

reportedly formed the nucleus of the MNLF. Shortly after the declaration of the Martial Law in 1972, the Muslim movement took an armed revolutionary approach to the struggle.

The MNLF was identified as a response to the "Coregidor (*sic*) massacre, land grabbing and the disappointment of the masses with the government's failure to solve social, political and most of all, economic problems."⁵⁰ Accordingly, the rise of separatist movements involving Muslim minorities was a response to the dominance of the non-Muslim majority who had become a hindrance to the changing of the "distorted social order".⁵¹ The maintenance of an Islamic social order [at all times] must be observed by every Muslim, and defended when necessary.

Islam was the common factor that bound the then MNLF membership, but its members were from a mixed background: "disgruntled politicians; ambitious people who used the movement to launch their careers; displaced farmers; the victims of arms and police abuses; religious leaders who would like to construct an Islamic theocratic state; idealistic intellectuals/students moved by a social duty; adventurous young students who would like to test their fighting process; and others who joined because of friends and relatives in the movement."⁵²

The three groups that constituted the then MNLF (*i.e.*, Nur Misuari's Tausog/Samal group; Bangsa Moro Liberation Front (BMLF) representative Rashid Lucman who is a Maranao and Hashim Salamat's Maguindanao group) also had varying interpretations of autonomy. In the 1970s, the MNLF initially stressed the primary goal of "secession under the supervision of Libya and the Islamic countries" but later opted for autonomy in Southern Philippines.⁵³ This discrepancy was attributed to the MNLF members' ethnic differences, personal idiosyncracies, and quests for power and leadership.

The MNLF's initial demand for an independent Bangsa Moro Republic was composed of

⁵⁰ Nagasura Madale, "The future of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) as a separatist movement in Southern Mindanao) p. 177 citing Alfredo Tiamson and Rosalinda Caneda (eds.) *The Southern Philippine Issue: Readings with the Mindanao Problem*. Proceedings of the 18th Annual Seminar on Mindanao - Sulu Cultures, 16-18 November 1979 (Marawi City: Mindanao State University).

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 177.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 178 citing Jalahuddin delos Santos, "Liberation and Separatist Movements and their Impact on Political Interpretation and National Development," *Philippine Political Service Journal* 1 (7) (1978): 6-14.

⁵³ *Ibid.*