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Managing the "Main Force": The Communist Party and Peasantry in the Philippines

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Despite the success of the Communist Party of the Philippines in winning rural support, its work has consistently been characterized by an instrumentalist approach to the peasantry. The article begins with an examination of the foundations of the party's attitude towards the peasantry and its roots in Marxist-Leninist theory and practice. It goes on to consider evidence of the party's instrumental approach in practice, examining the impact on legal peasant organizations and the experience of socio-economic projects in the countryside. Attention next turns to an analysis of the party's attitude towards "united front work" and its impact on coalition-building among the peasantry. Finally, the author considers the implications of the current split and debates in the ranks of the CPP for the peasantry and for the future of radical politics in the country.

Introduction

Since its founding in 1968, the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) has been best known for its phenomenal success in organizing a significant base among the peasantry which proved capable of waging guerrilla war against government troops for almost a quarter of a century. While the rapid growth in communist strength through the mid-1980s owed much to the presence of the Marcos dictatorship, the party was able to survive and expand under conditions of severe repression mainly because it based itself among the nation's rural poor majority and promoted their demands for access to land and increased incomes.

However, while the party succeeded in establishing a nation-wide peasant-based organization, it never transcended the bounds of traditional Marxist-Leninist theory, which has approached the peasantry in an instrumental fashion. The CPP proclaimed the peasantry as the "main" force in its revolutionary struggle to seize state power, but, true to its heritage, insisted that the leadership of the revolution necessarily remained with the "proletariat" and its "vanguard party". Despite its

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contribution to transforming the lives of thousands of peasant households, often through great sacrifices and hardships endured by its cadres, the party never encouraged the development of an autonomous peasant movement and, in fact, actively inhibited the rise of such a movement.

My central proposition is that the instrumentalism that characterized the CPP's work is rooted in the very foundations of Marxist-Leninist theory and historical practice. This sets severe limitations on the extent to which the party, or similarly-oriented organizations in the future, can contribute to, on the one hand, the promotion of the long-term interests of the rural poor and, on the other, the process of creating a more just, equitable and democratic society.

Party's Attitude Towards the Peasantry: The Foundations

When José Maria Sison "re-established" the Communist Party of the Philippines along with eleven other "delegates" at a founding "congress" in 1968, the political program they adopted had profound consequences for the party's relationship to the peasantry in subsequent years.[1] Two aspects of the program proved to be particularly important. First, inspired by the writings of Mao Zedong and the experience of the Chinese revolution, the young party adopted Sison's analysis of the Philippines as a "semi-feudal, semi-colonial" society and, consequently, the need for a "national democratic revolution of a new type", before moving on to establish socialism. Second, the new party identified itself in the Leninist tradition as the "vanguard" of the proletariat and adopted a class analysis which placed the working class at the leadership of the revolution while seeing the peasantry as the "main" force.[2]

The first position allowed the CPP to develop an extensive base in the countryside among the rural poor. The second position firmly locked the party in the traditional communist mould of treating all people's struggles and organizations, especially those of the peasantry, in an instrumental fashion subordinated to the party and its goal of seizing state power.

Semi-feudalism and revolutionary agrarian reform

Sison's statement of the mode of production in the Philippines as "semi-colonial and semi-feudal" had three important implications for the party. First, it emphasized the nationalist character of the movement and allowed the party to attach itself to a long-established nationalist tradition and movement. Second, it underscored the lack of industrialization in the country and allowed the party to assume the mantle of economic development, including the promotion of the role of patriotic capitalists (under the leadership of the party of course) in a future national democratic polity. Third, it stressed the plight of the rural poor, including "poor and lower-middle peasants" and landless farmworkers, arguing that the "major democratic content" of this stage of the revolution was the "peasantry's struggle for land", and it recognized that agriculture had to be developed as the basis for future industrialization. It is this third aspect that concerns us here.

By emphasizing the premier importance of the peasantry's struggle for land, as Mao had done in China, the party was able to focus its cadres' work in the countryside and win considerable support within rural communities. Cadres developed an impressive practice of social investigation as the basis of organizational work in the *barrios* (villages). The practice had emerged out of the combination of the young communists' earlier experience in trade union and student organizing in the cities and the emphasis that Sison placed on conducting a detailed class analysis along the lines outlined by Mao in China.[3] This practice of social investigation, when carried out properly, allowed the party to identify the specific problems of the community and the individuals most likely to serve as local leaders. It also served as the beginning of the education of the poorest members of the community and future organizers of the party.[4]

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The party's "Revolutionary Guide to Land Reform" outlined a minimum and maximum land reform program, again very much based on the Chinese model[5] (CPP, 1972). For the most part, the maximum land reform program, which involved the outright confiscation of land from landlords and its free redistribution to landless and land-deficient peasants, was to be implemented only after the establishment of a national democratic government.[6] The party's rural work was based mainly on its "minimum land reform program" which focused on lowering land rents, interest rates, milling fees and irrigation fees, and ensuring subsistence wage rates for farmworkers and reasonable prices for peasant produce.

It was probably the existence of this program, more than anything else, that allowed the CPP to survive in the countryside for so many years. There were both strategic/principled and tactical/pragmatic reasons for limiting land reform to the minimum program. The party's strategic position was to form an "anti-feudal united front" based on uniting the proletariat with the poor and lower-middle peasants and farmworkers, to "win over the entire middle peasantry to neutralize the rich peasants and isolate the landlord class."[7] (Guerrero, 1970: 145) Only the land of the "most despotic landlords" would be confiscated and redistributed, and this usually meant only the land of absentee owners whose overseers would not cooperate with the movement. This limited the number of enemies the party would create in a locality. On the level of principle, the party never fully agreed to the redistribution of individual land titles and generally distributed only planting rights to beneficiaries. This was partly because of the fluidity of the war, partly because they wanted the peasantry to remain open to redistribution later, and partly because they hesitated to sanction ownership rights over land.[8] (Putzel, 1992: 379-80)

Tactically, party leaders knew that any major land redistribution would attract the attention of the military.[9] In some regions, the party was more bold in carrying out land confiscation if they felt they had a big enough territory under their control to hide their activities for a significant period of time. The account by party leaders in Northern Luzon of such a situation is worth citing at length:

> The organizers there [in Cagayan] together with the NPA entered a group of five barrios controlled by one landlord, Yusevio Kapulatan, who

> was a despotic landlord in the sense that he grabbed the entire area. He asked every tenant there to pay him land rent every month. Besides that every forest product that the peasant brings down to the town center, he gets a percentage. There are also cases of raping women — teenagers and village women. So what the unit did was to arrest him when it entered after conducting the social investigation, knowing the problems, the extent of what Kapulatan was doing and consulting with the peasants. The unit presented the idea of arresting Kapulatan so that the lands used to be controlled by Kapulatan can be distributed, even the carabaos [a water buffalo used for farm work]. So the peasants consented about it. The unit arrested Kapulatan, tried him before a people's court. It was actually a public trial sometime in 1976. It was an open trial. It was attended by the barrio people of the four [sic] barrios. Then after confirming the accusations he was met with the death punishment. He was killed. Then the lands he landgrabbed were distributed free to the people. Even the 18 carabaos that he used to own were distributed to the people on a rotation basis. Those who did not have work implements or carabaos were given priority....That existed from 1976 to 1983, seven years. Then [the government's Provincial Commander] Rodolfo Aguinaldo came into the picture knowing that was one political gain that we have in the area. So he started, not only kidnapping babies, he started kidnapping carabaos also. He got the carabaos and parcels of lands distributed [and] land rents were resumed. Anyway, we enjoyed seven years of political and economic supremacy in the area before Aguinaldo came in.[10]

They emphasized, however, that, "only in areas where we are relatively strong and secure and consolidated do we implement the maximum program."

