Jose Maria Sison and the Philippine Revolution: A Critique of an Interface[1]

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On December 26, 1968, Jose Ma. Sison a.k.a Amado Guerrero met with ten of his trusted disciples to establish the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) along the lines of "Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tse-Tung Thought." Since then, Philippine radicalism – long thought to be politically dead after the debacle of the Huk Rebellion – has experienced a resurgence that was unprecedented in the national context. Much of the CPP's political growth, especially in the crucial initial stages, was largely attributed by many to Sison's leadership. He is said to have guided the revolutionary movement through its baptism of fire under the harsh conditions brought about by martial law. His arrest and nine-year solitary confinement did not break him. Rather, the movement continued to grow – despite most of its original leaders' death or capture (including Sison's) – to become one of the most enduring revolutionary opposition in the country and the region.[2] It is this feat that has placed Sison among the ranks of important figures in Philippine politics.

Apart from being the founder of the CPP, Sison is regarded by admirers also as teacher and student activist He is the author of Philippine Society and Revolution (PSR), the acclaimed bible of the revolution. During the height of the First Quarter Storm, students were openly declaring their fealty to Amado Guerrero and his revolution. At the University of the Philippines (UP), student activists even renamed one building after the CPP chairman. Revolutionary songs, both serious and jesting, hailed Guerrero as one of the inspirations of the new revolutionary upsurge.[3] During the early martial law period, Sison was one of the most wanted political figures by the dictatorship (the others being Kumander Dante and Victor Corpuz), the latter believing that his capture or death would destroy the CPP-ML.[4] And in the time of Aquino, he continued to be grudgingly respected both in the positive and negative sense.

Just how politically important Sison is perceived to be today can be gleaned from the reaction of the Aquino government to his "world lecture

tour." The government revoked his passport alleging that he had once more assumed the mantle of leadership of the CPP, solicited arms abroad on behalf of the movement, and worked to gain international support for its belligerency status. While he denied all these, the stories within and outside the movement point to this state accusation as reliable. Either way, these only strengthened the image woven by both the revolution and the Aquino government around Sison.

Sison and *Interface*

This extended essay is an attempt to critically examine the life of Sison using the manuscript Jose Ma. Sison and the Philippine Revolution: An Interface with Dr. Rainer Werning (henceforth cited in the rest of this paper as Interface) as a basis.[5] It shall look at how Sison narrates his own personal/political history in the context of two other histories, that of the CPP and the revolution it leads, and the larger history of Philippine society. Attention will be given to what Sison thinks were/are significant episodes in these three historical levels and what he thought/thinks ought to be highlighted, suppressed (consciously or not), and revised in these two larger histories. In a sense, this paper attempts a parallel biographical sketch of Sison, posting itself side-by-side with Interface, sometimes supplementing its narrative, but more often, counterpoising alternative comments and observations on issues, events, and time periods which the book, purposely or not has either ignored, de-emphasized or revised.

Interface is Sison's first "autobiography." Rainer Werning, a German academic involved in Third World causes and a member of the Philippine solidarity network in Germany,[6] has taken up the cudgels of presenting a book that would purportedly contest journalistic and scholarly views on the CPP by "fully tak[ing] into account the nature, causes, growth, implications and consequences of the national democratic movement" By getting the facts from the "most authoritative voice on the movement because he has been the person most responsible for the rebirth and growth of all its major forces since the sixties," Werning hopes to correct the deficiencies and inaccuracies these accounts have made about the movement through Sison himself, his life, and his views.

Interface likewise is Werning's way of attempting to give Sison an international stature ranking him among known world revolutionary leaders. Interface appears to be organized along the line of giving Sison the

revolutionary ranking which he purportedly deserves. His stature, in Werning's view, needs to be accentuated, for while the rest of the world's revolutionary movements are stagnating or on the verge of collapse, Philippine radicalism has proved an outstanding exception by surviving Marcos and, inspite of the 1986 events, even Aquino.

Sison, on the other hand, shares Werning's concerns but appears to be involved also with his own agenda. The book was written (and re-written)[7] at a time when the left has been shaken by the events of February 1986. A tenuous coalition took over the reins of government declaring itself as the anti-thesis of dictatorship. Marginalized by the events then for reasons which will be discussed later, the CPP was beset with dissension, resignations, defections, and unprecedented internal debates that caused it to lose much of the political capital it carefully nurtured during the Marcos years.[8] Confronted by the first major crisis inside the CPP, Sison, in his capacity as the founder, may be attempting, through Interface, to help restore order and restate the 'line of march" for the movement. This was the role he played in 1968 when he and His comrades revived a revolutionary agenda long abandoned by the ageing leaders of the Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas (PKP, old communist party), clarified its "political line," and charted a militant course that led the CPP to its current status. It seems that that role may now need to be re-enacted.

It is in this light that one situates Interface's emphatic concern over clarifying and restating (a) the basic problems of Philippine society, (b) the "correct" path to revolutionary change, (c) the "correct" political attitude to events, organizations, alliances, and international ties, and (d) the proper revolutionary attitudes that people should take. Instead of writing another PSR, Sison, this time, hopes to restore order within the movement by fusing his political views with accounts of his rife to serve both as an example of revolutionary commitment and an inspiration for cadres who, at the current moment, have yet to regain their balance in the helter-skelter of the post-Marcos period. He hints of this in one interview where he describes "A View from Within the Philippine Revolution" as "an attempt to present the Philippine revolutionary movement through my experiences, circumstances and ideas."[9] *Interface*, therefore, becomes both an "autobiography" and a political text where the personal merges and becomes subsumed into the political. And as to whether its message has been effectively delivered constitutes a part of this paper's discussion.

This essay essentially consists of two parts. The first section will seek to establish a parallel (it not contrasting) biographical sketch to Interface. It will therefore be admittedly long. The second focuses on how Sison conceives of himself both as a person and as the leader of the communist movement. Attention will be given to how his sense of prominence conforms to certain contexts in the history and politics of the CPP as well as the broader national scene. This section will also deal with how others perceive Sison, again as an individual and as a political leader. It will finally attempt to determine Sison's proper place in Philippine history and politics as well as give a tentative prognosis of his fate as the CPP's most famous leader.

It cannot be avoided that in discussing Sison, one also ends up doing a general biographical sketch of the CPP. The reasons for this are obvious. Interface is not so much a real biography of Sison than an attempt to tell his story and that of the party albeit from his own point of view. To what extent his "story" about the party coincides with other stories must necessarily be scrutinized. Secondly, it cannot be denied that Sison's ideas served as the "bread and butter" of the CPP when it was still at its infancy. But as will be shown in this essay, this ideological and political preeminence appears to have been challenged as the CPP grew away from its Maoist origins towards attempting to create a Filipino Marxism. Interface can be seen as an effort by Sison to deal with a party which has become different from his earlier ideals and conceptions of it.

A final note before proceeding. As a biographical sketch, this essay does not purport to be an alternative biography. The main reason for this is the lack of data. There is not enough information available on Sison or even the CPP. The Philippine left is a relatively recent object of academic interest and both available data and the literature pertaining to it remain relatively scant It is only during the last five years that scholars have begun to focus their attention on the left.[10]

From Childhood to Cadre

Jose Ma. Sison was born to a prominent Spanish-speaking family of Chinese descent from Cayuga, Locos Sure. The Simons were apparently one of the leading local political families, having provided for the first provincial governor under the U.S. colonial regime, two congressmen in the post-independence period, and even an archbishop. The Sisons had all

the features of a regional elite family in the Philippines: landed, overtly religious, and politically influential if not powerful. But they were also characteristic of elite families during the pre-martial law period; they led an incongruous political life where some relatives were rabid defenders of the status quo while others were dissenters and even subversives.[11] Sison's country gentleman father, for example, had a "strong feudalist orientation" intermixed with an odd "anti-imperialist" sentiment. Reminisced Sison:

> He was vocally a strong admirer of Claro Mayo Recto who in the early fifties was espousing the anti-imperialist line in the national political scene. He admired Recto not only for being an anti-imperialist but also for being a master of the Spanish language, a fellow product of the Jesuits and an opponent of the US-made "hero' Ramon Magsaysay who had touted himself as a champion of land reform.[12]

The family saw in the young Jose the son most likely to succeed in politics and be the "defender of family property." His political pilgrimage, as outlined by his father, was to emulate the course most children of local elites with national ambitions were made to follow. According to him

> I was encouraged to always top my class, excel in writing and oratory, get a Bachelor of Arts in Journalism, take up law, top the bar examination, proceed to Harvard for higher studies, marry a beautiful and wealthy woman, and come back to the Ilocos to start the climb to the presidency of the country.[13]

He was to strive for self confidence and excellence in all his endeavors worthy of his background and abilities. And as we shall later observe, the family may have failed to make a president out of him, but his self-assurance and sense of self- importance were his qualities as a revolutionary leader that his family taught him very well.

Sison fulfilled a part of this parental-induced pilgrimage. But it was a difficult one as what was taught him at school was increasingly running against the grain of his incipient oppositional politics. He was "honorably dismissed" by the Ateneo de Manila High School for allegedly leading a class protest against a Jesuit and for disbelieving in the tenets of Jesuit religious teachings.[14] He transferred to Letran College where he "dropped the idea of being at the top of my class," spent more time writing a novel,

and read his first anticommunist tract where the "long passages from Marx and Engels" made more sense to him and aroused his curiosity. At Letran, his sympathies for the lower classes and the defunct Huk movement were nurtured by observation and conversations with his "favorite barber" who was a Huk sympathizers.[15]

It was in UP where Sison's pilgrimage diverged from what his parents wanted of him. Like a fair number of exceptional students, the future "politico" would become the activist. Here he charted the radical trail that would make of him what he is today. Queried by Werning to summarize nodal points in His political development Sison, in his vintage, unchanging jargon, had this to say about his theoretical and intellectual life at UP:

> It was [there] where, on my own initiative and through self- study, I grew rapidly on the scientific kernel of bourgeois empiricism and rationalism and the democratic kernel of liberal political philosophy; cast off all sorts of medieval and bourgeois Metaphysics; ripped away the veil of liberalism from the face of modern imperialism and the local exploiting classes; and finally arrived at the most comprehensive, consistent and thoroughgoing philosophy- Marxism-Leninism-and the program of a new democratic revolution.[16]

Even if stated in a language reminiscent of Lin Biao, Sison did describe adequately the type of intellectual life at UP when he joined it in June 1956. He fitted well as an English major in the competitive academic atmosphere that made the university the premiere institution of the land. UP, by then, had already reached the stage where the liberalism of its earlier leaders had become a permanent feature in its life. The likes of "academic freedom" and the "free market of ideas" had become the main canons of the academe in the 50s.[17]

But more importantly, there was the political side of UP. The university was historically known for having involved itself, sometimes to its detriment in the politics of the nation. While it was fiercely protective of its "academic freedom," its leaders had been known to have taken sides when it came to the general issues of the day.[18] As might be expected, this partisanship spread among some of its students. The university thus became the training ground for those who had political aspirations, and its student bodies (like the student councils), the arenas by which aspiring politicos learned the art of "capturing" and exercising power. Since UP was the

leading intellectual establishment of the country then, its stature gave student politics a national prominence. One of the enduring myths about UP student politics is that it is a microcosm of national polifics.[19]

Moreover, student politics by the time Sison entered UP in 1956 was characterized by the growing tension between the student politicos, then headed by Greek-lettered fraternities, and a powerful Christian lobby group organized around the UP Student Catholic Action (UPSCA). The conflict which began in organizational rivalries, had assumed ideological forms as the fraternities sought to defend the university's liberal traditions' against the conservatism of UPSCA.[20] University life was thus attractive to an inquisitive and increasingly critical Sison.

With his propensity for writing, Sison gravitated towards literary groups. The incipient anti-Catholicism that he nurtured in his secondary school years began to acquire a more sophisticated character. He became an "existentialist" and a liberal soon after while dabbling in poetry and enjoying a pastime as an "inveterate girl watcher."[21] His existentialism would later be displaced by a more radical nationalist orientation when he became attracted to the writings of Claro M. Recto and historian Teodoro Agoncillo while enhancing his radical education through His exchanges with Marxists like Jose Lansang, Renato Constantino, and Francisco Nemenzo, Jr., and radical artist Amado V. Hernandez. Sison "discovered a few Marxist works in the UP main library and in the private collection of friends" to further his Marxist leaming.[22] A new life journey was slowly materializing and the more he plunged into radical theory, the more he drifted away from the original clan scheme of putting a Sison in Malacañang Palace.

His growing radicalism led him to form the Student Cultural Association of UP (SCAUP) which he envisioned to act as the nationalist strand of the student protests against religious sectarianism in campus. It is apparent from the formation of SCAUP that Sison was slowly realizing the importance of an organization in order to ensure the success of nationalist and radical proselytization. Within SCAUP, a discrete Marxist study group was also being built to propagate what Sison from hindsight now refers to as "the general line of the national democratic revolution" and prepare the Members "for the revolutionary struggle outside the university."

Yet, Sison is not exactly telling the entire story about SCAUP in Interface. The account excludes that part of SCAUP that would give readers

a glimpse of its early composition. SCAUP, at its inception, was mainly composed of a tiny group of intellectuals of different political persuasions "floating" in a sea of relatively apathetic students. Most joined in the regular discussions and educational sessions but refused to assume organizational responsibilities. According to Juliet Sison

> The problem then was that there was an anti-organization tendency among intellectuals. Everyone was reading Milovan Djilas' The New Class and Koestler's The God that Failed. People felt that organizations were stifling. But Joe said we got to organize.[23]

SCAUP was not even regarded as a new political force.[24] It held its own activities but nearly died as an organization due to its failure to overcome the above-cited problem.[25] But Sison persisted with his wife Juliet ably supporting him. Their labors came to bear fruit when the organization was revived and became prominent as a result of the internal conflicts in academia which assumed a national flavor when a Philippine version of the McCarthyite witchhunt began to turn its attention to the university. The witchhunt became one of the most fervent efforts by sectarians and opportunist politicians to impose their will and enhance their careers, respectively. The stupidity of the witchhunters, however, brought about a backlash where students and faculty united to defend the university's "academic freedom."[26]

The anti-CAFA (Committee on Anti-Filipino Activities) struggle was what gave a new lease to SCAUP's life and helped transform it into the leading student Political organization of the academic resistance. Sison, by then having graduated in 1959 with an honors degree in English and working as a teaching assistant under a "NEC-ICA teaching fellowship," saw the opportunity for the organization to play a major role. For while SCAUP was indeed smaller than the other student groups, it began to attract into its ranks the best writers and budding intellectuals versed in understanding national politics.[27] Thus, "SCAUP rose to the challenge of combatting the witchhunt. It initiated an alliance of fraternities, sororities, and other campus organizations to carry out…[an] anti-CAFA demonstration in defense of academic and intellectual freedom."[28]

CAFA also pushed Sison further to the left. He saw in the protests an opportunity for the inner Marxist circle in SCAUP to use the organization as a vehicle for spreading an "anti-imperialist and and-feudal content to the

mass action and all related propaganda" and an opportunity to organize more people along radical lines. He mused that the anti-CAFA demonstrations "marked the end of a long period of quiescence and stultifying reaction in the entire fifties; and the beginning of the resurgence of the progressive movement."[29] Sison did not elect to stay with SCAUP but started to work with the Lapiang Manggagawa (LM, Worker's Party), which he and Members of the PKP's peasant section set up "to transform the labor movement into a political force on the basis of a common programme."[30]

His politics ended his teaching assistantship in 1961,[31] but his involvement with the Philippine-Indonesian Friendship and Cultural Association landed him a six-month scholarship in Jakarta. In Indonesia, he developed "good relations" with the cadres of the -Partai Komunis Indonesia (PKI) and he claims to have read an "enormous amount of Marxist-Leninist classics and current literature." Upon his return, Sison immediately put himself back to work at the LM as head of its research and education department inspite of financial drawbacks for His family. He deemed it fit to leave SCAUP by that time since, as a result of the anti-CAFA protests, new leaders were coming in, this time with better organizing skills dm their earlier counterparts.[32]

In 1961, he put out his first collection of poems entitled Brothers and Other Poems (which he regards as "a concrete application of my views on aesthetics and literary theory) and organized the Progressive Review, a nationalist-radical journal intended to be a "vehicle for promoting the ideas of the new democratic revolution in the Philippines."[33] For Sison, Brothers was an important piece for its author "dared" to have a collection of overtly political poems published at a time when most intellectuals were immersed in a world of "the threatened emasculation of a Jake Barnes or the sense of lostness [sic] of Jay Gatsby."[34] It was a time when individual angst was the theme of most poetry, when the literati were concerned with their own self-gratification, and when social realism was viewed as anathema to culture, or if ever accepted, dealt with only in an abstract manner.[35] He was also said to have written a novel about peasant oppression which he showed to friends for comment. It appears now that the novel, even if it was political, did not elicit that much enthusiasm from his colleagues. His wife, Juliet described the novel as interesting but found it too "obsessed with sex and violence."[36] In Interface, Sison does not even mention this work.

Sison, the Lavas, and the Split in the Communist Movement

Sison and SCAUPs participation in the anti-CAFA struggles did not escape the attention of the PKP which, under the leadership of the third of the Lava brothers,[37] was already intent on reviving the party after the Hukbalahap debacle. But Jesus Lava, trying to cope with the trauma of the Huk days, was merely contented with resurrecting the party along the line of parliamentary struggle. He also had strong doubts about the young breed of self-taught radicals who appeared to be an uncontrollable bunch simply because their political training was not under the PKP. As Nemenzo puts it:

> [the new recruits] were more daring and innovative, whereas [the party elders] tended to be overly concerned with how the government might construe their intentions. Moreover, the fresh recruits, mostly middle-class intellectuals, had a better grasp of the Marxist classics and the Maoist adaptations, while the old cadres derived their theoretical knowledge almost exclusively from Josef Stalin's *Foundations of Leninism*.[38]

It was an Indonesian graduate student who is said to have convinced the PKP that Sison and his group were fit to become part of the party. Sison joined the PKP in December 1962 and was immediately invited to help form its executive committee. In 1964, he was appointed as secretary of the youth department and tasked with setting up the party's youth mass organization.[39] But in the span of five years, the fears of Jesus Lava proved correct as Sison initiated the split that would break the PKP and consign it to the dustbin of history.[40]

Sison does not hide his disdain for the Lavas. He recalls that the executive committee was a Sunday-affair group composed mainly of people close to Jesus Lava (including a nephew, Francisco) and "who had no connection whatsoever with the mass movement."[41] In another account he bitterly recalled:

> The only capital which the Lavaites had was the name of the party. I fought them [not only] because they were pro-Soviet but also because I thought of them as just weekend warriors. They really attended only one Meeting a month: It took so much patience dealing with the princes of the Lava dynasty. They were such mediocre men.[42]

Even at its formative stage, Sison revealed the series of problems within the committee, most of which were due to the "unsavory status and activities' of the Lava group. But he apparently held on to his PKP Membership until April 1967 when he decided to break away and form the CPP. One can only surmise that he still had hopes for the party knowing that there were still dedicated revolutionaries in the PKP (especially among the peasantry and the intelligentsia) to whom he could relate and who might in the event of a conflict with the Lavas, become his allies.

