

PART FIVE: The Alliance of Progressive Labor (APL)

1. What is the Alliance of Progressive Labor (APL)?

The Alliance of Progressive Labor (APL) is a “national labor center”. Consistent with its belief in social movement unionism, APL has built itself as a “multi-form center”, drawing into its fold various forms of labor organizations and not just trade unions. In the future, APL sees itself as a singular union structure consolidated along industry and geographical lines.

APL was formally organized on November 1996 through a National Founding Congress.

2. What is APL’s vision, mission, roles and functions?

a) **APL vision:**

APL envisions a just, self-managing peaceful society where:

- the working people is empowered;
- democratic principles and practices are upheld in the economic, political, and cultural spheres of life;
- gender equality is recognized; and

- the equitable distribution of the fruits of sustainable development is guaranteed.

b) APL mission:

APL's mission is to consolidate various forms of organizations of the Filipino working people along industry, sectoral and geographical lines toward collective actions that contribute to the transformation of social and property relations.

c) APL roles and functions

As a national labor center, APL primarily functions as a representative of its existing and potential affiliates in negotiating and advocating for their rights as workers and unions, at the national and international level. It performs at least four important functions for its affiliates:

- Campaign Center - APL launches campaigns and advocacies in line with its organizational and political agenda;
- Representation - APL represents its affiliates in various forums and in negotiations particularly where national laws and policies are concerned; this representation extends to the international arena
- Unifying Structure - APL implements activities that further unify its members so that they gain better bargaining leverage at all levels; APL also represents its members in unification efforts of the broad national labor movement

APL assists its affiliates by performing functions that they can no longer fulfill because of various tasks at the enterprise, community or federation level. It also extends services to its members particularly in the area of organizational capability-building. Recruitment of new affiliates is another continuing task performed by the APL.

3. How can APL advance the workers' struggle?

APL intends to advance the workers' struggle in all arenas of struggle:

a) **Strengthening APL's mass movement character**

□ The Merger Agenda

To help reverse the fragmentation of the labor movement and to increase the effectiveness of unions, the APL encourages the merger of its affiliates. Such merger is intended to enhance the unions' bargaining power and shall be done along industrial (vertical) and territorial (horizontal) lines:

(i) **Vertical Organizing** - One way to circumvent the limits of the current labor relations system is to build industry line formations such as national unions or industry alliances. These formations shall articulate issues and concerns pertinent to their respective industries and work for specific industry policies. These would be the ideal vehicle for pushing industry-wide bargaining mechanisms. Hopefully, such merger would also encourage the re-organization of the entire labor movement along industry lines, thereby reducing, if not totally eliminating the current practice of union raiding at the plant-level.

Initially, APL aims to build these formations in industries where it has a "competitive edge"; i.e. where it has a substantial number of member unions and where it has a solid grasp of industry dynamics.

(ii) **Horizontal Organizing** - Another way to address the problems brought by new patterns in economic and labor

relations is to build territorial alliances. All APL member organizations in a particular territory or geographical area shall be encouraged to form alliances for better coordination and consolidated political action. Territorial alliances also serve as the best mechanism for unions to participate in electoral exercises which are conducted based on political territorial units.

□ Broad unification efforts

APL shall participate in efforts to unify the broad labor movement. The APL believes that a unified labor movement is a necessary tool in combating the effects of neo-liberal globalization. APL shall work with other unions in creating a democratic, progressive and pluralist pole within a broad labor movement.

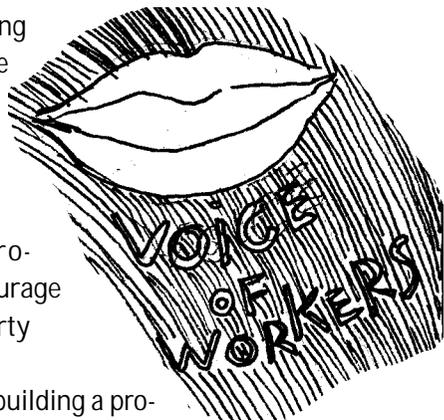
b) Building the Labor Vote

□ Increase political consciousness of its mass members regarding the electoral arena

APL shall launch education activities that promote understanding regarding the need for unions to engage in the electoral arena. It is important for unions to unify during elections and work for the election of pro-labor candidates into public office.

□ Help build a progressive party and encourage members to join the party

APL shall assist in building a pro-



gressive party that will field and support candidates based on a progressive reform agenda that includes labor rights. Members shall be encouraged to participate in such partybuilding work and help make its campaigns successful. APL shall also ensure that such party remains true to the aspirations of the working people.

- Work for electoral reforms

APL shall work for clean, honest and fair elections by advocating reforms in electoral laws.

- Develop skills of members in electoral campaigns

APL members must be equipped with the necessary knowledge, skills and orientation needed to conduct and manage electoral campaigns.

c) Engaging in the Development Arena

In the development arena, the APL shall strengthen its involvement in building workers' cooperatives. This shall include all kinds possible: credit, housing, transport, even production cooperatives. APL shall also help in making cooperatives democratic and efficient.

Workers' cooperatives are the training ground for future managers of a worker-controlled and managed enterprises. APL shall train workers for this future task.