Sticking to the minimum program was also justified in pragmatic terms. Party leaders realized, and when they did not local peasants reminded them, that existing landlords and moneylenders provided the credit that is essential for farming. Doing away with them prematurely would bring down ruin on a peasant community. What is more, redistributing land brings with it a host of administrative problems. Sison explained:

> If you do things prematurely, even among the land reform beneficiaries there would be a lot of disagreements and even quarrels about the quantity and the quality of land to be apportioned. The cadres have to

> mind so many problems. Now you are going to give them one more big problem settling. There is a natural division of the land already while doing the minimum land reform program. If you are going to rearrange, that is a lot of administrative work and even litigating. It is nice to hear, "confiscate now", and "give the biggest benefit now to the peasants". But is it possible? Is it to the advantage of the revolutionary movement now? Is the movement now capable of carrying out the maximum land reform?[11]

Aside from implementing its minimum land reform program, the party was, ironically, also often directly or indirectly responsible for the implementation of land redistribution under the Marcos and Aquino governments' conservative agrarian reform programs. Often, the presence of the party's New People's Army (NPA) in an area made landowners more willing to participate in the government program.[12] (Putzel, 1992: 317-18,363,378-79)

The CPP's early characterization of the mode of production as "semi-feudal" led it to focus on the countryside where it clearly developed an impressive record of work, sinking deep roots among the peasantry. It drew upon the best experience of peasant work in the international communist movement, that of the Chinese Communist Party, and applied the lessons creatively. While the party's basic theoretical position allowed it to develop work among the rural poor and to recognize the positive role capitalists could play in development, it also set clear limits on the party's long-term effectiveness. Its doctrinaire adherence to what was a rather shallow analysis of the mode of production, blinded the party to processes of economic change occurring in agriculture and rural communities.[13] Even its strongest card, land reform, was circumscribed by a hesitance to endorse enthusiastically individual rights to land. The party's positive focus on the countryside could well have been achieved through alternative and perhaps more sophisticated analyses of the country's political economy.[14]

The Proletarian Vanguard and the "Main Force"

While the CPP sunk roots among the peasantry, it also subscribed to traditional Marxist-Leninist theory about the nature of the working class and the vanguard party. In doing so, it endorsed traditional communist perceptions of the peasantry as in need of leadership from the working

class and it relegated all popular movements and organizations, including those of the peasantry, to a position subordinate to the party.

All the basic documents of the party proclaimed that in the "era of imperialism" the working class must lead the revolutionary struggle. The proletariat would assume this leading role through its proletarian party, the CPP. This ideological position accepted the view of the "backward" peasantry as enshrined in the work of Marx. In one of his most important works outlining his position on class struggle and the state, and, in fact, calling for an alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry, Marx outlined his view of the peasantry describing their situation in France:

> The small-holding peasants form a vast mass, the members of which live in similar conditions but without entering into manifold relations with one another. Their mode of production isolates them from one another instead of bringing them into mutual intercourse....In this way, the great mass of the French nation is formed by simple addition of homologous magnitudes, much as potatoes in a sack form a sack of potatoes....They are consequently incapable of enforcing their class interests in their own name, whether through a parliament or through a convention. They cannot represent themselves, they must be represented. Their representative must at the same time appear as their master, as an authority over them, as an unlimited governmental power that protects them against the other classes and sends them rain and sunshine from above.[15] (Marx, 1853: 478-79)

However, Marx did not dismiss the peasantry as reactionary in the manner of German Lasallean socialists.[16] He recognized that this "sack of potatoes" — the peasants — could contribute to revolutionary change, but they could only do so to the extent that they abandoned aspirations to retain small holdings and "linked up with the towns." Thus, the peasants were seen as a naturally conservative force unless they supported the working class, whose revolutionary struggle embodied the future, and renounced their claims to an outmoded form of property.[17] (Marx, 1853:481-84) Lenin[18] (1901:11-19), in one of his earliest writings on the worker-peasant alliance, conveyed the same message. Sison subscribed to a similar view writing in 1967:

> In the Philippines at this stage of our national history, the two most progressive classes competing for class leadership are the local

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bourgeoisie and the working class; it cannot be the peasantry or any other class. The peasantry can only follow either the class leadership of the bourgeoisie or the working class.[19] (Sison, 1967:193)

From the party's point of view, the peasantry could be understood as revolutionary only in so far as it accepted the leadership of the working class, but also the working class could only win in the Philippines in alliance with the peasantry. The CPP considered the peasantry as the "biggest motive force" and the "main force" of the revolutionary struggle.[20] (Guerrero, 1970:144,158) However, in affirming this, the party was essentially assuming an instrumental attitude toward the peasantry which could provide its soldiers and which inhabited the territory where its enemies could be defeated.

The peasantry was seen as so important, first because it made up the majority of the population and the majority of the poor and disempowered. As such, it was from among the peasantry that the party could recruit the bulk of its fighters for the NPA, the armed wing of the CPP, after 1969. Second, the peasantry was important because the "weakest link" of the state was in the countryside (due to geography and its lack of control over local exploiters) and it was there that the party and its army could defeat the armed forces of the state and encircle the cities to seize state power.[21] (Guerrero, 1970:144-45)

The ultimate goal of Leninist parties everywhere has been the seizure of state power by the self-proclaimed vanguard of the working class, the communist party. This had two important consequences in the Philippines, as elsewhere. The first, was that any means could be justified if they were perceived to contribute to the goal of seizing or consolidating state power to build socialism, or national democracy. Second, communist parties seize power in the name of the working class. Historically, they have been parties of the working class primarily by ideological conviction (something which has proven problematic to maintain over time).[22] Intellectuals, workers and peasants who become members and officials of the party lay claim to exclusive representation of the interests of the oppressed, the

veracity of which can be proven only by the party's success in gaining popular support and achieving victory (and presumably maintaining popular support after coming to power and staying in power).[23]

Both the party's success in winning support among the peasantry and its instrumental attitude toward the peasantry were founded in its most basic theoretical positions. The party's attitude toward the peasantry was thus not a problem of the individuals in charge, but rather a problem grounded in its basic theoretical and philosophical outlook.

Instrumentalism in Practice

Throughout its history, the CPP has engaged in organizing peasants insofar as such organization promotes the party's objective of seizing state power. This can be seen in the experience of both the underground peasant organization, the *Pambansang Katipunan ng Magsasaka* (PKM, or National Peasant Movement) and the legal peasant organization where party members have been the most active, the *Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas* (KMP, or Peasant Movement of the Philippines). The party's approach to these organizations, as to all "mass organizations" has been an instrumental one, and in the classic mode of Leninism, an approach that seeks to make them vehicles for transmitting the party's message to the people.