He describes His days with the PKP as very animated. In Interface, he literally boasts of His accomplishments (in two and a half single-space pages) as theoretician, organizer, and radical researcher, indicative perhaps of an extreme devotion to the revolutionary movement (despite its moribund leadership) but also of his enduring trait of self-importance that was impressed upon him during his childhood.[43] This time this was to be fortified by a growing perception of the "historic" significance of what he was doing.

In November 30, 1964, His group established the Kabataang Makabayan (KM, Nationalist Youth), bringing into its fold students who were politicized by the growing Philippine involvement in the Vietnam war. The bulk of KM's formal Membership, however, came from the children of peasants organized under the Malayang Samahan ng Magsasaka (MASAKA, Free Association of Peasants), the party's legal peasant group based in Central Luzon. This accounted for its overnight increase in size. The organization committed itself to a "struggle for national democracy" and prepared an elaborate political programme that covered practically everything from the Philippine economy to culture.[44] Sison was elected chairman and the organization became the PKP's legal youth group. This, however, was a mere formality. Its leadership retained an autonomous existence vis-a-vis the party and was extremely loyal to Sison rather than to the PKP.[45]

Sison also became active in the formation of the Movement for the Advancement of Nationalism (MAN) which was envisioned as a legal united front body that would formally reestablish the PKPs ties with other groups and individuals. Up to the time of the split within the PKP, MAN appeared headed towards success. It appeared to have created the appropriate structures for adequate representation by major "sectors" and it counted within its initial leadership prominent nationalists, businessmen, and even politicians.[46] Sison was elected general-secretary at its founding congress

on February 7-8, 1967 indicating his important role within the body as well as within the PKP.[47]

Sison's links with the PKPs labor groups also led to his election as the general secretary of the Socialist Party of the Philippines (SPP), the successor of the LM. The SPP became the new organization that he and other KM activists (who shifted to the trade union movement in consonance with radical principles of assisting in the organization of the proletariat) created after a split within the LM against the more reform-minded old trade unionists in 1967. SPP, however, would not last long and would break up further in 1971.[48]

Sison's growing popularity clearly frightened the Lavas. The eagerness with which he devoted himself to the reorganization of the party and to the revival of its past militancy was causing discomfiture to the PKP old guards who were content with legally reviving old organizations, being careful not to draw the attention of the state. Unlike the rest the KM was more militant. His made it the most popular among the PKP organizations. It attracted "the most colorful student leaders and the most talented campus writers." Its propaganda and education campaigns were sophisticated and vigorous, something never seen within the PKP before they made "socialism and national liberation respectable subjects [even] for academic discourse [and helped] overcome the communist phobia of the 1950s." This enthusiasm became fervor when Sison and the KM found inspiration in the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, especially in its invocations for communists to "learn from the people."[49]

The Lavas, however, could not move easily against Sison due to his popularity and the fierce loyalty of the people he trained. But as long as he recognized authority under the principles of democratic centralism, was active in the PKPs revitalization efforts and, perhaps, was seen to still regard with awe the Lavas's contribution to the PKP, the latter were content to keep him at bay.

It was only when he volunteered to write the draft of the party's history and presented it to the committee that the Lavas prepared themselves for an inevitable confrontation. The draft turned out to be a powerful indictment of the Lavas's history of incompetence since World War II. It was a well-researched document which relied mostly on the accounts of old cadres. To adopt the draft was tantamount to a complete de-legitimization

of the Lavas's stature as leaders of the party. They therefore pressured Sison to shelf the document for future discussion. But without the Lavas's knowledge, Sison was already sharing His findings with his fellow KM Members. The rift was inevitable.

The break, Sison narrates, was preceded by a "campaign of intrigue" by the Lavas against him. But this was apparently just one part of the picture. The KM apparently aggravated the tensions with their actions. What catalyzed the break was PKPs peasant section's complaint over the "ultra-leftist7 behavior of some EM activists who were visiting villages and preaching to MASAKA peasants the wisdom of Mao and the inevitability of armed struggle.[50] The MASAKA leaders, fearful of state reprisal, appealed to the Lavas to do something about the KM's "adventurism." The Lavas pounced on this to bring the peasant leaders to their side and - this time with confidence arising from MASAKA support - moved against Sison.

In an emergency Meeting in April 1967 of certain Members of the executive committee to discuss the coming local elections, Francisco Lava unexpectedly announced that the meeting would instead become the occasion to form a provisional political bureau and to appoint its Members as well as the officers of the other organizations of the party. Lava "had himself 'elected' as the new general-secretary" in this provisional politburo and Sison was transferred from the youth section to the less powerful education section. This was the straw that broke the camel's back. Sensing the ruse after protesting the "illegality" of the Meeting, Sison and his KM comrades left the PKP and started the process of "reestablishing" a rival party. He noted that

> [a]t this point, I realized that there was no more point in having anything to do with any action of the Lava dynasty. Genuine proletarian revolutionaries who had emerged independently of the old merger party from 1959 onwards as well as those who had emerged earlier under the original Communist Party of the Philippines and then under the merger party itself from 1938 onwards agreed with my stand. We decided to expel the Lava group from the Communist Party. We were determined to reestablish the Party on the theoretical foundation of Marxism-Leninism.[51]

During the same month, according to Sison, he convened his own provisional politburo composed of KM stalwarts and some older Members

of the PKP who were in constant disagreement with the Lavas. On May 1, this politburo issued a statement declaring itself in full support of the Chinese Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution and attacking the PKP as the Filipino variant of China's "capitalist roaders" and "modem revisionists."[52]

What followed was a series of splits within the PKPs legal organizations. The Lavas withdrew the peasant youth from the EM thereby removing from Sison's control the organization's huge peasant base. MAN was transformed into a "forum for squabbling communists" and promptly split. Similar incidents were repeated in other PKP organizations where Sison and the Lavas had their respective followings.[53] The SPP would also suffer from the split when tensions arose between the younger pro-Sison unionists and old radical leaders who preferred a legal status for the party. The tension eventually led to a split in 1971 when the old radicals joined the pro-Soviet World Federation of Trade Unions and were roundly censured for their revisionism. The younger cadres eventually withdrew from the SPP and formed a new federation. But this remained weak and would never assume a real militant presence.[54]

Yet, there remains a huge gap in the accounting of the events that transpired between the time of the declaration of the alternative politburo and that of the formal "re-establishment of the CPP. Interface does not explain why it took over a year before the CPP announced its coming to the scene inspite of the fact that there existed empirically-based explanations to this. One can only surmise that Sison may have thought of the events that fill the gap as relatively unimportant and will perhaps divert the reader's attention from the main issue: the split with the Lavas and the "historic" formation of the CPP.

Let us consider the events and explanations that can possibly fill in the gap that Interface ignores. First there were the repercussions of the split that Sison had to attend to, particularly the tug-of-war that went on inside alliances like MAN and other PKP organizations. Secondly, he had to attend to the final draft of his earlier works that eventually was published under the title Struggle for National Democracy, and rehash the draft on the PKPs history that he prepared earlier to adopt it to the new situation. There was also the problem arising from an internal rift within the KM. Sison confidently mentioned in *Interface* that on the eve of the "re-establishment" his group already had "developed a relatively strong mass movement among the workers, peasants, youth, and other people [sic]."[55]

He ignored the fact that within the ranks of His trusted circle in the KM, a mini-split happened that placed the organization's leadership in a crisis.

> Meanwhile a new faction shaped up within the KM itself. Consisting mostly of mass activists who did not know the background of the original split, they blamed ... Sison (the incumbent KM national chairman ...) for causing their sudden isolation from the peasant masses. At the second KM convention in November 1967, they put up a slate of anti-Sison candidates for the KM national council. So close was the voting in the new national council that Sison had to vote for himself to avert his own ouster. When their effort failed, the dissident faction established a separate organization, the Union of Democratic Youth (SDK).[56]

The formation of the Samahan ng Demokratikong Kabataan (SDK threw KM into disarray for a time, particularly when it had also lost much of its peasant-based members. Sison was, therefore, fighting on two fronts: against the Lavas and against his own deserters, most of whom were the best writers and student leaders in the KM ranks.[57] While he felt more confident in dealing with the Lavas, he apparently had considerable difficulty handling the SDK breakaway. He had to return to the KM, have himself re-elected as chairman, restore unity, deal with the dissenters, and bring KM back into the political mainstream. It was apparent that he did not do well in this effort for as Nemenzo observed:

> SDK was able to prove that it could stand alone ... It matched the KM and surpassed the MPKP in the quality of cadres. From 1968 to 1969, while KM was hibernating, SDK hugged the limelight. Its branches spread not only to the universities and secondary schools in Metro-Manila, but in the Visayas as well.[58]

With KM fractured and having only a solid base among the students and a few small labor unions under KM's control, forming a new radical center seemed to be an insurmountable task.

On February 1968, an incident forced Sison to make another major decision. Going home after a meeting with members of the SPP, Sison was nearly killed inside a jeepney by three unidentified men. While he was able to fend off his attackers, the assassination attempt proved to be the most serious threat to his life (which was now also the subject of intensified military surveillance.) After the attack, Sison decided to go underground with his family and "concentrate on work in the countryside."[59]

While the assassination attempt may have been the work of the military, there was also the distinct possibility that it was carried out upon the orders of the Lavas. The Lavas were then gaining the notoriety of dealing with dissenters in such a manner. Sison's break from the PKP was not only a major problem, it was also an unforgivable affront to the Lavas. One cannot dismiss the possibility that the assassination attempt was the Lavas's way of teaching the young dissident a lesson.[60]

A year later, Sison seemed confident enough that the KM had survived its crisis and that his labor connections were standing on a more solid foundation On December 26,1968, (Mao Tse-Tung's birthday), in Pangasinan province, he formally opened the first congress of the CPP and announced the formation of the new party with ten of his trusted comrades. The revised PKP general report now sporting the new tide "Rectify Errors and Rebuild the Party (RERP)," was adopted as one of the CPPs founding documents. Sison was elected as the party's chairman on the basis of his "theoretical competence and all-roundedness."[61] He also adopted the nom de guerre Amado Guerrero. The new Party also ratified a new constitution which included a "Program for a People's Democratic Revolution,"[62] and proclaimed its allegiance to Mao Tse-Tung Thought as "the acme of Marxism-Leninism in the present era when imperialism is heading for total collapse and socialism is marching toward worldwide Victory."[63]

Mao's concept of protracted people's war was adopted as the only workable revolutionary strategy for the Philippines. This involved building guerilla units in the countryside via peasant mobilization around the land question. The revolution would go through the three main stages of Maoist strategy[64] and advance in waves to "encircle the cities from the countryside and accumulate strength until the people's army is Wong enough to defeat the enemy forces entrenched in the cides."[65]

Recalling that historic caucus, Sison appeared to suggest that the CPPs original conveners were optimistic despite the difficulties that lay ahead of them. According to him,

> We recognized how gargantuan and how difficult and risky were the tasks, especially because we had only a few scores of Party members at the beginning. But we were not awed. We felt challenged to serve the people and carry the revolutionary cause forward.[66]

He also meticulously explained that the formation of the CPP was not solely a KM initiative to refute PKP criticisms that the party did not have either worker or peasant representation.

> Contrary to the notion spread by the Lavaites and the reactionary mass media that only young communists reestablished the CPP, the oldest cadres of the CPP and the most tested veterans in the worker, peasant, youth and armed revolutionary movements Max Gutierrez, Amado V. Hernandez, Felixberto Olalia, Simplicio Paraiso (a Lava relative), Lucio Pilapil, Samuel Rodriguez and many others who as a matter of prudence cannot as yet be mentioned supported the struggle to reestablish the Party. We had more than a year to reestablish the CPP on December 26, 1968 and the Congress of Reestablishment came far ahead of any such that the Lavaites could organize.[67]

But Interface fails to mention that this sense of optimism was not shared by all. Most of those who participated in the CPP's first and only congress (so far) were less sanguine about the prospects of reviving the Philippine revolution. Again, other accounts provide us alternative explanations. Nemenzo has this to narrate:

> In December 1982 I invited four participants in the Pangasinan congress to a group interview. Now politically inactive since their release from many years of detention, they reminisced in good humor: It was only out of respect for Amado Guerrero that they agreed to attend; and they had premonition of its historic significance. At the meeting, Guerrero brimmed with optimism, but the rest of them secretly nursed doubts about the whole project. Documents were adopted one after another with little debate because most of them were just itching to disperse. The only excitement was provided by their lone sentry who fell asleep on top of a tree while guarding the tedious conference and lost consciousness as he hit the ground![68]

Yet it remained a fact that Sison was extremely secure that the congress would yield fruit. What accounts for this? Perhaps it was Ws realization that with the utter bankruptcy of the PKP, there was no other option left but to chart a new revolutionary course. Perhaps it was the sense of urgency that he recognized in the unfolding events, especially with the growing restiveness over national and international issues. Or more importantly, perhaps it was also because he felt history was on his side;

a feeling reinforced by a confidence that he had the correct ideology (Maoism) and enough organizational experience to do it alone. Nemenzo, a close friend of Sison before the 1967 split[69] recalls that Sison had one enduring trait his sense of optimism.

> He was something of a dreamer but he was a great organizer. He was always charting new organizations and drawing them in pictures, with boxes and all, to go with them. We would say "But Joe, where are all of the people for this organization?" and he would laugh.[70]

The doubting Thomases in his midst were, however, slowly convinced to become fervent advocates of the cause when Sison managed to get in touch with a Huk splinter group based in Central Luzon and headed by Kumander Dante (Bernabe Buscayno). Dante, disillusioned with the degeneration of the Huks into armed goons and threatened by paramilitary groups, had managed to preserve his group within Tarlac and was searching for groups that remained loyal to the revolutionary principles of the PKP.[71] Sison recalls that he and Dante came to know of each other's activities through "veteran cadres and mass activists" in Central Luzon. Accordingly, they met in December 1968 ("under a mango tree in the yard of a peasant in a barrio of Capas, Tarlac") and forged an alliance which led to the formation of the New People's Army (NPA) on March 29, 1969. Sison and his radicals had found their peasant army and Dante's peasant revolutionaries had found their political vanguard. This meeting became the first major breakthrough of the new party.

What is curious about Sison's narration of this encounter in Interface is that he goes out of his way to deny that the late Benigno Aquino, Jr., then a powerful Tarlac warlord, had a hand in facilitating the meeting. The rumor then (and now) was that Aquino, perhaps sensing some future value in uniting the two groups, personally arranged the meeting by bringing Sison to Tarlac (in an elaborate manner so as not to arouse suspicion, according to the folktale) to meet with Dante who was supposedly under Aquino's protection in Tarlac. This story became one of the charges brought against Aquino by the Marcos dictatorship when he was arrested in 1972. To quote Sison:

> It was not necessary to have Aquino as go-between because there were so many possible reliable links. The Kabataang Makabayan was quite strong in Central Luzon. It was just a matter of firming up which

> link was to be used as soon as we heard of Commander Dante's desire to meet me.[72]

But as one can easily observe, this was also not a full denial. Sison was, uncharacteristically, not emphatic about his disavowal. Dante, on the other hand, has not made any public comment on the matter but is content in letting the rumor run its own course. While it is perhaps impossible to confirm these rumors, especially as its main actors are either denying it, not commenting about it or dead, the fact is that in *Interface*, Sison's circumspect reply may nurture the belief that this was indeed true.

The NPA received an added propaganda boost with the defection of Lt. Victor Corpuz, a charismatic instructor and alumnus of the Philippine Military Academy. Corpuz led a daring NPA raid of the academy's armory on December 29, 1970 and carted off a number of high-powered rifles. The raid became one of the most popular stories about the NPA. Corpuz became an overnight hero and was portrayed as the ideal model of a principled Filipino soldier not merely because of the act but more importantly, he joined the "genuine people's army."[73] However, when Corpuz returned to the military after his release and, in November 1986, accused Sison and Dante of a number of irregularities (including the bombing of Plaza Miranda in 1971), the Corpuz legend had to be destroyed. In Inter face, the demystification of Corpuz came in the form of Sison displacing Corpuz as the main actor of the PMA raid and claiming for himself that role.

> The enemy also could not reap any big propaganda gain from the scuttling of the NPA main force in Tarlac at the end of 1970. The armory of the Philippine Military Academy was raided by the NPA. I personally supervised the preparations for the execution of that raid. The NPA was able to get 43 Browning automatic rifles and other weapons .[74]

If Sison found his guerilla army in Dante's ex-Huks and defector Victor Corpuz, his reserve of political cadres would come from students who became radicalized overnight as a result of the events of January-March 1970, popularly referred to as the First Quarter Storm (FQS) of 1970.[75] On the eve of the FQS, the radicals had managed to do away with their differences and established a larger core within the student front

As late as 1969, KM and other activist groups were still a minority within the so-called student movement although radicals were indeed leading some of the "reform movements" that were emerging in the schools of Manila then. There were three major reasons behind this. Students remained, in general, wary of KM's radicalism and tended to veer towards more moderate forms of protests. Likewise, KM's main thrust- in the fight of the 1968 "re-establishment" - was to shift to trade union work "with the aim of building the CPPs base among the proletariat" Moreover, as has been cited above, it was SDK that proved to be more adept in student organizing than KM and the friction between the two groups continued to persist KM had apparently patched up its differences with SDK with the latter's younger activists expelling the older leaders responsible for the 1967 split from KM. By 1969, radical student actions began to be a joint KM-SDK affair.[76]

This larger radical core, as Sison described it, spearheaded student protests, especially as issues like the Philippine involvement in Vietnam, Marcos's "reelection," and other events led to a growing popular cynicism toward Philippine cacique democracy. Thus, when the bloody confrontations occurred in January 1970, the radicals were more organized and even had public opinion at their side.

For the new party, the FQS was definitely one of the most important junctures in its history. It broke the stalemate with the PKP and, more importantly, established the CPP as the rightful claimant to the radical throne. Its following among the youth expanded beyond its expectations and it acquired national fame. CPP cadres were themselves astonished at the spontaneous emergence of different KM and SDK chapters all over urban centers after the FQS. Even as the PKP could still rightly attack the CPP as nothing but a student-based party, the FQS turned this "bad thing into a good thing." The CPP took advantage of the students' radicalization, enjoining them to use their skills to- expand the CPP. And to the delight of Sison and others, the student cadres responded well.

