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## Filipino Social Democracy: Origins and Characteristics, Lessons and Challenges

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## **FILIPINO SOCIAL DEMOCRACY**

### **Origins and Characteristics, Lessons and Challenges**

BENJAMIN T. TOLOSA, JR.

**THE YEAR 2011** marks the 25th anniversary of the EDSA revolution that led to the downfall of the Marcos dictatorship and the restoration of democratic institutions under President Corazon C. Aquino. The celebration of “people power” is not just about those four extraordinary and triumphant days of non-violent uprising in February 1986. From a broader perspective, it is about a larger project and movement for democratization that goes further back than 1986 or even 1983, and in many ways remains an unfinished and continuing struggle at present. In fact, the democratic victory at EDSA was soon after threatened with reversal by rightist military coup plotters who besieged the government of President Cory Aquino throughout her term. More recently, Philippine democracy has been undermined by widespread corruption and blatant abuse of power in the highest levels of government during the Estrada and Arroyo administrations, and by various initiatives associated with President Gloria Arroyo and her allies to evade accountability and even extend their terms beyond existing constitutional limits via charter change.

Post-1986 Philippine democracy has largely seen a restoration of pre-1972 institutions, which while formally democratic, essentially did not challenge the concentrated political and economic power of a few dominant families. Thus the full promise of participatory democracy,

social justice, and communal solidarity symbolized by EDSA people power has not been fulfilled.

The landslide victory of Benigno “Noynoy” Aquino III and the peaceful transition of presidential power in 2010 marked a significant moment in defending and consolidating democratic institutions. The successful Aquino campaign was also crucial in harnessing widespread political participation and generating renewed hope in the possibilities of deeper political reform. May 2010 saw the election of a president who is seen as the heir of the struggle for democratization with a clear mandate for promoting development and addressing poverty through a kind of politics and governance imbued with integrity, trustworthiness, and accountability.

The present political moment is thus an opportune time to document the history of Filipino social democracy. While less well-known and visible compared to other formations on the right and left of the Philippine political spectrum, the history of social democracy in the Philippines is closely intertwined with the struggle for democratization in the country. From its beginnings in the late 1960s, nascent Filipino social democracy formed part of the surge of student activism that questioned the severe limitations of the elite two-party Philippine electoral democracy. It was a political system superimposed on highly unequal sociopolitical structures that persisted from the colonial period. The declaration of martial law in 1972 and the 14 years of authoritarian rule that ensued, forced Filipino social democrats to develop their political ideology, strategy, and organization in the context of violent repression. They defined their commitment to democratic socialism not only against the Marcos national security regime and its agents, but also vis-a-vis remnants of the “traditional opposition” from the pre-martial law era. Filipino social democrats likewise differentiated themselves from the national democratic/communist movement. While socdemers shared the natdemers’ long-term aim of radically transforming the structures of Philippine society and even some tactical goals and modes of struggle to bring down the Marcos dictatorship, they rejected the Marxist-Leninist-Maoist ideology and one-party vanguardist political strategy as ultimately incompatible with the twin goals of democracy and socialism. In the post-Marcos period, social democrats positioned themselves as a movement to defend democracy against the continuing threat of authoritarianism from both the right and the left, and also to deepen democracy towards wider political participation and empowerment, and greater equality in the ownership and distribution of economic resources and the fruits of development.

The essays in this book have discussed the various social democratic formations in the Philippines in the context of the struggle for democra-

tization at key moments in the country's recent political history: from the organizing and politicization efforts in the late 1960s—early 1970s; to the militant underground and aboveground resistance against the Marcos regime during martial law; to the contestation of the “democratic space” created by the political awakening and mobilization of the “middle forces” after the Aquino assassination in 1983, culminating in snap elections and the EDSA revolution in 1986; to the dilemmas of political expansion, consolidation, and engagement (electoral and extra-parliamentary) amidst restored democratic political institutions during the Aquino and Ramos governments.

A key aspect of the political narratives in the book are oral histories culled from personal and collective story-telling: memories of political recruitment, organizing, formation, and active involvement (amidst real physical danger and actual experiences of political violence and state repression); stories of political awakening and commitment to the imperative of social transformation—often rooted in a deep desire to respond more fully to the call of faith, justice and service to the nation; and personal and organizational struggles to be steadfast and consistent amidst very complex and conflict-ridden political challenges. These are stories of success and achievement, but also of inadequacies and failings. Many of these experiences of political engagement towards advancing democracy and socialism in the Philippines have originated from the days of youthful involvement but have also continued in various ways even in middle age and senior years.

What is Filipino social democracy? What are its distinctive characteristics? What are the political lessons and challenges coming from its history? What is its continuing relevance? What does it have to say to those who seek to be politically engaged at present, especially among the youth of today?

### **The Beginnings and Underpinnings of Filipino Social Democracy**

Even though Filipino political actors only started using the term “social democracy” and “democratic socialism” to define the political alternative that they were espousing in the late 1960s and early 1970s (see Manglapus 1967; Ledesma and Garcia 1971; Garcia et al. 1972; De la Llana et al. 1972), the origins of Filipino social democracy as an ideology and movement may be traced to individuals and institutions dating back to the 1930s–1950s (many of them associated with the Ateneo de Manila and the

Jesuits). They sought to respond to Philippine social problems by drawing upon Catholic social teaching as the basis for social analysis and action. At the center of these initiatives were Father Joseph Mulry, S.J., and the Social Justice Crusade in the pre-war era, Father Walter Hogan, S.J. and Juan Tan of the ISO and the FFW, and Jeremias Montemayor and Father Hector Mauri, S.J., of the FFF in the immediate post-war period (see Fabros 1988; Dacudao 2010; Hofileña 2010; Kimura 2006).

The emphasis on promoting both democracy and social justice that would mark Filipino socdem politics was already evident then. Moreover, the attempt to define a political way distinct from both traditional Philippine politics and communism was also apparent in the political framing and organizing efforts of the 1930s–1950s. A key figure of this political tradition was Raul Manglapus who ran as a “third force” candidate for president in 1965 and later founded the Christian Social Movement. In a 1967 *Free Press* article, Manglapus tried to define “the essence of Christian social democratic ideology”:

It will redistribute wealth, in response to the spirit of Christian justice not by violence but by the democratic process of law. This process will include the use of the police and taxing power of the State for the redistribution of land, the spread of ownership of industry, the providing of housing, free education, free medical attention to all citizens who need it or who may not be able to afford it otherwise...Christian social democracy will place economic development in the hands of the many and not of the few... It will, therefore, pursue economic planning (1967: 58).

But it would be in the context of the “social volcano” and “First Quarter Storm” (FQS) of 1970 that Filipino social democracy would emerge as a political alternative and movement with distinct groups identifying with and representing it. In this respect, the Lakas ng Diwang Kayumanggi—Diwang Pilipino (Lakasdiwa) under the leadership of then Jesuit scholastic Edmundo “Ed” Garcia played a significant role in the articulation and crystallization of Filipino social democracy. On February 17, 1971, the first anniversary of the founding of Lakasdiwa, Garcia wrote to his comrades:

Lakasdiwa dares to dream, as we all must in troubled times, with feet firmly grounded on native land, with minds and hearts engaged thoroughly in the quest for a genuine direction all our own—Filipino Social Democracy.

Lakasdiwa hopes to work with other like-minded fraternal movements among peasants, fishermen, workers, jeepney drivers, market vendors, slum-dwellers, professionals, youth and people from all walks of life—Ang Masang Pilipino (Garcia 1971 in De la Llana et al. 1972: 8).