The PKM was nominally a nation-wide underground "mass organization" of the peasants and non-unionized farmworkers and it was listed as a member of the National Democratic Front (NDF), the formal underground "revolutionary united front organization" led by the party. In fact, the PKM did not appear to have a national organizational existence, nor in most cases any independent local existence.[24]

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Regional party leaders expressed differing ideas about what the PKM should be. Ka Mer, of the Bicol regional command, when queried about the role of the PKM described it as functioning like the government "before there is a *barrio* revolutionary committee."[25] It was only in

1982 that the party began talking about establishing mass organizations, like the PKM, in the revolutionary base areas.[26] In practice, the PKM appears to have been the organization of male members of the village. Ka Mer explained the organizing process where initially party members established a *Barrio* Liaison Group. As the work progressed they would set up a *Barrio* Organizing Committee (BOC). The BOC organised the village by sectors, which he described as "the peasants, women, youth and fishermen" (evidently the peasants were men and the women were women).[27] Regional cadres from Northern Luzon described the "men's PKM", the "women's PKM" and the "youth PKM". However, there was no local chapter of the PKM bringing these together, but rather they were united under the BOC and later the *Barrio* Revolutionary Committee. To speak of a national PKM that was a member of the NDF therefore appears to have been a complete fiction.

The "local PKM" was the context in which peasants were mobilized to make demands for reforms along the lines of the minimum land reform program. The "most advanced activists" from among the PKM, the women and the youth sectors were recruited to the local party branch once the village was consolidated. The party did preside over the development of new leadership groups in the villages drawn from among the poor and lower-middle peasants, rather than the rich peasants and small landlords who have traditionally dominated *barrio* councils.[28] However, the PKM, as an organization, existed in name only and it was a name used to refer to the organized peasants in the guerrilla zones, who, in Ka Mer's words, "support the guerrilla base and support the army."[29]

The party also appears to have employed a rather instrumental approach towards the legal peasant organizations in which its members worked. After its founding in 1985, the *Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas* (KMP) openly adopted the political stance of national democracy outlined in the program of the CPP-controlled NDF. However, the organization was never merely a "front group" of the CPP, since it had a real existence with functioning chapters and a national executive, whose members were by no means all members of the party. Organizations that adopted a national democratic orientation, like the KMP, were commonly referred to as the "national democrats", or "nat-dems" — a label exclusively associated with CPP influence. The party has always taken a heavy hand towards the legal organizations over which it claimed ideological hegemony, and the

policy decisions taken by them. Often, on the local level, some members of legal "people's organizations" (peasant associations, trade unions, teachers' associations, etc.) owed more allegiance to local party leadership than the national leadership of their organization.[30] This made it particularly difficult for national leaders of organizations like the KMP, whether they were members of the party or not, to exercise real authority over their organizations.[31]

In Bicol, a legal peasant organization was established but, as a regional party cadre said, "it was only for grandstanding'." He said the legal peasant movement existed in the "mass movement area", which meant three kilometers from the road, "Beyond that is the guerrilla base." These organizations, he went on, were put up for "public projection — the legal aspect." They maintained a desk and attended to visitors and propaganda. They also provided assistance to the guerrilla base areas through education and research. The cadre said, "In the frank reality they serve as appendages. That's the frank reality."[32]

The party's instrumental approach was even more evident in its conduct toward the socio-economic projects launched by legal organizations where its members were active. On the one hand, these projects were often used to raise money for the NPA's armed struggle. On the other hand, many activists, even in the legal organizations themselves, expressed the fear that if too much attention was given to socio-economic projects, the peasants would become "economistic" or content with achieving minor reforms.[33]

In Bicol, in 1989, Ka Mer explained that the party had finally reassessed its approach to legal projects to ensure that money was actually spent on the projects to the benefit of local people:

> You know these legal projects. You have a funding agency [that says] "[you] give [us] project proposals [we] give [you] funds." What is being done by some comrades? There's no reality. It is rechannelled to the Party funds. Well it's good, it goes to the NPA, to the Party, to buy weapons, but the masses did not receive. But when the funding agency comes, to the masses...with all the legalities and the masses say, "I did not receive anything." Oh, that's bad. That's bad. That's why comrades from the legal institutions are complaining. I have talked with them and they want that the funds must be 80-20 — 20[%] for centralization and

> 80[%] for reality. "OK," I told them, "I want that," and I convinced comrades that this must be the policy now because the masses — we are committing the masses to this kind of swindling.[34]

This demonstrated not only the past instrumental attitude of the party toward the legal peasant organizations, but also the fact that some party members themselves began to realize both the precarious nature of the venture, as well as the potential impact on long-term peasant support.

The peasant organizations which the party contributed to building at both the underground and the legal level had a significant impact on peasant lives and encouraged the emergence of new village, regional and national leaders. Nevertheless, the party's instrumentalism was responsible for its failure to encourage these organizations to become autonomous groups through which the rural poor could come to articulate and defend their own interests. While this ensured short-term success for the party's own war effort, it considerably lessened the possibility that these organizations could contribute to the long-term transformation of rural society.

Problem of the "United Front" and Coalition-Building

The party's attitude toward coalition politics was also colored by an instrumental approach. Since its founding in 1968, the CPP has had difficulty in working with the fairly wide array of smaller political organizations associated with various versions of social democracy and democratic socialism. By the early 1980s the CPP was dominant in most of the largest, or at least the most active, people's organizations. However, many trade unions and peasant associations were either linked to the smaller social democratic political formations, the old pro-Moscow Communist Party (PKP), more conservative political organizations, or claimed to be entirely independent. At the root of persistent problems in building unity with other political forces, or between people's organizations where the national democratic orientation was dominant and those where it was not, was the CPP's basic position on the "united front"

Sison's early writings and the founding documents of the party spelled out the necessity of building a revolutionary united front to advance the national democratic revolution, another lesson learned from Mao's writings.[35] (Sison, 1967:197-199; CPP, 1968:285-286). The

united front was conceived as one based on an "alliance between the working class and the peasantry" and incorporating the urban petty bourgeoisie and at least the support of the national bourgeoisie. However, right from the start, the party insisted that, "A true united front is one for carrying out armed struggle," and insisted that, "the proletarian revolutionary party can best guarantee its leadership, independence and initiative only by having the People's Army firmly at its command." Only the party could lead the united front.[36] (CPP, 1968:287,300)

The National Democratic Front

The party first put out the call for building a formal united front through a Preparatory Commission for the NDF in April 1973, six months after Marcos declared martial law. While its ten point program centered on calls for the overthrow of the dictatorship, it included a commitment to armed struggle, and in its elaboration of the program in 1977 affirmed, "We are certain of the socialist future of mankind."[37] (NDF, 1977) For the most part, until the split in the party in the early 1990s, despite the long list of organizations said to be among its members, the NDF never succeeded in transcending the unity of those groups already led by the CPP.[38] This is not surprising since the basic documents of the party spoke about the united front as one of the party's "weapons" in the national democratic revolution.

