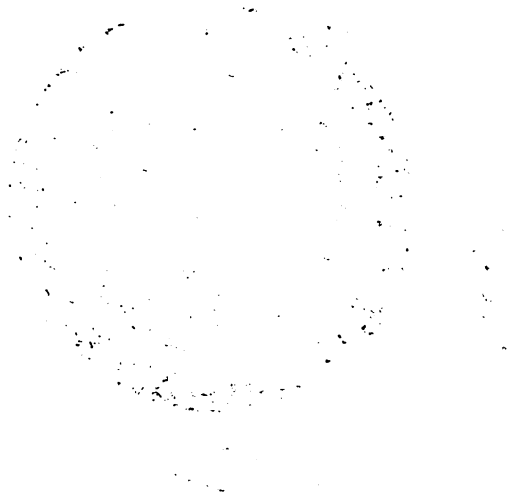


**THE URBAN MASS MOVEMENT IN THE
PHILIPPINES, 1983-87**



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**THE URBAN MASS MOVEMENT
IN THE PHILIPPINES, 1983-87**

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M.R.L.

Glossary

ATOM	August Twenty-One Movement
BANDILA	Bansang Nagkaisa sa Diwa at Layunin (A Nation United in Thought and Purpose)
BAYAN	Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (New Patriotic Alliance)
AFP	Armed Forces of the Philippines
ANP	Alliance for New Politics
BISIG	Bukluran para sa Iklauunad ng Sosyalistang Isip at Gawa (Union for Advancement of Socialist Thought and Action)
CARP	Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program
CDPD	Coalition for the Defence and Preservation of Democracy
CHDF	Civilian Home Defence Force Units
CNL	Christians for National Liberation
COAP	Coalition Against Oil Price Rises
Con-Com	Constitutional Commission
CORD	Coalition for the Restoration of Democracy
COURAGE	Confederation for Unity, Recognition and Advancement of Government Employees
CPAR	Congress for Peoples Agrarian Reform
CPP	Communist Party of the Philippines
CRUS	Christian Union of Socialists
EDSA	Epifanio de los Santos Avenue, Manila
ERB	Energy Regulatory Board
FDSM	Federation of Social Democratic Movements

FFW	Federation of Free Workers
FLAG	Free Legal Assistance Group
GABRIELA	General Assembly Binding Women for Reforms, Integrity, Equality, Leadership and Action
GATCORD	Garment, Textile, Cordage and Allied Workers in the Philippines
IPD	Institute for Popular Democracy
JAJA	Justice for Aquino Justice for All
KAACBAY	Kilusan sa Kapangyarihan at Karapatan ng Bayan (Movement for People's Sovereignty and Democracy)
KADENA	National Democratic Youth Movement
KBL	Kilusang Bagong Lipunan (New Society Movement)
KKD	Kilusang para sa Kalayaan at Demokrasya
KMP	Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (Philippines Peasants' Movement)
KMU	Kilusang Mayo Uno (First of May Movement)
KOMPIL	Filipino People's Congress
LACC	Labour Advisory and Consultative Council
LAKAS	Lakas Ng Sambayan (People's Power)
LFS	League of Filipino Students
Mabini	A human rights lawyers' group named after the revolutionary hero and lawyer, Apolinario Mabini
MMPC	Metro Manila People's Council
MNP	Movement for New Politics
NAJFD	Nationalist Alliance for Justice, Freedom and Democracy (Nationalist Alliance)
Namfrel	National Citizens Movement for Free Elections

NDF	National Democratic Front
NFL	National Federation of Labour
NFSW	National Federation of Sugar Workers
NMCL	National Movement for Civil Liberties
NPA	New People's Army
OUTCRY	People's Organizations Organized Towards Critical Yes
Pandayan	Pandayan para sa Sosyalistang Pilipinas (Movement for a Socialist Philippines)
PCHR	Presidential Commission on Human Rights
PDP-Laban	Philippine Democratic Party-Lakas ng Bayan
PDSP	Philippine Democratic Socialist Party
PKP	Partido Komunista sa Pilipinas (Philippines Communist Party)
PnB	Partido ng Bayan (People's Party)
PSSLU	Philippines Social Security Labour Union
PUP	Polytechnic University of the Philippines
RAM	Reform the Armed Forces of the Philippines Movement
ROAR	Run On Against Marcos and for Reconciliation
TUCP	Trade Union Congress of the Philippines
TUPAS	Trade Union of the Philippines and Allied Services
UNIDO	United Nationalist Democratic Organization
VPD	Volunteers for Popular Democracy
WFTU	World Federation of Trade Unions

Introduction

This monograph surveys the history of what I have called the 'urban mass movement', between August 1983 and October 1987. The movement - variously referred to as 'cause-oriented movement', 'people's power', and 'people's movement' - emerged as a protest movement during the Marcos years, when it campaigned for the removal of Marcos and for a new government which would institute democratic rule and carry out a range of social and economic reforms.¹ More specifically, these terms have been used to refer to the legal protest movement, as distinct from the underground, armed, revolutionary movement. During this period the legal mass movement flourished in both urban and rural areas but the centre of its activities was in the major urban settlements, especially Manila.

The period covered by this study is bounded by two watershed events in modern Philippines history: the assassination of ex-Senator Benigno Aquino, and the attempted coup d'état by Colonel Gregorio Honasan. The assassination of Benigno Aquino in August 1983 caused a massive outburst of protest which fuelled an acceleration in the growth of the mass movement and culminated in the victory over Marcos in February 1986. The next eighteen months were dominated by the attempts of the new government of Corazon Aquino to stabilize a form of traditional, parliamentary government. The attempted coup d'état of August 1987 reflected the frustration of conservative social forces in the Philippines with the inability of the Aquino government to bring a permanent end to the mass movement and the armed, revolutionary underground.

Before embarking on a historical survey, the importance of the mass movement in the recent political history of the Philippines should be emphasized. Strictly speaking, President Corazon Aquino did not come to power through elections, even though she received more votes than Marcos in the January 1986 presidential

¹ Probably the most succinct statement of the reforms that were being demanded by the protest movement can be found in the 'Compact' between several of the most important sectors of the protest movement, dated 6 January 1984.

elections. That her government was not a 'duly-elected constitutional government' was acknowledged in practice when she declared a Provisional Government and adopted the 'Freedom Constitution', a hastily-produced document, which gave her virtual dictatorial powers until a new constitution, drawn up by people chosen by the president herself, was ratified (Mamot 1987; Sison 1986). Essentially, Mrs Aquino's mandate was derived from the popular mass movement. The actions of the mass movement were far more important than the counting of votes; its defiance of the Marcos government rendered the Philippines increasingly ungovernable and made the removal of Marcos inevitable.

During the election campaign itself, mobilization of the people was critically important. The National Citizens Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel), led by big businessman and later Aquino's trade minister, Jose Concepcion, mobilized thousands of people who guarded ballot boxes and checked counting procedures. Drawing mostly on middle-class elements, it was active in almost all major cities and was particularly strong in Manila. Namfrel was not the only such organization. Another organization, TAPAT, mobilized workers and students in a similar election-monitoring exercise. TAPAT, a much smaller group, was led by groups identified with the Filipino Left.

After the election Aquino defied Marcos by refusing to accept the official declaration of the Batasang Pambansa (National Assembly) that Marcos had been elected president, and by unilaterally being sworn in as president. The response of the mass movement to Marcos's cheating was a declaration of support for a campaign of civil disobedience which was announced by Aquino on 16 February 1986 to a crowd of at least one million people at a rally in Luneta Park, Manila. The campaign was to start with boycotts of stores owned by Marcos cronies and the withdrawal of funds from crony-owned banks. While Aquino committed that section of the mass movement most loyally supportive of her to this relatively moderate path, the large and militant organization, Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (New Patriotic Alliance) or BAYAN (The People), indicated it would support such a campaign with strikes and other mass actions. Indeed, BAYAN had called for a general strike before Aquino's announcement. The threat of a general strike was particularly significant given the success, during the previous year, of the *welgang bayan* (people's strike) actions that BAYAN forces had launched in some cities. These involved

strikes combined with protest actions, pickets and any other measures that the BAYAN forces were able to manage.

There was also, of course, a military revolt led by Defence Minister Juan Ponce Enrile, Acting Armed Forces Chief-of-Staff General Fidel Ramos, and Enrile's security advisor, Colonel Gregorio Honasan. Even this mutiny, however, was a by-product of the previous three years of mobilizational politics. The influence of the Enrile-Honasan faction within the military was exercised through the activities of the Reform the Armed Forces of the Philippines Movement (RAM). RAM's mode of operation and style of activities followed those of the mass movement, using manifestos, open letters, newsletters and slogan-festooned T-shirts. Ultimately, however, RAM had a very different agenda from the mass movement (McCoy and Robinson 1986). Its growing influence lay in the fact that it rode the waves of mobilized dissatisfaction that emerged after Senator Aquino's assassination in August 1983.

Chapter 1

From Assassination to Revolution: August 1983- February 1986

The potency of the anti-cheating activism of the January 1986 election campaign, as well as the civil disobedience campaign of late January, drew on the momentum that the mass movement had developed since the August 1983 assassination of Benigno Aquino. An estimated two million protesters had attended his funeral in Manila, creating an atmosphere which involved even the previously politically inactive middle class. The Makati business district subsequently became famous for its anti-Marcos, yellow, ticker-tape parades.

Besides the several very effective *welgang bayan* launched by the Left, the urban mass movement was able to organize demonstrations on the anniversaries of Aquino's assassination and Marcos's declaration of martial law and on many other occasions between 1983 and 1986. Another new way of mobilizing people was the *lakbayan* or people's marches. In the largest of these, the Tarlac-to-Tarmac *lakbayan*, people marched from Tarlac Province (where the Aquinos come from) to Manila International Airport (where Benigno Aquino was assassinated). This attracted not only tens of thousands of participants, but also massive support from the residents in the areas through which it passed, who supplied food and shelter as well as moral support (see Fe Zamora in *Mr and Ms* 3, 10, February 1984). There were even 'people's jogs'. Agapito 'Butz' Aquino, Benigno Aquino's brother, led about four thousand August Twenty-One Movement (ATOM) members in a protest jog from a small town north of Manila, down into Manila. Cleverly taking advantage of the current middle class fad for jogging, the protest was known as 'Run On Against Marcos and for Reconciliation' (ROAR). It too gained the support of the local people. When the military moved to block off the road and the mainly middle-class joggers had to camp outside a church for several nights, food and drink were brought in and priests, folk singers and more people flocked to the area. When the joggers reached Manila, they were greeted by a crowd estimated at one million people (*Malaya* 1-2 February, 1984). Demonstrations,

welgang bayan, *lakbayan*, teach-ins, rallies, marches, strikes, leaflets and placards became the elements of mass political culture - along with violent dispersals, tear-gas, arrests, torture, 'salvagings'¹ and disappearances.

This 'parliament-of-the-streets'² provided the real opposition to Marcos and helped prepare the people in Manila and other cities for the February 1986 Revolution. Although the movement generated considerable spontaneous and unorganized support, it was not entirely spontaneous and unorganized. It brought together various existing organizations as well as giving birth to new ones.

The most conservative organizations were the opposition political parties, in particular Salvador Laurel's United Nationalist Democratic Organization (UNIDO), Jovito Salonga's Liberal Party and Peping Cojuangco's Philippine Democratic Party-*Lakas ng Bayan* (PDP-Laban, People's Power). These parties had, and still have, their basis in alliances between landlords and military in the countryside, and business and military in the urban centres. Their relationship with their mass following, especially in the countryside, is based on patron-client relationships; rural supporters often vote for them out of fear, out of feudal 'gratitude' or because of vote-buying or parochial pork-barreling. Such parties do not have a continuing mass base, but exist only at election time (Landé 1968; Rivera 1985).

Much more important for mass movement politics were the militant, and already large, left-wing, sectoral organizations. In Filipino political usage, the 'sectors' comprise the workers, peasants, students, teachers, artists, urban poor, and women. Each ideological current in the Philippines has its own sectoral organizations, but the most active are those on the Left. These

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- 1 The term 'salvaging' is used in the Philippines to refer to the political killing of grassroots activists.
 - 2 The term 'parliament-of-the-streets' first emerged during the period of nationalist protests and mobilizations in the 1960s and early 1970s. These big demonstrations, which in fact preceded martial law, were the first to establish the tradition of urban mass mobilization in the cities. The most important organization during that period was Josa Maria Sison's *Kabataang Makabayan* (National Youth), the forerunner of today's *Natdem* groups.

include the *Kilusang Mayo Uno* (First of May Movement, KMU) a union movement, the *Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas* (Philippines Peasants' Movement, KMP), the League of Filipino Students (LFS), the Association of Concerned Teachers, National Democratic Youth Movement (KADENA), the Association of Concerned Artists and, later, GABRIELA, an umbrella organization of women's organizations. Sectoral organizations had already experienced serious repression by the Marcos government, with many of their members having been arrested or assassinated, and they were the backbone of the *welgang bayan* actions.

The left-wing organizations are classified by Filipinos as 'National Democratic' ('Natdem'), that is, inspired by a political program broadly similar in perspective to that of the National Democratic Front (NDF). However, there was also a number of smaller sectoral organizations identified as 'Social Democratic'. ('Socdem'). These were considered to be inspired by the political program of the Philippines Democratic Socialist Party (PDSP), which, like the NDF, existed underground. Like the NDF, the Socdems maintained an armed force, though it was much smaller and virtually inactive. Amongst the larger, above-ground Socdem groups were urban poor community organizations, the Federation of Free Workers (FFW) and a number of smaller peasant organizations. They collaborated with parts of the Church, in particular the Jesuits. The Socdems experienced significant growth during the post-assassination period, when many of the newly activated middle-class forces were drawn to their organizations.

One new organization which became very active in mass mobilization, and drew in significant middle-class forces, at least up until 1985, was the August Twenty-One Movement (ATOM) (21 August being the day upon which ex-Senator Aquino was assassinated). ATOM was led by Benigno Aquino's brother, film actor, Agapito 'Butz' Aquino. Butz Aquino soon emerged as the Socdems' most popular figure. ATOM drew other non-affiliated groups around it, giving the Socdems a more effective mass-mobilization wing than they had ever had before. In June 1985 the Socdem groups which engaged in mass-mobilization activity - ATOM, the unions, urban poor groups, and Socdem-influenced church groups - were brought together under the umbrella organization *Bansang Nagakaisa sa Diwa at Layunin* (BANDILA). Once again Butz Aquino figured prominently.

Apart from the old established parties, the National Democrats and the Social Democrats, there was a loose grouping referred to as the 'Liberal Democrats'. Before 1985, the main organizational base for these people was human rights and legal aid organizations. The two most important were Mabini and the Free Legal Assistance Group (FLAG). As might be expected, given their organizational commitments, the Liberal Democrats were particularly concerned with Marcos's infringements of human rights. While often having only small organizational bases, the Liberal Democrats had substantial personal followings because of their articulateness and high public profile.

The underground organizations, the National Democratic Front (NDF) and the Philippine Democratic Socialist Party (PDSP), also mobilized their memberships. The NDF is easily the bigger and more militant of the two. Besides the 30,000-strong Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and its guerilla wing the New Peoples' Army (NPA), it includes worker, peasant, youth, teacher and women's organizations. The youth organization, *Kabataang Makabayan* (Patriotic Youth) is reportedly the strongest of these.³ The official pronouncements of the NDF and the CPP always supported the mass mobilizations and they carried great weight among above-ground activists as well as among the more radical organizations. The NDF's support was essential for success during the period up to December 1986.

There were, not unexpectedly, ideological differences among these groups. There were also differences on questions of methods of operation. However, during the post-assassination period there was a more-or-less effective working coalition. While the organizational strength of the National Democrats provided the backbone for mass mobilizations, it was the breadth of the coalition which provided the kind of authority needed to be able to mobilize huge numbers of those citizens still only partially radicalized. It was not unusual for mass mobilizations to involve hundreds of thousands of people. For example, on the anniversary of Benigno

³ Information on the underground movement is based on the NDF publication *Liberation*, the Communist Party of the Philippines newspaper, *Ang Bayan*, and discussions with participants.

Aquino's death in 1984 there was a mass mobilization of over one million people, despite the ever-present threat of violent dispersal.

The framework within which Natdem, Socdem, and Libdem all tried to work together was also formally organized. The first coalition was called Justice for Aquino Justice for All (JAJA). It was born out of the protests around Senator Aquino's assassination and it was through JAJA, directly or indirectly, that most of the very large mobilizations between August 1983 and May 1984 were organized. The different components, however, continued to conduct their separate activities.

The formation of JAJA was a major breakthrough for the anti-dictatorship movement in that it formalized, for the first time, a coalition among centre, left-of-centre and leftist forces. It was a breakthrough for the Left in particular, which was now able to speak to the supporters of the other forces, at mass demonstrations and other rallies as well as to the mass of non-organized people who became involved.

There was some breakdown in the coalition when, in 1984, JAJA gave way to a new formation called the Coalition for the Restoration of Democracy (CORD). While JAJA had evolved to organize the protest at Senator Aquino's funeral, CORD evolved out of the need for the anti-Marcos forces to come to a unified position on the 1984 elections for the national assembly.

In January 1984 a very successful national assembly of oppositionists, called the Filipino People's Congress (KOMPIL), was held. This Congress was attended by five thousand delegates from all the above-ground, anti-Marcos forces. It was a major event and an important boost to the morale of the opposition. The main outcome of the congress was the issuance of a 'Call for Meaningful Elections' (see Horatio V. Pardedes in *Mr and Ms* 27 January 1984). This statement indicated that the opposition forces would not participate in the 1984 elections unless Marcos relinquished his powers to issue legislation by decree and to veto legislation passed by the Batasang Pambansa. Both of these powers completely negated the role of the Batasan. When Marcos refused to accept these conditions the majority of the opposition declared a boycott.⁴ The minority, led by Salvador Laurel's

⁴ Nemenzo (1984). Also see *IBON: Facts and Figures* 29 February 1984; 'Resolution to boycott the 1984 Plebiscite and Batasan Elections', 10

UNIDO, decided to participate and campaign against Marcos's *Kilusang Bagong Lipunan* (New Society Movement, KBL). While CORD's boycott mobilizations did not match the size or momentum of the post-assassination protests, they kept the level of political activity very high. Also maintained were the links being formed among those groups most oriented towards non-violent activism and mobilization politics, which began to be referred to as 'pressure politics'. The groups included the Natdems (National Democrats), the Socdems (Social Democrats) and the most militant sections of the Libdems (Liberal Democrats) including such figures as former Senator Jose Diokno.

The coalition politics that developed between August 1983 and the middle of 1985 was a new phenomenon for the Philippines.⁵ The political currents most oriented towards mass action, the Natdems and Socdems, had been forced underground after the declaration of martial law in 1972. The Natdems had to struggle hard to obtain any kind of place under the 'legal' sun. The first step was to build strong sectoral organizations, such as unions and student organizations.

In 1983 there was no above-ground organization built around a general political program which could attract the sectoral groups. This situation was evident in rallies during 1984. Speakers at such rallies could be divided into two groups: those who spoke for an ideologically-oriented umbrella organization or for a major ideological group (mainly Libdem and Socdem); and those who spoke for a specific, sectoral, mass organization and aired that sector's grievances. The latter were always the most radical and

January 1984 (roneoed); 'Strive for National Unity, Struggle for Democracy, (Statement of the League of Filipino Students on the Batasang Pambansa elections)', published in pamphlet form, as a special issue of *Commitment*; and 'An Enlightened and Militant Boycott of the 1984 Plebiscite and Batasan Election', *Philippines Sign* 21-27 January 1984.

- 5 An important coalition grouping, the Movement for the Advancement of Nationalism, was formed in the 1960s. It brought leftists and nationalists together, but withered as an effective coalition during the period of turmoil inside the old communist party. In 1981 another coalition was formed to boycott the presidential elections of that year. It was called People's Opposition to Plebiscite and Election and the Movement for Independence, Nationalism and Democracy or People's Mind.

generally came from the Natdem groups. It was also their organizations which provided the core attendance at any mass mobilization. The August Twenty-One Movement (ATOM) also provided an organized, though much smaller, group. The rest of those at mobilizations were people who did not belong to any specific political group. They were, nevertheless, sympathetic to the demands of the mass movement and had their morale boosted by the level of organized support for a rally.

