KASARINLAN

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FROM THE THIRD WORLD STUDIES DESK

This is the maiden issue of KASARINLAN, the quarterly journal of the Third World Studies Center. This new journal is meant to take the place of the mimeographed individual papers through which the Center, for the last eight years, has sought to introduce a Third Worldist approach to the manifold local, national and global problems facing humankind. This approach is characterized by the perception that the root causes of Third World poverty and oppression are to be found in the persistence of imperialist domination and of client authoritarian states. The vision that animates it is the quest for authentic national liberation, and popular democracy, people-oriented development, and world peace.

The primary objectives of KASARINLAN are:

*to promote new paradigms for grappling with Third World realities;

*to contribute to the formulation and clarification of alternative modes in the political, economic, and cultural spheres;

*and to explore various ways of enriching and strengthening popular initiatives towards the desirable formation of society. *KASARINLAN* is the Filipino word for autonomy. Webster's Third New International Dictionary lists at least three important meanings of the term which resonate fundamental Third World aspirations: "1. the quality of being independent, free and self-directing; 2. the degree of self-determination or political control possessed by a minority group, territorial division, or political unit in its relations to the state or political community of which it forms a part and extending from local self-government to full independence; and 3. the sovereignty of reason in the sphere of morals or possession of moral freedom or self-determination."

Why KASARINLAN then? Why autonomy? Because this single word epitomizes the historic quest of all Third World peoples — of nations in search of nationhood, of ex-colonies seeking to complete the process of de-colonization, a quest that has been intercepted at almost every point by modern imperialism. The term also affirms the right to life and to self-directed growth, not only of individuals but also of entire nations and communities who must often exist in an environment characterized not simply by diversity, but by the hegemony of one group over others. And lastly, the word underscores the primacy of reason, a lesson that needs to be constantly reiterated because the process of history-making and history-writing in which we are engaged is so often fettered by the easy recourse to dogma, whether moral, intellectual or political.

KASARINLAN is being launched with the awareness that many journals often disappear after the first issue. This is especially true in the Third World where it is most tempting to allocate scarce funds to activities more overtly political than putting out a journal. Yet KASARINLAN is being launched also with the thought that much publishing and theorizing about the Third World is taking place in First World capitals. Must the First World also now speak for us? Don't we have our own voices, must we not create our own spaces for articulating even just our own confusion?

KASARINLAN represents a deep yearning to participate autonomously in the global debate. This is its most important rationale.

> Randolf S. David Editor