It is interesting that the nascent socdems stressed the distinctly Filipino character of their ideology and movement as founded on the value of community-building, to distinguish themselves from both capitalists and communists. In a recent interview, Garcia pointed out that the national democrats/communists had a ready-made ideology and “red book,” drawing primarily upon Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong thought as imported by Amado Guerrero/Jose Maria Sison. By contrast, the budding Filipino social democrats were weaving an alternative from such diverse sources as Catholic social teaching and liberation theology, European and Latin American social/Christian democracy, the community organizing principles of Saul Alinsky, the militant non-violence of Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Cesar Chavez, Dom Helder Camara and the unique contributions of Filipino national heroes, models and culture. Garcia was also inspired by the writings and witnessing of his Filipino Jesuit mentors, Fathers Francisco Araneta and Horacio de la Costa. This is the reason for Lakasdiwa’s use of Filipino symbols such as the *tambuli* (rather than the hammer and sickle) and its battlecry: “*Ipagmalaki ang pagka-Pilipino*” (Be proud of being Filipino) (Garcia 2009; also Garcia 2005).

What then has Social Democracy in the Philippine context to offer in contrast to...Liberal Capitalism or Communism? First of all, Social Democracy acknowledges the value of human dignity stressed by Liberal Capitalism and also the value of the common good stressed by Communism. What is needed, however, is the balancing of both values in communitarian sharing, the native Filipino characteristic of *bayanihan* or *pakikisama*. Only by building communities along socio-economic lines can the nation avoid the excesses of either individualism or collectivism. In this sense, fraternity is stressed in society, instead of either individualism or collectivism (Ledesma and Garcia 1971 in Gorospe and Deats 1973: 43).

Lakasdiwa pointed to the need for social organization and politicization of the basic sectors or what later socdems would call the

formation of “autonomous people’s organizations” as a mark of Filipino social democracy. This goal and norm would become a distinctive characteristic and legacy that would inform the political ideology and practice of the socdem in succeeding years, through the martial law period and post-Marcos era.

The social organization and politicalization of farmers, workers, and all other functional groups in society are thus seen as the indispensable guarantee for bringing about social justice...This painstaking work and long-range work of social organization highlights the difference between the social democratic and communist concepts of revolution. For as a Christian socialist in Latin America asserts: “Communism is apparently revolutionary in its methods, but really reactionary in goals. On the other hand, Christian Social Democracy is apparently evolutionary in its methods, but really revolutionary in its goals.” (Ibid.)

The commitment to militant non-violence as well as to politicized social organization among students, laborers, peasants, jeepney drivers, and the urban poor found expression in such mass actions as the *Operasyon Tuligsa sa Kongreso*, *Operasyon Bantay*, *Martsa para sa Kaunlaran ng Sapang Palay*, farmers’ demonstration at the Department of Justice and support for jeepney strikes. Together with like-minded organizations such as the National Union of Students of the Philippines (NUSP), Samahan ng Kabataan para sa Ikauunlad ng Tsuper (SKIT), Kabataan para sa Kaunlaran ng Sapang Palay (KAKASA) and the FFF, Lakasdiwa saw these mobilizations as consistent with the “concept of solidarity with the oppressed and alienated (the mass line) [as] an indelible tenet...which affirms that only by inseparable integration with the People can the youth be guided to correct theory and practice” (Lakasdiwa Program in De la Llana et al. 1972: 29; see also Fabros 1988: 158–159 and Brillantes 2005: 55–56).

Like other emerging socdem at that time, they also called for radical change (*Operasyon Pagbabago*) in the Philippine Catholic Church in the spirit of Vatican II and the social encyclicals which they publicized during the visit of Pope Paul VI to the Philippines in 1970 (see Lakasdiwa 1970 in De la Llana et al. 1972: 91–96). They also saw the historical importance of the 1971 Constitutional Convention as a venue for political organizing and conscientization despite its being “saturated with oligarchs, vested interests and Malacañang puppets” (Lakasdiwa 1971 in De la Llana et al. 1972: 144–145).

These experiences in social formation, political education and militant action were all seen as opportunities for the advancement of Filipino social democracy/democratic socialism even as this goal will be achieved only in the long term and in a protracted manner (Lakasdiwa 1971 in *Ibid.*: 144).

A true democracy is based on organized people's power. A politicized and socially organized people will eventually triumph in the struggle for a fully human and truly Filipino Democratic Socialism (Lakasdiwa 1971 in *Ibid.*: 163).

Lakasdiwa's conception of social democracy/democratic socialism also stressed "the integration of the sacred and the secular" leading to a view of property ownership not "as absolute dominion but as stewardship." Thus social democracy is "neither for absolute ownership, nor for abolition of private property...[but] for wider distribution of private property." Moreover, its nationalist clamor "is no longer for political independence but more fundamentally for economic independence and cultural identity" (Ledesma and Garcia 1971: 43–44).

Lakasdiwa viewed its ideology of Democratic Socialism as characterized by four principles: nationalist, socialist, democratic, and revolutionary.

Nationalism is its moving force expressing the desire of the masses of peasants and workers for liberation from oppression. Furthermore, Lakasdiwa adheres to scientific socialism as the People's goal to eliminate class exploitation. It is founded upon the belief and promotion of democratic principles and processes as the only medium of the total realization of the democratic socialist order. Finally, Lakasdiwa affirms that only revolutionary change, not palliative reforms, can truly liberate the peasants and workers from social enslavement (Lakasdiwa in De la Llana et al. 1972, 28–29).

### **Rootedness in the Masses and the Centrality of Community Organizing**

The emphasis on social organization and its definition of genuine democracy and socialism as rooted in people's power was surely not unique to Lakasdiwa among the emerging Filipino social democrats. As already noted, one may even trace this orientation back to the sociopolitical education efforts of the Social Justice Crusade in the 1930s



and especially in the sectoral organizing work among industrial laborers and farmers of the ISO, FFW, and FFF in the 1950s.

This emphasis on rootedness in the masses (*pagkaugat sa masa*) and a distinctive community organizing ethos was particularly evident in Lakasdiwa's 1970s contemporary, Kasapi. Its very name, Kapulungan ng mga Sandigan ng Pilipinas, evoked this perspective of seeing the basic sectors as pillars to be organized as a powerful social foundation and movement for change. As Cristina Jayme Montiel has discussed in her essay, Kasapi cadres were inspired by Saul Alinsky's "Rules for Radicals," and their buzzwords were always "organize, organize, organize." Montiel notes that more than Kasapi's social analysis or social vision, what is key to understanding the group's ideology was its strategy for change which was founded on integration or solidarity with masses—in organizing the oppressed and involvement in their day-to-day struggles. As Montiel points out, Kasapi cadres "were trained to integrate with and organize the masses into a social force grounded in the unity of large numbers of individuals." In fact, much more than Lakasdiwa which was largely an organization of youth and students, Kasapi was truly a multisectoral organization with many members from the urban poor, industrial workers, and fisherfolk. At times, as Montiel also notes, there were tensions within the organization when there was an apparent clash between the predominant "street-wise culture" of those who were primarily engaged in basic sector organizing and those in the leadership whom the former considered as "intellectuals" or "armchair revolutionaries."

Rootedness in the situation and organizations of the basic sectors was also a characteristic of the PDSP which also drew in former members of Lakasdiwa after the declaration of martial law. In his essay, Roy Mendoza says that PDSP's political work "was influenced by community organizing approaches and strategies such as those of Paulo Freire's on conscientization and Saul Alinsky's issue-based mobilization." Mendoza has also related an interesting anecdote from peasant leader Oca Castillo who was impressed less by the social analysis (the "isms") and ideological program presented to him in the PDSP seminars than by the genuine concern for the plight of the peasants which he experienced among the students and professionals whom he met and their commitment to social transformation rooted in the needs and interests of the masses.

Similarly, as Eleanor Dionisio writes, a large group of Pandayan's founding generation came from the ranks of community and sectoral organizers "whose formative experiences of political engagement came through their work with rural organizations and urban labor unions."

