoul testify, the bitter memories from the "Kwang-Ju Uprisings" would return to haunt Chun Doo-Hwan even in retirement and make him accountable for the killing of hundreds of young protestors.

Under this hard dictatorship there were no autonomous political parties and social movements. In the social arena, there existed only the organizations which were dependent on the government: for example the Korea Federation of Trade Unions (KFTU), the National Alliance for Freedom, Association of New Village Movements, etc. In the political society arena there was only one opposition party, the Democratic Korea Party (DKP), which was patronized by the ruling party. The DKP, however, didn't have financial and political autonomy. Thus, there were no 'anti-state' political and civil societies differentiated from the state.

During this period only the militant people's movements continued a principled opposition to the military regime. After recapturing state power, the military forces disbanded all the opposition organizations which had grown from the 1970s. Many democratic trade unions, such as Chongye Garment Trade Union and Wonpoong Textile Trade Union for example, were suppressed and dissolved by government. Even under such oppressive dictatorship, however, the anti-government struggles grew. The violence and ultra-oppression only resulted in increased militancy and the ideological radicalization of the student and social movements. These movements which represented the oppressed Korean peoples initiated and led the radical struggles against the regime.

### Social Movements in the Democratic Transition Phase

The main transition phase started with the enforcement of the 'Appeasement Policy' in late 1983, which attempted to diminish the severity

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of resistance from the opposition camp and to absorb popular discontent in order to restabilize the military regime. It was the policy of 'liberalization' in O'Donnell and Schmitter's terms. The transition period can be divided into the initial and follow-up phases.

### *Social movements in the Initial Transition Phase*

During this period the transition from 'the hard dictatorship' to 'the soft dictatorship' was accomplished. In spite of its enforcement, the 'Appeasement Policy' has failed to mollify the opposition movement, but rather resulted in the expansion the opposition movement to the political and civil societies.

The changing characteristics of the social movements in this period were as follows. First, the intelligentsia-led opposition movements developed into more popular opposition movements. Second, the movements which had been illegal and clandestine changed to a semi-legal and open status. Third, the ideological radicalization became a general trend, and as a result revolutionary orientation came to be generalized in the opposition camp. During this period, the so-called the 'Controversy on the characteristics of the Korean social formation'<sup>9</sup> emerged. Finally, the labour movements were intensified and the number of advanced workers who developed class consciousness increased. The strike of the taxi drivers in Taegu and the strike in the DaeWoo Automobile Company in 1984 are two good examples.

The results of the general election in 1985 increased the pressure from the people for democracy. A more politically clear opposition party, the New Democratic Party (NDP) became the major opposition party. The election results initiated a change from liberalization to democratization and expanded the opposition's reach to the political arena itself. This meant that the political arena which had been dependent upon the military state now became differentiated as an 'anti-state' arena.

The 'Park Jong-Cheol Incident' in February 1987, the death of a college student from torture during the investigation by a security unit, provided a significant chance for the opposition to enter the all-out offensive against the military government. The incident decisively amplified the democratization movement by making manifest the latent anti-military sentiment of the people. The democratization struggle in June 1987 was the culmination of continuous and militant anti-government demonstrations by the people, and was called 'the Great Democratic Struggle of June'.

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<sup>9</sup>Hee-Yeon Cho and Hyeon-Chai Park eds., *The Debates on the Korean Social Formation Vol 1-4* (Seoul:Juk-San Publishing Company, 1989-1992). I suggest some points of reflection over this controversy in the latter part of this paper.

In this situation the military forces headed by Chun attempted to enter into pacts with the moderates in the opposition camp to preserve the regime itself. When the negotiations to retain the military regime failed, President Chun announced on April 13th that the coming presidential election would be conducted under the existing constitution, not by the direct vote. As the 'April 13th Announcement' met an immediate and intense opposition from the people, his successor Roh Tae-Woo issued a different announcement, the 'June 29th Declaration', where he accepted the popular wish to elect the president by the direct vote. This act was a strategic scenario skillfully devised by the military forces in response to the intensified opposition. This was accepted as a progressive move, in that it would institutionalize the military's uncertainty that they would lose power under direct voting.

After the 'June 29th Declaration' a cleavage became obvious between the moderate opposition parties and the militant dissident movements. The moderate opposition interpreted the declaration with the optimistic vision to obtain state power. The 'June 29th Declaration' achieved the aim of moderating the political parties which had been undergoing a radical transformation after the general election in 1985. The declaration also controlled the expansion of opposition groups in society and stemmed their continued radicalization.

The presidential election in 1987 provided the chance to realize democratization from the bottom and establish the united state power of both the moderate opposition parties and revolutionary movements. However, the two powerful opposition leaders, Kim Young-Sam and Kim Dae-Jung, failed to unite and entered the presidential race separately. Consequently, in December 1987 General Roh Tae-Woo won the election and assumed the presidency.

The inability of the dissident movement to handle the split between its two leaders was the main cause of the opposition defeat. Despite the importance of overcoming the split at this critical juncture in Korean history the self-interest and egoism of leaders prevailed over everything else. On the other hand, the revolutionary camp should have maintained political independence from the moderate opposition parties and forced the unification of the divided leaders through independent influence.

In any case, the military forces successfully recaptured state power in the constitutional way, not the usual military *coup d'etat*. The 'hard dictatorship' was now legally transformed into the 'soft dictatorship'. Election by direct voting as a minimum condition for procedural democracy now became the general political rule of competition which nobody could oppose.

### *Social Movements in the Follow-Up Transition Phase*

The main characteristic of the initial transition was that due to the expansion of the militant opposition movement and its entry into the political arena, the military regime was forced to make the initial moves towards a democratic transition. But as the 1987 events showed, this phase ended with the recapture of power by the ruling forces in the form of a soft military regime.

In the beginning, Roh's government seemed to have a high level of stability. The regime tried to use a new ruling method which combined coercion and political inclusion. Many Koreans expected more freedom and political stability under Roh's government. The general election on April 1988 however resulted in a renewed political instability. The total parliamentary seats won by opposition parties exceeded that of the ruling party. An opposition-dominated National Assembly thus emerged. This meant a restructuring of the political arena. With this unexpected change, Roh's government lost the chance to initiate the conservative restructuring of the political arena, and in turn, the conservative restructuring of society through the change of the political arena.

Consequently, the new government's political initiative became weaker, and the ruling bloc became disorganized. This provided motivation for the opposition forces to remobilize their forces. The democratic movement, too, became more aggressive. The instability of the Roh regime gave a new momentum for a new transition.

The emergence of the opposition-dominated National Assembly implied the progressive restructuring of the political arena in favor of the opposition movement, but in other respects the restructuring process was a distorted one. Contrary to the concept of 'modern' political parties which are organised and act along class or social-division lines, the political parties in Korea are organized along geographical regional lines. Thus, these regionalistic parties receive overwhelming support only from their own regions, but little from other regions. The regionalistic party system interrupted the change of the political arena towards one which represented a real social, especially class, cleavage.

Besides, several factors made Roh's government more unstable. First, people came to realize its essentially undemocratic nature as well as its continuity with the old government. The second factor was the new realignment of the militant dissident movement and its expansion towards new areas. In January 1989, the Korea Alliance of National and Democratic

## Hee Yeon-Cho, Social Movements in Korea: Retrospects and Prospects

Movements (KANDM) was born as a united organization and included most of the militant dissident groups. There also appeared the Movement for the Reunification of South and North Korea, the progressive education movement and other new groups. KANDM became the National Coalition for Democracy and Reunification in December 1991, integrating the new emerging mass organizations. Third, the struggles of the militant people's movement weakened the military ruling system and the autonomous social arena expanded, of which the moderate civil movement, the Citizens' Coalition for Economic Justice (CCEJ), is an example.<sup>10</sup>

The emergence of these 'new social movements' of the Korean type signifies the growing autonomy of society from the oppressive state, which had been totally dependent on the military state. Furthermore, the social movements became differentiated between the militant people's movements and the moderate civil movements. The latter has the following characteristics:

- (1) no anti-government political attitude,
- (2) ideological moderation, or a standpoint of critical liberalism,
- (3) non-militant action,
- (4) utilisation of institutional legal methods, and,
- (5) the theoretical definition of the current Korean society as the 'civil society'.

The fourth source of instability of the Roh regime was the consistent growth of the labour movement. Many new democratic trade unions were organized nationwide, and these were united at the national level. The National Conference of Regional and Occupational Trade Unions was organized in December 1988. Following its organizational success, the Korea Council of Trade Union (KCTU) was also established in January 1990. The realignment of the militant people's movements and the development of the new social movements increased the instability of the Roh's regime, and finally forced a new transition.

"The Three Parties' Merger" was the attempt by the military forces to restructure the political arena to overcome the weakness of the soft military regime. President Roh entered into agreements with two opposition parties (the Unification Democratic Party headed by Kim Young-Sam, the present president, and the Democratic Republican Party headed by Kim Jong-Pil) and merged the three parties into one new ruling party, the Democratic

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<sup>10</sup>On this, see Kyeong-Seok Seo, "The Evaluation and Reflection of the Past Three Years' Activities", *The Social Critique*, August 1992.

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Liberal Party (DLP), which is the present ruling party. The 'Three Parties' Merger' meant not just a physical combination of the three parties but also the coming together of the moderate opposition parties and the military forces. This merger was an alliance of the conservative forces with the aim of recapturing political power in order to overcome the instability of the soft military regime.

It was different from the initial transition because it overcame the political crisis by changing the political arena. In contrast, during the initial transition, the military forces overcame the crisis through acceptance of the method preferred by people, that is, changing the relation between the military state and the people. This new situation represented a new relationship among the state, the political arena and society. In this merger the ruling forces could absorb the discontent and overcome the political crisis by changing the political arena - the autonomy of which had expanded through the transition process.

The transition process after the merger disclosed several characteristics. First, the politicians in the ruling bloc were divided into two fractions, those who supported the merger and those who opposed it. Between the two, there were intense conflicts. For instance, hard-line military officers, conservative political leaders and some capitalists opposed Kim Young-Sam's nomination as the ruling bloc's presidential candidate. In the competition for nomination in the DLP, they joined together against Kim Young-Sam. Second, in the follow-up transition the compromise lasted but the original contents of the compromise were negated among the merger partners. When they merged to create a new party, all three parts seemed to agree to amend the Constitution from presidential government institution to the cabinet system.

While the conflicts in the ruling bloc increased, the contents of the compromise were disclosed to the public and popular resentment ensued. Third, as soon as the possibility of the divided possession of the political power disappeared through the cabinet system, the conflicts within the ruling bloc became more intensified. As a result, some groups including one headed by Lee Jong-Chan of the ruling party, seceded from it and formed a new party, the New Korean Party (NKP) on August 1992.

Fourth, one of the industrial conglomerates, the Hyundai industrial group (one of the important financial supporters of the ruling bloc under the military regime), attempted to assume the character of a political force independent of the military and formed a new party, the National Party. This move implied that the monopoly capitalists, having acquired enormous economic power, was no longer satisfied with being a mere sub-partner of the military forces.

It is worth noting that the progressive party, the People's Party (PP), failed to enter the institutionalized political arena. The party traces its origins to the militant people's movements although it did not entirely depend on these radical groups. It was formed in 1989 when some members of the dissident groups formed a radical but legal opposition party, which was politically independent of the existing conservative opposition parties. It received, however, less than 2 percent of the valid votes and no one was elected. As a result, the PP was dissolved. The experiment of the PP, had it been successful, could have restructured the political arena distorted by regionalism and reformed the new political arena so as to represent various social classes or forces. Because the radical groups couldn't enter the political arena, the ruling bloc and the conservative opposition parties managed to keep the militant movements, the newcomers, in a marginal status within political society. The ruling bloc however, failed in expanding the representativeness and openness of the political arena which had purportedly been achieved in the transition process.

In the election of 1992, Kim Young-Sam was elected President. Thus in the beginning of the year 1993, the soft military government was changed to the 'conservative civilian government'. Korea was put into a new orbit of the compromise transition.

In contrast to the initial transition, in the follow-up transition the ruling bloc was successful in making pacts with the conservative opposition parties, and by restructuring the political arena as such it could diminish the internal contradiction of the soft military regime. But the pacts itself was only a compromise among the political elites, not between the ruling bloc and the masses.

### **Social Movements Under the Civilian Government**

In replacing the 33-year-old military government, Kim Young-Sam had began an era of a civilian, though conservative, government. He has reformed a number of aspects in wide spheres of society. In spite of the complex constitution of the ruling bloc, Kim's government succeeded, partly though, in breaking up the oligarchic clique of the military regime and the structure of corruption. The political reforms started in the initial phase with the campaigns for 'de-authoritarianization' and anti-corruption. Through the political reform the top layer of the power bloc of the past regime, the so-called Taeku-Kyeongbuk (TK) groups, which were based regionally in the Southeastern areas, was marginalized. Anti-corruption reform spread out into several spheres: for example the corruption in the school entrance examination, the secret assets of the Dong-Wha Bank, the

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corruption in the Slot-Machine business, the corruption of the Public Prosecutor's Office, etc. On March 8th, politically connected army officers were dismissed and an organized political factions of army officers called 'Hana-Whe', was dissolved. These reforms signify the weakening of the military power which had backed up the previous authoritarian regimes.

In economic reforms, Kim's government abruptly announced 'the Real Name Transaction System', which was evaluated as a great reform to halt the stream of 'black' money, and the corruption network. When we take a look at these reforms in 1993, the reform-oriented trend of the civilian government dominated that year. The support rating for the government rose steeply, approximating about 90 percent.

After the initial reform, however, Kim's government became more conservative. As pointed out above, Kim's government is the mixed regime in which the military forces and the moderate opposition parties coexist in the ruling bloc. This complex nature obviously imposed limitations on the reform. The past ruling forces resisted the reform, even though limited, and attempted to retard it. Because the conservative forces controlled the real power in the political arena, the Kim government's reform program was reduced to the minimum level. The progressive movements criticized the reforms, simply because those reforms stayed limited. The conservative turn of Kim's government suppressed the democratic change of Korean society. In March 1994 Kim announced the policy to stop the financial and political support for pro-governmental organizations, such as KFTU, NAF, ANVM, etc., which operated as the sub-mechanism of the ruling machinery. But this policy was postponed for two years.

As in the past, the student movements and the people's movements still could not attain legal status. The Preparatory Committee for the Korea Democratic Federation of Trade Unions which covers the Korea Council of Trade Unions, the white-collar trade unions and those of the big companies continued to be disauthorized. This pattern follows the experience of other countries where "although popular movements have played an instrumental role in recent transitions from authoritarian rule, during the final stage of 'elite-dominated' transitions and the initial period of democratic consolidation, mass actors have been marginalized in key decision-making processes."<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>P.J. Williams, "Dual Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Popular and Electoral Democracy in Nicaragua", *Comparative Politics*, January 1994, p.170.

In this respect it might be said that in the Korean democratization process "politics as a narrowly prescribed political game among elites was not changed to a political system which allows wider participation by organized interests of the masses. The Kim Young-Sam government politics can still be defined as an elite game."<sup>12</sup>

The change from military dictatorship to elected civilian government is analyzed here as a change of form of ruling rather than a fundamental change of a repressive order. At this point, private monopoly capital, which had the unqualified support of previous military regimes, has now acquired its own political base to a sufficient scale, and thereby seeks to establish full-fledged domination over society through a form that invites less resistance from the people. Thus, the South Korean civilian government implies, in a sense, a full-scale era of Capital.

Social movements under the civilian government underwent key changes as well. First, diverse civil movements emerged. One example is the progressive civil movement, People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy (PSPD). This movement was established in September 1994 with joint participation from the moderate left (revolutionary groups) and radical right (moderate liberal groups), with an aim of radical participation

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<sup>12</sup>"Is It Democracy?—An Analysis of the Kim Young-Sam Reforms in South Korea", Working Paper prepared for XVI World Congress of the International Political Science Association, August 21-25, 1994, ICC Berlin, Germany, p.10.

<sup>13</sup>After the emergence of the civilian government the dominant 'discourse' in Korean academic circles was 'the civil society'. I think that it is important to recent Korean social movements how to deal with the new problems which are confronting people in the so-called 'civil society', whether we define it as 'the civil society' or not. From my viewpoint the 'civil society' is a special kind of the modern form of the 'society', just as the feudal society is a kind of the pre-modern form of society. The economic modernization and industrialization brings the material foundation with it, on which the modern society can be formed. What kind of society it will be formed on this material foundation is up to the results of political struggles. According to the results a different kind of society, for example a socialist, a new trans-modern or no other than the 'civil society', can be formed, I think.

In Korea the material foundation on which the modern form of society could be erected has been prepared. The period of the 1980s in Korea is that in which the overall and fierce class struggles have unfolded between the ruling bloc and people's bloc. This is similar to the period of the late 1950s after independence from Japanese colonial rule, as mentioned in the first part of this paper. In these struggles the people's bloc was beaten after all and as its result lost the possibility to form a different kind of society. As a result of its 1992 victory the ruling bloc could manage to form the society in favor of it, that is, the so-called 'civil society'. In this respect the so-called 'civil society' is the political outcome of the economic foundations prepared by the industrialization from the 1960s.

As the recent Korean situation is defined in this paper, the most central task is how to struggle in the so-called 'civil society', which is newly given by the political outcome of the struggles in the 1980s, irrespective of whether we define it as the 'civil society' or not. In this viewpoint we can use the term of 'civil society' 'freely', even while we don't admit the linguistic hegemony of the ruling bloc. This viewpoint is basically different from that of CCEJ (showed in Chapter 3-2), which is based on the conception of the 'civil society'. This paper thus does not argue that we should use the term 'civil Society'.

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in an expanded so-called 'civil society'.<sup>13</sup> PSPD's activities revolve around units like the 'National Assembly Watch Center', 'Court Watch Center', 'Human Rights Center', 'Public Interest Litigation Center', and 'Whistleblowers Center' among others. In addition to PSPD, there emerged other new civil movements, such as the ones tackling the traffic problems and the improvement of the education environment, etc.

Second, a united structure of the moderate civil movements was organized through the initiative of CCEJ - the Congress of the Korean Civil Movements which was formed in September 1994. It also included some of the progressive civil movements. The diverse environment movements were also integrated into the Korea Federation of Environmental Movements in April 1994.

Third, although the civilian government maintained a close relationship with pro-government organizations and still oppressed democratic labour organizations, the democratic labour movement has continuously developed in organizational and popularity respects. The old Korea Trade Union Congress (KTUC) has developed into a preparatory committee for democratic federation of trade unions (a new KTUC) in which the trade unions in the largest companies, such as Hyundai and Daewoo participated. It competes now with the government-patronized Korea Federation of Trade Unions.

Fourth, new unification movements appeared. The National Congress for Independent Peaceful Unification was newly organized. The previous unification movement was, more or less, centered on the interest of the student movement, pro-North, and vanguard-action oriented. It has an effect of attacking the anti-communism sentiment and consciousness directly in the front. The new unification organization, however, is trying to preserve a neutral attitude about North Korea, and plans for popular action programmes which people find it easy to participate in.

### **Theoretical and Practical Reflections on Korean Social Movements in the 1980s and Tasks to Be Achieved**

This paper has so far reviewed the development of Korean social movements in relation to the political changes. In this section, I want to suggest some points of reflection on social movements and related ideological controversies especially in the 1980s, when Korean social movements reached the peak of its dynamics. In the 1980s, there appeared various controversies over strategy and tactics, the specific characteristics of Korean society, class structure and so on.

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In my viewpoint the ideological controversies revolved around the following issues and points:

(1) the rigidity of certain political standpoints, although the debates have, to a certain extent, recovered the revolutionary ideas and revolutionary directions;

(2) the error of identifying the 'theoretical practice' with the 'revolutionary practice' itself;

(3) according the academic controversy the central place in the debates instead of the practical controversy, for example the discussions over the specific characteristics of the Korean society;

(4) hindering the legitimate coalition between movement groups with different ideologies due to the over-intensification of the controversy;

(5) elevating the controversy on tactics into the controversy over strategies;

(6) absence and replacement of effluent analyses of the phenomenon by concepts of the essence of the phenomenon itself;

(7) the reduction of the concept of Marxism into Stalinist Marxism, and 'Soviet textbook' Marxism, thus overlooking the diverse wealthy trends of Marxism in the world; and,

(8) overlooking of the internal changes within the ruling system, focusing instead on the 'absolute' development of the progressive camp.

From these reflections, certain tasks follow logically, with special attention to the task of theoretical innovation.<sup>14</sup> The opposition camp, whether academic or practical, is now being confronted with the following concerns:

(1) how to overcome the failure of "actually existing socialism", and not staying within the boundaries of capitalism;

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<sup>14</sup>To achieve this innovation we have to change our way of thinking about Marxism and Socialism, preserving their 'rational core'. I described this new way of thinking as 'without Marx, before Marx', borrowing the concepts of Dietrich Boenhoeffer, the German theologian. See Hee-Yeon Cho, "The Breakdown of the Soviet Union and Eastern Socialist States and the Social Movement Debates in Korea", *The Debates on the Korean 'Social Formation'* Vol.4 (Seoul: Juksan, 1991).

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(2) how to surmount the dogmatism of Stalinist Marxism, such as reductionism, economism, the thesis of the inevitable breakdown of capitalism, the identification of the environmental problems and women's problems with the by-effects of capitalism, etc.;

(3) how to unite democracy and socialism, that is how to reconstruct socialism on the base of democratic principles, admitting that "the dictatorship of the proletariat" had been degraded into one-party dictatorship, which in turn was degraded into bureaucratic dictatorship;

(4) how to overcome the fetishism of state ownership, not identifying it with social ownership, that is how to overcome the statist conception of socialism;

(5) how to build the new economic system, absorbing positive aspects of the market mechanism under the predominant position of state planning;

(6) how to integrate the concept of 'state-civil society' with the paradigm of 'base-superstructure' <sup>15</sup>; and,

(7) how to include human rights, participation, democracy as target values, admitting that although socialist states regarded their values as being realized automatically in socialist society, capitalist society achieved some level of them in the conflict between capitalism and democracy.

In addition to the above, the following points in detail can be suggested to be earnestly pursued practically. The points of general and specific innovation for the social movement in Korea are:

(1) the organic combination of 'war of manoeuvre' with 'war of position';

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<sup>15</sup> To elaborate this point, some additional comments may be needed. I seek to incorporate positive aspects of the paradigm of state and civil society into renovating and extending the theory of base and superstructure. The Rightist approach to the paradigm of state and civil society tends to take civil society as a homogeneous entity, thus overlooking the fictitious state of civil liberties caused by internal class division, class inequalities, and other social, economic inequalities. On the other hand, the economic deterministic approach by the theory of base and superstructure has overlooked the aspects of the independence of civil society from the state, the provision of civil liberties and their expansion to social rights in modern bourgeois society, and the fact that civil liberties and democracy do not just pose as decorations of capitalism but provide momentum of active reforms and transformation of the system. In this regard, I pursue an integrated model of the two approaches, the Marxist paradigm and that of state and civil society, in which I would seek a paradigmatic expansion and renovation of Marxism, which remains the central paradigm for analysis to me, as well as incorporating positive aspects of the civil society approach.

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- (2) progressive and active intervention in the expanded 'civil society';
- (3) the positive active united relationship between the progressive civil movement (namely the new social movements) and people's movements (revolutionary movements organized in accordance with class lines);
- (4) the organic combination of the institutional method with non-institutional method;
- (5) interest in the new alienation, such as the one from information and knowledge, that is the new one in the so-called 'information society';
- (6) union of the interests of the middle classes with that of the working classes;
- (7) the extension of progressive activities into new areas, such as the area of cultural struggle;
- (8) paying attention to the new problems originating from affluence, not poverty, especially in NICs, that is the contradiction of 'development', not that of 'underdevelopment';
- (9) preserving the organization of the progressive movement which will be confronted with the condition of being in a weaker position (in spite of these new thrusts) in the present 'conservative cycle' at the global level;
- (10) changing of the struggle 'structure' against dictatorship into that against the transformed ruling system, that is the civilian government,
- (11) cultivating among the new generation grown in the affluent environment a consciousness to take a critical position on present realities and participate in the movements; and,
- (12) interconnecting of in-border movements with trans-border social movements.

Why did Korean social movements which have been highly admired by the western and the Third World activists come to the recent difficult conditions? Is there any near vision of revival of Korean social movements? I believe that the answer to those questions depend on how well the suggested tasks in this paper are achieved.



# **Redefining Civil Society: The CCEJ Experience**

Park Byung Ok



**T**he Citizen's Coalition For Economic Justice (CCEJ) was established in July 1989, 2 years after the "great struggle for democratization" which greatly changed our society and was the triumph of civil society against the military dictatorship. The territory of social movements was fundamentally altered with the replacement of the military with civilian political power. Although the latter was from a military background, this was still a slow but clear sign of the process of democratization. Social movements could not help but seek new directions and strategies and re-examine their content and methodologies. CCEJ is such an attempt.

## **Directions and Principles of CCEJ Activities**

Lawfulness and peacefulness are the first principles of CCEJ activities. When criticism against the national structure and policy was deemed impossible, and the authorities themselves ignored the law, people accepted the use of defensive violence by the social movements. But now, people endeavor to communicate through lawful methods and never approve of unlawful or violent ones. These methods have lost national support.

The second principle is to present reasonable alternatives. When there was no freedom of criticism, criticism itself had much importance. However, when criticism is permitted, the people no longer agree with criticism that is not based on reasonable alternatives. Alternatives which lack a sense of reality.

The third principle is to attach importance to national consensus. Under the military dictatorship, social movements did not have the opportunity to discover whether or not their opinions were based on the people's mutual agreement. The call to overthrow the military dictatorship did not require such mutual agreement as it was clearly supported by the people. When the dictatorship decamped the issue died along with it, leaving the many new issues once subsumed under it to appear. Most of these new issues were related to profits by special social classes or groups and had no consensus. After the collapse of the military regime, groups began to organize under their own interests. Many interest groups based on class, social rank, and region began to act for their rights and interests. Under the dictatorship, everybody supported the anti-dictatorship movement. But now things have changed. Various issues appeared and many groups which had different interests in relation to one another had difficulties. In this situation, public consensus became the most important consideration. Above all these issues, social activists the situation forced social activists to verify their arguments with the public consensus, and think seriously about what public demands will get the people's support.

The fourth principle is to make efforts to gradually reform laws and social systems. In the era of dictatorship, it was not possible to reform laws and social systems. But with the entry of the democratic process, the government has had to rule by law and not by force. With this change, reforming the system and its laws became most important as the people were confronted with the prevailing unjust laws.

The fifth principle is to make issues of problems people had in their everyday lives. After the dictatorship's collapse, people began to demand a better quality of life. Many social problems, once covered-over by the anti-dictatorship issue and resulting from rapid economic growth, appeared. These included traffic problems, environmental pollution, inflation, and "chaebals" (giant business conglomerates). People became more interested in these problems and how to resolve them.

The sixth principle is to organize the "middle class." The middle class in Korea had been enlarged and has been carrying out an increasing social role since the 1960s. However, they had played only a small role in the country's democratic movement, as the social movement concentrated on organizing the lower classes. But after the middle class played a leading role in the success of the great struggle for democratization in June, they were seen in a new light by the public. Moreover, it showed that without the agreement and support of the middle class, a highly educated group that forms the core of public opinion, it is impossible to lead the Korean society

toward progress. Therefore, tasks such as organizing the previously neglected middle class and getting them to participate in the social movement as well as strengthening the solidarity between the lower and middle classes became important issues.

The fundamental strategy of the CCEJ is to block oppression by the authorities through strengthening the power of civil society and to reinforce social development by enlarging the people's democratic rights. Up to recent times, civil society was passive towards the authorities and did not play a role in the social movements. As a result, the social movement developed in the form of a "do-or-die" corps without reference to civil society. But the great struggle for democratization in June, a situation where civil society overwhelmed the authorities, became the turning point for Korean society. Civil society grew rapidly and took the position of a powerful mass movement to restrain official power. CCEJ recognizes the need to gather and focus the power of civil society which was dispersed throughout the country and takes a stand for the rooting of civil movement in civil society.

