

Filipino Communism and the Spectre of the Communist Manifesto

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The *Communist Manifesto* and communism in the Philippines are like father and son who have grown apart. The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) declares itself a progeny of Marx and Engels and a faithful of proletarian internationalism but has since the 1970s dedicated itself to a less than global cause under a Maoist influence. While the CPP did adapt itself to local conditions, it was less prepared to handle the changing political economy as well as the alteration of the Filipino class structure. Unable to adjust to the changes under the Marcos administration and the emergence of migrant labor as the new Filipino proletariat, the CPP has become a national party committed to winning a national revolution while giving perfunctory attention to global processes and only ceremonially acknowledging its obligations to proletarian internationalism. More than a century and a half in existence, the *Manifesto* serves as a reminder for communists in general that capital is still very much the dominant force as perceived by Marx and Engels. The struggle against the dominant social formation will even be more difficult now that people and societies are driven to fight for other constructed and invented identities such as race, ethnicity and religion.

Introduction

A glance at the writings by cadres of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) – entrenched and ousted – will reveal an interesting anomaly: only one of them cited Karl Marx's and Frederick Engel's monumental *The Communist Manifesto* as ideological inspiration for figuring out the dialectics of the Philippine revolution. Jose Ma. Sison's *Philippine Society and Revolution* (PSR) does not mention the *Manifesto*, subsuming its two authors – and Lenin – under the “universal” (and eternal?) thought of Mao Tse Tung.¹ Sison's quasi-hagiography *The Philippine Revolution: The Leader's View* cites the *Manifesto*, but clearly regards it as less important than the writings of Mao.² A similar omission is discernible in Jose Eliseo Rocamora's book. The expelled leader of the National Democratic Front's (NDF) international committee preferred a short-sighted assessment of the CPP's contemporary mistakes instead of positing an in-depth ideological evaluation of the revolution.³ This elision is by no means limited to the two Joses. Collections like the remarkable *Red Book*, the journals “Praktika” and “Philippine Left Review,” and the internal assessments of regional committees were

equally oblivious of the pamphlet.⁴ *Ang Bayan* has been known to invoke the *Manifesto* as the original stimulus of all proletarian revolutions, the Philippines included. But its declarations were customary announcements that were generally followed by a deafening silence about how some of the *Manifesto*'s main arguments could help advance the revolution.

Assessing the *Manifesto*'s impact on Filipino communism is thus problematic, for as the above works suggest, the pamphlet's significance lies in its limited value to the revolution. Why then devote time searching for its relevance to Filipino communism? Yet, it is precisely this indifference that makes the CPP's lack of direct affinity to the *Manifesto* an interesting case. I would argue that a link exists, but it is a conflictual one. While the CPP declares itself a progeny of Marx and Engels, and swears fealty to proletarian internationalism, it has, since the 1970s, really been a party committed to smashing a "reactionary capitalist" state and destroying a "semi-colonial and semi-feudal" economy within a national framework. Plainly put, the CPP is a national party committed to winning a national revolution while giving perfunctory attention to global processes and acknowledging its obligations to proletarian internationalism only ceremonially.

While this national strategy arose out of the demands of the times, it also developed within the CPP a temperament that refuses to acknowledge what the *Manifesto* underscored in its message to communists all over: that capitalism transcended nations and nationalisms, and to battle this system, the proletariat and its communist allies (not vanguards) must develop an equally powerful international movement.⁵ Marx and Engels may have insisted that the "proletariat of each country must, of course, first of all settle matters with its own bourgeoisie" and that it must also "rise to be the leading class of the nation [and] must also constitute itself as the nation." But they also cautioned that as the struggle between bourgeoisie and proletariat intensified, "national differences and antagonisms" will increasingly vanish.⁶ Therefore what we seem to have here is an enigma of a party of the proletariat tracing its lineage to the *Manifesto*, but seeking to win its revolution on grounds that may be antithetical to the prescriptions of the tract's authors.

This essay examines how this relationship played out in the concrete, suggesting that the more the CPP adapted itself to local conditions, the less it was prepared to handle larger "objective processes" that resonated

with some of the *Manifesto's* arguments. I refer here to changes in the Philippine political economy under Marcos that showed, among other things, an accelerated expansion of capitalism, the transformation of both Filipino and foreign capital, and the consequent internationalization of a dynamic segment of the Filipino working class. As long as martial law polarized Philippine politics and kept options for the opposition simplified, the political ramifications these contradictions engendered could be set aside for future considerations. But the development of these objective conditions also would not wait for radical politics to play itself out. Capitalism continued to expand and alter the political-economic terrain that the CPP operated on. Eventually, the CPP's politics would – to paraphrase Marx and Engels – become a fetter to this changed landscape. When the party had its organizational crisis in the 1980s, its problems were not only due to tactical mistakes or the failure of the political line (depending on which faction was doing the explaining). Its predicament was also the outcome of a failure to give appropriate attention to changes brought about by these objective processes.

This essay is divided into three sections. The first examines how the *Manifesto* remains relevant today as a document describing the expansion of capitalism as a mode of production. It likewise notes contemporary problems, particularly in the political sphere, that the *Manifesto* was quiet about or had failed to anticipate. The next section returns to some of the ideological and political problems that the CPP encountered but had to set aside because of what one may term immediate tactical considerations. It suggests that these problems had strategic consequences which the Party failed to recognize. Its decline after 1986, therefore, was as much the result of a “tactical blunder” as it was the outcome of a failure to confront these issues within certain parameters suggested by the *Manifesto*. The final section is a brief reflection on the emergence of a new section of the Filipino proletariat – migrant labor. It makes that suggestion that perhaps in this small but extremely vital segment of the proletariat Filipino communist could find a connection back to the internationalism that the *Manifesto* constantly reminded everyone about.

The *Manifesto* in the 20th Century: The Contradictions of Capitalist Expansion and World Political Struggles

In his introduction to the *Manifesto's* 1998 edition, the radical historian Eric Hobsbawm notes how much of the tract's arguments have

become irrelevant to the present. He insists, however, that despite its age the pamphlet's statement about capitalist development remains valid.

Two things give the *Manifesto* its force. The first is its vision, even at the outset of the triumphal march of capitalism, that this mode of production was not permanent, stable, "the end of history," but a temporary phase in the history of humanity – one due, like its predecessors, to be superseded by another kind of society....The second is its recognition of the necessary long-term historical tendencies of capitalist development. The revolutionary potential of the capitalist economy was already evident – Marx and Engels did not claim to be the only ones to recognize it. Since the French Revolution some of the tendencies they observed were plainly having substantial effect – for instance, the decline of independent, or but loosely connected provinces, of separate interests, governments and systems of 'taxation' before nation-states, 'with one government, one code of laws, one national capitalist class interest, one frontier and one custom tariff...Marx and Engels did not describe the world as it had already been transformed by capitalism in 1848; they predicted how it was logically destined to be transformed by it.⁷

The *Manifesto* anticipated a global transformation that would unify territories, alter communities and put them under the power of capital. The leftist philosopher Marshall Berman added that the one "feature of modern capitalism that Marx most admires is its global horizon and its cosmopolitan texture. Many people today talk about the global economy as if it had only recently come into being. The *Manifesto* should help us see the extent to which it has been there all along."⁸

Marx's and Engels's "admiration" towards the revolutionary capacity of capitalism was also tempered by their recognition of the alienating world that the bourgeoisie spawned particularly among the lower classes. While in another work Hobsbawm observes how the proletariat has become variegated as capital expands globally, this segmentation of the proletariat did not invalidate two important historic givens.⁹ First, that class antagonisms between bourgeois and proletariat remain a principal contradiction, and second, that proletarian immiserization and bourgeois enrichment, continue on a global scale. The growing gap between the world's rich and poor underscore the polarization that the *Manifesto* foresaw. Again Berman:

Marx's vision of what modern bourgeois society forces people to be: They have to freeze their feelings for each other to adapt to a cold-blooded world. In the course of 'pitilessly tear[ing] asunder the motley feudal ties,' bourgeois society 'has left remaining no other nexus between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous 'cash payment.' It has 'drowned' every form of sentimental value 'in the icy water of egotistical calculation.' It has 'resolved personal worth in exchange-value.' It has collapsed every historical tradition and norm of freedom 'into that single unconscionable freedom - free trade.' The worst thing about capitalism is that it forces people to become brutal in order to survive.¹⁰

Human alienation became one of the impetus behind trade union organizing and the formation of radical working class parties. Marx and Engels were cognizant of these organizations from below that challenged capitalism and the bourgeoisie, but they also saw the necessity of a "line of march" that distinguished communists from their radical rivals and the proletariat from the other classes. The *Manifesto* was quite explicit on this.