Many of them started out as student volunteers who emerged from the social immersion, organizing, and development programs of SPES/Sarilikha and what later became the Center for Community Services (Workers' College, Organizing for Rural Development, the Office for Social Concern and Involvement and partners/related institutions) and the Socially-oriented Activities (SOA) at the Ateneo de Manila in the 1970s and 1980s. That is why their conception of democratic socialism was anchored on the formation of independent people's organizations. They rejected left-wing vanguardism and the political instrumentalization of sectoral issues and organizations as incompatible with authentic popular empowerment and democratization which were essential to building genuine socialism.

Thus what the various socdem formations shared from their very beginnings was the central value for and commitment to what the FQS generation called the "mass line" or "mass work." For many socdem, this was interpreted in the light of the "preferential option for the poor" at the heart of Catholic social teaching which faith-based sociopolitical activists in the Philippines have been advocating since the 1930s. For individuals and groups that had been particularly influenced by the Jesuits, this response was shaped in the late 1960s and early 1970s by the SPES framework of total human development (social, political, economic, and spiritual) that found its way in the formation of people's organizations as key agents of social transformation towards the fullness of democracy and socialism.

### **The Critical Role of the Youth/Students and their Mentors**

While it is true that the distinctive orientation and commitment of Filipino social democracy was the politicized social organization of the basic sectors as the foundation of democratization, there is no denying that at the heart of the movement were young people, particularly students and young professionals.

While Kasapi was founded by Father Jose Blanco, S.J., and had some Ateneans in its leadership, it drew majority of its youth/student membership from the University Belt and from among urban poor youth leaders and organizers. Montiel has discussed, for example, how from the beginning, Father Blanco set up Challenge House or C-Haus, the youth political movement that would give birth to Kasapi in Guido Ver across the University of Santo Tomas. Montiel has also pointed out that it was

in Araneta University that Kasapi found its most fertile ground for recruitment from among the student sector.

In his essay on the history of the PDSP, Roy Mendoza discusses the central role played by Samahan ng Malayang Kabataan (SMK) which started in 1976. This youth group was seen as critical for the expansion efforts of the party because the students were “young, diligent, and idealistic...indispensable in reaching out to other sectors...a reservoir of organizing talent.” Among the pioneers were students in the Student Catholic Action of the University of the Philippines (Diliman, Manila, and Los Baños) and the Ateneo de Manila. They saw a need for an alternative to the government youth arm, the Kabataang Barangay (KB) on one hand, and the Kabataang Makabayan (KM) and League of Filipino Students (LFS) of the national democrats, on the other. These students would be involved not only in sectoral organizing but also in the mobilization for electoral participation in support of the Lakas ng Bayan (Laban) campaign in Metro Manila in 1978. In the early 1980s, the University of Santo Tomas would become a focal point for organizing and recruitment, becoming the *de facto* center of SMK operations and of its “second generation” of recruits. The SMK would facilitate the founding of the Youth for the Advancement of Faith and Justice (YAFJ), an aboveground movement openly advocating the principles and program of social democracy as a crystallization of militant Christian involvement in politics. YAFJ was organized around the time of the visit of Pope John Paul II to the Philippines in 1981. As Mendoza has noted in his essay, the YAFJ would take a life of its own separate from the SMK, and some of its key leaders like Ronald Llamas later became founders of the Kristiyanong Ugnayan para sa Sosyalismo (KRUS) which eventually joined the Bukluran sa Ikauunlad ng Sosyalistang Isip at Gawa (BISIG).

In the essay on Pandayan, Eleanor Dionisio writes that an important stream in the organization’s founding generation came from student groups who were mentored by former PDSP cadres and professional community organizers/social development workers. They were very sympathetic to the social democratic vision and political tradition, but were “distressed by PDSP’s ‘democratic centralism’ and its strategy of armed struggle.” Dionisio quotes former UP Student Council President Jose Luis “Chito” Gascon as saying that he and other student leaders from UPSCA and the student party Nagkakaisang Tugon “found affinity” with “fellow travelers” who were non-aligned SD/DS sympathizers from other schools, but particularly the student volunteers and organizers of

the Center for Community Services (CCS) at the Ateneo de Manila. They would establish the Filipino Democratic Students (FIDES) with chapters in various schools, an organization which would become affiliated with Pandayan.

Another organization that would have close links with Pandayan was the Alyansa ng mga Kristiyanong Mag-aaral (AKMA) which had a wide network of support within schools in the Catholic Educational Association of the Philippines (CEAP) umbrella. While this alliance was not explicitly social democratic/democratic socialist, it was committed to the advancement of authentic Christian humanism and active non-violence in politics which was shared by many Filipino social democrats, particularly those who formed and joined Pandayan. It also had as its organizers/mentors Pandayan members like Leah Vidal of the Social Development Index which founded the network of student organizers, Tagasan, and project officers of the Ateneo's OSCI like Julio "Joly" Macuja and Karel San Juan.

When they graduated, these students became social development professionals and academics who in turn helped to recruit and form a new cohort of students and young professionals. As Dionisio points out, Pandayan's core of "young, idealistic, audacious, competent, and devoted cadres...[whose] readiness to renounce potentially better-paying opportunities for the love of the cause, made them attractive hires for NGOs" which provided an institutional base for the political education, organization, and mobilization work of Pandayan.

Because young people are at a critical stage in their lives when they are in the process of being formed intellectually, emotionally, socially, and spiritually, the role of formators or mentors is particularly crucial. In the history of social democratic organizations and their forerunners, many of these mentors were school administrators, teachers, advisers, and project officers in their student organizations/movements, a good number of whom were Jesuits, trained or based in Jesuit-related institutions. This tradition goes back to the pre-war era and immediate post-war period among the antecedents of Filipino social democracy. For example, Father Joseph Mulry, S.J., was the central figure in the Social Justice Crusade of the 1930s, as were Fathers Walter Hogan, S.J., and John Carroll, S.J., in the Social Order Club and FFW, and Jeremias Montemayor and Father Hector Mauri, S.J., in FFF during the 1950s. In the 1960s, students and young professionals who wanted to follow Catholic social teachings in the realm of electoral politics looked up to Raul Manglapus of the Christian Social Movement as a role model. Some of the youthful political activists of that

period, like Aquilino Pimentel, Ramon Tagle, and Luis “Booty” Jose, would later become key figures in the founding of PDP.

There are likewise similarities in the importance of student/youth mentorship in Kasapi, Lakasdiwa, PDSP, and Pandayan. Father Jose Blanco, S.J., has always been the recognized founding figure of Kasapi as noted by Cristina Montiel. For Lakasdiwa, the architect, visionary, and inspirational spokesperson was then Jesuit scholastic Ed Garcia, who in turn was influenced by his mentors, Fathers Francisco Araneta, S.J., and Horacio de la Costa, S.J. The writings and lectures of Father Araneta on the social teachings of the Catholic Church and Father de la Costa on Philippine history and the political thought of Filipino national heroes provided inspiration and direction for Lakasdiwa.

Father Romeo “Archie” Intengan, S.J., drew in students from the Ateneo de Manila and seminarians from Loyola House of Studies and San Jose Seminary into the PDSP. His painstaking work in systematizing the different components of Filipino social democracy/democratic socialism was instrumental in providing the wider socdem movement, not just PDSP, with a formidable ideological foundation, with theoretical resources and political education materials that could rival those of the communists/national democrats.

In the case of Pandayan, cadres who came from the student sector drew their inspiration and political education from the social development professionals based at the Ateneo Center for Community Services and the Center for Social Policy and Public Affairs which were both founded by Father Noel Vasquez, S.J., and from mentors among University administrators and faculty, both lay and Jesuit. Father Bienvenido F. Nebres, S.J., was a particularly influential figure because he was dean of the Ateneo School of Arts and Sciences from 1973 to 1980 and Provincial Superior of the Philippine Jesuits from 1983 to 1989. He was instrumental in building institutions that would direct the Ateneo de Manila and the Jesuit Philippine Province as a whole towards service of the nation and the promotion of justice (see Nebres 1975, 1979; also Philippine Province of the Society of Jesus 1975). Beyond the Ateneo de Manila, Pandayan drew on the network of students and student organizers/formators in Social Development Index, Tagasan, and the AKMA which had the support of key officials in the CEAP from the mid-1980s to the early 1990s. Thus given this mentoring and formation background, what Dionisio observes of Pandayan cadres may also be said more broadly of many Filipino social democrats, including the forerunners from the 1930s–1950s: they were political activists “motivated by the desire to live out the Church’s teachings on social justice.”