While personalities identified with the NDF enjoyed a significant stature in the major urban centers, the particularities of the NDF program do not appear to have been widely known among, or a major concern to, party cadres in the countryside.[39] This was not necessarily because they did not believe in working to establish coalitions, but rather they appeared not to believe in the possibility of making the NDF into a meaningful coalition. By mid-1989, the regional party leadership in Bicol was hardly aware of the draft of a new NDF program that had been in circulation for almost a year. Ka Mer said he thought he had seen the draft and it would be given to "allies", but added, "You know, the text is only in English." Regional leaders in Northern Luzon also raised the problem of the lack of translations of NDF materials.[40]

Ka Mer made two important points about the NDF. "Comrades are confused," he said, since they did not understand why this "formal organization" was needed in the region. They could understand that it might be needed to relate to forces abroad, who "will not correspond to

the Party or the NPA, but to the NDF," and maybe at the national level, in Manila. "The problem is, it is not yet organized. The NDF is not yet organized. There are political forces already, governments want to support us through the NDF. There is no NDF." Interestingly, he added that "alliance politics" were needed on a broader basis of unity than the program of the NDF, but said the Central Committee was still set on the NDF. Ultimately, for the party, coalitions were perceived merely as tools for advancing its own position, a fact that was not lost on would-be allies.

The Congress for a People's Agrarian Reform

The narrow attitude of the party leadership towards coalition work clearly carried over to activists within the legal peasant movement. This was evident in the case of the Congress for a People's Agrarian Reform (CPAR), set up in 1987, on the initiative of peasant organizations not linked with the party, to challenge the Aquino government to implement a meaningful agrarian reform program. These organizations soon came up with their own proposal for agrarian reform called the People's Agrarian Reform Code (PARCODE) and expressed their determination to force the government to adopt this code. The coalition brought together an impressive group of 13 peasant federations and enjoyed the active support of the entire center-left political spectrum among non-governmental organizations. The members of CPAR are listed in Table 1.[41] CPAR represented perhaps the most effective and long-lasting coalition among sectoral organizations from across the center-left political spectrum during the two decades after Sison and colleagues had reestablished the CPP.

The structure of CPAR was divided into two parts — the National Council, which included the leaders of each member peasant federation, and the Secretariat, which functioned under the leadership of the National Council to carry out the organizational tasks of CPAR's work. There was also an informal political caucus which was a place for discussion between the political forces involved in the CPAR.

While the KMP joined CPAR when it was established, its reception of the initiative appeared to be lukewarm. The KMP had its own proposal for agrarian reform put to President Aquino almost a year before CPAR was established.[42] (Putzel, 1992:218-19) It was probably bigger than any other member organization of CPAR, at least in terms of active members on the ground, and it no doubt irked KMP leaders to have to participate

Table 1
Peasant Federations in the Congress for a People's Agrarian Reform

	Peasant Federation	Leaders
AMA	Aniban ng mga Manggagawa sa Agrikultura	Francisco Baltazar
AMIHAN	Pambansang Pederasyon ng Kababaihang Magbubukid	Phoebe Pasamonte
BAHANGGUNIAN	Bahanggunian ng Maliliit na Mangingisda sa Lawa ng Laguna	Sofronio Balagtas
KABAPA	Katipunan ng Bagong Pilipina	Trinidad Domingo (Aida Lava)
KAMMMPI	Kapatiran ng Maliliit at Malayang Mangingisda ng Pilipinas	Arturo Olegario
KASAMA	Kalipunan ng mga Samahan ng mga Mamamayan	Feliciano Matienzo
KMP	Kilusan ng Magbubukid ng Pilipinas	Rafael Mariano (Jaime Tadeo)
LMMMP (LAKAS)	Lakas ng Magsasaka, Mangingisda at Manggagawa ng Pilipinas	Laurentino Bascug
LMP	Lakas ng Magsasakang Pilipino	Gregorio Nazarrea
NFSW-FGT	National Federation of Sugar Workers Food and General Trades	Roy Mahinay (Serge Chemiguin)
PAKISAMA	Pambansang Kilusan ng mga Samahang Magsasaka	Vic Fabe (Oscar Castillo)
PAMALAKAYA	Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakayang Pilipinas	Rodolfo Sambajon
PASFFI	Philippine Association of Small Farmers and Fishermen, Inc.	Rustico Tagarda

Source: Congress for a People's Agrarian Reform

on an equal basis with what they saw as smaller and less militant organizations.

In the months following CPAR's launch, members of the CPAR secretariat made it clear that while the KMP sent representatives to all meetings particularly to discuss policy orientation, it did not appear to be very active in building up the coalition's organizational structure.[43] During the same period, KMP leaders appeared to be unaware of the details of CPAR activities and did not accord them much importance.[44] Nevertheless, in mass mobilizations over the next three years, national democratic peasant and farmworker organizations often were the most widely represented. However, when speaking to the media, their leaders usually spoke only in the name of their own organizations like the KMP or the National Federation of Sugar Workers (NFSW).

By January 1991, CPAR had become an extremely significant organization.[45] A decision was taken to expand the coalition through regionalization, or the establishment of coalitions not only at the national level, but also at the regional level. According to the national secretariat there was a high level of unity within CPAR at this time. The government had decisively moved against the peasant movement, not only through the adoption of its conservative agrarian reform program in 1988, but also by jailing peasant leader Jaime Tadeo and failing to ratify the pro-farmer Florencio Abad as Secretary of the Department of Agrarian Reform.

By July 1991, peasant organizations in the provinces were carrying both their own name and the CPAR name. A regional council of CPAR was established in Mindanao during the first quarter of 1991. A coordination meeting had taken place in the Visayas region initiating a transitional phase toward the establishment of a regional coalition. A steering committee had been set up in Luzon, which was also in a transitional phase.

In July 1991, the National Council approved a year-long plan calling for regionalization. It was at that point that problems emerged. In the Visayas, the national democratic organizations opposed the establishment of a new regional CPAR claiming that a Visayas Council for Agrarian Reform (VCAR) already existed and that groups aligned with other political tendencies were members. However, the other CPAR member

organizations did not want to join the VCAR, which some perceived as dominated by the national democrats, and wanted to go ahead with a new regional CPAR.

The problem was brought to the CPAR National Council in November 1991. Groups from the national democratic aligned organizations charged that coalitions were "undermining" local organizations. The NFSW claimed that its traditional foreign partners were no longer providing funds to the union but instead were channelling them to the coalition. The National Council attempted to institute measures to ensure the respect of the organizational integrity of each member, including: the stipulation that local level CPAR coalitions would only be established if all groups at the national level participated locally; regional leaders of the peasant federations could decide whether and when to establish regional CPAR organizations; all funds and resources would pass through the national peasant federations, the National Council would be informed about all financial matters and foreign donors would be asked to go first to the peasant federations; and finally the CPAR secretariat should work with each federation.