1. In the national struggles of the proletariat of the different countries, [communists] point out and bring to the front the common interests of the entire proletariat, independent of all nationality.
2. In the various states of development which the struggle of the working class against the bourgeoisie has to pass through, [communists] always and everywhere represent the interests of the movement as a whole.¹¹

While Marx and Engels also asserted that "Communists everywhere [must] support every revolutionary struggle against the existing social and political order of things," they also added that communists must "bring to the front, as the leading question in each, the property question, no matter what its degree of development at that time."¹² In short, communists can fight for certain "immediate aims" – free speech, representation to parliament, democracy, etc. – but at all time they must also push forward the class question.

As we all very well know, communism after the First International never conformed to many of these prescriptions. Communists had only

limited success in establishing ideological hegemony over their radical rivals; in fact, after the two World Wars, in countries outside of the direct influence of the Soviet Union, and where radical parties were active, social democrats constantly upstaged communists.¹³ Moreover, efforts to forge a united international proletariat fell prey to national, religious and ethnic interests – identities that were supposed to be ancillary to class.¹⁴ Communists, beginning with the Second International, were faced with the problem of balancing their ascribed roles as internationalist revolutionaries and radicals belonging to specific nation-states. World War I and the outbreak of anti-imperialist resistance in the colonial world only exacerbated this tension. The Bolshevik revolution surprised many Marxists because the socialist revolution was supposed to break out in the most advanced of capitalist societies and spread like wildfire throughout the rest of the capitalist world. The failure of the rest of Europe to follow the October Revolution led to the un-communist “socialism in one country” and the establishment of a USSR which was not a center of world revolution, but just another nation-state with its own national interests. By the Stalinist era, internationalism had become *pro forma*.¹⁵

In the meantime, the anti-colonial struggle turned out to be more complicated than what Marx and Engels foresaw. Instead of finding mirror images of capitalist Europe in the colonial world, as the *Manifesto* predicted, Third World communists were faced with complex and contradictory political economies in their respective societies. Proletarianization occurred in these predominantly rural societies because of colonial exploitation, but “feudal” features and the peasantry also did not disappear. Capitalism may have modernized and marginalized communities as the *Manifesto* expected, but it had likewise rendered many backward and underdeveloped. Majority of rural folks were unable to escape the “idiocy of rural life,” a phenomenon which Marx and Engels said would not happen once capitalism spreads to the countryside.¹⁶ In the colonies nationalism also proved to be more effective in popular mobilization than the *Manifesto*. Nationalism even allowed segments of the colonial bourgeoisie to become progressives. Communists would find out that to play an effective role in anti-colonial struggles they also have to become nationalists and reach some strategic accommodation with their national bourgeoisies. And often with profoundly disturbing results. For it did not take long before nationalist credentials superseded internationalist and proletarian attestations.¹⁷ China, Cuba and Vietnam – the three successful communist-led or -participated revolutions after

1917 – turned out to be driven more by a nationalist outlook than proletarian internationalism.¹⁸ The next great revolution after Vietnam happened in Iran, led by conservative Islamic mullahs and culminating in the establishment of one of two theocracies in the modern world (the other being the Vatican).¹⁹ The Nicaraguan revolution showed the capacities of a coalition of left forces, but its success was due to its following closely to what the CPP would call anti-fascist line (anti-Somoza), reinforced by a strong populist program.²⁰ These two policies were not enough to preserve the Sandinistas in power. An American-led counterrevolution, the failure to keep the coalition together, plus popular disenchantment with the FSLN broke the revolution and reinstalled conservatives to power.

Hobsbawm calls the 20th century the “age of barbarism,” and rightly so. For the world has witnessed two world wars, hundreds of revolutionary and counter-revolutionary confrontations, and a similar number of armed intervention by powerful states over their less powerful counterparts in the name of national or regional interests.²¹ If there was one thing notable about these conflicts, with the exception of rightwing repression of leftist movements, it was that they were hardly driven by class-based issues.²² Societies engulfed in civil wars or countries in strife were motivated by more parochial loyalties like race, ethnicity and religion rather than more universal ones like universal humanity and class. Moreover, contrary to the *Manifesto*'s observations, the nation-state has not disappeared. As a human institution the nation-state developed to be the dominating model of political growth, and its structures would be duplicated from one society after another as this century advanced. What makes the nation-state an odd creation is that while its modularity has become universalized, it remains an institution that sets limits on the people that belong to it.²³ It imposes its own barriers via maps, armies and tags like citizenship to distinguish itself from other nations. As a consequence we may have a global system today, but it is one founded on national partitions. Political movements that aspire for liberation always end up imagining themselves as future nations, and even socialism would not be immune to this. In power, communists and socialists gave way to national interests in the case of the exanimate USSR and the still-standing People's Republic of China. Finally, national interests have also underpinned so-called global efforts to fight tyranny (the US, oil and the Gulf War are a recent example). Magicians of the markets have presently declared that the nation-state has ended, but the current financial crisis has shown that this might not

be so. Of late, nationalist protectionist measures have somehow protected Malaysia from the flight of capital but not the globalized Thailand and South Korean economies.²⁴

The diminution of the internationalist perspective in the communist movement and the complex character of the various struggles and warfare worldwide, stand in diametrical opposition to the objective process of global capitalist development. The *Manifesto's* prognosis that the bourgeoisie will try to satiate its "need of a constantly expanding market" by "nestl[ing] everywhere, settl[ing] everywhere, establish[ing] connections everywhere," destroying national industries, drawing raw materials "from the remotest zones," and selling their products "in every quarter of the globe" remains true today. In the last twenty years or so, capitalism exploded in East Asia with the dramatic revival of the Japanese economy, followed by the tiger economies of Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan. In the last decade, Southeast Asian countries were in pursuit of their eastern neighbors, proclaiming themselves to the "little cubs" on the verge of becoming tigers.²⁵ While the Latin American import-substitution industrialization model faltered in the late 1970s, and countries from Chile to Mexico suffered tremendously from a debt crisis, this problem did not reverse their economies back to a pre-industrial stage. Capitalism, dependent or otherwise, was already an embedded feature of the region.²⁶ A booty-form of capitalism has resurrected its ugly features in the former USSR. While many bewail its pervasive corruption and the universalization of patrimonial plunder, what is happening in Russia could also be interpreted as the first stages of capitalist re-implantation in an erstwhile centrally-planned economy.²⁷

The present global crises that Asia had precipitated has put in the starkest of fashion the inter-connectedness of today's world. This financial crisis cannot be analyzed within its own terms, but can only be understood as the effects of more intense globalization under capital.²⁸ As Southeast Asian studies scholar Ruth McVey succinctly puts it: "Capitalist transformation has...been taking place in Southeast Asia for well over a century. The rural and traditional character which until now seemed to characterize the region has been to an important extent a fiction, masking great social and economic shifts resulting from increasing involvement in a world market system."²⁹ It is also a capitalist order whose "operations had become uncontrollable."³⁰ The last 20 years have shown how this world system has began to contract, and while economists still

debate as to its origins (whether is it part of the boom-bust cycle or whether it is but a further dip in a long-term decline of this dominant mode), what is clear is that it has widened the gap between rich and poor nations, as well as the rich and poor within these nations.