At the ideological level, the radical perspective came to be articulated by the militant wing of the Liberal Democrats, a key figure in which was Jose Diokno. This was the closest the Natdems came to having a spokesperson not identified with a single sectoral group during this period, despite the fact that the Natdem groups had organized themselves into a 'multi-sectoral', ideologically-oriented organization as early November 1983 (NAJFD 1983; interview with Fr Jose Dizon, then deputy secretary-general, NAJFD July 1984). This was the Nationalist Alliance for Justice, Freedom and Democracy (NAJFD), often referred to as the Nationalist Alliance. Reflecting its strong, multi-sectoral composition, the Nationalist Alliance was soon bringing out policies which promoted the interests of labour, the peasantry, students, and women.⁶ It also worked closely with human rights groups. As a Natdem grouping it heavily emphasized nationalist issues, in particular, opposition to US influence in the country and the presence of US military bases. It was able to win over leading opposition figures such as the nationalist elder statesman of opposition politics, Senator Lorenzo Tañada. Leading figures from the sectoral organizations, especially the teachers and students organizations, also took on prominent positions.

The Nationalist Alliance was also able to participate as a member of CORD, representing Natdem positions in discussions and statements. But while these carried authority amongst NAJFD followers, there was still no other NAJFD leader with the popular authority of Senator Diokno. At rallies and demonstrations the popular Natdem figures were those from sectoral organizations, such as Rolando Olalia from the KMU, Elmer Mercado from the

⁶ For a compendium of these policies, see NAJFD (1984) and the NAJFD newsletter, *Nationalist Alternative*.

League of Filipino Students and Etta Rosales from the Association of Concerned Teachers.

Also in 1984, Senator Diokno, together with other nationalist Libdems and unaffiliated radicals, established a new grouping called *Kilusan sa Kapangyarihan at Karapatan ng Bayan* (Movement for People's Sovereignty and Democracy), usually referred to as KAAKBAY. Very similar in outlook to the Natdems, it could be distinguished from them ideologically primarily by its emphasis first on being 'ideologically independent' (not Natdem or Socdem) and, secondly, on the role of non-violent activism or 'pressure politics'. While all groups agreed that pressure politics was an important tactic to be used against Marcos, KAAKBAY tended to elevate it to a principle and saw it as a new, essential component of any post-Marcos democracy. Some people started talking about a political system which institutionalized a powerful role for the 'parliament-of-the-streets' as one of 'popular democracy'. The first major elucidation of this idea was set out in the August 1984 edition of a publication called *Plaridel Papers*.⁷ KAAKBAY, however, had no significant sectoral organizations affiliated to it and no major mass base. It was always a small organization, its strength stemming from the personal popularity of Diokno and the fact that it had recruited some very able and popular political commentators (interview with KAAKBAY activists, July 1984).

The emphasis on non-violent pressure politics was also important.⁸ No significant element amongst the three currents attacked the New Peoples Army during this period. However there was an ongoing debate as to what emphasis should be given to

⁷ 'Elite Democracy versus Popular Democracy', in *Plaridel Papers* (Manila, August 1984). The publication was widely read in Manila. The documents carried no names, however the publication was described as follows: 'PLARIDEL PAPERS, named after Marcelo H. del Pilar who struggled peacefully for reforms but remained open to the revolutionary option, are prepared by a group of politically active, middle class professionals to provide meaningful direction and thought to current actions for freedom and justice'.

⁸ The most important argument for non-violent change was by Professor Randy David, leader of KAAKBAY (David 1984).

armed struggle in the countryside and mass political struggle in the cities. People like Diokno were already convinced that even in the short term mass political struggle could make the Philippines so ungovernable that the US would be forced to withdraw its support for Marcos, thus ensuring that he could be toppled (interview with Senator Diokno, July 1984).

The underground National Democratic Front argued for primary emphasis to be given to armed struggle in the countryside. Many in the underground still felt that even the toppling of Marcos, as distinct from the social revolution itself, could only be achieved through an armed victory. They were certain that the US would not withdraw its support for Marcos no matter how advanced the 'parliament-of-the-streets' movement became.

By late 1984, therefore, the ideological spectrum within the 'pressure politics' wing of the anti-Marcos movement had been organizationally clarified. Founded in 1984 and active during the next twelve months, the following organizations had started to consolidate themselves: ATOM for the Social Democrats,⁹ Nationalist Alliance for the National Democrats, and KAAKBAY for the militant and nationalist wing of the Liberal Democrats. KAAKBAY, which itself was a coalition, also included a number of independent Marxists. There were also groups, such as Mabini and FLAG, which did not consistently align themselves with any of the three political currents but were united primarily around opposition to Marcos. Some of these latter people emerged to play a very important role in the Aquino government during its first twelve months. Additionally, outside the mass movement but often co-operating with it were the established opposition political parties.

With the clarification of ideologies of the organizations within the mass movement, the next initiative was aimed at establishing a formal and permanent coalition between these groups and the more liberal of the traditional parties.

In fact a more modest unification initiative had occurred as early as January 1984, when an agreement was reached among

⁹ ATOM was not an umbrella organization like NAJFD or KAAKBAY; however, the high profile of its leader, Butz Aquino, and the fact that it was the most active Socdem group in the 'parliament-of-the-streets', elevated its position to that of *de facto* Socdem representative group. This role was later taken over by BANDILA.

KAAKBAY, the Nationalist Alliance, the Liberal Party, and PDP-Laban. This agreement, known as the 'Compact', called for the establishment of a Preparatory Commission to prepare for a transitional government in the case of the removal of Marcos. The 'Compact' also set out the major reform proposals of the mass movement. These included land reform, removal of the US military bases, rescheduling the foreign debt, 'neutralization' of the country, repeal of all repressive laws and decrees and the re-institution of a free press.

In May 1985 there was another, more ambitious, initiative. The founding congress of BAYAN was held. This congress attempted to establish a 'unified command' for the major currents: Natdem, Socdem, nationalist Libdem and the 'unaligned' Libdems. Big business organizations which had become involved in anti-Marcos activities were also included. Considerable effort was put into preparing for the congress. It proved successful and most of the organizers were optimistic. The breadth of participation was reflected in the composition of the interim officers chosen by the congress's organizing committee:

chairperson:	Lorenzo Tanada [nationalist Libdem]
president:	Jose Diokno [KAAKBAY & Libdem]
vice-president:	Ambrosia Padilla [Nationalist Alliance - Libdem]
executive	
vice-presidents:	Etta Rosales [Association of Concerned Teachers - Natdem] Teofisto Guingona [SANDATA lawyers group - Socdem] Rolando Olalia [chairman of KMU - Natdem]
secretary-general:	Butz Aquino [ATOM - Socdem].

Diokno was elected in absentia.

The congress opened with agreement on four general principles: popular democracy, as opposed to both dictatorship and the 'elite democracy' that existed in the Philippines prior to martial law; national sovereignty, as opposed to imperialism and all forms of foreign domination; people's welfare and economic development, as opposed to social structures that perpetuate

economic inequality, and national unity, which was defined as 'solidarity between all genuinely patriotic and democratic classes, sectors and forces of Philippines society', not just a unity of politicians (*Mr and Ms* 3-9 May 1985).

The concept of popular democracy had begun to gain credence during the discussion that followed the *Plaridel Papers*. It also reflected the key role of KAAKBAY intellectuals in formulating policy for the movement at this time. The draft papers for the BAYAN congress were drawn up by a group under the chairmanship of Ed Garcia. Garcia, like the other important KAAKBAY intellectual, Randy David, was an academic at the University of the Philippines. The importance of the concept of popular democracy was that it represented a demand that the 'parliament-of-the-streets' play a permanent role in Filipino politics. As the weekly magazine *Mr & Ms* reported:

The traditional political parties, Diokno says, 'kind of go to sleep between elections'. What would make BAYAN different is that while it 'hopes to take part in the normal electoral activities,' it also intends 'to keep up pressure on government by extra-legal but not illegal means', including the usual demonstrations and rallies, as well as human chains, general strikes and other untested forms of mass action (*ibid.*).

With such ambitious aims as institutionalizing 'popular democracy' and establishing a unified command for the movement, the question of representation for the various groups on decision-making bodies became central. Controversy over this issue overshadowed much of the progress that was made on policy issues. Towards the end of the congress the disagreements became sharper and the alliance started to break up.¹⁰

¹⁰ The core of the controversy was over the representation to be given to organizations from the provinces. The Socdem groups insisted that each province have only one representative. The provincial organizations, which were mostly Natdem or similarly oriented, insisted on proportional representation. At the same time, the Socdems had achieved acceptance that the big businesspeople's group, Manindigan, be given four or five seats. For the respective views of BANDILA, BAYAN and KAAKBAY on these differences, see Manansala (1986).

The initial breakaway was made by the main Socdem groups, including ATOM, the lawyers' group SANDATA, and the SAPAK group headed by influential Socdem figure, Marito Canonigo. They walked out of the congress, refusing to participate in the National Council elections. Later, in June, the Socdem groups went on to establish their own umbrella organization, *Bagong Alyansang Nagkakaisa sa Diwa at Layunin* (BANDILA). Its main figures were Butz Aquino and Teofisto Guingonan (*Mr and Ms*, 7-13 June 1985).

With the second largest block, the Socdems, withdrawn, the Natdems were left with an overwhelming organizational majority. In the eyes of others still in BAYAN, the broad nature of the coalition was therefore lost. Later in the same month, the president of BAYAN, ex-Senator Diokno, also resigned.¹¹ This signalled the departure from BAYAN of the major remaining non-Natdem forces. As a result, BAYAN today is essentially an umbrella organization for the major Natdem-oriented organizations, such as the KMU, KMP, LFS and KADENA. With these organizations as the backbone of its militant politics, it has been able to attract a large number of other organizations, especially in the provinces. In 1986, BAYAN claimed to have over 1000 affiliates. The Nationalist Alliance continued to exist but was increasingly overshadowed by BAYAN; by 1986 it had transformed itself into an educational and research organization catering to the needs of BAYAN affiliates and other radical groups.

The failure of the BAYAN congress to establish a broad front was a setback. There no longer existed the equivalent of JAJA and CORD. This situation was worsened by a bitter disagreement between the BAYAN forces and the rest of the movement over what policy to adopt towards Cory Aquino's presidential campaign. Marcos had called presidential elections early and the 'snap elections', as they were called, also created a major 'snap controversy'. Even after a considerable amount of lobbying amongst the major leaders of the traditional political parties and the

¹¹ Note Etta Rosales's comment (*Mr and Ms* 21-27 June 1985) that the possible replacement for Diokno, KMU Chairman Rolando Olalia, was 'too sectoral'. The *Natdem* forces were still having problems in projecting a non-sectoral, political leader.

mass movement organizations, no leader could be found who would unite the opposition to Marcos. Finally, the hitherto not-very-prominent Cory Aquino was agreed upon. Aquino was forced to agree to run under the UNIDO banner in return for Salvador Laurel's withdrawal from the presidential contest and acceptance of the vice-presidential candidature. BANDILA and the non-aligned Libdems, as well as the traditional parties, all decided unequivocally to support Aquino's campaign. A new grouping of radical groups, called Independent Caucus, and KAAKBAY, decided to give Aquino's campaign 'critical support'. BAYAN called for an active boycott of the campaign (see documents in Schirmer and Shalom 1987).

The resulting tension within the movement was reflected inside BAYAN itself. At its second national congress, in July 1986, Secretary-General Lean Alejandro outlined the course of the internal debate:

The internal division of the federation on whether to participate or boycott broke out on 28 November, 1986 during the First Emergency Session of the National Council.... After a much heated day-long debate, with Senators Tañada and Padilla leading the participation advocates, it was agreed that BAYAN would participate if the following conditions were met: the resignation of Marcos, the synchronisation of the local and presidential polls, the abolition of the PDA [Preventive Detention Act] and the full restoration of the writ [of habeas corpus]. The decision was made after a division of the house as there was no consensus (Alejandro 1986:12).

Alejandro also explained that it was at this meeting that ex-Senator Tañada announced that he would take leave of absence from his duties in BAYAN as soon as Aquino announced her candidacy. Tañada obviously thought that the demands being put to Marcos would not be met. The debate continued after the meeting and an emergency session of the national executive committee was later convened.

The majority still supported a boycott. They considered that the election would be a sham and that participation in it would foster illusions that change could be achieved under Marcos through elections. There were others who argued that the elections would

provide an important opportunity to conduct political education. Finally, it was agreed to check on the possibility of coming to an agreement with the pro-Aquino forces, in particular Aquino's and Laurel's own groups, over a campaign platform. A committee was formed to work out the proposals to be submitted to Aquino. Following this meeting, BAYAN lost another major figure, when its president, Senator Padilla, tendered his resignation.

A 'Program for a Pro-People Government' was submitted to Aquino in December. On 8 January 1986 the second emergency session of the National Council was convened. Not surprisingly, there had been no agreement between BAYAN and the Aquino-Laurel camp on at least five major issues: closure of the US military bases at Subic Bay and Clarke Field; repudiation of foreign debts; land reform; nationalization of strategic industries; and abrogation of unequal treaties with the US and Japan. But the debate continued. As Alejandro reported:

The question of whether to boycott or participate was opened again due to a motion to reconsider the standing decision not to participate. After another emotion-laden debate, the house was divided once again and the motion was defeated: 82 votes against, 7 for and 3 abstentions. The form and conduct of the boycott was discussed and it was agreed upon that BAYAN shall launch an 'active and militant boycott'. ... BAYAN finally had a firm decision after 2 NC and 2 NEC meetings and a host of leave-of-absences and resignations (*ibid.*:13).

With this level of acknowledged dissension within BAYAN, it is not difficult to imagine the problems that arose with, as Alejandro put it in his report, 'sharp criticisms from our allies'.

The tradition of mass mobilization that BAYAN had helped establish became the foundation for Aquino's election campaign, the ballot-box protection activism and finally the February uprising. The levels of mobilization reached a peak, though they were more spontaneous and disorganized. Alejandro described the mood of the mobilizations as 'revolutionary', at the same time acknowledging: our rallies, statements and fora did not make an impact ... our mobilizations fell dramatically off the mark relative to our 'tested' capacity.

The failure of the boycott campaign also meant that the BAYAN forces were unable to provide any major leadership initiatives during the February Revolution itself. As Jose Maria Sison, founder of the CPP, pointed out in a 1986 analysis of the post-February political situation, BAYAN forces did take part in the February uprising. They took part in the mobilizations in Angeles City which prevented tank reinforcements going to Manila to help Marcos, and they were involved in actions at Channel 4 TV station which prevented Marcos forces from taking it back from the anti-Marcos rebels then in control. It was also BAYAN that mustered a large protest crowd outside Malacanang Palace on Marcos's last day (Sison 1987).¹² According to Alejandro, BAYAN members were also preparing their Manila branches for action should the turmoil continue - for example, they were preparing to arrest Marcos-appointed mayors and corrupt officials (Brevern 1986). Indeed, without both the activism of the BAYAN forces before 1986, and their interventions in 1986, the February Revolution may not have been successful. At the same time, however, BAYAN's 'detachment' from the masses, as Alejandro put it, meant that the BAYAN forces, despite their greater size and militancy, were not able to play a role in the political leadership of the February Revolution or, more importantly, its immediate aftermath.

The same situation applied to the National Democratic underground which had also called for a boycott. The December 1985 issue of the CPP's *Ang Bayan* published a statement entitled 'Snap Election: Big Political Swindle'. While defending the boycott campaign, it acknowledged the high level of concern about the boycott policy within the movement:

... although convinced that a boycott is correct and conforms to principles and morality, many anti-fascists and progressives amongst the middle forces are worried that by boycotting they may be isolating themselves from the people. Because of this, a substantial number of them have opted for participation while the rest stand for

¹² Anti-leftist commentators at the time blamed the looting of Malacañang Palace on BAYAN supporters. However, newspaper reports indicate that BAYAN forces, along with some priests, tried to prevent the mob entering the Palace (*Manila Times* 27 February 1986).

boycott.... Temporarily, there have also been doubts in the ranks of the progressive mass organizations and alliances. While there is unity that this scheme of the regime [i.e. the elections] should be exposed and opposed, there was no initial agreement on how to carry this out. Spirited democratic discussions were given free reign within the ranks, including those of Party organs and units (*Ang Bayan*, December 1985).

The split in the mass movement over the issue of supporting Aquino was qualitatively different from that which occurred over the question of boycotting the 1984 elections. When in 1984 UNIDO and the other traditional parties decided to campaign, there was no real loss to the movement. The traditional parties did not, in fact, seek to mobilize the people. The 'parliament-of-the-streets' remained united. In 1986, however, the split was between the best organized group - which had until then been the backbone of the mobilizations, namely the Natdems - and the more loosely-organized and spontaneous wing of the movement. One consequence of this was that the February Revolution was spontaneous and disorganized in character and was therefore unable to give birth to any sustained or institutionalized version of People's Power.¹³ The main organizational input came from the Roman Catholic Church, which quickly decided to withdraw from mobilizational politics after Aquino was installed. BANDILA also provided some organization, including the erection of barricades and the mobilization of forces. However, the great majority of people, even those from BAYAN, BANDILA, KAAKBAY and traditional party supporters, made their own way to mobilizations outside the two major military camps on the highway EDSA. The level of organization that groups such as BANDILA were able to bring to these huge mobilizations was very limited.

¹³ For a while during 1985 speculation was rife as to what would have happened had the Natdems joined the campaign. It would certainly have strengthened the whole movement organizationally. But what would have been the attitude of Enrile, Ramos and the United States to such a movement, and what kind of conflict and outcome would have resulted, are the questions most commonly asked.

The mass movement at the beginning of the post-Marcos period was thus characterized by three important features. First, it had established a powerful tradition of organized and militant mobilization amongst the people. It was this (in conjunction with the armed struggle in the countryside) which had tipped the balance in bringing an end to Marcos's rule and installing Aquino. Secondly, after making major headway in establishing a broad unity during the 1983-85 period, the movement had become divided again in the last days of Marcos. Thirdly, as a reflection of the new division, a greater level of spontaneity, disorganization and ideological confusion prevailed amongst a significant section of the mobilized masses. This was the basis for the emergence of Cory Aquino as a popular leader. Only the BAYAN mass forces remained well organized with a sustainable, though temporarily curtailed, mobilizing capacity.

Chapter 2

The Movement During the Interregnum from Revolution to Elections: February 1986-May 1987

It was recognized among mass movement organizations that the role mass mobilizations had played in the overthrow of Marcos provided opportunities for the expansion of the 'parliament-of-the-streets'. They wished to ensure that the reforms they had campaigned for under Marcos, such as land reform and an end to human rights abuses, would be implemented. There was a majority view that the February victory for 'people's power' should be consolidated, and various initiatives were launched to sustain the momentum and strengthen the mass movement, although a minority drifted away from mobilizational politics altogether. Among the first initiatives were those aimed at regrouping the mass movement after the divisiveness of the election campaign of 1986.

Post-revolution coalition initiatives

The 'participating' mass movement groups could be divided into three categories. First, there were groups which fully supported Aquino because they agreed with her election platform. These were mainly Socdem groups, organized in BANDILA but also included some of the non-aligned Libdems. Secondly, there were groups which had emerged only during the campaign itself on the basis of strong personal support for Aquino. They were usually referred to as the 'Coryistas', and included groups such as Cory's Crusaders, VICTORY and the Cory Aquino for President Movement (Abinales 1986; interview with Francisco Nemenzo, July 1986). Few of them lasted for more than a few months after Aquino came to power. Lastly, there were groups which had supported Aquino as a tactical move. They saw the election campaign as a period of anti-dictatorship mobilization, and participated both in the hope of isolating Marcos and furthering their propaganda work within the

movement.¹ These groups formed the nationalist bloc within the pro-Aquino campaign.

