

“The Democratic Left Conference”

Resolutions adopted at the Silang Conference

Silang, Cavite, May 26-28, 2005

Friday 7 October 2005, by [Democratic Left \(Philippines\)](#), [EBRO Tina](#), [NEMENZO Anna-Maria](#) (Date first published: 28 May 2005).

We are reproducing below the resolutions adopted at the Silang Conference, as well as the opening greetings from Tina Ebro and the closing speech from Anna Maria Nemenzo. Available papers and contributions given at the Silang Seminar are posted on our website under various headers, depending on their content: “The Left”, “Political Situation” and “Women”. Articles and additional information about this conference are also, or will be, presented on ESSF’s website.

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Resolutions

On the afternoon of May 28, 2005, the participants to what has been known as the Democratic Left Conference formally adopted the following resolutions in its last plenary session:

1. for the group call themselves as the New Philippine Left Forum (NPLF);
2. to sustain lines of communication among the different blocs, parties, organizations and individuals for continuing dialogue and discussions;
3. to establish a journal that will facilitate discourse and the exchange of ideas among the participants and those who belong to the democratic Left, the editorial board of which will be formed by the convenors and with issue editors to be invited later on;
4. to invite more people to join the e-group so as to ensure constant exchange of ideas within the democratic left community;
5. to join in the following important events:
 - June 10 CARP anniversary mobilization
 - National Day of Protest against debt, water and power privatization and low wages on June 30, 2005

- Women's March Against Poverty and Globalization in December 2005

6. deepen links with other regions especially Mindanao-based groups; and

7. actively address the CPP-assassination policy and support the call of PATH to establish a Truth Commission that will look into the CPP purges.

The body formally described themselves in the following manner:

What distinguishes us from the Old Left is our being non-monolithic, non-sectarian, non-authoritarian, and non-sexist. We respect different traditions and draw strength from these in striving to form new visions and programs of comprehensive change for Philippine society.

Foreword

Tina Ebro

On behalf of the convenors of this convergence, and the convenors come from different political formations headed by Ka Dodong, the working group and the steering committee of this seminar, we offer you a warm welcome and sincere thanks for attending this seminar. We also give our thanks to Pierre and Nathan, our main resource persons who came all the way from Europe just to be with us for the seminar. We would also like to thank two radical funding agencies for their support.

Comrades, I think we are aware of the potential contribution of this convergence towards left revitalization and renewal. This endeavor actually complements the Alternatiba project which is a forum of the blocs for political actions and campaigns. The general aims of this meeting are the following: we hope that it would lead to a revival of exchanges between the different political formations, the different sectoral movements and key networks; we hope that it would lead to clarifications towards the development of a more humane, pluralist and democratic framework and strategy; we hope we can identify valuable lessons from the past and key lessons from abroad, and we hope to identify main points of agreement and disagreement, and find critical areas for future collaboration.

I talked to a comrade who is involved in rural organizing. The comrade said many peasants have already been killed and small and separate actions are no longer enough. More coordinated struggles are needed to reverse the neoliberal agenda. So we fervently hope that this gathering will bring about the meeting of our hearts and minds and lead to greater understanding and cooperation. Amen.

Closing Speech

Ana Maria R. Nemenzo

Womenhealth

We are nearing the end of our three-day gathering. We started out as members of different groups, organizations and blocs. We attended this forum as individuals coming from different traditions. I am sure we can all agree that we are progressives with different viewpoints, working on various issues and in various arenas, but with a common goal of social change. Some of us may be involved in political movements while others are involved in issue-based groups, but we are all headed toward one direction - the social transformation of our society.

We have been engaged in debate for the past three days over the definition of various concepts. Many of us came from, and still uphold, the Marxist and Marxist-Leninist traditions. But we recognize that there are various traditions, and I know that at least two in this gathering are “anarchists”. Our modest objective was to exchange ideas and establish lines of communication. I have heard comments from people who said that this is the first time they have seen some comrades they have not met for quite some time. I believe this forum provided a venue for formal and informal exchanges, not as a formal clearing house, but an occasion for all of us to be here, to discuss where we are now, and to see where we can agree and push for changes together. We all know that we cannot change society and ourselves if we do not cooperate in this initiative and project.

There are many things that are still not clear to me. Another objective of this gathering was to take note of issues that we still need to discuss and clarify in the future. I believe that in the past three days, we have fulfilled our modest objectives despite our initial doubts and reservations. We have reached a consensus to continue with this forum. The Sao Paulo Forum is said to have helped in the revitalization of the Latin America Left. We hope this gathering - the New Philippine Left Forum - can play such a role. We hope this forum will herald a new beginning, a break from the old practices we have criticized for so long. Let us look forward to this continuing dialogue, and let it be exciting. I found it exciting. I do not know how you feel about it but at the end, we were able to have a better sense of where we are and to reach a consensus to continue the dialogue. We can then search for ways to move forward.

Let us give ourselves a big hand, and special thanks to the people who worked for the realization of the forum. First, let us thank the coordinators of the Working Group, Abby and Kiko; the members of the Steering Committee, Tina, Mercy, Manjette, Gina and Enteng; and the active members of the Convenors’ Group, Ka Dodong, Frank, Ronald, Manjette, Sonny and Gina. We also want to thank Pierre and Nathan who came from Europe to take part in this project, Viol and Aya who served as documentors, Lando who gave technical assistance, Joel Rocamora for giving institutional support, and Sanlakas for providing security to all of us. Last but not least, let us thank Tina, who prodded and in her gentle ways pushed people, who always stayed in the background but called on us to do what had to be done, and finally, our facilitators Milo Tanchuling, Joel Saracho and Rene Nachura. Let us all meet again!