> [S]tudent cadres of the CPP were extremely versatile. Equipped with social science skills, they would live inconspicuously in a new community noting down every significant detail in the style of professional anthropologists. Guided by their 'social investigation' reports, another team of experienced agitators would come into organize the village.[77]

The combination of peasants tested in battle and radicalized students of the FQS put the NPA in a much better position than the PKPs Hukbong Mapagpalaya ng Bayan (HMB, People's liberation Army). But more than this vast pool of radical recruits, the FQS gave the CPP the national prominence it needed. Its radical program appeared to have been received positively in a society where violence had become a "palpable feature of 'bourgeois democracy particularly after Marcos's re-election."

> [For] in the minds of many Filipinos who had come to reject the system, it was no longer a question of violent revolution versus peaceful reform; but of just violence versus unjust violence, violence to bring about change versus violence to preserve a despicable status quo. Acting out their catchy slogan, 'Makibaka, Huwag Matakot' [Struggle and fight, do not be afraio7 ... the KM and S DK activists ... braved the police assaults. Instead of isolating them from the masses ... they captured the popular imagination's.[78]

The popular mood of looking at China as the exemplar of a Philippine future likewise enhanced the Maoist party. The Vietnam quagmire had profoundly eroded American prestige and the sight of Vietnamese peasants putting to shame the best of American firepower was a source of inspiration for Filipino radicals fighting the imperialist "paper tiger." Meanwhile, China, Mao, and the Cultural Revolution were beacons of the just society. China attracted not only radicals but journalists, politicians, and even the Manila elite. As one converted Sinophile declared: "I have seen the socialist future and it ought to work in the Philippines."[79] Maoism became the latest moral guide to both students and clergymen. Its populist rhetoric - the mass fine - augured well with the need for relevance which was felt by these two sectors of the Philippine intelfigentsia.[80]

In *Interface*, Sison acknowledges that the CPP enormously benefited from the FQS.

> The unprecedented mass actions of 1970-1972 ... supplied a large number of cadres for the revolutionary armed struggle in the countryside. As the US-Marcos regime became more brutal and as it threatened to impose martial law on the country, an increasing number of mass activists became more determined to join the CPP and the NPA in order to carry out people's war.[81]

He is also quick to portray himself as having made major contributions to what occurred during those torrid days of 1970 in Manila, even though he was based in Northern Luzon! Reading *Interface* gives one the feeling that the chairman's reach was quite extensive.[82] Just how realistic these assertions are is open to question. For one, there was the distance. But more importantly, it de-emphasizes the capacity of student leaders and CPP cadres in Manila to determine the directions of the movement by themselves. If Sison's "leadership" was significant during those days, it may have been more as an inspiration rather than as actual authority.[83] One will continue to encounter this type of assertions by Sison as one goes further into his narrations in *Interface*.

Building the Party: Sison's Years as CPP Chairman

The formative years of the party saw Sison vigorously involved, as Interface recounts, in "rural mass work" and supervising the political and military training of the first NPA units in Isabela and Tarlac. He also portrayed himself as busily preparing documents that "refined" the CPPs critique of the PKPs revisionism while engaging in the political training of the increasing members of new cadres at the party's camp (aptly called the Revolutionary School of Mao Tse-Tung Thought in Isabela.[84] He was by then a full convert to Maoism. In his interview with Chapman, he reveals the process of his conversion to Maoism.

> Then and now I consider him (Mao) the greatest thinker on colonialism and imperialism and feudalism. Lenin was my pioneer, but Mao had made those extensive examinations of conditions in China and it seemed to me that they were similar to what I saw in the Philippines. And he was unbeatable on the subject of people's war. And then, by 1964, the line between the USSR and Mao was very clear. Khrushchev to me meant cooperation with imperialism and China was the leader against him. China was a big force and was encouraging revolution of all colonial countries. China looked to me like the Philippines of today.[85]

His foremost "theoretical" concern, however, was the preparation of a document other than the RERP that presented the party's comprehensive view of Philippine society "from the standpoint of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tse-Tang Thought," outlined its program, and conceptualized the strategy and tactics of the "people's democratic revolution."[86] The result was *Philippine Society and Revolution*, a 174-page[87] document which contained

three major parts: the first is a review of Philippine history, the second an "elaboration" of what Sison refers to as the three basic problems of Philippine society, and the last part is a laying down of the program for revolution which Sison referred to as a "national democratic revolution of the new type." In 1970, a draft of the PSR began to circulate around activist circles. It was printed in series form under the title The Philippine Crisis," by the *Philippine Collegian*, the UP student body's paper which was then under the control of KM and SDK activists. By 1971, the book became a political celebrity, competing in popularity with Mao's "Little Red Book."

What strikes the reader about Sison's political writings, *PSR* in particular, was the use of a language that was not exactly Filipino. The wordings of these documents appear to be culled from Chinese political writings. The simplicity of the analyses and arguments, the tendency to over-generalize, and the introduction of Maoist-inspired symbols, concepts, and even misconceptions were likewise new to the Filipino political scene. Political analysts and academics, when asked about the *PSR*, readily criticize it for its crude presentation of Philippine social problems and its overly politicized and simplistic language. Yet, in spite of such "scholarly" critiques, the book became the most sought after among students and activists. The question that may immediately be asked is this: why its popularity? The answer may he in the nature of the book itself and the "timing" of its publication.

Philippine society was already in the throes of a political crisis after the most violent and most fraudulent presidential elections of 1969, when Marcos became the first re-elected president ever. There was growing disenchantment among the people, particularly the "middle class," over Philippine "democracy's" increasing violence. Political disillusionment was aggravated by the decline in the standards of living of people after Marcos practically depleted government coffers of money to ensure his re-election. Already, the phrase "we are sitting on a social volcano" was becoming in vogue among politicians, journalists, and even the ordinary man-on-the-street Jose Lacaba captured the mood of the nation vividly:

> Day by day the nation was plunging deeper and deeper into crisis. The rich grew richer by the hour, fattening on the spoils of a neocolonial economy and a feudal system, and the masses of the poor could not turn to a hopelessly corrupt government for succor. The government was inextricably in debt, inflation was rampant and the peso, allowed to float

> promptly sank. The minimum wage went up by a couple of pesos which came to nothing in the face of higher prices and increasing unemployment. No money could be spared for public schools but billions were fed into the maws of the insatiable military beast. While Filipinos got shot like wild boars on US military bases, a 'civic action' contingent was dispatched, in exchange for a few dollars, to support the American war in Vietnam. From Capas to Taft Avenue to Mindanao, massacres had become common occurrence. The nation was fast turning into a 'garrison state,' a senator warned, and the President himself described the country as a 'social volcano.' To still the growing discontent, the people were given glowing accounts of yacht parties with movie stars and offered a Constitutional Convention.[88]

The situation was "ripe," so to speak, for major changes,[89] and people, especially the young, were demanding an explanation that allowed them to understand the depressing yet complex situation and understand it in a comprehensive manner. Intellectuals were indeed providing some answers, but they were themselves either too complicated explanations, were understood only by a limited audience, had nebulous alternatives, or were unclear as to what option out of the crisis was most effecdve.[90]

It was in these "days of disquiet' that *PSR* came into the picture. It was precisely its simplicity that gave people a comprehensive view of social ills. It provided them with the ideology and the appropriate political and class labels (e.g., "imperialism, feudalism, and bureaucrat capitalism and Mao's categories of classes) to understand reality and situate themselves in them. Finally, it gave them a clear "line of march" - revolution - decidedly a difficult venture but attractive in fight of the crisis. Its author, Sison, emphatically argued that *PSR* was a guide to action, a "basis for concrete and sustained revolutionary action."[91] There was no other ideologue nonpolitical party that approximated the ambitious undertaking of the PSR. It was only Sison and the CPP that dared to do this. And for that they caught the attention of people, especially the students. This is something that scholars of Filipino politics - no matter how much they disagree with Sison, his views, and his rhetoric - had to concede to the man. PSR helped transform Sison from a hard-to-believe demagogue into a political leader worthy of the state's and the public's attention.

> *PSR* made Sison the most influential Filipino writer after Rizal. The book was very popular and was regarded by the youth as the Red Book

> on the Philippines. Its popularity stemmed from the fact that while it may not have inspired the rebellion of the 60s and even the declaration of martial law, PSR contributed much to the analysis of contemporary Philippine problems. Thus even if academics reacted to what they called over-simplifications' in the analysis of Philippine problems in PSR [and if the book] reduced Philippine problems Into simple terms, It also allowed what indeed was a complex situation to be comprehended ... [It] was this simple exposition of Philippine reality with its explicit faith in the capability of the people to change the course of history and, by implication, their individual destinies that made PSR the guiding spirit of the ... revolutionary movement as a whole.[92]

Sison, by this period, immediately directed the party's attention to expansion, conscious of the fact that one of the reasons for the Huk debacle was the PKPs failure to seriously consider expanding beyond its bases in Central and Southern Luzon.[93] The government had also launched in 1970 a massive military operation in the Isabela-Tarlac area that destroyed the 60-man NPA main forces.[94] The only way for the CPP to survive, therefore, was to diversify into the outlying provinces as well as initiate moves to send cadres and student recruits to other parts of the country. Sison, with some difficulty, began to create the appropriate regional bodies and assigned people to these bodies.[95] Much of these 'organizational boxes" would be filled in by students radicalized by the FQS and ready to commit themselves to the "highest form" of struggle.[96]

Sison was also conscious that political trends were pointing towards the strong possibility of martial law as a result of the leftist upsurge as well as the increased inter-factional conflict within the Philippine state. The suspension of the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus by Marcos after the 1971 bombing at Plaza Miranda was, for him, a portent of greater repression, especially one that would be directed at the left Anticipating martial law, the CPP took steps by building its underground structures as well as directing its important cadres to go underground or to the mountains.[97] Thus, when Marcos launched his coup on September 21, 1972, the CPP was the only political opposition to Marcos that had a semblance of an organized response.[98]

Throughout these hectic days, Sison appeared to have been a most active and busy person. In Interface, he portrays himself as having been involved in practically all the major activities of the organization despite the

many attendant dangers to his life. One gets the impression that he was singlehandedly running the entire CPP-NPA organization while his other comrades were merely there to implement them. He was practically all over the place - presiding over meetings, attending to immediate practical needs, writing documents and important statements, and even doing "social investigation." Going through his own description of his responsibilities gives the reader the feeling of just how Sison regards his importance as party chairman.[99]

Despite the preparations made in anticipation of martial law, the CPP suffered major reverses in the first five years of its existence. The most serious were the aborted attempts to ship arms from China in 1972.[100] Sison admits that between 1973 and 1976, the party lost six central committee members and a good number of important underground houses of the trade union bureau and the national liaison committee (the body charged with the formation of the NDF). The biggest catch of the military was in January 1976, when the party's general-secretary was captured together with two other central committee members. Regional units of the NPA also suffered setbacks in Northern Luzon, Isabela (where the NPA was forced to conduct its own "long march" to escape the AFP dragnet), Sorsogon, Aurora, and Mindanao.

But there were also successes in the Cordillera, Central Luzon, and Eastern Visayas.[101] The CPPs biggest success, however, was in the Manila-Rizal region where adroit organizing reestablished party cells in universities, trade unions, and urban poor communities.[102] The radicalization of priests via the Christians for National Liberation (CNL) also opened up organizing possibilities not only in parishes but also in other institutions of the Catholic hierarchy.[103] CPP cadres especially manned the social action centers established by the Church in line with Vatican II and the hierarchy's realization that the Churches continued relevance depended on its ability to gauge the "signs of the times' which pointed towards more socially-oriented activides.[104]

From these church radicals and from the banned Movement for a Democratic Philippines (the legal affiance consisting of the left, some moderate and PKP groups, and personalities like Jose W. Diokno and Lorenzo Tañada formed during the FQS) were chosen the leaders of the preparatory commission for the National Democratic Front (NDF), the organization that Sison envisioned to become the umbrella body for

different groups opposed to Marcos to band together under CPP leadership. Former moderate student leader Edgar Jopson and SVD priest Edicio de la Torre became the leading cadres of the commission.[105] Sison proudly cites the role of the party in forming the NDF.

> The CPP has performed the role of leadership by initiating the formation of the NDF; becoming the most vital part of it through hard struggle and sacrifice; encouraging the NPA, the underground mass organizations before 1972 and the mass organizations outlawed in 1972 (mostly under the Movement for a Democratic Philippines) to join the NDF; and putting at the base of NDF the organs of political power created in the countryside.[106]

The NDF, however, became open to criticisms of CPP domination because of the groups which dominated the former and its rigidly Maoist-oriented program.[107] In Interface, Sison goes out of his way to refute these criticisms of CPP dominance in the NDF.[108] His reasons, however, are not exactly convincing. The experiences of other groups in exploring the possibilities of joint action with the CPP had always ended in failure, one reason being that of the latter's attempt to always control or dominate whatever coalition and alliance that is conceived of in the process of a joint action.[109] Suspicions of CPP domination also persisted as party documents categorically stated that any united front body "should correspond to the general line and program of the Party.[110]

Sison's balance sheet was optimistic that the successes of the revolutionary movement would outweigh its failures.[111] To ensure that this would be the case, however, it became important for him, by 1975-76, to prepare what the party calls "summing up" documents that would synthesize both the strength and weaknesses of early CPP-NPA experiences in order to set up new guidelines for expansion. During this period, Sison would write two of the last major documents of the CPP, both attempting to review the CPPs revolutionary strategy based on the experiences it had accumulated as well as in fight of martial law.

The first article was "Specific Characteristics of Our People's War' (SCPW) which Sison describes as an effort to "firm up the theory and practice of making nationwide protracted armed revolution in the Philippines."[112] SCPW, despite its Maoist rhetoric, was regarded by scholars of the Philippine left as a reflection of the serious efforts of the CPP to veer

away from its dogmatic adherence to Maoist revolutionary warfare and attempt to come to grips with the realities of Philippine society.[113] Its most important section dealt with the policy of "centralized leadership and decentralized operations" where top bodies like the executive committee or the politburo would content themselves with giving general guidelines and leave to regional and local units the right to determine how to implement these. Sison directed the distribution of members of the central committee throughout the entire archipelago to initiate the building up of regional and party organizations without many resources or even aid coming from the central leadership. This building up was sometimes done in relative isolation from the latter.[114]

In *Interface*, Sison acknowledges these observations on SCPW but insists that the essay's importance cannot be understood if isolated from the other points of the paper.[115]

> Friends and foes alike are most impressed by the idea of converting the archipelagic character of the country - an initial disadvantage - to a long-term advantage of the revolutionary forces and by the idea of de-centralized operations under a centralized leadership. These are supposed to be the ideas which have given confidence to and encouraged initiative and resourcefulness among the revolutionary forces. But I think that these ideas are better appreciated in relation to the other ideas in the entire article.[116]

The other document was "Our Urgent Tasks" (OUT)[117] which examined the accomplishments and failures of the party's early years and advocated a number of changes to strengthen the breakthroughs while overcoming its flaws.[118] Scholars tend to depreciate the importance of OUT since its concern for particulars made it seem less interesting a document than the SCPW.[119] But a careful examination of the document would show that, more than SCPW, OUTs importance lies in its giving more flesh to Sison's efforts to determine the proper blend of tactics for both the rural and urban areas based on the experiences that had been accumulated since 1969. Thus, Sison was correct in stating that OUT was "the document that has brought about the considerable success of the revolutionary movement up to the eighties ... [by] grasping the rhythm of the processes of expansion and consolidation."[120]

As detailed as OUT was, the document was also exceptional for Sison's admission of problems within the party. While OUT was still brimming with Maoist optimism, it also pinpointed along certain lines problems that the party was facing. One pertained to the tendency of NPA units either to be too aggressive in their military operations despite their diminutive forces or to be lethargic in their conduct when they are satisfied with the barrios they had already organized.[121] The second problem dealt with the question of leadership. OUT makes mention of the need for the party to expand collective work and to lessen dependence on certain leading personalities. This critique could both refer to cadres setting up their respective committees and Sison's method of work itself (which after all may be the model of these cadres).[122]

But what may have been the most difficult problem involved the party's biggest regional committee, Manila-Rizal, which was beginning to veer away from the political line of protracted armed struggle by enunciating policies which Sison viewed as "reformist deviations."[123] The impact of Manila's intransigence would only be felt two years later, and by that time Sison was already in detention.

All these, of course, are not mentioned in Interface as Sison merely contents himself with discussing the essay's general outline and importance and dismissing as insignificant (for purposes of the book) its details.

Sison remained confident that the party would continue to grow. After all, it had already survived the most crucial period of its life. With SCPW and OUT condensing the CPPs initial fortunes and tribulations, he was looking forward to actions on a bigger scale" than those of the early 70s and was hopeful that even if he himself were captured, "the revolutionary forces would know to advance further.[124] Moreover, by the end of 1976, a more consolidated party leadership was also making preparations for a party congress that would elect a new set of leaders.

Arrest, Detention, and the Party without the Chairman

Sison was arrested in Barrio Pagdalagan del Norte, San Fernando, La Union on the early morning of November 10, 1977 as a result of information provided by a Central Luzon informer, a military intelligence operation covering the entire northwestern part of Luzon, including Baguio, and Sison's overconfidence.[125] Arrested with him were his wife, Juliet, and

three others. In *Interface*, Sison downplays the impact of his arrest (and that of Dante in 1976).

> By itself, or combined with the previous arrest of Comrade Buscayno, my arrest did not cause any big damage to the revolutionary movement. Before the end of 1976, the Executive Committee of the CC consolidated itself, made clear the line of succession and was preparing for a Party Congress to form a new Central Committee. The comrade who would take over my functions had known with me the entire structure of the CPP, NPA, and NDF and had been with me in meeting Party personnel at various levels and in various spheres. There could be no confusion of great proportions after my arrest. The enemy could not derive much direct and immediate benefit tom some documents and the small amount of money taken from me. 126

Sison was immediately transported to Malacañang Palace where he met Marcos and engaged in thirty minutes of repartee with the dictator (in Ilocano) over the merits and demerits of armed resistance, Gen. Ver's friendship with his family, the Ilocanization of the AFP, and the stories that linked Benigno Aquino, Jr. to the CPP, as Marcos tried to impress on Sison that he knew about the link. Sison described the encounter as a duel.[127] From Malacañang, Sison was brought to a detention center (most probably Fort Bonifacio) and for a week was subjected to "punching and water cure sessions."[128]

What he described as the worst form of torture was psychological. He was kept in isolation for five years, eighteen months of those "manacled and fettered to a cot' and deprived of his glasses. Sison remarkably survived these initial years in prison by maintaining an active mind. Accordingly, he utilized Ws capacity to recall subjects and events "and using materialist dialectics to analyze these, composing poems, thinking out essays and devising plots of novels and short stories." He was given the Bible as reading material. This he read seven times. Gradually, however, the restrictions were lifted and he was allowed books and periodicals and a small radio. He brags that by using Ms materialist dialectics once more, he generated information which could have produced for him "a number of doctorates!"[129] But most important of all, what he thought made him survive was his revolutionary conviction and optimism.[130]

Accordingly, he also kept himself theoretically busy. He wrote poems (which were later on published in his second book collection Prison and beyond), articles, and "for proletarian revolutionaries and those who wish to become so... a book-length manuscript on the fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism."[131] He was eventually able to gain more solid information regarding the movement through his lawyer and co-accused as well as through elaborate communications he claims he "secretly had with comrades outside of prison on subjects ranging from plans to spring me out to the conduct of revolutionary struggle in its varied forms."[132]

These links accordingly, allowed him to contribute to the preparations and discussions of "basic documents and manifestos of various organizations," the CPP included. Through the same sources, he was able to smuggle out his poetry, statements and messages, and even some of Ws "long pieces on various aspects of Philippine society, the revolutionary movement [his] detention experiences and the cases against [him]."[133] When Juliet was released in 1982 he was able to get more news about the outside world and managed to smuggle out Ms writings (and even answers to interviews).