The main organizations in the nationalist bloc were KAAKBAY and the Independent Caucus. The Independent Caucus was formed during the 1985 BAYAN congress. It comprised various intellectuals, trade union leaders, student groups, and radical Christian groups who were in agreement with the Natdems on key policy issues, such as land reform and removal of the US bases but disagreed on questions of strategy and tactics. They emphasized the need to work within the unorganized, spontaneous, pro-Aquino formations and claimed that such a strategy necessitated a firm and clear policy of 'critical support' for Aquino and some tolerance of the unorganized character of the pro-Aquino forces. The main disagreement in 1985 was over the question of the election boycott. The other major difference was the Independent Caucus's open support for socialism.² The Independent Caucus eventually transformed itself from a coalition of groups and individuals into a pre-party formation based on individual

1 The most comprehensive explanation of 'critical participation' as a *tactic* emanating from these circles is *Participation Without Illusions* Resolution on the Special Elections of February 7, 1986 of the Filipino Marxist League (FML). The FML is a small Marxist underground group influential in radical groups outside the broad national democratic movement. The FML is based on a fusion of the Communist Party of the Philippines-7th Column and the Marxist-Leninist Group. The former is a breakaway from the CPP, the latter a breakaway group from the old party, the PKP.

2 The Independent Caucus/BISIG program is outlined in the document *Socialist Vision*. This was circulated in draft form during the Independent Caucus period and adopted as the main policy document of BISIG at BISIG's founding congress on 25 May 1986 (see BISIG 1987:1-24). There has also always been a link between national democracy and socialism. The first work to popularize national democracy was Jose Maria Sison's *On National Democracy*, a collection of three talks delivered during 1966 and 1967. In the third of these Sison argues primarily that national democracy in the Philippines will lay the material base for the broadest united front to achieve the necessary nationalist and democratic reforms, such as land reform, basic democratic rights and the development of national industry (Sison 1987).

membership. It was called the Bukluran para sa Ikaunlad ng Sosyalistang Isip at Gawa (Union for Advancement of Socialist Thought and Action), or BISIG (To Strive). The main leaders of Independent Caucus/BISIG are Francisco Nemenzo, Randy David, the militant Christian socialist, Ronald Llamas, and National Federation of Labour leader, Bong Malonzo.

BANDILA groups, the Independent Caucus, and the spontaneous pro-Aquino formations quickly formed an alliance called the Lakas Ng Sambayan (People's Power), usually referred to as LAKAS. The basic thrust of the LAKAS manifesto was progressive and populist. The following excerpt captures its general character:

The Popular Revolution involved the seizure of state power by the people; it was essentially a political act. However, it remains unfinished. To become a social revolution, social relations and social structures need to be transformed. Remnants of the old authoritarian order need to be dismantled to pave the way for the creation of a new social order. To deepen democracy and create a just society, the participation of the people must be effectively encouraged and harnessed.

To accomplish these tasks, the peoples' power must now be systematically articulated and translated into a cohesive, organized and sustained force which will promote popular democracy, national sovereignty, justice and equity.

The logic of the majority must prevail and the interests of the working class must be advanced.

President Aquino's government, installed by extra-constitutional means and meta-legal processes, must rebuild popular democracy through the same invincible power of the people (*Lakas Ng Sambayan*, 2 March 1986, typescript).

LAKAS, however, did not develop into an effective organization. It is unlikely that all its member groups fully understood and supported its manifesto. The formulation of the

manifesto and the general articulation of radical policies was ideologically dominated by the KAAKBAY/Independent Caucus bloc, supported by a small, left-wing grouping amongst the Socdems, led by Florencio Abad. Nemenzo and David, and possibly Abad, became the main theorists for the coalition. They were the only grouping with a developed analysis of the situation which the mass movement now faced.

Perhaps more important was the emergence of a second axis of conflict within the movement, between parliamentarians and 'popular democrats'. The commitment of some sectors of LAKAS to the militant 'parliament-of-the-streets' politics was weakening. These groups assented to the rhetoric of the radical manifesto, while their political practice moved further and further away from it.

During her election campaign and in the days immediately afterwards, Aquino had exhorted the people to organize themselves in order to continue the struggle for reforms. By March, she had shifted the emphasis to that of restoring constitutional democracy. Her concept of a return to democracy entailed no major structural reforms and no role for extra-parliamentary mobilizations in achieving social reforms. This became evident in March when she proclaimed the 'Freedom Constitution'. This was, however, a temporary measure and in April a Constitutional Commission (Con-Com) was established. The Con-Com comprised a majority of people who were not committed to 'popular democracy', and the final draft of the constitution provided only lip-service to the role of the mass organizations. There were no concrete mechanisms to institutionalize their role, except for a provision (Art.vi Sec.5(ii)) giving the president the right to appoint 25 sectoral representatives to the 250-member House of Representatives. The backbone of the anti-Marcos movement thus stood to get a maximum of only 10 per cent of the seats, providing Aquino made such appointments. Three months after Congress opened, Aquino had appointed only four sectoral representatives none of whom came from the large, active mass organizations.

The majority of BANDILA and the Coryistas accepted Aquino's framework of party-based, parliamentary democracy. The more recently formed pro-Cory groups quickly faded away, as there was no more need for them if there was to be no more extra-parliamentary mobilizations.

Many of the Socdem leaders accepted positions in the new government or were proposed as possible candidates for an Aquino

senatorial team. Butz Aquino and Teofisto Guingona, for example, both took on government responsibilities. Butz Aquino became the government's negotiator with the rebel group of NPA-renegade Conrado Balweg in the Cordilleras and the Moro rebels in the south. Guingona became a member of Cabinet and, at one time, head of the government's negotiating team in the ceasefire talks with the NDF. Both were later elected as pro-Aquino senators. Even activist figures and former political prisoners, such as Marito Canonigo, accepted positions; in Canonigo's case in the Presidential Commission for the Urban Poor. With this closer identification with the government went an acceptance of what was evolving as its fundamental political objective: the restoration of a stable party system through a process of legitimation, involving the ratification of a new constitution and the holding of elections.³

This was not a surprising development. From the beginning, Aquino's political platform was ambiguous, even contradictory. On the one hand, she promised a number of social, economic and political reforms (Schirmer and Shalom 1987:338-343). Her January 16 speech, 'Program of Social Reforms', for example, promised big changes in land ownership and workers' conditions. These were stated as her two highest priorities. On the other hand, Aquino was moving to reinstate the political system that existed before martial law and which was based on competition among the traditional political parties; parties representing those social forces which were resolutely opposed to the social and economic, if not political, reforms Aquino said she intended to introduce.⁴ The mass movement organizations had become the backbone of the opposition to Marcos precisely because of the class character of the traditional parties, which relied ultimately on landlord-military partnerships in the countryside and business-military partnerships in the towns, and consequently had participated only half-heartedly in the mass movement.

³ In an interview with Canonigo in July 1986, he stated that he thought two terms for Aquino would enable stabilization of the party parliamentary system.

⁴ For analysis of parties and their social base in the Philippines see Julie Sison (1986) and Landa (1986).

LAKAS also failed in its attempt to build an alliance with the Natdems, the largest and organizationally strongest element of the mass movement. Given the level of disagreement that existed during the election campaign, the inclusion of the Natdems remained a sensitive issue. Additionally, the increasingly conservative stance of the Socdem majority and the Coryistas proved a major obstacle. The left wing of LAKAS, especially BISIG, made attempts to prepare the way for an eventual linkage with the Natdems by supporting inclusion in LAKAS of those sections of the Natdem network which were not so closely identified with the election boycott.

There were two major Natdem groups which had not participated in the boycott: Volunteers for Popular Democracy (VPD) and KADENA. VPD had been formed on the initiative of two released political prisoners who had been active in the underground National Democratic Front, Ed De la Torre and Horacio 'Boy' Morales. De la Torre was allegedly founding chairman of the Christians for National Liberation (CNL), an affiliate of the NDF. Morales was allegedly chairman of the NDF at the time of his arrest (Almendral 1984; Friends of Boy Morales n.d.). VPD represents a small group of activists with a particular concern for re-establishing an effective coalition between the Natdems and the activist and leftist wings of the Socdems and Libdems. They see the elaboration of a 'transitional program' which can unite these forces as a high priority task. They refer to this transitional program as the 'popular democratic' program. As both De la Torre and Morales were in prison during the election campaign, and were known to oppose the boycott decision, some Socdems and Libdems have a less sectarian attitude towards them than towards other Natdem figures (interviews with De la Torre and Morales, July 1984; VPD 1986, 1987). KADENA was also a lesser target of anti-Natdem sectarianism because it was, through its chairman, Joey Flores, the first to publicly criticize the boycott campaign after the elections. Apparently some sections of KADENA itself did not boycott (see Florey in *Ang Katipunan*, October 1986).

After some debate and discussion, KADENA was let into LAKAS and Morales and De la Torre became observers. However, due to the weakening commitment to the coalition amongst the conservative Socdem and Coryista groups, this bridgehead never led to an expansion of LAKAS, whose base dwindled to that of an

alliance between BISIG and a small group of left wing social democrats. Founded in March 1986, by May LAKAS had virtually ceased activity.

The VPD group, never having been fully accepted into LAKAS because of the hostility of the more conservative Socdem, also took its own initiative. In Manila, it helped establish the Metro Manila People's Council (MMPC). Using Aquino's call immediately after the elections for the people to organize, VPD and other Natdem forces began organizing local suburban councils on which sat representatives of various sectoral and political groups. The MMP was also able to attract BISIG, left-wing Socdem individuals and various new and independent groups. It had a much firmer base than LAKAS because it was able to work more closely with the strong, Natdem, sectoral organizations. At the 1986 independence day rally it mobilized 30,000 people (interview with De la Torre and Morales, July 1986; interview with De la Torre, *Direct Action* 5 November 1986). MMPC continued to exist until early 1987. However, it never became a major political group. The energies of the National Democratic movement were taken up meeting the constitutional and electoral initiatives of the Aquino government.

Meanwhile, there had been a certain amount of demoralization within the Natdem movement following the failure of the boycott campaign. This was especially the case in the cities, where the mass movement was the basic focus of the Natdem's work. As Lean Alejandro said in his report to the BAYAN second congress: 'many believed BAYAN would fall apart' (Alejandro 1986:12). In the countryside, the backbone of the opposition had always been the underground NDF and the NPA. While legal radical organizations did exist they were, and probably still are, of secondary importance. The impact of the overthrow of Marcos was felt less by the peasant population in the countryside because the Aquino government did not begin any real reorganization of the Armed Forces nor any effective disarming of the private armies of the landlord class. While these remained intact, political changes in Manila had little effect on the political plight of the peasant masses.

The urban Natdem movement quickly revived and began a number of projects. There was a thoroughgoing assessment of past policies and the current situation. In terms of membership and cohesion of organization, the BAYAN forces in the cities had

remained basically intact. No sector suffered any major losses or disruption, with the partial, and temporary, exception of KADENA.

By mid-1986, then, the new political map of the active mass movement had become clearer. The main groups were BAYAN, VPD, BISIG, and the left-wing of the Socdem, which had gravitated around a group called Pandayan (Pandayan para sa Sosyalistang Pilipinas).

In July and August there was an attempt to forge these groups into a major alliance in response to events surrounding the so-called 'Manila Hotel Siege'. In July, supporters of the deposed President Marcos, including elements of the Armed Forces, took over the Manila Hotel and swore in Marcos's vice-presidential candidate, Arturo Tolentino as acting president. They then called on the people and the Armed Forces to support them - a kind of parody of the February Revolution. From the beginning, the attempt was a farce, with no chance of success. Marcos had been completely discredited and there was no possibility of any significant section of the AFP or the population rallying behind a call for his return.

Other incidents surrounding the affair gave the mass movement greater cause for concern. It became apparent that Defense Minister Enrile and his military advisers, under Colonel Gregorio Honasan, were aware of the Marcos loyalists' plans yet did not warn the government. They even made public statements praising the Marcos group's anti-communist stance and indicated that they did not feel that military action should be taken against them. Enrile and Honasan used this opportunity to win the sympathy of the Marcos supporters while showing the Aquino government that there was disenchantment within the Ministry of Defense, where it was felt that the government was not being sufficiently 'anti-communist'. Enrile and Honasan's statements were given further potency when AFP chief-of-staff, Ramos, decided to 'discipline' the troops who had taken part in the putsch by making them do thirty push-ups.

These actions by Enrile, Honasan and then Ramos gave rise to fears of a *rapprochement* between the pro-Marcos section of the military and the section that had defected to Aquino in February. It appeared that the unifying factor might be a move towards greater repression. Most of the mass movement feared that any anti-communist crackdown would also hit the legal mass movement. It also threatened the Aquino government's initiative in seeking a ceasefire with the NDF (Mamot 1987).

In response to these developments the Coalition for the Defence and Preservation of Democracy (CDPD) was formed. It included thirty-five affiliated groups, most of which were, in turn, either affiliated to, inspired by, or represented, BAYAN, BISIG, VPD or Pandayan. Amongst the thirty-five signatories to the CDPD manifesto were Nemenzo (BISIG), Florenco Abad (Pandayan, signing for LAKAS), Etta Rosales (BAYAN), Lisa Dacanay (Nationalist Alliance) and Efram Moncupa (VPD).⁵ A rally on 23 July was attended by over 40,000 people (*Ang Bayan*, August 1986). However the CDPD was unable to maintain its momentum. The Aquino government gained the upper hand, at least temporarily, over the military rightists and this reduced the need for a coalition. At the same time, many of the affiliated organizations were preoccupied with internal organizational consolidation.

Those sections of the mass movement which remained active and supportive of mobilizational politics tended to coalesce into two wings. The National Democratic wing, organized primarily through BAYAN, remained the largest. The left-wing of the former LAKAS coalition formed the nucleus of the second, minority, wing. But while the two wings were primarily concerned with internal consolidation, they also tried, wherever possible, to collaborate on specific issues and campaigns.

The National Democratic forces

Despite the failure of the boycott campaign, in the months after the February Revolution BAYAN remained the strongest single element of the mass movement. Its strength lay in its roots in the Filipino working class and peasantry, particularly through the KMU and KMP.

The national council of BAYAN met on 6 and 7 March, soon after the February Revolution. At that meeting, those who had left

⁵ The CDPD manifesto, dated 15 July 1986 was published as a full page advertisement in *Malaya*, 21 July 1986.

over the boycott issue, such as ex-Senator Tañada, returned and resumed their positions. Reconciliation was made possible by the self-critical approach of the boycott supporters and the shared view that most of the social and political problems of the country remained. Land reform, nationalization of foreign industry, support for local business people, debt repudiation, closure of the Bataan nuclear plant, and removal of the US military bases still had to be fought for. Nor was it clear there would be an end to human rights abuses and other problems of militarization. BAYAN's provincial branches reported continuing harassment of their activists. According to Alejandro's report to the second national congress (Alejandro 1986:18), 150 BAYAN activists had been killed in the previous year. Last-minute defection by the majority of the AFP had saved the AFP from a purge of human rights violators and it was clear very early that there would be no trial of military officers for human rights abuses. The Presidential Commission on Human Rights (PCHR) was not given prosecuting powers. In the Cagayan Valley, in northern Luzon, the military launched a major counter-insurgency campaign code-named *Oplan Mammayan*. During this, many abuses took place and large numbers of villagers were forced to flee (*ibid.*:24). BAYAN provincial leaders reported that many of their supporters could see no change since the February Revolution. Amongst both boycotters and those who had left BAYAN to participate in the elections, there was a conviction that BAYAN was still needed.

The organization set its first tasks within a general framework of support for the Aquino government. The BAYAN national council congress meeting of 5 March 1986 adopted a policy of 'vigilant and principled support' (*ibid.*:16). This was essentially a 'critical support' policy. Their immediate demand was for the continued dismantling of the remnants of the dictatorship's institutions, including the purging of the AFP. Demands for a wide range of reforms which BAYAN had traditionally supported were reaffirmed.

The policy of 'vigilant and principled support' was based upon an analysis of the incomplete nature of the February Revolution and the contradictory composition of the new government. According to BAYAN:

What emerged from the ruins of the ousted regime could not yet really be considered a people's government,

despite the unquestionably democratic manner by which it was installed and no matter how it may be called, because political power never really did pass into the hands of the people. The exercise of People's Power installed a government that has yet to institutionalize and guarantee power to the people (*ibid.*:24).

BAYAN identified three main political forces operating in the country: liberals, fascists and progressives. It saw the government as a 'rather bizarre coalition of liberals and fascists', as opposed to which were the progressives. The liberals included both the established (anti-Marcos) political parties and the 'reformist politicians, business and middle-class activists, and representatives of the Church hierarchy':

... they control the civilian bureaucracy and enjoy popular support. As such, they are obliged to promise reforms, no matter how cosmetic, and democratic space to the people. They are locked in struggle with the fascist forces for effective control of the whole state apparatus (*ibid.*:26).

The fascists comprised the pro-Marcos forces, including provincial warlords, and the Enrile and Ramos factions of the AFP. They were seen to control the AFP. While General Ver had fled, and Aquino had begun to retire a number of overstaying generals, the command structure of the military remained essentially the same. Enrile, who, as a martial law administrator, had arrested activists in the past, remained Defense minister, and Ramos, who had been head of the most abusive arm of the forces, the Philippine Constabulary (PC), was now AFP chief-of-staff.

The progressive forces comprised the bulk of the 'parliament-of-the-streets' in combination with the underground. They included the nationalists, progressive politicians and middle-class activists, democratic organized labour, peasantry, students, women and other politicized sectors, and the revolutionary groups (*ibid.*). The progressives were located primarily outside the government and had a common interest in preserving the atmosphere of democracy that existed immediately after the February Revolution.

In discussing possible future scenarios for the Philippines, the BAYAN analysis saw three basic possibilities, each reflecting a

victory for the three forces. There was, however, a general scepticism as to whether the liberal forces would be able to consolidate any kind of victory. The National Democratic forces viewed the Aquino experiment as a temporary phenomenon; they were convinced that because the new government would not seriously attempt any thoroughgoing socio-economic reforms, the social dynamics of polarization would reassert themselves.

For the moment, however, BAYAN set itself tasks which took into account the current ascendancy and popularity of the liberal forces. It identified as crucial:

.... the process of Constitution-making, the ceasefire negotiations and possible political settlement, and the respective sectoral struggles of the basic sectors, especially the workers, farmers and students (*ibid.*:27).

The second national BAYAN congress also emphasized that intervention in these areas as part of a struggle to achieve victory for the 'progressive forces' must be accompanied by the maximum possible collaboration between the progressive and liberal forces.⁶

Even after the election of Aquino, the mobilizational capacity of the BAYAN forces was quite formidable. BAYAN claimed a national membership of approximately two million. The KMU accounted for 600,000 and the KMP another 100,000. The rest came from the approximately 1000 provincial-based organizations that had affiliated to BAYAN. In 1986, tens of thousands attended the KMU-organized May 1 celebrations, at which not only Aquino, but also CPP founder, Jose Maria Sison, and NPA founder Bernabe 'Dante' Buscayno, appeared.

In July, 15,000 attended an anti-US military bases demonstration in front of the US embassy in Manila. A small contingent of BISIG forces also attended. The rally was the first to be violently dispersed by the Aquino government. The police broke up the rally using tear gas, smoke bombs, and rocks. Four demonstrators were shot and several beaten up. The rallyists later returned, however, this time led by the eighty-nine year old BAYAN chairman, Tañada, and several members of the Constitutional Commission. General Lim, in charge of the police at the rally, was reluctantly forced to allow it to continue. (The author observed the rally, dispersal and re-assembly on 4 July 1986). There was also a huge BAYAN mobilization (observers claimed

one million) at the funeral of the murdered leader of the KMU, Rolando Olalia. Almost all of this crowd was mobilized by BAYAN and other Natdem forces.