### Issues Dealt With By CCEJ

From its inception, CCEJ has raised the issue of rampant real estate speculation as the most important problem. Every year, the total sum of real estate price increases reached twice the GNP. A few real estate owners monopolized this unearned income, increasing the conflict between the rich and the poor. CCEJ declared that the biggest problem in Korea was the confrontation between the unearned income class and the producing class. In addition, this issue focused attention on the urgent need for secure housing for the rural poor and homeless.

Thus activated, CCEJ extended its involvement in all economic fields in Korea. The phenomenon of unearned income was caused not only by real estate speculation, but also by political and economic corruption, inflation, and a financial system governed by the political authorities. Due to the unbalanced economic order, corruption, and irrational practices under three decades of a centrally controlled economy, society had no way to accomplish fair distribution or sustainable development. CCEJ issues were extended to nearly all social issues such as gaining the independence of the central bank, guaranteeing the autonomy of the financial system, reforming of accounting systems and banning corruption in politics and the economy.

In 1991, CCEJ took the opportunity of the restored local elections to campaign for clean elections and politics. The campaign was very successful and CCEJ stood for a new movement to reform the administrative system and distorted politics. The campaign for clean and fair elections was held to

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correct the corrupt electoral system and promote a sound electoral culture. Another reason was to break up the corrupt union between politicians and the financial clique. After the elections, this campaign was changed to a movement for the reform of laws, maintain the current system of political parties and the national assembly.

In the beginning, CCEJ stood for a society "that combines growth with sharing." But thanks to its participation in UNCED in Brazil in 1992, CCEJ came to know the importance of the environmental issue. "Environmentally sound and sustainable society" became an additional goal. This began CCEJ's environmental movement. In order to further this goal, CCEJ established the Center for Environment and Development which has been developing policy alternatives in this area.

The 1993 South-South Korean premier's meeting was a shock to many Koreans who regarded reunification as a distant dream. CCEJ also realized that reunification was no longer to be viewed as an event in the distant future and that the country must prepare for it in the immediate situation. In order to promote the Korean reunification movement, CCEJ established the Korea Reunification Society. After many debates, we reached the conclusion that the most important and effective policy was to promote economic and cultural exchanges between North and South Korea, and to achieve social consensus on how to accomplish reunification. CCEJ is carrying out its reunification movement in this direction.

In 1995, local autonomy election year, CCEJ campaigned for the growth of local autonomy. We researched the problems of 10 local communities and set forth policy alternatives to solve these. In April 1995, CCEJ published the book "Our Community: Let's Reform It." Here, CCEJ outlined and educated locals on 100 policies for local community reform. CCEJ further pressed candidates to adopt CCEJ policies in their election pledges. CCEJ plans to monitor and influence local administrations and the activities of local assemblies towards reformative policies after the local elections. Such a program will contribute to local reform and democracy.

CCEJ is concerned about various other issues in addition to the above. Many people bring their problems to CCEJ which helps enlarge our focus.

### **Organizations in CCEJ**

There are three main divisions in CCEJ.

The first develops policy alternatives. The Policy Research Committee, a central part of our structure, and its subcommittees: Legislation, Labor

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Management Relations Reform, Agricultural Reform, Special Committee for Local Autonomy etc. The Policy Research Committee has 17 divisions, such as Banking, Finance and Taxation, and Land. There are about 300 professors and specialists working in these committees.

The second is the Organizing Committee, which carries out the role of organizing members and citizens. It has various association: Citizen's Association, Youth Association,, Christian Youth and Student Association, Science and Technology Committee, etc. CCEJ has 30 branches and 20,000 members throughout the country.

The third is Special Projects and is aimed at deepening roots of the citizen's movement. There are the Korea Economic Justice Institute, the Anti-Corruption Center, The Center for Environment and Development, Korea Reunification Society, the Weekly "Citizen's Times" among others.

### **Open Forum & Reactions**

**Jung Ok Lee:** South Korea has had a long history of underground movement before and after the war. We are also the only country who are still divided by the former cold war ideologies. Inspite of that strong underground movement, the women's movement cannot catch up with the underground movement's political space. Only in the 1990's have the new types of social movement, like the CCEJ, appeared under the base of the long history of the underground movement. The South Korean case is a very unique phenomenon, that is the reason why we introduced CCEJ to you, to show you this type of combining civil movements into the people's movement.

I also want to add that because the women's movement occupies a very small space and there was a strong tradition of social movement, women cannot divert into the forefront of that kind of a camp. They have their own social movement hegemony. Most of the women's movements cooperated with that kind of social movement. But we cannot find any women's name in that tremendous drama. Women also get tortured because their husbands are in jail.

Just like the CCEJ phenomenon, the feminist movements in the 80's and the early 90's are still more supportive of men's movements without a conscious effort to understand the feminist interest. The two camps could not cooperate with each other very well. But these days the situation is more ripe to cooperate with each other. That's because the dominance of any of the social movements has disappeared and the feminist movement has their own political space. They have their own voice to get to the parliament to petition and to get the local

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government positions or to make some legislation on sexual violence, sexual problems, and family problems. In those areas we have begun to cooperate with each other and it's just a start. But we still have the unification problem and, if the government becomes more oppressive and conservative, how the feminist movement can keep their proper space.

**Ed Tadem:** First of all I would like to express my appreciation to our three panelists from South Korea for presenting different aspects of Korean social movements. One from a perspective presented by the CCEJ case study which emphasises more cooperation with a state which is in the transition to democracy and another group is represented by the organisation of Mr. Cho which emphasises more militant, perhaps mass based, actions in support also of the democratic process. And then thirdly, the women's movement, which as Jung Ok has pointed out, has been marginalised in the sense that its leaders and its heroines have not been accorded their proper place in the history of the democratic movement in South Korea. I see that these different tendencies are sitting beside each other and seem to be in friendly terms and perhaps that is one question that I would like to ask. Coming from the Philippine experience the different tendencies can't be in the same building because they would certainly be at each other's throats. In the Korean experience what I think is quite fascinating is that despite the differences in their approach towards social transformation, towards engaging the state, the concept of civil society, their attitude towards the existing government, they still manage to work together. So the basic question is how do you do it? Maybe some lessons for our Filipino friends on that.

I have some specific comments on the presentations of Mr. Cho and Mr. Park so I will go through them very quickly. Firstly, I am not clear about the democratisation process as narrated by Mr. Cho especially the concept of the preparatory stage where it is described as the Chun Doo Wan regime preparatory stage to democratisation. I am not clear as to why we should consider this as a preparatory phase especially since he says that the Chun Doo Wan regime, compared to the Park Chung Hee regime, had no consent at all from the population whereas the Park regime had, to use Gramsci's term, "least consent." So it would appear that the attitude would be the other way around. That the Park regime which had the least consent is probably the one that prepared the democratic process. Whereas Chun Doo Wan's regime was a backward step in the democratisation process.

Secondly, the concept of political society and its differentiation from civil society is also not clear. I would think that many organisations in civil society are also political institutions by themselves with avowedly political goals. If you look at it from that sense, isn't political society as defined in the

paper a subset of civil society rather than a separate middle layer between state and civil society? Or are the boundaries between civil society and political society unclear and sometimes probably weave in and out of each other? I would like some clarification of this categorisation. Related to that, I see that Mr. Cho looks at a particular category of society in general where he sees the relationship between three sectors: state, political society and civil society. But for the purposes of this workshop I would think another set of categorisations would be more appropriate and that is the categorisation of state, market and civil society because we are, after all, interested in the development of economic liberalisation, market economy and how these relate to social movements in the four case studies. So perhaps a clarification on the use of the terms of civil society in the paper is in order.

Now to go to some particularities with Mr. Park's presentation, I would like a clarification of the term "lawfulness." What does it mean? If this is a principle of CCEJ's activities? What does it mean to be lawful and does this connote that the social movements in this particular stage in Korean society should never approve of unlawful methods of political action? We read in the papers of the militant and sometimes violent actions by Korean workers and Korean students. You see all those dramatic footage of Korean students hurling bombs against the police in Seoul. How does CCEJ look at these actions? Would they condemn them? What are the reasonable alternatives, I would ask reasonable to whom? To the ruling classes? To the workers? Perhaps there is a need in this case to distinguish because I assume from the term reasonable alternatives that it could also be interpreted as realistic alternatives but what about the vision? What about an over-arching vision of a particular framework or paradigm which are always open to the criticism of being unreasonable or unrealistic from various perspectives?

Another principle of CCEJ is national consensus. I also want a clarification of what it means because I think for example, given Lee Jung Ok's presentation, we should see the gender demands as separate and legitimate goals. Would these gender or even class demands not be unfairly and unjustly subsumed under this concept of having a national consensus? Not to mention the fact that this term could also be used by government for its own ends. Perhaps not only looking at South Korea but other repressive governments, it is always a tendency for repressive governments to call for national unity and consensus in order to obliterate class, gender and even ethnic demands. I am quite curious as to why the CCEJ paper does not address the issue of the nature of the present government. Does CCEJ take it as a given that democratisation is well under way and that only reforms are needed to complete the process?

And then lastly, how does CCEJ look at the present Korean model of economic development: the NIC model. Does it approve of this? Does it think this is the way to go?

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**Jung Ok Lee:** We have had factions in the movement for too long and that has prevented us from taking any meaningful steps. That is enough failure for us. This is where the reunification problem, which is not as specific as labor problems, comes in as a national task to be achieved as well as an umbrella under which to cooperate with each other. That is the reason why we can still cooperate with each other.

Mr. Cho's presentation focused on the political dimensions in Korea and did not delve not on market societies, globalization or capital modernisation processes because, in our case, it is very specific. We don't think it can be applied to other third world countries because our success story was possible only with the sacrifice of our political division. We were the economic, not political, partners to America. So they aided us and they didn't calculate much about us economically. This explains our focus, but now we are into globalization as we are not keeping that kind of relationship with the U.S. anymore. We are also confronted with the same situation in other countries that emphasised open markets and America ordered us to open the door in the agricultural sector and multinational companies came in and we could not protect ourselves anymore. So we are just beginning to face that kind of situation, hence the lack of focus on the same. It is in this context of a very specific Korean situation that Dr. Cho divided political society from civil society.

Despite of our very strong underground movement struggles, we still do not have any open political space so we are forced to do something by way of parties. Even though it is not effective, it is the only reason why Kim Il Jung still has some affection for us. We cannot make our own people's party. We want to relate the underground movement to the political party. It is according to this background that you can understand the CCEJ phenomena because it is trying to get the national consensus to have an open space in the political arena and win elections. This is why we should collaborate with the middle class. For a long time the middle class and student intellectuals supported the people, we had taken for granted the national consensus because dictatorship is "bad." Everyone thinks dictatorship and division is bad. We should have one nation. The proposed target for social movement are taken for granted, regardless of whether they are middle or working class. We can cooperate with each other very easily to achieve this kind of purpose. But after the democratisation process, the directions have been diverted into each other. So CCEJ still wants to keep the support from the middle class because this class consciousness comes up in elections. In the last election, only the anti-dictatorship issue was hot. But these days, class issues have come up. CCEJ wants to keep that kind of coalition. But they do not want to divert the middle class into the upper class. So they should explore to catch the middle class interest in cooperating with the people's movement. They are exploring education problems, pollution, and

## Park Byung Ok, Redefining Civil Society: The CCEJ Experience

environmental issues to catch the support of the middle class.

**Cho Hee Yeon:** South Korea has developed from a pre-modern, to a capitalistic modern, to the capitalistic post-modern economy. With this new situation we are trying to find new roads to answer new problems. Present socialist countries fly through the pre-modern to socialist kind of trans-modern but have failed. As society develops at each stage, it has very different problems. We are confronted with very new social, political, and economic problems. So CCEJ and PSPD are trying to confront these new problems. We are trying to integrate the old movement's strengths with new strategies for the new problems in forming a new agenda of action.

**Jung Ok Lee:** Just before the Berlin wall collapsed, many young Korean activists like Cho imagined we could establish a socialist government. Many were very optimistic because we had a very big national consensus and social movement, but if we became rigid we would be blocking the road. So we are continually looking for alternatives and revising strategies.

Finally, on CCEJ's view on the present government. At first, we thought Kim Young Sam could do something for us because he was from a long branch of our democratic tradition and we wanted to support him so he can help fight the more conservative teams on which he was dependent on during that elections. Unfortunately, after one year he was closer to the conservatives so CCEJ began to divert from and be critical of him. But for the first year many activists, women's organisations thought we should support Kim Young Sam, we were disappointed. During that time our energy somewhat lost its way. So, it is our task to rebuild and go on.

**Arief Budiman:** From the two presentations, especially the one by CCEJ, I think we get the wrong impression as if the struggle before the transition period for democracy is different from the struggle after democracy comes. Ed tried to contrast these two phases and asked how they can work together. I think the struggle is always the same, only the emphasis is different. One struggle is unlawful and underground and the other is above the ground and lawful. I would say that Indonesia, at present, is in a similar situation like that under the Park Chun Hee government. There is a very repressive government, you cannot even have a discussion in the university without the permission of the police and the military. But still the struggle is at two levels. I think in the Korean case, maybe the emphasis by CCEJ maybe more instrumental than using the violent and unlawful methods. So I think the main thing is that we have to know that they are complimentary and they must not necessarily become enemies. They have to cooperate. It is only a tactical difference as long as the purpose is the same.

Secondly on Dr. Cho's presentation, I think that there should be more

**"...strengthening and building society is not just a question of resisting and militance, it's also a question of concrete and realistic alternatives."**

emphasis on the actors. You are talking about political change and civil society but who are the actors? Journalists, students, NGOs, workers and also maybe during Park's or Chun Doo Wan's regime maybe some faction of the military being used by the social movements. This kind of more detailed descriptions will be interesting.

Thirdly, I would like to know more about the international aspect of the issue. Maybe during the Park regime it was not so prominent but now

especially after the crisis of socialist state solutions, the human rights aspects, the US and Japan are very aggressively talking about human rights. How do you use this problem? How do you internationalize and establish solidarity among the civil society people of NGOs? Coming back to my question, basically I want to know the actors especially on the international side. I would also like to know, during Park Chung Hee or Chun Doo Wan, whether the international aspect was important knowing that south Korea is always the model country for the so-called "free world" and so they have some limitations. If the military kills students, not only the socialist countries react, but also the Americans by their morale force, by their morale slogans against Park's violation of human rights otherwise the north Koreans will use that against them.

**Fred Chiu:** I think from the answers on the Korean situation that we find a tremendous tension between two ways of thinking. One I would characterise as generalist which is a linear model of development, with some emphasis on the term transition. The term transition is always problematic, as is the term social change. How can society change? What is changing and who is changing? What transformation? What kind of transition? Whose transition? Transition to where? Another problematic term is democratisation. Whose democratisation? For whom?

It is a very particular case in Korea. I think the generalist versus the particularist is a serious problem of intention. I would like to say every society has this particularity as the concrete contradiction. But if we look at it in this way, I think it would be very easy to bite into the nationalist rhetoric of the uniqueness of the national drama. The best proponent of this is Lu Ping in China. The Chinese are unique so now you are in Malaysia and out comes the

uniqueness of Lee Kuan Yu. I think we need to have a second thoughts about this claim of particularity. I would claim that, within the concrete historical development movement, the Korean situation is not as unique as it claims. It's very similar to the Taiwan situation. Kim Dae Jung still has the people's nostalgia or aspiration because he is still their favourite. If he fails he will be another Kim Young Sam. That's what we learned from Taiwan. If you cling to party politics and are loyal to it when it is an underdog you have to be prepared because once it succeeds it becomes a state sector doing exactly the same thing. I think it is here where the particularity goes with the generality in a very strict structural sense.

**Vinod Raina:** South Korea is of great interest to us in India and I would like to ask some queries for my own clarification in terms of a comparison between the two countries. I would refer to your illustration which I feel doesn't give the particularity of south Korea because there is no long and short term agenda for the social movements in south Korea. I can understand that the democracy movement is very intensely emotional and immediately needed. But this is no reason why our social movements should be stuck only in the present democracy movement. The reason I ask is that perhaps with the longer tradition of a democratic, political functioning in India, the state remains repressive. Therefore, the short term pursuit of making the state democratic becomes the goal for social movements.

My second query is, do certain processes of democratisation within the society have to wait for state democratisation? I would like to know the case in south Korea because in India there is legal protection of women in very diverse forms. There is the dowry act, there is a child abuse act, there are all kinds of acts that protect the rights of women but there is still violence them inspite of all these state acts because violence is in the society. The state acts do not act as a deterrents to cleanse the society of those things. Now do we need to wait for the state to act or can we have a social movement without first a democratic or simultaneous divide with the democratic state? One of the important social pursuits in India is to free women from the bondage of the patriarchal family. You have economic independence, the first stage of that freedom. On one hand it seems to be a step towards emancipation, on the other hand it doesn't seem to be a step towards empowerment. What is the feminist movement in south Korea's analysis of this complicated situation? Similarly, one of the outcomes of the advanced capitalistic state model is an increase in power. Is increasing state power and the urge in the state to express that power and siege of imperialism inherent to this? Is that power then confined to the state or does society also share the glow of that power? I ask this question because Daewoo and Hyundai are now investing in India. I know exactly what kind of labour relation problems occurred in south Korea with these kind of corporations. What are the social movement's views towards their companies investing in

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other Asian countries? Do they see it as a reflection of the power of their own nation? Is there a national consensus or are there pluralist to view of expansion?

**Jeannie Nacpil-Manipon:** I wanted to ask about what the new attitudes, visions and strategies for reunification that are emerging from the social movements especially what are the new social economic and political basis for that under the new situation in Korea. The south is really pursuing a kind of post modern stage as you were pointing out while north Korea remains to be a very closed society. So what is the new vision and strategy for reunification under that concept?

**Clark Soriano:** I think the civil society is defined by paper what you put into it. I think the key question in civil society is defined by opposition and protest. What happens in a situation where you've won a little more space? Is civil society continuously going to be defined just by resistance and not against resistance and militance? I think militance and resistance is an important part of defining civil society. But when you're faced with space and people are asking for alternatives and opportunity to strengthen civil society then the question becomes a little bit more complicated because strengthening and building society is not just a question of resisting and militance, it's also a question of concrete and realistic alternatives.

Often times when we talk in the Philippines and we talk about being either revolutionary or reactionary. But that makes the reference point your strategy which I don't think is correct. If your reference point is strengthening civil society as something progressive on its own, then perhaps you cannot use the same revolutionary-reactionary handles. Perhaps the act of organising a cooperative or the act of organic farming, or the act of developing a people's cooperative bank can be as revolutionary, as progressive as street action or armed struggle. Then maybe the challenge here is to develop a new way of re-conceptualising the kind of framework that we are accustomed to as the ways that you used to categorise who is your ally and who is not has changed.

**Sujita Shakya:** I have some question on this civil society idea. I was in Korea last month and I got the opportunity to talk with different groups in Seoul and I was impressed with the Korean labour movement. My impression, however, is that they still haven't found the right path. On one side they are criticising the capitalist model and this fast changing and fast developing country. The other side is taking the citizens who work in the field. What's the alternative? So now we go to civil society, including the intellectuals and middle class people. Will you organize on this side and the labor side at the same time? Who will take the leadership? Who will coordinate the sectors for the national political movement? There is still a very limited political space open to the people. Koreans have a strong labour movement but legally they still cannot fight and

· speak out for their political rights. So who will lead and coordinate them? I think the Korean people need a national perspective and a clear vision to guide the country.

**Urvashi Butalia:** I am interested about how those of us who see ourselves involved in social movements deal with the question of difference. We talk about reunification or unification as if it were an unquestionable concept. It could mean, as in the case of India and Pakistan, that the need for reunification or the belief that I held that India and Pakistan were the same was actually completely fallacious. I could go there and feel at home because my parents came from there. I could go there and feel at home because it has the same culture. But actually what for me as an Indian was division, was for Pakistan independence. The perspective of the two was completely different.

In the same way we sit in things like this and talk about solidarity across cultures, across countries with some kind of nebulous view that we hold that we all believe in the same thing. But when it comes down to the ground there are, even within the feminist movement, huge differences. How do we deal with these differences specifically in the context of Korea if you're talking of a north and south coming together? How does this deal with the fact that they may actually be very different perceptions whether it is a good thing or not, whether it is a hegemonic thing or not?

**Jung Ok Lee:** The first query was how much the relationship was between the international network and our internal social movement. During 60's and 70's it was very stringent, even it came out from the UN human rights agenda or it was from Amnesty, we would not have survived without this networking. So it was a great help.

As to the question on who are the actors in the social movement. There were many actors, the most visible actors were the students. But they were

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always related with the people's movement. In the Korean situation trade unions operate very tightly so they can do much. Only the students and the Christian church can do something because they have an international network. No one else has a voice. That's the reason why the students are so violent. In the 80's many white collar workers joined and supported the student movement openly. Farmers and trade unions only appeared on the ground level in 90's. So that's also related with the first question why we are cooperative with each other. The trade union movement and the people's movement are so oppressed that they should help each other in that kind of situation. We just came out from that situation and we still have that kind of sentiment. Still we don't know if in this open space our movements can begin to diverge with each other and we still don't know how we will cooperate in the future on that.

Let us deal with the question on Korean multinational companies. Last May, for the first time, PSPD had a workshop on monitoring multinational companies in other areas. One or two years ago former activists formed organisations to help the foreign workers in Korea, but we just started monitoring the violation of human rights and trade union problems in Korean multinational companies in foreign country, Hyundai and Daewoo. We just started because most Korean social movement activists were very busy with their own problems. Most of us had experiences in jail and our points are always hard for others to accept. We have little space to do anything. We are too busy building our own lives such that we cannot protect others. But if we think about how much we get help from Amnesty or any other human rights groups from the international network, we realize that we should do something for

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them. So we started monitoring Korean multinational companies but we don't know how effective it is. We need help from all of you.

Now with regard to other problems on the conceptualization of civil society. Two serious questions are left. One is related with civil society and the others is with reunification. The reason why it is difficult to answer that question is it is a newly emerging phenomenon for us, especially with regard to civil society. Yes we

think we can use the capitalist society. We can label it as non-civil society as opposed to capitalistic society. But in that category of the term there are a lot of things we cannot explain so we think that that kind of a concept cannot put the old things together. That's the reason why we need some other concept besides the same type of western style civil society related with our long history of social movement. We created some kind of open space both in the underground and the open level. We call it civil society. We just borrowed the western terminology and this might be confusing. It may be that we might need to adopt a new terminology for that.

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**"I still think the labour and peasant movement are the so called the old movement and remains the central movement. And the so-called civil movement is a supportive peripheral movement."**

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**Park Byung Ok:** There was a controversy about civil society and the civil movement in Korea. They were divided into three partitions. One partition is committed to the orthodox tradition. They say they emphasised the class limitation of civil movement. The other partition holds the rightist conception of civil society and civil movement which overlooks the class division of civil society and civil movement. Actually I belong to the middle partition. I didn't start with how to define civil society and the civil movement. I started with how to deal with the new problems and new areas. I think there are actually new problems and new areas and new activities of people. So we had to make new action programmes to deal with these new problems. I borrowed the inspiration from Gramsci. Of course we're confronting Korean civil society which Gramsci was not faced with. Actually the militant people's movement are walking with the civil movement nowadays. But the civilian government is trying to divide the militant people's movement from the people.

**Jung Ok Lee:** Yes, they want to segregate the labour and farmer's movement from everyday citizens, the lower middle class, and the urban poor. That's the reason why that kind of civil society movement comes out. We do not want to be divided by that kind of politics. But still there are a lot of problems that come out, and in certain aspects the people might not be satisfied with this new type of social phenomenon. Until now we still have to be supportive of

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each other because the trade movement, as Sujita commented, is still illegal. We think that to enlarge their space we need some networking with them and make a voice for them. That is the reason why we call civil society a very confusing concept because it can be some kind of justification used by the government.

**Park Byung Ok:** I still think the labour and peasant movement are the so called the old movement and remains the central movement. And the so-called civil movement is a supportive peripheral movement. As for the reunification problems as I have mentioned in my paper, there are new orientations in the reunification movement. In the late 1980's there were only reunification movements which had a pro-north Korea orientation.

**Jung Ok Lee:** What is the reunification agenda in the social movement? The Korean case is very complicated. When I was still a student we were not allowed to read any Socialist literature. The socialist ideology was totally prohibited. We could only bring out anti-dictatorship issues, no one would dare say anything about a people's socialist regime for fear of the their lives. Until the first part of 80's the reunification agenda could not come out in the social movement. It was only in the late 80's that the reunification issue came out in the social movements among the very radical students. So after that our social movement camps divided into reunification first and people separate first. They had numerous debates on that issue. During that course, the Berlin wall abruptly collapsed and this fascinated any of the radical students. But since the change was so abrupt, we were caught with very little information on the circumstances of reunification. We were caught off guard. The conservative camp was able to raise its voice with regard to the German model of capitalist absorption. The students who didn't know how to deal with this new kind of situation were quiet. The same situation holds now in the 1990s as the social movements have been very quiet on the reunification issue because of its inability to cope with the sudden change.

**Suthy Prasartset:** Please comment on the role of mass media and the case of information technology in global development. I would like to know what role the media and the new information technologies play in the structure of people's movement.

**Jung Ok Lee:** We think mass media is a new oppressor. It is a new kind of big editor and power.

**Suthy Prasartset:** So, the press and the media sided with the state? Is there an independent, autonomous media?

**Jung Ok Lee:** No, we don't have autonomous media. We don't have state media either, most civil broadcasting companies are owned by government supported organisations. So, no pure private sector. But the staff and technicians who work there are more sympathetic with the people's movement. They want to write articles and make programmes for us but the senior managers don't allow them to do that. It is a kind of internal conflict in that area too. But even the most supportive members in that area would not be allowed to be supportive of the trade union movement. That's the reason why the representative were to do something for the trade union or the grassroots movement. To be the conduits for media politics. If CCEJ or PSPD did something they spotlight on us, but they are still apprehensive about focusing on trade unions.

**Tesa Encarnacion:** I was wondering about the role of the external forces in the social movement. For example with regards to the negotiation with north Korea and south Korea you always see a U.S. chief negotiator there. What is the impact of the U.S. presence? There was really no mention about it in the discussion so does that mean that external forces are not of any influence to the social movement?

**Jung Ok Lee:** Yes, it affects us in two dimensions. One is that the Americans are the capitalistic allies of our state that oppressed our social movement. We found it very hard to fight with this alliance. It is a big giant and a small egg. The other side is that no one dares to be anti-American. After the Kwangju uprising, many people still innocently believed that America was our saviour from the civil war. This kind of manipulation is still effective even among the workers who are more conservative on this part. They didn't know the structural network

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between our government and the Americans and Japan. At first they were surprised on how the protagonist U.S. democratic camp can support this kind of dictatorship. This kind of sentiment raises the question of anti-Americanism in the human rights movement.

# **Social Movements Response to the New Economic Policy in India**

**Gopal Guru**



**T**he New Economic Policy (NEP), which was introduced in the middle of 1991, only institutionalized trends noticeable even earlier. The argument in favour of NEP emphasized the market rather than the planned allocation of resources for economic and social development. Advocates of NEP argued that the Indian economy had been sheltered from the market forces and denied competition and had become inefficient.<sup>1</sup> This had resulted not only in high cost and poor quality of products and services which was unfair to the consumers, but restricted growth as well and hence, it was necessary to restructure the economy both domestically as well as globally.<sup>2</sup> This policy signified two major packages: stabilisation and adjustment. In India, the stabilisation programme was aimed at restoring balance on the fiscal side as well as in external payments. The fiscal imbalance was expressing itself in the growing budget and deficit of the central government. The resultant deficit subsequently caused the inflationary pressure on the economy.