Transnational corporations have dealt with problems of overproduction, declining profits, increasing labor costs and environmental restrictions by relying more on technological innovation and displacing an increasing number of workers from the production process. Corporations have also gone abroad, virtually transferring massive production sites to countries where labor is cheap, profit remittances are unimpeded by state regulations and environmental regulations are non-existent. Cash-starved Third World countries have welcomed these technology and capital transfers with open arms, offering their human and natural resources without seeking assurances that the national well-being be given a share of the wealth. This have come at a cost for the original home bases of these transnational corporations where industrial cities have virtually died as industries moved abroad and thousands became unemployed.³¹ This has also produced immense strain on the ability of Western states to provide safety nets to their people (thus the crisis of social security) as well as prevent inequalities and its social consequences from worsening.

Yet, the transfer of capitalist production to Third World sites had generally not been beneficial to the populations of these countries. After the so-called “golden age” of post-war capitalism, the problems associated with labor being displaced by technology, with unemployment arising from global shifts in industries, and the use of child and women labor reminiscent of early industrial England have returned. Proletarianization, penury, marginalization and political domination continue to recur even at the end of this century, manifesting themselves in the most awful of forms in globalizing countries like India, El Salvador, Brazil and China.³² In certain cases, dependent industrialization may have improved the status of workers in certain countries – notably the East Asian Tigers – but in other areas, workers and other classes drawn to the new production sites remain poorly paid, exploited, silenced and under-represented. Even the South Korean, Taiwanese, Singaporean and Hongkong workforces underwent sustained periods of exploitation and political oppression before benefiting from their export-oriented industries.³³ In the “cub” economies, unemployment has not been substantively eliminated and in

fact has risen again as the crisis took its toll on these countries.³⁴ China has chosen to follow the path of the tiger economies with heavy social and environmental costs, and without even promising that the soon-to-be-achieved improved livelihood of all Chinese will be followed by political liberalization.³⁵

As this century comes to a close therefore, we are witness to a world of contradictions. The more nations appear to be unified and integrated economically, the more they have become fragmented politically. The more people and communities are proletarianized by global capitalism, the less they identify with their universal class conditions. Never has the *Manifesto* been right about capitalism as the world's dominant mode of production, but never has it also been wrong about such identities as nationalism and resilience of the nation-state. It was amidst a world setting characterized by these contradictory developments that the CPP was re-established by Jose Ma. Sison and his student recruits in December 1968.

The CPP, Capitalism and the Filipino Class Structure

Sison's generation reached political adulthood at a time when Marx's and Engel's notion of proletarian internationalism had virtually ceased to be part of the communist imagination.³⁶ The CPP has only faint memories of the First and Second Internationals. Its original inspiration came directly from Mao and 1968, not Lenin and 1917. While the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution and anti-Soviet revisionism gave the CPP comfort with having China as its "great socialist rear," this fraternal bonding did not last long. Maoist solidarity was sacrificed at the altar of national self-interest and foreign policy expedience and the CPP was discarded once the People's Republic of China normalized diplomatic relations with the Marcos dictatorship.³⁷ By 1975, the CPP was an international orphan and was very much left to itself to move its revolution forward (it had flimsy ties with such inconsequential organizations like the Communist Party of North Kalimantan and some Belgian and Dutch Maoist sects that appear to be the hosts of Sison and his cabal of exiles). This orphanization would set a course that accentuated the CPP's nationalist credentials, and narrowly focus its lenses to a Philippine-specific revolutionary project.

Not for long “Specific Characteristics of our People’s War” began the process of making Filipino communists look inward. And self-reliance became a stunning success. The CPP’s remarkable growth was made more notable since it came at a time when communism had waned as a political force in most of Southeast Asia.³⁸ The full story of the CPP’s rejuvenation after 1972 remains to be told as present interpretations remain inadequate because of their top-down, leader-centered perspectives.³⁹ A myriad of shorter studies however attribute its success to factors that ranged from successful application of the Maoist “mass line” to peasants seeking succor from poverty and repression, the “interplay between people’s own perceptions, experiences, solidarities, and actions on the one hand, and, on the other, new ideas, opportunities and constraints, organizational forms and collective action introduced by (CPP organizers).”⁴⁰ Whatever their effectiveness, a notable feature of these organizing efforts was that they were undertaken within a national framework that gave only perfunctory mention to proletarian internationalist responsibilities.⁴¹ And here the problems associated with the capitalism’s global expansion and the “much narrower” frame of most Third World revolutionary politics would arise.

During the Marcos dictatorship, the push for export-oriented industrialization failed to make the Philippines an industrial nation-state principally because of the patrimonial plunder by the Marcoses and the inability of the state to take advantage of openings in the world economy to expand its industrial and manufacturing base – even along dependent lines. But the EOI program was equally significant for having set in motion an unparalleled development of capitalist production relations in the country. This was especially distinctive in the countryside where traditional exports were rationalized with the help of foreign capital, and where the production of new export commodities were facilitated by capitalist production processes. This changing political economy was evident in many regions, but was most discernible in the major periphery – Mindanao. In this last of the country’s land frontiers, corporate capital, with considerable support from the dictatorship, led the way in a major alteration of the Mindanao landscape.⁴² By the 1980s, there were 751 major corporations (with an average of P10 million capitalization) operating in Mindanao, of which 89 were foreign or subsidiary firms.⁴³ Even food production experienced an infusion of capitalist relations, as programs like the Green Revolution increased the infusion of capitalist technologies and practices in rice and corn lands.⁴⁴

Under the dictatorship, there had been a manifest increase of the rural proletariat and a rapid movement of people from agricultural to non-agricultural work.⁴⁵ Tenancy and single-owner peasant cultivators did persist even in areas like Mindanao, but “a fairly large proportion of Mindanao’s labor force, approximately 30 to 40 per cent for males and even more for females [was] not [anymore] employed in agriculture.”⁴⁶ The changes in Mindanao’s political economy in the past decade continue to this very day, with government statistics showing that in the last three years those working in the category “agriculture, fishery and forestry” have shrunk to about 40 per cent of the total labor force.⁴⁷ The 1997 census alone reported that “agricultural workers” comprised the “biggest number of employed,” and non-agricultural occupations have hired over half of the workforce.⁴⁸

Fifteen or so years ago, these changes had prompted a group of radical intellectuals (some ex-CPP) to argue that the main relationship between the rural elite and the peasantry, the basic premise behind the CPP’s agrarian revolution, had unraveled.⁴⁹ The spread of capitalism in the countryside meant that peasant “democratic demands” for land would have to play second fiddle to more proletarian concerns, notably unionization, wage increases, etc. Increasingly dominant capitalist relations also meant that the revolution had to address these problems by positing more socialist(ic) alternatives in agriculture like collectivization rather than national democratic ones like the individual and petty producer-oriented “land-to-the-tiller” program.⁵⁰ The CPP understandably refused to accept these revisionists ideas and their strategic implications.⁵¹

For one, to submit that the countryside was not proletarianized meant the party had to come up with a more precise call than just the democratic demand of “land to the [petit-bourgeois] tiller.” Acceptance of these critics’ argument would also force the CPP to develop a new program suited to an agricultural proletarian mass base and reconfiguring the New People Army’s (NPA) strategy. The NPA cannot just be a peasant army anymore, going through the protracted process of organizing peasants under the appeal of its revolutionary land reform program. It cannot just go about cautiously amassing arms and people in preparation for the final “advance counter-offensive” when the revolution would engulf the reactionary state’s core in Manila and overthrow the “semi-feudal and semi-colonial” social order. Instead, the party may have to make its mass organizations the leading force rather than the guerrilla

army. These organizations, in turn, will give priority to trade union struggles, general strikes, uprisings and the systematic paralysis of the political economy. Armed struggle will have to shift to the urban areas and play only a supportive role to these more proletarian mass actions. CPP cadres from Mindanao, in fact, suggested a shift away from Mao's "protracted people's war," to insurrectionism and a combination of political and military resistance.⁵² The success of *welgang bayan* and mass uprisings was the immediate cause of this rethinking, but I would also suggest that underpinning these demands for re-thinking was a changing frontier political economy. The party grew the fastest in Mindanao not only because of militarization or the speed with which the revolution drew adherents. Its mass base also came from communities which had been marginalized by corporate agriculture and proletarianized by the entry of capitalist production relations in their areas.⁵³