The main challenge that BAYAN faced was the limited opportunity to reach out to the unorganized masses who were still looking to Aquino. The mechanism for this had been the 'parliament-of-the-streets'. The splitting of the movement before and during the boycott, the defection to Aquino's parliamentary program by important sections of the Socdems, and the high level of support for the Aquino government from the unorganized masses and their middle-class leaders, all contributed to the demobilization of the 'parliament-of-the-streets'. Organizations like the KMU and KMP continued to grow, and BAYAN was still able to make use of the press to reach sectors of the public. The demobilization of the mass movement, however, closed off the best point of access to the semi-radicalized, now politically inactive, masses.

This problem was ameliorated somewhat during 1986 with the formation of a new political party, Partido ng Bayan (People's Party, PnB), to participate in national and local elections. The idea of launching a party committed to the National Democratic program was not new. It had been discussed as early as 1979. In 1985, before the US had pressured Marcos into a snap presidential election, discussion was already underway about the possibility of forming a new party or parties to compete in local elections. There had been calls for the formation of a labour party from within the trade union movement and calls for a peasant party from activists working within the peasant movement. BAYAN itself was originally intended to develop into a political party; this did not happen because in many provinces members of existing parties who had gravitated toward the National Democratic program and had joined BAYAN continued to maintain their allegiance to the old parties, such as PDP-Laban and even UNIDO.⁶

⁶ Provincial politics is very complex. The national leadership of traditional policial parties, in some provincial cities and towns, have lost their grip on the local organizations. This has allowed the emergence of younger, maverick activists in these parties. Some of these have been attracted to the radical programs of BAYAN. This trend can also be found amongst provincial business people who are attracted by the Natdem emphasis on building up a nationally-owned industry. The Filipino Left does not advocate wholesale nationalization of industry, especially not of locally-

After the overthrow of Marcos and the emerging possibility of new congressional elections, these calls became stronger. They were supported by a number of former political prisoners released by Aquino. Jose Maria Sison, Bernabe 'Dante' Buscayno, Horacio 'Boy' Morales and Alan Jasminez were all deeply involved. When a preparatory committee was formed to organize the launching of the new party, Sison was named as chairman, Jasminez as secretary-general, and Morales as head of the finance committee.

Partido ng Bayan held its founding congress on 30 August 1986. It elected as chairman KMU leader Rolando Olalia, and as secretary-general, Alan Jasminez. Buscayno, who received a standing ovation, gave the opening address. Sison delivered the main political report which was adopted as an official document of the party (Sison 1987). Over one thousand delegates from all over the country attended the congress, which was also celebrated with a rally of over ten thousand supporters (see Ike Suarez in *Mr and Ms* 5-11 September 1986). The party's founding membership came primarily from the worker and peasant sectors, with a smaller number from the middle class. Its constitution provided that all decision-making bodies at all levels must have a 60 per cent representation from the workers and peasants (interview with Alan Jasminez, July 1986).

With 'parliament-of-the-streets' politics in the doldrums and elections in the offing, the formation of the new party provided another potential bridge to the unorganized masses. It projected the National Democratic cause to the whole of society on a multi-sectoral basis, counterposing its program to that of the new government. Naturally, it placed considerable emphasis on institutionalizing 'Peoples Power' and pluralist politics, on land reform and labour reform, and on the removal of the US military bases in the Philippines. To the extent it represented the National Democratic cause as an alternative to the government, its ability to attract the semi-radicalized people who looked to Aquino was limited. However, it raised the profile of the Natdem movement significantly.

owned industry. (Interview with Alan Jasminez, Secretary-General, Partido Ng Bayan, July 1986).

The National Democratic forces were also able to consolidate their sectoral organizations, particularly among workers and peasants.

In the Philippines, trade unions are organized at the factory level. A trade union established at the factory constitutes a single, independent union. Many of these then form federations, but others remain independent. The federations may affiliate to a trade union centre. There are two major centres, the KMU and the old pro-Marcos Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP). There are also five big independent federations and a number of provincial and industry-based alliances. These centres and federations often compete to affiliate unions. Elections are held in factories, where workers choose which union they want to represent them. A key measure of the growth of a federation or centre is its success in winning 'certification elections', as they are called.⁷

The winner during 1986 and 1987 was the KMU. It affiliated a number of unions to KMU federations or directly to the KMU (interviews with KMU and non-KMU trade union leaders and organizers, August-September 1987). It has continued to provide the largest numbers of people at mobilizations, though the number of strikes declined slightly during 1986 due to a moderating of political actions after BAYAN adopted a position of 'principled support' for the government. (KMU, for example, adopted a three month strike moratorium.)

The strength of the KMU was revealed more clearly when it launched its first *welgang bayan* in the post-Marcos period. This occurred in August 1987 following the government's decision to raise oil and kerosene prices. In a series of rallies, demonstrations and strikes, the *welgang bayan* completely paralyzed Manila's transport system and brought to a standstill many factories and offices. The phenomenon was repeated in other cities, reflecting

⁷ The major alliances are: the Trade Union of the Philippines and Allied Services (TUPAS); Federation of Free Workers; KATIPUNAN; Philippines Social Security Labour Union (PSSLU) and Garment, Textile, Cordage and Allied workers in the Philippines (GATCORD). A more recent coalition of independent unions is Lakas Manggagawa (Workers Power). See Institute for Labour Research and Documentation (1985).

the combination of organizational depth and the popularity of the issue.

The KMP was also adjusting to the post-Marcos situation. The KMP was formed in July 1985. Like the KMU, it is a federation, its membership consisting of peasant and farmer organizations, many of which operate on a provincial or district level, sometimes covering farmers working in particular crops. The activities of the farmer organizations usually started with welfare and education and broadened into representative organizations confronting landlords and government. In some areas, where peasant rebellion and conflict with landlords have been endemic throughout the twentieth century, there has developed a strong tradition of militancy. The KMP had, in fact, been in the making for over a decade.

After the overthrow of Marcos, KMP activities escalated on two major fronts. First, there was an increased demand for land reform. Rallies and forums were held. The peasant organizations had developed a tradition of mass actions in the form of 'people's camps' before 1985. During 1986 they organized several camps outside the Ministry of Agrarian Reform and the Ministry of Agriculture. There were at least three marches to Malacañang Palace, though on no occasion did anyone from the Presidential Office meet with the farmers. At the biggest of the rallies, marines fired on the demonstrators wounding over a hundred protesting farmers and killing over twenty.⁸ It was only after widespread criticism of the government following this massacre that a dialogue between the KMP leaders and the government took place.

The second major front was in the countryside itself. One of the least controversial aspects of the proposed land reform was that abandoned and unused lands should be made available for use by landless peasants. Even this was resisted fairly successfully by anti-land-reform elements within the government. However KMP-affiliated organizations soon occupied land and began handing it over to landless peasants. Some farm plots were obtained with the permission of the owner, some were unilaterally occupied. By late 1986 the KMP was claiming that it had occupied over fifty

⁸ A full account of this incident, known as the Mendiola Massacre, can be found in Maglipon (1986).

thousand hectares of land (interview with Rafael Soviano, secretary-general, KMP, August 1986).

In the countryside, peasant organizations were in frequent confrontation with landlords. The single, largest group of victims of 'salvagings', disappearances and other forms of terror has always been grassroots organizers in the rural areas. One of the biggest farm-worker unions is the National Federation of Sugar Workers (NFSW), which is based in Negros. During 1986 and 1987 several of their organizers were killed and a number of their members arrested and tortured (interview with national, provincial and barrio leaders of NFSW in Negros, September 1986). NFSW also became active in running a farm-plot program on abandoned and idle lands.

One development during late 1986 indicated just how great was the potential for outreach by the National Democratic forces. In November, a ceasefire agreement was signed between the NDF and the Aquino government. Among other things, the agreement allowed for the opening of an NDF office in Manila. During this period, NDF leaders Satur Ocampo, Antonio Zumel and Bobby Malay-Ocampo, had free and frequent access to the media. They attended the huge protest march for assassinated Partido ng Bayan chairman, Rolando Olalia. The NDF was able to hold successful rallies in many provincial cities and small towns. With its leaders publicly visible and participating in peace talks the National Democratic movement's potential to build itself into a popular alternative to the government was momentarily revealed.

The ceasefire talks later broke off and relations between the Aquino government and the NDF worsened. Aquino retained the mantle of leadership. The challenge remained of building a broad, progressive coalition which could become a new pole of attraction for those that the Natdem organizations had not recruited but who might become disillusioned with Aquino.

Minority radical forces

Ironically, it was the Socdem forces which found themselves less intact after their successful participation in the presidential election campaign. Despite the formal allegiance of the Socdem groups to 'social democracy' and socio-economic reform, the rallying cry of the majority of the Socdem leadership never went much further than

a call for the removal of Marcos. It was only a relatively small and well organized wing of the Socdem that had consciously built up a commitment to democratic socialist principles. As a consequence, the overthrow of Marcos immediately undercut the Socdem's mass base. The various organizations that emerged during the election campaign, and which looked to the Socdem, soon disappeared. Much of the Socdem leadership took positions in the government and supported the move away from mobilizational politics. As noted above, this was a major factor in the stillbirth of the LAKAS coalition.

This tendency within the Socdem forces, however, gave impetus to the growth of new radical formations. The most important is BISIG. BISIG did not originate in the Socdem movement, but was formed during the 1985 founding congress of BAYAN, when various non-affiliated trade union, intellectual and student activists coalesced. This small group considered itself socialist or Marxist and radical, its members united in the idea that the only solution to the problems of the Philippines was a socialist one. Their perspective and their program are similar in many ways to those of the Natdem. Different members of BISIG have disagreements with the Natdem, depending on what section of the mass movement they originally came from; there are former Natdem, former Socdem, members of the old PKP who rejected its collaboration with Marcos, but could not accept the Maoist-influenced Natdem analysis of Filipino society, and a number of other tendencies. The major disagreements are on questions of strategy and tactics.

The overall perspective of BISIG is spelt out in its founding document, *Socialist Vision*.. Its analysis of the post-Marcos situation is set out in *Beyond February: The Tasks of Socialists*. In many ways, BISIG's summing up of the post-Marcos situation was similar to BAYAN's:

... the people did not keep the power they won in the February Revolution but handed it over to the liberal bourgeoisie who, in turn, are bound to use it for their own class interests. It is therefore illusory to expect the new government, no matter how sincere and amiable compared to its predecessor, to carry out the reforms to meet the people's objective needs. The initiative for meaningful reforms must come from the people

themselves, and people's power or pressure politics will have to be applied. The role of BISIG is to equip the people with the skills to extract reforms from the liberal government, and ultimately to wield power themselves and build a socialist society ('Beyond February: The Tasks of Socialists', in BISIG 1987).

The concrete tasks BISIG set were primarily oriented to consolidating and building BISIG itself, seeking alliances with the Natdems and Socdems, combatting the rightist elements in the new government, and resisting any backsliding by the government as far as the expanded 'democratic space' won by the revolution was concerned. Organizational consolidation and coalition formation were the central tasks. BISIG's small size and newness meant that it could not undertake major sectoral campaigns. It has no equivalent of KMU and KMP.

BISIG held its founding congress in May 1986. At that time it had about 500 members, including the leaders of a number of worker, student and urban poor organizations. It was able to mobilize people for most of the key campaigns during 1986: the May 1 rally, the July 4 demonstration in front of the US embassy, June 21 Independence Day rally, and a rally held on August 21, the anniversary of the assassination of Benigno Aquino. It also mobilized several hundred people for the caravan, organized jointly with the Natdem forces, which held protests in Angeles City against the presence of US military bases in the Philippines. BISIG also had active branches in Pampanga Province, especially in Angeles City and small but active student groups on the campuses of the University of the Philippines and the Polytechnic University of the Philippines. Unlike BAYAN, BISIG was based on individual membership.

The core of the BISIG leadership came from what is usually called the independent Marxist stream. It included University of the Philippines figures such as Francisco Nemenzo and Randy David. However, with the polarization of the Socdems, a significant section of the left wing of the Socdems joined BISIG. The major organizations involved were the Christian Union of Socialists (CRUS) and the militant Christian workers' group, KAMAO. This gave BISIG its initial working-class base. Most of BISIG's trade union leaders belonged to unions in which the Natdems were in the

majority. In 1987 the large Socdem, urban poor organization UMALUN, also left BANDILA to join BISIG.

One of BISIG's greatest strengths was in the ideological area, where its leading writers influenced important publications. The University of the Philippines magazines *Diliman Review* and *Kasarinlan* are edited by Nemenzo and David respectively. They are both widely read amongst the Left. Another strength of BISIG is its ability to act as a bridge between Natdem and Socdem groups in the building of alliances, a position it shared during 1986 with the Natdem group, VPD. However, compared to the BAYAN forces, BISIG remained a minor force during 1986 and 1987, unable to initiate significant mobilizations by itself. Its major role has been in coalition with other forces in providing a left leadership to a range of smaller radical groups who have shared BISIG's disagreements with the Natdems.

Social Democratic forces

Besides being drawn into government, the Social Democrats were kept busy with internal organizational problems. This was less a matter of consolidation than of proliferation. By mid-1986 the following legal Socdem organizations were acting more or less independently from each other: the Philippines Democratic Socialist Party (PDSP), the Federation of Social Democratic Movements (FSDM), BANDILA and its affiliates such as ATOM, and a group called KASAPI. Further, key Socdem figures such as Aquino and Guingona were lining up as senatorial candidates for the new Lakas Ng Bansa group being formed by Aquino for the congressional elections. Other Socdem figures were later to join the Liberal Party or PDP-Laban. As mentioned above, a left-wing formation joined BISIG. Other groups were to follow the Christian Socialists and KAMAQ in 1987. The previously Socdem-oriented Young Christian Workers joined BAYAN. There emerged new, leftist tendencies which were unwilling to break away totally from the Socdem camp but were moving closer to BISIG or BAYAN.

Underlying this proliferation of groups and splits was an emerging polarization. Amongst the groups which stayed within the Social Democratic milieu, the dividing lines became questions of emphasis on mass work, on the need for alliances with other radical forces, and on having a critical approach to the Aquino government.

The majority of the Socdem forces, led by Butz Aquino and others, supported a parliamentary approach, vied away from alliances with the Natdems, and gave uncritical support to President Aquino. These forces became concentrated in BANDILA and PDSP. The leftist forces, while remaining active in those two organizations, gravitated towards Pandayan, a small organization (according to its leaders between 100-200 members, which was concentrated in the trade unions).

Responding to Aquino's Legitimation Project: the politics of ratification

The latter part of 1986 and the first five months of 1987 were dominated by Aquino's attempts to shift the basis of her legitimacy from popular revolution to a conventional electoral mandate. Her main initiatives were the plebiscites to ratify the draft constitution, the ceasefire with the NDF, and the congressional elections. Both the National Democratic movement and the minority radical groups became preoccupied with responding to these initiatives.

The Natdems and the minority wings of the organized mass movement were involved in similar campaigns during the drafting of the new constitution. Both lobbied members of the Constitutional Commission (Con-Com) in order to obtain similar provisions: the exclusion of foreign bases and nuclear weapons from the Philippines; commitment to comprehensive land reform, and the institutionalizing of the role of people's organizations in the new political system.

However, the whole spectrum of policy issues came under debate. BAYAN held a conference in June 1986, which was attended by over a hundred delegates from around the country, to formulate proposals to put to the Con-Com. Detailed policies were developed on a wide range of policy questions, from how to promote industrialization, to how to organize a citizen's army and what system of parliamentary representation to apply. Strong proposals for the protection of civil liberties were also put forward.⁹

⁹ These policies are set out in a number of stencilled documents which were distributed at the conference. Final proposals were published in *Malaya* newspaper during mid July.

While mass mobilizational activity may have decreased during this period, lobbying by BAYAN increased. This was a new form of activity for the BAYAN forces, and was facilitated by the way in which the Con-Com operated. The Con-Com set up a number of standing committees to consider specific aspects of the constitution. These travelled to different parts of the country and held public hearings which became the focus of lobbying activities. Delegations from various sectoral organizations and provincial branches of BAYAN addressed the standing committees; often, small demonstrations or pickets took place. BAYAN organizations held press conferences and other forums in conjunction with the public hearings. The best known of these public hearings was that held by the standing committee looking into possible constitutional provisions against foreign bases on Filipino soil. The hearing was held on 4 July, American-Filipino Friendship Day. BAYAN leaders ex-Senator Tañada and Etta Rosales spoke out against the bases, as did BISIG vice-chairman Randy David. There were also delegations of students carrying placards inside the hall. Outside, over 10,000 people gathered for a march to the US embassy.

The basic thrust of BAYAN's campaign was set out in the widely distributed pamphlet, *Fight for a Truly Pro-People Constitution*. Key sections included the following:

Full constitutional guarantees for the civil, political and economic rights of the different social sectors - land ownership for the peasants; unionists' rights, employment, job security, humane working conditions, higher wages for the workers; shelter and social security for the urban poor; free, relevant and quality education for the students; just pay and the right to organize for the teachers; better business opportunities for nationalist businessmen and Filipino entrepreneurs; equal rights for women; social welfare for children and the aged; autonomy and self-determination for all minority people.

Democratic representation of all sectors in government, meaning their effective participation in all its policy-making bodies.

A self-reliant economy upholding the national patrimony above and beyond foreign powers and foreign capital.

A non-aligned foreign policy renouncing all wars of conquest and upholding mutually beneficial relations with all nations.

Genuine national security, removing all threats of war and nuclear devastation posed by the US bases and use of various military pursuits in the Philippines and abroad.

Nationalist mass-based, pro-people and non-discriminatory art, media and culture, promoting the needs of the Filipino nation.

Although BISIG and Pandayan did not produce the same kind of comprehensive documentation, they supported much the same basic principles. BISIG's policy statements on other issues during this period, such as those against privatization of Marcos- or crony-owned businesses and in support of land reform, also followed BAYAN's constitutional campaign.

One area of disagreement between BAYAN and BISIG concerned the emphasis to be given to campaigning for proportional representation for political parties, as opposed to direct parliamentary representation for sectoral organizations. This was also debated within the respective organizations. BAYAN's final position supported sectoral representation to maximize participation by mass organizations. While supporting this idea, BISIG called for proportional representation in both houses of Congress as a means of breaking the traditional two-party dominance of Congress (author's observations of the BAYAN conference and BISIG meetings held to discuss the constitution, Manila, June 1986).

The final draft of the constitution did not live up to the expectations of the mass movement organizations. Except for those who were moving towards an official alliance with the government, virtually the entire mass movement was opposed to at least part of the constitution's provisions. In the area of civil liberties, there was a number of new constitutional safeguards against the emergence of another dictator. There was also commitment to principles of social justice, land reform, and a nuclear-free Philippines. But many of

these in-principle commitments were qualified. As this had been the method used to thwart land reform programs ever since the Philippines gained independence, scepticism was extremely high amongst the organized groups.

While the mass movement was more or less united in its criticisms, differences emerged on how to respond to the constitutional plebiscite. The majority of the National Democratic movement decided to campaign for a 'no' vote. The minority radical groups and some National Democratic elements decided on a 'critical yes' campaign. This difference reflected the disagreement over tactics that had occurred at the time of the election boycott in January 1986.

BISIG, VPD and the left wing of the Social Democrats considered that it was important to keep open lines of communication with the semi-radicalized, unorganized, pro-Aquino masses. Even at the end of 1986, their assessment was that Aquino was still the focus of this unorganized, pro-reform, public opinion. They considered that the best strategy was to call for a 'yes' vote while running an education campaign pointing out the deficiencies of the Constitution and reminding people that there was still a struggle ahead.

The 'critical yes' group also saw the ratification of the constitution as a necessary step to defend the government and the democratic gains, such as the legal enshrinement of civil liberties, that had been won since the February Revolution. By the end of 1986 there had already been two coup attempts: the Hotel Manila Siege in June and the much more serious attempt involving Defence Minister Enrile and Colonel Honasan in November. The political forces involved in these coups were also campaigning against the new Constitution. The 'critical yes' group considered that it was necessary to indicate that popular opinion was against Enrile. (For the BISIG view see BISIG 1987.)