### **The Challenges of Political Engagement during the Marcos Regime**

Filipino social democracy emerged and crystallized in a situation of political crisis, during the student activism of the “First Quarter Storm” in the early 1970s and the violence and repression that followed during the martial law period from 1972 to 1986. Thus the form of organization and the dominant modes of political involvement and engagement would be shaped by this background that persisted even after the restoration of political democracy during the Aquino and Ramos governments in the mid-1980s to the 1990s.

At the outset, it was active engagement in the “parliament of the streets” that dominated the political strategy and involvement of the emerging social democrats. This was true of the pre-martial law organizations, *Lakasdiwa* and *Kasapi*, that launched and supported mass actions such as the *Operasyon Tuligsa sa Kongreso*, *Operasyon Bantay*, jeepney drivers’ and industrial labor strikes, and other protests and mass actions of both the rural and urban poor. This mode of political struggle could have evolved towards both strategic extra-parliamentary and electoral participation as there were initial efforts to create a broad social democratic front in Philippine politics in the early 1970s, but the declaration of martial law in 1972 forced many social democrats to lie low or to go underground. In the case of *Kasapi*, as members became victims of arrests and torture, those who remained aboveground worked in organizations that were not labeled “subversive” such as Church-related organizations like the Archdiocesan Student Catholic Action, even as they maintained links with those who had gone underground. PDSP was also a clandestine organization during martial law when it recruited members and set up fronts among the basic sectors and the youth/students. Roy Mendoza in his essay says that PDSP called for resistance against the Marcos regime using legal, extra-legal, and armed forms of struggle.

In 1978, the regional elections for members of the Interim Batasang Pambansa (IBP) provided an opportunity for social democrats to engage in electoral struggle. Both *Kasapi* and PDSP participated in the campaign of the *Lakas ng Bayan* (Laban) ticket in Metro Manila led by Benigno “Ninoy” Aquino. They used the political space provided by the elections for education, organization, mobilization, and coalition/united front work with the traditional liberal opposition and national democrats from the Manila-Rizal area. While the social democrats went all out to work for the electoral victory of the Laban ticket, they also recognized that this was difficult if not impossible to achieve

under martial law conditions, particularly because Imelda Marcos herself was running for office in the administration Kilusang Bagong Lipunan (KBL) slate. But the electoral campaign allowed various opposition groups to expose openly the injustices and failures of the Marcos regime and provided them space (by creatively using alternative media and political action) to present not only alternative candidates but also alternative programs, including the social democratic minimum program. Thus electoral participation supported the wider extralegal struggle to bring down the Marcos dictatorship. According to Mendoza, PDSP members, a good number of whom were from the youth/student sector, were mobilized to produce and distribute election materials, conduct meetings and door-to-door campaigns, and train and serve as poll-watchers. Montiel writes that Kasapi launched *Operasyon Bantay Balota* to guard the polls and even founded a small electoral party, the *Partido ng Sambayanang Pilipino*, to field candidates. The most successful political initiative of the 1978 campaign was the Metro-Manila-wide noise barrage on April 6, the eve of the parliamentary elections. This political demonstration showed to the Marcos regime, its supporters, and the wider public, the extent of popular opposition to and defiance of the dictatorship, even as the official COMELEC vote count would show the KBL sweeping the Metro Manila seats in the IBP elections held the following day. The metro-wide noise barrage, the first successful large-scale civil obedience action during martial law, exposed the unpopularity of the regime in the nation's capital, and cast serious doubt on the improbable victory of the entire KBL ticket in Metro Manila. By demonstrating the strength of the popular resistance to martial law and pointing to massive electoral fraud, the political opposition further undermined the credibility of the Marcos government.

The arrests and renewed political repression that immediately followed the IBP elections and public protests against systematic cheating, however, drove both the PDSP and Kasapi further underground and towards armed struggle. Mendoza notes, for example, that when the youth group SMK was formalized after the 1978 elections, the members believed that the armed struggle via a protracted people's war should be the primary mode of struggle. Indeed there were efforts to organize, recruit, and train members for PDSP's *Sandigan* army in cooperation with the MNLF. As Mendoza also writes, these preparations included training in the use of explosives which led to the failed Operation June Bride, a project to bomb electric towers to disrupt power supply in Manila. The plan was to protest Marcos' "reelection" which the opposition boycotted in May 1981.

Similarly, Montiel notes that after the 1978 experience in electoral participation, one wing of Kasapi saw the futility of open and legal struggle under martial law and decided to form the April 6 Liberation



Movement (A6LM) (in commemoration of the successful 1978 noise barrage) in order to wage urban insurrection. The aim was to challenge the Marcos regime in the main cities, especially Metro Manila through urban guerrilla tactics such as bombing visible symbols of Marcos power and wealth. This strategy was demonstrated in October 1980 during the bombing of the American Society of Travelers Association (ASTA) convention in PICC with Marcos himself in attendance. The resort to armed struggle resulted in even further repression targeting the social democrats. They were now branded as the “third force” leading to more arrests/torture or exile for the leaders of both PDSP and Kasapi.

Even social democrats who were not members of the two organizations (e.g., Florencio “Butch” Abad, Henedina “Dina” Razon-Abad, and Angelita “Angge” Gregorio-Medel who would later be among the founders of Pandayan), were imprisoned during this wave of arrests because the Marcos government could not distinguish among the different socdem personalities and organizations.

The effect of this incarceration or exile of the social democratic leadership was to force remaining cadres to look for “legal jobs” as Mendoza has pointed out in the case of PDSP. This option included social organizing, formation, and development work in NGOs, Church, and educational institutions. In fact, this aboveground social conscientization and organizing work was already the principal occupation of a key stream of people who would later constitute Pandayan such as the Abads, Gregorio-Medel and others in Ateneo-based social development offices, as Eleanor Dionisio has written in her essay.

These organizing and education efforts would soon bear fruit politically after the assassination of Ninoy Aquino in August 1983, as they would become the base and take-off point for the so-called “cause-oriented groups” who would fill the renewed “parliament of the streets” that would openly challenge and eventually bring down the Marcos dictatorship in 1986. Mendoza is therefore right in observing that while the shift to legal and aboveground work among PDSP cadres in the early 1980s may be interpreted as a “lying low” phase, it may also be seen as a critical transition phase that helped pave the way for the surge of political involvement in the post-Aquino assassination period.

In the case of Kasapi, the imprisonment of key leaders identified with the A6LM also left the organization with no choice but to shift to aboveground strategies. A key project was to participate actively in building a new open and legal political party, the Pilipino Democratic Party (PDP), which was launched in 1982. Even as the Marcos govern-



ment severely clamped down on social democratic and even liberal opposition groups that had resorted to armed struggle (e.g., the Light a Fire Movement) in the early 1980s, there had been increasing pressure both domestically and internationally particularly from the Carter administration in the United States since the late 1970s, for Marcos to liberalize politically. There were calls for the holding of elections and the upholding of human rights. Indeed the resort to armed struggle among groups that were hitherto seen as “moderate” could have alarmed the US State Department to pressure Marcos further to implement reforms. Thus the IBP elections in 1978, the formal lifting of martial law, and the holding of presidential elections in 1981 were part of this dynamic. Even if these shifts were generally seen by the opposition as token changes and hardly significant moves toward genuine democratization, there was still enough widening of the political space to allow for aboveground social and political organizing, including the formation of new opposition parties like the PDP that aimed to contest power through elections.