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1. R.C. Dutt, *Planning and Public Sector*, AES 1993-94, PIRG, 1993-94, New Delhi.

2. *Ibid.*

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It was further argued that the structural adjustment programme (SAP) helped the country to accelerate the pace of economic growth. The SAP was classified into two categories :a) deregulation and privatisation of domestic economic activities i.e. debureaucratization and encouragement of competition in domestic markets, and (b) globalisation of the Indian economy.<sup>3</sup> This NEP, however, as pointed by several scholars<sup>4</sup> has far reaching implications for the vulnerable sections i.e. peasants, workers, urban and rural poor, women as well as to the ecology and environment.

The major focus of this paper is to look into the following set of questions particularly in the context of NEP. First, what are the major implications of this NEP particularly for the vulnerable sections of the Indian society? Are these vulnerable sections protesting against these implications which are the direct fallout of NEP in India? If yes, which are these sections, and with what intensity and magnitude are these sections responding to NEP? What is the nature of this response, is it organised or spontaneous, is it centralised or independent? What are the factors that shaped and influenced the impact of this intervention from these vulnerable sections? To what extent has the social movements made the state contentious? It would also try to understand these social movements' response to NEP particularly in the context of the different processes and levels of economic development in India. Thus, this paper seeks to find out if there are any shifts both in terms of content and form of the social movements in the articulation of their protest before 1980s and after 1980s.

While it is true that after 1980s there were protests from the workers, peasants, women, dalits and several ecological groups against the devastating implications of this policy, it cannot be said that these protests were led by one single political formation. In fact, the fora of social movements in India and also around the globe are undergoing radical transformation in the context of the changing economic scenario. In India, one can easily notice that the social movement at present can be defined as an autonomous people's attempt to participate in the struggle for democracy, development, cultural autonomy, self-determination, social justice and equality. The social movements, as we shall see in the following sections, have diverse origins and agenda depending on the historical, social and developmental circumstances that have necessitated autonomous social praxis. It is in this historical, social and developmental circumstances that it becomes necessary to go into the trajectory of these new social movements in India.

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3.V.S. Vyas, NEP and Vulnerable Sections - Rational for Public Intervention, EPW, March 6, 1993, p.405, 406.

4.Please see issues of Alternative Economic Survey 93-94 brought out by PIGR, New Delhi.

The first phase in which the social movements emerged in relatively organised forms and ideology can be marked from 1950 to 1970, the first two decades of Independent India. This phase roughly represented the emergence of peasant movements particularly led by CPI, CPM and CPI(ML) in Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh<sup>5</sup> mainly around the land question. This phase also represented the organisations particularly of industrial workers, by the Congress Party, the Socialist Party, the CPI and CPM and also some of the splinter groups operating at the local levels in the states. Thus, we have various trade union movements led by Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC) linked to undivided Congress Party, Hind Mazdoor Sabha (HMS) led by the Socialist Party, All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) led by CPI and Council for Indian Trade Unions (CITUC) led by CPM. This particular phase also experienced the tribal mobilization in the North-East and Maharashtra by the Naxals and Dalit mobilization by Republican Party of India in the Maharashtra in particular and in India in general.

The second phase of social movements which falls between 1972 and 1985 has seen the emergence of very powerful social movements like peasants movements in Maharashtra led by Sharad Joshi, Raith Sangha led by Nanguadaswamy in Karnataka, Khedut Sangh in Gujarat, peasant movement in U.P. led by Mahendra Singh Tikait, peasant movement in Tamil Nadu led by Narayan Swami and peasant movement led by Bupendra Singh Mann in Punjab.<sup>6</sup> All these movements basically organised the peasants around the question of remunerative prices for their product. Another feature of these movements was that they had come up outside the formal political structures.<sup>7</sup> These peasants movements particularly the Shetkari Sangathana from Maharashtra also tried to mobilize the women through its Mahila (women's) front on the issue of gender discrimination.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, the CPI(M) and CPI, both these communist parties of India organized Indian women under All India Democratic Women's Association and National Federation of Indian Women.

However, this phase also represented an independent mobilization of women on various issues particularly issues related to environment. For example, 1972-74 was a period that saw the emergence of the Chipko movement in the Himalayan foothills. The peasants, particularly the women, hugged trees to prevent loggers from cutting them down.<sup>9</sup> It is during the

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5.M.S.A. Rao, *Social Movements in India*.

6.Gail Omvedt, *Reinventing Revolution*, New York, Sharpe 1993, p. 27.

7.Gail Omvedt, *Farmers Movement in India and the formation of New Economic Policy - Journal Peasant Studies*.

8. Shetkari Sanghata (Marathi), August.

9.Op.cit., Gail, p. 77.

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same phase, and in the context of the growing atrocities and sexual violence against Indian women, that one could see the emergence of the women's united front in various parts of the country. For example, Dahej Virodhi Chetna Manch (anti-dowry consciousness raising forum) in Delhi and the Stri Mukti Andolan Sampark Samiti in Maharashtra were formed in 1979. In Madhya Pradesh, it was heartening to see the emergence of tribal and working-class women's organisation, the Chhattisgarh Mahila Mukti Morcha, which was associated with a radical workers union and a regional nationalist organisation in M.P. During the same period, particularly in Maharashtra, tribal women were also being organised under the banner of Satyashodhak Mahila Aghadi associated with the Satyashodhak Communist Party in northern parts of Maharashtra. These tribal women not only fought for the restoration of their right over the land and equalspace in Indian constitution but also joined hands with the dalits who were trying to get social justice through their cultural struggle over renaming of Marathwada University after Ambedker. During this phase, while the rural women were raising the question of rights over land, urban toiling women began to raise the question of housing. They became dominant forces in the struggles against eviction in the 1980s. The Madurai womens organisation, Pennurimai Iyakkam, organised womens committees in a struggle for the house site which they finally got in 1981.<sup>10</sup>

In this phase, India saw the emergence of a powerful and militant dalit movement in the form of Dalit Panthers in 1972. This movement developed in Maharashtra as a response to the deteriorating socio-economic conditions of the dalits and the growing atrocities against them. The Dalit Panther was also a reaction against the 'Uncle Tom's' image of the dalit political leaders. This Dalit Panther movement was not confined only to Maharashtra, it spread over to Gujraht, Delhi, Karnataka, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh.<sup>11</sup>

In the industrial sector, the Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh associated with the earstwhile Jan Sangha and now with BJP, the Hind Mazdoor Sabha associated with the Socialists, the All India Trade Union Congress associated with the CPI, the Center of Indian Trade Unions associated with the CPI(Marxist), and the Indian Trade Union Congress associated with the Congress Party in India.<sup>12</sup> These are some of the leading national level workers trade unions which basically fought on the issues of economism. Till 1982, these workers union were quite powerful and were representative of the workers in the country. Apart from these national level trade unions, India

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10. Gabriele Dietrich, *Women's Struggle for Housing Rights* EPW, Oct. 17-24, 1987.

11. Gopal Guru, *Dalit Panther Ani Samagra Kranti (Marathi)* Sharan Kumar Tribute -Dalit Panthers (Movement, Sugava Publication, Pune, 1989, p. 34.

12. E.A. Ramaswamy, *Industry and labour*, Oxford Delhi 1988, p. 93.

had state level trade unions that still exist in the industrial states of Madhya Pradesh (Chathisgrah Mine Workers), Tamil Nadu (DMK), and in Lal Nishan (Red Flag) Maharashtra.

However, these trade unions particularly led by the communist party became ineffective partly due to their own narrow economism and largely due to the anti-working forces that sabotaged working class unity in the hands of certain mercenaries like Shiv Sena in Bombay. The workers also rejected political parties who seem to have destroyed the workers struggle by using them for narrow electoral purposes. The trade unions were used by the hooligans like Shiv Sena who were basically anti political in the sense of socialism on the one hand, and the militant forces like Datta Samant on the other.

Datta Samant was an unique phenomenon in the history of trade union movement in India both in terms of unilintancy and the length of struggle. The strike of the textile workers led by Datta Samant Kamgar Aghadi Workers Front in 1982 was dragged on for eighteen months. This strike included ongoing actions in Bombay, and attempts for worker-peasants solidarity, greater solidarity among the workers themselves across caste and religious lines, as well as rejecting political sectarianism.

To sum up, this phase of the social movements in India can be characterized by the following things: first, the social movements were either directly linked to the political parties or these movements evolved into formal political structures such as the Shetkari Sanghatana of Maharashtra, Raitha Sangh in Karnataka, and Dalit Panther in Maharashtra. There were some kind of politics or political element at the center of activism of these parties. And hence, these social movements were not apolitical. Secondly, these movements brought the state into the center of confrontation. These movements made the state highly contentious because these movements organised their militant struggle against the state. However, as we shall see in the following section, INTUC and BMS could not be said to be absolutely anti-state. Third, The nature of these movements was organised and centralised in character even though some of them were outside the formal political structure.

It was during the period of relative economic stability that these social movements in India were more organised and centralised in form. The reason for this organised form was because the movements were aware that the state can play the interventionist role. These movements also assumed that the state has the capacity to play this role. In this situation, these movements, if organised, could realise some of their objectives (for the workers movement, economism and minimum wages; for the peasants, remunerative prices; for

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the dalits and women, social welfarism). In all, the movements in India during this period was more organised because the state was visible in terms of its relative response to these sectors.

In the present context, one can raise questions about the nature of the social movements, the levels of their activism, and around what issues are these movements organising their activism? When India adopted SAP as an important aspects of NEP, these movements seem to have lost their organised and centralised character and their solidarity seem to become extremely vulnerable to fluctuations.

Various experts on trade unionism in India<sup>13</sup> observed that the trade unions who are usually hostile to one another failed to bring about unity on the broader questions like their attitude to the government's New Economic Policy and Industrial Policy.<sup>14</sup> For example, as Tulpule further argues, while the INTUC and BMS were generally favourable to the new policy, the HMS, AITUC and CITU strongly opposed it.<sup>15</sup> This lack of unity over the NEP in India was also observed in the peasants movement in India. In another case, the Shetkari Sangathana of Maharashtra supported the new policy of liberalisation and globalization<sup>16</sup> but the Karnataka Rayat Sangh peasant movements in Karnataka violently opposed it.<sup>17</sup> The reason for such kind of fragmentation and lack of solidarity and organisation could be seen in a period of structural crisis because either the state is withdrawing from the social sphere or it is completely vanishing or being overshadowed by the super state. This lack of organised resistance of the social movements could have been brought about by the vacuum in understanding the new order both at the international level and with the internal economic stability that is yet to be crystalised.

Apart from these structural reasons, the informalisation of industries and the closure of sick units have also led to the marginalisation of the organised workers movement. Similarly, the peasants movement has been the victim of this informalization where the peasant cooperatives simply serve the profit-oriented needs of the private sectors who monopolise the milk and poultry industries such as that in Maharashtra.

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13. Bagaram Tulpule, Exit Policy in Public Sector, EPW, Feb. 15, 1992, p. 319.

14. Ibid.

15. Ibid.

16. Op.cit., Gail, p. 78.

17. Viswas Rane, Farmer's Rally Against GATT, EPW, Oct. 30, 1993, p. 2341.

In such a situation of informalisation and marginalisation which signify the dissolution of mainstream social movements into insignificant ones, we raise the following issues: Which are the forces that are putting up resistance to the NEP in India? What is the intensity and magnitude of this response? What are the forms of protests and degrees of solidarity of these resistance? The NEP that is adopted in India since 1991 as a larger package of the SAP imposed by the IMF and the World Bank have far reaching implication on the socio-political, cultural and economic life of the Indian toiling masses. The NEP has consistently undermined the contributions and sources of livelihood of small producers. This policy has placed the social services like health care and education beyond the reach of the poor. As stated by the NGO alternative declaration at the Copenhagen Social Summit, the SAP is going to lead to malnutrition of people, rapid exportation of natural resources, and deregulation of economy increasing the number of poor people onto the marginal lands.<sup>18</sup>

The provision of social services is fast declining with the budget crises of the state government. The influx of foreign investment and multinational companies (MNCs) further worsen the situation by gaining command over the resources particularly with regard employment, nutrition, electricity and environment. Thus, immediate attention should be focused on the entry of MNC into agriculture, public distribution system, industry, chemical and textile, and environment issues. It is in these sectors one could notice the resistance from the grassroots. The MNCs entry into the power sectors of India attracted worldwide attention due to the Enron power project in Maharashtra. The MNCs also entered the power sectors of Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. The Government of India received 87 proposals to create 50,000 MW involving an investment of over Rs. 180,000 crore in the private sector with foreign tie-up.<sup>19</sup> Of these, 28,000 MW worth Rs. 100,000 crores were proposed by the MNCs.<sup>20</sup> The Indian government amended the 1910 Indian Electricity Act and the 1948 Electricity Supply Act<sup>21</sup> incorporating new legal, administrative and financial provisions which allow and encourage private enterprise in the electricity sector.<sup>22</sup> The Indian Government also provided extra market incentives to attract private and foreign investment in the power sector.<sup>23</sup>

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18. Copenhagen Alternative Declaration, quoted in Alternative EU Survey 94-95 Alternative Survey Group, New Age. International limited, Delhi, 1995, p. 14.

19. Surendra Kumar, Power Sector, p. 206, New Alternative Economic Survey, 93-94, PIGR, New Delhi, p. 113.

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid.

22. Ibid.

23. Ibid.

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It is in this context that the U.S. based Enron Corporation, in collaboration with the General Electrical and Bechtel, was given license to install a liquefied natural gas-based 2015 MW power generation at Dabhol in Maharashtra. The Maharashtra government was alleged to have given more concessions to Enron than to any other MNC. In the amended 1948 Act, any project with a budget of more than Rs. 25 crore has to get a prior approval from the Central Electricity Authority in India (CEA). As well, the company has to give a 60-day notice in the government gazetteer and major papers so as to invite people's opinion or objections<sup>24</sup>. Only after this process can the proposal be certified by the CEA. In the case of Enron, the State government did not give proper publicity of the proposal and waited only for 30 days<sup>25</sup>.

Reputed economists, experts on power, journalists, political parties, NGOs and bureaucrats objected to the Enron project on several grounds. First, the Enron project is not necessary because Maharashtra does not require as much power and certainly not from Enron which will inflate the cost of electricity per unit almost three times more than the existing rate.<sup>26</sup> Thus, Enron is costly and misplaced. Second, Enron power project will not generate much employment because it will be a highly modernised plant thus requiring less labour.<sup>27</sup> Enron will also displace peasants from their land. The Enron project also destroyed the already yielding mango orchards.<sup>28</sup> Third, the fisherfolks opposed the project because it will release pollutants such as oxides and sulfides which will affect the prawn and fish cultivation as well as the other marine life in the area.<sup>29</sup> They also opposed the project because it might lead to another disaster like the Bhopal gas leakage.<sup>30</sup>

Apart from these immediate factors, there are also other factors such as the lack of transparency in the deal, technical deficiencies, and, the terms and conditions favour Enron even at the cost of national sovereignty. Furthermore, the people were against the project because it was against

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24. Paryar Astana, Enronche Akraman Kashasathi, (Marathi) Samaj Vidhyanan Academy, Pune, 1995, p. 49.

25. Ibid.

26. Ibid.

27. Ibid.

28. Ibid p. 16

29. Ibid p. 17

30. Ibid.

their material interest. The local peasants and agricultural labourers opposed the project because the government forced them to handover the land to Enron in 1988.<sup>31</sup>

It was the people's initiative which started the protest against the Enron. It later snowballed thus enlisting the support of political parties like CPM, Lal Nishan Leninwadi (Red Flag), AITUC, CITU, HMS, Bombay University Teachers Organisations, All Shramik Sangh (All Workers Organisation) Kokan Parishad (Local) Bharatiya Janwadi Ahadi (Indian People's Front) and Guhagar Bachao Samiti (Guhagar Protection Committee). Enron was opposed by BJP and Shiv Sena but only for tactical and political reasons.<sup>32</sup>

The anti-Enron movement used various methods like hunger strikes, demonstrations, Satyagraha, boycott and anti-Enron poster exhibitions.<sup>33</sup> In addition to those peaceful means of protest, the movement also pressured the Assembly House to abandon the Enron project.<sup>34</sup> The response of the Enron company and the state government was very tough and repressive. In the beginning, the state used the police to suppress the people's protest<sup>35</sup> which led to the forced evacuation of the peasants from the land they cultivate. In the face of the growing opposition, the state asked other controversial chemical plants like Starlight project to shift its plant from Kokan area in 1994.<sup>37</sup>

The anti-Enron movement was carried out in a more sustained manner. In view of this, the Enron Corporation allotted Rs.65 lakhs to "educate" the Indian population about the benefits of the project.<sup>38</sup> In addition, the Enron Corporation also pressured the central government to offer a return-guarantee to Enron contract without delay. For example, in order to pressure the Indian government, it showed on television how the Indian cloths are easily inflammable. The advertisement clearly suggests that Americans should not buy Indian garments.<sup>39</sup> Enron for its own interest was using American media in order to cut down the export of Indian garments.

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31. Ibid p. 54

32. Jeevan Marg (Marathi), Bombay, 6th August, 1995.

33. Social Science Academy, p. 45.

34. Ibid.

35. Ibid.

36. Ibid p. 54

37. Ibid p. 15.

38. Indian Express, Delhi, August 13, 1995.

39. Social Science Academy, p.15.

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Amidst all this local resistance, Enron with the active support of the central and state government was able to start the first phase of the project. However, the unity of the Shiv Sena and the BJP in Maharashtra challenged the government of its political interests which finally lead to the scraping of the Enron project on 31st July 1995.<sup>40</sup> Thus, the Shiv Sena and the BJP successfully provided the political initiative of the local people's movement in the Kokan region of Maharashtra. The Enron project is currently on hold but there are apprehensions that the state government is going to renegotiate with Enron after the 1996 Parliamentary elections.

In contrast to the anti-Enron movement which started as a local concern, the peasants movement against the entry of MNCs in agriculture started with a national character. However, the peasants movement was deeply divided between the MNCs and the NEP of the central government. The central and the state government welcomed the entry of private and foreign capital not only in fertilizers and pesticides but also in food and horticulture particularly in Gujrat<sup>41</sup>, Karnataka<sup>42</sup> and Maharashtra<sup>43</sup>. The farmer's response to liberalisation is quite varied. For example, one of the most important and militant peasants organisation - Shetkari Sangathana in Maharashtra has expressed its categorical support to the NEP policy.<sup>44</sup> As opposed to Joshi, the Farmers' Movement in UP and led by Mahendra Sing Tikait and Karnataka Raith Sangha led by Nanjundaswamy have opposed the pro NEP policy of the state government.<sup>45</sup>

In Karnataka, farmers across the country and farmer leaders and scientists from Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Philippines, Ethiopia, South Korea, Nicaragua, Malaysia, Zimbabwe and Thailand participated in a day long rally in Bangalore on 2nd October 1993 to protest against the Dunkal proposal.<sup>46</sup> The farmers argued that these proposals will have devastating effects on their livelihood in general and on their control on seeds in particular<sup>47</sup>. The leaders of Karnataka Raith Sangha also argued that they

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40. All Indian leading News papers carried this news next day.

41. In this regard, the study made by Prof. Manorama Saur, Prof & Head, Sociology Dept. Bombay University, Bombay.

42. Op.cit, Rane, P. 2341.

43. Maharashtra Times, 7th August, 1995.

44. Gail Omvedt, *Farmers' Movement : Fighting for Liberalisation*, EPW, Dec. 11, 1993, p. 2708 also see Tom Brass, *The politics of Gender Nature and Nation*, Journal of Pleasant Studies, London, Vol. 21, No. 3-4, July 1994, p. 37

45. Op.cit., Tom Brass, P. 37.

46. Op.cit, Rane, p.2341.

47. Ibid.

have the freedom to grow seeds and they will not allow anyone to hinder them in doing so.<sup>48</sup> Nanjundaswami in a very militant tone said at the Bangalore farmers' rally that farmers should not be content with ransacking and demolishing Cargil units but should aim at ousting the MNC from India.<sup>49</sup> The Raith Sangh also opposed the entry of foreign capital in agriculture by adopting 'Seed Satyagraha' and also suggested an alternative programme for seeds production.<sup>50</sup>

Peasants particularly from the dalit and tribal communities are also fighting against the intrusion of foreign capital in the agricultural sector. The Indo-French corporation has acquired 400 acres of land from the dalits and tribals for growing and exporting grapes thus seriously affecting the local market and the small peasants. The dalits and the tribals are fighting against the MNCs because it displaced them from their land without any promise of rehabilitation.<sup>51</sup> But these peasants have not yet achieved any major success.

The foreign capital may not be directly invested in agriculture but it brought the peasantry further into poverty. The Siner Made Pulp and Paper factory, a joint project of an Indian and an Indonesian corporation, in Pune District of Maharashtra was opposed by the peasantry for the following reasons. First, this project was given the permission by the irrigation department of Maharashtra to use 2 crores 50 lakhs liters of water everyday from the Ujani Dam thus radically reducing the irrigation supply of the farmers.<sup>52</sup> It would severely affect the supply of drinking water in the villages of Solapur District of Maharashtra.<sup>53</sup> Secondly, the peasantry opposed this factory because the polluted water would be discharged into fertile lands.<sup>54</sup> Apart from these protests against the MNCs, the peasantry also did not vote for election candidates responsible in making inroads for the private capital in poultry, horticulture and vegetables. This protest through election was evident in the 1995 assembly elections in Maharashtra.<sup>55</sup>

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48. Ibid.

49. Ibid.

50. Ibid.

51. have seen the struggle of the Dalits and the Tribals of Dindori Taluka in Nashik District of Maharashtra. Op.cit., Tom BraSS, P. 37-38.

52. Sinar Mas project that would destroy the peasantry the Phample brought out by Sinar Mas Action Committee, Published from Pune in 1995, p.4

53. Ibid. p.5

54. Ibid. p. 7

55. Gopal Guru, Assembly Elections in Maharashtra, EPW, April, 1995.

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Although there are differences between peasant organisations like Kisan Coordination Committee and Shetkari Sanghatana on the one hand, and BKU and KRRS on the other. These differences in the peasant movement obscure fundamental issues like anti-farmer policies and the lack of tariff protection to ensure higher domestic prices.<sup>56</sup> The peoples' movement has led many militant struggles against foreign investments. This was evident when the peoples' movement forced the Cargil units to withdraw its salt project from Kandla in Gujrat.<sup>57</sup> But the most militant struggle was led by the people's movement which could drive out the Nylon 6.6 project from Goa to Tamil Nadu. However, the militancy of the local resistance led to the killing of a person in the police firing in Goa.

The Nylon 6.6 project is a joint venture of the Thaper groups and the U.S. Multinational E.I. du Pont de Nemours. The local people's movement, NGOs like Vikas Adhyan Kendra, environmental groups, the Anti Nylon 6.6 citizen's Action committee, the Goan press, Goa Research Institute for Development, ECOFORUM, Goa foundation Gram Vikas Kendra, and peaceful society<sup>58</sup> all these opposed the Du pont project on the following ground. One, the project was dangerous not only to the natural resources, horticultural Orchards, Village ponds, springs, settlements, upland paddy fields and grazing land but it also undermined the local political authority and tried to push through the project<sup>59</sup> the local movements got annoyed with the project they saw the complete sell out of the state which tampered with the environmental laws so as to suit Du ponts interests.<sup>60</sup> It even did not take the permission of the Gram Panchayat of Goa and went ahead with its programme of constructing the project.<sup>61</sup> When the Du pont undermined the democratic bodies like Gram Panchayats the encouraged mob of 2000 people destroyed the illegal construction, and burnt down the valuable property of worth 1 crore.<sup>62</sup> Again in 1994, people resorted to village level anti-du pont meeting, Morchas demonstration gate meeting with violent demonstration.<sup>63</sup> The then Chief Minister tried to use TADA provision so as

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56. Op.cit, Brass, p. 37-38.

57. Social Science Academy, Op.cit.,

58. Bonnie A Meneses, Role of Individuals and NGOs, in Creating Environmental awareness in the state of Goa. A paper presented in the seminar in Environment, organised by Sociology Dept, University of Pune, 7 July, 1995.

59. Ibid.

60. Du Pont, a Jolt to anti-people project Anubhav (Marathi) July 1995, Bombay 24.

61. Ibid, p. 26.

62. Ibid, p. 20.

63. Ibid.

to terrorize the struggling people,<sup>64</sup> But people's were anti- Du pont militancy reached its height in 1995 when two women were seriously injured and one youth was killed in the police firing on the site.<sup>65</sup> Finally the local people sought the judicial intervention of the court which finally asked Dupont to pack up to Goa.<sup>66</sup> Thus, the people of Goa succeeded in driving Du pont out. However, like the state of Maharashtra and the case of Enron in Goa also the state and politicians played the same anti people- role.

However, it is not only the peasantry which is the victim of NEP of Indian government, but the rural poor are also the worst victim of this NEP because the NEP is going to affect the poor through getting rid of Public Distribution system. The poor for whom food security consists of access to food in spite of low incomes, public systems are the only mean to guaranteed food entitlements. However, the Dunkel proposals is going to destroy this PDS system in number of ways. One, as argued by the experts that the agencies like IMF, under the name of Nutrition objectives may dismantle the food security system of the poor in Indian.<sup>67</sup> Secondly, the Dunkel proposal also require that countries will maintain the PDS only though purchase at market prices and sell there food stocks at market price only.<sup>68</sup> The consequence of buying at the market price would deprive the poor people from buying enough food or no food from the market. Thus, the new economy policy is going to affect the food security of the poorer people in the India. The opposition to this Dunkel draft proposals affecting PDS, has been under as far as the social movements in the country are concerned. For example, although the left and democratic parties are raising voice against this policy both inside and outside the decision making bodies, but the NGOP working at the grassroots levels here also been opposite this policy by raising anti- NEP consciousness among the poormasses. Secondly, the social movements like trade unions, landless agricultural labourers, women, tribal, political parties and groups have also collectively opposed NEP affecting PDS. The workers, and Bahujan front in Maharashtra is a case in point.<sup>69</sup> While in Rajasthan several voluntary organisation working in the drought areas of Rajasthan, have reported the intensified distress as allocation of foodgrains under the PDS has been severally curtailed.<sup>70</sup> People have also

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64. Ibid.

65. Ibid.

66. Ibid.

67. Shiv, Vandana, *Free trade Vs. Food Security, Legal Perspective*, September 1993.

68. Thomas Singh, Kanitkar, Ahmad, Johnson : *Dunkel Text Implications for Rural Sector*, EPW, March 26, 1994 p.A-47.

69. Op.cit. Guru.

70. Kothari Miloon and Ashish Kothari, *Structural Adjustment Vs. Environment*, EPW, March 13, 1993, p.473.

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protested against anti PDS stance of the NEP, by throwing out from the electoral power those congress governments in Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra which the people that were responsible for making PDS inaccessible to urban and rural poor.<sup>71</sup>

The new Economic policy which is active at growing privatisation and market based onprofit has not only affected the rural poor through PDS, but it has also led to the rapid degradation of limited natural fisheries. The NEP has now has set itself on the task of privatising the marine life. The acceleration of this trend is apparent from Kothari's following observation. He says "in abid to tap the countries vast marine resources on a priority basis, the government recently cleared 1100 percent export oriented deep seed fishing ventures in the private sector, with foreign collaboration. Indian companies are quickly cashing in Tatas has moved the Orissa state government to clear large scale shrimp farming project adjoining one of Indian most valuable blakish wet lands the Chilika lake. The proposed project is aimed at exports primarily to Japan."<sup>72</sup>

It is against this invasion of private and foreign capital in of the coastal region the fishing community is chalking out its agenda quite autonomously and collectively. For example, the fishing community both from the Hindu and Christian fold have launched their joint struggle against the monopolisation of the marine resources by the mechanised boat lobby in Goa, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. These local initiatives are marked as father Keppan would call it politics from below-independent of the party and government.<sup>73</sup> This politics from below is mediated by Kerala Swantara Matsya Thozilali federation and The National Fish Workers Federation.<sup>74</sup> Thus, the fishing community is trying to keep the big fishing shark away from the indiscriminate exploitation of the natural resources and thus are responsible in maintaining the ecological balance. Similarly, anti drought movement in Maharashtra by the rural poor and the anti-dam movement of the tribals are not only fighting for the ecological reasons but their struggle is marked by the genuine social dimension as they are fighting for the restoration of their socio-cultural life which has been subverted due to the displacement of the former.<sup>75</sup> These people's struggles are evident in the

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71.This was the response of most of the news papers, journalist about the recent assembly elections in Andhara and Maharashtra.