BISIG, VPD and the left Socdems were able to rally a number of the reform-oriented pro-Aquino groups to the 'critical yes' cause. Over forty organizations eventually came together to form the People's OUTCRY (People's Organizations United Towards Critical Yes). Most came from the left wing of the non-BAYAN mass movement. Apart from BISIG and VPD, key groups were Pandayan, KAAKBAY and Metro-Manila People's Council. Most of the other groups were linked in one way or another with these organizations. The exceptions were the several

Natdem groups which took a 'critical yes' stance despite their links with BAYAN, which campaigned for a 'no'. These were Nationalist Alliance, the University of the Philippines Chapter of the League of Filipino Students, Association of Concerned Teachers, No Nukes, and KADENA. Non-left Socdem groups, such as the University of the Philippines Socdem student organization UP-TUGON, also joined.¹⁰

While there was considerable debate within the National Democratic movement, the majority of the Natdems decided to campaign against the ratification of the new constitution. A key aspect of their analysis was that Aquino had already won US support for her government and the threat from the Enrile and Marcos loyalists was not serious. Additionally, they saw the Aquino government evolving in the same direction as that being called for by Enrile himself and they were also sceptical about the likelihood of the positive elements of the Constitution being implemented. They thus saw Aquino's ratification campaign as a means of legitimizing her increasingly conservative rule. Such legitimation would, they thought, encourage her to violently suppress those who operated outside the constitution, in particular those on the Left. They held the view that the repression of the poor would continue no matter what the constitution said. In addressing some of the arguments that the 'critical yes' group was putting forward, they asked, how much democracy would really exist under the new constitution? The CPP articulated fairly clearly the sentiments of many in the National Democratic movement:

But what democratic space and what democratic rights are there really to speak of? Sincere elements from among the middle forces appear to have been so mesmerized by the initial spate of democratic reforms that ensued upon the Aquino government's assumption of power. Now they fail to recognize the fact that economic and political power remains firmly in the hands of the people's oppressors and exploiters, and Philippines society continues to be dominated by US

10 The People's OUTCRY manifesto, *A Call for the Critical Ratification of the Draft Constitution*, 12 January 1987, was published as a leaflet.

imperialism. The Aquino regime and its imperialist backers, meanwhile, harp so much on the restoration of formal, democratic rights and processes after the downfall of a regime of tyranny and open terror, even as they steer clear of the more fundamental questions....

Workers' rights continue to be violated in the interest of 'industrial peace' and a 'favourable climate for foreign investment'. Urban poor settlers' and national minorities' sites continue to be trampled on in the name of 'development'. Peasants continue to be deprived of their lands, and together with those resolutely asserting their legitimate demands, continue to suffer from illegal arrest and detention, torture and salvaging, bombing and strafing, forced evacuation and hamletting (*Ang Bayan* January 1987; also reprinted in *Kasarinlan* Vol. 2, No. 3 1987).

On this issue, however, Aquino firmly retained the initiative. The final result was a national vote of well over 75 per cent for 'yes'. Outside Ilocos and Cagayan Valley - the traditional bailiwicks of Marcos and Enrile - the vote was often over 85 per cent. The National Democratic movement's 'no' campaign was constrained by a number of factors. The main one was that the Aquino government continued to be seen by many people as the only short-term alternative to a return to power by pro-Marcos forces, if not by Marcos himself. It should be remembered that tied-up with a ratification of the constitution was the provision that Aquino remain for her full six-year term. A 'no' vote was seen by many as a vote against Aquino's continuing rule. It is certainly true that a win for the 'no' vote would have created a constitutional and political crisis.

The stability of the government became an even more central issue when in February 1987, just weeks before the plebiscite there was another coup attempt by pro-Marcos forces. Pro-Marcos officers and troops occupied Channel 7 television station. Even though no other sections of the AFP were involved, the fact that AFP Chief-of-Staff Ramos was so hesitant to use force against the rebels rekindled fears of a *rapprochement* between the military and the pro-Marcos and Enrile forces.

The 'yes' vote was thus much more a vote against the Right than a vote for the constitution. Indeed, it is extremely unlikely that more than a tiny percentage of the population knew what was in the 62-page document. The low 'no' vote outside the Ilocos and Cagayan areas indicated, however, that the National Democratic movement, both legal and underground, had not succeeded in convincing large sections of the population. It is less clear what effect their criticisms of specific provisions in the constitution had on people's consciousness. What percentage of the 'yes' vote was actually a 'critical yes' vote, whether based on the Natdem or the People's OUTCRY critique of the constitution, is impossible to tell. Aquino had been in power for only one year and many voters were prepared to give her the benefit of the doubt.

The ceasefire negotiations

As discussed earlier, the period of ceasefire from November 1986 to February 1987 saw a highly successful propaganda drive by the NDF representatives, Antonio Zumel, Satur Ocampo and Bobby Malay. This was mirrored in many provinces where local NDF negotiators also emerged into public view.¹¹ Unlike the government, the NDF had clear and firm proposals to solve the country's social and economic problems. In the area of land reform, for example, it had a sophisticated package with specific arrangements for each agricultural crop while the government was floundering around unable to say what kind of land reform it would support. (Nine months later when at least four bills had been presented to Congress, Aquino still had not indicated support for any particular land reform program.) The NDF made considerable headway during this period in winning popular support.

The ceasefire had taken place in the context of Aquino's election promise to try to end the 'insurgency' by removing the root causes. For the revolutionary movement this meant instituting a comprehensive land reform, nationalizing foreign enterprise and

¹¹ This is documented for Negros in the film *Negros: Social Volcano* (North-South films, London). See also Romi M. Gatuslaw, 'Making the ceasefire work in region X' in *Mr and Mrs* 23-29 January 1987.

building up local, private and state industry, and institutionalizing democratic reforms while dismantling the remaining structures of the dictatorship, such as the para-military forces and private armies. It soon became apparent, however, that the government considered the 'root causes' of unrest could be solved at a purely individual level. It offered amnesty, land and money to individual guerrillas who agreed to give up fighting. Furthermore, the government took the view that the AFP had already been reformed. The NDF saw the AFP as the major bastion of the Marcos dictatorship and demanded that it be purged of those officers who had known records of serious human rights abuses. This was a call echoed by many other groups, including church and legal-aid organizations. Provincial church and human rights groups were still handling evacuees who were fleeing the activities of the military in the provinces for the relative safety of Manila. In responding to the NDF's demand for reform in the AFP, the Government Negotiating Panel (n.d.:62) stated:

Today's soldier is a new military man. His value of loyalty is to country and constitution - not to a dictator. He is the protector of people, not their oppressor. He is a professional, not a politician - and the people already recognise this despite the aberration of a few.

This refusal of the government to acknowledge a continuing civil liberties problem resulting from the activities of the AFP meant that the essential minimum conditions for a continuation of the negotiations were not present. The government's strategy was to entice the NDF, with amnesty and land, into participation in open, legal politics. This was possible, in the government's eyes, because 'the new military man' was no longer the oppressor. The NDF, on the other hand, observing continuing military harassment of peasant and worker organizations in the countryside, was hesitant. The assassination of the chairman of the Partido ng Bayan and the arrest of a member of the NDF negotiating panel during this period no doubt also added to their concerns. Then in January 1987 there occurred the massacre of peasant demonstrators in front of the presidential palace. This prompted the resignation of ex-Senator Jose Diokno from the Government Negotiating Panel.

Following the ratification of the new constitution in the February plebiscite, the government hardened its position by

demanding that negotiations take place within the framework of the constitution. It also indicated that it would continue with its amnesty and rehabilitation policy. The first demand meant the NDF giving up negotiation on land reform, national industrialization and the reform of the AFP. The constitution gave no authority to the president to conduct such negotiations, such policies being left to the decisions of Congress.

At the end of the 60-day ceasefire, the NDF panel sent a letter to the government panel stating its conclusion that the government was not seriously concerned with the basic question of 'addressing the root causes of the popular armed resistance' (NDF letter, signed by Ocampo, Zumel and Salas, reprinted in *Kasarinlan*, Vol. 2, No. 4 1987, p. 80). The NDF was also angered by continuing violations of the ceasefire by the Armed Forces, which continued operations in some areas, and the refusal of the government to react to the NDF's complaints about this, while on the other hand the national committee, which had been established to monitor the ceasefire, had censured the NDF for doing no more than letting some of its supporters appear in a parade carrying arms.

During this period, the BAYAN forces conducted a range of activities to support the idea of a political settlement that would address fundamental social and political problems, such as the need for land reform. These activities were overshadowed, however, by the extremely successful campaign waged by the NDF leaders. It was a period of expanding popularity for the National Democratic movement. The decision of the NDF to withdraw from the negotiations was supported by the BAYAN forces.

The coalition for peace

From within the mass movement there emerged another interpretation of the political implications of the ceasefire negotiations. This interpretation came from the leading organizations of the People's OUTCRY coalition, in particular, BISIG. BISIG's view was that the achievement of a lasting ceasefire was a popular demand, being articulated in particular by the unorganized pro-Cory masses and reflected in Aquino's continuing popularity. On 17 January BISIG issued a manifesto (later published in *Kasarinlan*, Vol. 2, No. 4 1987) entitled: 'An

Alternative Approach to the Peace Negotiations: A Letter to Our Friends in the NDF'. This manifesto opened:

Our people want peace. They want peace so urgently that they demand an immediate moratorium on all conflicts just to have political stability.

The claim was qualified by the expression of concerns, similar to those of the NDF, about the root causes of popular unrest and rebellion. The opening paragraph continued:

Yet it is clear that what our people need is not just any kind of peace, but a peace that will endure because it is based on justice and reason.

The BISIG manifesto went on to outline how it saw the Aquino government's strategy on the question:

The Aquino Government fervently believes that the cause of a just, honorable and lasting peace could be achieved if only it is given a chance to reconstruct a democratic republic which would represent all classes equally, and accommodate contending visions of social progress within the framework of national reconciliation and political pluralism.

On this premise, its peace proposals boil down to a challenge to the revolutionary Left to set aside its arms and peacefully pursue its vision for Philippine society. Failure to take up this challenge is, from the Aquino Government's point of view, synonymous to being the enemy of peace and democracy.

The BISIG manifesto was not arguing for acceptance of the government's view. As with the People's OUTCRY argument in favour of the 'critical yes' policy, BISIG argued that it was necessary somehow to respond to what it perceived to be the broad popular sentiment at the time:

... it is undeniable that the Aquino Government occupies a high moral ground in the eyes of our people when it

demands that it be given a chance to prove its sincerity, and when it accordingly enjoins the revolutionary forces to submit themselves to a peaceful process of settling differences in the approach to social change.

If it is to seize the political initiative and regain moral ascendancy over all other class forces in Philippines society, the revolutionary movement must now recognise that a *sudden shift* in the political situation has indeed occurred with the replacement of the fascist Marcos regime by a popularly-installed liberal democratic government.

In the BISIG analysis, the central political issue was what it saw as the popular demand for peace. BISIG was concerned that the NDF's response might discredit the NDF in the eyes of Aquino's mass following. A tactical difference was therefore emerging between BISIG and the NDF. This manifesto, launched in mid-January, was obviously aimed at convincing the NDF to try and extend the ceasefire.

BISIG, however, did not call for the NDF to lay down its arms. In suggesting the policy that the NDF might adopt on the ceasefire, it proposed that the NDF agree to a ceasefire providing that the government guarantee the NDF's right and ability to participate freely in legal politics. BISIG also maintained that the NDF should not lay down its arms until the private armies and paramilitary groups were disbanded and the AFP reformed - as Aquino had promised before the elections.

There is little doubt that the BISIG leadership's view was that the government would not be able to fulfil its promises. Clearly underlying its strategy was the idea that it was better that, if the ceasefire talks were to fail, they fail because of the government's inability to live up to its own ideals rather than because of its failure to meet the NDF's demands, no matter how much those demands were in the people's interests.

In this, there was also an unstated difference of analysis between BISIG and the Natdems as to what the people expected from Aquino on the question of peace. BISIG judged that the people wanted peace, providing there was a possibility for contending parties to compete peacefully. The NDF's position was that the people wanted peace only on the condition that the socio-economic root causes of the people's problems were addressed

directly. For BISIG, the NDF withdrawal from the ceasefire talks before Aquino had been exposed as being unable to guarantee the NDF's participation in legal politics free of harassment, and before any reformation of the military, was a mistake. The NDF's view was that the government had already been exposed to the people as being disinterested in attacking the basic causes of economic and social problems, because it insisted that there be no negotiations outside the framework of the constitution.

The controversy over the ceasefire talks brought into being a new coalition of groups calling for a resumption of the ceasefire talks. This coalition, founded in January 1987 and called the Coalition for Peace, included BISIG, VPD, the UP chapter of KAAKBAY, Pandayan, the Socdem KASAPI group, and the moderate Socdem groups BANDILA, PDSP, and FSDM.

The Coalition for Peace positioned itself outside the process of dialogue between the NDF and the government and issued demands upon them both. It is clear from its demands upon the government that the Coalition shared concerns with the NDF. One of its first statements followed in the wake of the 22 January massacre outside the presidential palace. After condemning the shooting of the peasants, it called on the government to take the following steps to ensure that the peace dialogue continued:

Remove from active service command the most notorious human rights violators (e.g. Abadilla in Bicol, Aguinaldo and Figueroa in Region 2);¹²

Act on the PCHR recommendations regarding the repeal of repressive decrees, the disbanding of private armies and the deactivation of abusive CHDF [Civilian Home Defence Force] units;

Punish the coup plotters and those responsible for the murders of Olalia and Alay-ay;

¹² These three were all to later support the 28 August 1987 attempted coup by Colonel Gregorio Honasan.

Conduct a swift investigation of the violence at Mendiola last January 22, punish the perpetrators, and indemnify the victims;

Take concrete steps towards agrarian reform (e.g. Hacienda Lusita [the Aquino family property], idle lands and confiscated crony lands as test cases);

Reassert civilian supremacy and instill discipline in the armed forces. Rely once more on people power rather than the military (A Call from the Coalition for Peace, 26 January 1987, reprinted in Coalition for Peace 1987:1-2).

The same statement went on to make certain demands on the NDF as well. It called on the NDF to desist from confrontational excesses; to avoid undertaking mass actions 'which might only heighten the cycle of violence'; to support the progressive elements in the government; to respect the right of the people to vote on the constitution and to respect the result; and to encourage meaningful local regional participation in negotiations by the NDF regional forces.

After the breakdown of the ceasefire talks, the Coalition for Peace called upon both sides to resume the dialogue. In particular, it called for direct dialogue between President Aquino and the NDF leadership. At the same time, it reiterated the demand on the government to carry out reforms. In July 1987, on the eve of the first sitting of the new Congress, it called on Congress to institute agrarian reform and labour policy reform, to institutionalize a more meaningful role for the 'parliament-of-the-streets', to reform the military, and to bring the government and the NDF into dialogue again (Coalition for Peace 1987:17-18).

The Coalition was unable, however, to conduct an effective campaign on these issues. BISIG, VPD and Pandayan were small and without the forces to launch an effective public campaign, although it seems certain that they dominated the policy formulation in the Coalition. The mainstream Socdem groups, such as BANDILA, which had greater access to the media and government and which could have helped get such a campaign off the ground, did not do so. One of the key Socdem leaders, Teofisto Guingona, was the head of the Government Negotiating Panel which had

issued the statements about the 'new military man'. Guingona and Butz Aquino were now part of officialdom.

There were, moreover, real ideological differences between the supporters of the mainstream Socdems and the left wing. These were glaringly exposed in the aftermath of the August 28 coup attempt. A week after the coup attempt the Coalition held an emergency conference to discuss reaction to the coup, and when a vote was taken on a statement condemning both the coup plotters and the NPA, only BISIG and VPD voted against it. The left wing argued that the popular rebellion had been forced upon the peasantry and other oppressed sectors because no other way was left open to them given the repression of the Marcos dictatorship. The instruments of that dictatorship, the AFP and the paramilitary forces, had been neither purged nor reformed under Aquino; in their view, the popular rebellion could not be put in the same category as the Honasan coup.

It seems fairly certain that while the mainstream Socdem groups were signatory to the early Coalition for Peace manifestos, the group remained essentially in the hands of the BISIG-VPD-Pandayan alliance, with the support of individuals with a similar outlook, such as Dr Nemesio Prudente and Dr Ed Garcia. Prudente had been a member of a small underground anti-Marcos group until his capture in 1985. Garcia was a leading figure from KAAKBAY. In that sense, the Coalition for Peace was a continuation of the People's OUTCRY initiative, which the key OUTCRY groups had been able to broaden to include the more moderate and right-wing Socdem forces. On the other hand, the Natdem groups which supported OUTCRY did not, with the exception of VPD, join Coalition for Peace.

The congressional elections

As discussed above, the Natdem forces had been able to launch, with a great deal of publicity, their new party, the Partido ng Bayan (PnB). The PnB decided to field candidates for both the Senate and the House of Representatives. Of all the 'parliament-of-the-streets' organizations, the Natdem forces were the only group able to launch an independent national election campaign. Together with VPD and BAYAN, the PnB campaigned as the Alliance for New Politics (ANP).

The smaller Left forces, BISIG and Pandayan, supported candidates that were standing for other parties whom they considered to be progressive. These included PnB. Pandayan also fielded a candidate in one House of Representatives seat and one Pandayan member, Florencio Abad, stood for the Liberal Party (and was elected).

The Alliance for New Politics

There was a number of important features of the ANP campaign. They included the organizational strength and significant mass base of the Natdems, the quality of the Natdem leadership, and the PnB's monopoly, amongst the electoral parties, of issue-oriented (as distinct from personality-oriented) politics. The campaign, however, also revealed the Natdems' weakness in popular mobilization.

The ANP was able to mount a national campaign for the Senate. It fielded seven candidates: Bernabe 'Dante' Buscayno (former head of the NPA), Horacio 'Boy' Morales (former chairman of the NDF), Crispin Beltran (chairman of the KMU), Jaime Tadeo (chairman of the KMP), Nelia Sancho (secretary-general of GABRIELA), Romeo Capulong (lawyer for the NDF) and Jose Burgos Jr. (former editor of the anti-Marcos paper *We Forum* and editor of *Malaya*).¹³ By any account, this was a formidable team. The fact that the ANP could bring together the country's most famous guerilla fighter (Dante), its most famous renegade technocrat (Morales), the heads of the largest worker, peasant and women's organizations, and one of the country's most outstanding journalists indicates the underlying strength of the National Democratic movement.

Unlike the landlord- and business-based parties (and remembering that Aquino herself has one of the largest landholdings in the country), the ANP had virtually no access to major sources of funds. (When the successful senators declared their pecuniary interests in August, it was revealed that only one of

¹³ Profiles of each of the ANP candidates are contained in 'The Magnificent Seven', *Midweek* 1 April 1987.

the 24 senators was not a peso millionaire.) Even so, the ANP was able to take its senatorial team to most parts of the country and to organize rallies and parades in many provincial cities. It relied on its mass base in the provinces to provide the logistics. Transport between major cities on the larger islands was by bus, and often accommodation could only be organized at the last minute as the campaign teams arrived at the next stop.

In addition to its seven-candidate senatorial team (interview with campaign organizer for Horacio Morales, August 1987), the ANP put up a number of candidates for House of Representative seats. This was the most dangerous area of activity for ANP campaigners: over forty PnB campaign workers were killed and many were harassed during the campaign. Even in Manila, in the electoral district where BAYAN secretary-general Lean Alejandro stood campaign workers were harassed and some detained.