As Montiel has discussed in her essay, PDP presents an interesting case because it was both a political movement and an electoral party. Its agenda was not only to end the Marcos dictatorship but also to transform the character of Philippine politics along the lines that social democrats had been pushing even prior to martial law. PDP brought together various strains of Christian and social democratic-influenced politicians and groups: those with ties to the Christian Social Movement, particularly the Young Christian Socialists of the Philippines in Davao and Manila, the cooperative movement in Cagayan de Oro, and the Kasapi. It also brought in politicians from the Mindanao Alliance who already had electoral successes both prior to and during martial law (i.e., in the 1978 IBP elections). PDP combined the emphasis on structured ideological formation, grassroots organization, and collective decision-making characteristic of socio-political movements and at the same time the electoral experience and savvy of long-time politicians. Eventually the unique character of such a party, especially after the merger with the Metro Manila-based Laban, would create internal conflicts that would effectively split the party into Pimentel and Cojuangco factions. In the early 1980s, however, particularly after the assassination of Ninoy Aquino, PDP-Laban won seats in the Batasang Pambansa and expanded rapidly across the country. Prospects were bright for the party not only to challenge the Marcos dictatorship but also to participate strategically in transforming traditional Philippine electoral politics towards more progressive and even social democratic lines.

The democratic space created by the martyrdom of Ninoy Aquino and the political awakening and mobilization of the so-called “middle forces” presented a tremendous opportunity for aboveground social democrats to regroup and expand. They drew upon organizations among the basic sectors that they had formed throughout the 1970s–1980s and linked them with networks of newly organized “cause-oriented groups” in the renewed “parliament of the streets.” This period saw the rise of a new generation of activists, among the business and professionals sectors, Church and religious organizations and student/youth networks. Many individuals and groups who were shaped by the social formation and organizing programs in the mid-1970s to the early 1980s became politically engaged, together with an older generation of professionals and former student activists who came of age in the 1950s and late 1960s to the early 1970s. Thus the Filipino Social Democratic Movement (FSDM) was formed to consolidate social democrats from the Kasapi network (Kampilan or F2) and from the network of the PDSP, Lakasdiwa and independent social development/school/Church-based traditions (Tambuli or F1).

After the failure of the united front effort with the national democrats in the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan), the FSDM united with liberal democratic organizations such as the August Twenty One Movement (Atom), Manindigan and Aware, to form the Bansang Nagkaisa sa Diwa at Layunin (Bandila). Bandila also included members of the Alyansa para sa Kapayapaan at Katarungan (AKKAPKA) which was founded by Kasapi mentor Father Jose Blanco after the Aquino assassination. AKKAPKA became a key advocate and trainor in the philosophy and methods of active non-violence, influencing not just liberal and social democratic individuals and organizations but also grassroots organizations among the youth/students, peasants, labor, and the urban poor. By late 1985, Bandila had emerged and was recognized as a political pole in the anti-Marcos dictatorship movement that was clearly distinct from the traditional political opposition represented by the United Nationalist Democratic Organization (UNIDO) headed by former Senator Salvador Laurel on one hand, and of the national democratic umbrella Bayan which was linked with the underground CPP-NPA-NDF, on the other.

Thus during the time of the snap presidential elections and the EDSA people power uprising in 1986, various social democratic personalities and organizations were strategically positioned in the aboveground and non-violent anti-dictatorship movement which had now coalesced around the figure of Corazon “Cory” Aquino. Socdems had political

presence both in the electoral arena via PDP-Laban, and in the extra-parliamentary sphere through Bandila. At the same time, however, there was never an overarching and unified command structure and a clearly defined political project that would systematically link these efforts and maximize the strategic gains to advance social democracy, particularly in the context of a restored elite democratic order.

### **The Dilemmas of Social Democratic Politics in the Post-EDSA 1986 Period**

Filipino social democrats faced the dilemma of how to relate with the government of President Corazon Aquino and how to engage the formal political democracy that the new regime had inaugurated. On one hand, having participated fully in the anti-Marcos struggle and, more directly, in both the snap elections and the EDSA revolution, the socdems saw the downfall of the Marcos dictatorship and rise of the democratic Aquino government as a genuine popular victory. Moreover, the new context widened space for progressives to join the state bureaucracy or run for elective office, and at the same time continue organizing the basic sectors and forming alliances outside the state and electoral arena. Thus when the newly restored democratic system faced destabilization threats from both the right and left of the political spectrum, Filipino social democrats saw that they had a stake in defending both the Aquino government and post-EDSA democracy in general. A good number of socdems in fact had taken positions inside the government (both at the national and local levels). Activists identified with the social democratic movement like Chito Gascon and Ed Garcia were appointed by President Aquino to the Constitutional Commission of 1986–1987. Social democrats saw bright prospects for advancing key points of their sociopolitical agenda on agrarian and urban land reform, industrial democracy, national sovereignty, and people's participation by engaging the state and establishing close links with potential allies in the executive and legislative branches of government.

On the other hand, socdems were also aware that even as the new order had revolutionary origins and possibilities, what had occurred was very much an “unfinished revolution” from the standpoint of deepening democracy towards greater popular participation and social justice. Even as the “cause-oriented groups” and “street parliamentarians” were behind the Aquino candidacy and provided an organized component of “people power,” the traditional politicians and parties

became the dominant players of the post-Marcos democratic system. In many ways, the pre-martial law oligarchic electoral politics was restored after the first congressional elections under the 1987 constitution. It was critical then that alternative centers of democratic power outside the state had to be built and strengthened so that the struggle for democratization could be sustained and traditional Philippine politics transformed.

In the case of Kasapi, Montiel has pointed out how the new conjuncture resulted in “serious internal rifts, between those who wanted to work for social transformation within the new government, and those who remained outside government as development workers and nongovernment organization leaders.” Among the social democratic formations, it was Kasapi that had the most number of its members entering both the national and local government bureaucracies. This resulted from its active participation in the anti-dictatorship struggle through FSDM/Bandila, PDP-Laban and the underground A6LM. Opportunities arose to join government also because of key members who were appointed or elected to high government posts. For example, Jose “Joey” Lina was appointed chair of the Metro Manila Commission and later was elected senator. Brigido “Jun” Simon became mayor of Quezon City. Arturo “Ka Turing” Olegario, the leader of the Kapatiran ng Malayang Maliliit na Mangangisda ng Pilipinas (KAMMMPI), Kasapi’s fisherfolk organization, was appointed by President Aquino as sectoral representative of the fisherfolk in Congress. Montiel notes, however, that even as Kasapi members found themselves occupying key posts in various agencies, the organization as a whole was not able to coordinate their work and sustain their efforts into a strategic and transformative political project. One important lesson from this experience according to her is that “social democratic organizations need to support comrades who move within the state, whether within the national or local state.”

The experience of PDP-Laban is particularly illustrative of these dilemmas of social democratic political engagement, as the space for the party’s participation in electoral politics and sharing in state power expanded following the August 1983 murder of Ninoy Aquino, and especially after the triumph of Cory Aquino and people power in February 1986. As Montiel observes, the PDP-Laban merger in 1983 “simultaneously strengthened and weakened” the party. She quotes Pimentel himself as saying that it was a “shortcut to the PDP’s achieving national credentials as a political party” because while the traditional strength of PDP was in the