72. Op.cit, Kothari, kothari, p. 75.

73.S. Kappan, Towards Radical Christianity, Negotiations, no. 11.

74.Op.cit, Gail, p. 136.

75.Ibid.

Chipko in the Himalayas, anti-Narmada Dam in Gujraht and Khednt Mazdoor Chetna Sangh in Madhya Pradesh.<sup>76</sup>

The left political parties<sup>77</sup> and certain voluntary organisations<sup>78</sup> are in the front to oppose the privatisation of public sectors like telecommunications. For example, the CPM has opposed the control between Door Darshan and American based CNN International Television company.<sup>79</sup> As it has been observed by K. Ashok Rao "there is an active proposal to privately place 30-40% of the equity of important and strategic public sector units with strategic partners. Which would be MNCs selected by the government. The tendering proposals in telecom ensure a pre-eminent role to line MNC".<sup>80</sup> In this regard, what needs to be taken into account is that the role of Indian government has been discriminating against public sector in the sense that public sectors are forced even at the cost of material damage to collaborate with their competitors.<sup>81</sup>

The crisis that the public sectors are facing due to NEP is likely to result in deviating from achieving its goal of balance regional and social development. These objective were sought to be achieved through policies of Industrial location and possitive discrimination favouring the Dalits in India. Therefor, it is for thus reason Dalits in India are opposing the NEP privatization.<sup>82</sup> Therefore, growing privatization and on the other there is the problem and industrial sickners which is leading large scale displacement of workers. As it is recorded by different observers, almost all the trade Unions irrespective of their political affiliation, have expressed their opposition to this NEP.<sup>83</sup> There nationwide 'bandha' were organised during last two years and the poling has been opposed and criticised at various official and other fora.<sup>84</sup> But despite the opposition government policy went ahead with its NEP policy . Thus at one level reflects on the marginalisation of trade union movements in India.

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76.Sunita, *Desperate Measures : Police repression of Anti-Dam movement at Alirajpur*, EPW, March 20-22, 1993, p. 501.

77.Jeevan Marg, 13 August 19, 1995.

78.Vikas Adhayan Kendra, Bombay Based Voluntary organisation are opposition ....?

79.Op.cit, Jeevan Marg.

80.K.Ashok Rao, *Public Sector Reforms, Alternative Economic Survey*, p. 103.

81.Ibid. p. 105.

82.Dalit opposition to NEP is evident in National Seminars, Conference, and certain Dalit led NGOs like Women's voice forum, Bangalore in collaboration with other NGOs is opposing NEP.

83.Sarath Davala, *The New Economic Policy and Trade Union response*, EPW 19, 1994, p.406.

84.Ibid.

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In the context of failing industries, the workers are searching for alternative. As a part of these efforts the workers have been trying to run the inefficient mills on a cooperative basis in Bombay and Calcutta.<sup>85</sup> Alternatives are also provided by the local people in terms of fighting drought situation and solving water problem both in Rajasthan<sup>86</sup> and Maharashtra.<sup>87</sup>

To sum up, in the context of NEP, one observes that the people's existence is less nation state centered and directed more against the international power centers which are neo-imperialist forces. This resistance is loose and discrete in nature but reflects very temporary moments of solidarity. The left parties after the collapse of Socialist Union seem to have reconciled to the fact that they cannot now homogenise other local protests but are associating themselves with other subaltern forces fighting against the new economic policy of India.

### Open Forum

**Vinod Raina:** I think Guru's paper has given us a lot of insight on various issues of debate both at the conceptual level and also at the three levels in the various social movements in India. But I think one of the comments is that the examples are restricted to the western state of Maharashtra, and my feeling is that it is a logical fallacy to try to understand India with these examples. It's perhaps impossible to create a paper in which you will get both a conceptual and empirical picture of India so I think that it's an impossible demand. But I think that when you are addressing an Asian and international audience that there is a need to show this complexity and variety. Hanging everything together can result in a very limited view of India. But if one is to attempt to generalize, such an endeavor would require some more empirical examples to give more substance to it.

It's my belief that there is a very strong social consciousness in India against NICHood, structural adjustment programmes, foreign debt, and the course of development which has taken over the rest of Asia. But I think we need to go deeper in order to understand why there is a strong consciousness. It is a separate question whether that strong consciousness is preventing the state from that path or not. There is certainly debate in India about capitalism. Do we record that path? No one can say that this is not an issue. Now why is that so? It's a very complex question we need to examine.

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85. Times of India, Sept. 11, 1995.

86. Op.cit, Kothari,

87. Op.cit, Gail.

I will go back to the time of independence in India in 1947 and state that some of the routes are to be seen at the time of independence. Muto indirectly mentioned about the differences between the pragmatic and conceptual perceptions of east Asian and south Asians, I am not sure how valid that is but there is an example that might support his view. India started in 1947 with two diverse perceptions, conceptualisations, and ideologies of development. It selected one and rejected the other. Gandhism as an ideology for development was rejected. It had those characteristics which Gopal Guru mentioned about ideology, mobilisation, and organisation. What was accepted was the more Soviet model of industrialisation as a basis for development or what is to be called Nehruism. But even though there was a rejection of Gandhism as a valid course of development at the state policy level, the fact was that Gandhism continued to be a very strong social movement outside the state. In India, there were voluntary groups which had the Gandhian ideology of economy, of social mobilisation, of the kind of life there ought to be. But it also had the actors who were people mediating with altruism and voluntarism. They were not fancily dressed and were trying to live what they were preaching. The hope was that the acceptance of large masses of this movement would be on the basis of both its intellectual content and its image.

From the late 60s onwards there was a very strong communist movement in India. But what happened in less than six years is that the communist movement decided to get away from the parliamentary democracy processes into an armed uprising of the Maoist kind. This went on until the late 70's. This kind of social movement attracted a very large number of intellectuals in the universities and was centered in many parts of India including affluent parts like Punjab, very poor parts like Bijar, and intermediate parts like Andhrapradesh. It had a kind of national character. It wasn't confined to one region and it attracted a very large number of intellectuals who went as gun carrying activists into the movement. But this movement was crushed, suppressed through state power by the early 70's. From the early 70's onwards you will find another stream coming in terms of work in India. You find city-based professionals like doctors, engineers, and scientists physically moving out to the rural areas and setting up small groups around their professions for the betterment of the life of the people. You had groups springing up throughout the Indian countryside of city based professionals who had migrated and were using their professional expertise in particular areas in terms of a positive reconstructional manner to better the life of the people as medical groups, as groups of hydrologists, geologists and engineers who are trying to solve local water or soil problems or teachers who go to rural areas for rural education and so on. There was an environmental concern around those times but that environmental concern was more a middle class concern for conservation. But a high point in this story perhaps what happened in 1973 when rural poor women in the mountainous region of north India took upon hugging trees so that the contractors will not be able to chop them down. This started the Chipko

**"The people's fight in India is against poverty and for sustenance. All the social movements that we have talked somehow focus on improving the lot of this kind of impoverishment and that is to be seen quite separately from the image of a violent demonstration."**

movement. "Chipko" means to cling to a tree. Now this movement to my mind has to be seen differently and that is what I want to point out in Gopal Guru's analysis which is perhaps limited. This kind of environmental movement was not talking about conservation the way the urbans talk about it. It was saying we require that tree for our fuel wood, it's for our use. You can't take it away to make hockey sticks and cricket bats. It was conceptually a very different kind of a movement involving contending claims to natural resources rather than mere conservation. It is, in some sense, both an economic and a social movement because in terms of loss of

revenue to the state by not selling to the contractor, it was an economic issue. And this is the variety that is lost by simplistically calling it an environmental movement. I would say that that is the movement in terms of trying to say who has the right to use the natural resources, the state or the people? Who has the right to decide to set up a dam which displaces two hundred thousand people, the state or the people? What is the process of decision making before such things are set up? That's the kind of question Narmada is asking. That's the kind of question which Baliapal missile range used when they want to set up a missile range for the military but the people refused to get out of that place saying that our oranges are more important than your missiles. This has to be seen in terms of something entirely different and this is something which came to my mind when I was looking at south Korea.

When we talk of the Indian social movement what is the context? The context is the government's very questionable count of who is poor, defined as people who get less than 2200 calories of food per day. By this questionable single factor count, about fifty percent of Indians are poor. The people's fight in India is against poverty and for sustenance. All the social movements that we have talked somehow focus on improving the lot of this kind of

impoverishment and that is to be seen quite separately from the image of a violent demonstration. But the image in Korea is that these militant students who are throwing grenades are well clothed and fed. When you look at an Indian demonstration, the ones who are demonstrating are not clothed or groomed well. They are poor. We have to keep that in mind and say that the media image plays a very important role because I always see solidarity with those south Korean students but I see them differently because they are very well groomed. So you have to differentiate and disaggregate these things. We're talking about that kind of power distribution where the dream that industrialisation would create a large proletariat working force has been shattered. Most of the employment is not in the organised industrial sector, it is in the unorganised industrial sector of artisans, load carriers, and women. The largest workforce is the informal sector which is not organised. It is this informal sector which has found that it needs to organise itself along certain conceptual or trade issues either as women's or environmental groups. As people fighting against the dam or for higher wages or better education. These kinds of groups are so strong in India and the number could be thousands and the state finds in them very strong resistance. Therefore, when the Indian state brings a bill in the parliament saying that since we have accepted the GATT agreement we have to change our patent laws to allow our integration with the world trade organisation, the bill is not passed. That kind of resistance comes from this kind of a grassroots actions which find expression in various policy-making bodies but they also get defeated.

You also find a strong resistance to NIChood, particularly to multinationals coming in. The reason is that the Indian state has invested enormous amounts in bringing technical infrastructure in the country. Making steel, cars, heavy electrical equipment, turbines and so on which at one point in time were symbols of oppression to impoverished people. But when this whole infrastructure is being threatened by multinational onslaught after liberalisation you find a very peculiar solidarity of trying to protect your own expertise and that is a new kind of alliance which people are trying to push forward. Formerly trade unionists would not support a big dam protestor saying that it is taking away the wages and employment of my colleagues. But today you find that they are joining hands in saying that we don't want this. It's a very strong political statement. I think it would be necessary for us to see this bigger picture, along with the corresponding experiential details, in order to get the hang of the Indian scene.

**James Keezhangatte:** I have a comment on the intellectual movement. I was quite interested with your discussion on the middle class and when you said that the dalits are a group that don't want to theorise. But I am surprised you see this is a problem. For me that's not a problem, that is what it is. It is not a problem and is simply a descriptive analysis.

Well my question is this. I don't see why you don't include business when you speak of the state. I think very strongly that you should bring in business especially in this new environment where everything is opening up. I would particularly refer to the Goa resistance to Dupont. I think women were participating, farmers and dalits were participating, everyone was there. So I would actually look at it as you would but look at it as a whole. So just as you would put emphasis on gender and other movements, I would also strongly suggest that you bring in business in the whole treatment.

**Arief Budiman:** We have this kind of problem when we talk about grassroots social movements. On one hand it is usually caused by very immediate practical things like the inability of workers to get jobs. They try to fight for something that is very real. On the other hand, when we talk about social movements, we are also talking about transforming society, sometimes from the top. So social movement doesn't mean that the aim is necessary social transformation. It's just to meet the practical needs of the people. Social movements have to be linked with some conceptual ideas that make the movement itself significant not only to the immediate practical life of the actors but also to the transformation of society. It is very interesting because India is a big country, there are many social movements from the grassroots and there are also many people who give meaning to these social movements. These are things that I think have to be clarified: how grassroots social movements are being interpreted and are given meaning.

**Rajan Bhattarai:** In India there are a number of indigenous people's or minority movements that are very strong at the grassroots level. How do you see these kind of movements as a social activist? I would also like to point out that India is considered the largest democratic country in the world. But at the same time there are a number of problems within this democratic system. I would like to find out how the largest democracy at state level deals with the numerous social problems at the local level.

**Urvashi Butalia:** Unlike the Koreans, when you put three Indians together, we fight. I have a very strong disagreement with the basis of your paper and particularly with what you say about movements. I have been trying to believe for a long time that ideologically there should be no barrier between men and women discussing with equal empathy and understanding the women's movement. But every time I come across a discussion by a man I am more than ever convinced of the opposite. I am afraid that I can only call your presentation very uninformed.

First of all, you started out by trying to place every one of those movements you spoke of in the context of the new economic policies, liberalisation, and globalization. There is a great deal to be said about what is

happening to women's lives and how women's groups are moving in this particular context. It's a very dual thing because in reality it is opening up many more jobs for women. You know that I am just making it extremely difficult to build political solidarity, but how can I present an over arching view of feminism that doesn't address the need for jobs? How can you say that this is short term when actually it is very difficult to convince people that monetary gain or economic benefit is not necessary in their lives. This is creating a problem.

**"How can you say that this is short term when actually it is very difficult to convince people that monetary gain or economic benefit is not necessary in their lives. This is creating a problem."**

You can't speak about new economic policies without speaking about the power of the media and without what the media talking about women's lives in India today. Poverty is increasing because the media, especially the foreign media, and that too is a dual as I don't want to take a nationalistic-chauvinistic line saying all foreign media are bad, is creating a dream world. It is true with the consumeristic ideology, with television reaching seventy percent of its population. What is happening is that the little money that poor women were earlier able to save and invest in a child's education now goes to buying a tape recorder. It is not they who are buying, it's their husbands. So there's the problem first of all. You spoke of the public institutional system. Who has been fighting the public institutional system and its inadequacies in India but the women's movement? I think that it is unfair to reduce the most dynamic conflicts and dismiss them just because they are not easily analyzed. You talked about the relationship of the movement with the state. The women's movement has had a very troubled relationship with the state which is no different from what most social movements in so-called democratic setups do. It is our state, we fight with it, we reject it, we need it, we work with it, we compromise with it, it happens in any movement. The women's movement is no exception. So I think that to say that the women's movement has compromised is a mistake, which movement hasn't compromised with the state? And which movement has not been enriched by fighting with the state?

You said that the women's movement started in the urban areas and filtered down to the rural areas. I find in that formulation a contradiction of what you are trying to reject saying you were rejecting the middle class, when you were

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actually taking a middle class view. The women's movement draws its history also from the rural movement. In fact as an urban feminist, have learned a great deal from rural movements. In your paper you talked about two women's conferences. You are obviously not aware of the fact that every three or four years there is a women's movement conference held which now has at least forty five thousand women eighty percent of whom are rural. It's not a huge number in a country which has four hundred million women, nonetheless, you cannot dismiss it. It needs a bit of sympathy to understand that movements go through a whole lot of very troubled phases and it is only too easy to dismiss what seemed as inaction, to judge by what you see in the media. That this movement exists or doesn't exist because you are then ignoring a whole history which doesn't find its way into the media. If today you do not see middle class women out in the streets in the newspaper in India that is not because the movement does not exist, that is because the middle class movement has become institutionalised in the urban areas.

You also did not address the question of religion. It is the most difficult thing that has come up for the women's movement. It has thrown up the most amazing theoretical and conceptual questions. I think it is the only movement in Asia which is dealing with these questions. You have to know how to deal with the fact that, on a religious basis, communal fundamentalist parties can mobilise women across the border and we have felt that the women's ideology that what we call feminism has an over arching commonality, it doesn't. What do you do with it? So I would just request you to deal with these things with a little more sympathy.

**Gopal Guru:** I would not really want the feminist movement to use this word "sympathy" as it involves an element of patronage. I would like women to attack me ruthlessly despite the fact I have been writing for and about women. Do I not get the chance to speak about women just because I am a man? I feel that I should not be sympathetic, instead I should be identifying myself with the concerns of the feminist movement. I am just trying to say that all those theories, radical, liberal, and revolutionary that are being advocated by the feminist movement really has no reflection in the life conditions of women there. You really need to incorporate their life situations so as to conclude your theory. Therefore, theory does not have specificity, it has universal appeal.

Can there be a separate theory for women? I don't think so. There can be a theoretical framework to understand the women's movement, but there cannot be a separate theory for women. Theory has universal application and therefore, maybe I have not captured certain illustrations which may be hidden. Otherwise I will not be able to understand the experiences in Korea or the Philippines because they have different theory or overarching framework. I can't play that dangerous Post-modernist game.

But I appreciate that there are reformulations and re-alliances taking place, for example the communists who would treat you as untouchables and outcasts because you are not going with their class model are now ready to negotiate. You find the workers, peasants and the women and tribals are fighting against the new economic policy. The business class is also having some kind of alliance, some sections are supporting the new economic policy the others are not and, therefore, you find that some sections are supporting the people's movement. I forgot to mention this Cargill project in Maharashtra where you find women, dalit and the peasants fighting against the environment project.

**Vinod Raina:** I think we are trying to discuss here country papers to have a certain conceptual and empirical understanding of social movements. It's quite clear that I will not be able to understand the intricacies of the south Korean or the Indonesian or the Hong Kong situation unless I spend a considerable amount of time studying them. And therefore my feeling is we are not in a university academic exercise in referring to articles so on and so forth. And the other thing that I would like to say is that I am also not here to say what my personal viewpoint is. I mean to be fair about everything I must present a picture of things which even I don't subscribe to and that's important. Probably my own ideology is Marxist but I will present other ideologies which I don't accept because people should know about them. I think therefore I would refer to the question which Arief has because I don't think that should be left out. Who are the people who are socialising the ideas of the social movements? There is a very strong left tradition in India which is a very important unifying ideology principle. But it has contradictions. That we understand because that is an Asian experience. Gandhi is a very strong ideological source but there are also lots of people actors who are university based activists and also activists situating themselves in other kinds of institutions but still doing their work of synthesizing and abstracting. So that provides another important conceptual intellectual base. But it is not yet a large crop of people that is

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refining that ideology and also lots of groups acting on that ideology. In fact in the social movements, the socialist ideology is very strong but what I would like to refer to is that there are a lot of attempts by people, particularly after the dismantling of the Soviet Union. We must also remember that the communist party of India is the largest communist party in the world now. They rule the state of west Bengal whose population is equal to many Asian countries and they are on the fringes of ruling the state of Kerala where they are the largest opposition party. So the communist party is not just an ideologist, it has a very strong party base.

There are lots of academicians who are trying to figure out alternative conceptual frameworks by not sitting in coffee houses and universities but trying to base them from a set of praxis by examining groups and trying to relate it to existing notions what we have gone through. Such is the alternative trade union movement of mine workers which is trying to forward an alternative framework for trade unionism and there are a whole lot of intellectuals in India who have spent time trying to give this new form of trade unionism a theoretical basis. A trade unionism which is not steeped in economic issues but in social issues and economic issues together There is also a very strong women's

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**"...a lot of progressive thinkers had understood social movements and power in relation to the state. Now that we are saying that power is not only in the state and in a broad ambiguous term like civil society, we get more confused."**

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component to this and I would like to plead here as a feminist that women's movement should not be seen autonomously as those controlled by a group of women who are necessarily talking in feminist terminology but trade unionism I don't understand why someone should say that we don't have a women's movement of that kind. So the point is that I think many of them are interwoven. The problem is our categories. If we want to delineate them by whatever academic categories we try to look at the most dominant factor and throw the rest, that's our problem, that's an intellectual problem. So I think we need to redefine in our own way these categories.

**Clark Soriano:** Just three things. In relation to the middle class, the Philippine experience

is not so much trying to win them over as thoroughly progressive but recognising that you can win over the middle class as the middle class and it is perfectly fine and okay. In the sense that at certain moments in our history there was particular use. Perhaps the frustration can also be because winning over the middle means something more than what is possible at the particular moment. Number two, I think I like the fight. In the discussion in south Korea it helped me understand civil society in terms of how social movements resist the government in a very unjust situation. But here you have a situation where you are trying to understand civil society not from the point of view of those engagements but from the point of view of the dynamics within civil society itself. This I think is very important and the key word here I think is nuances and decoding. A while ago Arief was talking about the need to make some conceptual links. Perhaps the conceptual links can go in two directions. One direction could be what's the conceptual link between the dalits, the women's organisations, the farmers organisations to national transformation and social transformation. But that's just one part of the question. I think more importantly the conceptual links also have to be made within those various civil society groups themselves. I say this because for a time a lot of progressive thinkers had understood social movements and power in relation to the state. Now that we are saying that power is not only in the state and in a broad ambiguous term like civil society, we get more confused. I think the way out of that confusion is when we try to decode what Vinod calls as contending claims of the resources at the local level, what we call as the dynamics within the dalits and women. Because I think decoding this set of messages has a very profound meaning of our understanding power, social transformation and civil society.

**Cha Mi Kyung:** I was very impressed about your country movement. But in terms of the migrant issues, what is your stand? For example now a lot of migrant workers are going to east Asia. How can you also consider the migrant workers issue in Asia? In my opinion, in your country the labour organisations are not fully concerned about this issue and therefore do not organise migrant workers outside. Even though you have a very strong ideological theory I don't think this is applying to the practical level.

**Gopal Guru:** I can say it is an endless debate. In India I cannot really see any ideological work done by a large number of people, even in Gandhi's state. But let us be objective and find the social base of any ideological appeal. You find there's a variation even within the dalit and peasants movements. Now there is a comeback of this non-dominant, non-Brahmin ideology in the form of the Mandal commission which is a package given by the state central government in the form of reservations of jobs. But it is not a social movement because it has a political motivation. It has formed a political party and they have kept the political party in certain states so it no longer a social movement. And there are different questions coming up. Communalism is not doing very well because of the lack of sustainable support. The dalit castes are coming

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together but then they are getting fragmented because there is no serious ideological mobilisation and it becomes serious because you have a common economic interest now. So that is the problem there in terms of social following. And I think it is not bad because we should let other flowers blossom. Lets have different opinions. At least there will be some kind of concession which cannot be forged. It is a very harmful activity that we create concession out of a very complicated process.

Civil society is a desirable thing. I want a civil society but the question is what kind of civil society. There are different versions of civil society. There is bourgeoisie civil society where you are free to sell your labour and the bourgeoisie are free to buy your labour and there's harmony and no contradiction. Do you want that? Do we want civil society across the region? I would want that. So I have to gradually, slowly dismantle those structures that are obstructing the formation to this global civil society. So by doing this kind of thing I only have to remodel my ideological package. I cannot impose my ideological package. I would try to make the Gandhian project complimentary to my model or mine to Gandhian. So it is a very complicated process. If we want to learn we have to get confused.

The middle class, along with the livelihood movements, are there but they have their limitations. Like the Cargill and the Chipko movement there is the question of survival. But who has access to these local resources? Despite the fact that the liberalisation process is really supporting their livelihood, there are still limitations.

About the middle class, whether the middle class is available for revolutionary appropriation. Can you make use of the middle class? I think so. And this is not my personal view, I am just sharing the views of those people who have very serious doubts about middle class capabilities. So the middle class they have been there in the forefront. They are privileged people in terms of education and technical exercise. But what is happening is that knowledge becomes power. You keep the people deliberately ignorant in terms of techniques. Language also becomes a technique weapon. How many people know the dominant Sanskrit? How many people know Pali? How many people know English? How many people know Hindi? How do you communicate? Language creates perceptions that are then passed on to the people and this may be a dangerous situation.

# **The Rise of NGOs as a Critical Social Movement in Thailand**

**Suthy Prasartset**



**T**he growth in the activities of non-governmental development organizations (NGOs) and people's organizations (POs) in their search for alternatives, as manifested in diverse economic and political struggles, has resulted from a polarised model of development followed by the Thai state. In the Thai context, this model may be labelled as the 'transnationalized model of accumulation,' implying, to a large extent, the 'Thai elites' submission to the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF). Successive national economic and social plans have seen substantial involvement on the part of the personnel of the two organizations.

This model is technically founded on the ideology of developmentalism, consumerism and militarism. The Thai state has committed itself to an economic policy which is mainly growth-oriented, urban-biased and externally focused. It also almost unconditionally upholds the principle of the free market, among which related policy measures include promotion of foreign investment, export promotion, liberalisation and

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deregulation and market pricing of essential public services. Following this policy, the Thai state has increasingly abdicated its role in providing for the economic well-being and job security of the popular sector. As a corollary, the corporate sector and the bureaucracy have been greatly aided in their phenomenal growth.

As a consequence, such a development model has resulted in the concentration of economic and political power in the hands of certain social groups, thereby causing marginalisation and disempowerment among the popular sector. In actual fact, high growth has also offered limited opportunity for a small section of the middle strata. However, such an opportunity remains illusory for the majority of the people who are marginalised in the process of 'development.'

In sum, this transnationalized model has resulted in the maldevelopment of Thai society. Such maldevelopment is manifested in, a.) a dual process of the concentration of economic and political power in the corporate and state sectors, and the marginalisation of the popular sector; b.) widening gaps in the regional and sectoral distribution of gains from the development process; c.) the rapid depletion of natural resources which constitute the popular sector's life support system, and, d.) the rapid erosion and decay of the environment and ecology. Such a maldevelopment process, with its detrimental impacts on the population, has engendered a wide variety of socio-political struggles, hopefully with far-reaching consequences for the existing political configuration of Thailand. It is within this maldevelopment context that the Thai NGOs, along with the POs, have emerged as an essential part of the critical social movement in Thailand.

### **The NGOs and Their Activities With POs**

#### **A.) A Brief History of the NGO movements in Thailand**

Much of the early history of the NGOs movement in Thailand was associated with the name of one eminent person, Puey Unkpakorn, a socially-concerned bureaucrat and scholar as well as a 'social activist.' He was formerly the governor of the Bank of Thailand, and at one time was the rector of Thammasat University. In 1969, he established the Thailand Rural Reconstruction Movement, (TRRM) which was the first non-governmental development organization in Thailand. The philosophy of this organization includes the following principles: the right to a secure livelihood, education, health, self-government and non-violence.

The key idea was that rural reconstruction is human reconstruction. This movement used the economic uplifting of the rural poor as the major means to achieve human development. During this period, these activities

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were also related to university students' community development camp activities, exposing middle-class students to the plights of rural peasants.

At present, several of these early field workers continue their active roles in the NGOs. They are the key people who have worked in various parts of the country and are now active in alternative livelihood projects, networking and policy advocacy. In 1970, Puey Unpakorn established the Thammasat University Graduate Volunteer Center (TUGVC) which continues to this day. The function of this center is mainly to supply personnel for the voluntary organizations. Although a large number of participants have ended their active participation in the work of the NGOs, many of these graduate volunteers have still continued to be involved with the NGOs' activities; some are in leading positions within both large and medium-sized NGOs. Similar graduate volunteers program was later established at Khon-kaen University in the Northeastern region in 1986.

In 1974, Puey Unpakorn established the Meklong Integrated Rural Development (MIRD) project. A new concept of action-oriented research was introduced into the study and planning of this rural development project. University staffs were also actively involved. The participating universities were already offering opportunities in non-formal education, (e.g. Mahidol University in health care (Health); Kasetsart University in agriculture (Livelihood); and Thammasat University in self-government. In this way, almost all these institutions were helping to give concrete expression to the ideals and philosophy of the TRRM as well. In addition, some links had been forged with (POs), such as that in the Yokkrabutr Subdistrict, which were centered around a respected local monk.