There were additional conceptual problems. An ancillary issue raised by these fraternal critics was the question of the Filipino ruling classes. Following Mao, PSR broke down the composition of the capitalist class in the Philippines to factions that ranged from the imperialists, to the comprador bourgeoisie, the national bourgeoisie, and the petit-bourgeoisie.⁵⁴ However, this distinction became more bewildering during the dictatorship period. The bourgeois factions in particular had overlapping memberships, complicating the political dichotomy that CPP cadres took pains at refining and showing how precise they were. More importantly, the distinction between the "comprador bourgeoisie" and the "nationalist bourgeoisie" had turned out to be more mythical than real. When it came to dealing with foreign capital and the state, and the furthering of their economic interests, these comprador-bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie differed little, except perhaps the patriotic rhetoric by a small number of Filipino capitalists.⁵⁵ Moreover the dictatorship had cultivated a new breed of Filipino capitalists. The Marcos cronies were displaying attributes akin to the national bourgeoisie when they seized control of vital industries of the country, and challenged the hegemony of foreign capital with assistance from the state.⁵⁶ But they were also very intimate with foreign capital, going into "joint-venture" agreements with transnational corporations. This was a practice that identified them with the habits of the compradors.⁵⁷

The bourgeoisie's varying political responses to the dictatorship had also blurred the so-called standpoint identified with it as a class. While

it was true that the majority chose to keep their peace with the dictatorship, segments of the comprador bourgeoisie were openly opposed to Marcos. During the last years of the dictatorship, particularly after the assassination of Benigno Aguino, Jr., more compradors had become bolder, challenging Marcos and openly declaring their desire to end martial law (albeit through peaceful means, of course). Some even went to the extent of expressing their objection to the American military bases, and many in fact joined nationalist caucuses because of their new-found awareness of the “imperialist” question.⁵⁸ The world, on the eve of Marcos’ downfall, appeared to have turned upside down, with the very class enemies of the party now marching side-by-side with its cadres and activists in protests and demonstrations. Something was not right.

The CPP responded to these changes by formulating conjunctural analyses and introducing accompanying concepts to explain changes like the Filipino bourgeoisie’s anti-Marcos position in the 1980s. *Ang Bayan*, for example, tried to make sense of the political reconfigurations after the Aquino assassination spurred an unprecedented multi-class opposition to Marcos. It introduced categories like “anti-Marcos reactionaries,” “liberal democrats” and “bourgeois reformists” into the enlivening languages of protests, articulated mainly through its legal organizations and alliances.⁵⁹ But these new political markings were simply based on the extent to which these groups “secure[d] privileges for themselves” vis-a-vis Marcos and the United States, as well as in their attitude towards the appropriate strategy to end the dictatorship (which for the CPP was armed revolution).⁶⁰ They were not grounded on a more systematic ideological re-evaluation of the political economy nor were they connected to the changes of that political economy’s capitalist substructure under martial law. The party opted for tactical classifications instead of a more comprehensive and strategic reconsideration of class relations in the Philippines.

Of course, one may infer tactical brilliance in the conception of these categories given that the CPP was adjusting itself to a dramatically changed political situation.⁶¹ But they also suggested a CPP less prone to spending time re-evaluating or substantively reinforcing its original ideological premises. It also showed a party distancing itself, perhaps unconsciously, from the fundamental themes of its original thinkers.⁶² The categories “liberal democrats,” “anti-Marcos reactionaries,” or “bourgeois reformers” may be useful in understanding the early 1980s

(in the same way that Marx developed his categories to explain Louis Bonaparte).⁶³ But they were also conjunctural concepts unique to that specific period. Thus unless one was grounded on a theoretical substructure, there was often the tendency to accept these markings as permanent and lose sight of the larger picture. Marx had *Kapital* to underpin his ventures into political analysis of specific periods, the CPP had an outdated PSR to rely on.

This discordance between tactical analyses and long-term ideological re-evaluation persisted even after Marcos was ousted. This time it was not only the CPP leadership that was adulterated; the discrepancy had also affected the evaluations of cadres who were distancing themselves from the orthodoxy of the party leadership. Let me cite one example. The conjuncture-centered explanations of the popular democratic factions of the party were transmuted into permanent frameworks of analyses that had very little connection to the Philippine political economy. The consequences of this theoretical lapse were serious. They ranged from this group's silence on the analysis of changes in the character of capital operating in the Philippines, the absence of any Marxist investigation of transmutations in the social formation, and the lack of strategic vision and clear direction in many of these factions' purported political projects. The failure to remain alert to the importance of class-based political analysis affected the CPP's political standing as the most dominant anti-Marcos force in the 1980s. The tactical mistake during the "snap elections" precipitated its marginalization, worsening further when the anti-Sison CPP factions mistook class fractions of the bourgeoisie as still immersed in their differences in the Aquino period. In fact, the bourgeoisie had reunified as a class around a restored cacique democracy, and had effectively ended the leftist threat. Today, popular democrats analyze local bosses and warlords without connecting these to larger structural contexts, lobby inside the legislature and launch electoral forays at the local and national levels – with extremely limited results and with no clear purpose except to have some "left presence" - no matter how miniscule and insignificant – within the state.⁶⁴

It was not only communists (who were the ones most affected by the post-Marcos era) who disagreed with Sison, however.⁶⁵ Sison and his faction were equally not immune to what had happened. For while they have called for a "return to the basics," their reaffirmation of the orthodoxy stands on a platform that is out of touch with political-

economic reality, both within the Philippines and abroad.⁶⁶ Feudalism has ceased to be a dominant mode within the country, with peasants having shifted from tenancy to petty-productions. The countryside has also become littered with the agricultural proletariat and many have left the *kanayunan* to join the urban work force. All this have rendered one of PSR's core arguments – that of a feudalism being the social base of imperialism – anachronistic, and with it the strategy of protracted people's war. The problem does not stop here. In the political arena, the ability of the Filipino bourgeoisie to repair the splits and mend factional fissures caused by polarized politics under Marcos had seemingly simplified the landscape. But it has caused some problems to the painstaking classification of the Filipino ruling class that Sison laid down in PSR. In fact, ruling class unity appears to have nullified the internal distinctions and put to question the value of relying on old categories as the foundation for analysis and action.⁶⁷

The calcification of ideological analyses of the Sison faction and the deficient theoretical grounding among its rivals, have made Filipino communists miss out on a major social transformation in the composition of its most important mass base – the Filipino proletariat. Here again, we see why overlooking the *Manifesto's* basic arguments had affected the CPP's perspective.

A Note on the Filipino Proletariat Abroad: Implications for the Revolution

Beginning in the mid-1970s, more Filipinos have gone abroad for work, pulled by the demands for labor in the oil-rich Middle East, and pushed by the growing economic crisis of the Marcos dictatorship. Tables 1 and 2 show this increase in number of Filipino migrant workers and the revenues this transnationalized labor has brought to the national economy. What is immediately noticeable is the amount of income generated by such a small percentage of the entire workforce. Migrant labor constitutes roughly about three per cent of the national workforce but the incomes it has produced has been so substantive that these have altered the lives of lower and lower-middle class families who sent their husbands, wives and adult children abroad.⁶⁸ These earnings (and money transfers from immigrant communities in the United States) have been instrumental in keeping many families financially stable amidst the series of economic

downturns that hit the Philippines during the last years of Marcos dictatorship and all throughout Aquino and Ramos. Today, incomes from migrant labor has become the only stable revenue base of the government mired in billions of internal and external debt it could never pay, and unable (unwilling) to pursue the recovery of the Marcos billions.⁶⁹

Given a nascent familiarity with the political economy of migrant labor, let me just posit a couple of issue which may be of relevance to the topic at hand. On the one hand, the rise of migrant labor indicates the extent to which today's "globalization" has facilitated the movement of labor as a commodity. Filipinos are not the only ones affected by this process. In the second half of this century, the movement of labor has intensified, involving countries in Southeast and South Asia (where their workers are distributed across a wide span that ranges from Japan to Rome), the Central American republics (Mexicans, Colombians, El Salvadorans, who mainly end up in the fruit farms and garment enterprises of the United States), northern African societies (Tunisians, Moroccans, Egyptians and even Libyans moving northwards to work in French, Spanish and even German industries, big and small) and the poorer regions of Eastern Europe (i.e., the continuing drift of Poles, Albanians, Serbs and Croats to Germany and France).⁷⁰

This phenomenon came to affect the Philippines when the Marcos dictatorship sought to take advantage of the worker-starved but cash-rich oil states of the Middle East, and later on when the East Asian NICs boomed and Western Europe began to search for blue-collar workers for its service and domestic industries. The impact has been profound, and various types of Filipino workers – including prostitutes – continued to be in demand abroad. The "Saudi connection" was joined in by the "Japanese, Taiwanese, Hongkong and Italian connections," where, because of their talent and knowledge of English, Filipinos of various occupations have been drawn into these countries.