Visayas and Mindanao, Laban's base was in Metro Manila. Moreover, because of the 1978 IBP campaign, Cory Aquino herself identified with Laban. Thus the merged party had a direct line to her, but also through her brother, Jose "Peping" Cojuangco, who became a top official of the party. With Cory Aquino assuming the presidency of the Philippines after the EDSA revolution in 1986, PDP-Laban was thrust into the center of power with the potential to pursue key political and socioeconomic reforms in the new democracy. At the same time, it was also in a position to benefit from "transactional deals" and the "political spoils of victory" as Montiel also notes. No wonder there was a rush of new applicants wanting to jump into the PDP-Laban bandwagon—even erstwhile Marcos supporters or those who simply stood on the sidelines during the long and difficult anti-dictatorship struggle. Montiel adds that those eager to join and quickly expand the party included those offering to fund PDP-Laban's basic membership seminars (BMS) in the knowledge that political education was one of the requirements for membership. The BMS were indeed among the practices that made the party distinctly ideological and particularly social democratic in orientation. But of course it was the quality of "political education" that was at issue, and among the continuing tensions in the party were precisely those between politicians and trainers. Eventually as the party prioritized rapid expansion and pragmatic politics gained more foothold, the quality of recruits and their training suffered. Furthermore, the PDP-Laban constitution was amended to allow "more personalized rather than collective party authority." Provisions that stressed "consultative decision-making and territorial autonomies" were also deleted. PDP-Laban had increasingly lost its character as a social movement and had become a more traditional/transactional political party as its leaders rose to power. But to add insult to injury, in 1988, the new leadership under Peping Cojuangco moved for a merger between the pro-Aquino parties, PDP-Laban and Lakas ng Bansa to form the Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino (LDP), declaring the former as dissolved. Those in the Pimentel faction resisted this move and decided to regroup in order to revitalize the old PDP-Laban, but unfortunately minus many original party stalwarts who had already joined the Aquino government and were now aligned with the Cojuangco/Mitra faction in LDP. These developments in PDP-Laban were indeed a setback to efforts since the Marcos regime to build a social democratic party rooted in a social movement that could engage successfully in Philippine electoral politics.

In the case of PDSP, the party leadership that had returned from exile in Spain prioritized party consolidation in order to rebuild itself as an electoral party. A crucial question faced by the party was what to do with

Bandila which had become the primary multisectoral alliance of various social and liberal democratic groups since 1985. As Roy Mendoza has noted, PDSP tried to form its own "Social Democrats for Aquino" (SODA) in the run-up to the snap elections in 1986, but this effort did not really prosper with Bandila already having gained national projection and support among socdems both inside and outside PDSP. With the top leadership of PDSP in exile during the post-Aquino assassination period, Bandila had become the main vehicle of aboveground PDSP members together with independent social democrats who had *Lakasdiwa* or social development backgrounds in the so-called Tambuli formation (F1), and those from the Kasapi formation (F2). PDSP secretary general Mar Canonigo was elected to that same position in Bandila as social democrats gained prominence in the resurgent "open and legal" democratic mass movement in the mid-1980s culminating in the non-violent EDSA revolution. Because of his contribution to the anti-dictatorship struggle and his background as an urban poor leader in *Lakasdiwa* before martial law, Canonigo was appointed chair of the Presidential Commission on the Urban Poor (PCUP). Former *Lakasdiwa* and at that time Bandila activists Conrado "Dodi" Limcaoco and Noel Tolentino were also named to head the government-owned and controlled television stations PTV 4 and IBC 13, respectively. In the end, because a majority of Bandila's leadership assumed positions in the Aquino government or later ran for electoral office, the alliance that served as the main anti-dictatorship front for Filipino social democrats in 1985 to 1986 was not reconstituted and sustained for the continuing struggle for democratization in the post-Marcos period. Thus the question of disengagement from Bandila became moot even as some party cadres lamented that the alliance could have become a continuing vehicle to advance the social democratic ideology and program had the party decided to invest its efforts in the movement.

Nevertheless, as Mendoza writes, with PDSP permanently renouncing armed struggle and becoming a legal party, the party focused on the complementary tasks of electoral and militant mass struggle with its reconstituted leadership and organization oriented to these efforts. It was in the latter that PDSP found success by focusing on organizing among the peasantry, labor, urban poor, women, and youth/students with party-led organizations for each of these basic sectors. Its participation in national policy advocacy was also issue-based, e.g., centering on the demand of farmers for a comprehensive agrarian reform law, and the continuing push for the defense of the right of laborers to organize and to receive just wages and good working conditions. According to Mendoza,

PDSP “had the largest labor constituency among socdem groups until the mid 1990s” focusing on alliance-building among labor federations. PDSP however failed in the electoral arena as the party’s efforts and successes at building sectoral organizations did not translate into votes for party candidates (including PDSP chair Norberto “Bert” Gonzales) whether in congressional or local elections. The party suffered from a shortage of resources, lack of campaign experience and name-recall of its candidates, and the inability to match the networks and electoral base of opponents who were rooted in traditional political families and a patronage culture in their respective areas.

Pandayan was formally launched in the post-EDSA context even if its roots date back to the struggle against the Marcos dictatorship involving professionals and students in social development and basic sector sociopolitical education and organizing work. As Dionisio notes, its political strategy was shaped by the community organizing and social formation ethos of its founding generation and those who were the products of this tradition. Pandayan embraced the vision that socialism is the fullness of democracy. The challenge for democratic socialists in the context of the new Aquino government was how to promote democratization as the equalization of power in various spheres, given the largely unchanged oligarchic conditions of the Philippine political economy. Pandayan sought to build alternative centers of power based on independent people’s organizations with the objective of constructing both democracy and socialism from below. At the same time, the aim was to conquer and transform the state, creating “a form of representative democracy which is dynamically linked with organs of direct democracy in the workplace and the community” (Tolosa 1990). The crucial question, however, was how to formulate and implement a coordinated strategy that would dynamically link the building of people’s organizations and the extra-parliamentary struggle with the work in the formal structures of government towards a reshaping of the state and a democratic conquest of power. This was the challenge that Pandayan and social democrats in general had to face in a formally democratic but oligarchic context. Pandayan was able to establish itself as a legitimate and respected player in the extra-parliamentary arena, especially among left-wing and other progressive groups, in sectoral organizing, and united front/coalition-building work for issue-advocacy. In the electoral and governmental sphere, Pandayan also formed a parliamentary commission that was supposed to strategize and oversee its participation. But in her essay, Dionisio quotes Butch Abad as saying that he saw the organization’s



commitment to electoral involvement as being “formal in words but not in terms of resources and people.” Those who were immersed in this kind of political involvement like Abad and Chito Gascon saw Pandayan as more focused on sectoral work. They felt that they were not provided with much organizational and strategic support, even as their own forays into electoral party politics (via the Liberal Party) and involvements in the executive and legislative branches of government were shaped by their social democratic background and commitments.

The 1992 national elections provided social democrats a strategic opportunity to engage in electoral politics. This was the first synchronized elections under the 1987 democratic constitution with not only the presidency, vice-presidency but also congressional and local positions at stake. The elections split the social democrats and effectively ended earlier efforts to build a Demokratiko-Sosyalistang Koalisyon (DSK), uniting PDSP, Kasapi, and Pandayan in one umbrella in 1988. Kasapi and PDP-Laban activists had earlier regrouped after the Cojuangco faction formed LDP and prepared for a presidential run by PDP-Laban head Aquilino Pimentel. Pandayan followed the lead of its members in the parliamentary commission who were working inside the Liberal Party (particularly Butch Abad and Chito Gascon) in supporting Jovito Salonga for president. Pandayan also gave its whole-hearted organizational support to the senatorial bid of Abad after his resignation from the Department of Agrarian Reform. When Pimentel agreed to become the vice-presidential running mate of Salonga, Pandayan and Kasapi cadres came together in the Liberal Party-PDP-Laban electoral coalition. Other organizations on the left like BISIG, the Movement for Popular Democracy (MPD), and some national democrats who wanted to engage in electoral struggle joined this alliance which was named Kaakbay ng Sambayanan (Akbayan)—the precursor of today’s party list group Akbayan-Citizens’ Action Party. On the other hand, PDSP made a calculated decision to support the Ramos candidacy under the Lakas-NUCD-UMD banner and which was endorsed by President Cory Aquino herself. This move, as Roy Mendoza has noted, put the party in conflict not only with other social democratic and progressive groups but even with its own partner organizations, especially among the peasantry who at that time were all under the umbrella of the Congress for a People’s Agrarian Reform (CPAR). But the PDSP prevailed upon its federations to support Ramos and not Salonga. Moreover, the party would fail to come to a



consensus on support for the pro-peasant former Agrarian Reform Secretary Butch Abad's senatorial bid. These dynamics would provide the backdrop for the break-up of CPAR.