The ANP was the only party to campaign around issues. Its campaign emphasized such things as the need for land reform, industrialization based on greater control of foreign investors, the removal of the US bases, changes in the labour laws, a new foreign debt policy, and improvement of conditions for women. Detailed policy proposals were formulated.¹⁴ This was in marked contrast with the government's campaign, which became known as 'armpit politics'. The essence of the campaign for the pro-government Senate candidates was to project them as being supported by Aquino; pictures of candidates standing with Aquino, hands held high together (thus the reference to armpits), were the major aspect of the publicity campaign, along with Aquino's personal appearances in support of these candidates. The government campaign gave virtually no attention to policies and issues, relegating this to discussion in the Congress once it was elected. The underlying appeal of the campaign was the assertion that a landslide win for Aquino's team would finally consolidate the government and end the transition from 'provisional government' to tenured government. Like the overwhelming positive vote for the constitution, the eventual overwhelming vote for Aquino's Senate

¹⁴ A compendium of material used by ANP candidates can be found in *Briefing Papers on Selected National Issues* prepared by the Nationalist Alliance.

team was, in reality, a vote to ensure the end of the Marcos dictatorship, and to secure all the good things that might flow from the new dispensation.

The ANP's vote disappointed many on the Left. No ANP candidates were elected as senators, and only two House of Representatives candidates were elected. The most popular ANP candidates, Dante and Morales, secured just over two million votes. The campaign for social and political reform, addressing the root causes of the country's social and economic problems, came up against a strong popular belief that securing the Aquino government would bring an end to uncertainty and make impossible a return to dictatorship. The so-called 'Cory factor' was less significant in the House of Representatives elections, where many Aquino-backed candidates were defeated by opponents with strong landlord and military backing. The Senate, on the other hand, was projected as a wing of the government itself. Aquino argued that her team should dominate the Senate so as to ensure efficient government; as she herself put it, the Senate should be 'without opposition'.

At the local level, the ANP came up against cheating and harassment. On the island of Negros, for example, there was a number of districts in which the PnB received no votes, although several people whom the author interviewed insisted they had indeed voted for PnB. Other observers reported similarly. Vote buying was also a problem for the PnB. Its potential supporters were to be found amongst the most impoverished sectors of the population, who often find it difficult to refuse offers of financial gifts during the lead-up to the elections. This is complicated when the offer comes from landlords and refusal brings the threat of reprisals. On Negros, official PnB policy was that people should take the money but vote with their conscience; the problem was that having received gifts, people's consciences told them to vote for the landlord's candidate (interviews with members of the Negros executive of PnB).

The ANP therefore faced two basic problems. First, it projected itself as a radical alternative to the Aquino government when the belief of big sections of the unorganized masses and the middle class was that the only alternative to Aquino in the short term was a return to dictatorship. It was enough for the government team to call for 'a vote for Cory', because Cory was still equated with stability. Secondly, it faced the repressive presence of landlords and the military throughout the countryside.

activities that might promote illusions that real social change could be brought about through elections. The dominance of the landlord-military complex would ensure a landlord-millionaire-controlled Congress. There was a strong tendency, therefore, to use the campaign as an arena for raising issues and doing educational work. The necessary arrangements for mobilizing voters on voting day and arranging scrutineers to check for cheating during the vote count were often not carried out. This made the ANP more vulnerable to the tricks employed by the opposition. Also, the ANP used very stringent criteria in deciding whether to collaborate with non-ANP candidates. Non-ANP candidates whom the ANP supported were sometimes expected to support all of the ANP platform and election strategy. In some cases the ANP put up candidates against popular local progressive figures, or withdrew from alliances with such people, consequently reducing the ANP vote.

At the second national council meeting of the PnB, in August 1987, a lively debate took place on these questions. The meeting, attended by over one hundred delegates from around the country - provincial and national, worker, peasant and middle-class - discussed the problems of the party and the things needed to be done for the forthcoming local elections, and resolved to look more closely at the relationship between education and winning elections.

The PnB had not succeeded in mobilizing far beyond its organized base (and had let some of its votes be stolen away) but it had strengthened its credentials, learnt from its experiences, and renewed its commitment. It is likely, however, that with increased activity by right-wing vigilantes and military 'counter-insurgents' in the aftermath of the Honasan coup attempt, PnB candidates in the next elections will be taking their lives in their hands. Aquino's shift to the right, her greater reliance on the military, public association with the vigilantes, and the crackdown on labour unions, may also have reduced enthusiasm for participation in future elections.

The Movement for New Politics

The ANP campaign was not the only electoral initiative to emerge from within the mass movement. BISIG, Ed De la Torre's Institute for Popular Democracy, and various left Socdem personalities

attempted to establish a campaign formation called the Movement for New Politics (MNP). Like LAKAS, the MNP's underlying purpose was to build the broadest possible left-to-centre coalition. The basic idea behind the MNP was to campaign for all candidates, regardless of party, who agreed to support MNP's legislative agenda. MNP hoped to attract non-party mass organizations which could be mobilized in support of such candidates.¹⁵ It also seems that many in the MNP thought that the PnB/ANP's popular appeal was too narrowly based to gather the maximum momentum for progressive policies such as land reform and opposition to the US bases. They thought that the PnB was too closely associated with both the 1986 boycott campaign and the CPP. By building a broader coalition, still united by certain basic policies, they considered greater momentum could be developed.

The MNP, however, faced problems similar to those experienced by LAKAS and People's OUTCRY; it simply did not have sufficient forces to wage an effective campaign. Only BISIG was sufficiently well-organized to do any campaigning and it was still very small. Further, the MNP was overshadowed by those groups actually running candidates and the situation was complicated by the fact that the PnB-BAYAN-VPD alliance also used the term 'new politics' in forming the Alliance for New Politics.

The MNP was most effective in assisting the campaigns of particular candidates, notably that of Nikki Coseteng who stood for a new party, KAIBA Party, established on the initiative of figures within GABRIELA to represent women's interests. Coseteng was a wealthy businesswoman who had been active in the mass movement and could be counted amongst the militant nationalist wing of the Libdems. She was a popular and glamorous figure, renowned not only for her militancy within the 'parliament-of-the-streets' but also as a former manager of one of the Philippines most popular basketball teams. Coseteng supported many of the same policies as the ANP and, having been elected, is now chairperson of the House of Representatives Human Rights Committee investigating the abuses of vigilante groups. Coseteng was the only MNP-supported candidate to win and overall the MNP's impact on

15 See the MNP manifesto, *Movement for New Politics* (roneod) and its *People's Legislative Agenda*, issued as campaign leaflets.

the election was slight (interviews with BISIG activists, August 1987, and with Coseteng, September 1987).

Chapter 3

After Legitimacy: The Mass Movement of the Offensive, May-August 1987

During the period between January 1986 and May 1987, the mass movement was essentially preoccupied with responding to the new government's initiatives, which included the constitutional plebiscite, ceasefire talks and congressional elections. Yet the movement also continued the grassroots organizing work being done in sectoral organizations, such as the trade unions.

At a superficial level, the appearance was that Aquino had succeeded. She could claim that both the constitutional plebiscite and the congressional elections had reinforced her mandate to govern. The character of that mandate, however, was ambiguous. While there was very little debate over the contents of the constitution during the plebiscite and very little debate over policies during the congressional elections, it cannot be assumed that the mass of people who voted for Aquino had no policy expectations, even though it might be difficult to identify precisely what those expectations were.

The mass movement organizations claimed that the people had given Aquino a mandate to implement a whole range of reforms which had been long demanded by the mass movement during the period of opposition to Marcos. The popular decision to stabilize Aquino's rule was based, they argued, on the assumption that this stability was to enable her government to push through with reforms. Following the massive 'yes' vote at the constitutional plebiscite, which many in the mass movement considered was ample reaffirmation of the mandate given to Aquino in February, Randy David, deputy chairman of BISIG, asked the following questions in a *Kasarinlan* editorial:

Will she use these [her near absolute powers] to correct the basic structural injustices that have accumulated ...?
Will she, in particular, address the urgent problem of peasant landlessness now, or will she defer to Congress?
Will she ...overhaul the political system and bureaucracy which were elaborately defined by her fascist predecessor? When will the promised streamlining of the bureaucracy begin? How soon can we expect the much-

delayed reorganization and cleansing of the military?
 Will she use her enormous popularity to rally her
 depoliticized people behind the ideals of national
 sovereignty, social justice, and popular democracy?
 (David 1987:4).

If David was asking these questions in relation to what might happen immediately after the big 'yes' vote in the constitutional plebiscite, the answer to all the questions was in the event, 'no'. With a third mandate, following the congressional elections, expectations rose again. At the very least, it could be assumed that things would get better, that there would be signs that reforms were beginning to take place.

A situation involving the sharpest of contradictions had been brought into existence. The constitutional and electoral exercises were intended to legitimize and stabilize. Having appeared to do so, the arguments for postponing reforms had been removed. The mass movement could be expected to become more united and aggressive in insisting on reforms. A more united and aggressive mass movement, however, would undermine the government's attempts to attain stability and legitimacy. Restoring a parliamentary form of politics would also reduce the role of the mass movement. If legitimacy was to come from a voted mandate, stability was to come from ending mobilizational politics, or, more precisely, demobilizing the mass movement and isolating the Left. Associated with this, the failure of attempts to bring about a permanent ceasefire - a failure for which the NDF was held responsible - was seen as a means of further isolating the underground Left.

The attempt to demobilize the masses was partially successful, in that BANDILA and the Coryistas ceased to be active. However, the national democratic forces remained cohesive and grew steadily and the militant wing of the Socdems and Libdems had a new source of leadership to which they could look, in the form of BISIG and the VPD.

Ideological confrontation

In some senses, the mass movement, in particular the National Democrats, had already gone on the offensive. This was partly the

result of posing the Partido ng Bayan as a direct alternative to the Aquino regime, but a more important development was Aquino's response to the breakdown of the ceasefire talks in calling for 'total war' against the insurgency. This decision must be seen as the first clear break by Aquino with the rhetoric of ending the insurgency by addressing its socio-economic causes. The policy had direct consequences for the legal movement as well as the underground. To the extent that her speech signalled presidential support for increased counter-insurgency campaigns by the military, it was also seen to condone intensified harassment of legal grassroots organizers in the countryside and amongst the urban poor.

There were no major NPA-AFP battles following the call for 'total war'. In a guerilla war there can be no big battles unless the guerrillas want to do battle. Intensified counter-insurgency activity meant more forced shifting of villages (hamletting), more zoning operations (house-to-house searches by the military), and more interrogations of suspected NPA supporters. In addition, the 'total war' concept was an implicit legitimation of the use of right-wing vigilantes, many of whom, though referred to under different names, already had a record of gruesome abuses under Marcos. New vigilante groups, armed and financed by the military, emerged and started assisting the military in hamletting, zoning, and interrogating. Many grassroots activists and organizers were killed.¹

The ideological offensive against the government was focused on this 'total war' policy, which was seen as part of a US-sponsored Low Intensity Conflict (LIC) strategy. In the absence of opportunity for a return to the Marcos-style dictatorial rule, the US was pushing, said the critics, for a policy of offering parliamentary rule with one hand and whipping up intensified military repression at the grassroots with the other. As the activities of the vigilantes increased, and the campaigns of the military in the countryside escalated, causing more and more refugees to flee to major provincial cities or to Manila, the

¹ For a survey of vigilante groups see *Human Rights Update*, May-June 1987, and former US Attorney-General Ramsey Clarke's report on human rights under Aquino reprinted in *Human Rights Update*, June-July 1987. *Human Rights Update* is a publication by the Association of Major Religious Superiors of the Philippines.

propaganda attacks on LIC and 'total war' increased (see Racaza 1987; Rao 1987; Coronel in *Manila Chronicle* 26 March 1987).

This trend was reinforced as the military was used more frequently against labour picket lines in the city, and zoning was extended to the slum suburbs of Manila. In the period January-August 1987, the Association of Major Religious Superiors alleged that there were 2648 political arrests and 406 were still in gaol. They also reported 434 cases of torture, 30 disappearances and 135 political killings. They also claimed that 95 people had been killed and 122 wounded in military massacres of civilian populations and that 13,794 families had been forced to evacuate areas because of military operations, and that food blockades had been set up in seventeen *barangays*. (*Human Rights Update* September 1987).

BAYAN and the various sectoral organizations increasingly challenged the government on these issues. Activists and supporters of the National Democratic movement saw less and less difference between the Aquino government and the Marcos government. BAYAN and PnB in fact changed their policy from one of 'vigilant and principled support', adopted immediately after the February Revolution, to one of 'principled opposition'.

The National Democratic underground, the NDF, held to a similar position but took the analysis further by calling the government the 'US-Aquino regime'. This had a similar ring to 'US-Marcos dictatorship', which was the National Democratic movement's term for the old regime, but a distinction was drawn between a dictatorship and an authoritarian regime. Following the breakdown of the ceasefire talks, the NPA also resumed normal operations, including ambushes and assassinations by urban partisans, notably Manila's Alex Boncayo Brigade.

Overall, however, despite the often sharp Natdem language, the ideological offensive was subdued. Even during the PnB election campaign, the tendency was to concentrate more on issues than on the general character of the regime. Neither BAYAN nor its affiliates launched any significant offensive mass actions, with the exception of the January 1987 peasant protest which ended in the Mendiola massacre.

BISIG and the other smaller left-wing groups retained their basic 'critical support' approach but with increasing criticism as time progressed. BISIG strongly attacked the government over the massacre of protesting peasants in January and joined the protest rally that was held following the massacre. It also attacked the

government for encouraging the spread of the vigilantes and it issued highly critical statements attacking the government's privatization campaign and other economic policies. BISIG's general orientation to the government was based on two premises. First, it considered that the Aquino government was still under threat of a military coup that would unleash an even more total 'total war'. Its critical support policy, therefore, took the form of attacking the rightist opponents of the Aquino government rather than of praising Aquino's policies. It was prepared, also, to call on the people to defend the government should it come under attack from the military (BISIG 1987:36-37). Secondly, BISIG believed that the majority of the unorganized masses, who were still sympathetic to the idea of social and political reform, would not listen - at this stage - to political organizations which proposed the overthrow of Aquino. Aquino was still popular, BISIG believed, and was seen by the unorganized masses as a bulwark against the return of dictatorship.

The differences or orientation to the government between the BAYAN forces and the smaller left forces based on the Coalition for Peace remained a major stumbling block to the formation of any strategic alliance. Indeed from January to July 1987 relations between the two left currents may have been at their worst. This period also saw some dissent within Natdem forces become public, as for example when Dante Buscayno called for a halt to the urban guerilla operations and a toning down of attacks on Aquino herself. Criticisms even began to emerge of the notion of 'popular democracy', insofar as it was seen to imply an alliance with former anti-Marcos mass movement groups whose members now held government positions.

Open debates started to take place on such questions as extending the ceasefire talks, and on whether or not there was a threat of a coup and what its implications might be. The Natdems thought that BISIG and its friends were becoming timid just when Aquino was starting her 'total war' strategy. BISIG and its friends thought that the Natdems were endangering the movement as a whole by isolating it from what BISIG viewed as the massive pro-Cory sentiment of the masses while there was still an impending threat of a 'neofascist' revival.

However, despite this tension common opposition to specific government policies enabled the mass movement to go on the

offensive. It did so in two main arenas: the Congress and, under National Democratic leadership, the 'parliament-of-the-streets'.

The offensive in Congress

The congressional elections delivered a victory to Aquino, to big business and to the 'landlord-military complex'. According to research done by the Institute of Popular Democracy (IPD 1987), over half the new members of the House of Representatives belonged, or used to belong, to the traditional political parties which had historically supported or at least accepted Marcos rule. The IPD research firmly indicated that the landlords and big business based political clans had reasserted themselves strongly in the provincial cities and in the countryside. The power of the landlord-military complex in the provinces, in areas devoid of media observation, cannot be over-emphasized.

In the Senate, Aquino herself fielded an official ticket and won all but two of the seats. The ticket was a coalition of leaders of major political clans, big business and lawyers who had been prominent in the anti-Marcos opposition or who had crossed sides soon afterwards. It, too, was dominated by the wealthy. This was a victory for the Aquino forces. Many commentators amongst the mass movement immediately began to express serious reservations about the potential of the new congress (Manglogon 1987; IPD 1987), reservations which are turning out to be well-founded. However, in terms of propaganda advances, the mass movement made big gains during the first two months of the Congress.

The mass movement had some representatives and sympathizers in Congress. In the House of Representatives, there were two PnB members, Representative Garduce from Samar, and Representative Andalona from Leyte. In addition, Abad, from Pandayan won a seat as a Liberal Party candidate and Nikki Coseteng, who stood for the women's party, KAIBA, won her seat. The former exile Bonifacio Gillego, who stood successfully as a Christian Democrat, was a strong supporter of land reform and democratic rights. Altogether there are probably between six and twenty House of Representative members who take strong stands on nationalist and democratic issues, including land reform. These members are organized into two caucuses, as well as the majority caucus to which they all, including the PnB members, belong. The

larger, looser caucus is called the Solidarity Caucus. The initiative for its establishment seems to have come from Coseteng. The smaller and more radical group at the centre of the radical initiatives in the House is the Nationalist Bloc. Its membership comprises the two PnB members, the representative from the Cordillera region, William Claver, Gillego and, more recently, Abad.

In the Senate, the pro-mass-movement 'bloc' is represented by Wigberto Tañada, son of Lorenzo Tañada of BAYAN. The other mass movement figure on the Aquino slate, Bobbit Sanchez, under controversial circumstances failed to secure election.² During his period as labour minister he had won the support of organizations such as the KMU. However, the pro-Aquino sentiment in the Senate impeded the emergence of a left-wing, progressive or mass movement dissident bloc. There were exceptions on some issues: on the issue of the US military bases, for example, a number of senators indicated their opposition to the bases or at least called for implementation of anti-nuclear policies but they were not particularly active in campaigning or spreading propaganda.

The land reform campaign

The best example of the gains made by the mass movement in the battle of ideas within Congress was in the area of land reform. The demand for comprehensive land reform had been at the forefront of the mass movement's program during the struggle against Marcos. Landlessness and rural exploitation were the most widely recognized root causes of the armed rebellion. Land was given the highest priority in Aquino's promised program of reforms. It was also a fundamental plank in the policies of the NDF, which believed that a radical reworking of land ownership was essential for the establishment of a democratic system. Without the liberation of the peasantry from the landlords, liberal democracy could not deliver even its own limited agenda.

² Based on interviews with Garduce (PNB), Abad (Pandayan/Liberal Party), Coseteng (KAIBA/independent), September 1987.

Because of the primacy of this demand, there were many calls on Aquino to use her special powers under the 'Freedom Constitution' to introduce by decree a radical and comprehensive land reform law before Congress met. Given that Congress was dominated by millionaire landlords, there was considerable scepticism that this would eventuate. The government had, in fact, moved very early to formulate a land reform policy. In March 1986 a special task force was established to formulate land reform proposals. The task force included Ed Tadem, a University of the Philippines academic and member of BISIG, as well as a recently released political detainee. It formulated a radical and comprehensive policy which was submitted to the Ministry of Agriculture. Some were inspired by Aquino's appointment of these radicals to hope for reform.

Between April 1986 and July 1987, however, there was steady and accelerating compromise on all the basic components of land reform policy. The final compromise took place when, just days before Congress was to sit, Aquino issued her decree on the so-called Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP). CARP was not only disappointing in its vagueness but also in its confrontational attitude towards the peasant movement. It left Congress to decide how much land a landlord could keep, how much he would be paid, what land should be distributed first and at what pace, how the peasant should pay for his land and how much. In other words, Aquino had, in reality, simply handed land reform to the landlord-dominated Congress. On the other hand, she put into her own decree the provision that all peasants who illegally occupied land prior to the reforms being passed by Congress would be denied the right to receive land.³ Additionally, of course, they could be arrested. Many in the mass movement saw the contrast between the vagueness of the redistribution principles and the harshness of the anti-peasant provisions as symbolic of a basic lack of commitment to land reform. It was also another stark repudiation of mobilizational politics.