That meeting also decided the basis on which CPAR would participate in the upcoming presidential elections of 1992.[46] The National Council laid out the criteria by which it would support presidential and senatorial candidates. Three of the CPAR organizations (LAKAS, PASFI and LMP) ended up supporting former General Fidel Ramos, while all the others supported the presidential candidate favored by most of the left and center-left of the political spectrum, Senator Jovito Salonga. CPAR joined in an election-oriented United Rural Sector Association and advocated the implementation of agrarian reform. While divided over their favored presidential candidate, CPAR united around a senatorial slate.

In the aftermath of the elections, at a meeting in June 1992, the KMP raised basic questions about CPAR's orientation, questioning whether the organization was still advocating genuine agrarian reform and suggesting that it was too deferential to the government. At that meeting CPAR decided to hold its Second Congress.

The KMP raised its criticisms of CPAR in a more aggressive manner at a National Council meeting in August 1992. Representatives from the other peasant federations objected to the KMP's language, saying they

were addressing coalition partners like enemies. The KMP charged that: (1) the basis of unity of CPAR was violated by several groups that were no longer promoting PARCODE; (2) these same groups had decided to support Ramos for president; (3) CPAR was getting "dole outs" that amounted to a "clandestine form of bribery"; (4) some peasant leaders in CPAR were determined to obtain positions in government; and (5) CPAR had become a "super coalition" implying it was undermining the position of member peasant organizations.

The KMP proposed that the organization take several steps: (1) review its basis of unity; (2) take a clear position on the Ramos government; (3) suspend projects involving government and foreign funding; (4) dissolve the regionalization; and (5) reduce the secretariat to 1987 levels of four to five people. While the national democrats insisted they did not want to break up the coalition but only oppose a "conservative trend", by arresting the regionalization of CPAR and calling for the dismantling of the secretariat, they were actually proposing the winding down of CPAR. At a series of discussions in September 1992, LAKAS and LMP decided to endorse KMP's call for dissolving the regional structures of CPAR. Plans for a Congress were abandoned and instead a meeting between the peasant federations was called for 4-9 October of the same year.

The "inter-federation" meeting was attended by some 200 people and KMP had the smallest delegation of all the peasant federations. All the federations were to arrive with a position on the KMP proposals. The KMP re-read their position paper and were questioned most closely on why they were addressing coalition partners like enemies. The national democrats present said that support for Ramos during the presidential elections was a break in the unity of CPAR. Individuals who had supported Ramos argued that there was no break in the basis of unity since, as Oscar Castillo said, he had supported Ramos personally, but his organization, PAKISAMA, had supported Salonga. Representatives of the peasant organizations not associated with the national democrats argued that the most important issue was not the elections but what position to take toward the new Ramos government. During the course of discussions the KMP representatives said they had not wanted to treat all as enemies and were critical only of some CPAR member organizations. There was divided opinion over the regionalization of CPAR.

In the end a decision was taken to dissolve the regional organizations of CPAR and to gradually reduce the number of people in the central secretariat. While the National Council said it would launch a campaign on the problem of the conversion of agricultural lands to industrial use to demonstrate CPAR was still active, it was clear that this was the beginning of the dissolution of the most successful coalition organization to have emerged in the Philippines.

Those organizations associated with the national democrats clearly had a point in questioning CPAR members who had supported Ramos' election campaign, since the former general, Armed Forces chief and Defence Secretary was never a friend of agrarian reform. At the same time, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that they feared the further expansion of CPAR mainly because it was a coalition where they could not exercise control. They had gone along with CPAR while it did not threaten their dominant position in the peasant movement. But as CPAR began to grow, the independent, social-democratic and democratic-socialist peasant groups expanded their influence. Foreign NGOs that once provided funding to the national democrats were increasingly attracted to channelling funds through the broader coalition. There is little doubt that party activists in the peasant movement who assessed their coalition work primarily in terms of party gain, rather than in terms of building a broad peasant movement, felt threatened by these developments.

During this period the mood among organizations where party members were active was very much influenced by the debates causing sharp division within the party itself. There was a general atmosphere in party-influenced circles that it was time to "batten down the hatches" and consolidate forces. It was perceived that devoting energy to coalition-building was being done at the expense of basic organizing and party-building. In fact, the primary party actors behind the attack on CPAR appear to have been those associated with the less doctrinaire "rejectionist" camp who were attempting to prove their party credentials by withdrawing from coalition work.[47]

The Peasantry and the Current Split in the CPP

From at least the middle of 1991, the Communist Party of the Philippines has experienced a deep crisis that has led to the exodus of many individual members and the declaration of autonomy by two

regional organizations: Manila-Rizal, comprising the party structure in the national capital region, and the Visayas regional organization.[48] The divisions within the party began to emerge clearly only after the overthrow of the Marcos dictatorship, but they have roots stretching back to the early years of the party's existence. A full analysis of the debates and the current split in the party's ranks is not possible here.[49] Only a brief discussion of the debate is offered, concerning the party's relationship with the peasantry and the impact of the debate on the peasant movement.

On a simplistic level, the division in the party has been presented in the press and by party and non-party members as that between the supporters of party founder, José Ma. Sison, who is believed to have resumed the chairmanship of the party from abroad under the pseudonym Armando Liwanag and has called for a rectification movement to "reaffirm" the basic principles of the party, and those who have "rejected" this campaign and called for a rethinking of the party's strategy and tactics.[50] In fact, the debate is far more complicated than that, principally because those who have rejected the Sison position have done so for many different and often contradictory reasons and by no means form a unified group or point of view. That is, the debate cannot be accurately understood in the Maoist sense of a "two line struggle", even if it appears to be presented that way by the "reaffirm" position.

The debate is far from a merely theoretical dispute, as it involves a dark episode in the party's recent history when, in the mid-1980s, a large number of party cadres were interrogated, some tortured and many executed as government "deep penetration agents" (DPAs) with the subsequent realization that most were loyal party cadres.[51] It also involves the expulsion of former leaders of the party and an open accusation by Sison in the Manila press that they were enemy agents, thus threatening to degenerate into violence between disputing sides.[52] Finally, not only have individuals expressed their opinions by leaving the party, the exodus of regional party groups with their armed units also bodes ill for the peaceful resolution of opposing positions. All of this is even more serious given the history of the measures taken by the Armed Forces of the Philippines in their counterinsurgency warfare and the ever-present possibility that they will intervene covertly and openly, employing violent means against the factions of the party and the communities where they are active.

Many of the "rejectionists" are activists of long standing who have left the party and now advocate the creation and strengthening of people's organizations and non-governmental organizations autonomous from all political parties. This stance has assumed more importance since there appears to be an effort by the "reaffirm group", in the traditional instrumentalist spirit, to consolidate authority within such organizations. In fact, the fall-out of internal party disputes not only caused disruption within coalitions like CPAR, but has led to the split of the KMP itself.