In the end, it was Ramos who won a narrow victory. The Salonga-Pimentel ticket, suffering from a serious lack of financial and organizational resources, lost badly in the elections, with Salonga getting fewer votes than Imelda Marcos. This experience was a wake-up call for social democrats and other progressives wanting to engage successfully in electoral politics. In the case of Pandayan, the defeat of the Salonga-Pimentel ticket and the failure of Abad's senatorial candidacy was a lost opportunity in terms of advancing the organization's electoral agenda. As Dionisio writes, "the organization was unable to cast the experience in a way that would allow the disappointed cadres to regroup, learn from their mistakes, assess and consolidate the gains made in recruitment and capacity-building, contextualize the involvement as part of a continuum of struggle, and move on to the next battle." While the experience pushed the organization to strategize its electoral involvement and come up with a six-point electoral program in 1993, Dionisio also notes that those who could have advanced this agenda were no longer active members of Pandayan by the mid-1990s. But while it is true that Pandayan by itself may not have produced a successful electoral project, it is arguable that it has participated in advancing social democratic electoral and state politics through other means. It was instrumental in the formation and development of Akbayan in the late 1990s and the emergence of former Pandayan chairperson Ana Theresia "Risa" Hontiveros-Baraquel as Akbayan party list representative and national political leader. The organization also claims as its own sociopolitical reformers in the Liberal Party like Butch Abad, Dina Razon-Abad, and Chito Gascon who were among Pandayan's founders.

While tactically having made the right call to support the winning candidate, according to Mendoza, PDSP's decision to side with Ramos apparently did not lead to clear gains for the party in terms of strategic government positions or influence in public policy under Ramos. PDSP was not considered a significant player and source of support within the Ramos coalition. Nor did this political decision facilitate the party's growth in electoral support, resources, and capability. There were costs generated by the party's electoral stand, however, in the form of conflicts and divisions within the social movement—among the basic sectors both within and outside the PDSP's sphere of influence and among other social democratic and progressive political organizations.

### **Building and Drawing upon Social Development Institutions**

Filipino social democrats have had limited success in the electoral and state arena. But one sphere of sociopolitical work wherein socdems have had significant presence and where they have distinguished themselves for their commitment and contributions has been in the formation of institutions that support basic sector organizing and sociopolitical advocacy for democracy, development, and social justice. In turn, these institutions have helped sustain the political involvement of social democrats. They have provided socdems political cover during repression, human and material resources for education, expansion and coalition building (including secretariat support), and social influence often larger than their actual numerical size, particularly among reformist and progressive groups.

From the 1950s to the 1990s, institutions like the Institute of Social Order, La Ignaciana Apostolic Center, Center for Community Services, Center for Social Policy and Public Affairs, Institute on Church and Social Issues, and Social Development Index have played a critical role in the formation and expansion of various basic sector organizations, political education, and coalition work in which social democratic groups have been involved. The ISO helped give birth to and sustain the FFW and FFF, the acknowledged precursors of Filipino social democracy, as it fostered awareness of poverty and injustice, called for committed response based on Catholic social teaching, and provided practical training and support for organizing, advocacy, and lobbying efforts. According to Mendoza and Montiel, the different desks of the La Ignaciana Apostolic Center facilitated the sectoral organizing, alliance-building, and secretariat functions of PDSP and Kasapi at various times, both during the dictatorship and under democracy, before and after martial law. Dionisio has identified both CCS and CSP as the critical “institutional foster parents” of Pandayan as they “nurtured the labor, peasant and student organizations and federations which became Pandayan’s partner POs” and were “the main sources of its cadres.” The political education programs of these institutions promoted the ideological, political, and organizational lines of Pandayan and facilitated its regional expansion. To forge alliances of organizations that shared the vision of authentic Christian humanism and a “faith that does justice” that underlay Filipino social democracy, Pandayan also drew upon the student social formation offices and outreach programs of the Jesuit social apostolate network, as well as Tagasan

and its student alliance, AKMA, which grew out of the Social Development Index. In the early 1980s, Index was also the home of a number of Kasapi and PDP-Laban cadres and thus provided a take-off point for both social development and political organizing work. The institutions would also be supportive of efforts at forming issue-based and multi-sectoral coalitions, as well as broader political alliances among socdems and other political tendencies, as Angelita Gregorio-Medel and Maria Josefa Petilla have discussed in their essay on coalition building.

The crucial importance of the social development institutions to the growth and deepening of the political work of the Filipino social democrats during the struggle against the Marcos dictatorship and the transition to democracy in the 1970s and 1980s, however, led to problems of sustainability in 1990s. This was true particularly of Pandayan, whose political and organizational work were closely linked with the objectives, programs, and personnel of the Ateneo de Manila's CCS and CSP, and the Jesuit social apostolate network. The priorities of the University changed and international funding agencies shifted their focus from politicized sectoral organizing, alliance building, and political education to community-based economic projects, development management, and effective services delivery from the mid-1990s. Moreover, as NGO work became more professionalized, Pandayan cadres within institutions called for greater respect for and delineation of the programs of the institutions separate from the political and organizational interests of Pandayan. This growing realization led to efforts to create more explicitly "Pandayan institutions" outside the formal Ateneo-Jesuit network to support political organizing and education work, but these fledgling institutions did not have the same legitimacy and capacity (in terms of financial and human resources) as the more established Jesuit institutions.

### **Confronting Neoliberal Globalization and Constructing a Democratic Developmental State**

The shift in the institutional priorities and strategies both among international funding agencies and within the Ateneo de Manila itself in the 1990s occurred amidst the end of the Cold War and the collapse of communism worldwide. This was also the period in Philippine history that saw the first constitutional transfer of power in 1992 to an elected president since 1966—a significant achievement in the restoration of democratic institutions in a country that had been ravaged by 14 years of

authoritarianism. For social democrats who have always believed that democracy is the means and the end of the struggle for socialism, the global trend toward democratization could have been interpreted as a signal victory for the principles and strategies of social democracy which has always opposed authoritarianism from both the right and left. The problem, however, is that what emerged triumphant during this period was not social democracy, but a hegemonic neoliberalism that was proclaiming “there is no alternative” (TINA) or the “end of history.”<sup>1</sup> It was not just the death of communism that it announced. The so-called Washington consensus also dismissed state-interventionist, reformist and socially inclusive forms of democratic capitalism as a “fundamentally flawed framework for economic growth, efficiency, and even the resolution of poverty and inequality” (see Tolosa 1994: 173).

Thus the rise of the Ramos government presented a unique challenge to social democrats and other progressives in the Philippines, amidst a global market-oriented consensus that anchored the prospects for growth on liberalized financial markets and the surge of portfolio capital investments. In 1993, the Philippine stock market became the top performer in the region and the third best in the world, and by 1996, the Ramos government was already proclaiming the country’s burgeoning “NIChood.”<sup>2</sup>

The development discourse emanating from the Philippine government in the late 1980s and early 1990s reflected the tensions in economic development and governance during that period. Both the post-Marcos Aquino and Ramos governments subscribed to the economic liberalization, deregulation, and privatization policies consistent with the Washington consensus as the framework for politically democratic economic development. At the same time, the language of “East Asian NIChood” and “catching up with our neighbors” was an undeniable and central part of the background discourse. Thus together with the neoliberal rhetoric of liberalization, deregulation and export-promotion, the Ramos government’s “Philippines 2000” vision, for example, also stressed the government’s “promotional and developmental role” in political-economic transformation (see Ramos 1993). Moreover, emerging out of both authoritarianism under Marcos and elite democratic restoration under Aquino, the Ramos-era discourse also singled out “cartels, monopolies, and oligarchic power” as historical impediments to Philippine development. The Ramos government’s vision was a curious mix of political-economic neoliberalism with anti-elitist and statist themes. At that time, I pointed out to social democratic and progressive groups that “unlike the Aquino government whose main concern

(and achievement) was the dispersal of power to various branches of government and competing sectors of society through the restoration of pre-1972 institutions, it seems the Ramos government recognizes the importance of the state wielding power to forge a consensual, collaborationist, and indeed corporatist, path to development” (Tolosa 1993: 10; see also Hutchcroft 1998). Moreover, the concept of “people empowerment” found in the government’s development plan, while couched mainly in liberal terms, understood the “private sector” to mean not just business firms, but also communities, households, cooperatives and NGOs/POs.