The most dynamic sectors of the Filipino workforce has thus shifted abroad. In Abu Dhabi, Rome, the Kowloon district and all over Tokyo, Filipinos have become part of an international labor force that, while segmented and living in limited contact with the citizens of these countries, are nevertheless fulfilling vital and objective roles as cogs of national economies inextricably linked to the world capitalist system. The Filipino proletariat, or at least a segment of it, has already become – for

all intents and purposes – part of the international(ized) proletariat that Marx and Engels talked about. The Filipino has entered an arena where s/he could become a worker of the world, and the political implications are clear.⁷¹ If we go by the forecasts of the *Manifesto*, and considering the economic value placed on migrant labor by the present nation-state, this internationalization of the Filipino worker is a trend that will continue well into the next century.

On the other hand, because their earnings have placed them at an income level higher than their counterparts who remained in the Philippines, this internationalized Filipino workforce may also develop a political predisposition identified by Marxists with the so-called labor aristocracy. Going by the popularity of revivalist movements like El Shaddai among Filipino migrant workers, there is indeed basis for arguing the presence of conservative tendencies within their ranks.⁷² Other features can reinforce the development of this political standpoint. In general, migrant workers do not have unions that struggle for their rights in their countries/places of work, and whatever associations they have come in the form of mutual aid associations and/or language- or province-based organizations. Their being aliens make them vulnerable to the laws and agencies of coercion and discourage any form of organizing to push for worker's rights. Moreover, their temporary status undermine continuity in membership, a crucial feature in terms of keeping organizational and experiential memories alive. Organizational resilience can equally suffer due to constant change of personnel. The same conditions, however, could very well transform the labor aristocracy into a progressive force. Their alien status and the refusal of their host countries to allow even the most basic of labor organizing may bring home the point that they are, in the final analysis, workers and proletarians, expending their labor for capitalists and nations they do not identify with, and at wages well below what they believe they deserve. Moreover, as the case of nineteenth century England suggests, this Filipino labor aristocracy could also very well become a leading group in whatever economic or political movement that may emerge in the future. Like the skilled crafts unionists of Tsarist Russia, by "defending their privilege [they may find] themselves turning into Bolsheviks."⁷³ The question is whether the CPP, or any other left-wing faction for that matter, will be in a position to tap on this force once it is animated.

One other contradiction needs mentioning here, although it will not be elaborated for reasons of space and my limited knowledge. I refer here to the contradiction between what I call Filipino migrant labor's "sense of exile" and its objective status as part of a (re)emerging international proletariat. Studies have shown that a "longing for home" pervades many Pinoy migrant workers, creating the basis for the development of a deep sense of national identity and nationalism.⁷⁴ The sources of Filipino nationalism's continuing brio may therefore become both domestic and international, with the latter developing among economic exiles. The feeling of nationalist comfort, however, is mitigated by one factor – physical distance. Exile detaches someone for the nation, and also allows for a realm of experience specific to the migrant worker to develop. In short, being away separates one from the everyday realities of Philippine society and exposes a migrant worker to a different reality in his/her daily encounters with his/her domain of work.

The countervailing influence of exile nationalism may thus be negated by an experience unique to one's place of work; a site away from one's homeland, but which a worker also realizes as a part of a world economic order. The pendulum could very well easily swing back towards a worldview that transcends the nation. What may evolve then – as more and more Filipinos go abroad – is some kind of trans-nationalism that combines both the national experiences with those Filipinos encounter abroad. This opens up this important group (sector?) of Filipinos to a complex panoply of perspectives and standpoints (as well as emotions and related sentiments) that may enhance both their sense of identity as Filipinos but also their bonds with an international – and Third World – proletariat. This overlapping is cogently contextualized by Filemono Aguilar:

The late 20th century has witnessed an accelerating tempo in the global circulation not only of capital but also of persons...Notwithstanding the constraints imposed by the global system of states...the restructurings of capitalism in the various parts of the world-system and the attendant technological advances have led to unprecedented numbers of people moving across the face of the earth. The velocities of spatial mobility are represented by international tourists seeking to consume culture in reinvented, commodified packages. Less transitory yet similarly peripatetic are the movements of labor migrants – comprising a wide array of skilled and semi-skilled manual, white-collar, and intellectual

workers – in search of alternative lifestyles, better pay, and novel cultural experiences. Others are resettling in new places as permanent immigrants. These global nomads – labor migrants and even those who seem to fit the conventional image of the international migrant – are contributors to an evolving transnationalism. The social, cultural and political activities and relationships they sustain, create, cultivate or even disrupt, are no longer confined within the boundaries of one country at a time; on the contrary, these activities and relationships may simultaneously, and instantly, span two or more countries. The facticities of space and time have undergone some compression. This challenges to global and local social existence, reconfigures the contours of political economy and culture...and demands a reformulation of bounded parochial categories of thought and units of analysis. ⁷⁵

The implication of the above contradictory state-of-being on revolutionary organizing in the Philippines can be far-reaching. Mobilizing migrant workers (even for instrumentalist reasons) is a given; in fact, for any left group seeking to re-establish a viable presence in 21st century Philippines, this is imperative. The question, however, is whether one organizes migrant labor as Filipino labor and for issues specific to the Philippine revolution, or whether one recruits migrant Filipinos conscious of their status as an international workforce. Will the Filipino revolutionary infuse this workforce with an internationalist viewpoint, knowing that such is the ideological upshot of an objective development in the national and world economies? Or will s/he galvanize migrant Filipino workers strictly for national purposes, in the same manner of solidarity networks for the Philippine resistance? Filipino communists of the various factions remain silent on this issue for reasons that – I suspect – include the lack of any theoretical grounding on understanding the objective character of the proletariat, Filipino or otherwise.

Conclusion

For far from being pushed into the museum of antiquity, the Communist *Manifesto* has become a revenant from the past, reminding Filipino communists of various shades that the dominance of capital is still very much in place, with its regressive social and political consequences on the majority who do not own or benefit meaningfully from it. Like many ghosts, this extraordinary pamphlet has also warned of the difficulties of fighting this dominant social formation. This struggle has become more

complicated of late because overlaying it are other forms of identities and loyalties that – to many communists – tend to obscure the more fundamental conceptions like class and capitalism. Nowadays, people and societies are driven to fight for race, ethnicity and religion – identities that are themselves often constructed and invented – and we rarely find similar numbers and intensity among those fighting to defend or advance class interests.⁷⁶ These kinds of rebellions also seek to build nations, not fight for causes that encompass communities larger than the nation-state, thus complicating the radical imperative of framing its struggle beyond this constricting identities.

Understanding the *Communist Manifesto's* relationship to the Philippine revolution is made more difficult by the fact that throughout its history (or histories), Filipino communism has largely been national in its perspective and its actions and thus may only be evaluated within that national framework. At present, however, the *Manifesto* has brought back phantoms of unresolved debates with far-ranging implications on revolutionary strategy. The nature of the political economy, the changing character of imperialism (then the United States, now Japanese, Taiwanese, Singaporean and Malaysian), the alteration of the Filipino class structure and the unusual resilience of cacique democracy, are some of the subject-matters the CPP had set aside in the name of revolutionary contingency. But it cannot continue to do so, particularly if it wishes to survive and possibly regain the repute it carefully built in the 1970s. To make that leap, however, demands that it confront the *Manifesto* and its implications which, today have become the spectre that haunts not only capitalists, but also all factions of Filipino communism.