About three years after the military coup of 6 October, 1976, the activities of most of the development NGOs came to an almost complete standstill, especially those centered on civil liberty and human rights. Since 1976, after the bloody coup, several members of the Left in urban centers and peasant leaders had to seek sanctuary in the jungles, thereby joining the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) as members of its front organizations.

Although Thai NGOs were to adopt a low profile during these years, in the period since about 1976, when civil war in Kampuchea drove countless numbers of refugees into Thailand, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and its partners in Thailand have stepped up their relief activities. Several international NGOs came to operate in Thailand, e.g. REDD BANA, Save the Children Fund, Canadian University Services Overseas (CUSO).

Paul Turcott and his Thai colleagues thought that it was unfair to help only the refugees from neighboring countries, whilst neglecting the Thai

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peasants whose livelihood was just as meagre and deteriorated. So, they jointly established the North East Thailand Project (the NET) at Surin province around 1981. This project has continued until now. It adopted the basic philosophy of the TRRM as mentioned above. Its approach is based upon integrated rural development.

Since 1979, after the Thai government issued the Prime Minister's Order No.66/2522, several former student activists who 'went to the jungle' had returned home. A number of them joined the NGOs activities.

Phoomtham Wechayachai, former deputy of the Thai Volunteers Foundation, described the situation as follows:

"In 1979, (the former Prime Minister) General Kriangsak Chamanant announced a policy to reduce ideological conflicts in the country. At the same time, he gave financial support to the Duang-Pratheep Foundation, an NGO working on the problems of the urban poor. The various NGOs then in existence came to realize the need for closer cooperation among themselves. After several sessions of seminar discussions, several new organizations and networks were formed among NGOs. These included: the then Thai Volunteers Service Project, Committee on Dissemination and Promotion of Development Works, Rural Document Center, Mass Media for Development Groups, and *Chomram* or Clubs of Regional NGOs Workers, etc. In addition, NGOs which worked in similar sectors also formed themselves into networks for closer coordination and exchanges of information, e.g. Network on Children Development, Network on Primary Health Care, Network on Human Rights, etc."

In sum, the easing of political conflicts and the state's drive towards lessening such ideological confrontation was an important facilitating factor behind the relatively rapid growth of the NGOs' activities in Thailand since around 1980. By the mid-1980s, there were about 50 new NGOs, mostly small, working in search of alternative livelihood with rural peoples. Now the development NGOs number more than 350.

In 1984, the NGOs submitted a letter to the Ministry of the Interior, proposing to establish a Joint Committee of Public Agencies and the NGOs. This encouraged the National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB) to establish a joint committee of government agencies and the NGOs for rural development. During this period there had been serious discussions among the NGOs groups and their various networks on the idea of forming a national coordinating committee. This culminated in the establishment of the national NGO Coordinating Committee on Rural Development (NGO-CORD) at the concluding session of the national congress of the NGOs in December, 1985. The NGO-CORD, despite its rural-orientated name, has since become a national coordinating organization for all types of NGOs. Its over 200 NGO members maintain strict autonomy in their organisational affairs.

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The NGO-CORD has the following objectives:

- to develop the cordial relationships and collaborative activities among NGOs into a coherent movement.
- promoting the coordination of joint activities between NGOs, government offices, and peoples' organizations for rural development.
- promoting networking among NGOs engaged in similar activities, as well as among regional and national NGOs.
- promoting the establishment of POs and networking.
- enhancing the role, image and efficiency of all NGOs.
- raising public awareness and consciousness about social problems, the NGOs' activities, (especially in the rural regions) as well as promoting public support for the NGOs.
- disseminating information on social problems for public discussion, and presenting the views of the people and their proposals for policy measures to the government.

### **B.) Changing Strategies and Activities of the Thai NGOs**

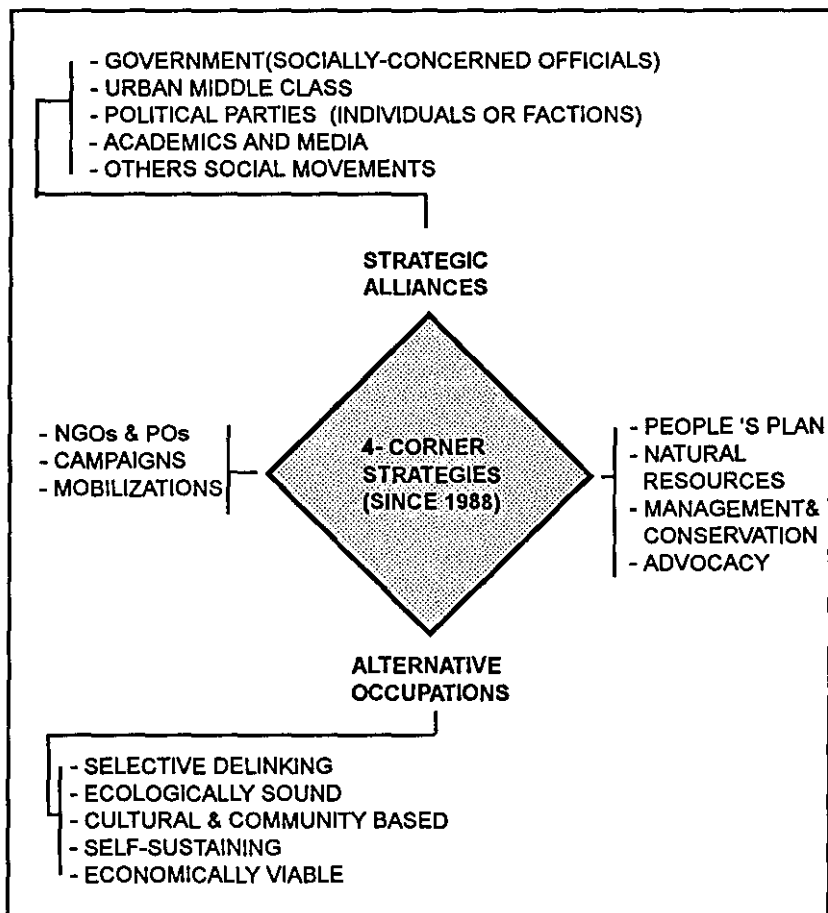
Since 1981, several NGOs have expanded their field of activity into several parts of the country, especially the Northeast, a region with the highest degree of marginalization owing to the maldevelopment process. The activities of the NGOs have since expanded nationwide.

Judging from the evidence of more than one decade of field experience and efforts to intervene at national level in the formulation of policy on issues of concern to them, we can identify four major categories by their activities, designated as 'the four-corner strategy.' These are: 1.) the search for alternative livelihoods; 2.) the networking of NGOs and POs; 3.) the advocacy of a policy for a people's plan, community rights in the management of local resources, along with the right to a sound environment; and 4.) strategic-alliance building with other social forces.

#### ***1.) In Search of Alternative Livelihoods***

In the early 1980s, most development NGOs were heavily involved in the question of solving the basic livelihood problems of the peasants. The strategy during these years involved the principle of self-reliance and people participation, with the promotion of groups such as small cooperatives, rice banks, fertilizer banks, cattle banks, savings groups, community revolving

Chart 1



funds for village stores, and handcraft groups, for example. The main idea was to organize the people into groups, both to be headed by formal and/or traditional leaders. "The answer is in the villages" was the main slogan of most of the rural NGOs at this time. The marginalised peasants and NGO workers struggled hard to seek new alternatives. In their view, alternative occupations should conform to some or all of the following principles: selective delinking, ecological soundness, being culturally and community based, self-sustaining and economically viable.

The general trend was for the peasants to practice partial delinking from the market, opting for integrated or mixed farming. In the search for

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such alternative farming systems the initiative of the peasants in using methods based upon indigenous knowledge provided the main stimulus. The result was the transition from specialized rice farming into mixed farming, which was basically aimed at serving the needs of peasant households before those of the market.

During these years, there was an attempt to revive the study of local history and culture, along with a rediscovery and application of 'peasants' wisdom' or indigenous knowledge systems for the improvement of rural conditions, especially in synthesizing various farming practices into a mixed farming system. Awareness of, and practice in the applications of traditional medicines was promoted, especially in the management of primary health care within the village. A process of the mutual exchange of learning between peoples and their 'organizations' also formed a part of this strategy. Visits between the community leaders were encouraged to exchange advice on successful methods of production and farm organization. Moreover, local 'wisepersons' were invited to participate in and contribute to seminars and workshops on rural development, at both the local and national level.

### *2.) Networking of NGOs and POs*

In the search for alternative livelihoods, at the local level, the NGOs had tried with certain measure of success to link up various sectoral activities into networks for the sharing of experiences and information and to coordinate their activities. As a result of these efforts, several networks of people's groups and organizations were formed. These networks included:

- farmers engaging in integrated farming,
- cattle-raising groups,
- local handicrafts (weaving/sericulture) groups,
- revolving funds groups,
- peasants wisepersons (local intellectuals),
- *Hmuang-fai* or traditional irrigating organizations and community culture,
- community forest campaigns,
- Development Monks.

The networking of these groups and organizations has facilitated the process of mass mobilization during protest rallies. In certain cases where people were suffering similar problems, they often formed themselves into regional networks to campaign and mobilise for rallies at certain times and places, e.g. *Klum Pa-Choomchon* (Groups Campaigning for Community Forests) in 8 Provinces, Cattle-Raising Groups, Network of Development Monks in the Northeast, Network of Farmers Facing Soil Salination Problems.

As mentioned in above, the networking among NGOs themselves took the form of NGO-CORD, which has been closely linked with most of the

POs.

In summary, during the search for alternative occupations, the NGOs played a crucial role in supporting these networks, especially in linking the leaders of groups or organisations in the network, in providing information, in coordinating campaigns and protest rallies and, later, in the support of public advocacy activities. It will be shown later that these various networks were instrumental in the military struggle and in the process of the democratisation of Thailand.

### *3.) Policy Advocacy on Rights to Resources, a Sound Environment, and Other Issues*

Economic recovery since 1987 has been strong and the NICs' mentality has been the name of the game. The government policy put emphasis on three main industries: those of export, tourism and agri-business. A great influx of overseas capital, especially from Japan, turned Thailand into a new export production base. A scramble for lands in strategic locations such as the eastern seaboard and sites for tourist resorts, golf courses and agri-business brought about waves of land speculation and a consequent rise in land prices. This has inspired a number of conflicts, including a struggle for lands, community forests, mangroves, and concession lands for fast-growing trees (Eucalyptus). All have involved the eviction of peasants from their lands. This is the beginning of an era of polarised 'resource conflicts,' pitting the state and corporate sector against the popular sector. The NGOs have risen to defend the rights of local communities by undertaking active policy advocacy works, as well as bringing the plight of affected peasants into public debates.

Within the context of these sharpened conflicts, the people and NGOs have devised certain strategies for their campaign of resistance. The struggles of the people have now attained a new dimension, i.e. the use of policy advocacy at the national level to effectively solve their problems. Struggle at the local or regional level may achieve certain results in mitigating the devastating impacts of state and corporate projects, but again, in several instances the struggle has had to be waged at the national level in terms of removing certain legal structures or making changes at the national policy level, especially in terms of communities' rights to manage local resources such as community forests, grazing lands and ponds. There had been several instances of these new activities. However, brief cases of NGOs' and POs' struggle at the national level of policy advocacy will be given in the section after next.

### *4.) Strategic Alliance Building*

It will be apparent from the above discussion that in carrying out their activities, the NGOs and POs often encounter difficulties, either in their local socio-economic development projects, regional networking, or advocacy work at national policy level. Such difficulties arise from those whose interests are affected by the NGOs activities, such as big business groups, and the so-called 'local influentials' and local officials. Recently, the leaders of the NGOs and POs have begun to pay attention to the formation of alliances with other social groups, in order to gain wider support and greater legitimacy for their activities, as well as building up their internal strengths through further organizing and networking. Such alliance-building activities have already been undertaken to some extent by some of the NGOs and POs. However, the following points should be noted.

Firstly, in their activities, be they local or national, there is a need to maintain a 'positive' relationship with government officials, in spite of the danger of cooption. Any projects which are misinterpreted by officials will face severe problems from the outset. Usually, the development NGOs are hostile to the idea of a close relationship with the government. However, it is necessary to identify certain socially-conscious officials who share the same concerns. The case of the Raindrop Association working to restore mangrove forest and provide for the protection of coastal fishing waters for small fisher-folks is a successful example of this. The point is to coordinate, rather than integrate, relevant activities with the government, whilst keeping a firm hold over their own policy measures.

Secondly, in the various policy advocacy campaigns, NGOs also need technical support and information from academics, as well as resources and the support and understanding of the urban middle class. Given the information, knowhow and resources, some form of link with individual politicians from the various parties will serve to strengthen their lobbying power. This point has been duly noted by the NGOs, as can be seen from several conferences organized to discuss controversial issues and exchange views with other socially concerned groups such as academics, politicians, the public and the mass media.

Finally, the legitimacy of the movements needs to be carefully considered, especially with regard to the public image of their organisations and activities. Thai society has long been under authoritarian rule, and dominant thinking is still greatly influenced by the national security mentality. The general public, especially the rising urban middle class and the related media, tend to portray the NGOs' activities as being nothing short of trouble making. Although such conflicts are location and sector-specific, such as in the protest against dam construction or against the arrests of Burmese

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students, they tend to convey an inaccurate impression of the NGOs as a whole. While maintaining their own identity and ideals, the NGOs need to make a greater effort to inform the public and to open a dialogue with certain sections of the media which often 'misrepresent' their activities. The question is one of how to maintain the legitimacy of the movement.

As mentioned above, the NGOs and POs networks have been consolidating their links and improving their organizational skills and performance through various types of socio-economic activity. However, at certain political junctures, when the fundamental freedoms and civil liberties of civil society were violated, as in the case of the February coup of 1991, the people in these networks and organisations were well equipped for political activities as well. They had proven this point through their active participation in the broad-based, multi-class, anti-military coalition formed to restore democracy in Thailand. This is dealt with more fully in the following pages.

### Cases of the Struggle of NGOs and POs

#### The National Forest Policy and Land Resettlement Scheme (The *Khor-jor-kor*)

During the Chartichai administration, in 1988, the government wanted to establish a National Forest Policy. Consultation sessions were held among government officials, and members of the NGOs in an attempt to formulate a coherent policy with the avowed objective of benefiting the peasantry. However, much to the disappointment of the NGOs' representatives, their views were not incorporated in the policy. The policy had, however, accommodated most of the agri-business sector's demands for the commercial exploitation of forests, and the taking of land by big agri-business firms for eucalyptus planting and other cash crop production. A flagrant disregard for the natural and communal rights of the peasantry was the defining feature of this policy.

In late 1990, the Chartichai government initiated a program to resettle the peasants, whose lands had been officially declared *ex post* as 'reserved forest' or uphill areas, which constituted the source of rivers. This project was known as the *Khor-jor-kor* project. This project has, since the February coup of 1991, been placed under the Ministry of the Interior, headed by one of the key leaders of the coup. The relevant officials had committed so-called 'state terrorism' against the peasantry, as well as monks, in the Northeast. The military have also played an active role, especially in the forced eviction of the peasants, so much so that the project was commonly known as the 'military *Khor-jor-kor* project.' According to the project, it was envisaged that about 2,500 villages with 250,000 households be removed

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from their long-settled communities and henceforth be declared as 'national forest reserves or national parks.' The case of Pa-Kam District, which was in dispute since 1985, was a notorious example of the abuse of authority and excessive use of power by local officials. Under the authoritarian regime, from early 1991, the summary implementation of dubious 'forest laws' has amounted to 'acts of state terrorism.' The peasants who were affected by the *Khor-jor-kor* project set up the *Chomrom Anurak Pa-Isarn*, (North East Forest Conservation Club) which was comprised of representatives from 7 provinces. They were dispossessed persons, whose houses had been uprooted, and who had been resettled on arid land, lacking basic infrastructural services, contrary to the policy guidelines stipulated in the project. The Chomrom was later joined by people in other targeted areas where the project had not yet been implemented. Also, the Small Farmers Assembly (SFA) of the Northeast (*Sapha Kaset-korn Rai Yoi*), which was established around 1991 together with allied groups, was instrumental in the campaign against the project. The SFA organised the biggest marches and rallies along the Northeast Highway before stationing itself at the town of Pak Chong.

### The Small farmers' Assembly (*Sapha Kasetkorn Rai Yoi*)

The care-taker government after the military coup of February 1991 proposed a Bill to establish the National Farmers' Council (*Sapha Kaset Haeng Chat*). Although the stated objectives were to promote the well-being of the farmers, the composition of the council members and other provisions combined, in effect, to benefit the big agri-business firms rather than the small farmers who comprise the majority of the Thai population. According to the Government's plan, this council is to be established as a tripartite system, comprising of farmers, business firms, and governments.

The Northeast SFA comprised concerned farmer groups and several people's networks in the Northeast region, which, with the support of NGO-CORD, jointly established the *Sapha Kasetkorn Rai Yoi* (Small Farmers Assembly) in order to campaign against the pro-business government policy and to propose their own alternative policy. The following networks of people's organizations were involved in the founding of the Assembly.

- a.) The network of local handicrafts
- b.) The network of cattle-raising groups
- c.) The network of households affected by the government's resettlement scheme (*Khor-jor-kor*)
- d.) The network of alternative agriculture.
- e.) The network of rice farmers' groups
- f.) The network of monitoring groups on salinated lands
- g.) The network of environmental groups (dams, rivers.)

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After the successful *Khor-jor-kor* campaign the SFA, under the leadership of Bamrun Khayotha until 1995, has since continued to be active in campaigning on behalf of affected farmers, and its membership has greatly increased.

Since the Small Farmers Assembly is an organisation making several demands on the government, including the solution of farmers' indebtedness caused by failed government-promoted projects, price support for their products and land rights, it was decided by all parties in the struggle to establish another organisation which focused only on the land rights issues. To this end they established the Northeast Farmers Assembly for Land Rights and the Recovery of Natural Resources, or NFA. The NFA, with the same leadership and allied social forces, succeeded in negotiating with the government representative at Pak Chong. This movement successfully demanded the abolition of the project on July 3 1992.

### Proposing the People's Development Plan

The concrete ideas which underlined the development policy and plan of the people were crystallized from several years of field work in close and mutual cooperation between members of the NGOs and the people suffering from the effects of marginalization. They pinpointed the crucial problems endured by the people of each region, and then searched for alternative means of solving such problems. During this process, they had learned from indigenous wise persons and drawn upon the latter's long-accumulated knowledge system in preference to the so-called modern methods. In this way, the NGOs workers and members of the POs were able to formulate their policy proposal and the so-called people's plan.

The attempt to propose such a plan, albeit in a somewhat rudimentary form, marked an important step in the development of the NGOs and POs activities, from community organizing and agitation for a decent livelihood and networking at regional and national level, to the advocacy of policy at the national level.

The plan was largely drawn up by the NGOs, with the participation of only some sections of the marginalized peoples. In spite of this short coming, the plan was, as far as was possible, conceived to articulate the aspirations of its potential beneficiaries.

Although the plan was not a solid and comprehensive one in terms of the technical planning process, it represents the crucial point that the people wanted their own project to be integrated into the national plan, usually

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dominated by the technocrats and businessmen. More importantly, the people's plan stands as a key document, significant not only for expressing a wide variety of the people's demands on the Thai state, but also for representing a challenge to the existing development model.

In the following we will briefly outline the proposals offered by the NGOs as alternative policy guidelines to the Thai state, before focusing on the People's Plan proposed by the Northeast POs and NGOs.

After noting the process of polarization which had been brought about by the previous three decades of so-called development in Thailand, the NGO-CORD issued the following proposals and policy guidelines to the Thai state in August 1991.

a.) The state should give priority to the question of income distribution and social justice;

b.) The state should formulate a development policy and measures that would place the people at the center of development;

c.) In its development effort, the state should pay sufficient attention to the needs of the agricultural sector, which had for so long borne the burden of urban and industrial development.

d.) The state must take into account the need for the protection and conservation of forests, land, waters and other rural resources. Furthermore, in the extraction of natural resources, the state must ensure that appropriate and sustainable methods be employed in order to yield real benefits to the majority of the people.

e.) The state must recognize and support other development alternatives pursued by the people, even though such strategies might differ from its own.

f.) To prevent further polarization, the National Development Policy must take into account the interests of the great majority of the people who are mostly marginalized and powerless. Adequate safeguards and precautionary measures against the negative impacts of the so-called development process must be provided.

Since the Northeastern region suffers from the highest degree of marginalization, and the NGOs together with the POs there were the most active in formulating and articulating the region's alternative plan, it will be interesting to discuss their project at some length.

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Several NGOs have been working in various localities in the Northeast from around 1980, and by about 1985, NGO members had formed several networks of people's groups or organizations. Towards the end of the Sixth Development Plan, or around 1990, some members of the NGOs were invited to participate in the evaluation of the government's rural development programs.

Also, during the course of the Seventh Plan (1992-1996), the government showed a keen interest in having the NGOs participate in the formulation of the plan. While some members of the NGOs were appointed to participate in certain sub-committees commissioned to draft the plan, other NGOs proposed that they ought instead to initiate the People's Development Plan. To this end, the national NGO-CORD organized a Congress to propose the People's Development Plan, in May 1991.

Given below is the people's development plan for the Northeastern region. This plan was formulated by the Northeast NGOs in close collaboration with the people's occupational groups and organizations.

In June 1990, the Northeast NGO-CORD organized a regional congress of NGOs to discuss the development strategies of the regions. Basic problems facing the people were identified from long-accumulated field experience. Nine case studies were presented. Out of this sharing of experiences emerged the concrete proposals and alternatives offered for the solving of such problems. Several alternative occupations were suggested for certain areas in possession of the appropriate geographical, environmental and cultural conditions. The main thrust of these alternatives was the effort to avoid the negative effects of the rapid invasion of big agri-business firms, and to prevent the intense capitalist penetration of such rural communities. These alternatives were mainly concerned with the rediscovery of indigenous systems of knowledge in order to devise a process of partial delinking which might improve their impoverished conditions. Thus the alternative occupations proposed were those involving the goal of survival and livelihood. From this regional congress of NGOs and POs came the People's Development Plan for the Northeast. This plan and its contents were distributed at the Thai People's Forum in October, 1991.

Further, the NGOs and POs leaders were also instrumental in providing the contents of the People's Forum of the Campaign for Popular Democracy (CPD) in the two months before the general election of March 22, 1992.

According to this program, the representatives of political parties were invited to participate in a television program where they would be questioned by the members of the People's Forum from four regions of Thailand. The

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questions were basically those already highlighted in the problem situations of a region's development plan. This television program afforded a valuable opportunity to make the views of the voiceless heard, and make the problems of the people visible to the general public through the use of the government media.

The main points of the Plan are as follows:

i.) To seek the state's recognition and assurance of the people's role, especially in their capability to manage local resources, their role in social development and their identity and local autonomy.

ii.) An assertion of their rights, especially local and customary, including their rights to natural resources, e.g. forest, and coastal resources. The right to information and the right to seek alternative paths of development (e.g. alternative occupations to those promoted by the government.)

iii.) A demand for the decentralization of administrative power, particularly in resource management, into the hands of local communities in order to prevent the plundering of resources by outsiders, and to keep more of the surplus within the local communities.

iv.) To voice the people's claims on governmental services for the POs and NGOs, e.g. on information, research for alternative occupations, women development, etc.

v.) To put forward the principle that people's rights to survival and livelihood must take priority over the freedom of enterprise of businesses. (seen, for example, in the struggle against the state granting of lands for agri-business firms' eucalyptus planting, or against the rock-salt mining which destroyed paddy fields in the neighborhood.)

vi.) Proposing the principles and practice of gender equality and social justice.

vii.) A demand that the Thai state protect and promote the agricultural sector by stressing the right of the rural majority to a decent livelihood and standard of health. Since the rural sector has long subsidized the urban and industrial growth, a reciprocal process should now be initiated.

The above are general the principles which would ensure a viable and sustainable alternative development path for the people and the general demands on the Thai state. This was followed by policy measures and guidelines for the solution of the people's problems, and for the attainment of alternative means of livelihood and ensuring their well-being.

## **The Role of Women Workers in Thai Labor Movements**

Women workers played an important role in the struggle for the amelioration of their condition. In 1975, they took over the management of the Hara company after the failure of negotiations. The workers managed to operate on the basis of self-reliance and fair trading in the enterprise's products. In their struggle they were joined by student activists and other unionists.

Recently, women workers have again been in the forefront of the struggle. It can be viewed as a demonstration of the way the new movement has endeavoured to respond to the new demands and new agenda ignored by the so-called old social movement (i.e. the male-dominated labor unions). This time they were working closely with the so-called network of NGOs on workers' issues.

Also, a distinguishing feature of this women workers' movement is the fact that it represents an alliance of various social forces, including the NGOs, existing labor organisations and academics. This movement has also managed to elicit a sympathetic response from the media, and the anonymous support of some bureaucrats.

The activities of the women workers' movement can be summed up as follows:

Around 1990, the Friends of Women Foundation along with some women workers in several industrial areas around Bangkok, such as Omnoi, Omyai, Rangsit and Prapradaeng, formed their own labor activity groups (*Klumpyarn* or area groups) outside the existing labor organisation. They set up a fund for health-care.

Later, the groups of several areas formed into a network of women workers, involving activity in labor education, training of members and consciousness-raising. These area groups and NGOs on workers issues joined together to form a campaign for welfare and social security law along with other social forces. This campaigning included the organizing of seminars and press releases, and the lobbying of relevant officials and politicians. At the peak of the campaign 20 women workers and students staged a sit-in and undertook fasting as a non-violent form of struggle. The media seemed to be on the side of this campaign. The law on welfare and social security was passed. In retrospect, at first the leaders of the four major labor councils did not pay much attention to the campaign, but the strong pressure applied by the *Klumpyarn* (area groups) encouraged them to jump on the bandwagon. Existing male leaders at the time were only concerned with the demand for

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higher wages, or else they were coopted not to take leading role in the struggle. A few months later, the women workers campaigned further for longer maternity leave with full pay. The existing payment was 30 days. They successfully demanded a payment of 90 days for maternity leave (45 days to be paid by the employers and another 45 days from the Social Security Office). They were engaged in continuous campaigns, along with academics and concerned citizens, which involved organizing seminars and press releases, group discussions, lobbying politicians, organizing demonstrations and a huge rally in front of the Prime Minister's residence. With that strong show of force and public interest in the question of longer maternity leave, the government passed a new law for maternity leave of 90 days with full pay in April 1993.

On the 10th of May 1993, a huge inferno at the Kader Industrial Toy Factory killed 188 young women workers and injured over 400. This tragic accident, caused by unsafe factory construction, inspired great public outrage and a condemnation of both the officials responsible and the factory management. The women workers' network and its allies were active in helping relatives of the victims, and demanded a just compensation for them. They also demanded serious state action and measures to ensure health and safety standards in the workplace. In this endeavour the Thai women workers group was also supported by several NGOs and groups in Hong Kong, including Asia Monitor Resource Center, the Committee for Asian Women, Asian Workers' Solidarity Links and Asian Cultural Forum on Development (ACFOD). These groups arranged a large rally to condemn the company.

The network of women workers and its allies were active on a government-appointed committee for assisting and following-up on the progress of the Kader victims and their relatives. They helped the latter to negotiate fair terms with the company and the government. Out of this latter struggle, the women workers network set up their own campaigning committee for workers' health and safety with Ms. Arunee Srito, a famous women's labor leader, as the first chairperson. The new committee secured some funding for starting a 'Center for Workers' Health and Safety.' The center is planned to function as follows:

- to be a center to collect all grievances and reports on health and safety problems from the workers and report the cases on their behalf to the relevant offices, and undertake regular follow-ups of the cases.
- to become a data bank on health and safety issues for the labour movement.
- to provide health and safety awareness and education to the workers.
- to establish an occupational diseases clinic in the future.