Thus in the 1990s, the challenge for progressives was how to engage the Ramos government which while palpably subscribing to the globally hegemonic neoliberalism, also provided bases for political and ideological dialogue and even collaboration, because of the distinctive developmentalist and even populist aspects of its vision. At that time, one take-off point for a possible programmatic dialogue and engagement with the Ramos government was a document titled *People’s Agenda for Development and Democracy* (PADD) which was prepared in time for the 1992 elections. It was spearheaded and published by the Ateneo Center for Social Policy and Public Affairs (ACSPPA or CSP) which was a key institutional base of Pandayan cadres during that period. PADD may be seen as a culminating statement of the efforts among the Ateneo’s social development units and their partner NGOs/POs to participate in and shape the direction of the struggle against the Marcos dictatorship and the ensuing democratic transition from the 1970s to the early 1990s. As the document emphasized, PADD was “the product of the thinking of an entire community: the community of people’s organizations (POs) and nongovernment organizations (NGOs) in the Philippines working for a more equitable, peaceful and humane society.” It brought together “the recommendations of years of consultation among such POs and NGOs on issues ranging from peace and human rights to the rights of indigenous peoples” and had as its objective “to process these recommendations into programs and projects that can be implemented and realized within a specified period.” Among the elements of the vision as outlined in the document were: social justice and equity, scientific and technological advancement, people’s participation and empowerment, democratic and effective governance, national sovereignty and international solidarity, peace based on justice and a liberating culture (ACSPPA 1992). These were, in fact, also among the key components and themes of the Filipino social democratic minimum program.

The Ramos government did convene a number of “people’s economic development,” “social reform” and “peace and unification” summits that included representatives and inputs from social democratic-influenced NGOs/POs or what at that time were beginning to be called civil society organizations (CSOs). At the forefront of the CSO side was Teresita “Ging” Quintos-Deles who chaired the National Peace Conference. These summits led to the formulation of a “Social Reform Agenda” (SRA) which became the social/sectoral counterpoint to the Ramos government’s economic growth strategy outlined in “Philippines 2000.”

Confronting neoliberalism, however, means going beyond the well-developed sectoral programs/social development agenda that have been the result of many years of social immersion/organization and sectoral “mass work”—a hallmark of Filipino social democracy. It entails the formulation of a coherent national political-economic development program that could be presented clearly as a social democratic alternative to neoliberal globalization. Using such a platform, social democratic politicians and parties/coalitions can run for office and govern their societies.<sup>3</sup> In Latin America, this is what some of the elected left-wing/progressive governments have been trying to achieve recently in the context of globalization (see Sandbrook, Edelman, Heller and Teichman 2007; see also Cardoso 2009; Evans 2009).

Effective engagement with the state and its institutions also requires sophisticated and systematic political organization and intervention. It calls for social democratic activists engaged in grassroots organizing, social development, and sectoral advocacy work to enter the arena of electoral and bureaucratic politics. The problem, however, is that political education, recruitment, and expansion were increasingly more difficult to undertake by the 1990s. Institutional and funding priorities had changed, and young people became less attracted to political-ideological involvements. As both the external and internal environment began to emphasize global competitiveness, development management and effective delivery of services, it became less conducive for political organizing work. Nevertheless, Filipino social democrats did recognize the importance of seriously strategizing and organizing for electoral, governmental and party politics at that time, particularly after the failure of the Salonga-Pimentel campaign. Because the Demokratiko-Sosyalistang Koalisyon (DSK) did not take off as the unified political vehicle of social democrats, multiple avenues for engagement with electoral politics and state institutions were explored by the different social democratic groups. These initiatives

included the continuation of party-building and electoral work in the LP, PDP-Laban and PDSP, and the discussions that led to the formation of Akbayan involving Pandayan and Kasapi cadres later in the decade.

This is the historical background for the present context in which a key challenge is to develop a coherent social democratic political-economic program and a strategy that links social development, governance and political work amidst the global crisis of neoliberalism. Moreover, there is a need to renew political education, organization, and engagement in the face of a continuing call for democratization.

### **Forming a Successor Generation and a Filipino Social Democracy for the Present**

Although the global context for a renewed interest in social democracy is the crisis of neoliberalism and the search for political economic alternatives, the impetus for and purpose of this project on the history of Filipino social democracy has been more limited and local. It stems more directly from the experience of the last five to ten years in which the task of defending and deepening democracy—a central tenet of social democracy—has become particularly stark and urgent. And yet, part of the recent experience has been the difficulty of getting people, especially young people who have no experience of martial law, politically organized and engaged in a project of democratization. Because what they often experience are the obvious flaws of an imperfect democracy which they often feel powerless to change, many young people tune out of and disengage from the world of politics.

Is there something valuable to be learned from the history of social and political commitment and involvement among Filipino social democrats? Can the stories from the past be shared in a way that can help inform the challenge of political education and organizing even at present? In 2008, when the seeds for a book on Filipino social democratic history first germinated, it was in the context of a meeting or reunion among representatives from different social democratic traditions: Social Democratic Caucus-PDSP, Kasapi-PDP-Laban, Pandayan, and independents who are not affiliated with the three core formations. At one level, there was an urgent need for collective story-telling in order to document various oral histories that may get lost as older generations pass on. At the same time, it was felt that if Filipino social democrats are to contribute to the current struggle for democratization and help nurture a successor generation, a crucial task was to be able to contribute its own story to the discourse on



the struggle for political democracy and social justice in the Philippines and its place in it. By producing a memoir of sorts as reflections on a shared history, it may be possible to start a continuing process of identification, renewal, and reorganization that may hopefully include a new generation for whom these stories may have resonance.

The national elections of 2010 and the participation of many young people in both government and non-government organizations today show that the Filipino youth can be engaged in a project to transform national politics and governance. How do we sustain this interest and involvement so that the youth imbued with a commitment to democratization will take on leadership roles in political parties, government agencies, and non-government political organizations? How can they participate in mechanisms of agenda-development, political selection and recruitment, constituency-building and party/coalition-formation? Can Filipino social democracy provide a pole for political education and organizing so that values can be shaped and venues can be created for participation in politics and governance that promote the fullness of democratization?

For all the limitations and weaknesses of Filipino social democratic politics through the years, and despite many efforts at political organizing, alliance-building and consolidation that have not survived, there are exemplars of the commitment to democracy and socialism in various fields that endure. Thus the story of Filipino social democracy is a living one—embodied in the people and institutions that have been formed by its social vision and political practice, and by all those who will be willing to learn from this experience and take up the challenge to continue the struggle.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> These catchphrases are associated with former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and Francis Fukuyama (1992), respectively.

<sup>2</sup> “NICs” stands for newly industrializing countries, a term first associated with the East Asian economies like South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore that experienced rapid economic growth in the 1970s–80s. It has also come to include the emerging economies in Southeast Asia like Malaysia and Thailand, and sometimes also encompasses Latin American countries like Brazil and Argentina. The Philippines was considered the economic laggard or “sick man of Asia” in the 1980s and was notably excluded in the World Bank’s study on the *East Asian Miracle* (1993). That is why the Ramos government’s economic vision was for the Philippines to join the ranks of the “Asian tigers” or at least to become a “tiger cub.”

<sup>3</sup> I owe this point to the comments made by Dr. Anna Marie Karaos on a draft of this essay.



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