When KMP leader Jaime Tadeo was released from prison in August 1993, after serving more than three years of a sentence for a criminal charge against him rigged during the Marcos years, he resumed his position as chairperson of the KMP and attempted to bring together opposing factions around a call for the unity of the peasant organization and its independence from warring party groups.[53] In a circular dated October 1993, Tadeo wrote:

> In KMP, the crisis centered on how to carry the peasant movement in the country. The group of Mr. Mariano, our vice-chairperson, wanted to go back to and "reaffirm" the old purely political-propaganda-campaign center orientation of KMP; while we want to create and traverse a new path in the peasant movement....We want a peasant movement which is principled but not fanatical, flexible but not opportunist. We want to have a peasant and people's movement which is already liberating even in the process of struggle for national liberation.[54]

The "reaffirmists" within KMP reacted by declaring they were the true KMP, disowning the Tadeo group, and removing funds from a KMP peso bank account. Tadeo responded by removing funds from the KMP dollar account so they could be "returned to the funding agencies for safekeeping'." The reaffirm group then demonstrated just how far an instrumentalist approach can be taken by filing official charges against Tadeo for stealing the money, thus threatening to put him back in prison in a manner not dissimilar from that employed against him by the government. While the case was finally withdrawn, the scars left by that action are not likely to fade in the minds of the veteran peasant leaders allied with Tadeo who now call themselves the Democratic KMP (DKMP).

One dimension of the division which has torn asunder the communist party is clearly a struggle for power. This is most evident in the long-standing rivlary between the Sison aligned Central Committee and the

Manila-Rizal organization, and in Sison's own "power agenda".[55] However, the more important debates concern the fundamental positions of the party on the "strategy of the revolution", the experience of socialism, the characterization of the dominant mode of production as semi-feudal, semi-colonial, the nature of coalition-building, the relationship between the party and people's organizations, and many other issues of central importance to those concerned with development and justice in the country.

The followers of Sison have fallen back on the party's old positions and thus have a more elaborate, consolidated and clear-cut stand on all these issues than their opponents. Additionally, they have been able to point to the anti-DPA campaign carried out when the party was under the leadership of some of those who are now among the rejectionists.

The strength of the party, as it pursued the strategy originally outlined by Sison, lay, on the one hand, in the determination with which its members sought to address the problems of the poorest and most disenfranchised in the Philippines — the poor peasants, farmworkers and fishermen, urban workers and the urban poor communities — and, on the other, in its recognition that capitalism still has a progressive role to play in the Philippines, both in the modernization of agriculture and in the development of industry.[56] Some of Sison's opponents have opposed the continuing characterization of the Philippines as a semi-feudal society and criticize the strategy of "protracted people's war" and the overemphasis on the countryside as the base for organizing.[57] (Villalobos, 1986, 1987) Among them are those who would support armed urban partisans and call for insurrectionary urban politics under the leadership of a new vanguard, while others emphasize the centrality of democratic popular movements and parliamentary forms of struggle.[58]

There are clearly many interesting ideas now being discussed by those who are reconsidering how to bring about fundamental changes in the Philippine political economy. As the dogmas of the past are discarded one would hope that sound analysis will inform new strategies. Clearly, in a country where near to 50 percent of the population lives in depressed rural areas and where the majority of rural producers have little secure access to land, the organization of rural producers and the implementation of redistributive agrarian reform appear to be necessary, if not sufficient, conditions for future development. That conclusion need not flow from

an analysis of the economic system as semi-feudal. Japan benefited, both in political and economic terms, from the implementation of agrarian reform after World War II when it was clearly a capitalist economy. While the Philippines has undergone tremendous demographic, economic and political transformations since the late 1960s, it would be erroneous to prematurely write-off the importance of rural development as some analysts appear to be doing.[59]

On the other hand, it is absolutely necessary that recent changes in the political and economic landscape, both in the Philippines and internationally, be taken into account by those who would aspire to 'ead the country towards the future. Discredited formulas for "nationalization", transforming plantations to state farms, and central planning, are only held onto at great cost either to the political fortunes of those advancing them or the people who must live under authorities who attempt to implement them. Since the CPP was founded a quarter of a century ago, there has been a revolution in progressive thought — in cultural, feminist and environmental theory — and important developments in the natural sciences, in economics and the study of institutions. A party looking to the future must be able to engage with all of these and no amount of "reaffirming" would appear to prepare it to do so.

Conclusion

A number of objections might be raised to the arguments presented here. First, it might be argued that the peasantry is fast disappearing as a social group and historically, to the extent that peasantries have participated in modern social movements, they have been (and had to be) "led" by outsiders. Related to this is the contention that it is the peasants themselves who provide the most solid support to the doctrinaire instrumentalist position of the Sison party faction.[60] (Goodno, 1991:167; Rocamora, 1994:84,126,203)

Engels[61] (1894), in opposing demands for the perpetuation of small property in agriculture, was convinced that the peasantry was disappearing in the face of the superiority of large scale capitalist farming. However, evidence in the 20th century has proven earlier Marxists wrong in their propositions about the small peasant farmer. In many developing countries it is still meaningful to talk about the peasantry, though the social groups referred to, like the countryside in which they live, have

everywhere experienced constant processes of transformation.[62] In the Philippines, like in Thailand, India or Mexico, modern peasant movements have emerged, which make use of modern communications and are national in scope. Whether it was ever appropriate to characterize peasants as "sacks of potatoes", and I suspect that it was not even in 19th century Europe, it certainly is not correct today.

In the Philippines, as elsewhere, the rural poor have many common interests and concerns and could emerge as a potent political force in the process of democratization and development.[63] If the Sison faction has secured support in the countryside it is because people in dire straits crave simple answers to their problems. It is the job of the politically enlightened not to pander to this tendency, but to encourage people's organizations to emerge as autonomous actors capable of understanding the complexity of their situation in order to act to transform it in their own interests.

Secondly, it might be argued that there was nothing particularly surprising about the CPP's instrumentalist attitude toward the peasantry since this is the very nature of communist parties. No doubt an equally compelling case could be made about the CPP's attitude toward urban wage workers, or even the party's collective attitude towards its own members during internal purges.[64] However, the fact that the party's strength was in the countryside and its moral authority derived largely from its claim to peasant support seems reason enough to focus on the peasantry.

In current debates among former party leaders and activists the organization's weaknesses are still too often looked upon as problems of particular party leaders and the "line" they have defended, rather than basic philosophical problems embedded in Marxist-Leninist theory.[65] The CPP's penchant for "managing" the peasantry, rather than empowering the peasants, was not the product of one faction in the current debate, but was shared by all. As wider debates continue about the future of the radical movement and as new peasant organizations are formed, it seems urgent that the same mistakes are not repeated.

Finally, it might be argued that the CPP has had no monopoly on instrumentalism and that all political parties, especially the clan alliances behind elite parties, have approached the peasantry and all citizens in an

instrumental fashion. This is certainly true, thqugh these political actors have not claimed to be revolutionary nor to be the voice of the rural poor. Even in a weak elite democracy like that which exists in the Philippines, clan alliances that temporarily control the state must temper their instrumentalism with the knowledge that they have opponents — if only elite ones — who are standing on the sidelines ready to replace them if they come to be widely perceived as abusing or misusing their power and failing in the job of governance. The CPP's instrumentalism, in contrast, is absolutist and therefore potentially much more abusive.