The latest activity of this women workers' network is to campaign for the Ministry of Labor and Welfare to issue a Ministerial by-law to force

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firms to set up an in-house committee to supervise health and safety standards. The committee is to be composed of both the employers' and workers' representatives. In addition, the network also demands that a clause stipulating protection for the workers' representatives on the committee from unjustified lay-offs must be included in the by-law.

If this by-law on the in-house committee is passed, it can be expected that the committee will be a viable entry point for organising workers at the factory level, because even now it is difficult for the workers to form a union.

In conclusion, the rise of women workers' activism represents a new kind of social movement, whose demands and problems are not usually addressed by existing movements. The strategy of struggle is directed at pressing the state to respond to their demands. As existing channels through the political parties were closed to them they resorted to the tactic of mobilising with a broad-based, multi-class alliance to arouse public awareness and concern which, in its turn, influenced the leadership's political decisions, usually impossible to achieve through the normal channels of formal representation. The activism on the part of women workers has certainly reinforced the Thai labor movement in general.

### **The Role of the NGOS in the Struggle for Democracy**

The role of Thai NGOs in the struggle for democracy can be assessed from their active participation in the Campaign for Popular Democracy (CPD). The CPD was established about one month after the military coup of February 1991, by a coalition of NGOs, students' leaders, academics and social activists within labor organizations, the mass media and other professional associations. The coup was led by a new military council, 'the National Peace Keeping Council (NPKC).' The CPD, allied NGOs, and the Students' Federation of Thailand (SFT) played a vanguard role in anti-military campaigns and demanded a democratic constitution. The re-establishment of democracy in Thailand after the bloody May event of 1992 owed much to the CPD's fearless and active campaigns, and its nation-wide coordinating capacity.

Early efforts took the form of protest letters and press releases urging a speedy general election and the reinstatement of civil liberties and fundamental freedoms. After the military-appointed legislature set up a commission to draft a new constitution, the CPD was the most active and vocal civil organization to challenge the constitution drafting commission. The CPD issued statements commenting on the first draft, and conducted

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nationwide campaigns for the amendment the NPKC's constitution, which was basically designed to ensure the continued dominance of military power and influence in Thai political life.

This activity was at first limited to academic and political debates that tended to be beyond the reach of ordinary people, especially peasants and workers. Then came a new strategy devised to involve the popular sector in the discussion and the struggle for democracy in the hope that a wider social base for the struggle could be built up.

However, the CPD campaigning activities were complicated by the fact that the NGOs workers at the local level faced difficulties in explaining to and convincing the people at the grassroots of the important link between their own economic problems the (concrete) and the 'amendment of the constitution' (abstract). This matter was later overcome by the CPD through the convening of a 'national congress' to draft the people's own version of the constitution. The so-called national congress was structured in such a way that regional and local grievances and the demands of the people could be integrated into the constitution provisions, along with the abstract provisions for the promotion of fundamental freedoms, human rights and civil liberties. The former demands were a direct assertion of the people's economic and cultural rights. In this way, the concrete and the abstract democratic demands arising from the different social classes formed themselves into a solid ideological base in the struggle. This process probably helps to explain the strength of the multi-class coalition in the anti-military confrontation of May 1992.

The CPD's several regional congress sessions for the drafting of a grassroots people's version of the constitution soon became important arenas in which they were able to voice their demands and make an assertion of their rights (particularly community rights to land and resource management). Before the plenary People's Congress on the Constitution in June 1991, NGOs and POs in each region held their own regional congresses to formulate their own contributions to the drafting process, including the proposing of local demands, basic principles and issues of particular concern to them, most of which were adopted and became part of the people's constitution.

In the latter half of 1991, the CPD and SFT were constantly at the forefront of the struggle to promote the people's versions of constitutions and demanded a drastic amendment of the first draft of the NPKC-sponsored constitution. Several conferences were held on the issue, with the participation of NGOs, academics and pro-democracy political parties. The first sign of solid popular support for the amendment of the constitution was on November 19, 1991 when there occurred the largest political rally after the February coup. Through the coordinating efforts of the CFD, about five major political

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parties jointly signed a 'social contract' to amend the constitution to give it greater democratic content. This joint declaration was read out at the rally.

The impact of all the above-mentioned political activity was as follows: a.) to increase the degree of activity-relatedness among the different networks of the NGOs; b.) to improve the efficiency of networking activities; c.) to improve coordinating skills among members of the NGOs and POs networks; and d.) to bring about a closer relationship between the various membership and personnel of the NGOs.

In our view, in the course of such struggles the networks of these social activists and those also of political information, resources and facilities, have been gradually transformed into what might be termed as a popular sector's 'socio-political infrastructure'. This 'socio-political infrastructure' also embraces modern information technology and telecommunication devices such as electronic mail, fax machines, mobile phones and databases. As the struggle and campaign for popular democracy becomes more intense, we will observe that this socio-political infrastructure was further developed and strengthened, especially in the NGOs participation in the Poll-Watch Commission (PWC) and establishment of the Forum for Democracy (FFD). In the period leading to the final confrontation, it had unfailingly provided a ready support network for political mobilization on a national scale in the fight against the NPKC.

About three months before March 1992, general election, key members of the CPD and allied NGOs and professional associations (teachers, lawyers, and primary health care associations) were involved in the PWC. The CPD, for its part, launched the Forum for Democracy (FFD) to promote genuine popular participation in the process of democratization. NGOs' involvement in the two organisations has further strengthened the popular sector's 'socio-political infrastructure.'

### **NGOs' Role in the Poll-Watch Commission**

The Poll-Watch Commission was established in early January, 1992 by the Anand government, with one Deputy Prime Minister as its head. Its 33 members came from NGOs, POs such as trade unions, academia, and professional associations such as those of lawyers, teachers and public health workers. The commission's secretary general had been a leading figure in the CPD and the Union of Civil Liberty.

In carrying out its mission to monitor the general election, which was under the supervision of the Ministry of the Interior, the PWC had enlisted about 30,000 volunteers nationwide. The PWC's organizational networks

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comprised a broad range of social groups within the whole spectrum of political opinion. The NGOs' networks, formed since the mid-1980s, were the core groups in the coordination of various activities. Its regional networks worked jointly with those of teachers, rural doctors and lawyers. Those from the NGOs and those linked to POs tended to have higher organizational skills and to be more politically active.

In carrying out the mission of the PWC, the NGOs had enjoyed a good opportunity to extend their working relationship with those outside of their own networks. This relationship brought about an awakening of the political conscience of the so-called 'middle class' participants in this monitoring work. Most volunteers now had a clear understanding of the tactics and the various kinds of vicious tricks used by certain candidates to win elections. More important was the fact that democratic participation entailed not only the casting of votes at the ballot box, as was formerly the case, but also active involvement in policy debates, the monitoring of the political activities of elected politicians and participation in other political movements to build a strong autonomous civil society.

### Forum for Democracy

In order to ensure genuine democratic participation and an open and clean election, the CPD Committee decided to set up the Forum For Democracy (*Wethi Prachathipatai*) to undertake campaign activities in support of the democratization process. The main activities were geared towards the opening of a political forum in order for the people to voice their problems and offer their own proposals for redressing them. This forum was organized at both the provincial and national levels. The latter campaign consisted of a series of television programs aired at special broadcasting times allocated by the government. The costs of producing these programs and organizing the provincial forum were borne by the PWC.

Apart from the regional division of the forum, sectoral issues, such as those concerning women, children, labor and the urban poor, also formed another important part. Speakers from these sectors were invited to join in a dialogue with politicians and to present their own policies to the contending political parties.

It is important to note that the activities of the FFD, whether at the sectoral, provincial or national levels, relied mainly on the NGOs' regional and local networks. The national NGOs coordinating committee (NGO-CORD) had played a vital role in this respect. The Thai Development Support Committee and the Media Center for Development actively participated in the production of the FFD's television programs.

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The FFD, via the NGOs' networks, brought the people's representatives into direct dialogue with politicians, the latter being questioned about how, and with what concrete measures, respective parties would solve the people's problems. These representatives were persons closely involved with the regional networks of the NGOs. They had acquired a certain experience in articulating the people's voice and conveying their demands; some of them even gained some debating skills in the course of several campaigns and rallies.

The television programs organized by the FFD can be said to have been a political innovation on the part of the popular sector. It was the first time that speakers from the grassroots were given the opportunity to voice their grievances and express their ideas on how their problems were to be handled, and also to press the politicians to include their concrete policies in the platforms of the parties.

Among the issues raised during the provincial forum and the national television forum were the following:

The emphasis of the POs' representatives from the Northern regions was placed firmly on the rights and identity of minorities, and upon the issue of trafficking in child prostitutes; the Northeast region focused upon soil salination and environmental degradation, as well as upon land rights, and the problem of out-migration; the Southern region was concerned with the destruction of mangroves causing coastal ecological decay, and the low prices of rubber and tin. From the central region came complaints about irrigation services and the high cost of farming. It was noticeable that all the regions' demands included an expression of concern about the government's policies on commodity price stabilization and price support programs.

The sectoral speakers included issues such as the protection of women and children's rights, sexual equality, the right of public enterprise workers to unionise, longer maternity leave for female workers, and a proposal for general workers' welfare, along with social and infrastructural services for the urban poor. Most of the sectoral speakers stressed the need to amend the existing outdated laws and also the necessity for the effective and indiscriminate enforcement of laws.

We will clearly observe that the people's demands came mainly in the form of concrete measures which they wanted political parties to enact when they came to power. This notion of the people's participation in the election process can justly be described as 'grassroots democracy'. In fact, for 'grassroots democracy' to be realised, meaning a democratic system that is responsive to the needs and aspirations of those at the grassroots, we still

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need a wide-ranging reform of the bureaucracy and a decentralization of power to allow more autonomy to local communities and people's organizations, and an opportunity to take part in the decision making process as it affects their economic and cultural life. Also necessary is a restoration of their right to manage local resources. These issues are still high on the agenda of the CPD campaign activities.

To summarise, the NGOs' involvement in the PWC, the FFD's television programs, and its provincial forum, was a highly significant factor in raising the political consciousness of the public, and also brought the NGOs, POs' workers and other social groups into close contact and profitable working relationships, and allowing for the development of a wider networking system. At a certain political juncture, they were even further politically motivated, especially when, soon after the March election, a coalition of pro-military parties nominated General Suchinda Kraprayoon, the key man behind the NPKC, as the new Prime Minister. This act was in defiance of a widespread public demand that the Prime Minister must be an elected member of the National Parliament. Those people who participated in the PWC were among the provincial leaders who later led protest rallies and raised campaigns against the military junta led by General Suchinda Kraprayoon, especially after the junta opened fire on unarmed and peaceful demonstrators in Bangkok on the night of May 18, 1992. It will be seen that these widened networks had now been transformed into consolidated 'socio-political infrastructures' of the democratic movement that rose successfully against the military junta in May 1992.

## Concluding Discussion

The role of NGOs in the struggle for democracy for Thai society is led by the network of NGOs coordinated by the CPD and the SFT. It was joined at the last moment of struggle by the Confederation for Democracy (CFD). Members of other NGOs were involved with the above organizations either as individual social activists or as representatives of their organisations. However, at the time of mobilization and confrontation, most NGOs were often actively involved in one capacity or another in the struggle. During such upsurges in the struggle they were joined by other POs and professional organisations, as well as the masses, thus expanding the 'sociopolitical infrastructure' to make for a wide-based, multi-class final confrontation with the military junta.

The NGOs' democratic struggle shares the same cyclical nature as other forms of struggle that experience periods of upsurge and low ebb. The activities of the CPD are no exception. About 6 months after its establishment in March 1991, it seemed that other social forces were not yet ready to join

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in the anti-military struggle, led by the CPD and SFT. The so-called middle class and businessmen even felt heartened after the February coup, as they had suffered no business decline in the wake of the coup. This time, however, things were different, as the international community started to pour on condemnation of the junta and withheld aid, investment projects and credit lines. In time, they tended also to be more vocal in their opposition to the regime.

The general pattern of the political activities of the CPD comprises the following:

a.) In the beginning, the CPD fulfilled the function of keeping the democratic issues alive by organizing seminars and releasing statements calling for an early election and calling for a democratic constitution, giving more power to the elected House of Representatives rather than the military-appointed Senate.

b.) The CPD organised a forum for the critique of the constitution drafted by the NPKC-appointed legislature. Also, it convened a people's congress to draft the people's own version of the constitution. In the process, the CPD also became a mediating channel, linking the grassroots demands of the people to the political parties.

c.) The CPD played an indispensable role in mediating between the various political parties. As each political party was hostile to the idea of allowing another to initiate a forum or organize protest rallies, the CPD served an invaluable function as a non-partisan organiser, issuing invitations to any political parties that cared to participate. Among its major achievements was the role it played in persuading about five political parties to sign a 'social contract' to amend the Constitution to give it a more democratic content.

d.) The CPD undertook nationwide coordinating work as the occasion arose, especially through its close links with NGOs' regional networks and allied organizations.

e.) The campaigns and rallies organized by the CPD were strictly based upon the principle of non-violence and peaceful struggle. It is interesting to note that all the activities of the CPD, either in campaigning or mobilizing, were in conformity to the above principle; its leadership tended to avoid potentially violent confrontations. However, as the course of the struggle was caused by certain political events to escalate, certain factions within the broad range of the CPD's network, as well as leaders of other allied organisations and social activists, thought that the time had come to reorganise the movement to meet the escalating demands of the masses.

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From this process emerged the Confederation for Democracy (CFD), established on May 14, 1992, after a conference of various anti-military coalitions of social forces, which courageously staged a series of the biggest anti-military rallies in the streets of Bangkok in two decades. These took place between the 5th and the 11th of May 1992. The CFD led even larger mass protests leading to direct confrontation with the military from the 17th to the 21st May. CPD members who did not join the CFD nevertheless participated in the largest rally, from May 17th onwards.

These groups, comprising several NGOs activists, also prepared certain safety measures for the masses joining in with the protest rallies. But, to my knowledge, these were of little practical use as the situation quickly ran out of control.

The transformation of the struggle from the CPD to the CFD was interesting in terms of the shifting of the organisational form and tactics of the struggle. In my view the NGOs were only capable of providing for the above mentioned points. They did not intend to lead the struggle towards a total confrontation bearing unforeseen consequences for the participating masses.

Within the context of heightened struggles and prolonged political rallies, it somehow happened that with the upsurge of the struggle, with the escalating demands of the masses and the attendant swell in their fighting spirit, several political events had converged to give the movement a dynamism of its own, with a new but provisional organisational form and a new collective leadership to take the struggle to its logical conclusion. This signifies the simultaneous nature of the political movement started by the CPD's campaigns, the role of which eventually became part of the overall masses' movement.

### **The Process of People Empowerment**

After experiencing in the last few years a mixture of both success and failure in policy advocacy at the national level, the NGOs and POs realised that no policy advocacy nor campaign will carry much weight in the decision-making process at the national level if it is not backed up with a wide and solid social base of support, i.e. the more organized are the groups and networks of people's organizations, the more likelihood there is that such policies will be accepted by the government.

In spite of the struggle faced by the people's groups and organizations at policy levels, either concerning alternative occupations, community forestry, sound ecology and environment or even the proposal of a 'people's

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development plan,' they might still have achieved certain concessions in some instances. However, in most cases they faced some kind of official delaying tactics, with problems being shelved through the setting up of joint committees for further investigation of the issues. Then the leading members of the people's organizations and the NGOs started to realize that policy advocacy work is not sufficient in itself if the people still lack a strong social base of support to lend political weight, as well as legitimacy, to their projects. Together with the advocacy work, the organizational and networking activities must be progressively strengthened too.

In 1988, several people's and NGOs leaders came to appreciate the limits of policy advocacy without wide and strong social bases of support. The failure to lobby the government for a people-oriented national forest policy in 1988 stands as the case in point.

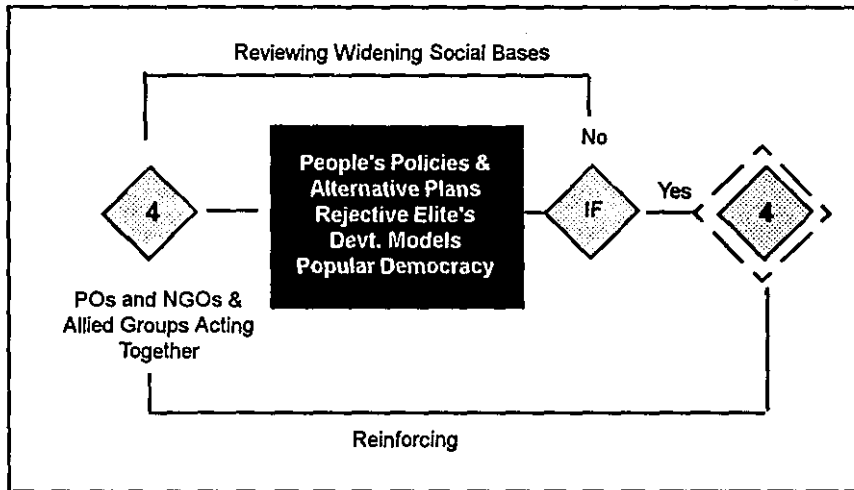
At present, it seems that the regional network of NGOs and the networks of POs (both organized according to occupational groups and the issues affecting them) are now working together closely on various issues, at both the regional and national level.

The NGOs' leadership still has mixed feelings about their strengths and potential for further progress. However, it is hoped that their further networking and close collaboration in the struggle for social transformation will continue to develop. In sum, policy advocacy activities must be carried out in conjunction with the coordination and networking of people's organizations into a solid social base of support in order to ensure the success of their efforts for a people's project. This can be achieved through a joint effort, both at the level of campaigning and mobilizing, and at the level of policy advocacy based on negotiations. This can be visualized in Diagram 1.

Based on the so-called 'four-corner' strategies, the POs and NGOs, together with allied groups mentioned earlier, act together to propose people's policies and alternative development plans to campaign in the struggle for popular democracy. If they achieve a certain measure of success, they can move the struggle forward and enlarge the people's political voice, as well as pressing the state to adopt part of their project, thereby reinforcing the overall movement in the process of their empowerment in the struggle for popular democracy.

On the other hand, if the movement fails, they will have to review the tactics and strategies of the movement in order to gather a greater social base of support and popular consent before continuing with another round of the struggle. As experience has shown, this process tends to fluctuate with periods of upsurge in the people's struggles and the advancement of the

Diagram 1  
The Process of People Empowerment and Popular Democracy



people's agenda, punctuated by a period of slow progress. This all depends on the balance of forces at a particular historical moment.

### Open Forum\*

**Clark Soriano:** I have two questions. The first question has to do with the strategy of NGOs in a situation where governments are thinking about NICs in a manner that is different from the way governments and businesses thought about development before. I say this because each particular country has particular nuances in relation to the way they conceptualise NICs. In our country there is an element of free market and deregulation. But there is also an element of how all of these will break down the monopolies that the Filipino NGOs have been fighting against for so long a time. Number two, it's a tricky thing in our country because unlike other NICs which had authoritarian regimes, in our country's democracy they provide space and engage NGOs in the transition as part of their strategy to NIChood. Now this makes it a little bit difficult for the Philippine NGO community which I am closely involved in. It is confusing and I don't know whether there is that kind of dynamic in countries like Thailand. I understand that the Malaysians do. Now the second question relates to the

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Editorial note: As the presenter was not able to present this same paper during the workshop, the open forum may reflect questions other than those addressed by the text.

danger of translating this framework into organisational form. In the Philippines, coalition building is one of the reasons why coalition cannot prosper. Why do I say that. A lot of efforts to build this umbrella NGO coalitions under a very nice strategy end up with a whole tiresome, painful debate on issues of representation, on issues of democracy and on issues that they would prefer. Perhaps coalition against a dictatorship was important, but in a situation where there is space that is not the case. Now my question is you mentioned a little bit of that in Thailand regarding the framework that you shared. Is it as neat when it comes to the way NGOs relate with each other or is that the intention? My next question, should it be a framework or should it be an organisational intention because at this point when we cook, we sometimes cook the ingredients too much and end up with a bad meal? I mean it might be more dangerous bringing NGOs and actually creating more undemocratic dynamics.

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**"...media in other countries interpreted [democratization] as a result of the economic growth which created the urban middle class who are affluent enough to think of democracy. So on the line of this mode, economic growth of this type encourages democracy. I suspect that there should be some different motive and understanding of democracy."**

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**Muto Ichiyo:** I want to inquire about the nature of democratisation in Thailand. The Japanese press and perhaps newspapers and media in other countries interpreted it as a result of the economic growth which created the urban middle class who are affluent enough to think of democracy. So on the line of this mode, economic growth of this type encourages democracy. I suspect that there should be some different motive and understanding of democracy. So my question is how do you interpret this situation? To me it seems that there is certainly the effect of urbanisation there which is in a picturesque way manifested in the demonstrations in

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Bangkok with heavy political party involvement. But on the other hand, there is another layer, a bottom layer. How do you perceive this dichotomy?

**Vinod Raina:** You take out the freedom movement and you change the Thai names to Indian names and your paper would have been written for India. It makes me want to make an inquiry related to the post-modern argument of celebrating unbirthdays. When I read your paper, and whenever I remember India, I see that whenever we talk about social movements we're actually talking about unsocial movements. There must be thousands of movements which have their own existentialist autonomy. This question is both for Thailand and other places where the democracy movement cannot be given a certain structure. I still believe in structures as I am not post-modern. When we talk about grand alliances, are these grand alliances then ritual forms only? And that the question I ask within the Thailand social, political system where is there no concept which can give it a certain structural unification.

**Arief Budiman:** Basically I only have two points after many questions have been asked. The first point is that in your paper I haven't seen much discussion about people's organisations? Why do you emphasize NGOs? If this paper were written in Indonesia that will be justified because NGOs are now the most important social movement in Indonesia because political parties have been basically castrated by the government. They limit the numbers and those that exist are being manipulated. So political parties do not function in Indonesia. Mass organisation have been very much repressed also. So the only thing is NGOs. NGOs are defined as groups of people trying to do service. So the government thinks this is alright. So in the case of Indonesia NGOs are important because the other organisations have been harassed and limited in their activities. How about in the Thai case, why are political parties not functioning? I understand that political parties are much freer than Indonesia. So my question is what is the relationship between NGOs and political parties?

My second question is about ideology. There are many NGOs working on issues as if they are only limited to solving issues rather than having a bigger vision. Is there any debate among intellectuals about alternative societies which is, more or less, discussed by NGOs? Is there a unifying principle that makes all these NGOs, more or less, unified?

**Fred Chiu:** I think in Taiwan you have the opposite situation. The political party were highly suppressed and before the lifting of martial law you had various social movements. But after lifting martial law all these social movements were under heavy pressure to be coopted by the party. However, what is lacking now in Taiwan is nobody has any idea about what an NGO is. Nobody doing the real ordinary service work other than the

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state or the political party. I think that is another kind of situation. Actually now people are trying to import the notion of NGO into Taiwan and try this kind of set up. They take the job from the government which has to fund them.

**Suthy Prasartset:** Fred mentioned that Taiwanese political parties were formerly suppressed, but after martial law, the party tried to coopt civil groups or NGOs and the people there seem to be confused about the meaning of NGOs and so on. Arief asked me about the role of NGOs as well as the role of parties. Why are political parties not functioning in Thailand? Why do NGOs play a big role? What is the relationship between NGOs and parties? As I have mentioned during my presentation maybe I am much influenced by Indian discourse about non-party political formations or non-party structures because I observed the functioning of the political parties during the last ten years. We can see very clearly this structure being dominated by big business groups who stay behind the parties. There is no room for people with good ideologies. There is no party of the left, there is no party even of the social democrats. This is the nature of the present party system so there is a common saying among observers that in Thailand we have two kinds of parties: the government party and the other parties waiting to be government parties. You cannot see a kind of check and balance. And since they are more influenced by the business groups, the party people tend to respond to that interest and ignore popular problems. They come to the people only at election time. So you see the people are left out of this political structure. That's why there is this urge of the people to struggle for themselves and this is where the NGOs and some other groups can join in.

**Arief Budiman:** Why don't the NGOs make themselves a political party?

**Suthy Prasartset:** In the Thai context there is a common perception of the party as a bad institution. The image of the politician is also not good. So I always say not to join the party. You can perform as an independent autonomous force and your voice may carry political weight. But once you become a member of this party your voice becomes downgraded by the people. I have one close friend who was the secretary general of the communist party who was trying to set up a movement in order to voice out some democratic issues. After that six months he was approached by the security office and told that if you want to continue your political activities in town you must register as a political party. Don't continue as a group. What is the meaning of this? It means the elite, the security structure, know the sentiment of the Thai people. Anybody identifying himself as a member of a party is less respected.

Whether NGOs talk about alternatives or not, I quite agree that the NGOs, being involved in a lot of things, do not go very strongly thinking about vision. This is the same question they are thinking. I feel that they now thinking about what ideology will come to replace the so-called defunct socialist thinking. But they have come to a stalemate, they don't know. What they are doing now is to operate within a structure where a dominant force is oppressing a marginalised group. It is their task at the present to help the people solve this problem. I feel now that people are shifting from abstract ideologies to work in the concrete. I think this is toward the process of formulating something new. We don't know what kind of ideology is coming up. I think they are in the process of reconstructing a new ideology from a new concrete framework.

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**"In the Thai context there is a common perception of the party as a bad institution... the security structure, know the sentiment of the Thai people. Anybody identifying himself as a member of a party is less respected."**

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So this brings us back to the unbirthdays and unmovements. I think that most of us would agree that movement should be a continuing process. But this process is sometimes just like traffic, sometimes there is very heavy traffic because there is a lot of excitement and a lot of people come. Sometimes the traffic becomes less congested because the excitement has declined and people don't feel like coming out. But the route, the way, the forum should be there.

**Rajan Bhattarai:** With this kind of motivation what are the dynamics? You say the wave sometimes is very high and we observe that in the Thai movement, the students, even the peasants, immediately come to the streets and have big demonstrations. But after that it died down and was very hard to find even small activities.

**Suthy Prasartset:** I think for the movement to be viably sustained there must some kind of network or very loose communication structure between people who struggle in various areas and in various parts of the

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country. Certain groups may use the likes of the fax machine, the mobile phone, or maybe E-mail. This is the so-called socio-political infrastructure I put in my paper. When some event occurs, news is spread through this network. In Thailand the mass media is very active in the sense that there are many people with social activist backgrounds in the media. Although the policy at the top is controlled by the business company who gets a concession from the military who owns all media, there is a lot of this subcontracting going on now. So maltreatment gets into the media and the wrongdoers have to think twice about their actions. I feel that the existing socio-political structure, including equipment and people, is important.

Regarding politics, you are correct in your assessment of the pivotal role of urbanisation and the rising middle class. But in the anti-military struggle in May 1992, there was more participation and the movement was not limited to Bangkok. NGOs and other organizers decided to hold big rallies in provincial towns to spread the structure because they thought that this was the time to conscientize people in many places. This movement was especially big in the northeast. With regards to your inquiry about the single slogan of "down with Suchinda," I remember reading one article on the importance of the revolutionary slogan as it is a summation of concrete structures and suffering of many people and many groups.

I think Clark made a very important suggestion about NICs. In Thailand, I feel the NICs thinking is basically a middle class and bourgeois project. And there has been a lot of talk among the bureaucrats and business groups and also in the national media. So this is basically an elite project as they have access to media to promote Thailand while hiding the realities of slums and the poor in the country who are further marginalized by their activities. On the second point of coalition building, I quite agree that there has been some talk among the NGOs that if we build big networks there is a tendency towards bureaucratisation. So they are trying some "re-engineering" to reduce the bureaucracy within this movement. They are trying to loosen the network so as not to lead into a tight structure. I think that it is quite relevant that they are struggling against the tendency for tight structures. There is an apprehension to using the word "network" because a net is something which traps you. The word "hammock" is preferred because it accommodates all kinds of things. The lady, the man, the thin, the fat, the tall, and the slim can be accommodated in a hammock. Each one maintains autonomy and they come to exchange views and move together.