Part of keeping himself mentally alert was to avail himself of every opportunity to fight.[134] Sison's resilience was remarkable at this point and he managed to keep himself active inspite of His isolation for nearly ten years.

Sison's arrest as well as that of the other original central committee members, did not paralyze the CPP, indicating the extent to which the guidelines laid down by SCPW and OUT proved useful to the party.[135] The earlier difficulties were soon surmounted (the NPA managed to reestablish its bases in Northern Luzon, Mindanao, and Bicol)[136] while the painstaking efforts at building underground networks in urban areas yielded fruit with a new capacity for launching open strikes among students, workers, and urban poor communities without inviting massive state reprisal.

The party had also managed to establish a strong presence in the different churches (except for the Iglesia ni Cristo or Church of Christ) where the religious began to play an important part in such issues as the defense of human rights. Finally, the CPP had even achieved a certain degree of success in establishing solidarity networks throughout the United States and Europe.[137]

The party had the Marcos dictatorship to thank for the opportunities it opened for the revolutionary movement. Extensive militarization, the regressive effects of the Green Revolution, and the unmitigated exploitation of vast land resources and labor by Marcos cronies with transnational linkages escalated peasant resentment In the cities, the imbalance between wages and inflation led to continued protest activities in factories while Mrs. Marcos's repulsive beautification drives catalyzed slum unity and action. All these the CPP tapped as entry points for expansion. Even the anti-Marcos elites were preserving their ties with the CPP, knowing the strength of its "warm bodies" and its countryside influence.[138] The CPP was obliged to maintain these ties as these elite personalities did give its legal cadres a chance to establish a national presence. Indeed, there is a basis for Sison's assertion in Interface that the CPP would survive even in his absence.

But the party was not immune to strains arising from such growth. For even as SCPW and OUT were able to establish the framework by which the CPP could develop despite political and even geographic adversities, these documents could not attend to all factors and problems that the revolution had to face. Given the limited availability of sources, we shall focus on three of these problems.

The first concerned the germinating diversity of localized interpretations of party doctrines arising from the policy of "centralized leadership and decentralized operations." Regional and local bodies, seeking to analyze concretely their specific contexts, began to "distort' party policies in order to successfully implant themselves in their respective areas. As mentioned above, OUT complained that these regionalist and localized tendencies were beginning to display themselves and warned that such were symptoms of revisionist and reformist worldviews.

Indeed, while Sison was suffering in His first months in jail, the problem reached a certain crisis point in the region which was the biggest and most affluent of all the CPPs local bodies: Manila-Rizal. Its regional committee instigated an internal major crisis by proceeding with plans that deviated from the CPPs protracted people's war strategy. It aimed for a Manila-based uprising against Marcos, fiddled around with parliamentary politics, and even arranged a mutual collaboration-of-equals with the disenfranchised anti-Marcos politicians.[139] These drew the ire of the leadership and the rift culminated in the purging of the regional committee

on charges of violating democratic centralism, disregarding the policies on united front politics, and most important of all, deviating from the strategy of protracted people's war.[140]

The resolution of the conflict via organizational fiat did not solve the problem fully. But its worst consequence was the weakening of the Manila-Rizal organizations and the difficulty the new regional committee would face in reviving the mass struggles in the country's main urban center. On a broader scale, the 1978 conflict only forbode of more serious problems for the CPP. Sison alludes to the seriousness of the Manila-Rizal controversy when he mentions that after the Aquino assassination he "urged the revolutionary leadership to hasten the building of urban-based progressive mass organizations and urban community organizations which had been adversely affected by the boycott participation dispute in 1978."[141]

The second major challenge for the party at the time of Sison's capture was ideological. This problem manifested itself in two ways. First in the late 70s, CPP hegemony was being challenged ideologically by former cadres who joined hands with local *dependistas* and ex-PKP members to theoretically question its basic principles and formulafions.[142] While the CPP regarded these as minor irritants, it felt uneasy about these ideological confrontations with the more sophisticated radicals, some of whom were previously from its ranks.[143] It lacked the ideologue who had the adequate Marxist knowledge and ideological standing to counter this ideological challenge. Sison, perhaps the most capable and the one with the most stature, was in jail.

The other symptom was internal. By the late 70s, the CPP leadership was expressing a growing concern over the failure of its cadres to develop ideologically. Through *Ang Bayan*, the party complained that its members were not giving serious attention to political education resulting in an imbalance in the movements ideological growth. It therefore encouraged its cadres to devote time to studying the Marxist and Maoist classics.[144] Moreover, among its mass base, NPA guerrillas and party commissars were having difficulty trying to broaden supporters' political consciousness beyond "anti-fascism." There was a growing awareness that while it was not difficult to gain mass support because of the Marcos dictatorship, a support that only stands on an "anti- fascist" line may just prove to be insufficient to sustain the revolution, much less inspire the masses to struggle for a national democratic order.[145]

Finally, by the late 70s and early 80s, a host of other international questions bedeviled the party. The collapse of the Chiang Ching clique, the resurrection of the "capitalist roaders," and the repudiation of the Cultural Revolution as a "dark era" in Chinese history caused some anxiety even as the party, as far back as 1976, was already admitting that "there were no ready-made complete solutions to our specific problems from books or from abroad."[146] The Indochina conflict saw the CPP supporting Pol Pot and for this much of its solidarity was to suffer (for example, the U.S. solidarity network eventually split between the Pol Pot and the Vietnamese factions).[147] The leadership, in response to cadre demands for explanations and discussions, could only give the excuse that either these issues had yet to be fully studied or that party cadres ought not to be distracted by these issues and instead focus their attention on "how to win the revolution in our country."[148] Pragmatism and prudence proved to be a better and wise option than making any categorical, controversial, and consequently divisive statement

This is not to say that Sison was unaware of these problems. It appears that he was apprised of the situation and tried his best to contribute to their solution. His being in jail unfortunately limited his effectiveness. In Interface, he dismisses the Manila-Rizal rift as nothing but a psy-ops ploy by the military. The ex-CPP chairman would not believe that the regional committee would be so disloyal to party principles and provoke a crisis.

How could an electoral exercise staged by the class enemy divide the revolutionary movement? The CPP cannot be obliged to answer the question of whether to participate or not in an electoral exercise of the class enemy because it is a party leading an armed revolutionary movement that is building a new government even while the reactionary government still exists.[149]

Sison tried to participate in the ideological debates with the Filipino dependistas but he mainly encouraged his supporters in the academe to defend the party line.[150] He apparently was not thoroughly familiar with the problems caused by the international issues. It is only upon His release that he seems to have recognized these. Thus, he attempts to deal with them in Interface, with 'indirect and sometimes grudging admissions that he erred in His original perception of certain revolutionaries Eke Che Guevarra and issues like the restoration of capitalism in the USSR and the Cultural Revolution in China.[151]

Notwithstanding these problems,[152] the CPP began to shift into high gear in the early 1980 and announced that it was already entering what it called the "substage of the strategic defensive." Accordingly, it would prepare itself for the eventual seizure of power by the 1990s by re-organizing the NPA into a purely military force and by distributing its political and ideological work to either underground mass organizations or the militia; by setting up provisional NDF councils in the local and provincial levels; and by increasing urban mass struggles to eventually lead to larger and more powerful mass strikes.[153]

This shift in strategy, however, was not as smooth as it was expected to be. In certain regions, local CPP initiatives seem to have arisen from premises different from what the leadership conceived them to be. In Mindanao, where the party's growth was most pronounced,. a different explanation was provided for by the Mindanao Commission as to why it was intensifying its resistance. It included seriously questioning the CPP's conception of a "semi-feudal, semicolonial" society, which undermined the very basis for the party's protracted people's war paradigm.[154] But Mindanao's growth also suffered when its fast paced expansion allowed military deep penetration agents (DPAS) to enter the hierarchy and even occupy major positions in the commission.[155]

Towards February

The polarization of Philippine politics reached an explosive moment with the ineptly-handled assassination of Benigno Aquino, Jr. on August 2I, 1983. This single instance opened up an unprecedented opportunity for all anti-Marcos forces and groups to unite to increase their following and influence a thousand-fold (especially with the entry of an agitated middle class) and to put Marcos in an unfamiliar defensive position.

In his *Interface* narrative, Sison relates that he sensed the political importance of the moment and tried to do his "bit of helping to push for the mobilization of the people." He called for the CPP regional leadership to double its efforts at strengthening the party's mass organizations in Manila, conscious of the fact that the assassination both sparked spontaneous opposition and gave the other anti-Marcos groups a chance to revive and reestablish themselves as a third political option to both Marcos and the left. The pace at which the protests developed, however, forced the CPP to undertake both expansion and alliance work at the same

time. And as more groups sprang up to demand "justice for Ninoy," the latter became a more imperative task.

By late 1983, the CPP found itself in a situation where it had to do some real united front work with other groups. In the 70s, the party was contented with building party-led sectoral and class organizations for the NDF and with maintaining ties with other groups (the conservative parties and the social democrats) on an ad hoc, issue-to-issue basis. This time the qualitative change in the anti-Marcos protests and the gravity of the political crisis sparked by the assassination had forced it to a situation where united front politics meant real united front politics with non- left and non-CPP organizations along medium, if not long-term fines. The party's general experience with post-1983 coalition work proved dismal.

The first alliance, "Justice for Aquino, Justice for All" (JAJA), was the broadest of all waited front experiments, involving groups that ranged from traditional parties Eke Laurel's United Democratic Opposition (UNIDO), new politicized groups like chapters of the Philippine Jaycees and the middle class August Twenty-One Movement (ATOM), to the national democratic legal organizations like the Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU, May One Movement) and the League of Filipino Students (LFS). What kept it together was the middle ground between the two extremes - human rights groups and what Sison calls "progressive urban petty bourgeois groups," perhaps referring to Jose W. Diokno's group Kilusan Para sa Kalayaan at Katarungan ng Bayan (KAAKBAY, Movement for Philippine Democracy and Independence).

JAJA did not last long as an alliance. Its component organizations predictably got entangled in long debates on issues Like what the coalition's "political line' ought to be, the "elitism" of certain major slogans, and the exact political formulations for propaganda purposes.[156] There were also fundamental differences between the conservative wing of the opposition (mostly the anti-Marcos political parties) and the so-called "cause-oriented" groups or those following programmatic lines. Conservatives, in particular, were locked in an increasingly heated contest with the CPP's legal cadres in determining who would take control of the largely-spontaneous opposition. These rifts merely reflected the contrasting agenda of the different groups with the two extremes attempting to control its leadership which was loosely held by centrist groups.[157]

In Interface, Sison states that while still in prison, having sensed the looseness of leadership in JAJA, he "proposed the expansion and consolidation of the antifascist forces to include the organizations of the basic toiling masses and drafted a plan for a proposed Congress for the Restoration of Democracy which would eventually become the Coalition for the Realization of Democracy (CORD) in 1984.[158] CORD was a narrower alliance than JAJA, and its members mostly consisted of national democratic organizations, smaller social democratic formations, and new groups that emerged after l983 (which one political scientist fondly called the NPE or the "newly politicized elements").[159]

Non-left leaders, attempting to reforge the broken ties between the cause-oriented movement and the traditional politicians, came out with their own ideas of a post-JAJA anti-Marcos coalition.[160] After elaborate negotiations, a Kongreso ng Mamamayang Pilipino (KOMPIL, Congress of the Filipino People) on January 24, 1984 was convened which brought together for the last time all the different political tendencies within the opposition.[161] KOMPIL, like JAJA, also did not fare well as a coalition project As early as its first and only congress, all the groups had already failed to agree on how to take on the Marcos offer for elections to the Batasang Pambansa (National Legislature). The right and some middle groups opted to participate while the left and groups like KAAKBAY boycotted.

According to Sison, the reason why KOMPIL failed was the inadequate preparations of the more "progressive" forces to counter the dominant presence of conservative groups in the coalition. He also asserted that while CORD was able to include some social democrats as well as new groups that emerged after 1983, it was not "broad enough" an organization. Appraised accordingly of this predicament Sison claims that from his prison cell, he made another series of proposals to the CPPs united front cadres "for a still broader united front organization." Out of this materialized the idea of forming a new alliance which he continued to push for up to 1985.[162]

In May 1985, all major "cause-oriented groups" with the exception of the political parties convened at the Ateneo de Manila University to form the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (BAYAN, New Patriotic Alliance).[163] But again, the effort failed. This time the split was more serious and acrimonious. The social democrats and the business group Manindigan! (Take a Stand!) left the congress accusing the left of manipulating the

voting processes in order to dominate BAYAN's leadership. The smaller middle groups associated with the "Independent Caucus" likewise left on the second day with the same accusation, complaining as well that the CPP's united front cadres broke a pre-congress agreement of balanced representation in the soon-to-be-"elected" leadership. On the other hand, the left made the counter-accusation of a social democrats businessmen's conspiracy to dominate the congress despite their smaller number.[164]

From hindsight Sison admitted that left sectarianism was a major cause of the split in BAYAN. Why this sectarianism came about however, was not adequately explained by the CPPs ex-chairman. This is rather unusual given Sison's propensity to insist on a dialectical and comprehensive explanation of events.

Instead he turns his guns at the other groups, especially the social democrats and the business groups (the pro-US elements"), accusing them of trying to control the congress.[165] He also acknowledges that there existed a number of misunderstandings and confusion over the real conception of BAYAN.[166]

This latter explanation appears to correspond to the explanations of a number of major participants in the pre-congress negotiations. These participants, especially those from the social democratic groups and Independent Caucus, had the idea that BAYAN was to unify all anti-Marcos forces under a single "unified command," an idea that met with opposition from both those CPP cadres who felt that any united front should be dominated by the left and from those who assented to an alliance but insisted that each ideological tendency or political group be allowed to undertake its own initiatives without being encumbered by the alliance.[167]

Sison avers that he failed to foresee the split as he was not "apprised promptly of the details that would lead to the trouble at the founding congress of BAYAN."[168] But upon hearing about the debacle, he immediately sought to remedy it by proposing the convening of a "BAYAN-KAAKBAY-BANDILA [Bansang Nagkakaisa sa Diwa at Layunin or Nation United in Spirit and Purpose] consultative council ... that could even be further expanded to include the opposition political parties." But even his "stature" could not mend the rift as "there was stubbornness on the part of BAYAN, KAAKBAY, and BANDIIA to stay apart from each other according to their respective motives, interests and tendencies." He nevertheless accuses

the non-CPP groups of being more at fault than His comrades in the united front

> If BANDILA and KAAKBAY had really wanted unity, this could have been accomplished through a consultative council allowing independence and initiative of the components. But obviously, BANDILA and KAAKBAY wanted nothing less than a command of the large progressive forces of BAYAN...KAAKBAY thought that it was beneficial for itself to go along with BANDILA in hitting BAYAN as dogmatic and sectarian. There was a slurring only over of the fact that pro-US elements in BANDILA were interested only in appropriating the mass strength of BAYAN but consigning it to the status of a footstool. Why should BAYAN put its forces under the command of unreliable and smaller entities?[169]

Sison concludes that the split was more beneficial to the progressive movement for it sharply defined the political positions of the different tendencies. It prevented the moderates and the right wing opposition from influencing other groups in BAYAN to join their cause. It also revealed which of the different groups eventually backed down due to American pressure.[170]

His explanation notwithstanding, the BAYAN split marked the final falling out of the diverse forces that emerged after Aquino's assassination. The different groups decided to forge their own diverse strategies of opposing the dictatorship, sometimes crossing each other's path but most of the time running parallel to each other. Whatever coalitions that emerged after the 1985 split were very tactical in nature and usually short-lived. And as we shall see later, when a major event occurred, the ideological and political differences served to slacken efforts at common action.

For the CPP, however, the series of splits since 1983 was indicative of a failure to recognize the reality that new, smaller, but nevertheless influential forces had emerged to challenge its hegemony over anti-Marcos politics. Its insistence on dominating legal alliances showed a conflict between the old united front formulations, the foremost of which was Sison's idea of the united front as one which mirrored the CPP's political line.[171]

February 1986: The Left Retreats

In November 1985, under considerable American pressure, Marcos announced his plans to call for a "snap election" in February 1986. The announcement broke the stupor which plagued the opposition groups since the BAYAN congress. The non-left opposition was further animated when, on December, Corazon Aquino announced her intention to him against Marcos. While these groups began forming the Aquino campaign machinery hastily but with renewed dedication, the CPPs executive committee, in a December memorandum, declared that the elections were nothing but an "empty but noisy contest of local reactionaries ensuing between the government fascist puppet faction and the bourgeois-reformists cultivated by U.S. imperialism."[172] It then directed all party units, both legal and underground, to launch an "active boycott' movement against the snap polls.

The memorandum elicited varied reactions from the underground organizations which were locked in acrimonious and painful debates over its tactical adequacy and possible consequences if it were followed to the letter. And instead of projecting a united left stand, the different CPP organizations either refused to abide by the policy or implemented it half-heartedly. The KM, for example, refused to abide by the policy and encouraged its members to join the Aquino bandwagon. Other underground groups became ineffective as their ranks split into two camps: boycott advocates and pro-parficipafionists.[173]

Similar problems buffeted the party's legal groups and coalitions.[174] Inside BAYAN, the boycott policy was forcibly implemented leading to resignations and leaves-of-absence by some of its leaders (prominently Chairman Lorenzo Tañada and Vice-Chairman Ambrosio Padilla) who opted to participate in the elections after Corazon Aquino decided to ran against Marcos. With the boycotters in control of the nationwide alliance and reinforced by the failed negotiations with the Aquino camp, BAYAN took up the initiative in spearheading the boycott movement But as election day neared, it was obvious that it was taking a very unpopular line.[175]

Sison complicated the situation when, in an interview, he cunningly sidestepped the boycott-participation issue and advocated a policy described by one source as "boycott in theory, but participate in practice."[176] This position merely confused lower-level activists who were only privy to the

boycott memorandum and were generally secluded from the debates that were confined, to the leadership. For them, it became a case of deciding which document carried more weight: the memorandum or the words of the chairman. Again, no unified stand emerged; instead, there was utter confusion.