Most members of the CPP made enormous sacrifices and were doubtless committed to a vision of progress toward a more prosperous, equitable and just society. However, for the CPP, like communist parties everywhere, the tendency to subordinate peasant organizations and the goals of rural communities to the longer term goal of seizing state power was linked to a general disdain for democracy, pluralism and individual rights. These values were condemned as illusory liberal concepts forming part of a justification for continued exploitation. The CPP failed to see the intrinsic value of peasant organizations or the need for them to develop an autonomous identity to articulate and defend their own interests. Instead the party would articulate and defend the best interests of all through its superior command of revolutionary theory and its embodiment of the historically inevitable mission of the proletariat.

The possibility of party reform to take account of these problems is remote. There appear to be general difficulties in attempting to bring about fundamental reforms inside any communist party. Very few parties have succeeded in doing so.[66] Because the democratic-centralist Leninist vanguard by definition must consider itself as the embodiment of proletarian ideology and revolutionary theory, and relies on that identity as its claim to legitimacy, any process of fundamental reform and questioning tends to lead to the unravelling of the organization. It would seem that the reaffirmists understand this and, from their own perspective, are pursing the only course open to them if they want to avoid the disintegration of their organization and the establishment of something else in its place. Yet, while that may prolong the existence of the CPP and its army, and possibly rival formations of the same type, it is not likely to facilitate the empowerment of Filipino people nor the economic development of the nation.

While the CPP has done much to transform the political spectrum in the nation and especially in the countryside, it has never transcended the instrumentalist approach to the peasantry that has been the hallmark of most communist movements. The most promising sign for the future is the new interest in democracy expressed by those in the peasant and other sectors who have distanced themselves from the party.[57] It is much more difficult to build a pluralist and democratic movement committed to far-reaching social change, than it is to build a single-minded organization to wage war. Democracy can be a messy business. It can be an empty shell of formalistic procedures where personalities and dominant economic classes easily have their way, or it can be a rich process of debate, participation and struggle for social transformation. ✿

Notes

1 The author is Lecturer in Development Studies at the London School of Economics, Houghton Street, London WC2A 2AE. An earlier version of this article was presented at the Second European Conference of Philippine Studies, School of Oriental and African Studies, London, 13-15 April 1994. Thanks are expressed to Gerard Clarke, Irene Gedalof and reviewers for comments on earlier drafts.

2 For an account of the founding "congress" see Jones (1989, Chapter 2). The party's orientation was spelled out in the "Program for a People's Democratic Revolution" (CPP, 1968, pp. 283-301). This orientation was first outlined by Sison (1967) and further developed under his pseudonym, Amado Guerrero (1970).

3 Sison first described the peasantry as the "main force" under the leadership of the proletariat in the context of a national democratic revolution in 1966 (p. 89). The position was restated in all major party documents (CPP, 1968, p. 285; Guerrero, 1970, pp. 144, 158-9). This was most clearly inspired by Mao's (1939, p. 317) first systematic statement of the nature of the Chinese revolution, though Mao (1927: p. 32) had much earlier described the "poor peasants" as the "main force" and even as providing "leadership" before he tailored his language to suit the Comintern.

4 Interview, José Maria Sison, Utrecht, 20 May 1990.

5 In a meeting with a local party group on a *hacienda* in Negros Occidental in 1984, I was impressed with the ability of sugar workers, who had no formal education, to present fluently an analysis of the production relations on the *hacienda* and its place in the local and national political economy.

6 Interview, José Maria Sison, Utrecht, 20 May 1990. Though Sison explained that many times well-intentioned cadres had attempted to implement the maximum program with disastrous consequences.

7 This is in fact what happened when land titles were distributed to the peasantry in the name of the CPP-led National Democratic Front in 1987-1988, apparently in a propaganda effort to challenge the Aquino government to pass a meaningful agrarian reform program.

8 Interview, two leading cadres from Northern Luzon, May 1989.

9 Interview, José Maria Sison, Utrecht, 20 May 1990.

10 These changes included: the rapid growth of landless rural wage labor; a reduction in the importance of land rent to rural wealth and a concomittant increase in the importance of control over credit, trade, transport, agricultural equipment and other characteristics of capitalist production; and migration and labor export bringing new sources of income to the villages.

11 For instance, the importance of the peasantry and of capitalists to future development could have just as easily emanated from a characterization of the mode of production as "underdeveloped capitalism". My point is not to revive the rather derivative (and ultimately unproductive) "mode of production debate" that took place in the 1980s, but to point out that alternative formulations that might have allowed the party to comprehend the processes of rapid economic change would not necessarily have undermined its impressive record of work in the countryside.

12 The claim that Marx opposed the peasantry was propagated by Mitrany (1951). In fact, Marx vigorously opposed the "anti-peasant" views of Ferdinand Lasalle who saw all classes outside of the working class as "one reactionary mass" (Hussain and Tribe, 1983:6).

13 Official sources put working class membership of the Communist Party of China at about 14 percent in 1956-57 (Schurmann, 1968:132). James Petras (1978:40) opposes such an "excessively numerical approach" to identifying the class character of these parties arguing that "working-class struggles profoundly influenced the ideas and practices of the revolutionary organization."

14 The claim about the leading role of the party was outlined by Sison in the same teleological terms much later (1989:166, 172).

15 For instance, in more than 24 hours of detailed interviews about the peasant movement in a guerrilla zone in Bicol in 1989, no mention was made of the PKM until I raised it as a question to leaders, and Sison never mentioned it once during four and half hours of detailed discussion of revolutionary work among the peasants. James Goodno (1991:144) had similar experiences.

16 Interview with Ka Mer, Bicol regional command, September 1989.

17 There does appear to have been an on-going debate in the CPP from the early 1970s over whether an autonomous peasant organization should have been encouraged (discussion former member of the National Peasant Commission, July 1994). In 1974, church-based activists drafted a program for a National Peasant Union but it seems to have been labelled a "reformist" initiative and shelved. The exact relationship of party activists to the NPU has not been made clear (Franco, 1994:21-22 and appendices).

18 While there were slight variations on the formula from region to region, according to cadres in Northern Luzon this step by step organizing process (minus the reference to PKM) followed a plan elaborated in a party document in 1976, no doubt Sison's, "Our Urgent Tasks," in *Rebolusyon: Theoretical Organ of the CPP*, Vol. 1 (30 July 1976) as cited in Abinales (1992:36).

19 For an account of this process, see Rutten (1994).

20 Interview with Ka Mer, Bicol regional command, September 1989.

21 In the Philippines, the term "people's organizations" usually refers to non-elite groups organized around their members' basic economic and social interests, roughly parallel to what Marxists have traditionally labelled "mass organizations".

22 One national peasant leader referred to the party's leadership of the peasant sector as a "memocracy", constantly sending down from on high memos with instructions for action. Personal communication, 1994.

23 Interview with Ka Mer, Bicol regional command, September 1989.

24 This was expressed to the author on many occasions by activists in Central Luzon as well as Negros.

25 Interview with Ka Mer, Bicol regional command, September 1989.

26 Only the Christians for National Liberation (CNL), due to their particular character, maintained a somewhat distinct identity within the NDF. See the discussion of the NDF in Putzel (1992:167-69) and the discussion of PKM above. Davis (1989:53) provides a list of 14 member organizations, confirmed by Rocamora (1994:140).