Endnotes

- 1 Amado Guerrero, *Philippine Society and Revolution* (Hongkong: Ta Kung Pao, 1971).
- 2 Rainer Werning and Jose Ma. Sison, *The Philippine Revolution: The Leader's View* (New York: Crane and Russak, 1989). Listen to Sison: "I read all these (sic) avidly. And I came to the conclusion that a national democratic revolution of the new type, led by the working class, would have to be carried out in the Philippines", p. 11. Marx and Engels never made mention of national democracy, given their abhorrence towards nationalism, and Lenin was never seriously committed to the same concept the few times he looked at the colonial world.
- 3 Joel Rocamora, *Breaking Through: The Struggle within the Communist Party of the Philippines* (Pasig, Manila: Anvil Publishing Co., Inc., 1994). Unlike Sison, Rocamora's "up close and personal" assessment of the NDF appeared driven more by sentimental reasons rather than Marxist dialectics. See his reply to his mother in p. 233 of the book. Rocamora was formally expelled from the NDF during the Front's 1994 general

- assembly (now controlled by Sison's allies). Others expelled from the NDF International were Francisco Gonzales, Sixto Carlos, Jr., Ma. Marguerite Manalo-Lopez, Edicio de la Torre, Nathan Quimpo and Byron Bocar. See *Liberation: Official Organ of the National Democratic Front* 6, 5-6 (September-December 1994), 9.
- 4 The longer title of the *Red Book* is *Study, Debate, Discussion, Summing-up: Profound Re-Examination and Revitalization on the Crisis of Socialism, Strategy of Action and Internal Democracy* (Manila?: n.p., January 1993).
 - 5 Marx and Engels declared that "working men have no country. We cannot take from them what they have not got." Karl Marx and Frederich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto: A Modern Edition*. With an introduction by Eric Hobsbawm (New York and London: Verso, 1998), p. 49.
 - 6 *Manifesto*, pp. 49, 58.
 - 7 Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction," *Manifesto*, pp. 16-17 [underscoring mine].
 - 8 Marshall Berman, "Unchained Melody: Review of *The Communist Manifesto*," *The Nation*, May 11, 1998: 12.
 - 9 Thus putting to question Marx's and Engel's prediction that calls antagonisms would be simplified "into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other: bourgeoisie and proletariat. See Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes: A History of the World, 1914-1991* (New York: Vintage Books, 1996), pp. 266-277, 302-305.
 - 10 Berman, "Unchained Melody," p. 15.
 - 11 *Manifesto*, p. 51.
 - 12 *Manifesto*, p. 71.
 - 13 Aggravating the tensions between internationalism and communism was, of course, the *Manifesto's* assertion that "The proletariat of each country must, of course, first of all settle all matters with its own bourgeoisie." Marx and Engels would further confuse readers by adding later that "working men have no country. We cannot take from them what they have not got." Yet, more mixed signals a few lines down: "Since the proletariat must first of all acquire political supremacy, must rise to be the leading class of the nation, must constitute itself as a nation, it is, so far, itself national, though not in the bourgeois sense of the word." *Manifesto*, 49. What does "bourgeois sense of the word" mean?
 - 14 Liberal critics of the *Manifesto* have underlined this weakness. See, for example, Stephen Holmes, "The End of Idiocy on a Planetary Scale," *London Review of Books* (October 29, 1998): 13-14.
 - 15 On the failure of communism to overcome nationalism, see Ronaldo Munck, *The Difficult Dialogue: Marxism and Nationalism* (London and New Jersey: Zed Books, 1986).
 - 16 In his later years, Marx did acknowledge that rural backwardness could persist. He made this modification after reading about Russian agriculture. See *Late Marx and the Russia Road: Marx and the "Peripheries of Capitalism (A Case)*, Teodor Shanin, ed. (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1983).
 - 17 Thus the use of the American declaration of independence as the Vietnamese Communist Party's source of inspiration in the historic speech of independence by Ho Chih Minh. In the 1990s, the debate over whether Ho and the VCP were communists or not, continues. See Ton That Tien, *Ho Chi Minh and the Comintern: Was Ho Chi Minh a Nationalist?* (Singapore: Information and Resource Center, 1990). Vietnam was not unique. See also the case of Indonesia's Partai Komunis Indonesia in Ruth McVey, "Nationalism, Revolution, and Organization in Indonesian Communism," *Making Indonesia: Essays on Modern Indonesia in Honor of George McT. Kahin* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Southeast Asia Program, 1996), pp. 96-117.
 - 18 Francisco Nemenzo once remarked how Marxist mavericks like Castro, Mao and Ho turned out to be the more successful revolutionaries. Was this nonconformism also due to their nationalism? Francisco Nemenzo, "The Millenarian-Populist Aspects of Filipino Marxism," *Marxism in the Philippines* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Third World Studies Center, 1984), 2-3. I do not know much about North Korea to be able to include Kim Il Sung and his Juche revolution in this reputable assemblage.
 - 19 See S. Bakhsh, *The Reign of the Ayatollahs* (New York: Basic Books, 1984).

- 20 George Black, *Triumph of the People: The Sandinista Revolution in Nicaragua* (London: Zed Press, 1981).
- 21 Between 1914 and 1990, 187 million people were killed by various causes, including wars and political repression. See Eric Hobsbawm, "Barbarism: A User's Guide," *New Left Review* 206 (July-August 1994), p. 47. In the latest of the "major" wars, "Operation Desert Storm," both Iraq and the United States took pains to avoid talking about dead bodies. A writer however estimated that over 145,000 Iraqis were killed in the war broken down to about 5,000 civilians whose deaths were war-related, 40,000 military personnel and 100,000 civilian deaths after the war due to violence and deterioration of health. James Chace, "New World Disorder: Review of The World Transformed, by George Bush and Brent Scowcroft," *New York Review of Books* XLV, 20 (December 17, 1998), p. 62.
- 22 Even revolutions declined after 1917, as guerrillas and popular organizers (urban and rural) were displaced by small group violence and rallies, general strikes and "strategic counter-offensives" were replaced by political assassinations and related "acts of terrorism." Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes*, pp. 456-458.
- 23 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins of Nationalism* (London and New York: Verso, 1998). Within each nation-state, there is effort to hide internal inequalities and differences and hide their potential tensions by the cloak of citizenship. *Imagined Communities*, p. 6-7.
- 24 An example of such delusions about the market in the Philippines is Alex R. Magno, "The Market Consensus," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, August 10, 1995, p. 31. Lately, however, some market advocates have revised their positions, a move that has yet to create echoes in the Philippines. See Daniel Yergin and Joseph Stanislaw, *The Commanding Heights: The Battle Between Government and the Marketplace that is Remaking the Modern World* (New York: Simon and Shuster, 1998).
- 25 Giovanni Arrighi, *The Long Twentieth Century: Money, Power and the Origins of our Times* (London and New York: Verso, 1994) pp. 333-356.
- 26 Fernando Henrique Cardoso, *Dependence and Development in Latin America* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1979).
- 27 "To Sicilians, Russia has no Mafia. It's too Wild," *New York Sunday Times*, January 10, 1999, p. 5. For a more comprehensive discussion of the interlacing of politics, gangsterism and bureaucracy in Russia, see the section on "The Economy" in John Lloyd, *Rebirth of a Nation: An Anatomy of Russia* (London and New York: Joseph Publications, 1998).
- 28 See Robert Wade and Frank Veneroso, "The East Asian Crash and the Wall Street-IMF Complex," *New Left Review* 228 (March-April 1998): 3-24.
- 29 Ruth McVey, "The Materialization of the Southeast Asian Entrepreneur," in *Southeast Asian Capitalists*, Ruth McVey, ed. (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Southeast Asia Program, 1992), p. 18.
- 30 Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes*, p. 408.
- 31 Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes*, pp. 403-416.
- 32 *Free Trade and Economic Restructuring in Latin America: A NACLA Reader*. Fred Rosen and Deidre McFadyen, eds. (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1995).
- 33 Frederic Deyo, *Beneath the Miracle: Labor Subordination in the New Asian Industrialism* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1989).
- 34 The latest report of the International Labor Organization has this statistics on Southeast Asian unemployment: Malaysia (6.7 percent); Indonesia (5 percent - but this was before the crisis); Thailand (4.4 percent); Singapore (2.3 percent); the Philippines (13.3 percent). The Philippines has the highest unemployment rate in ASEAN. See Frankie Laguno, "RP jobless rate tops ASEAN," *The Manila Times*, March 15, 1999.
- 35 On the economic and political costs of market socialism in China, see Lui Binyan and Perry Link, "A Great Leap Backward? Review of He Qinglian's China's Pitfall," *New York Review of Books* XLV 15 (October 8, 1998), p. 19023.
- 36 I will not go into the specific circumstances and background of the CPP's formation in this essay. Readers, however, can find varying explanations of the historical context in PSR and Sison's *The Philippine Revolution: The Leader's View*, as well as in the following works: Francisco Nemenzo, "Rectification Process in the Philippine Commu-