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Maybe the last point. Why is there so much talk about NGOs and no other movement? I have to write more on that and that's why I gave you only the example of women workers movement which produces successful work and is challenging the existing labour movement. But to be fair to the present movement group they are still quite responsive. After 1990, elections gave way to a new leadership who seem to be quite responsive. The leaders talk about social movements, labour unions, the people's environment, women's issues, and human rights. Of course you can also see the involvement in the confederation for democracy to overthrow the military. And this has been spearheaded by the people along with the NGOs.

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# THE MINDANAO EXPERIENCE

## The Silent Revolution

Carolyn O. Arguillas



**T**he island of Mindanao in the southern part of the Philippines is the country's second largest island and the richest in natural resources. With an area of some 92,000 square kilometers or about a third of the Philippines, it is more than twice the size of Belgium and larger than Ireland. Mindanao has an estimated population of million or about 1/4 of the country's total and has a distinct tri-people character -- the Moro people, the *lumad* or indigenous peoples, and the settlers, or what the national press calls 'Christians.'

Often referred to as the "Land of Promise," Mindanao, in reality, is the "Land of Broken Promises" and the "country's cash cow that gets only dog food." We feed the stomachs of our countrymen up north with crops from our rich agricultural lands, fish from our seas, meat, and poultry. We even provide dessert for foreigners -- bananas and pineapples from our plantations. We feed the manufacturers of goods in Metro Manila, Cebu and the rest of the world with our raw materials. We also feed the banks in Manila with our deposits which they siphon off from their branches in our island to finance megamalls and factories in the national capital.

The majority of us, however, can hardly feed ourselves. Because of this, we are the country's "war zone." Under the Marcos dictatorship, we were home to more than half of the country's New People's Army, all the factions of the Moro National Liberation Front and more than half of the government's armed forces. Because of this, various social movements have sprouted in the island, both under and above ground.

## Land Of Broken Promises

The dictator Marcos promised to transform the "Land of Promise" into a "Land of Fulfillment." He broke his promise. After Marcos, President Corazon Aquino made the same promise. She broke it as well.

In 1992, two weeks after Fidel Ramos was installed as President, he flew to Davao City to inaugurate the "Malacañang of the South" or the President's Office in Mindanao. He appointed a businessman as Presidential Assistant for Mindanao.

Ramos, as expected, promised to "accelerate the economic growth in the region," and bring the national government "closer and within the reach of the people of Mindanao" and make Mindanao the "Land of Fulfillment."

## Philippines 2000

Ramos would turn out to be the only Philippine President to make over 40 visits in Mindanao in three years. But it is not so much because the President is concerned with the plight of the wretched in Mindanao. Rather, the main reason for his frequent visits is to ensure his very ambitious economic program to transform the Philippines into a newly-industrialized country by the year 2000, Philippines 2000, succeeds.

One of the major components of Philippines 2000 is the Brunei-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA) involving Mindanao, Brunei, East Malaysia and East Indonesia. This was patterned after the SIJORI model involving Singapore, Johore in Malaysia and Riau in Indonesia.

As it was in the past, so it is in the present. The Philippines still depends on Mindanao for its economic future, especially now that the Mt. Pinatubo eruption in the north has destroyed, and is still destroying with its lahar flow, thousands of hectares of agricultural land in the North. "The future of the Philippines," a former senator would repeatedly say, "is Mindanao."

## Mindanao 2000

Two weeks after President Ramos assumed office in 1992, he created the Malacañang of the South purportedly to give more attention to Mindanao. He appointed businessman Paul Dominguez as his Presidential Assistant for

Mindanao and later appointed him head of the Mindanao Economic Development Council (Medco). The Council was created in November 1992 from the five Regional Development Councils (RDCs) carried over from the Aquino administration. With a token NGO participation, the RDCs and the Medco are essentially big business-dominated.

Medco later came up with a Mindanao 2000 vision which spoke of “a prosperous Mindanao with highly-motivated, self-reliant, culturally diverse but unified communities which are socio-economically and politically dynamic with ample and appropriate opportunities for self-fulfillment within a framework of ecological soundness, sustainable development and equitable growth.”

It also came up with an “economic vision for Mindanao” as a “vibrant island-wide economy, integrated internally, led by the agricultural and agri-industrial sectors, accompanied by growing industrial and service sectors, creating widespread employment and entrepreneurial opportunities.” Only the government planners, however, understand this “vision.”

Mindanao 2000 comprises two development strategies:

- 1.) fully integrate the regions of Mindanao economically through strategic investments in critical infrastructure projects; and,
- 2.) make Mindanao internationally competitive by developing direct trade links with the East ASEAN Region.

These strategies include the establishment of five regional industrial centers (the cities of Zamboanga, Davao, Iligan, Cotabato and the province of Maguindanao) and two industrial estates in Misamis Oriental and General Santos City.

It also set up four growth corridors, namely the

- Davao-General Santos-East Indonesia Corridor
- Zamboanga City-Sulu-Tawi-tawi-East Malaysia Corridor
- Cagayan de Oro City - Iligan Corridor; and the,
- Davao-General Santos-Zamboanga City Corridor

Mindanao officials soon became busy selling their respective areas, principally to foreign investors. Local legislatures soon passed investment codes and rushed very attractive investment packages, some of them offering investors five-year tax-free incentives, others privately assuring investors a five-year moratorium on labor strikes.

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Then followed the mad scramble for airports here, ports there, roads here, and highways there. But in all this economic development planning, government planners forgot one major factor: the people.

### Mindanao 1995

The key players in Mindanao's economic programming are still the government and big business, although most of the time the distinction between them is a blur.

For the first time in the Philippine Senate, there is not a single senator coming from Mindanao. The Mindanao candidate, a staunch defender of Mindanao, the same man who described Mindanao as "the cash cow that gets only dog food" was cheated in the electoral counting.

While we have 49 legislators in the 199-seat House of Representatives, only a handful can be said to be truly "representative of the people." And only a handful do not belong to Mr. Ramos' political party -- the Lakas-NUCD.

Against this backdrop are four major social movements. Those operating underground are the Communist Party (including its New People's Army and the National Democratic Front organizations) and the Moro National Liberation Front and its factions. Those that are aboveground include the non-governmental organizations and the cooperatives.

It might be best to start with those underground.

### Tri-People

Because of Philippines 2000, the Ramos administration, like the Aquino administration, is negotiating for peace with the National Democratic Front (NDF) and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF).

To understand why Mindanao is home to rebellions is to look deeper into its history.

What makes Mindanao rather unique from the rest of the country is its three major groupings commonly referred to as tri-people. By "tri-people" we mean the Moro people (otherwise referred to generically by the national government as "Muslims"), the *lumad* (indigenous people), and the settlers (lumped by the national press into "Christians") who now constitute the

majority. The lumad and the Moro people say they were driven from their lands by the settlers.

On the 97th anniversary of Philippine Independence last June 12, President Ramos sparked a national debate when he proposed the inclusion of a crescent on the Philippine flag purportedly "to show that we recognize our Muslim brothers and sisters as part of Philippine society." The proposal roused the nation, as Christians demanded for a cross while a number of Muslims said they are not asking for the moon but for their rightful place under the Philippine sun.

Lumad advocates said they too demand recognition.

The national debate about the flag diverted the attention of the nation from the controversies of the day -- the police rubout of criminals, the escape of two *Abu Sayyaf* prisoners, the impending oil price hike, the high-tech electoral cheating and other dirt the Ramos administration wanted swept under the rug.

The only positive factor it brought about was that it brought into sharper focus the rather belated acknowledgment of the role of the Moro people in Philippine history.

## The Moro People

The Moro people -- original occupants, like the *lumad* -- of Mindanao, resisted colonization by Spain and America. For that, Spaniards called them *juramentados* or amoks. When it was America's term, Americans had to invent the caliber .45 to stop the Moro *juramentados* dead in their tracks. The Americans also said "a good Moro is a dead Moro."

For three centuries of Spanish rule and about half a century of American colonization, our ancestors were taught to despise the Moro people. To this day, that prejudice remains. The Moro people, as it turned out, would also resist colonization by what is often referred to in Mindanao as "Imperial Manila."

When the Americans came in the early 1900s, they introduced a system of land ownership that was alien to both the Moro and the *lumad*. Land titles were decreed. The Moro and the *lumad* had no land titles. Unschooled, they suddenly found themselves waking up in the morning evicted from their ancestral land. As early as the 1900s, vast tracts of agricultural lands were turned over, courtesy of the public lands laws passed, to the Americans and the emerging elite of the Philippines.

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In the 1920s, just as plantation land had become scarce and expensive in Hawaii, the California Packing Corporation, producers of Del Monte, came to Mindanao to turn a huge part of Bukidnon into a pineapple plantation. The cost of the land was very cheap for the Americans. This single act of opening a plantation, would, however, turn out to be at the expense of generations of Mindanaoans.

Peasant unrest in the north soon troubled the Manila government and so it opened Mindanao for settlement in the late 1930s. Soon, the Moro people and the *Lumad* were driven either to the periphery or deep into the mountains.

Because Mindanao is rich in natural resources, the Luzon-based elite and transnational corporations soon flocked to the island, logged its forests, exploited its mines and waters, and turned the vast agricultural lands into plantations.

Meanwhile, the seeds of rebellion quickly germinated into the Mindanao Independence Movement and by the late 60s, into the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), which first espoused independence or a separate Mindanao state before settling for autonomy.

### Rebellions

Government neglect of Mindanao and the inequities brought about by the encouragement of plantation economies in the entire island have made Mindanao home to all sorts of rebellions.

During the time of Marcos, Mindanao was home to more than half of the country's New People's Army (NPA) and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) (before and after it divided into factions) and more than half of the country's armed forces. When President Marcos declared Martial Law in 1972, he pointed to two major threats confronting the nation: the MNLF and the Communist Party of the Philippines. At that time, however, both groups were not as Marcos had projected them to be. Marcos and his Martial Law turned out to be the chief recruiter of members for both.

Aided by Islamic countries in terms of firearms and training, the MNLF soon became Marcos' nightmare, until an agreement brokered by Libya's Muammar Qaddafi was forged in December 1976. That agreement, however, has not been implemented the way the MNLF thinks it should have been. This is the reason why government and the MNLF panels are still negotiating peace in 1995.

Back in 1976, the MNLF was negotiating from a position of strength. Months later, Marcos successfully divided and ruled over them by sparking a split among its top leaders, along ethnic lines. Salamat Hashim of Maguindanao set up its own Moro Islamic Liberation Front; Dimas Pundato of Lanao set up the MNLF Reformist Group; and the MNLF membership under Misuari was reduced to mostly Tausugs. Between 1976 and 1995, the MNLF's *Bangsa Moro* Army had been reduced to a minority. Most of Misuari's top commanders had become provincial governors or logging concessionaires; two sets of autonomous governments -- one under Marcos and another under Aquino -- had been set up in the Moro-dominated provinces; and the *Abu Sayyaf*, a group purportedly espousing Islamic Fundamentalism at its extreme, is now the military's number one enemy in Mindanao.

Brokering the peace negotiations now is the powerful Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) -- the same organization which brokered peace during the 70s.

Marcos in the 70s negotiated peace because he feared an oil embargo from the Islamic countries. Ramos in the 90s is negotiating peace because Islamic countries are a rich source of investments for his Philippines 2000.

### **National Democratic Front/ Communist Party of the Philippines**

A very strong and cohesive organization under the Marcos Dictatorship, the Communist Party with its New People's Army and the National Democratic Front (NDF) in Mindanao slowly tapered off under the Aquino administration and is now no longer a major force to reckon with in Mindanao as it was a decade ago. Only ten years ago, Davao City in Mindanao was the "laboratory of urban guerilla warfare of the Communist Party of the Philippines." More than half of the estimated 23,000 members of the New People's Army in the country then was in Mindanao. One of its more popular members was a Catholic priest, Frank Navarro, who was allegedly killed by Army troopers in August 1994.

It was also in Mindanao where the National Democratic Front, the political arm of the Communist Party, gained a strong foothold with its front organizations coming from various sectors: the church, urban and rural workers, farmers, students, and professionals. Such was its strength that it could successfully launch island-wide coordinated general strikes or *Welgang Bayan*, that effectively paralyzed Marcos' economy for a day or two.

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The dictatorship's response was naturally militarization so we in Mindanao also became home to more than half of the country's armed might. As you can guess, human rights violations were a daily occurrence and mass evacuations as well as hamletting were reported here, there, and everywhere.

But the more repressive the Marcos regime became, the more members the New People's Army and the Communist Party in Mindanao gained. However, by the time Marcos announced, in November 1985, that a snap Presidential election would be held in February 1986, the New People's Army had been unusually quiet in Davao City and the rest of Mindanao.

The Mindanao Commission or *Kommid* of the Communist Party, had discovered that they were infiltrated by deep penetration agents (DPA) fielded by the military.

The Army, the Party, and the Front were "unusually quiet" because of the simultaneous mass purgings of DPAs and suspected DPAs within their ranks in Mindanao. Mindanao's huge number of armed comrades and the most-organized Fronts turned into a disadvantage. As it turned out, Mindanao became too vulnerable to military infiltration. Meanwhile, the suggestion of the *Kommid* to participate in the snap elections was defeated in the national debate within the Communist Party. Subsequent events would later vindicate the Mindanao Commission.

Political prisoners were released shortly after President Aquino assumed office in February 1986 but it was also during this time when the mass purgings in the communist movement in Mindanao heightened. It is not certain how many innocent Party members were killed. What is certain is that the mass purging became a nightmare for Party members in Mindanao long before it became a nightmare in the Southern Tagalog area.

By February 1987, while the underground left was still debating on the correctness or wrongness of the purging, the military managed to seize the opportunity to launch the anti-communist vigilantes. The launching pad, again, was Davao City.

The *Alsa Masa* (literally Masses Arise) was propelled to international fame and notoriety when a popular radio commentator, supported by the military, launched his "harassment for democracy" and "extortion for democracy" campaign.

If you are familiar with the rise of the anti-communist vigilantes in 1987, you probably would have seen a poster of a blown-up photograph of

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three vigilantes, one armed with a rifle, the others with huge *bolos* (machetes). The centerpiece of that poster was the head of a suspected communist on a plate. That was a photograph taken in Sta. Cruz, Davao del Sur.

The vigilantes then told journalists they chopped off the head of the suspected NPA because carrying the body was burdensome. They also claimed to have tasted the blood of their victims.

The vigilantes, guided by disgruntled Party elements, were exhuming bodies -- those killed during the purging of 1985 and 1986 and buried in shallow graves.

Soon, the anti-communist vigilantes spread across Mindanao and even in some parts of Luzon and the Visayas, specially when President Aquino personally appeared before the *Alsa Masa* in Davao City in October 1987 and told them "you, here, have set the example."

That the vigilantes soon became the number one violator of human rights did not matter as far as government officials and the military were concerned. To them, what was important was that the vigilantes had, by sheer terrorism, deprived the communists of their mass bases.

### Myth

As early as March 1987, when the *Alsa Masa* was getting noticed internationally (no thanks to media hype that projected it as a voluntary mass movement that was freeing the masses from the clutches of communism into the embrace of good government), a government official mouthed these lines at a time when antagonizing the *Alsa Masa* was a no-no for most politicians, 1987 being a pre-election year: "The *Alsa Masa*," said Rodrigo Duterte, a former city prosecutor whom President Aquino appointed as Acting Vice Mayor of Davao City, "is bound to falter because any mass movement founded on myth is bound to falter. Ridding the rebels of their mass base is important but what is more important is to address the problem of insurgency at its roots." Duterte, accepted by the left, the right and the center, was elected mayor in 1988, reelected in 1992 and was again elected last month, for his third and last term as mayor.

True enough, the anti-communist movement soon disintegrated, the livelihood projects enriching only their leaders.

## What's Left Of The Underground Left

From a very cohesive group a decade ago, the NDF's Communist Party has, since the onset of the Ramos administration, split into the reaffirmists (RA) and the rejectionists (RJ) at the national level.

The RAs are those who reaffirm the Party's basic principles of:

- adherence to the theory of Marxism-Leninism;
- repudiation of modern revisionism;
- the class analysis of Philippine society as semi-colonial and semi-feudal;
- the general line of new democratic revolution;
- the leading role of the working class through the Party;
- the theory of people's war and the strategic line of encircling the cities from the countryside;
- the united front along the revolutionary class line;
- democratic centralism;
- the socialist perspective; and,
- proletarian internationalism

The RJs say this is a framework over a quarter of a century old and that lessons learned from actual experiences should be incorporated.

This is not, however, a paper that is meant to discuss the split. We are just citing this by way of introducing how the split at the national level has affected Mindanao.

The Mindanao Communist Party, which had the most number of New People's Army cadres and the most cohesive Front organizations under the Marcos dictatorship, is generally RA although the Central Mindanao Regional Party Commission, which has the most extensive linkages with the Moro and *lumad* revolutionaries, declared autonomy in 1993, and independence in November last year.

The split at the national level adversely affected what otherwise were so-called "pro-people" programs in Mindanao. A very telling example is the community-based health project of the Party managed by a front organization in one of the cities of Central Mindanao.

Party leaders, noting the questions raised by members sounded "rejectionist," declared in late 1993 that the quarterly budget for the health project would be released only after the front organization would have sworn to reaffirm the Party's basic principles.

The leader of the rejectionist group told us this story:

"The Party released only a small part of the budget, promising the rest would be released later. What the Party actually wanted was to hold the project hostage until the front organization toed the line. Meanwhile, the front organization was in a dilemma as it could not stop midway in its program of providing preventive health care to the masses. What the front organization did was to send out letters of solicitation to funding agencies abroad, including the funding agency which has been providing the funds for the project. Naturally, this particular funding agency found it strange why this health project, whose funding had earlier been released, would be so desperate as to ask for financial assistance. An investigation was promptly ordered. The funding agency stopped funding the entire health project in Mindanao."

The question of funding plays a crucial role in the life of the Party and its front organizations. Lack of funds has been hounding Front organizations for a couple of years now.

A decade ago, funding was not a problem. One major Front organization, which used to have huge streamers, colored posters and statements printed in offset years ago, can no longer afford even a letterhead or stationery. The majority of the Front organizations have folded up due to lack of funds. Quite a number of the activists of yesteryears are now either in government service or have set up their own businesses. Only a handful have opted to stay behind.

### Non-Governmental Organizations

Forced by circumstances brought about by an unresponsive national government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have sprouted in Mindanao, most of them spin-offs from church-based programs in the 1960s. The dictator Marcos' imposition of Martial Law, however, led to the arrest of mass organizers and forced others to go underground. Repression and human rights violations, however, did not deter, but instead gave impetus to the Church to take the lead in mass organizations of farmers, students, workers and professionals. There was some psychological factor injected into this. Being a predominantly Catholic country, the dictator's troops, mostly Catholics, too, initially hesitated to do as they pleased because of the fear of God's wrath.

When I returned to Mindanao from the university in Manila in December 1984, I was fortunate I was then a reporter for a Catholic-run weekly newsmagazine. Even as I asked the most sensitive questions, even as I made interviews with communist or Moro rebels, I was only watched but not harassed. This was only because I wrote for a weekly newsmagazine identified with Cardinal Sin.

By the time I came back, Mindanao was leading the way for the country's social activists. Community theatre groups had been organized alongside organizations of farmers, fishermen, workers, students, and professionals. Church support was still a dominant presence but so was the Communist Party. Immediately after President Aquino assumed the presidency, more NGOs sprouted -- a number of them referred to as "Cory (Aquino) NGOs" or "government NGOs." This was because the President made a policy of channeling foreign grants through NGOs. During Aquino's time, the left-leaning NGOs (which still preferred to be called "cause-oriented groups") were less in number than the "Cory NGOs." Foreign dole-outs to NGOs encouraged the setting up of more NGOs. Some were actually set up by the local government officials. Others were set up merely to source funds.

Vice Governor Nabil Tan of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao recalls that there was a foreign grantor who wanted to set up projects in Jolo, Sulu but specified that the funds be coursed through NGOs. Immediately after this announcement, 300 NGOs were set up in Jolo.

In Davao City, NGOs wishing to take active part in the affairs of the local government through the mandated Citizens' Development Councils (CDCs) soon realized that lobbying against unpopular proposed ordinances simply made noise. City legislators still had the last say. To date, NGOs are still being set up. There seems to be an unspoken belief that the more NGOs, the better for the country. Having more NGOs actually means the people have not been empowered enough to become self-reliant.

The NGOs must, therefore, take a different track now, by not relying on foreign or other funding except from themselves.

It must practice what it preaches. People Empowerment is nothing without economic empowerment, without the capability of becoming self-reliant.

## Myths

In a decade of reportage in Mindanao, from Marcos to Ramos, I have come across several mass movements and I have reported on their rise and fall. All these mass movements offered essentially the same ideal: freedom from want, jobs, food, justice, and a better life. All of them offer HOPE/SALVATION to the faceless, voiceless, nameless masses. All of them were promising at the onset; all of them turned into myths in the end.

The myth about the *Alsa Masa* was that it was a *mass movement*, that it was *voluntary*, that the *masses* understood what they thought they were fighting for. The other myth was that it actually believed physically driving the communists out was *the* solution. The myth about the NPA was that it had *the* support of the *masses*. The myth about the NGOs is that toppling Marcos was *the* answer. The other myth is that the more NGOs, the better. The myth about MNLF/MILF was that life for Muslims would be better through armed victory.

## Cooperative Movement

Having been exposed to the other mass movements, having seen the wars in the island of Mindanao, having seen the promises offered by various mass movements, I bumped into the cooperative movement in 1992.

At that time, I embraced it with skepticism. It was only when I saw the basic differences with the other mass movements that I convinced myself that here was a movement that, indeed, showed much promise.

Very briefly, the Cooperative Movement also offers the same ideal as those offered by the mass movements mentioned earlier: freedom from want, jobs, justice, food, better life, hope, salvation.

So what's the difference?

Like the previously-mentioned mass movements, the Cooperative Movement, generally, loves dole-outs. That is how the previously-mentioned mass movements went about its business, too.

The Davao City Cooperative Movement, however, is trying to be different by shunning dole-outs and favoring loans instead. When the previously-mentioned mass movements began, they mustered, at one point or the other, a mass following but somewhere along the way, failed to sustain that.

Lessons have to be drawn from their experiences.

One of the reasons for their failure is that while they preached people empowerment, while they fed the mind, they did not feed the stomach.

The visions, ideas, and projects of the Cooperative Movement in Mindanao may be superior to all the rest of the mass movements *but* superiority in wisdom must translate into superiority of numbers that can effectively translate that *vision* into reality.

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Also, multiplying hands without multiplying the brains and the soul can be very very dangerous, as the past mass movements have shown (and as the traditional cooperative movement has shown). The traditional thinking in the cooperative movement are still dole-outs.

This is now changing as the new breed of cooperative members in Davao City are shunning dole-outs in favor of loans.

Within the context of the period when the NPA wielded considerable influence, quality was sacrificed for quantity. That was their downfall. Within the context of the period when the MNLF wielded considerable influence, it broke into factions.

Within the context of the period when the Alsa Masa wielded considerable influence (according to mediamen like Pala), "leaders" took advantage.

Within the context of the period when the NGOs had "moral" authority, it actually wasn't a moral force because it encouraged, instead of discouraged, mendicancy.

In these mass movements, the people became just mere *numbers*. There was a mission. But there wasn't much of a vision.

There was a body but no soul.

To ensure the success of the Cooperative Movement in Mindanao, it should endeavor not only to feed the mind and the body as it is doing now, but also to feed the soul.

Political freedom, it is true, cannot be had without economic freedom. Economic freedom can be had through this system called the Cooperative.

The Cooperative Movement is waging a war. It is a war without bullets.

It is a silent revolution.

# **HUMANIZING CHANGE PROCESSES:**

## **Some Reflections**

**J.M. Tiongco**



**T**he first injury recorded in the Bible was a neurosurgical case.

Cain brained Abel with a large rock. And all because of the wind direction. While both were polluting the atmosphere with products of combustion, Cain's mixture of hot gases and carbon somehow caught a downdraft and did not quite make it to the same altitude as Abel's.

Now, Cain equated height with might and dominance. What resulted was the first recorded conflict in the Bible -- which brought about the first violent solution: murder.

Since then, if we follow the Bible, more intricate conflicts and various interesting solutions have followed -- page after page in a fascinating tapestry of human (and divine) nature.

But in essence, the Old Testament is replete with the lesson: Brain the other guy before he brains you. (Or if you are politically correct, ask God to do it for you). But resolutions of conflict do not really take a simplistic turn as that and God seems to have a disconcerting tendency to take His time in coming down from heaven to brain the bad guys. So

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people are forced willy nilly to find more intermediate solutions to keep their brains inside their skulls where they should be.

Then came a time when a Man walked the face of the earth and preached not only Justice but also Mercy and a Humanity that transcended into the Divine.

The World has not been quite the same since then. Because now we are made aware of the fact that it is not the dominion over the universe that makes a being human. It is his relevance.

Relevance was easier to maintain in the days of pure agriculture when communities produced for their own basic needs. Trading occurred only if production exceeded need. Then, life was simpler, though not easier. But due respect was given to nature and to people one's daily existence depended on.

This changed, however, with the Industrial Revolution. Suddenly, people were no longer producing for their own needs. They were now working on components for a produce they may not even need, much less see. Their basic needs were supplied them by hands they would never feel. Trading (buying and selling) became a daily activity for survival.

Relevance faded with the loss of the personal relationship with the process of production. Increased production led to increased surplus, but only for the owners of the systems of production. Wealth, as a surplus of production, became arrogated only to them even while the entire community laboured to produce it. Wealth trickled down minimally only to maintain production optimally.

This condition prevails in the Third World countries. The elite 5% owns, operates and profits from the labours of the destitute 95%. But it is a situation, once gotten into, which does not permit easy escape. Because it is the elite 5% which invariably controls the government of any Third World country. It makes laws and executes them against the long-suffering 95% of the population.

Political exercise in any third world country is an exercise in manipulation. How can a homeless and hungry peasant or worker be expected to choose his leader wisely? There can be no freedom of choice without freedom from ignorance and dire want.

Although wealth may seem to be evenly distributed even among workers and farmers in the First World countries (the G-7), one might also

say that the entire World is in a Third World condition. Less than 5% of the population of the World (mostly Western Europeans, North Americans, Japanese, Australians and some Arabs) owns and controls about 95% of the wealth. Of course, its influence on worldwide organizations of political and economic import is tremendous, to say the least.

The dehumanization of the exploiters and exploited rapidly developed into conflicts of worldwide extent. As a result, large and lucrative production systems have evolved in First World Countries which provide more effective and efficient versions of Cain's rock to protagonists. Wars, whether ostensibly for religious belief, geographic prerogative, racial pride or national integrity do have a more important but usually hidden basis: Money.

There have been amazingly few wars in history which did not basically stem from economic reasons. Wars, as one of the more effective means of exploitation, usually pit exploited poor against exploited poor. All the shooting wars today are in the economically disadvantaged countries. But more and more we are coming to realize we are all protagonists in the only real war that is now being fought. The war for Relevance. The war against Exploitation. The War against Poverty. And this is an economic war. The rock we use here is Money. The side with the biggest and the most rocks wins.

It is easy to think that the side of the exploiting rich has more money. But there are so few of them. The exploited poor, since they are the ones who actually work to produce that money, actually have more of it -- if they put it all together.

A few years ago, in Mindanao, a handful of health workers realized that since it was always the poorest who were the sickest, it was therefore the poor who provided the economic base for one of the biggest and the wealthiest businesses in the world: Health.