APL shall also seek the assistance of and work with labor-related NGOs to build the capacities of the Center and its members.

d) Participating in the Global Struggle of Workers

APL shall think and act global, not just local or national. This kind of perspective is necessary because neo-liberal globalization has to be challenged at a global level.

The objective of APL's international work is to help build resistance to neo-liberal globalization and shape an alternative global agenda. This primarily involves solidarity work with labor groups from all over the world and joining progressive and like-minded networks.

APL's international agenda includes the strengthening of the global labor movement; the creation of international guarantees for human rights including workers' and trade unions' rights; reform and strengthening of the United Nations and UN bodies such as the International Labor Organization (ILO); participation in networks that promote ecological balance and protection, democratization of global trade and finance, democratic governance over corporate activities and sustainable development.

4. What programs does APL provide workers and unions?

a) organizational formation and development

APL conducts organizing activities intended to expand the center's membership and consolidate and further unify its member-affiliates.

b) unification efforts

Consistent with its merger agenda, APL holds activities that bring member-unions closer along industry or territorial lines. APL also joins meetings and conferences intended

to unify the broad labor movement both on tactical and strategic issues.

c) political and legislative actions

APL launches campaign activities — mass mobilization, press conferences — that promote its advocacies. These campaigns are extended to the legislative arena through the lobbying of progressive labor bills. APL also participates in negotiations with the national government and its various agencies.

This area of work also involves the development of APL's electoral program.

d) assistance in negotiations

The form of assistance APL extends to its affiliates in the area of collective negotiation involves information sharing and capacity building. The work of collective bargaining, however, is seen as the task of unions and federations and the APL only assists in these efforts. APL, however, takes a more active role in negotiations that are conducted at the national level, particularly negotiations with the national government.

e) legal and para-legal work

The APL assists its members develop para-legals who in turn help unions in solving legal union matters.

f) education work

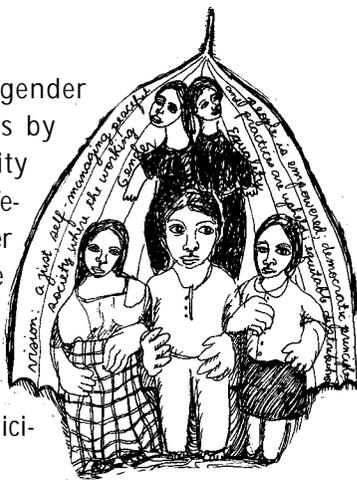
The APL conducts both political education and skills training for its members. For such education work, the APL seeks the help of labor-related education NGOs.

g) economic development projects

This involves the development of cooperatives and other similar self-liquidating economic services.

h) gender program

The APL promotes gender equality among its ranks by launching gender sensitivity seminars for both male and female members. The gender program also involves the creation of women's committees at the federation and the national level meant to ensure active women's participation in union activities.



i) environmental program

The APL advocates for environment-friendly policies and programs. It is also concerned with developing and advocating for occupational safety and health measures for workers.

j) multi-sectoral and international solidarity

The APL participates in strategic as well as issue-based multi-sectoral coalitions, developing linkages with various international trade secretariats and other labor unions or NGOs from both developed and developing countries.

k) administrative maintenance

The APL maintains the center by ensuring that all members are fully informed about day-to-day operations as well

as major activities and decisions.

5. How does APL make and implement decisions?

In keeping with its principle of democracy, the APL operates through a democratic structure composed of the following:

a) **National Congress**

The National Congress is APL's highest decision making body and is convened once every two years. It is composed of voting delegates from affiliates, members of the Executive Committee, the Deputy Secretary General and the Department Secretaries of the General Secretariat.

All APL affiliates are entitled to one(1) voting delegate for every two hundred (200) hundred dues-paying members.

The APL Congress has the sole authority to amend its constitution and bylaws and elect national officers. The Congress also sets the direction and priority programs of the APL.

b) **Council of Leaders (COL)**

The Council of Leaders is APL's second highest decision making body and is convened at least once every six months to decide on important policy issues. The COL is composed of one(1) representative from each territorial chapter, one (1) additional representative for every ten thousand (10,000) dues-paying members of said territorial chapter, and, members of the Executive Committee.

c) Executive Committee (Execom)

The Execom consists of elected leaders tasked to implement Congress and COL decisions. It is composed of nine (9) members: the Chairperson, 1st Vice-Chairperson for Internal Affairs, 2nd Vice-Chairperson for External Affairs, Secretary-General, Treasurer and four (4) Executive Directors at least one of whom shall be a woman. All Execom members are elected by the Congress for a term of five (5) years.

d) Commissions

Commissions perform supervisory and policy-formulation tasks on specific concerns. At least three commission have been created: Audit, Election, and Internal Affairs.

e) General Secretariat

The General Secretariat is in charge of administering day-to-day affairs of the APL. It is headed by the Deputy Secretary General and is under the direct supervision of the Execom.

f) Territorial Chapters

These structures are designed to ensure that APL's agenda for horizontal mergers is implemented.

g) Trade, Sectoral and Cooperative Groups

These structures are meant to unify APL affiliates along industry or sectoral lines.