27 Rocamora (1994:Chapter 5) nevertheless places great importance on the evolution of the NDF program as a site of CPP debate on basic issues of democracy, the vanguard party, women, environment and an alternative national democratic economic strategy. However, he appears to exaggerate the impact of this debate and to underestimate the extent to which even the least doctrinaire version of the NDF program, the 1988 draft, was hamstrung by Marxist-Leninist theoretical foundations.

28 Interviews with Ka Mer, Bicol regional command, September 1989, and two leading cadres from Northern Luzon, May 1989.

29 In my book on agrarian reform there were several errors in my description of the member organizations of CPAR that I would like to correct here (Putzel, 1992, Table 7.3, p. 229). KAMMMPI, a national federation of small fishermen's organizations, was not aligned to the PKP. PAKISAMA, a national federation of peasant affiliates had affiliates in 26 provinces, and had no formal affiliation to BISIG but rather to the Demokratiko Sosyalistang Koalisyon (DSK), the coalition of Filipino Democratic Socialists founded in 1988. KASAMA called themselves an independent peasant federation with no formal ties to the KMP or PHILDHRRA. LMP was a national federation and the FFF was not part of SANDUGUAN.

30 Interview, with Dina Abad, October 1987.

31 KMP Chairman, Jaime Tadeo, said that, "Through CPAR we have shown the people and the government that it is not only KMP that is pushing genuine agrarian reform...It has projected a broad alliance. I think that would be [its] primary purpose" (Interview, Jaime Tadeo, 16 September 1987). KMP Secretary General Rafael Mariano felt CPAR had one tactical purpose, "It (CPAR) was launched during the debates on agrarian reform We will see if it will continue action to expose the character of Congress. That is essentially its purpose" (Interview, Rafael Mariano, 16 September 1987).

32 The following account is based on an interview with CPAR Secretary, Dinki Soliman, 25 November 1992 and unpublished documents of CPAR meetings during the previous year.

33 For an analysis of the 1992 elections, including the performance of the left, see Putzel (1995).

34 Discussion with former party members responsible for peasant work (July 1994).

35 See Manila-Rizal Regional Committee, "Declaration of Autonomy," (CPP, 1993a) and Party Organizations in the Visayas, "Declaration of Autonomy" (n.d.) (CPP, 1993b). Subsequently other smaller party groups, including the National Peasant Secretariat, as well as leading members of the party's United Front Commission, declared their autonomy, (CPP, 1994 and *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 22 March 1994).

36 The most scholarly analysis of these issues has been undertaken by Abinales (1992, 1993) published in *KASARINLAN*. This journal has carried numerous articles since 1991 relevant to the debate. For a more partisan account, but with the insight of one long involved and committed, see Rocamora (1994).

37 The two basic documents outlining the "reaffirm" position are: "Reaffirm Our Basic Principles and Carry the Revolution Forward," significantly dated 26 December 1991 and signed "for the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines" and published in the party's theoretical journal, *Rebolusyon* (an earlier version in circulation was signed by Armando Liwanag, Central Committee, CPP and published in *KASARINLAN*) (CPP, 1991); and Armando Liwanag, Chairman, Central Committee of the CPP, "Stand for Socialism Against Modern Revisionism," (CPP, 1992).

38 In Bicol, Ka Mer (September 1989) said, "Many comrades have died. Most I think weren't from the enemy." The most interesting reflection on the purges is Abinales (1994).

39 In fact, one former Quezon regional leader, Leopoldo Mabilangan, known as Ka Hector, was assassinated on 3 April 1994 by the dominant faction within the party. However, the CPP announced that the execution was for collaboration with the security forces before and after his formal surrender rather than for his position over the party split (*Chronicle*, 7 April 1994).

40 I have discussed Tadeo's unjust imprisonment elsewhere (Putzel, 1991).

41 The mimeo was dated October 1993 and signed Jaime "Ka Jimmy" Tadeo, National Chairperson, on KMP letterhead.

42 Based on past conduct in party leadership and urban warfare, it seems likely that Filemon Lagman, head of the dissident Manila-Rizal Committee, whose differences with the Sison faction date back to the late 1970s (Jones, 1989, Chapter 10), would be every bit as dictatorial as Sison (and certainly no less instrumentalist) if he could capture control of the party organization. Rocamora (1994:Chapter 4) provides a thorough analysis of the Sison faction's power agenda and acknowledges that, "One section of the opposition would recreate a CPP without Liwanag (Sison). They want to organize the opposition on the basis of tight ideological unity and the organizational traditions of a unitary Leninist party (204).

43 As it reasserted control over the party, the Sison faction has moved away from this aspect of "national democracy" by insisting on immediately moving to "socialist revolution" after seizing state power (Rocamora, 1994: 114, 147-53).

44 It is interesting to note the difference between the MR and Visayas Declarations mentioned above, where the former limits its criticism to Sison's "absolutism", "Stalinism" and "dogmatism", casting a shadow over the Sison political strategy without detailing its own, and the latter presents a much more balanced argument based on both issues of party functioning and detailed comments on political strategy.

45 In a provocative article that otherwise suggests an important agenda for research and debate, Alex Magno (1993) does precisely this.

46 For an explanation of the use of the category "peasantry", see Putzel (1992, pp.2-3, 7, 35n9).

47 For an interesting analysis of peasant organizations and democratization in the Philippines, see Franco (1994), though she does not deal with the role of the CPP and other political forces in the organizations discussed.

48 Perhaps nothing demonstrates more forcefully the consequences of instrumentalism than the series of internal purges in the CPP, which led to hundreds of executions including those of many peasant members. Bello (1992) believed the purges resulted from a combination of the lack of a "system of justice and scientific assessment that allowed paranoia to spread" together with a "tactical view of individuals": "An instrumental view of people is a tendency that affects particularly activists in the Marxist-Leninist tradition, making them vulnerable during moments of paranoia at the height of the revolutionary struggle to expedient solutions involving the physical elimination of real or imagined enemies." Abinales (1994) opposes this interpretation that links the purges to intrinsic features of Marxism-Leninism preferring an explanation centered on local social and cultural factors, but in doing so tends to fall prey to what Richardson (1993:394), in examining scholarship on the old party, describes as giving "undue weight to the view 'from below'."

49 I find this particularly the case among former leaders of the Mindanao Commission who have come under direct attack by José Ma. Sison (discussions with two former members of the Commission). A notable exception is the thoughtful reflection by Rocamora (1994).

50 Of the many "Marxist-Leninist" parties formed throughout the world in the late 1960s and early 1970s, few have succeeded in basic democratic and doctrinal reforms. Those that survived have generally adopted some form of social-democracy while most were dissolved or degenerated into cult-like small groups. The experience of socialist countries has also demonstrated the difficulties in trying to fundamentally reform Leninist parties.

51 Rocamora (1994) provides the most thorough discussion of this emerging trend.

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