Health, a basic human right, is being sold for the price of jewels. It has become a luxury trade, fully afforded only by the rich. So they put together health institutions which were owned and operated by the poor communities -- the first cooperative hospitals and health services in the country. As a corollary, they put together a Cooperative Health Fund. They gathered the average health expenditure of the community members into a mutual fund.

What had individually been not enough for their health needs, when put together, became more than enough and even began to earn for the

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community. (It was much like having a child's baon of five loaves and two fishes feed the five thousand people who followed the Man to a mountain above the sea of Galilee. The Miracle of Sharing). They also discovered that what could be done with health could also be done with the other basic human needs. They soon were owners of one of the biggest cooperative banks in the country which not only serviced their needs in health but also their other basic needs through the same process of simply putting their paltry resources, their unavoidable daily expenses, together.

While factions (Rich vs Poor, North vs South, Right vs Left, etc..) were braining each other for the ownership and management of Production as the means to Wealth and Power, the Cooperative realized that the aim of the whole exercise for dominance was the MARKET. They further realized that without the market, the wealth, technology and dominance of all the rich nations were irrelevant.

But who was the market? It was invariably the many Poor.

Through the Cooperative, the poor, the source of raw material, labour and the ultimate market, could and should own the means of production. This is real people empowerment. It puts into the hands of the toiling masses, the power that emanates from their toil. It is simple. But it is not easy.

Generations of irrelevance and dehumanization have taken their toll on the psyche of the poor. For them to mold themselves together into an organic Whole, integral and integrated into each other, rehabilitation and reorganization is necessary. This is the main thrust of the movement. The whole is always much more than the mere sum of its parts.

But what about the government? The government, as always, follows the power configuration. If the power configuration points to the community and not the few owners of big businesses as the source, then the government follows. Because, trite as it may seem, Government IS People -- not just a few of them, but all of them.

Perhaps that is what Civil Society is all about. It is what the Man who stood on a Mount over the waters of Galilee spoke about.

People. Relevance. Respect. Love.

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Editorial note: The word "man" is repeatedly used in the article but should otherwise be reflected as "peoples."

## **Open Forum**

**Muto Ichiyo:** In the Philippine situation, I think the key word is war. War by guns and war by money. I'll tell you one experience which I had in northern Thailand in terms of organic agriculture. I met many people, among them there are leaders, ideologists, theoreticians who interpret what the farmers do. There is a separation of two different kinds of efforts. One tries to build organic agriculture in the village and organise some sort of new social relationship resistant to this ideological encroachment from Bangkok culture and capitalism. The leaders are, however, indifferent to what is being done by their fellow farmers who have sacrificed and are fighting. So there is this separation not because of particular personalities but because of a tendency between the efforts for alternative development and the efforts to organise or reorganise civil society.

People oriented systems are vulnerable from outright political repression and competition from profit seeking business entities. How can we get rid of this trap? Is it by constantly mobilising coop members to join the primary for the sake of health, mobilising them for political struggles on issues which affect the whole people including themselves? Or do we wait until they are ready to fight? Or by means of internal political education? I am saying this because in Japan when it comes to mostly consumer cooperatives in urban settings they come from a more or less left background. And I know that it is very difficult for them to keep organizational integrity as a movement which involves people who come just for healthy food. It's a very difficult task and I think this is a reality and we have to challenge it and we have to search for ways to relate to this. And the other enemy in this war is more sophisticated than the government. For instance for the Japanese cooperatives, in order to survive you have to follow the rule of competition where you either win or lose. So to simply survive the cooperatives must engage itself in the same kind of practice. So the "good reasons" are lost. So we have very much to learn from the Davao experience. I want to know whether you face the similar question. For instance the hospitals, you increased the number of new hospitals so there's a competition from the local hospitals, how do you cope with it?

**Dr. Tiongco:** I understand there are two questions. One is how do you cope with repression from both the business and the political sectors? And the second is how do you cope with competition? First from the commercial entities that sells health and two from the cooperatives themselves who might be dealing in the same type of work. But first let me just come up with a background. Like I said, we have started with health and as it became

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Editorial note: The Philippine case was presented through a video. The two papers were written after the workshop. Thus the open forum may supercede issues surfaced in the papers.

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**"...cooperatives, in order to survive you have to follow the rule of competition where you either win or lose. So to simply survive the cooperatives must engage itself in the same kind of practice. So the "good reasons" are lost."**

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successful was translated into other areas such as education, information and transportation to provide the people with services that the government is unable to provide. This is your concept, our concept of a civil society. A society that is able to take care of its own basic human needs by utilising its own resources, by putting themselves together. So we feel what we did with health can and has been done in other areas of basic human needs and because these basic needs are not met, is not free and there

is a problem of freedom. And so if we can do this then we can stand up to any repression.

Now the repression naturally comes from economic means because this is my basic thesis that everything is translated into economics. What does money stand for anyway. It's only a piece of paper. So money translates into trusts. Its not money as a commercial entity that is the root of all evil but the capacity of money to represent trust when trust is not there yet that is. That is why people trust the dollar more than the peso or trust the deutchmark better than the dollar. You trust because of the perception that the community has. And so when repression comes it comes not just from political, not just from a commercial, not just from legal or military but basically it's commercial. The people are elected into political positions because of big business and the reason why they make losses is because business tells them that this loss is good for you because it is good for us. And even the military moves because of money. For a while in Mindanao it was the poor exploited people who t shot at other poor exploited people who took up guns because they were in the military. They don't kill the generals. But mostly the people who get killed are the same grassroots people who get exploited by the military. So if its money that makes them run you know it is very important to understand that here we have a group of people organising themselves and are willing to bear any burden to pay enterprise march into hell and dare the devil to a dance in order to heal the economic situation. And we did it. If people can come together then there can be no

other political party that can stand up to us because they are afraid of the power that comes up with the people putting resources together.

The second question was competition from commercial entities which could just go down and destroy the markets so to speak. If we offer help at one peso and they offer help at ten centavos then you lose business. But here is a situation wherein the end user is also the producer. Take a look at most third world countries had to grapple with in terms diseases that have already been old fashioned in first world countries. Tuberculosis, for example, is an economic disease more than physical disease. We buy anti-tuberculosis preparations by the billions of dollars every year to third world countries because that is where it is found. And we buy this from Switzerland, Italy, and America but there is no tuberculosis all of those countries so it was our money that was used by them to put up their factories. Our money that they used to pay themselves high salaries and our money that they used to pay themselves vacations when they go to the Philippines and take two or three virgin girls to take with them. But can we help it? They are pointing a gun at our heads and saying that if you don't buy our medicine you die. But we are also pointing a gun at their heads and we are telling them that if we don't buy your medicines, you die first because your money comes from us. So in this case, the price cuts do not matter because we are owners of the merchandise that we are buying and in the second place, the competition from cooperatives themselves, now the word coop preempts competition.

**Carol Arguillas:** I just want to add one very short answer. It has something to do with labour movement in relation to the cooperative also. The Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU) in Davao City, in one cement factory they have a very strong cooperative with about ten million assets already so that when they have a collective bargaining negotiation, they can threaten the company with all sorts of things because they have lots of money in the cooperative. There are two separate entities. The employees belong to the union, the militant union and they are also members of the cooperative so that is how they work within the system.

**Tesa Encarnacion:** Just like Muto my questions will be arising from a cooperative experience which I started studying in 1991 until the present and this used to be the government model cooperative of Dante Buscayno the founder of the new people's army. Several questions arise now. I think the very first question was when Carol mentioned that Mindanao is generally "reaffirm." That is why I wanted to know what the impact of this whole left debate is on the cooperative movement especially if your target are former NPAs, so I want to hear the comments because this will affect their attitude towards the cooperative. And the second is the ingredients that they say are the factors for the success of the cooperative. One is I want to know about

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leadership. Definitely I am sure you and Carol are leaders of the cooperative movement maybe you can give Dante a tip or two. Dante is a very charismatic leader, he is a good organiser but he is a poor business person. Also, the farmers look at him as a peasant so when he asks money from them they say why are you asking money from us, you are just one of us. We'd rather pay the usurer. Saying that since they want to know something about the attitude of people, dependency on a leadership and can you expound on the dole-out mentality. And that is what I want to know about and I think that this is related to education and training. For Dante, they believe that the education would come through the practical experience of people. When they have a very successful cooperative then you have structural forces that will go against it, they will fight against it. But what happens is cooperative members have come to these structural factors and something very practical: the aspect of managing a cooperative. These are farmers who have no experience and are not business people and I would like to know how you, I mean a doctor and a journalist, do it. And maybe lastly I think I'd like to emphasise, if you can expound on the role of the state, I mean you say it's our cooperative and all but in the beginning you focused on the mayor. And from then you said the cooperative is now on its way, meaning that there was some tie up with the state in that sense. So is it possible for you to expound it.

**Arief Budiman:** I would like to ask if the cooperative would that have been possible under Marcos, first of all because if I take that experience and put it into the Indonesian context that is almost impossible because the business sector will work together with the state and will start anything, any activitie that will compete with the private sector. So it will be the state and the business sector that will try to repress you. So then you come to the political questions. I believe that people if they are not touched by the state have the capacity to organise themselves. And we did some research on the economy of the people, the informal sector in the cities of Indonesia and they are very good. The problem is not because they cannot compete with the private sector but because the state keeps on intervening and destroys them

**Vinod Raina:** It's interesting for me because working in the alternative service professional areas like health and medicine and, like I mentioned yesterday, the very form of practice in India leaves a lot of space for people to organise into alternative forms of work of this nature and it has happened for many years there. What we feel there is that inspite of successes of this kind, what we found that probably after thirty years of this kind of work it seeps onto the mainstream. It remains as a niche for you to continue you are not repressed particularly when you are in the service area but it does not make any policy changes politically. I believe that social movements need an ideology. I have couple of questions. Can work in the service sector like

health have an ideological complement and does this particular cooperative movement and the health movement have an ideology because I don't think we can look at movements only in terms of economics. It's the same kind of criticism on the mainstream that you cannot reduce it to economics, politics is larger than economics.

Another question is, I can't find the hospital movement has a social context, the movement context if it just started affecting the mainstream health system of the Philippine's government, if it just started making a dent on that. The question is I think it gets a political and ideological context when it goes to pure services into the production area because production is where control and user production to me is very critical not the services, although there is a need for services. I also feel as these cooperatives tend to grow and that is what happened to SEWA, the pure power they get increases and I've seen that they enter into bilateral economic agreements with the World Bank. I don't know whether that makes them more radical or less radical, I am not so sure about that, that is the question. So I would like to put all that's been said into that context and I'm particularly worried because in the first explanation we've heard that that part of the Philippines has become a part of a free trade zone, and if you have a cooperative movement out there what's the future?

Urvashi Butalia: Let me cite an example of a big cooperative in India which is a milk cooperative which is a nationwide thing now. And it is actually based on one man. Now a question for me with this kind of movement is what happens when that one man disappears? A question also raised is when cooperative management becomes almost the negative sense how do you retain the vision? The third question relates to the same

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example that Vinod gave of SEWA (Self Employed Women's Association). SEWA is an amazingly successful cooperative in economic terms. It is working with poor women and there is a cooperative training through which these women have become economically self-sustaining. But what SEWA did not bargain for was what might happen, and did happen, in the recent sectarian conflict in India when the Moslem and Hindu factor over identities cut so deeply into this economic miracle that among these women there was a clear division. It was a major problem and again I say that it is related to Vinod's question because it is about retaining a political ideology within the management structure which we know allows for that.

**James Keezhangatte:** The cooperative movement has gone very much into health sectors. But now the question is what happens to the state. The state still gets all forms of taxes. Are you telling the state that you are not doing what you should be doing so we pay less taxes? Or if we take all the

health or the other sectors totally we will not be taxed at all so your survival is questioned. Are you motivating the people for that?

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**"The history of cooperatives in the Philippines is a history of failure. And the reason for this is that basically the government tried to put up cooperatives... So it is very strange for a non-cooperative entity to be putting up cooperatives and that makes it doomed to failure... The cooperative must come from the community itself..."**

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**Clark Soriano:** Yesterday the Koreans talked about transition. Arief said that the states under a situation of transition is different from other situations, this is perhaps saying that perhaps that cooperatives are possible under that stage. Now that you have that space there are several questions like what do you do with that space? Is it a matter of bringing up old issues that you've fought against during that time and bringing and transferring those issues into that new space? Are there new issues? Who do you fill up that space with. Is it a

matter of just doing what the others were doing and letting the others do what you are doing? Or do you need to do something else? And the third question is what is that space competing against? Before we usually talked about that space in relation to the state, the civil society versus the state. I think Ed yesterday was talking about the civil society versus the market. Now this issue of the cooperative bank is not just a commercial issue. It is a political issue that has recently been brought to the fore after Cory because of a series of complications. Banks in the Philippines are all owned by a bank cartel and some of them can be traced all the way back to the crony capitalists. But at the same time you have a situation of liberalisation where come the multinational banks saying that Filipinos can have the best interest rates if you allow foreign multinational banks to come in and liberalise. So they do it that way and what alternative do you do? You can say "no we don't want the multinationals to come in and have a monopoly" and still continue having a monopoly. Or you can get into this and they compete against the bank. Now the key question in here I think is that a transition raises new issues, new questions that were not originally the issues and questions under a dictatorship. So you not only address the old questions but you also have to ask new questions and create new issues. Now I'm coming from a movement that is involved with what Muto calls as the "other social movements." The mass movement, the left who are involved with the left debate, the other NGOs etc. and these are the questions I am asking. Now the question I want to ask the team are these the questions you are also asking?

**Neng Magno:** It's not a question but a follow up to Arief's point. I just have three points. First I think the cooperatives are not just a response against the repressive state but have, historically in the context of the Philippines, been in existence even before Marcos. It was used by the presidents before Marcos. So I think it's not just the cooperative but it's also the concept of how it works and who is the actor and towards what are they headed for. We can see through the history of Philippine cooperativism that in the sixties and the seventies it was the state legitimising the essence of cooperatives. It flourished after Cory because she went begging after '86 with the PAP which requires partnership between government, people's organisations and NGOs. On the other hand cooperatives also existed during the Marcos period. It also included the state putting legitimacy on the cooperative movement because there was a kind of economism and it destructs the whole process of politicization of the people. It was at the height of anti-Marcos dictatorship and the organised saw that cooperativism was not helping the movement then but was hindering the growth of political consciousness. But now we see a blend of all these kinds of efforts.

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And second if we put cooperatives in the context of the organised left movement, there were also debates whether it is an entry point or an end point. There have been long discussions about how to build cooperativism into the context of a broader mass movement. Lastly, I see that we are not just talking about infrastructures when we talk about cooperatives, we're also talking about how people think and how people react to some kind of teachings. Are we doing because of external motivation? Are we encouraging people's self reliance?

**Dr. Tiongco:** I came from the battlefield but I did not reckon on your ammunition. Yes thank you very much for all your reactions. Some of these questions can be lumped together. Let me answer the first ones about Dante this comes together with Arief and connects with James and Neng also. The history of cooperatives in the Philippines is a history of failure. And the reason for this is that basically the government tried to put up cooperatives. Now I have no quarrel with people let's say Muslims who would want to espouse Christianity and start building Christian churches and cathedrals. There's nothing morally wrong with that but it is very strange. So it is very strange for a non-cooperative entity to be putting up cooperatives and that makes it doomed to failure. I do not know if that was deliberate in terms of government actions but I cannot imagine an outside entity going into a community and setting up a cooperative. The cooperative must come from the community itself, it's felt needs, otherwise it becomes a puppet as most cooperatives are. Dante is the best example of this kind of stupidity. The government made it a sweet exhibition and poured in one hundred fifty million pesos and showed it around that here is a captured NPA leader who is now leading the country to progress. Who sat in the board of the cooperative? The mother of Benigno Aquino, Ting Ting Cojuangco and all the rest are in the board of Dante. He was a puppet, he fought a puppet and then became a puppet himself. And so when the strings are loose then the puppet dies. Marcos didn't come down to us but Cory did. And she said "Dr. Tiongco I would like to know what makes cooperatives so strong here in Davao City." And I said "Ma'am, the reason for that is you." She thought that she was instrumental in making us strong. But it was because she was too far away from Mindanao that she could not, and did not, interfere and we became much stronger.

We are told that cooperatives started in England in an industrial situation. I don't believe cooperativism necessarily came from the West. I think it is ingrained in our culture, especially in the East, that we cooperate with each other. And one of the reasons why Mindanao has one of the strongest cooperative movements is because we are so different. We are in a sense migrants, and right next to us would be another house of people who have different eyes, different colour of skin, different clothes, different language and a different god and the government is so far away so you are forced to

interact for survival. So that is one of the main reasons that perhaps we are rather strong.

Now when it comes to management and leadership I think a charismatic leader is a very poor leader. There's been no charismatic leader that has left anything of value except for tears and blood. And that is the reason why a cooperative is a very important instrument because there is a one man-one vote setup. It is not a matter of how much money I have in the

business that makes me vote you down. And the best part of the cooperative is that ten percent of its net should be spent on education.

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Then what is the state's role. The state's role is to step aside. The state's role is what they call a role of subsidiarity but the state is not doing that. The state is moving in which brings us down to Arief's question: What do we expect the state to do and then again James's question with what is going to happen to the state? Now let us look at the state first. Is it a legal definition or are we referring to the powers that are at that particular moment as the administration of the government. Because the state to me is the people. So there are two definitions here. When I say we are the state, we are the people, we are the race, we are the culture then the cooperatives should represent the state. But if you say the state represents Marcos or Cory or FVR then we are talking about the government. Now in any type of economic activity we have to deal with government. Like I said, most governments are set up by big business and then come after repression that Muto was telling about. What do we expect from these people? Big business, at the beginning of the cooperative being a peoples movement and knowing how little the people have, usually doesn't mind us. It's only when we get more money and, therefore, accumulate power that they begin to become anxious and then they go to the government to promulgate moves against us. Now like I've said we are called cooperative and not competitive. Like I said we will dance with the devil if the music is ours. So they almost killed us in Davao when this first happened but before they could move we saw it right away.

**"...we believe that good service means good business and good business means good service. There can be no other way. You might give good service and not have a good business like an NGO but you die when your funders refuse to do it anymore."**

You see the concept of cooperativism relies on the economies of scale. If I spend fifty dollars for my health and its not enough but if fifty million people put fifty dollars together its not only enough it becomes more than enough. We can buy hospitals, we can buy schools because we are the source of power. So in order to do it we have to get out of Davao. We have to go out and contact people all over the Philippines and they would not listen. So what happened, Cambodia listened. We flew to Cambodia, Phnom Penh practically trying to tell people that this can work for you and then after that we went to Africa. By the time I got back to the Philippines they were willing to listen and listen and that is why I lost my voice. We got twenty eight areas in the Philippines, right now we have

fourteen hospitals and twenty eight clinics and we are still counting.

And so this brings us to the power of numbers which is basically what we are talking about here in business. What happens to business. We are cooperative not contractual. There are so many chinese traders who have rather been exploitative in their practices in the Philippines, who have come over to our side and said that it is safer for us and it is better for us to do our trading as part of the cooperative wholesale society. Because we believe that good service means good business and good business means good service. There can be no other way. You might give good service and not have a good business like an NGO but you die when your funders refuse to do it anymore. But you might have good business and bad service like a lot of our chinese traders but they die faster. So we believe both should go together and we are able to convince them, some of them at least. But we realise that there is this tension but we believe that we can overcome this.

So let's get down now to the point that Arief was stressing if this was possible under Marcos. Marcos as a matter of fact tried to do it by putting up Samahang Bayan which were mini-cooperatives. But then again this was

done out of political patronage and money was dangled before people and they naturally collapsed. But we built on this because there was a residue of awareness of people working together and at least that is one thing that Marcos did. And so the educative part was already a part of this. His mistake was that he, or they, focused on agriculture. This myth about reaching out to the poor and reaching out to the farmer like Dante was a fatal mistake. You know the cooperative movement in the Philippines was focused on the farmers and the farmers alone. After one typhoon or pestilence or drought, the farmers cannot pay. The farmers are not the only actors in the economic situation. You have to pull in the traders, you have to pull in the professionals, you have to pull in the managers, you have to pull in the students because no one can exist in a vacuum. The doctor needs the farmer and the farmers needs the doctor. Whenever a sector fails then the other sector takes over.

The problem with the cooperatives before was that they banded together into federations, farmers banded with farmers from the municipalities all the way up to the national level. And the traders banded together up to the national level, and so on. The farmer is the natural enemy of the trader. The farmer would like to sell his produce to the trader at the highest possible price while the trader wants to buy from the farmer at the lowest possible price. And the trader turns around to the consumer and tries to sell to the consumer at the highest possible price which the consumer want to buy at the lowest possible price. So there was chaos and failure in the cooperative movement until we came in. The situation here was that when health came in you know

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**"The situation here was that when health came in you know everybody needed it from the farmer to the trader to the consumer. So what we did, instead of building a vertical federation we built a horizontal federation wherein everybody was a member. We offered the help farmer offered grain... It might look very utopic but it is working."**

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everybody needed it from the farmer to the trader to the consumer. So what we did, instead of building a vertical federation we built a horizontal federation wherein everybody was a member. We offered help, the farmer offered grain. And so the farmer can come in and keep on farming and we will take out his appendix and we will take in his grain. It might look very utopic but it is working. But it is true what Vinod said that we haven't made a dent in the mainstream if you are talking about actual financial dent, no. But if you are talking about conceptual dents: yes, certainly.

So you talk about a social movements needing an ideology and then again we go into definitions of ideology. I think ideology has to do with class movements. That is how I understand ideology I do not know if there are any other definitions. I agree, we have a group of people who are working for their interest which is a common interest, a common good. That is why I don't believe that we would have competition with other cooperatives because when you are talking about corporations or a privately owned business entity this is for the private good. And when you are talking about private good you are talking about competition. When you are talking about common good there can be no competition because there is only one common good. So I agree that most of the questions are being answered. When you talk about political you are talking about economics really acquiring a political face, I agree with you. But at least that political face was acquired by common consensus on a one man-one vote basis, I think that is very democratic.

We go on to production, no problem on that as I think there were problems of success in terms of excess of money, ownership of production, excess of commodity. Yes, people tend to look at excesses as a problem. But again we are talking about a mass movement here. If you have a surplus here in Hong Kong there is a deep lack somewhere in Mindanao. So if you keep it to yourself, it becomes your problem but if you reach out to other people, not on a dole out basis but in terms of investments, in terms of participation not only of ideas but of business methods, then all of these surpluses not only in terms of commodities but money would find its way to where it is needed. I mean I wouldn't think that we would try to drown sheep as New Zealand farmers will be doing in order to increase prices of sheep but we would rather look for something else.

Carol Arguillas: I think it is easier for you to understand if I say that what the health cooperative has done really has a tremendous effect on the other sectors if followed correctly. What he did not say is that when they banded together in different areas of the Philippines, all twenty-eight areas, they were able to bring down the cost of I.V. fluids from about three dollars to less than a dollar, which is very important. That is only one example and I think from there you can imagine what other things a cooperative can do especially when it is linked with the other cooperatives in the other sectors not only in one specific sector like the hospitals or the farmers.

# The Workshop Participants



**Clark Soriano:** ARENA board member involved in the organization's Social Movements program. Formerly with the Institute for Popular Democracy in the Philippines, he is now involved with the UNDP in Manila.

**Ed Tadem:** Former Development Studies faculty at the University of the Philippine in Manila, he is the current Coordinator of the ARENA Secretariat.

**Arief Budiman:** Indonesian academic-activist, he was recently dismissed from his University for his advocacy in the country's social movements.

**Fred Chiu:** Currently connected with the Hong Kong Baptist University. He used to be actively involved in the Taiwanese political terrain.

**Jung Ok Lee:** Feminist-academic-activist and ARENA board member, she is currently teaching at Hyosung Women's University in South Korea.

**Ian Jong:** Former Korean student activist who is now connected with PSPD and teaching at an Anglican school in Korea.

**Seiko Ohashi:** Board member of ARENA currently based in Negros Island in the Philippines and involved in alternative trade with Japan.

**Hui Siu Lun:** Currently a Ph.D student at Hong Kong University.

**Suthy Prasartset:** Professor of Economics and Political Economy at Chulalongkorn University.

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**Lakshmi Daniel:** Currently working for the Documentation for Action Groups in Asia (DAGA).

**Lau Kin Chi:** ARENA board chair and teaching at Lingnan College. She is also currently involved with the China Social Services and Development Research Centre in Hong Kong.

**Law Wing San:** ARENA fellow and currently connected with Lingnan College.

**Muto Ichiyo:** ARENA fellow and connected with the Rural-Urban Alternatives (RUA) in Japan involved in alternative trade.

**Ada Cheung:** Formerly connected with the Human Rights Watch for Asia.

**Urvashi Butalia:** ARENA board member and teaching at the University of New Delhi. She is a feminist-publisher and co-founder of Kali for Women.

**Tesa Encarnacion:** Currently completing her dissertation on cooperative movements for a doctorate at the Hong Kong University.

**Dessa Quesada:** Formerly with the Philippine Educational Theatre Association as a cultural activist. She is now based in Japan and is connected with RUA.

**Gopal Guru:** Head of the Department of Politics and Public Administration at the Poona University in India.

**Carol Arguillas:** Currently based in Mindanao, Southern Philippines as the Mindanao Bureau Chief for the Philippine Daily Inquirer.

**J.M. Tiongco:** A doctor of medicine and surgeon, he is the general manager of the Medical Mission Group Hospitals and Health Services Cooperative in Davao, Philippines.

**Basil Fernando:** Currently involved with the Asian Human Rights Commission based in Hong Kong and engaged in drafting the Asian Human Rights Charter, among others.

**Jim Imrungruang:** Formerly with the Friends of Thai and the International Young Christian Students in Hong Kong.

**Tan Chi Kiong:** Formerly the general secretary of the Asia Alliance of YMCAs, he is now the Director of the Asian Migrant Centre.

**Vinod Raina:** A theoretical physicist by profession, he is now an ARENA board member and is involved in working for alternative science.

**James Keezhangatte:** Programme officer of ARENA handling the Victims of Development and the Alternative Development Programmes. Formerly lecturer at Nirmala Niketan College of Social Work, Bombay.

**Cha Mi Kyung:** Also a member of the PSPD in Korea, she is currently involved with the Asia Monitor Resource Center (AMRC) in Hong Kong.

**Jeannie Nacpil-Manipon:** The Secretary for International Affairs of the Christian Conference of Asia.

**Titos Escueta:** ARENA Programme officer handling the State of the Asian Peoples Programme and the organization's publications modality. He also taught Political Science and International Studies at the De La Salle University and St. Scholastica's College in Manila.

**Park Byung Ok:** Manager of the Policy Research Department of the CCEJ.

**Hee Yeon-Cho:** Professor of the Department of Sociology at Sung Kong Hoe University in Seoul and Chair of the Board of PSPD.

**Chantana Banpasirichote:** ARENA Board member and researcher at the Chulalongkorn University.

**Carla June Natan:** Formerly with the Asian Migrant Centre and now working with returning migrants in Indonesia.

**Neng Magno:** ARENA Programme officer coordinating the Gender and Social Movement Programmes. She was an instructor and practitioner of Community Development at the University of the Philippines.

**Rajan Bhattarai:** Nepali secretary of the Asian Students Association which is a regional body based in Hong Kong.

**Sujita Shakya:** Formerly with AMRC, she is actively involved in the labour movement in Nepal.

**Binda Pandey:** Working for the Committee for Asian Women based in Hong Kong, she was also involved with GEFONT in Nepal.



**HEE YEON CHO** is a professor of the Department of Sociology, Sung Kung Hoe University in Seoul. He is also the Chair of the Board of the People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy (PSPD).

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ARENA's goal is to build and sustain a community of concerned Asian scholars, intellectuals, and activists that will spearhead a process of social awakening and thereby contribute to the people's struggle for a new, just, and more humane social order.