As soon as Congress met, a campaign was started to promote land reform. The Nationalist Bloc introduced a draft bill that set a two hectare retention limit (*Malaya* 1 August 1987; *Manila Chronicle* 4 August 1987). It sought confiscation of the large

³ For a comprehensive analysis of the CARP see Rodriguez (1987).

tracts of land owned by big landlords and called for agribusiness-owned lands to be included in the land reform program. It provided no compensation to the big landlords who had already profited from the land for decades, although smaller and medium landlords would receive some compensation. The principal sponsor of the bill, Butsch Abad, explained that the redistribution of land should not simply be a real estate transaction, whereby the peasantry was forced to buy back the land at market values despite the fact that they had been exploited by the landlords for decades (interview with Florencio Abad, September 1987).

Being the only document already drafted, the nationalist bloc bill was taken by the Congressional Agrarian Reform Committee as the basic document for discussion. From the beginning, the committee chairman, Gillego, was sceptical as to its fate. Although he was supportive of the bill, his committee was dominated by landlords.

In the event, the pro-land reform group on the committee was able to out-manoeuvre the majority. The bill which the committee finally submitted to the House, although having increased the retention limit to seven hectares, remained a strong bill, retaining, for example, the provision of no compensation for big landlords. The committee's acceptance of this bill (House Bill 400), however, was qualified to the extent that many members reserved the right to oppose it on the floor of the house.

What was significant in this was the ability of the Nationalist Bloc to retain the initiative, despite its minority position. In that sense, the return to traditional party politics was not effective in isolating representatives of the mass movement. The mass movement also supported the Nationalist Bloc outside parliament. The KMP continued its series of protests, demonstrations and pickets outside government offices. The movement also intervened directly in the political conflict occurring in parliament through a new alliance formed across Natdem-Socdem-Libdem lines around the land reform question.

This alliance, formed in May 1987, was called the Congress for Peoples Agrarian Reform (CPAR). CPAR comprised thirteen peasant and fishermen's organizations claiming a total membership of 1.5 million people. The major organizations included Socdem-oriented organizations, independent groups, the Natdem KMP, and the radical and well-organized National Federation of Sugar

Workers (NFSW)⁴. BISIG people were also involved; Tadem, for example, had been active in drafting CPAR policy documents. Leading organizers, such as Isagani Serrano from Volunteers for Popular Democracy, joined the alliance. CPAR's main activities were directed towards developments inside Congress. It set up a tent city outside Congress where it could lobby members and profile the issue for the public. CPAR also appeared before congressional hearings, representing a peasant perspective on land reform. It issued press statements and circulated documents commenting on new proposals and ideas as they emerged in Congress. In particular, CPAR lobbied strongly for the discussion and adoption of House Bill 400.

Again, the level of protest and propaganda activity and, more importantly, the formation of a cross-ideological peasant class alliance indicates the extent to which the mass movement was able to take the initiative. While the machinations of the landlord majority ensured a postponement of any vote on the bill, they were unable to prevent the organizational and propaganda initiatives of the mass movement. The high profile of the parliamentary debates, combined with the mobilizing activities of organizations like the KMP and NFSW in the provinces - as, for example, in the occupation of abandoned land - showed that by correctly grasping the appropriate issue it was possible for the mass movement to begin to unify and strengthen itself again.

⁴ See CPAR documents: *Congress for People's Agrarian Reform* (typescript); *CPAR Declaration of Principles* (roneod), also published in *Kasarinlan* 2nd Quarter 1987 and in *The Workers Voice* 10 June 1987 under the title 'Salient Points of People Programme for Agrarian Reform'; 'Workers Call for Land Reform', *The Workers Voice* (publication of the NFSW), 10 July 1987. Data was also obtained from an interview with Edgar Estacio, vice-president

The August *welgang bayan*

The possibility of further, effective mass action was demonstrated in a series of strikes and protests between 17 and 27 August. Again, the key to the movement's success was the correct choice of issue: an increase in the prices of oil, petrol, and kerosene. The protests climaxed in a very successful 'peoples strike', the *welgang bayan*.

In August 1987 the Energy Regulatory Board (ERB) announced price increases ranging from 17 per cent to 22 per cent for petrol, diesel and kerosene. There were also 7 per cent to 10 per cent increases in the price of gas. The price of fuel has a strong influence on the cost of living, especially for the poor who use kerosene for cooking and boiling water, and are particularly affected by increases in bus and jeepney fares. It has always been a politically sensitive issue in the Philippines.

The unpopularity of its decision was exacerbated by the way in which it was taken; Aquino, declaring that 'the increase was long overdue', approved the price rises, following submissions to the ERB from Royal Dutch Shell, Caltex and Petron, despite the fact that the ERB was, in accordance with its own procedures, still to receive submissions from opponents of price rise.

In Congress, the decision was attacked from left, centre and right. Even the conservative Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP), formerly supportive of Marcos, threatened to organize a jeepney driver strike. The press universally condemned the decision.

Earlier, the more independent-minded trade unions had formed a coalition through the Labour Advisory and Consultative Council (LACC) established by the former Minister for Labour, Bobbit Sanchez. It comprised the KMU, the Filipino affiliates to the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU), the church-influenced, Socdem-oriented Federation of Free Workers, and the Lakas Manggagawa (Workers' Power) coalition, which includes BISIG and Pandayan-influenced unions as well as various other independent, progressive unions. The LACC also indicated its opposition to the oil price rise and said that it would be appealing to the Supreme Court. The LACC's approach was a moderate one, calling for sobriety in the union response. This caution no doubt reflected the Socdem presence in the coalition. The KMU, the

WFTU affiliates and the left-wing of Lakas Manggagawa agreed to LACC's moderate approach for the sake of unity. The effect of the unified LACC protest and appeal to the Courts was to add weight to the opposition to the price rise.

Meanwhile, other sections of the mass movement, essentially under the leadership of the Natdem forces, were preparing a more militant response. BAYAN, KMU and a number of smaller organizations came together to form the Coalition Against Oil Price Rises (COAP). COAP planned a series of protests for Monday 17 August. Central to this action were transport stoppages by the more militant jeepney driver associations, which were either directly affiliated to KMU or operated in alliances in which KMU jeepney driver associations played a leading role.

On August 17, public transport in Manila came to a virtual stop. The government was forced to use dump trucks to provide transportation for the public. The following days saw mounting criticism in Congress and from the press. Following the success of the August 17 strike and in the context of continuing protest and opposition, COAP announced plans for a week of protests between 21 August and 26 August, culminating in a national *welgang bayan* on the 26th. This would be the first attempt at a peoples strike during the nineteen months of Aquino's government. The mass movement's sharpest weapon against Marcos, the Natdem's *welgang bayan*, was now to be used against Aquino herself.

The week of protest began with a 10,000-strong rally outside the presidential palace, attended mostly by members of the KMU and the Natdem urban poor groups. There were speakers from most of the sectoral mass organizations affiliated to BAYAN. Leaders of BAYAN and Partido ng Bayan also spoke. Effigies of Aquino, as well as of the head of the ERB and Uncle Sam (representing the oil companies) were burned. COAP re-iterated its threat to organize a full-scale *welgang bayan* if the government did not reverse the price rise.

Symposia and other activities held at BAYAN suburban branches and smaller rallies and demonstrations took place in most important provincial towns. Another strike by bus and jeepney drivers again severely disrupted public transport and there was a largely successful boycott of classes in many of Manila's universities.

The breadth and depth of public anger was reflected in the positive media coverage of the proposed *welgang bayan*.

Commentators began talking about the revival of 'peoples power'. It began to seem increasingly possible that a successful *welgang bayan* could be pulled off. On Monday 24, the pressure on the government rose when COAP leaders, including BAYAN secretary-general Lean Alejandro and jeepney-driver leader Medardo Rodawas, announced that the *welgang bayan* would go ahead on the following Wednesday 26.

On Monday and Tuesday, BAYAN and its affiliates carried out protest actions in a number of cities and towns. In Manila, there were further strike actions by jeepney and bus drivers and in Cebu City human roadblocks were dispersed by water cannons. Police arrested forty protesters, including the chairperson of BAYAN in Cebu, Professor Zenaida Uy. In Davao City, 90 per cent of public utilities' vehicles were off the road, with 4000 drivers on strike. The Davao authorities put on 50 buses guarded by armed soldiers and vigilantes. In Bicol, public transport was paralyzed in Camarines Sur, Albay and Sorsogon. BAYAN also held rallies in Bataan, Bulacan, and Pampanga.

On Tuesday night, Aquino appeared on TV to announce that she was halving the price rise. Her move, however, was too late. The COAP leaders announced that the strike would go ahead and that they would continue to demand a full price rise reduction. In many ways, what occurred on the following day was an even more impressive *welgang bayan* than had occurred during Marcos's time. Strikes, combined with pickets, rallies or parades, occurred in most parts of the Philippines; there was no major provincial city where a protest action did not take place.

The Manila transport system was brought to a halt, with the city a virtual ghost-town. Hundreds of thousands of people stayed home. Human barricades were set up throughout the city, and clashes took place when police and army used water cannons and truncheon attacks to disperse rallyists. Many people were injured. The majority of school and university classes were cancelled. Office workers, those who were able to get to work, were sent home.

KMU, the WFTU affiliates and the Lakas Manggagawa unions called on their members in certain industries to strike. Walkouts occurred in big chemical and food factories such as Procter and Gamble, Nestles and Pure Foods, and many smaller establishments. (The Socdem-oriented Federation of Free Workers did not participate.) The newly-formed civil servants association,

the Confederation for Unity, Recognition and Advancement of Government Employees (COURAGE) also led its members in a walkout. Eight bank employee unions went on strike, as did employees of the Shoemart department store chain and thirty-two factories in the Bataan Export Processing Zone. Human roadblocks were established in Bataan and Cavite, where one striker was shot dead by police dispersing pickets. In Pampanga, public transport was paralyzed. In Cebu, the huge Atlas mine was paralyzed and walkouts were reported in at least eleven factories. There were more rallies and thirty more protesters were arrested. Classes in five universities were suspended. In Bacolod City, a consumers' holiday was declared while the public transport system came to a halt. In Davao, 3000 jeepneys and buses stopped.

Despite Aquino's popularity, the *welgang bayan* was an enormous success for the National Democratic forces who showed convincingly that they were the most serious and effective force in the protests. There is little doubt that without the actions organized by BAYAN and the threat of the *welgang bayan* there would have been no change to the price rise. Congressional and press criticism would not have had the same effect. The public, and the press, were conscious of the importance of the *welgang bayan*. The day before the strike most of the major dailies carried banner headlines such as: 'Welgan On!', and '*welgang bayan* Looms!'. Moreover, the impending strike was projected positively in the press. This was partially because of the popularity of the issue, but also a result of BAYAN's care to ensure that it cooperated with other groups wherever possible in other, more moderate, actions. The KMU, for example, worked with the other LACC unions in preparing to appeal the government's decision in the Supreme Court.

The impact of the *welgang bayan* cannot be overemphasized. It was a major shock to the government. The government had been forced to partially reverse a decision, but found that even this concession did not stop the actions. The fragile nature of Aquino's popularity had been revealed. More importantly, the National Democratic forces had shown in action that they were the most effective defenders of the people's interests. Some observers commented that the BAYAN rallies on the day were relatively small. This was true. The rallies, strikes and pickets were carried out by organized groups; there was little spontaneous involvement, with the majority of people indicating their protest by staying at

home. But the achievement of the National Democratic forces in the *welgang bayan* was not their ability to mobilise the semi-politicized masses in direct action but their success in mobilizing its organized forces in an effective mass strike which gained sympathy and respect. The challenge of winning leadership over the unorganized masses still lay ahead. The Natdems were, however, in a much better position to launch new initiatives.

Meanwhile, the government's position had been severely weakened. Even the liberal wing of the establishment press ran anti-government editorials in the aftermath of the strike. An editorial in the *Philippines Inquirer* (27 August 1987) was representative of the mood that the *welgang bayan* generated:

Strike vs Smug Gov't

The success of yesterday's Welga ng Bayan was stunning not only because it crippled almost totally mass transport in Metro Manila and other urban centres throughout the country, but also because the several steps the Aquino administration took to discourage the protesters had failed so miserably.

The magnitude of popular indignation was so great that not even Ms. Aquino's 11th hour attempts late Tuesday afternoon to dampen the enthusiasm of the strikers by announcing a 'partial rollback' of fuel prices was able to halt the Welga proceeding as scheduled.

In the end, the Aquino administration had no other recourse but to fall back on the police, the military and all the other coercive agents of government ... to keep in check ordinary citizens who had taken to the streets - the very same people who only a few months ago made up its loyal, if forgiving, constituency. But if yesterday's protest were any indication, they are no longer as forbearing.

There was an attempt to continue the strike into the next day, however this was a spontaneous decision, not backed up with sufficient organization, and it fizzled out. Another, better planned, *welga* was announced for the following week. The following day

Manila authorities, apparently with the support of the president's executive secretary, Joker Arroyo, organized a police raid of the KMU offices. Over forty people were arrested and detained overnight; jeepney driver union leader, Merdado Rodawas detained until the following Monday and charged with fermenting sedition. This added to the impression that the government was isolated and was acting in a high-handed and callous manner.

By Thursday evening the pre-existing political situation seemed to have been greatly transformed. The strike forces, mainly the National Democratic movement, were being identified as the popular representatives of the angry citizens, and the previously popular Aquino government was being depicted as smug and authoritarian. This did not mean that the forces of protest had completely stolen Aquino's mantle of leadership but they had certainly seriously mauled it. What would have emerged had another protest been launched the following week, would have been very interesting to see.

Meanwhile, there were other forces who had feared that Aquino's project of legitimation through the new constitution and elections would not deliver stability, nor kill the mass movement. The success of the mass movement's activities, especially the *welgang bayan*, confirmed their worst fears. With the mass movement perhaps regaining the political initiative, and with Aquino more isolated, these other forces decided to launch a coup d'état.

Chapter 4

The Mass Movement and the 28 August Coup d'Etat: Repolarization

The attempted coup d'etat by Colonel Gregorio ('Gringo') Honasan marked a watershed in post-Marcos politics. It further exposed Aquino's vulnerability and thereby helped propel her even more rapidly in the direction of authoritarian rule. It demonstrated the reality that Filipino politics is determined by the dynamics of sharp, severe and serious class conflict, and remains polarized. The coup attempt and the events surrounding it suggested that it is impossible to contain that conflict within the boundaries of liberal democratic, or even conservative, bourgeois democratic rule. It also had important implications for the mass movement, apart from sabotaging the momentum that might have emerged from the *welgang bayan*.

The coup attempt began at approximately 1.30 am on 28 August 1987 when troops loyal to Colonel Honasan attacked Malacañang Palace, Channel 4 television station, the main air force base at Villamor, and AFP headquarters at Camp Aguinaldo. AFP Chief-of-Staff Ramos set up operational headquarters in Camp Crame across the road from Aguinaldo and deployed loyal Scout Rangers outside the Camp. Clashes continued throughout the day, but it was not until after 3.00 pm in the afternoon that Ramos was able to launch a serious assault on Camp Aguinaldo. This delay was symptomatic of a problem which underlay the political importance of the coup attempt Ramos was apparently unable to attack because he could not be sure of the loyalty of all the Manila troops. It was only when the small contingent of Manila-based marines was able to retake Villamor, and Ramos was able to fly in loyal troops from Zamboanga, that a full-scale assault on Camp Aguinaldo could begin.

As the day progressed it was revealed that there was quite extraordinary support (or at least sympathy) in the AFP for the coup plotters. Apart from the apparent neutrality of most of the forces stationed in Manila, at least two thousand soldiers were actually involved in the attempt. These were reported to include:

...14th Infantry Battalion (Nueva Ecija); 62nd Infantry Battalion (Nueva Ecija); 3rd, 7th, and 10th Companies of

the 1st Scout Ranger regiment; PMA [Philippines Military Academy] Corps of Cadets; PC [Police Constabulary] Regional Command 7 (Cebu); 3rd Light Armored Battalion; Philippines Army Special Operations School (Nueva Ecija); Nueva-Ecija PC-INP [Police Constabulary-Integrated National Police] Provincial Command; and DND [Department of National Defense] military personnel, including the aides of [Defense] Secretary Rafael Iletto.

In at least six provinces (Cebu, Bohol, Pampanga, Cagayan, Quirino and Albay) the military overthrew the civilian authority (Nemenzo 1987:6).

The fact that Ramos had to use 40-year-old Japanese Toradora planes, usually used only for training, suggested that he could not rely on the combat pilots of the Air Force. With neutral or unreliable forces on the one hand, and pro-coup forces on the other, Ramos was left in a weak position. Indeed, the immediate suppression of the coup was probably made possible only by the fact that Honasan did not move to seize the telecommunications system. This fell into Ramos's hands and Honasan was unable to inform waiting forces in Cebu and Cagayan Valley that it was safe to fly into Manila with reinforcements.

Within a few hours Camp Aguinaldo had fallen to Ramos. Honasan and many of his supporters escaped. Other positions held by Honasan's troops were, one by one, surrendered. Just over 1000 of the estimated 2000 troops involved were caught but many of the rebels surrendered were allowed to go free. With Honasan and his reserves on the loose, and with the situation unclear as to how much support within the AFP remained, fears of another attempt were high for several days.

The attempted coup revealed that a significant section of the AFP had no interest in the legitimacy that was supposed to flow to the government as a result of the constitutional plebiscite and congressional elections. Plebiscites and elections, constitutions and congresses were obviously irrelevant in the eyes of a large section of the AFP. The coup also exposed specific criticisms of the government by the military. Two important statements of political position were made by the Honasan forces. On the day of the coup attempt, a group of young officers appeared on

television. One of their leaders read a statement on the purpose of the coup. It said that the 'Young Officers Movement' had lost faith in both the military and political leadership of the country; in particular, they wished to bring to an end 'the over-indulgence in politics' which had allowed 'threat groups' to make significant gains; reference was made specifically to 'developments during the last few days', obviously the *welgang bayan*.

A more detailed elaboration of what 'bringing to an end over-indulgence in politics' might mean was given by Colonel Honasan in a taped radio interview a few days after the coup. In it, he made the following criticisms of the government:

Political prisoners of the past regime were released, in spite of protests from the military, merely in compliance to a campaign promise.

The Presidential Commission on Human Rights was established with blanket authority to conduct a witchhunt within the military.

Experienced and competent military leaders were given insignificant posts because of their previous relationship with the deposed dictator.

The pointless ceasefire talks with the CPP-NPA were pursued.

Insurgency-related statutes were discarded and softer ones took their place. Rebels were given the right to bail.

Legal fronts of insurgents remain untouched .

Policies and directions on counter-insurgency were generally vague and were often formulated and adopted in spite of military advice to the contrary (*Philippines Inquirer*, 6 September 1987).

In other words, Honasan was opposed to any purge of the AFP for human rights abuses or earlier collaboration with Marcos, was in favour of increased restrictions on legal mass organizations ('legal fronts of insurgents'), and supported the idea of keeping

political prisoners in gaol. He was opposed to political reconciliation with the NDF and in favour of an intensified and coordinated anti-insurgency campaign. These criticisms have to be seen in the context of the continuing anti-insurgency operations and military harassment of grassroots organizers from the mass movement; the fact that most of Marcos's anti-labour and other repressive laws had not been repealed by Aquino; continuing arrests of activists in the countryside; the fact that not a single army officer had been prosecuted as a result of the work of the PCHR and that the PCHR was given no prosecuting powers; and the reality that NPA rebels who were caught, such as Rodolfo Salas, were not being granted bail.

Honasan clearly wanted an even more severe and consistent application of these policies. From his point of view, successful actions by the mass movement, such as the *welgang bayan*, were sufficient proof that current policies were inadequate to hold back advances by 'threat groups'. At the same time, the AFP was making no real progress against the NPA. What Honasan's demands amounted to was a call for an end to feuding within the elite and an intensified campaign against both the armed revolutionary movement and the legal mass movement.

The coup attempt also dramatized Aquino's abandonment of mobilizational politics. Her demobilizing policies had begun when she announced the formation of the Constitutional Commission and campaigned for people to 'wait for Congress'. During 28 August, and even in the few days afterwards, when many of her sympathizers were urging her to mobilize people in a show of mass support, she refused. The suppression of Honasan's coup was left entirely to the military. Only in the wake of the crushing of the coup did members of Congress appear on television to discuss what had happened. In her own television and radio appearances during 28 August, Aquino had made only the usual rhetorical calls for support, avoiding any call for mobilization and urging people to stay indoors. Her key political weapon, her 'popularity', was not used and was thereby diminished. Since then the usually reliable Social Weather station polls have shown a constant and significant decline in her popularity, from, in percentage points the high 1970s to the 1950s.