The elections and the consequent events of the "people power revolution" or "EDSA uprising" have been widely discussed so there is no need to repeat the highlights here. The impact of those events on the left had also been examined both by scholars and CPP activists, although the full effects as well as their underlying causes still need deeper inquiry.[177] What was clear, however, was that the CPP had committed a major blunder that consigned it to the sidelines during those decisive days of February.[178]

Sison, along with Dante, Edicio de la Torre, Horacio Morales, and other CPP leaders, was released on the first week of March as part of Aquino's pledge to release all political prisoners. In *Interface,* he expressed his gratitude to Aquino for his release but insisted that Mrs. Aquino neither amnested nor pardoned him. He qualified that his release was not solely out of Aquino's good heart but mainly due to the lefts "decisive" role in putting her to power as well as his own contributions to the struggle.

> For specifically ordering my release, despite US and military pressures on her not to do so, I am grateful to Mrs. Aquino. But in the first place she was being grateful to the national democratic movement, including myself, for having closely cooperated with her in the struggle against the Marcos dictatorship .... You must recognize that the organizations of the national democratic movement were the staunchest, most sizeable and most solid antifascist organizations which had been the hardcore of the unprecedented and sustained mass actions from 1983 to 1986 ... At the least, everyone should recognize a reciprocal sense of gratitude between Aquino and myself. I did my bit in supporting her against Marcos. To support her, I did more than just the published interviews favorable to her even while I was in prison. [Moreover, Aquino had actually no] choice but to order my release... [o]therwise, she would have validated the arbitrary rule of Marcos and the authority of the military commissions which had also persecuted her husband.[179]

Sison became an instant celebrity upon his release. Together with Dante and other formerly detained CPP leaders, Sison toured the television

talk show circuit and was sought after by journalists for interviews.[180] He found himself also invited to international gatherings and was hopeful that he could earn some money through lectures, especially in the United States.[181] While there were those who sought His political ideas,[182] the public seemed to be more interested in him as a person. One writer complained that instead of being regarded as political leaders whose ideas were important inputs to the efforts of understanding contemporary society, Sison and his fellow detainees found themselves trivialized into objects of curiosity.

> Autographs and photographs of the sudden celebrities were most sought after. They were made to guest on talks shows... to trivialize the horrors of detention. They spoke before the Rotarians, Jaycees, and other civic groups on the various faces of torture and how it was to live in *bartolinas."*[183]

But Sison also returned to the political scene with the CPP seriously racked in an unprecedented internal crisis. A number of regional leaders resigned in the aftermath of the boycott fiasco, among them leaders of the Negros regional committee,[184] Cordilleran ex-priests Conrado Balweg and Bruno Ortega, and some leading members of the KM general secretariat[185] BAYAN had lost much of its political capital and was the object of derision of people who regarded its boycott position as having propped up Marcos. The tales of February were critical of BAYAN and no matter how its leaders went out of their way to prove their participation in the uprising, BAYAN's record was already tarnished.

And as if to compound the situation, some of the skeletons began to emerge from the party's closed notably the public disclosure of infightings in the leadership and the brutal mismanagement of the DPA problem in areas like Mindanao.[186] Suddenly, and at a most inopportune moment, the image of revolutionaries as dedicated people began to be tarnished by the seamier side of the CPP that was exposed to the public. The party's political prestige suffered considerably and was seen to be at its lowest. In Northern Mindanao alone, the following description reveals the extent of file damage.

> The damage to the movement also includes the destruction of the Party machinery in four political centers in the region and the regional white area machinery; destruction of one of the fronts and a major

> setback to the full-time guerilla unit in that front; a number of regional cadres were affected and the Regional Committee was dislocated for 6 months; a number of unauthorized arrests were effected and a number of guerrillas were killed; on a region-wide basis a number of elements of the NPA were implicated including Party, revolutionary mass organizations and sympathizers - resulting in the loss of trust among them; setback in the armed and political struggle which could have been avoided had the policies on handling arrests and investigations been proper; a major effect on the prestige of the Party, the N PA, the NDF and the inhuman treatment at Camp A earned black propaganda against them; lowering of morale among those who followed orders (or purging) of DPAs/informers who have infiltrated their ranks.[187]

Meanwhile, those who had disagreed with the boycott memorandum but remained loyal to the party felt vindicated by the uprising and vigorously criticized the leadership. They also demanded an internal "democratic space" to allow meaningful discussions and debates to flourish. Sharp exchanges punctuated the first months of 1986, between these cadres and their comrades who still considered the boycott decision appropriate. Gareth Porter aptly describes the major issues upon which the debates revolved upon by summer of 1986: "[S]harp debates within the CPP had emerged on at least three major issues: the roles and relative importance of armed struggle and political struggle in revolutionary strategy, the nature of the Aquino government and the nature of the united front."[188]

Leading lights in the CPP magnified the party's woes when they began articulating "revisionist' pronouncements that attracted adherents among the confused mass of *aktibistas.* Kumander Dante criticized the left for having failed to recognize the changes in mass consciousness and declared that he would critically support" the Aquino government.[189] Edicio de la Torre and Horacio Morales advanced the idea of "popular democracy" which they conceived of in an effort to realize a meaningful coalition process among the different political groups (the traditional political parties included).[190]

To compound the party's woes, the debates occurred amidst the constantly changing political situation where the party found itself engaged in a wearisome activity of attempting to determine the nature of the new regime.[191] The transitional character of the Aquino government unsettled

a CPP that had become used to simple cut-out political categories of analyses during the Marcos period. Thus, even as Aquino was herself uncertain of her power in the first year of her administration, she managed to maintain the upper hand against the CPP, forcing it on the defensive during the ceasefire negotiations, the constitutional plebiscite, and even during elections for the legislature.[192]

There is, so far, no record of Sison having participated in these debates upon his release from prison, although it is safe to infer that he was involved in some of them. Throughout 1986, Sison kept himself out of much of the political controversies surrounding the revolutionary movement He was instead reported to have been actively involved in the laying down of the groundwork for the formation of the Partido ng Bayan (PnB, Party of the People). PnB was supposed to become the legal party that would pursue the left's political interests via "parliamentary struggle."[193] He also spent much of Ms time going around the international Philippine solidarity circuit for lectures. He limited his public views for most of the period to commending the left for its resilience despite the vagaries of the post-Marcos situation; he would rather focus His criticisms on the Aquino regime as it began to, accordingly, unfold its "pro-US and reactionary" character while reiterating that his old ideas remained valid even under the new dispensation."[194]

Sison was also busily defending the left against the criticisms heaped upon it after 1986.[195] He was particularly concerned with the criticisms of NPA atrocities in Mindanao arising from an over-reaction to the problem of DPAs in the party structure. He admits that the problem caused a "substantial decrease in the number of fighters in Mindanao" but qualifies that the party's Mindanao Commission had already began the slow process of rectifying this error."

Also, as in his response to criticisms against BAYAN in 1985, Sison would insist that it was not only the fault of the CPP that ought to be considered but also the mistakes of the other groups. But once he goes into an elaboration of the latter, the mistakes of the left slowly become de-emphasized. For example, he acknowledges that BAYAN (and on a much broader scale, the CPP) committed a major mistake with its boycott policy and that BAYAN had also failed to meaningfully intervene during the February uprising.

But he would castigate Aquino partisans for "invent[ing] the myth that the organizations of BAYAN were not present [in EDSA]." Sison then makes the unsubstantiated, if not downright spurious statement, that BAYAN and other left groups were able to overcome their predicament and took "the lead in calling for a national strike movement to bring down the Marcos regime." BAYAN, according to him, comprised the "hardcore and eighty percent" of the people who converged at EDSA since the other groups such "as BANDILA, KAAKBAY, PDP-Laban, and UNIDO were too small then [and] their members made a tiny fraction of the mass uprising."[197]

Sison also concedes that the downfall of Marcos did not conform with His vision of a revolutionary ouster of the Marcos dictatorship.[198] But he would insist - perhaps if viewed in a wider context, correctly - that the left played a determining part in all these; and with him, of course, contributing his own "bit in hitting hard" at Marcos and the US.

> If we single out the most decisive factor that brought about the fall of Marcos, we must point to the revolutionary mass movement led by the [CPPI. This fact is, however, obfuscated by the rise of Mrs. Aquino and her pro-imperialist and reactionary cohorts in government positions. The balance of forces was such that the revolutionary movement could cause the downfall of Marcos but could not as yet seize political power.[199]

By 1988, however, Sison began to publicly make strong rejoinders against those who continued to be critical of the CPPs immediate and strategic mistakes. These were not only in response to the criticisms; more importantly for him, they were replies in defense of the revolutionary framework that he first conceived when he presided over the "re-establishment" of the party. It was his way of reasserting that no matter how much the political situation had changed, the views he held as far back as the first years of the party remained as valid as ever, and that the criticisms and new ideas that had emerged after 1986 were erroneous deviations from the revolutionary fine.

Sison berated the cadres who questioned the old strategy of protracted people's war and demanded that the party give serious attention to the strategy of mass uprising that included both military and parliamentary tactics. His arguments however were essentially militaristic.

> To rush to armed urban uprising with only 10,000 automatic rifles as a hard core is to beg for the annihilation of the armed revolutionary movement. It is wrong and disastrous to overreach ... Armed urban uprisings should not be counterposed to the theory and practice of encircling the cities from the countryside over a protracted period of time. Some elements can now suggest that armed urban uprisings be launched only because there are firearms accumulated through protracted people's war ... But are the firearms in the hands of the NPA already enough for it to seize and keep political power in the cities? These are not enough ... An impulsive action led by a hard core of only 10,000 guerilla fighters has no chance of winning. Revolutionaries have to have some more hard work. They should be happy that the NPA has grown from only 9 automatic rifles in 1969 to 10,000 today.[200]

He was surprisingly harsh towards the advocates of an insurrectionary strategy. He accused them of proposing a revision that was "a manifestation of petty-bourgeois impulsiveness and adventurism reminiscent of the [PKP's] 1950 error in the Phifippines."[201] This remark was the most serious allegation ever made by him against His CPP comrades. By identifying their thinking with the errors of the PKP, he was in effect considering this revisionism as a serious political menace to the CPPs capacity to wage revolution. For within the CPP, to be equated with- the Lavas was tantamount to having committed a mortal sin.

He was not as curt in his criticism of the errant executive committee (EC) of the party. While conceding the fact that the EC had acted in an undemocratic manner when it laid down the boycott policy, he was quick to qualify that the issue over the policy may not have assumed serious proportions had the CPP opted to stand above the question while at the same time allowing the legal mass organizations and alliances to take positions within the range of groups opposing the US-Marcos dictatorship.[202]

He also became critical of those who favored the position of "critical support" in relation to the Aquino government and those who characterized it as a "liberal-democratic regime."[203] He thought of the first view as "an obsequious expression" and complained that "progressive organizations [oftentimes] make the mistake of debating and dividing themselves over whether to be for or against a thing or process of the reactionaries and missing out on more important questions and tasks." The other view he castigates as fostering an illusion that a liberal-democratic regime could exist in a semi-colonial, semi-feudal society as the Philippines.[204]

Along the same vein, he censured those who argued that the CPP had ignored the importance of the electoral arena as an avenue for radical politics. For him, not only were electoral exercises unreliable "means and measure(s) for expressing and realizing the people's will," they were also means of legitimizing the rule of the revolution's class enenues.[205]

When the NDF entered into a ceasefire with the government, Sison was initially supportive.[206] But in *Interface,* he takes the contrary view arguing that the NDF should have refused to be drawn into Aquino's proposal.

> There would have been no political cost to the NDF or the revolutionary forces if preliminary talks on mutual safety and immunity guarantees and then on the agenda of the negotiations proper took as long as it was necessary to arrive at what was mutually satisfactory...There was no urgent need for any nationwide ceasefire. If the US-Aquino regime would denounce the revolutionary forces for the lack of a ceasefire, then that would only become the occasion for them to expose the unwillingness of the regime to put the basic national and democratic demands of the people on the agenda.[207]

When the national democrats got embroiled in another series of internal debates like the plebiscite for the 1987 Constitution and the legislative elections, Sison lamented the fact that the debaters were wasting their efforts debating when they could apply a "revolutionary dual tactic" to ensure that while significant portions of the revolutionary movement would reject actions or exercises initiated by the government, others would critically support them.

There is yet no account of any counter-response to these series of restorationist views of Sison. This may either be due to the deference of the critics towards the founding chairman,[209] or simply because Sison's ideas were so dogmatic or extraneous that they were of no political use either as modes of analyses or guides to praxis. But it appeared that Sison's views fell on receptive ears inside the CPP leadership, especially by 1987 when Aquino's cacique democracy had consolidated itself and the CPP was increasingly finding itself pushed into a constricting position in relation to the governments.[210]

On February 1987, *Ang Bayan* formally signalled the CPPs break with Aquino by attacking the government as a "clique that is hell bent on imposing its oppressive and exploitative powers" on the people.[211] The CPP vowed to continue with the armed struggle unvil victory. The new policy towards Aquino also became the occasion for the leadership to end all the internal debates and demand that all party cadres unite under the new policy. At a May 1987 conference, the party held a theoretical conference and denounced cadres like Buscayno, de la Torre, and Morales who became "right opportunists" and "reformists."[212] What was significant was that the decision was based on arguments that followed the same line as Sison's.[213] One can only infer that the CPP leadership may have used Sison's rejoinders with the knowledge that they also carried some preeminence due to their authorship.

Having established the "correct fine," the CPP immediately moved to limit the organizational maneuverability of its critics by reassigning people, dissolving party cells which were composed of or dominated by critics, and waged a sustained "education" campaign to correct these "deviations." It also allowed cadres who remained fanatically loyal to the 1986 boycott decision to attack the "revisionists" while severely curtailing the latter's ability to respond to these reinvigorated counter-criticisms.[214]

In late 1987, Sison and His wife left for Europe upon the invitation of various Philippine support groups linked with the NDF's office in Holland to continue His "world lecture tour." With Holland as his base, he moved a lot around Europe delivering lectures on a variety of topics on the Philippines. In his talks on the revolutionary movement Sison brimmed with optimism believing that the crisis in the Philippines would ensure the continuing advance of the revolutionary movement he foresaw that other factors considered, a strategic stalemate (where the NPA will be in near parity with the AFP militarily) "would be reached in three to five years from 1986."[215]

Sison apparently wanted to return to the Philippines by 1988 but was dissuaded by comrades who feared for His life after the spate of assassinations of leftist leaders. He would then just continue his lecture tour on "the Philippine situation and prospects and special topics. Like the role of the Church, land reform, the youth movement and a part of Philippine history such as the Hukbalahap and the HMB."[216]

On early January 1988, the Aquino government began feeding the media with stories that Sison had re-assumed the position of chairman of the CPP replacing Benito Tiamson who was reportedly just a compromise candidate. Sison has also been accused of actively soliciting arms for the revolutionary movement by negotiating with the Soviet bloc states as well as by diverting funds for development and aid agencies intended for "people's organizations" in the Philippines. Sison vehemently denied all these allegations, arguing that he had "been very busy lately lecturing, researching, and writing ... [and wishing] that I could do more for the movement but my time has been really limited."[217]

In the latter part of the year, reacting to a video interview with Sison where he allegedly referred to the legal left groups as members of the NDF[218] and openly advocated the armed struggle against the Aquino government the Aquino government revoked His passport in order to force Mm to return to the Philippines and face charges of sedition which the military had filed against him. Sison's consistent reply was that he would return in his own time.

Meanwhile, concrete realities seemed not to coincide well with the CPP chairman's predictions. During the first two quarters of 1988, the military had captured the party's general secretary, the NPA head, and a number of politburo and regional party leaders who were in Manila to attend an important central committee plenum.[219] Captured with them were diskettes believed to contain important information about the current status of the movement the party also discovered that the problem of DPAs was not only confined to Mindanao but had seriously affected other regions as well.[220] Neither has the CPP recovered from the dissensions of 1986, the statements of its leaders to the contrary.[221] On November 12, 1988, Ignacio Capegsan, a politburo member, resigned from his position. He was arrested by the military as he was allegedly on his way to board a plane for the U.S. He gave the following statement

> Nagkaroon ng kanya-kanyang taktika. Ang mga local territories, nagkaroon ng kanyakanyang development. *[Inside the leadership]* nagkaroon ng kanya-kanyang kampo, kanya-kanyang pagtingin. May nagsasabi na ang Nicaraguan struggle ay ang model..Mayroon namang nagsasabing Russian model naman ang pinakamahusay. May nagsasabing ang linyang Mao Tse Tung and pinakamahusay. Hindi either or ang nangyayari ... parang walang kakayahan ang *present leadership to direct*

the whole revolutionary movement. Hindi ko na matagalan... Nandiyan ang trabaho, kailangan mong maiabante, hindi mo naman alam kung saan ka pupunta - kanan, deretso o kaliwa. Bago pa magkagulo-gulo, nanahimik na lang ako. [Everyone began to have his own tactics. The local territories began to have their own individual developments. Inside the leadership there emerged camps/factions and everyone had his own view. There are those who say that the Nicaraguan struggle is the model... Then there are those who say that the Russian model is the best. There are those who say that the Maoist line is the best. It was not "either or" that was happening...as if the present leadership did not have the capacity to direct the whole revolutionary movement. I could not stand it anymore ... The work was there, you had to advance it but you did not know where to go — right, straight ahead or left. Before everything gets out of hand, I just chose to shut up.][222]

Images, Self-Conception, and Reality: Examining *Interface*

One fully agrees with Werning that no study of the CPP will ever be meaningful without taking into consideration the role that Jose Ma. Sison has played in its history. Sison has more than earned a place in the history of the revolution for the contributions he made towards its resurgence and acceptance by a segment of the Philippine population. In sharing part of his life in *Inter face,* one is therefore allowed to examine in greater detail the nature of his role as the CPPs foremost leader and assess it in relation to the growth of the party and the manifold challenges it confronted and continues to confront throughout its twenty-year history.

This section shall mainly concern itself with examining the following:. a) the format of the book; b) the self-conception of Sison that he and Werning want to impress upon the readers, as well as the possible reasons behind this depiction of the CPPs founding chairman; c) the contradictions that are inherent in this self-conception arising from contrasting images of Sison; and d) the audience that Sison had in mind for this "autobiography."

Time, the need for brevity, and the relatively meager documentary and oral literature on the Philippine left dictate that this examination of *Interface be* confined to looking out for the book's idiosyncrasies. This will be done without the intention of understating whatsoever one's deference towards Sison's contributions to the Philippine revolution.

Is *Interface* an Interface?