- nist Movement," *Armed Communist Movements in Southeast Asia*, Lim Joo-Jock and Vani S, eds. (Singapore: Institute for Southeast Asian Studies, 1984); Gregg R. Jones, *Red Revolution: Inside the Philippine Guerrilla Movement* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1989); Jose Lacaba, *Days of Disquiet, Nights of Rage: The First Quarter Storm and Other Events* (Quezon City: Salinlahi Publishing House, 1982); and, Conrado de Quiros, *Dead Aim: How Marcos Ambushed Philippine Democracy* (Pasig City, Manila: Foundation for Worldwide People Power, Inc., 1997). The *Red Book* contains some of the remarkable explanations by CPP cadres on the crisis, and before it, those in *Praktika*. Among scholarly works on the CPP, see the essays in *Marxism in the Philippines Second Series* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Third World Studies Center, 1988); and Benedict J. Tria Kerkviet, "Contemporary Philippine Leftist Politics in Historical Perspective," in *The Revolution Falters*, pp. 9-27.
- 37 One consequence of this was the abandonment of CPP cadres who were stranded in China when martial law was declared. Jones, *Red Revolution*, pp. 71-83.
 - 38 On this fading of Southeast Asian communism before even Eastern Europe, see Benedict Anderson, "Radicalism after Communism," in *The Spectre of Comparisons: Nationalism, Southeast Asia and the World* (London and New York: Verso, 1998), pp. 285-289.
 - 39 There is nothing on the CPP's development in the different regions, including even Metro-Manila. Why the CPP succeeded in embedding itself in peasant villages, factories and urban poor communities is also still to be fully explained.
 - 40 Rosanne Rutten, "Popular Support for the Revolutionary Movement CPP-NPA: Experiences in a Hacienda in Negros Occidental, 1978-1995," in *The Revolution Falters: The Left in Philippine Politics after 1986*, Patricio N. Abinales, ed. (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Southeast Asia Program, 1996), p. 114.
 - 41 P.N. Abinales, "Consideration on Filipino Marxism: A Response to Nemenzo's 'Questioning Marx, Critiquing Marxism,'" *Debate: Philippine Left Review* 8 (November 1993), 24-25.
 - 42 Compare this for example to Mindanao in the immediate post-war period. An internal report of the U.S. embassy observed: "Despite widespread enthusiasm, Mindanao's development continued to be largely on paper...Hydro-electric construction and road-building had not progressed far by the end of the year, and little new industry had come into existence. Mining also had indifferent success in Mindanao; new projects did not develop as rapidly as had been hoped, and some companies, particularly those engaged in gold-dredging, reduced or suspended operations as a result of the minimum wage law." David C. Cuthell, American Consul, "Annual Economic Review for 1951 (Cebu Consular District) Supplement, Enclosure No. 1 to Despatch No. 1173, March 7, 195, p. 2.
 - 43 Eduardo C. Tadem, "The Political Economy of Mindanao: An Overview," in *Mindanao: Land of Unfulfilled Promise*. Mark Turner, R.J. May and Lulu Respal Turner, eds. (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1992), 11-13.
 - 44 Rene E. Ofreneo, *Capitalism in Philippine Agriculture* (Quezon City: Foundation for Nationalist Studies, 1980), pp. 74-81, 97-131, 144-153. See also Rigoberto Tiglao, "Non-Progress in the Periphery," *Diliman Review* (April-June 1978): 38-45; and Cynthia Banzon-Bautista, "Marxism and the Peasantry: The Philippine Case," in *Marxism in the Philippines*, pp. 155-188.
 - 45 As Marx and Engels put it: "The bourgeoisie, by the rapid improvement of all instruments of production, by the immensely facilitated means of production, draws all, even the most barbarian, nations into civilization...It compels all nations, on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeois mode of production; it compels them to introduce what it calls civilization into their midst, i.e., to become bourgeois themselves. In one word, it creates a world after its own image." *Manifesto*, pp. 39-40.
 - 46 Michael Costello, "The Demography of Mindanao," *Mindanao: Land of Unfulfilled Promise*, 39.
 - 47 "Employed Persons by Major Industry Group, October 1998, 1997, 1996," *National Statistical Coordination Board*, Manila.
 - 48 "Employed Persons by Major Occupation Group, October 1998, 1997 and 1996," *National Statistical Coordination Board*, 1998. These sub-categories the already vague

- "agriculture," plus "animal husbandry," "forestry workers," "fishermen," and "hunters."
- 49 The political implications of the following works point to this direction. See Rigoberto Tiglao, *The Philippine Coconut Industry: Looking into Coconuts* (Davao City: ARC Publications, 1981); E. C. Tadem, *Mindanao Report: A Preliminary Study on Economic Origins of Social Unrest* (Davao: AFRIM Resource Center, 1980); and Eduardo Tadem et. al., *Showcases of Underdevelopment in Mindanao: Fishes, Forests and Fruits* (Davao: Alternate Resource Center, 1984).
 - 50 Thus the political proposal of the socialist caucus BISIG.
 - 51 See the fervent defense of the "semi-feudal" thesis in Ricardo Ferrer, "On the Mode of Production in the Philippines: Some Old Fashion Questions on Marxism," in *Marxism in the Philippines*, pp. 189-240.
 - 52 See, for example, Marty Villalobos, "On the Insurrectionary Strategy," mss., March 30, 1986; and Omar Tupaz, "Toward a Revolutionary Strategy of the 90s," *Debate: Philippine Left Review 1* (September 1991), pp. 6-40.
 - 53 Did it not come as a surprise that a few years later, Marcos would fall when an aborted military coup in (urban) Manila combined with a semi-mass uprising? And a CPP that appeared to have reversed back to protracted people's warfare at this decisive period was left with very little role in EDSA?
 - 54 Guerrero, *Philippine Society and Revolution*, pp. 132-155.
 - 55 See Temario C. Rivera, *Landlords and Capitalists: Class Family and State in Philippine Manufacturing* (Quezon City: Center for Integrative Development Studies and the University of the Philippines Press, 1994). The notable feature of Rivera's book is the author's awareness of how unstable CPP categories of the Filipino bourgeoisie were. While like a good ex-natdem, Rivera points us back to the problem of land as the core of Philippine underdevelopment, he agonizes over the realization that the national bourgeoisie is as economically opportunistic as the other fractions. Rivera, of course, stops short to questioning the orthodoxy writ large. On members of the national bourgeoisie who engaged in patrimonial plunder, see the case of Republic Bank, which was owned by "Don" Pablo Roman, an admirer of Rectonian nationalism, and the Overseas Bank of Manila, owned by Emerito Ramos, who had intimate ties with members of the nationalist Civil Liberties Union of the Philippines (and thus the quintessential examples of national bourgeoisie, by PSR standards), in Paul D. Hutchcroft, *Booty Capitalism: The Politics of Banking in the Philippines* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1998), pp. 90-102.
 - 56 Gary Hawes, "Marcos, His Cronies, and the Philippine Failure to Develop," in *Southeast Asian Capitalists*, 156-159; and, Ricardo Manapat, *Some are Smarter than Others* (New York: Aletheia Publications, 1991), pp. 68-98.
 - 57 Mamoru Tsuda, *A Preliminary Study of Japanese-Filipino Joint Ventures* (Quezon City: Foundation for Nationalist Studies, 1978).
 - 58 On the elite opposition to Marcos, see Mark Thompson, *The Anti-Marcos Struggle: Personalistic rule and Democratic Transition in the Philippines* (New Haven : Yale University Press, 1995). I recall that some members of the "Makati" crowd joined the organization KAAKBAY inspired by the nationalism of its founder, the late Jose W. Diokno.
 - 59 In the 1980s, it was not unusual to hear leaders of BAYAN, KMU and KMP talk about the "AMRs" (anti-Marcos reactionaries), or the "BRs" (bourgeois reformists) in many a symposium and public meetings.
 - 60 P.N. Abinales, "The Left and other Forces: The Nature and Dynamics of Pre-1986 Coalition Politics," in *Marxism in the Philippines Second Series*, 39-40.
 - 61 Brilliant plays they were, but unfortunately short-lived. The coalition that was painstakingly built in 1980 unraveled in 1984 and broke down completely on the second day of the BAYAN Congress, May 1985.
 - 62 I remember an interesting discussion with a CPP cadre who insisted while the "feudalism-capitalism" debate was indeed fundamental, it was not an issue demanding immediate attention. Paraphrasing what he said: we have a civil war out there, and we do not have the luxury of sitting back and theorizing, or even doing substantive research like you in academia.