Mass movement reactions to the coup attempt

No section of the mass movement was prepared for the August 1987 attempted coup. The National Democratic mainstream was, at that time, of the view that the Aquino government was successfully consolidating itself and that the threat of an ultra-rightist coup had diminished. They considered that Aquino's adoption of what she called the 'total war' strategy had reduced the possibility of the ultra-right in the military acting against the government. Leaders such as Jose Maria Sison did predict a coup attempt very similar to that which occurred but not for another one or two years (Sison 1987a: 10-11). The minority section of the organized movement, represented by groups such as BISIG, gave greater emphasis to the threat of a coup but did not have the forces to do anything about it.

The reaction of the various mass movement organizations during the early part of the coup was to prepare for the worst. This involved making arrangements for an orderly retreat underground, as well as preparing for the necessity of a fightback. From BAYAN leader, Lean Alejandro, came an initiative to unite the various groups. On 28 August almost all the still-active components of the mass movement, including some of the moderate Socdems, met at St Joseph's Church in Manila to discuss a common position and common strategy. All were united in their condemnation of the coup, of the killing of civilians that took place, and of the threat of greater repression that Honasan's success would have meant. However, different orientations towards Aquino quickly came to the fore.

For BAYAN, there was no substantial difference in the political program of the Aquino government and that of the coup plotters. In an advertisement published in the newspapers on 31 August, BAYAN stated:

It is ironic that the Aquino government has chosen to adopt a hard-line policy on popular dissent [i.e. arrest of KMU leaders of *welgang bayan*] against the backdrop of its kid-glove treatment of rebellious militarists in the past. This has encouraged the latter to launch another bid to seize power. To many minds, last Friday's events can be construed as simply a conflict of two factions of a repressive government on the question of who between

them can be more effective in suppressing the political rights of the people.

For despite both factions' declarations that they are for the interests of the people, their practices indicate the contrary. The Aquino government, prior to the coup, had shown disregard for its avowed democratic concern by going on a rampage against oil price hike protesters. The bloody records of Honasan and company even during the time of the deposed dictator Marcos are already known. Today, still unsatisfied with the repressive measures already employed by the Aquino government, they are out to accelerate the return to open terrorist rule.

For the people, therefore, there was no choosing sides. They did not support the military nor did they rally behind the President nor respond to her call for people power in defense of her government. This was unlike EDSA in February when the people went out in their numbers to brave the tanks and advance what they then believed was the alternative to the dictator Marcos. In last Friday's conflict, there were no alternatives, no democratic interests at stake. They couldn't care less for it was nothing but a fight between two sides of the same coin that spells poverty, oppression and exploitation (*Malaya* 31 August 1987, reprinted in *Kasarinlan*, Vol. 3, No. 1 1987).

The BAYAN statement was not meant to suggest that members of the National Democratic movement should desist from intervening should the coup plotters succeed in making a comeback. BAYAN in fact called on its member organizations to heighten their vigilance and to prepare to resist any militarist takeover. But it refused to call on its members and supporters to defend the Aquino government. This reluctance came from its analysis of the government as being, like the ultra-right, committed to the suppression of the mass movement.

Nor was the BAYAN leadership unaware of the implications of intervening in a conflict between what it saw as two competing elite factions. Intervention could take the form of either

mobilization in support of one faction against another, or of action to provide a rearguard defence of an orderly retreat. In an interview on 1 September, when another attack by Honasan still seemed possible, Alejandro made it clear that there were circumstances under which the National Democratic forces would ally themselves with Aquino namely, if any new attempt by Honasan's group seemed likely to succeed, and Aquino should agree to arm the National Democratic forces (interview with Lean Alejandro, Manila, 1 September 1987). It is not difficult to understand the premises and logic underlying Alejandro's position. The BAYAN leadership considered that any government takeover by Honasan would involve violent and severe repression; Honasan had virtually admitted that himself. In Manila at that time there was considerable talk about the examples of Indonesia in 1965 and Chile after Allende. Such a takeover could not be effectively resisted in the cities except by force of arms. Without the arming of the mass movement, it was argued, any non-violent resistance in the immediate wake of a coup would be crushed. The alternative to such an armed alliance with the Aquino forces, explained Alejandro, was an orderly retreat underground. This would be the only way to save the mass movement forces in the face of Indonesian-type repression, involving mass arrests and assassinations.

A further aspect of BAYAN's response was reflected in Alejandro's public statements that the bankruptcy of the two opposing elite factions emphasized the need to more energetically pose the National Democratic movement as a possible alternative government. There needed, he said, to be another choice for the people.

In practice, BAYAN's actions in the few days after the coup were markedly restrained. The *welgang bayan* proposed for the following week was postponed, although smaller actions went ahead in many provincial cities. KMU plans for strikes over wage rises were also postponed, while a long series of negotiations and meetings between the LACC and the government began. BAYAN did, however, organize a series of 'peoples assemblies' throughout the country, aimed primarily at mobilizing its own membership to discuss the post-coup situation and to ready them for any future contingencies. In Manila, the largest of these was held on the Friday following the coup, amid rumours of possible military dispersal of the rally and arrests of Alejandro and other

BAYAN leaders. About 2000 urban poor attended; they were urged to go back to the workplace and neighbourhood and prepare for any emergency. The main speakers, Alejandro and Etta Rosales, curbed their attacks on the Aquino government, although it was clear that the crowd itself was as anti-Aquino as it was anti-Honasan. At the same time, despite the fact that disagreements among BAYAN, VPD, BISIG and the Socdems continued to surface at meetings, contacts were maintained and discussions continued.

While the National Democratic forces saw no real choice between the two groups in conflict, BISIG saw a major difference and immediately took sides:

Despite the current leadership's conservatism and indecisiveness in instituting basic changes, BISIG maintains that a bourgeois democratic regime is a hundred times more preferable than a military dictatorship. BISIG therefore expresses support for the civilian administration of President Corazon Aquino in this crisis and declares its readiness to unite with other democratic forces in a demonstration of people's power.

We are outraged by [the Aquino government's] recent policies or lack of policies. Nonetheless we must come to its defence against the fascist menace. Should the Aquino administration fall at this particular historical juncture, the alternative can only be a military dictatorship. (*Gringo's Deadly Adventure*, BISIG press release 30 August 1987, reprinted in *Kasarinlan*, Vol. 3, No. 1 1987).

BISIG leaders were fully aware of and concerned about the harassment that the grassroots mass movement was suffering under the Aquino government. It felt, however, that a military dictatorship would bring about even worse repression, and greatly restrict the room within which the legal mass organizations could operate. The gains of the February Revolution would be lost. As in previous disputes with the National Democratic mainstream, BISIG leaders gave great weight to avoiding the alienation of what they saw as unorganized mass support for Aquino. A refusal to defend the government against an ultra-right military takeover

would, they thought, discredit the mass movement in the eyes of all those who still had hope in the Aquino government. At the same time, it offered its own criticisms of the government's recent performance, calling, for example, for the dismissal of all those government officials involved in the oil price hike.

BISIG's perspective on the tactical requirements of the situation emphasized the need for a massive show of support for the government, 'a demonstration of people's power':

We urge President Aquino to call for another massive display of people's power in order to show the wavering troops (those who stayed neutral at the critical moment) as well as Gringo's reserves that if they persist in their foolishness, they may steal the symbols of authority but they will not be able to govern. Let us remind these rascals of the lesson of February: when besieged by an enraged but disciplined multitude, their soldiers will not obey orders to open fire (BISIG press release, 30 August 1987).

BISIG's assessment was that wavering sections of the AFP would refrain from supporting Honasan in any comeback attempt.

BISIG's strategy, however, relied totally on Aquino. It depended on her calling for a show of mass support. Only Aquino had, at that time, the ability to mobilize millions (as distinct from tens of thousands) of people. In the wake of the *welgang bayan*, however, there were many observers who wondered whether she could still muster the numbers. In any case, it had long been clear that she had rejected mobilizational politics; that rejection was the essence of her post-February political program.

During the week after the coup, the Coalition for Peace met regularly. On 6 September it held an emergency conference, to be followed by a march and rally. It was able to draw in some of the mainstream BANDILA and Coryista groups, although not in large numbers. This broader confederation called itself the Kilusang para sa Kalayaan at Demokrasya (KKD). The members of KKD sent messages to Aquino urging her to call for a show of mass support at the rally. Aquino did not comply and only three thousand people, mostly pro-Cory elements in the Coalition, attended the rally (*Midweek* October 1987 [Melanie Manlogon]; interviews with BISIG and VPD activists, September 1987). The

uncritical pro-Cory slogans at the rally were too much even for BISIG and VPD, who did not participate in the march. Aquino later received a delegation from the Coalition but no move back towards mobilizational politics was forthcoming.

Both BAYAN's and BISIG's proposed tactical responses to a successful military takeover revealed their weakness. In both cases there was a reliance on Aquino; in BAYAN's case for arms, and in BISIG's case for a call to mobilize. Neither was probable. BAYAN was in the stronger position. Because the NDF already existed as an underground network, it was reasonable for the legal National Democratic forces to assume that there was somewhere for them to go if they were declared illegal. The possibility of preserving a significant section of the National Democratic forces and continuing the political struggle from underground remained a realistic option. This was more difficult for BISIG.

In this context, the various mass movement organizations continued to meet and talk, the more earnestly as Aquino started to make concessions to the demands of Honasan and other sections of the military. These concessions further emboldened the ultra-rightist forces.

Re-polarization

Aquino's initial concession related to the dismissal of her executive secretary, Joker Arroyo. During the Marcos period Arroyo, a lawyer, had been associated with the defence of prominent leftists and had thus come to be labelled by the military as a leftist. He had been active in MABINI and often had participated in anti-Marcos mobilizations, though he had never joined any of the major political groups. There had been a longstanding demand from within the military for his dismissal. In the aftermath of the coup, a sustained campaign was launched to force Aquino to dismiss him (the campaign against Arroyo was front page news in the daily press between 6 September and 10 September 1987). Eventually, Aquino asked the whole cabinet to resign and Arroyo was one of those not reappointed.

Among Aquino's liberal supporters, and even amongst some hopeful leftists, her cabinet reshuffle was a major disappointment. These groups had been warning her that if she wished to maintain popular support in the face of any further coup attempts, she must

begin seriously to implement the reforms she had promised before she was elected. They looked upon the resignation of cabinet as an opportunity to appoint new, reform-oriented ministers. As it turned out, the new cabinet was essentially a reflection of the old one, with no new reform-oriented appointees at all. The only new appointments were retired generals (*Philippines Inquirer, Manila Chronicle*, 10 September 1987).

More importantly, Aquino's spokespersons began to repeat frequently that the AFP had always had a 'free hand' in its offensives against the NPA. In the context of the coup, public reiteration of this 'free hand' policy could only be interpreted as a signal of support by Aquino for increased anti-insurgency activity and, therefore, increased military intervention against the mass movement in the countryside and in the slum areas of Manila where the NPA's armed urban units were based.

At a meeting with members of Congress and businesspeople, Aquino also made clear her commitment to use the police to bring an end to so-called 'illegal' strikes. This policy was reaffirmed more strongly in a speech on 20 October (*Philippines Inquirer*, 21 October 1987). Following that speech, the police moved in and violently dispersed over twenty pickets throughout Manila, even though the pickets had not been declared illegal by the appropriate authorities. The KMU re-established its pickets, which were again broken up by the police. At a meeting in November with LACC leaders, including Crispin Beltran from the KMU, Aquino refused to give a commitment to bring an end to the police actions. Even though most of the strikes had not been declared illegal, Aquino publicly praised the efforts of the police. The raid on the KMU office and the overnight detention of KMU leaders and employees the day before the coup had angered all the active mass movement groups.

Aquino's turn rightwards also emboldened those still further to her right. Vice-President Laurel embarked on an extraordinary tour of military camps, addressing meetings of officers and men and asking them rhetorically such questions as: 'Do you want Colonel Honasan pardoned?' 'Do you want the Leftists [sic] in the cabinet removed?' (*Philippines Inquirer, Manila Chronicle, The Star, Malaya*, 9 September 1987; television reports, Manila, September 1987.) Laurel later refused to resume his post as foreign affairs minister saying that he did not agree with the

government's 'kid gloves' approach in its fight against the communists.

Honasan himself was able to maintain a high profile in the media, giving secret interviews to the press and television even while the AFP were supposed to be hunting him down. Former Defense Minister Enrile, and his supporters in the Congress, also went on the propaganda offensive arguing that Honasan and his supporters would not have rebelled without good cause. See especially a seven page interview with Honasan published in *The Independent*, 14 September 1987.

The most ominous development, however, was the assassination of the young BAYAN secretary-general, Lean Alejandro. Returning from a press conference to BAYAN headquarters in Quezon City, his car was attacked by gunmen in what was obviously a well-planned operation. Alejandro was shot in the head and died immediately. Two of his three companions also were seriously wounded (*Midweek*, 7 October 1987). The considerable strength of the National Democratic forces was exhibited when at least 150,000 supporters, mostly workers, peasants and students, attended a 40 kilometre funeral march for Alejandro on 30 September.

The mass movement and the underground responded with a number of new political initiatives. Most important among these was an attempt to re-form a united front of legal forces opposed to the swing back towards authoritarianism. A sign of possible future trends was the formation of the National Movement for Civil Liberties (NMCL), an alliance which grew out of the discussions that began at St Joseph's Church on 28 August 1987. The first congress of the NMCL took place in February 1988. The breadth of support it attracted indicates the extent of concern over the post-coup shift to the right within the mass movement. Present were leaders of the National Democratic organizations such as BAYAN, KMU and KMP; leaders of BISIG, VPD and Pandayan; members of Congress such as Abad, Coseteng and Gillego; key Libdems such as former Labor Minister Sanche; figures from MABINI and FLAG; several outspoken church leaders and well-known journalists and intellectuals such as Professor Renato Constantino and Petronilo Danoy. Figures associated with the old Communist Party, the PKP, joined later. However, the mainstream Socdem and other more conservative forces were not

represented; they remained organized through the Coalition for Peace, which did not include the Natdems.

The NMCL's first manifesto, *Solidarity in Defence of Civil Liberties*, clearly recognized the convergence taking place amongst the various factions of those in power and those on the political right:

...the Honasan putschists and the so-called constitutionalists [i.e. Ramos] have used the alleged neglect of the military establishment as an excuse in their differing thrusts for power. Also common to both as a justification for their claims to power is the demand for a military solution to the insurgency without recognizing its social and economic roots. Laurel and his ilk have similarly thrown their hats into the ring with their communist witchhunting.

The tragedy is that the civilian authority has acceded to the demands of the militarists and has increasingly adopted repressive measures against the masses who are working for basic social change.

The government must stand firmly on the principle of civilian supremacy, and purge the AFP of its anti-people and corrupt elements and thoroughly reorient its personnel along nationalist and democratic lines. Moreover, the government must undertake genuine reforms to propel socio-economic development based on social justice.

Four factions were attacked: the two main wings of the military - Honasan and Ramos - and the two main wings of the civilian establishment - Laurel (and Enrile) and Aquino (who represented 'civilian authority'). The manifesto continued with a call to mobilizational politics:

In these uncertain and critical times, with the military's increasing domination over civilian authority and the widespread use of fascistic practices, it devolves upon the people to organize and mobilize themselves towards the defence of democracy, the quest for justice of victims

of human rights violations and the unremitting struggle for civil liberties and people's welfare.

The NMCL also issued a strongly-worded statement, as a full-page paid advertisement, attacking Aquino's public support for the armed rightist vigilantes operating in Davao City. Aquino visited Davao and appeared publicly with the leadership of the Alsa Masa group, which had been responsible for a number of killings. The advertisement featured a well-publicized photograph of Alsa Masa vigilantes holding up the severed head of one of their victims.

It is too early to predict how rapidly the attempts to forge new 'parliament-of-the-streets' alliances will develop. The launching of the NMCL, collaboration among a broad range of groups in organizing the funeral arrangements for Lean Alejandro, the longstanding success of LACC, and the ongoing activities of the CPAR do, however, indicate that there is a strong awareness of the need for unity.

Past conflicts and continuing disagreements still bear down on the movement, as is shown by the existence in the movement of the separate BAYAN and Coalition for Peace groups. The major dispute between these two groups, however, has always revolved around the question of how to orient towards the Aquino government and its popular support. Aquino's own sharp turn to the right has become an important factor in forcing new developments on this issue. The organizations within the Coalition for Peace are rethinking their support, whether critical or unequivocal, for Aquino.

This new polarization, or re-polarization, is reflected in the call made by BISIG following police raids on the Philippines Polytechnic University (PUP), where refugees from right-wing vigilantes in Leyte had been housed. Scores were arrested, without warrants. They were later released but many were then re-arrested, again without warrants, and accused of being members of the NPA. The police did not at the time produce any evidence. Aquino supported the raids. Subsequently there was an assassination attempt on the president of the university, Dr Nemesio Prudente, a leading member of the Coalition for Peace. A PUP lawyer who was travelling with Prudente was killed. A right-wing death squad, *waling-waling*, later claimed responsibility for the assassination attempt. The BISIG statement said:

Earlier, BISIG had warned of an emergent neo-fascism which found its most brutal representatives in the likes of Gringo Honasan. We fear that this neo-fascism has extended its reach and has even started to engulf the very government that Honasan and his cabal wanted to overthrow.

A new situation has unfolded. New strategies and tactics must be conceived and old ones modified.... Unity has never been a more urgent task (*The PUP raids and the broadening of neo-Fascism*', BISIG statement, 6 November 1987).

The Coalition for Peace also increased its criticism of the government in a manner which indicated it was moving away from a 'critical support' position. In a statement condemning the police raids, it said:

Finally, we are deeply concerned about the trend towards political repression which this incident highlights. The PUP raid is only one among a series of disturbing events which puts into question the government's commitment to democracy: the regular raids on urban poor areas; the assumption of police forces of the right to determine the legality of the strikes and pickets; the continuing harassment of leaders of peoples organizations working for social reform; and the endorsement by government of vigilante groups without the mechanisms for controlling their potential for abuse ('Statement on the PUP raid', issued by coalition for Peace 2 November 1987).¹

¹ At the time of this statement the organizations affiliated with the Coalition for Peace included: Alliance of Concerned Teachers, BANDILA, BISIG, Filipino Social Democratic Movement (FSDM), KAAKBAY, KASAPI, Lakas Manggagawa Labour Centre, Pandayan, Philippines Democratic Socialist Party (PDSP), and volunteers for Popular Democracy. What the support of this statement by mainstream Socdem organizations (BANDILA, FSDM, PDSP and KASAPI) implies for the position of pro-government figures, such as Butz Aquino and Teofista Guingona, is not clear.

This re-orientation has been characterized by Alex Magno in a recent essay in *Kasarinlan*, entitled 'The New Polarization':

The [February 86] Uprising might have, in fact, arrived at a merely transitional arrangement, a disposable regime doomed to unravel by its intrinsic limitations. Its mode of accession was superficial, its historical vision myopic, its basis of support probably volatile.

This possibility is a spectre haunting the minds of those who prefer to believe that the Aquino government represents a definite historical phase, an irreversible and desirable transition from the dark age of the dictatorship. It taxes the hopefulness of those social sectors the Aquino government counts on most for support.

The liberal democratic arrangement as the crucial outer perimeter of a political condition favorable to the consolidation of popular democracy and conducive to popular empowerment. They have, in the past, thrown their support behind the Aquino government and vowed to defend it against attacks from the ultra-right.

Now they are desperately searching for evidence to show that this political arrangement is worth defending - or even that this political arrangement indeed exists.

(*Kasarinlan* , Vol. 3, No. 1 1987).

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