The 1981 Webster Dictionary defines an interface in the following terms:

> (a)a surface forming a common boundary of two bodies or faces; (2a)the place at which independent systems meet and act on or communicate with each other; broadly, an arena in which diverse things interact; (2b) the means by which interaction or communication is effected at an interface.

At first glance, *Interface* fits well into this Websterian description. There is Rainer Werning, a progressive academic who represents one "body" (the Third World solidarity network of Germany) or the "independent system" (Europe?), posing the questions to Jose Ma. Sison, representing another "body" (himself as' chairman of the CPP and/or the party itself) and another "system" (the Philippines), who has much to tell about his own experiences for Werning's benefit.

The unstated proposition of the author(s) that *Interface* is an interface is further buttressed by the types of questions that Werning addresses to Sison.

They seek not only historical information but also demand clarification on issues about the left that remain unclarified and controversial (e.g., the left's boycott debacle, the Aquino regime, Philippine Maoism, etc.) and have become the object of attention of scholars and journalists from other 'bodies" and systems' interested in Philippine politics. The questions are asked with the assumption that the existing answers provided for by these scholars and journalists have either been inadequate or have thoroughly distorted the nature of Philippine politics and, more specifically, the image of the revolutionary movement. These have become the cause of concern of those interested in the Philippines, especially of Progressives Like Werning.

With no "less than the widely acclaimed principal tanker and practical leader of the Philippine revolutionary movement providing the answers, Werning hopes to correct these misrepresentations in his "system" resulting from the stream of books on the Philippines and the left by coming out with "the most factual and most meaningful answers for the edification

of the readers."[223] Werning makes sure that he does not only act like a "journalist out to beat a deadline."

> I have been provocative at times to be able to extract the best possible answer; and I have also sounded provocative at other times simply because the issue touched is by itself controversial.[224]

But is a real interface going on between Werning and Sison? Are readers made to believe that a "place at which independent systems meet and act on or communicate with each other; broadly, an arena in which diverse things interact" is being provided for by *Interface?* Interfaces are supposed to be interactions between different "bodies" or "systems." And as such, they are supposed to be a two-way street. There is also an element of spontaneity in interfaces, and the responses, exchanges or further interrogations that come out of them reflect the given moment of the interaction. Interfaces are therefore Like conversations, where both parties engage in a continuing interchange of views. And while, in the case of *Interface,* the focus is on Sison, its being described as an interface leads the reader to believe that some exchanges, some "real" interaction between Sison, the main respondent and Werning, the interviewer, did occur.

Closer examination of the book, however, leads one to question whether *Interface* is an interface. Rather than being an interface, as Webster defines one, the book is a structured interview. It is also a modified interview since Sison is allowed time (from October 1987 to February 1988) to formulate and reformulate Ms answers. No spontaneity is felt by readers; a spontaneity that we would expect to be borne out of a real exchange of views between Werning and Sison."[225] The dynamism of an interface is only hinted at through the "grueling number of hours to arrive at the basic chapter outlines [and] formulate the questions." Instead, this is replaced by a five-month process of allowing Sison to reexamine and re-work" his answer.

This is unfortunate, for other accounts give readers a glance at Sison's abilities to allow a real interface to transpire. While interviewing Sison, for example, Chapman made the observation:

> Only once did the combativeness of which I had been warned flare to the surface. I had observed that after two decades of proselytism, the

> Party he founded seemed to have produced rather few Marxist ideologues. "How many priests does the church have?" he shot back. "Only a few thousand, maybe. But it is enough."[226]

Thus, the transcripts of that real interaction, the interface, yield to the structured re-examining and re-working responses of Sison. *Interface,* therefore, ceases to be an interface. It becomes an interview. No thing more, nothing less.

Werning, perhaps, can confess ignorance of other accounts that may put to doubt some of Sison's answers. But in the fight of His argument that the "spate of Western books" and studies on the Philippines had been inadequate, if not distorting, it is expected of him to apply the same inquisitive and critical attitude towards Sison, even if his respondent happens to be no "less than the widely acclaimed principal thinker and practical leader of the Philippine revolutionary movement" This point is particularly important when Werning asks about Sison's views on post-Marcos 1986 politics.

By the tone of some of these questions, Werning apparently is familiar with certain features of the post-Marcos period, especially those that pertain to the CPP and other groups like the social democrats, KAAKBAY, Bukluran sa Ikauunlad ng Sosyalistang Isip at Gawa (BISIG, Alliance for the Advancement of Socialist Thought and Action, formerly known as Independent Caucus) and even CPP cadres advocating "popular democracy" politics. Moreover, his involvement with the German solidarity network for the Philippines and other Third World countries presumably gives him better access to data and information about the country than the so-called Western scholars and journalists writing it. But Werning allows Sison to "escape" with his answers, some of which fail to give readers a full and balanced understanding of these groups and movements.

There are also certain points in the book where Werning could easily contest Sison's contenfions.[227] But the interrogator prefers to accept the respondent s answers without even bothering to pinpoint whether these remain valid or not.

Thus, readers may find it difficult to understand *Interface* in terms of Webster's definition of the word.

The Self-image of a Revolutionary

What is striking about this structured interview is the great length at which Sison consciously seeks to establish his revolutionary credentials. Sison portrays himself in His childhood as already developing strong sympathies for the under-privileged, despite his class background and a family-induced personal pilgrimage that would have led him to Malacañang Palace. When he entered the university, Ms exposure to liberal and, eventually, radical ideas merely strengthened His rebelliousness and gave Mm the necessary theoretical framework with which to further develop his thoughts and commit himself to a life of continuing political activism.[228]

The activist phase of Sison's life then shifts to his membership in the PKP, the outburst of energetic activism as a PKP cadre (forming the EA4, MAN, SPP, *Progressive Review,* etc.), and his rejection of its leadership's moribund politics. The high point of this revolutionary existence, However, is His single-handed "reestablishment" and guidance of the CPI).

Detention did not in any way undermine his revolutionary personality and, in the classic Mao statement of "turning a bad thing into a good thing," he transformed his isolated existence into another battleground for the revolution by making himself "not a comfortable guest in [Marcos's] care."[229] He would continue to contribute his share through the struggle in various ways, thus, giving the impression of being able to still guide the movement even from prison.[230]

Thus, readers are made to see a consummate revolutionary in the tradition of Lenin, Mao Tse-Tung, and Ho Chi Minh. But the odd thing that one begins to notice in Sison's efforts to convey to readers just how committed a revolutionary he is lies precisely in his description of himself. On the one hand, here was Sison, devoid of any self-interest other than that of the revolution, uncompromising despite all adversities, sacrificing his life, family, and even a possibly great political future (as president of the country?). The entire breadth of his life, his actions, His thoughts, is political and revolutionary. There is nothing in him which is not a reflection, a manifestation of a revolutionary. In shot here is the Filipino Lenin who thinks about revolution for twenty-four hours of the day and whose life is consumed by a dedication to make the revolutionary movement succeed. Here is the model of what a real revolutionary ought to be.

On the other hand, when describing his revolutionary life and its attendant responsibilities, one encounters a political personality with an enormous sense of self-importance - a huge ego. The myriad "I's" and other first person references that punctuate *Interface* appear to point to a huge ego. It is worthwhile to quote lengthily a section in *Interface* where Sison's self-importance is most emphatic:

> I drafted the important documents of the Central Committee, wrote books and also wrote articles for the Central Committee organ, *Ang Bayan,* under my nom *de guerre;* read the reports of the general secretariat, the commissions of the central Committee, the New People's Army, the regional Party committees, articles other than mine for Ang *Bayan* and interesting publications, including periodicals and books; wrote replies to reports and letters; and issued written directives and oral instructions... I called and presided over meetings of the Central Committee, the Political Bureau, the Executive Committee, the Military Commission and other commissions directly under the central Committee. I held consultations with the members of the Preparatory Commission of the National Democratic Front, the national Party groups of the major mass organizations led by the Party and with elements of the Party in major reactionary institutions and organizations... From time to time I engaged in social investigation, especially in the rural areas, in order to understand what is typical or help solve a crucial problem. /would also go to the mountains and live in mountain huts either to conduct meetings or participate in political and military training... I presided over the planning of important military operations in my capacity as chairman of the military commission.[231]

Sison appears to be everywhere, singlehandedly running the entire revolutionary show-from the mountains of Northern Luzon where he intercedes at the crucial moment in the discussions on how to proceed with the student protests in Manila during the First Quarter Storm, to conducting all important meetings and writing the major documents of the party, to Ms involvement in CPP planning and organization even while in jail, and to his intervention in those critical days when the broad anti-Marcos opposition attempted to coalesce into a solid bloc against the dictatorship.232

Even if one may argue that *interface,* as an "autobiography," would necessarily highlight Sison's achievements, the manner in which this is done is simply unbelievable. But more importantly, pride in one's own

achievements is usually rare among other Marxist revolutionaries. Ho Chi Minh, for example, is content with describing himself as a mere "uncle" of the Vietnamese people and portrays himself as such by his simple apparel.[233] Or for that matter, *Kumander* Dante, even with his extraordinary experience with the revolution, still humbly referred to himself as an old rebolusyonaryo who is always "bukas upang matuto sa iba' (open to learn from others).[234]

Sison's account is particularly most strange given the CPPs high regard for de-emphasizing the role of the individuals in favor of that of portraying the revolution as a movement of the "people" and not just of individuals. This is most peculiar given the constant exhortations in party documents and manifestos for cadres to always remain selfless and humble.[235] While the contributions of individuals like Sison are acknowledged, there is a parallel effort to project the revolution as a collective effort.

Clearly, while Sison claims his political lineage to Lenin, Mao, and Ho Chi Minh, the manner in which he "writes" about his life as a revolutionary (and with the collaboration of His fan Werning) is antithetical to how Lenin, Ho Chi Minh, and Mao, at least during their revolutionary days, wanted their lives to be described.[236] Unlike His revolutionary predecessors whose major traits include the utmost humility about their lives, Sison is most concerned with being able to display his accomplishments as a revolutionary.

One can only deduce that *Interface* - perhaps unintentionally - belongs in the genre of official biographies of Stalin and Kim Il Sung. They were "leaders" who were portrayed as the embodiment of the revolutionary superman; infallible individuals in which history has nothing but praises for their "selfless" contributions to the cause of mankind. Sison's portrayal of his tireless life also approximates the images revolutionaries like Hoxha, Trotsky, and Tan Mataka have tried to project to their followers.[237] What the book may intuitively be suggesting is the development of a personality cult revolving around Sison. If such is the case, it may come into conflict with what the CPP wants its revolution to be, i.e., a collective endeavor rather than a leader-oriented enterprise.

In another context Sison's conscious effort to establish His credentials leads him to thoroughly "politicize" his own fife. Even the way he depicts nonpolitical stories of His life (something that Werning insists he covers in order to "make the book even more lively and interesting to both scholarly

and popular leaders') is now wrapped in politics. Thus, when asked, for example, to recall "funny and amusing incidents" (since Werning knows the Filipino's propensity for humor) while still underground, Sison accedes but makes sure that the tale has also a political content

> Whenever I learned that a comrade was courting another, and saw some mutual interest I would feel happy and even try to promote the courtship until it ended in a marriage. I was often asked to officiate the marriage. And then some comrades would chide me for matchmaking with the ulterior motive of sharing in the good food served at the wedding.

So far, the answer indicates that Sison is also capable of everyday normal and natural actions of people seeing their friends mutually attracted to each other. But then he proceeds:

> I was even more interested in matchmaking when one end of the courtship came from the lower class and the other end came from the upper class. I derived some pleasure, not in any kind of class reconciliation, but in imagining how the conservative upperclass parents would react.[238]

Yet inspite of the recognition of a revolutionary dedication that led to admirable results, one cannot help but realize that readers get to know little of Sison as a human being. The personal Sison, with his real human traits and frailties, cannot be found in *Interface.* The Sison that his wife describes as an "inveterate girl watcher" and writer of a political novel "obsessed [with] sex and violence,"[239] or the person who was not very articulate in public but was so persuasive in one-on-one debates according to His comrade-friend Nemenzo are not revealed in *Interface.* There is no notion of Sison as Chapman describes him to be:

> a slender man with lively eyes and a thin scraggly mustache. Gregarious and articulate, he loves conversation of all sorts and delights in the well put-aside and the *bon mot* .. Sison worried about money and he was counting on the fees from a speaking tour of the United States to provide financial security. The thought of earning money in the land of the imperialists pleased his sense of irony and he was promptly carded away by recollections of other odd and whimsical turning points of his life.[240]

What is instead portrayed is the "politically correct" and "politically upright" Sison. The book's dual stagelighting (Sison and the revolutions is focused only on this side of Sison while the "human" side is dimmed in such a way that the viewers are made to believe that it is either unimportant or is thoroughly subsumed under the accentuated political part. Even the story of revolution becomes ancillary to his own, and in doing so, the revolution also loses much of its "human "side.

The writings of Sison's partisans also do not help readers realize that this revolutionary is human, but instead manage to enhance what Sison wants readers to see. This illustration of Sison is representative of such.

> Sison's identity, however, cannot be confined simply by legalese and bureaucratic terms reflective of the mechanical, abstract and technocratic worldview of his persecutors. To do so is to surrender the freedom of inquiry and latitude of discourse to those who command a monopoly of power.[241]

Yet, even in *Interface* itself, there are vignettes of this "hidden" side of Sison Among these are the internal tensions between Sison as revolutionary, a man "immersed" in the people as per Mao; and Sison, the academic-intellectual who, by circumstances and because of His role in society, would be detached from the everyday grind of life. On the one hand, Sison regards academic life as being "sterilized from extramural life;" on the other, he admits that academia "has always been attractive to [him]."[242] In the book, there are sixteen pages devoted to just a listing of all His political writings. In the important biographical dates of his life, it is not only his revolutionary credentials that are cited; equal emphasis is given to his research and other intellectual pursuits.

One gets the sense that Sison carries his "intellectual" and academic credentials around with him to present to people, as Werning could not have possibly done the research himself. It is as if Sison wants readers to recognize him not only as a revolutionary, but also as being in the same rank as the Philippine's leading radical academics. It may be Mao Tse-Tung's description of himself as a "teacher" which Sison seeks to emulate. But the way in which he parallels Mao is entirely the opposite. His effort to establish his authority, given his proclivity for a thick curriculum vitae and his wish that his "intellectual' pursuits be equally underscored clearly militates against Mao's concept of a teacher.

Or perhaps, this is Sison's way of distinguishing himself as the revolutions philosopher compared to other Filipino revolutionaries who merely put into practice his views and analyses. Being such would markedly enhance his image within the revolutionary movement and underscore His importance. But the image of philosophers and intellectuals held by Filipino revolutionaries has always been contemptuous, so that if Us is Sison's intention, he would open himself to the accusation of dabbling around with "ivory tower theorizing," even as he may be recognized for the political merits of *PSR* and his other works.[243] In fact there had been suggestions within the CPP that His ideas and analyses have become outmoded and these are exemplified best by one cadre's comment

> The new chairman who replaced Sison was an organizational person – exactly what we needed for our development. Sison was the philosopher. He laid the theoretical foundation, for which we are grateful, *but we need to move* on.[244]

The biography, therefore, fails to give readers a complete insight into Sison by hiding the interesting sides of his person. It would have become more effective as a political tool if the readers were provided a glimpse of the underside of Sison's life. This is especially true for the "average' Filipino whose conception of revolutionaries is influenced more by what both the Aquino and the Marcos regimes have portrayed them to be. This explains why Sison et. al., became much sought-after guests in television shows. It had to do with satisfying popular curiosity on whether communists have a "human dimension," one with a "voice and a face TV audiences can listen to and look at."[245] *Interface* has done precisely the opposite - draw Sison away from being seen as the human being which people were slowly discovering in him after his release.

On a larger scale, the book also removes from the revolution that human dimension it had acquired during the early part of the Aquino regime.[246] It overturns the writings of other revolutionary leaders that are also intended to evoke sympathy and support for the struggle by concentrating on the revolutions' gentleness and respect,"[247] as well as the process of human struggle itself. This is essentially true with writings by detained CPP cadres who see in their experience a way to politicize people about the revolution and also to make them see the humanity behind it. Sison's experience with detention is fraught with episodes that depict his unwavering

revolutionary commitment. But it does not discuss that other part of prison life which is most thoughtfully depicted by de la Torre.

> Thinking was the easiest way to fill the many days and nights and impossible to avoid. I worried about the work left undone and companions who would need to regroup in new meeting places. The early afternoon heat would send me to my metal cot to stare at the ceiling, counting cobwebs, and thanking the spiders for catching the pesky mosquitoes, wondering haw many people thought of prisoners that way, before drifting off to sleep. Sunset was always a sad time, despite the bright colors framed by the dark window bars (like Mondrian lines except they were spaced too uniformly). Night brought to mind our many songs and poems especially about freedom surely dawning no matter how long the darkness. Would that the struggle were so simple. But the sun will rise whether we wake or sleep: freedom needs people who keep watch through the night and rouse others, even if they grumble.[248]

Instead, *Interface* tends to encourage those types of writing within the revolutionary movement that highlight either commitment and its ability to inspire the best among peasants, proletarians, activists, and revolutionaries,[249] or present the revolution as an inviolate movement experiencing minor mistakes along the way, but never capable of committing a serious deviation from its "historic path." The former is the only human aspect that must be accentuated in the movement all others are merely signs of ideological or political weakness arising from inborn class traits.[250] The story of the revolution as narrated by *Interface* ceases -to be the story of a living movement; in its stead is projected a seemingly lifeless crusade of faceless people fighting for the liberation of the "masses."

The question then is, why does Sison content himself in being portrayed this way?[251]

A possible answer could be found in his stature as the founding chairman of the CPP. He is expected to embody the revolution. This image has to be maintained; and one of the many ways to do this was to relate to people in the same language which Sison used to relate with the movement during his heyday as Amado Guerrero.

But more importantly, Sison regards it as obligatory, being its founder, to come to the rescue of a party that has been disoriented since Aquino

came to power. He needs to reassert His ideological leadership by providing confused *rebolusyonaryos* with the "longer view' on current politics. He must once more, bestow cadres with the "correct7 way of looking at things and inspire them to renew wholeheartedly the struggle. For it is in the current period that the party is in need of political clarity. As Rodolfo Salas, Sison's successor as CPP chairman until his arrest in 1986, describes it:

> In the recent years, especially the past year, and a half, the Left has been afflicted with illusions, disorientation, and vacillations. A breakdown in discipline occurred in certain areas of the country. Many actively believed the Cory Government to be liberal democratic and progressing towards a pluralist democracy. Still others dreamed of an "EDSA II," an urban insurrection similar to the Russian October Revolution ... What the Left needs now is a 'cold-blooded' assessment of the situation so it can formulate a coherent and realistic program of acfion.[252]

Sison must reestablish the primacy of the ideological categories he developed, and the "boxes" (as Nemenzo used to call them)[253] by which the CPP can recover its political hegemony. He also has to defend the party's official response to the growing stories about is some of which originate from party ranks. He must use the strength of his authority to de-legitimize those stories that compromise the CPPs prestige, and support those that enhance its stature in Philippine politics (even if some of them are falsifications). He must also return popular attention back to the political side of the revolution, and away from the tales latter-day cadres want to share: stories of the difficult life in the mountains, bad comrades, factionalism, even rumors of sexual flings and financial opportunism, etc. And the best way to do it is through a political autobiography of the founding leader of the CPP itself - the portrayal of a life which has been the paragon of revolutionary commitment "ideological clarity,' and erudite political sense.