- 63 Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (New York: International Publishers, 1963).
- 64 Among the latest pop-dem fetish with "local power" is the book collection: *Boss: 5 Case Studies of Local Politics in the Philippines*, edited by Jose F. Lacaba (Manila: Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism and the Institute for Popular Democracy, 1995). Together with other leftwing formations, the popular democrats have also managed to win some council seats in the south, and put a representative to the House of Representatives via the party list system.
- 65 Thus the classic cry of Edicio de La Torre: "My God, we missed out again!" E.C. Tadem, "The February Uprising and its Historical Setting," *Diliman Review* 34, 2 (1986): 18.
- 66 As one leftwing writer paraphrasing Rosa Luxemburg puts it: "there was a real peril of practice hardening into theory and vice versa." Christopher Hitchens, "Moderation or Death: Review of Isaiah Berlin: A Life and The Guest from the Future: Anna Akhmatova and Isaiah Berlin," *London Review of Books* 20, 23 (26 November 1998): 6. How many potent Maoist parties are there in the world today? Peru's Sendero Luminoso and Sison's CPP appear to be the only stragglers left of a once potent counter-ideology to Soviet "revisionism."
- 67 A trenchant critique of Sison's orthodoxy is Paco Arguelles, "'Pagbabalik-Aral': A Priorism in Reaffirmation," *Debate: Philippine Left Review* (August 1993): 27-32.
- 68 I arrived at this percentage by dividing the total number of migrant workers in 1997 (795,000) by the 1997 estimate of the national labor force (28.9 million). Sources for these statistics are "The Employment Situation in January 1997," *Income and Employment Statistics Division. National Statistics Office* (Manila, 21 March 1998); and "Employed Persons by Major Industry Group, October 1998, 1997, 1996," *National Statistical Coordination Board*, Manila. I thank Prof. Roli Talampas of the University of the Philippines-Manila for sharing this information.
- 69 Edgar R. Rodriguez, "Net Social Benefits of Emigration from the Perspective of the Source Country: Do Overseas Filipinos really benefit the Philippines?" *Philippine Sociological Review* 44, 1-4 (January-December 1996): 137-161.
- 70 Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes*, 276-77, 309-10, 363-64.
- 71 The 1997 statistic on migrant workers placed most of them in non-managerial positions. Women workers were mostly located in the service sector, while men were classified as production and transportation workers. "Employed Persons by Major Industry Group, October 1998, 1997, 1996," National Statistical Coordination Board, Manila.
- 72 This is another unstudied aspect of the present labor force. Public actions, however, appear to confirm initial impressions. One of the highlights of El Shaddai ceremonies, for example, is the waving of passports as would-be or returning migrant workers thank God for the bounty they are about to or have received accordingly.
- 73 Eric Hobsbawm, "Debating the Labour Aristocracy," in *Workers: Worlds of Labor* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 223.
- 74 This is even true of Filipino immigrants to the United States. This is an odd group since, by virtue of their status, they have expressed their desire to become Americans formally (and thus show a similar intent to end their Filipino citizenship), but in everyday life they have displayed little interest in American domestic politics, preferring to continue following closely the political dynamics back home. This would include believing that they have a "right" to comment on and even make their presence felt in local politics. On this strange relationship between American(ized) Pinoys and the Philippines, see Benito Vergara, Jr., "Nationalism without Guilt," Paper presented at the Panel "Filipino Nationalism and History," Association for Asian Studies Meeting, March 1998, Washington, D.C.
- 75 Filomeno Aguilar, Jr., "Guest Editor's Preface," *Philippine Sociological Review* 44, 1-4 (January-December 1966): 4.
- 76 A side issue here is the debate over strategies and modes of resistance. Elections and the "parliamentary road" have made a marked revival in areas like Southeast Asia, while "guerrilla warfare" is resurrecting itself in Bosnia, Kosovo and Chechnya.

Table 1. Number of Land- and Sea-Based Filipinos Working Abroad, 1975-1992

Year	Total	Land-based (Percentage)	Sea-based (Percentage)
1975	36,035	12,501 (35%)	23,535 (65%)
1976	47,835	19,221 (40%)	28,614 (60%)
1977	70,375	36,676 (52%)	33,699 (48%)
1978	88,241	50,961 (58%)	37,280 (42%)
1979	137,337	92,519 (67%)	44,818 (33%)
1980	214,590	157,394 (73%)	57,196 (27%)
1981	266,243	210,936 (79%)	55,307 (21%)
1982	314,284	250,115 (80%)	64,169 (20%)
1983	434,207	380,263 (88%)	53,944 (12%)
1984	425,081	371,065 (87%)	54,016 (13%)
1985	389,200	337,754 (87%)	51,446 (13%)
1986	414,461	357,687 (86%)	56,774 (14%)
1987	496,854	425,881 (86%)	70,973 (14%)
1988	477,764	381,892 (80%)	95,872 (20%)
1989	522,984	407,974 (78%)	115,010 (22%)
1990	598,769	468,591 (78%)	130,178 (22%)
1991	701,762	554,476 (79%)	147,286 (21%)
1992	723,449	564,801 (78%)	158,647 (22%)
TOTAL	6,359,471	5,080,707 (80%)	1,278,764 (20%)

Source: *Philippine Overseas Employment Administration.*

Table 2. Overseas Contract Workers Foreign Exchange Remittances 1984-1994 (\$Million)

Year	Number of Workers (thousand)	Land-based Growth Rate		Sea-based Growth Rate		Total Growth Rate
		Amount	%	Amount	%	
1983	660.08	284.37	2.76	944.45	69.13	16.53
1985	597.89	89.91	26.52	687.20	(52.06)	4.30
1986	571.75	108.69	(04.37)	680.44	21.70	(0.98)
1987	671.43	120.48	17.43	791.91	10.85	16.38
1988	683.31	173.50	1.77	856.81	44.01	8.20
1989	755.19	217.83	10.52	973.02	25.55	13.56
1990	893.40	287.67	18.30	1,181.07	32.06	21.38
1991	1,125.06	375.23	25.93	1,500.29	30.44	27.03
1992	1,757.36	445.02	56.20	2,202.38	18.60	46.80
1993	1,840.30	389.28	4.72	2,229.58	(12.52)	1.23
1994	2,280.40	349.72	23.91	2,630.12	(10.16)	19.42

Source: *Philippine Overseas Employment Administration.*