

Visions and Strategies for Social Change

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We used to have a BKP, Batayang Kursong Pampartido (Basic Party Course) in the CPP. We still have a BKP, but now it means Batayang Kurso ng Padayon (Basic Padayon Course).

Padayon’s vision of change in Philippine society can be summed up in our general line or call: Participatory Democracy, Participatory Socialism. We define revolution as the struggle of the Filipino people, especially the basic masses, to overthrow the power of the local ruling classes and to smash patriarchal culture, and as the continuing protest and struggle against the forces of neoliberal globalization. Our stand against the local ruling classes who are the most corrupt and enthusiastic accomplices of the forces of globalization is the most democratic component of the revolution. This means our wholehearted commitment to end all capitalist, feudal and semi-feudal forms of exploitation in our society and to build socialism in the Philippines, together with the Filipino people and all revolutionary forces. The feminist character of the revolution consists of the struggle for equality in production and reproduction wherever we are, as our contribution to the development of feminism in our particular communities.

Our political line is both a critique, and a tribute to the admirable aspects of the national democratic tradition and struggles of the CPP-NPA. It rejects the conventional definition of democracy based only on elections and upholds democratization in all aspects of society - social, political and cultural. It rejects the old models of socialism where only the state has the power to distribute resources and continue the development of society. It also criticizes and eliminates all forms of one-party regimes. The revolution upholds the existence of an active and genuine civil society, which serves as protection for the people against elitism and as a venue for discourse on alternative models of social change and development.

Padayon recognizes the value of class analysis and struggles. It also upholds a framework for development, not only at a national scale, but also at the community level. It recognizes the importance of personal and family relations, and the relation of comrades in a community. This framework of development and of the importance of communities and personal relations may be a most effective way of mobilizing the majority in our society.

The third framework is gender. We are aware of the need to pursue issues concerning production and reproduction, concerning the personal and the political, and concerning relationships between men and women and those with a different sexual orientation. We are aware of, and are starting to use, a gender framework.

Our fourth framework rejects and protests against the senseless development of industrialization that is headed for the utter destruction of nature. We are for maintaining a balance between meeting the people’s needs and the needs of economic development, and protecting the environment.

The fifth framework: aside from class and other forms of exploitation, Padayon recognizes and is

ready to relate the national and ethnic questions and exploitation of sectors like women and the marginalized.

The sixth framework is conjunctural analysis. Aside from the over-all analysis of Philippine society, we strive hard to see conjunctures where we weigh the balance or forces between the people at particular moments where we need appropriate tactics to further advance the revolutionary agenda. This means conjunctural analysis that seeks to pinpoint the weaknesses in an existing situation so as to direct the situation to attain radical reforms and political objectives up to the seizure of power.

The seventh framework is identity and individuality. Not only class and gender but individuality.

We place great value on the Gramscian model of struggle, of hegemony and counter-hegemony. We all know that the state has two faces: one is the use of armed force against the people, the state being the means of coercion, and second is the state's use of other means to get the consent of the governed through institutions and apparatuses such as the media, communication, and culture. Gramsci has written that we need to attain counter-hegemony before we can smash the state, especially in the realm of culture, so as to win the consent of the people and erase the state's legitimacy, paving the way for the people's seizure of power from the ruling classes.

Second, we will help the people to build up their own strength, especially the organized strength of the basic classes and sectors. We believe that the peasant movement should be autonomous and peasant-led. This is our contribution and aspiration in mass organizing, in communities, in regions, and throughout our country. This will be the weapon in weakening and confronting political, cultural and economic institutions from the local to the national level. The objective of organizing is to form blocks of radical reform in the economic, political and cultural arenas in as many communities possible. We do this while very much aware that we can help to create and grab those moments of revolutionary rupture to effect social change.

From this theory comes the concept of achieving radical reform. Radical reform in the countryside, for us, means first and foremost, the change in property relations, principally between big landlords and peasants and plantation workers, in favor of the poor. There are other elements of radical reform but principally it pertains to changes in class relations. We believe that not all economic reforms in society are radical reforms. This framework is mirrored primarily in the experience and stand of the Zapatistas in Chapas, Mexico, a good example of an armed group using the principle of radical reform.

I want to present our practice and efforts to implement radical reform. I want comrades to know that after the split, this group suffered tremendously to be able to refine new concepts and methods. Our efforts bore fruit, and from 1994 to 2004, our comrades in various peasant organizations and formations won victories in waging struggles for land that covered 300,000 hectares. This was our first experiment. At first, we truly thought that peasants would obtain land only after the victory of the revolution, but the peasants triumphed through their own initiative and efforts. Their struggles for agrarian reform and democratization took place in land owned by the biggest landlords in the largest plantations, or what we call local authoritarian enclaves in 27 provinces all over the Philippines. These landlords included people like the Cojuangcos, Floirendos, Arroyos, Uys and Reyeses in the Bondoc Peninsula.

The second characteristic of radical reform is its effort to raise the level of struggle. The peasants used, not only dialogues but also such forms as siege, land occupation, and the ouster of DAR secretaries who became blocks to winning victories in agrarian reform. The call or slogan was: Reforming Agrarian Systems, Reforming the Bureaucracy! Third, the development of strong and autonomous peasant movements that merges with the broad mass movement. The peasant

movements cannot be used as transmission belts; it is the peasantry that will decide on the character and direction of the peasant movement. Padayon join and supports them in this aspiration.

Radical reform also refers to the solution of important policy questions - CARP, coconut levy, and GMA's Ten-Point Program and trade liberalization. If the peasantry wants land and subsidies, the peasant movement should fight for land and against liberalization, tooth and nail. Fifth, the struggle of women to participate in and benefit from peasant struggles. Our experience is that many peasant leaders are women. Women have been able to win land titles and have taken part in peasant occupations and boycotts, and fought for changes in leasehold arrangements. They have dared to use bolos to defend themselves and their movement. Many women are leaders of the peasant class and peasant movements. However, there is still a lot to be done by feminist comrades in developing gender struggles.

We stand for multiform struggles and the bibingka strategy (conscious combination of upsurges and action by reformists in government), and rightful resistance (which is premised on the masses' understanding of their basic human and social rights). Our legal offensive and legal defensive struggles are also strong. Through rightful resistance, we are also heightening the contradictions among elitists, reformists and high government officials to weaken the position and opposition of the people's adversaries. We use the frameworks of right to life, right to land, food security, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, including the right to self-defense. We use rightful resistance in taking part in electoral struggles, engagements with the state, penetrating the bureaucracy, seizing local power in agrarian and political issues, and the recognition of the value of cultural work. We want to develop alternative leaders from the ranks of poor peasants.

The last point is the struggle for a revolutionary culture. The struggle for revolutionary change involves, not only external revolution, but as Mabini said, internal revolution. We support the emergence of new revolutionary aspirations and culture, and attitudes up to the personal level, changes in lifestyles that are consistent with revolutionary action, struggle against the culture of consumerism, and respect for different identities based on religion and ethnicity, sex and sexual orientation. Mabini said revolution has two aspects, external and internal (the latter refers to our inner development as human beings, and as members of the Padayon and Philippine communities).

P.S.

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