Promoting Sison's personality also falls within the purview of Werning's concerns. One of Werning's intentions is to give Sison the international image that he -long deserved because the Philippine revolution has not generated the same international attention as other Third World revolutions perhaps until recently. Even as it may have succeeded in becoming the model of revolutionary self-reliance, the Philippine movement has not achieved the same stature as that of Nicaragua and El Salvador whose

international solidarity networks, especially that in Europe, are quite strong. It therefore, needs that crucial international exposure that would hopefully engender the sympathy and support that the other revolutions have induced. And there is no better way to do this than to introduce to the world Jose Ma. Sison who, coincidentally, is in the midst of his "world tour."

In the same manner as the Philippine revolution via Sison gets introduced to the world, *Interface* may also want the Philippines to get to know more of the world. For if there is one striking feature about Sison and the Philippine revolution, it is their provinciality and insular outlook. Circumscribed by geographic factors, ostracized by other revolutionary movements for taking a fanatically pro-China line during the early years, only to be abandoned later by China herself and to come into conflict with Vietnam, the CPP and its leaders have come to value the virtues of self-reliance.

This revolutionary preference - which has the appropriate legitimizing quotations from Marx, Lenin, and Mao - has done wonders for the party, as scholars like Nemenzo and Malay have attested. But it has also bred insularism that tends to estrange Filipino leftists from the rest of the world. And when the CPP reacts to revolutionary and other political events worldwide, its reactions are marked by a total or near-ignorance of the real dynamics of these events. More than once, the CPP has been caught with its foot in its mouth because of this.[254]

Through *Interface,* this predicament could hopefully be remedied. At the same time as the world gets introduced to the Philippine revolution, the revolution also gets to be introduced to the world. And again, "no less than the widely acclaimed principal thinker and practical leader of the Philippine revolutionary movement is there to facilitate such an interaction.[255]

Internationalism vs. Provincialism: A Second Look at Sison's "World Lecture Tour"

Adding to the bizarre quality of Sison's accounting of his revolutionary accomplishments is that after his release from prison, the revolutionary energy which produced these accomplishments appears to have waned. Even as he claims that he was involved in organizational activities reminiscent of his pre-detention days (e.g., the formation of the PnB),

Sison's description of his life after Marcos indicates a waning intensity. He appears contented with just replaying one role: that of the party's foremost ideologue whose ideas would set right the CPPs confusion in the post-Marcos period in the same way they did at the time of the split from the PKP. There is the contentment just to do research and to write his views. That part which depicts him as the active and dedicated organizer appears to have lost much luster. Thus, the claim that he has "been very busy lately lecturing, researching and writing," and the wish that he "could do more for the movement but my time has been really limited."[256]

One may regard this as a ruse, a convenient cover for an important personality of the CPP who may be involved in major negotiations with foreign parties, governments, and movements for more support to the revolutionary movement But if this were so, his current "political task" also effectively removes him from being involved directly in the revolution, and makes him forfeit much of the chance to actively re-animate it at a time when it desperately needs all the subjective help it could get.[257]

Sison constantly harps on the importance of "concrete analysis of concrete conditions." With his "world lecture tour," he definitely deprives himself of the chance to apply this Leninist dictum at this crucial period of the CPPs existence. For his physical absence from the realities of home also means he is unable to grasp the dynamics and intricacies of events in the Philippines and the interaction of various forces within and outside the left he would have to contend with the time factor and generalized reports of the political happenings in his country. And it is generally assumed that whatever conclusions are made will remain inadequate to explain these realities.

Furthermore, given Sison's stature within the left, assigning him such political tasks as "international work" do not exactly conform to His capabilities as the leader of the revolution. If one assumes that His previous political responsibilities were as enormous as he claims them to be, then again, in the context of the current disorientation of the left, His physical presence would be essential. International work would have been best left to cadres who have accumulated enough knowledge and experience to build up the party's foreign links.

Why then is Sison satisfied in merely giving lectures in Europe and writing three books?[258] From the perspective of Werning and the German/

European solidarity network, as a real revolutionary, his presence is both a symbol and an inspiration to their continuing activities in support of the struggle in the Philippines.[259] But one may assume that Sison is not only in his "world lecture tour' to satisfy First World supporters and sympathizers. The other explanation would be his political task for the revolution. But, as argued above, this would be an insufficient explanation.

There may be grounds to argue that his European sojourn is the result of his becoming an irritant to the movement.[260] At a time when the major political categories that the CPP had strongly held in the past appear to lack their former explanatory powers when trying to grapple with the present and are Questioned from even within the party, His penchant for fundamentalist explanations served more as a hindrance rather than as a guidepost for a better understanding of the current reality. This remark of Lacaba on Sison's ideas reflects the discomfort of other political observers and activists with the CPP founding chairman:

> Joema has been called by some of his critics as the 'last of the old-time Maoists' and his propensity for making pronouncements without citing his sources tends to put off footnote-conscious academicians and objectivity-oriented journalists.[261]

At a time when the CPP is having problems with the revolution, this discomfiture with Sison as a "peripatetic polemicist" may have extended even to the ranks of the party. For despite its declarations of unity, the party remains as plagued as ever with unsettled debates.[262] Sison kept at a distance would confuse the situation less than if he were in the midst of the debates and the efforts of the CPP to recover from its problems.

The nurtured child has already grown up to be a young man; he has problems - grave ones - along the way, but he does not need the father anymore to tell him what to do. And the insistent father is transported to the "home of the elderly" (Europe) to be visited once in a while for some old sage's advice, but kept comfortable at the "retirement home" away from the young man's life.

A Question of Audiences

To whom is, *Interface* addressed? For Werning, it is obviously directed to the reading public who has been fed only with the limited and inadequate works on the Philippines by Western scholars and journalists.

This aim is shared also by Sison, a provincial Filipino revolutionary seeking to establish an international reputation while on his "world lecture tour." *Interface* is also addressed to the party. It may be foremost in Sison's mind that such an account of his life and the revolution might be important as part of the ideological and political arsenal the CPP and its cadres need in these critical times. With Sison's inclinations towards academia, the book is also for scholars, intellectuals, and academics - Sison's former and perhaps potential peers.

But the book is definitely not for the ordinary Filipino. It is not for the Filipino worker or the peasant, radicalized or not. It is written in English and in a rather tedious style. The question to be asked is why is this ' so? Why would a political figure like Sison, who during his prime demanded that art and literature must serve the people,[263] still make use of English which definitely has a limited constituency in the Philippines?

The apparent reason for this is Sison's difficulty with Philippine dialects other than his native Ilocano. His preference for English was also fostered by his English degree at the University of the Philippines and his literary pursuits (there is no poem of Sison in Filipino or any other dialect). All but one of Sison's works, therefore, reflect how comfortable he was with English as a political language.[264]

This is one of the biggest ironies of Sison's career as a revolutionary leader. He has to write his political ideas in English, and where his writings come out in Filipino, these are mostly the product of prodigious translation work by his wife and other comrades who act as the decoders of his English. Why Sison prefers such an arrangement and spares no effort at "de-colonizing" his political language (in the same manner as other CPP cadres have forced themselves to think in Filipino or in their dialects to facilitate their political work) remain inexplicable. One can only deduce that maybe Sison, by virtue of his being chairman, ideologue, and philosopher of the revolution, is allowed that privilege.

Interface would, therefore, have to run the same course as Sison's earlier works for it to reach the masses. It would be passed through CPP cadres, the movement s intellectuals who would explain the analysis, categories ("boxes'), and symbols that the book uses to peasant, worker, and urban poor supporters and recruits.

This peculiar nature of Sison's writings stands in contrast to other revolutionary leaders. *Kumander* Dante, for example, need not be concerned with the problem of language and the masses who, after all, are the real audience of the revolution. Dante epitomizes radical language itself and his peasant origin makes him an organic part of the peasantry's way of life. He does not have to tell his story or passionately argue his commitment (or carry around his credentials). like Ho Chi Minh, he embodies the revolution itself. He is the revolution's story; and it is a story which the peasant or even the worker can immediately identify with. Others, like de la Torre, have come to recognize through their experience that their works and writings must be able to surmount the limitations of "scientific analysis' in reaching out to nuns and priests.

> Even the literature we gave them did not always help, for the movements writing was dominantly secular, even Marxist, and the occasional Christian pieces did not avoid the strident tone that reflected our anger more than the hope within us for which we should account with gentleness and respect.[265]

Underlying all these is the fact that *Interface* is the first biography ever written on a major figure of the CPP. The timing of the publication is designed to anticipate the possible stories of other CPP leaders, some of whom may be more frank, honesty and candid about their experiences inside the movement This honesty would not necessarily translate to a spotless CPP image (as what *Interface* wants to project).[266] *Interface* is also a way of de-legitimizing those stories" of CPP leaders that have already found their way to the public mind (largely through movies like *Balweg and Victor Corpuz)* which do not exactly conform to the propaganda agenda of the CPP. Lastly, *Interface* becomes means by which Sison's story would subsume and subordinate all other stories about the revolution and its people by indicating the "proper" outline and emphasis by which these stories must be presented.[267] Sison, by virtue of His prominence, is in effect saying: "This is the story of the party and the Revolution. "Apres *moi, le deluge.*

Orthodoxy vs. Indigenization: The Irony of *Interface*

The distinction between Sison and Balweg and Corpuz with respect to audiences merely reflects the inner tension in the CPPs political culture between forces and processes that seek to indigenize the movement and

those that still cling to its old Maoist roots.[268], As the revolution has advanced, more and more cadres have come to realize the inability of Sison's way of seeing things to fully deal with specific features of Philippine society. This has led them to revise and improvise on their propaganda and education work by giving due consideration to these traits.[269] Where they remained fixed with the old formulations, the situation led them to serious mistakes, the most recent of which was their non-participation in the February 1986 uprising.[270] These cadres have come into conflict with comrades who still believe in the validity of Sison's views as a framework for viewing Philippine society and as a guide to revolutionary praxis. These debates reached their peak during the last two years and many of the issues that were fought over remain unresolved.

Sison, by asserting the continuing suitability of these orthodoxies in the party, may have helped to reverse the process of revolutionary indigenizadon. Through *Interface,* Sison has managed to resurrect a mode of analysis and explanation that neither reflects nor appeals to the Filipino mind. Not only is it in English, but the particular variety of revolutionary English that is used, with its choppy, jargonistic, and pedantic way of explaining politics, is the antithesis of the radical efforts to evolve a Marxist praxis that could come to grips with the unique complexity of Philippine society.[271] This makes *Interface* not the asset its author and editor want it to be, but a liability to a movement that has now managed to establish, albeit with difficulty, its roots in society.

This is perhaps where the main problem of *Interface* lies. It is an attempt by Sison to deal with the communist party he founded, a party which now has a -history of its own, one that could stand without even the presence of its founding chairman.

One cannot question the noble intentions of *Interface* in these times when the prevalent revolutionary paradigm is in a state of crisis. But intentions do not necessarily lead to effective intervention if they are merely interested in resurrecting those facets of the paradigm that precisely led to its crisis. Interface's authors should be well forewarned of Marx's trenchant comment in "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte," of history capable of repeating itself, first as a tragedy, and second as a farce.

Endnotes

1. This extended essay is based on a paper I wrote for Government 647 (Political Anthropology: Seminar on Biography and Self in Southeast Asia), Fall Term 1989, Cornell University. I am grateful to John Sidel, Mary Callahan, Elizabeth Remick, and most of all, Ben Anderson, for their comments and criticisms. In the Philippines, Antoinette Raquiza-Boudreau was most helpful in pointing out my pitfalls and cautioning The about things. Of course, these friendly critics are absolved from any failings of this essay which are solely mine.
2. See Francisco Nemenzo, "Rectification Process and the Philippine Communist Movement," in *Armed Communist Movements in Southeast Asia*, ed. Lim Joo Jock with Vani S. (Singapore: Institute for Southeast Asian Studies, 1984), pp. 71-101.
3. An example of such popular songs carried such lyrics: "Tayo na sa Isabela. At doon makipagkita. Kay Dante at ang dakilang si Amado Guerrero [Off we go to Isabela, and there Theet with Dante and the great Amado Guerrerol". The more popular, albeit less "politically correct" song goes: "Sandaang machinegun, hawak ng makabayan, lulusubin ang Malacanang. Sa bundok, sa gubat, kami ay walang gulat. Lulusubin ang Malacañang. Ang aming chairman, Amado Guerrero. Si Victor Corpuz ang Kumander. Ang sigaw namin, ibagsak ang pasismo, piyudalismo, imperyalismo. Ang suot namin, pajama ng Vietcong. Pati jacket ni Mao Tse-Tung. Ang sigaw ... [One hundred machineguns, in the hands of nationalists. We will invade Malacañang. In the mountains, in the jungles, we cannot be startled. We will invade Malacañang. Our chairman, Amado Guerrero. Victor Corpus is our commander. Our cry: down with fascism, feudalism, imperialism. Our garb, pajamas of the Vietcong. Even the jacket of Mao Tse Tung. Our cry ... I
4. When Sison was captured, Marcos gleefully announced that he had broken the backbone of the revolutionary movement, to which Sison, when brought to face Marcos, retorted: "You have imprisoned a revolutionary, but you cannot imprison the revolution!" See Jose Ma. Sison, "Filipino Revolutionary Fighter," Alliance for Philippine National Democracy (U.S. [?], n.d.).
5. Dated March 29, 1988, photocopy form, 176 pp. *Interface* eventually came out in book form under the title *The Philippine Revolution*: *The Leader's View* (New York: Crane Russak, 1989). I have decided to stick with the manuscript form due to lack of time to go over the final copy.
6. Weming is a member of the newly-established Philippine Buro (Philippine Bureau) which has close links with the NDF but which tries to widen its links in the Philippines to include other non-NDF organizations. He is also active in the Korea campaign and a number of Third World-oriented German magazines like *Blatter des iz 3 W* and *Aid Dritte Welt-Zeitschrift*.. I am grateful to Mr. Christoph Giebel, a graduate student in Asian Studies in Cornell, for this information.
7. Werning concedes this when he states: "[T]his structured interview permitted Jose Ma. Sison to reexamine and rework his answers in a period of five months, from October 1987 to February 1988." Introduction, *Interface*, p. 11.
8. See, for example, the articles in *Praktika: Theoretical Journal of the Party National Urban Center*, 1:(14May 1986).
9. Jose Ma. Sison, "Crisis and Revolution: Interview with Jose Ma. Sison, "interview by Homer Biuenviaje, *National Midweek* (January 27, 1988).
10. Nemenzo, so far, is the only scholar who has dealt extensively with the early part of the CPP's history (which will account for my over-citing his works). The other scholar is Armando Malay, Jr. who wrote his dissertation on the ideology of the CPP. It is, however, unfortunate that I could not acquire a copy of his dissertation, much more

be able to read it even if I had one. Malay's work was written in French and, so far, I have no knowledge of any English translation. Malay, however, wrote a number of essays on the CPP which will be appropriately cited in this paper. The book of Gregg Jones, *Red Revolution: Inside the Philippine Guerilla Movement* (London and Colorado: Westview Press, 1989) also came to The late and I had no time to incorporate some of the more interesting insights he presented.

11. Interface, p. 3.
12. *Ibid*.
13. *Ibid*., p. 7.
14. *Ibid*., p. 8.
15. The Huks were the armed units of the PKP that launched an aborted uprising in the 50s. See Benedict Kerkvliet, *The Huk Rebellion: A Study of Peasant Revolt in the Philippine*s (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1979).
16. *Interface*, p. 17.
17. See Milagros Guerrero, "Sinco's Clash with Conservatism (1958-62)" in *University of the Philippines.- The First 75 Years* (1908-1983), ed. Oscar Alfonso (Quezon City: UP Press, 1985).
18. See for example, Bernardita Reyes Churchill, "Palma's Momentous Decade, 1923-33," in *ibid*, pp. 197-198.
19. According to Nemenzo, what gave UP its name is that it "attracts the best of different types, from raving reactionaries to left-wing fanatics. Its tradition of free thinking and debate apparently brings out the best and the worst of them all." See his "An Irrepressible Revolution: The Decline and Resurgence of the Philippine Communist Movement," Work-in-Progress Seminar, Department of Political and Social Change, the Australian National University (13 November 1984), p. 43.
20. Milagros Guerrero, "Sinco's Clash..."
21. Juliet De Lima Sison, "Interview with Juliet De Lima Sison", interview by Gehima Almendral, *Diliman Review* (March-April 1983), p. 18.
22. *Interface*, pp. 10, 17-18.
23. As quoted in William Chapman, *Inside the Philippine Revolution* (New York and London: W.W. Norton Company, 1987), p. 71.
24. University politics was then dominated by fraternities which trained their brothers for the future world of national politics and the Christian student group supported by powerful entities from the faculty and administration and hell-bent on making the university another sanctuary of the Lord.
25. De Lima Sison, "Interview with Juliet De Lima Sison," pp. 19-20.
26. Nemenzo recalls: "The McCarthy-style inquisition, which the committee chairman himself admitted to be a publicity stunt, only earned untold embarrassment because the only authentic 'red professor' CAFA could exhibit was zoologist who had been estranged from the party since the Japanese occupation. The rest were plain liberals, iconoclasts, and crackpots who could not possibly distinguish Marx from Marcos." Nemenzo, "An Irrepressible Revolution," pp. 44-45.
27. Moreover, the fraternities were more concerned with fighting UPSCA at that period and did not anticipate the conflict assuming national proportions when CAFA and Leonardo Perez stepped into the picture.
28. *Interface*, p. 12.
29. *Ibid.*
30. Rosario Torres-Yu, "The Philippine Trade Union Movement, 1953-73: In Search of Working Class Consciousness," *Diliman Review* January-February 1983), pp. 66-67. See also Francisco Nemenzo, "The Philippine Labor Movement and the Continuing Struggle for Democracy," paper presented at the Conference on Labor

Movements in Transitions to Democracy, Kellog Institute for International Studies, University of Notre DaThe (20-29 April 1988), p. 15.

31. With the benefit of hindsight, Sison sarcastically thanked "the authorities of UP English Department for not renewing my teaching fellowship. The academic life has always been attractive to me. I am fortunate that I was not drawn all the way to it and sterilized from extramural life." Interface, p. 14.
32. Among these new leaders was Nilo Tayag who eventually became the CPP's first secretary-general. He is said to be mainly responsible for the setting up of the organizational structure of the party as well as the recruitment of the leaders that would spearhead its initial expansion.
33. *Interface*, p. 25.
34. Petronilo Daroy, "From Literature to Revolution," in *Jose Ma. Sison. Prison and Beyond: Selected Poems 1953-1983* (Philippines: Free Jose Sison Committee, 1984), p. 36.
35. For a general review of the development of Philippine literature, see Bienvenido and Cynthia Lumbera, *A History and Anthology of Philippine Literature* (Quezon City; National Bookstore, 1984), pp. 247-250. It is interesting to note that the Lumberas, the leading literature scholars in the country, do not include Sison in their anthology.
36. De Lima Sison, "Interview with Juliet De Lima Sison."
37. Four Lavas dominated the PKP: Vicente, Jose, Jesus, and Francisco. The last of the Lava brothers was formally ousted from the leadership in the late 70s but the dynasty remained influential within the PKP and was instrumental in the party's surrender to Marcos in 1974.
38. Nemenzo, "Rectification Process," p. 75.
39. According to Nemenzo, Lava wrote a political transmission to this effect. But whether Sison read it, much more complied with it by forming the KM, remains unknown. This information I culled from Nemenzo while interviewing him on the Philippine student movement. The links between the PKP and the PKI and how these played a role in the development of the two parties, especially the PKP, remain unstudied. Early explorations were made by Helen Jarvis, an Australian scholar who worked on Tan Mataka. But nothing seems to have come out of that project.
40. Nemenzo, "Rectification Process," p. 75.
41. *Interface*, p. 40.
42. As quoted in Chapman, *Inside the Philippine Revolution*, p. 77. Sison may have erred, however, with his accusation of the Lavas as "pro-Soviet." In my talks with Nemenzo, he said that the Lavas were more congenial to the Chinese Communist Party than to the Soviets.
43. *Interface*, pp. 28-30.
44. "KM Programme," as reprinted in *So the People Would Know* (Manila: Armed Forces of the Philippines, 1971), pp. 347-361.
45. When the split occurred, peasant Members of the KM withdrew and were organized under the new PKP youth group, the Malayang Pagkakaisa ng Kabataang Pilipino (MPKP, roughly translated as Free Filipino Youth Union). See Nemenzo, "An Irrepressible Revolution," P. 52.
46. Among its leaders were Lorenzo Tañada who became the chairman, Alejandro Lichauco, Rep. Rogaciano Mercado (first vice chairman), Dr. Horacio Lava, Baltazar Cuyugan, businessman and doctor Antonio Araneta, Jr. (vice chairman for Finance), Nemesio Prudente, Francisco Lava, Jr., Sotero Laurel (a senator under the Aquino Administration), Jose V. Cruz (who became a Marcos ghost writer), Francisco Nemenzo, Jr., and Rep. Ramon V. Mitra (Speaker of the Lower House under the

Aquino Administration). See *Movement for the Advancement of Nationalism: Basic Documents and Speech of the Founding Congress, February 7-8,1967*, prepared by the committee on Publications (Quezon City: Phoenix Press, 1967).

47. It can be argued, however, that Sison could not have succeeded without the support of the other PKP organizations, especially the peasant group MASAKA and the labor unions headed by Felixberto Olalia. As we shall see later on, when Sison broke up with the Lavas, MAN remained a PKP organization mainly because of this peasant and labor support.
48. Nemenzo, "The Philippine Labor Movement," p. 16. See also Torres-Yu, pp. 61-62.
49. Nemenzo, "An Irrepressible Revolution," p. 47.
50. *Ibid*, pp. 51-52.
51. *Interface*, p. 4 2.
52. Nemenzo, "An Irrepressible Revolution," p. 52.
53. As was the case of the Philippine chapter of the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation (which broke into two groups each claiming that they were the legally-recognized chapter of the London-based organization) and the *Progressive Review* (where Sison expelled those loyal to the PKP and announced a change in policy for the journal). *Ibid*
54. Torres-Yu, p. 67.
55. *Interface*, p. 52.
56. Nemenzo, "An Irrepressible Revolution," pp. 52-53.
57. Among those who left KM were writers Vivencio Jose and Ninotchka Rosca, economist Ricardo Ferrer, and student leader Sixto Carlos, Jr. Nemenzo, "An Irrepressible Revolution," p. 53
59. De Lima Sison, "Interview with Juliet De Lima Sison," p. 21.
60. This is not pure conjecture. In 1972, when Nemenzo and his loyal cadres split from the PKP over the latter's support for martial law and formed the Marxist-Leninist Group (MLG), the Lavas instigated a series of assassinations against the MLG.
61. *Ibid*., p. 45.
62. See So the People May Know.
63. Amado Guerrero, Philippine Society and revolution Hongkong: Ta Kung Pao Publications, 1971), p. 1 10.
64. Viz., the strategic defensive, strategic stalemate, and the strategic offensive.
65. *Interface*, p. 47.
66. *Ibid*, p. 52.
67. *Ibid*, p. 42.
68. Nemenzo, "An Irrepressible Revolution," p. 64. These cadres were also less hopeful of the prospects of armed struggle. They had no guns and only one or two knew how to use them. They were to set out organizing peasants but their only skills were learned through organizing students and some workers. See Chapman, *Inside the Philippine Revolution*, p. 78.
69. Asked by Werning who were the Filipino intellectuals who were closest to him, Sison mentions that he had "almost weekly correspondence with Francisco Nemenzo while he was taking his doctoral degree in Manchester University." *Interface*, p. 18. Nemenzo and Sison renewed their friendship after the former was expelled from the PKP for his "anarcho-Trotskyist" views. They remain good friends at the present despite their continuing doctrinal differences.
70. As quoted in Chapman, *Inside the Philippine Revolution*, p. 70.
7I. *Ibid*., p. 79.
72. *Interface*, p. 53. On the Aquino link, see Gregg Jones, Red Revolution

73. Corpuz was not the only PMA officer who joined the NPA. A year later, Crispin Tagamolila, a cadet whose brother was a major SDK figure, also defected. He died in an encounter during the early days of martial law and now has an NPA command named after him.
74. *Ibid*, p. 56. Underscoring supplied.
75. The FQS pertains to a series of bloody confrontations between students and the state from January 26 to March 1970. What initially began as a moderate-dominated student demonstration against Marcos was radicalized almost overnight when police and students battled each other for nearly two months. Lacaba gave a graphic description of those battles. The FQS split the moderates (with significant numbers joining the radicals) and brought the CPP into the political limelight. For a vivid description of the events, see Jose Lacaba, *Days of Disquiet, Nights of Rage: The First Quarter Storm and Other Events* (Quezon City: Sanlahi Publishing House, 1982); while for its impact, see Nemenzo, "Rectification Process p. 84.
76. When I interviewed former KM leaders about this, they explained that the reconciliation was brought about by SDK's acceptance of the CPP's existence and political line. Interview with former KM cadres for the paper "Building the Parliament of the Streets: The Birth, Hegemony, and Crisis of the Philippine Student Movement" (Third World Studies Center Library unpublished manuscript, 1984).
77. *Ibid*., p. 70.
78. Nemenzo, "An Irrepressible Revolution," p. 68.
79. As cited by Armando S. Malay, Jr., "Random Reflections on Marxism and Maoism in the Philippines," in *Marxism in the Philippines* (Quezon City: Third World Studies Center, 1984), pp. 45-67.
80. See Edicio de la Torre's "The Challenge of Maoism and the Filipino Christian," in *Touching Ground, Taking Roots: Reflections on Theologv and Struggle in the Philippines* (Quezon City: Socio-Pastoral Institute, 1986), pp. 6171.
81. *Interface*, p. 35.
82. According to Sison, he made two major contributions during the First Quarter Storm. The first was his "timely" intervention in the student's plans to dialogue with Marcos. Because of this, they instead launched a bigger demonstration on February 12 in protest of the killings of January 30-3 1. The other was what he called the "statements that I issued after every mass action to sum up and direct the next mass action ... [and] inspire the masses along the national democratic line." *Ibid*., p. 57.
83. In Lacaba's account, there is no mention 6fSison's hand. Moreover, Dante was a more popular figure in the demonstrations rather than Amado Guerrero. This may be due to the fact that Dante's military exploits were more appealing to the frenzied students than the statements and analyses of the CPP chairman.
84. Among the major works of Sison as Amado Guerrero were the compilations entitled *Lavaite Propaganda for Revisionism and Fascism and Pomeroy: Portrait of a Revisionist Renegade* where Guerrero castigated the Lavas for their revisionist errors and gave special attention to American Huk William Pomeroy whom he regards as the Lavaite's leading theoretician. Both were published in 1972 and 1973, respectively, by the CPP's Central Publishing House.
85. Chapman, *Inside the Philippine Revolution*, p. 75.
86. *PSR*, Introduction, p. iii.
87. As per the 1979 edition, published by the International Association of Filipino Patriots, Oakland.
88. Lacaba, *Days of Disquiet, Nights of Rage*, pp. 12-13.

89. It would be worthwhile to note that the children of the rich studying in private sectarian schools were also starting to demand for "social justice and reforms" in society and government to arrest the worsening of a social volcano. A noted leader among this group was a Jesuit scholastic named Edmund Garcia who formed a student/professional group of advocates for non-violence called *Lakasdiwa* (Strength of the [Filipino's] Essence).
90. The works of Renato Constantino were classic of this type of nationalist-radical writings. See *Society without Purpose* (Quezon City: Malaya Books, 1968); "Parents and Activists," *ibid*, 1971; and such articles as "The Miseducation of the Filipino," and "Roots of Subservience," *Weekly Graphic*, June 1966 and 1969, respectively.
91. *PSR*, op. cit.
92. Daroy, "From Literature to Revolution," p. 39. Moreover, in the context of the Sino-mania mentioned above, it would not be far-fetched to infer that the public would, at least, come to accept *PSR* in a manner different from the strong anti-communist reaction of the 50s.
93. CPP membership had reached 2,000 after FQS, and the NPA started expansion in Central Luzon and Cagayan Valley. "The CPP was practically a cadre party with members capable of leading not only committees and squads but also large mass organizations." *Interface*, p. 55.
94. *Ibid*., p. 56.
95. According to Sison, "In June 1971, I went out of the Isabela forest region to push hard for the realization of this decision through the general secretariat of the Party." *Ibid*., p. 55.
96. *Ibid*, P. 57.
97. *Ibid*, pp. 66-67. See also Nemenzo, "Rectification Process..... P. 88.
98. The social democrats were thrown into complete disarray while Marcos destroyed the base of opponents like Benigno Aquino through the combination of military operations (to destroy their private armies), detention (to deprive supporters of their patron), and cooptation (to silence or even get the support of those whom loyalty was brittle).
99. These were not his only responsibilities. Sison continues to narrate that, "There were disruptions in my routine whenever I would suddenly be called to attend to some big problem in another place or shift to some other place because of some imminent or proximate danger from the enemy. It was difficult to perform my functions as chairman of the central Committee in the rural areas during my time because there were no barrios where I could be absolutely safe." But he also had some good time. "But there were times when I could play basketball for relaxation in a barrio. And whenever I would be in the mountains, I would enjoy mountain climbing, singing loud for hours, shooting practices usually with a caliber.22 rifle and occasionally with a high-powered one." *Interface*, pp. 76-77. As to whether this flaunting of responsibilities is true or simply unbelievably ridiculous will be discussed in the second section of this paper.
100. These two operations were apparently secretly carried out by party cadres. But either due to amateurishness or simple incompetence, these were complete failures. The first ship, *M.V. Karagatan* got grounded in Palanan, Isabela in June 1972 due to a typhoon. The NPA managed to recover some of the arms but had to abandon its operation when the military discovered the ship. The second attempt via the smaller *M.V. Andrea* was a complete flop. The ship sank outside Eastem Luzon due to inclement weather, submerging with it the arms shipment. Sison and a host of other CPP leaders were to be charged with subversion using the *Karagatan-*

Andrea cases as major evidence. The CPP and Sison, up to now, neither confirm nor deny whether these two operations were made by the party or not.

101. Some of these successes, however, occurred under dubious circumstances. The Cagayan NPA, for example, dramatically grew not so much because of painstaking work, but through ties it established with local warlords of the area. This information was graciously shared with me by Gerry Finin, Ph.D. candidate at the Department of City and Regional Planning. See also Nestor Castro, "The Zigzag Route to Self-Determination," *Diliman Review*, 35:5 & 6 (1987):26-27.
102. Nemenzo, "Rectification Process..... pp. 88-89.
103. See Mario Bolasco, "Marxism and Christianity in the Philippines: 1930-1983," in Marxism in the Philippines, op. cit., p. 119.
104. Rolando Yu and Mario Bolasco, *Church-State Relations* (Manila: St. Scholastica's College, 1981).
105. See Sison's "Tribute to Edgar M. Jopson," *Political Detainee's Update* (September 30, 1982); and the latter of Edicio de la Torre to Cardinal Sin in *Pintig sa Malamig na Bakal* (Lifepulse in Cold Steel): Poems and Letters from Philippine Prisons (Hongkong: Resource Center for Philippine Concerns, 1979), pp. 3- 4.
106. *Interface*, p. 68.
107. Nemenzo, "Rectification Process..... p. 89. See also "Sectarianism is the Blight: An Exclusive Interview with a Filipino Revolutionary," *Longer View*, 2:2:1-2. The NDF's first ten-point program, for example, was 2 near prototype of the "Program for a People's Democratic Revolution" outlined by Guerrero in PSR. It even included a condemnation of Soviet revisionism.
108. "Though it is a solid organization, the NDF is not rigid. It is flexible enough to recognize that the national united front is not limited to its confines but is willing to add other forces and elements outside the NDF framework to the developing strength of the national united front and the people's government. The NDF is the most reliable entity preparing the formation of broader consultative councils and organs of political power. It is not the sole expression of the united front but it is the most stable united front organization of the basic forces of the revolution." *Interface*, p. 68.
109. I tried to give a general overview of this problem in "The Left and Other Forces," in *Marxism in the Philippines. Second Series, op. cit*, pp. 2649.
110. "Rectify Errors and Rebuild the Parry," as reprinted by the Filipino Support Group (London: n.d.), pp. 4243.
111. *Interface*, pp. 81-82.
112. *Ibid*, p. 73.
113. A.S. Malay, "The 'Legal vs. Illegal' Problem in the CPP-ML Strategy and Tactics," *Asian Studies* Vol, xx (April-August-December 1982). See also Nemenzo, "Rectification Process..... pp. 90-91; and A.R. Magno, "The Filipino Left at the Crossroads: Current Debates on Strategy and Revolution," in *Marxism in the Philippines. Second Series, op. cit.,* pp. 81-82. Sison admits that SCPW "radically departed from the old notions that a nationwide protracted armed revolution is impossible in an archipelago and that winning the revolution is mainly a matter of waging protracted legal struggle, capped by an armed uprising in Manila and nearby regions." Interface, P. 73.
114. Amado Guerrero, "Specific Characteristics of our People's War," as reprinted in *PSR*, 1979 edition, pp. 179-215.
115. The other points raised in SCPW were: (a) that the national democratic position was the correct line for 211 revolutionary forces to take; (b) that the revolution remains a countryside-based one undertaken in a protracted manner making use of mountains to offset the "narrowing effect" of the archipelago; (c) that major

islands are to be the target first before the smaller ones; (d) that martial law was a sign of weakness rather than of strength; and (e) that the world imperialist system was at a "deep-going crisis" which would enhance the revolution. *Ibid.*

116. *Interface*, p. 72.
117. Published in *Rebolusyon: Theoretical Organ of the Communist Party of the Philippines* Vol. I (July 30, l976).
118. *Ibid* pp. 74-75.
119. Nemenzo, for example, completely ignores the document.
120. *Interface*, pp. 74-75.
121. Sison acknowledges such problems in *Interface*, pp. 81-82.
122. This was the answer I got from former CPP cadres whose views on OUT I tried to elicit. Interviews with CPP cadres in connection with the project "Political Dictionary for Filipino Activists" (Third World Studies Center, April 1988).
123. OUT, *op.cit*. See also Armando S. Malay, "The Dialectics of Kaluwagan: Echoes of a 1978 debate," in *Marxism in the Philippines. Second Series, op. cit*., p. 1 0.
124. *Interface*, pp. 75 and 82.
125. "I knew about it [the intelligence operations]. But I under-estimated it because I could move in and out of Northwestern Luzon up to the time of my capture." *Ibid*., p. 83.
126. *Ibid*, p. 86.
127. *Ibid*, pp. 86-87. Sison was presented to the media later on at Fort Bonifacio together with other important CPP leaders in detention for propaganda purposes. Marcos apparently wanted to dampen the "revolutionary enthusiasm" of the other detainees. Sison, according to CPP legends, however seized the occasion to enjoin his comrades to raise their clenched fists and admonished Marcos with his now-classic statement. See footnote 4.
128. Sison apparently managed to survive thew "sessions" without revealing any major information to his torturers' Stories and legends have been built within the left about his torture session. The most popular is the story that, even while in pain, Sison had the courage and wit to berate his torturers 'inability to be as "scientific" in their questions as the policemen of an American television police series, Hawaii Five-0.
129. *Interface*, pp. 88.
130. "The most important thing for me was to hold on to my revolutionary conviction and keep my fighting spirit. I felt angry instead of afraid. It was helpful to think that it was shameful to betray anyone; and to consider technically that the brain shuts off when pain becomes unbearable. It never occurred though that I would pass out when I was being tortured by punching or water cure. I was dazed but I kept my wits." Ibid., p. 89.
131. *Ibid*, p. 97. The manuscript remains unpublished.
132. *Ibid*, p. 98. Sison even claims that these secret links extend to "a wide range of anti-fascist leaders in the country and in the United States."
133. *Ibid*, pp. 13 and 90-91. Some of these essays were distributed in mimeographed form under the nom de plum Patnubay K. Liwanag (Guiding Light).
134. "To keep myself alive physically and spiritually, I carried out a struggle in defense of my democratic rights and always sought to participate in the larger struggle outside of prison... If enemy officers acted cordially, I responded accordingly and tried to enlighten and turn them against Marcos by starting from their level of consciousness. When they were threatening or insulting, I showed them that they could not bully me. I scolded at least four officers on different occasions and told them to go to hell with Marcos and the commanding general of the Military Security Command in charge of my detention... To maintain sanity in prison, I consciously

kept a balance of fighting spirit and sense of humor. Even as the guards were prohibited from talking to me unless absolutely necessary, I encouraged them to talk with me and would try to enlighten and befriend them. Those who came from my own region and from areas where the revolutionary movement was strong tended to be friendly. But they were careful about the electronic bugs in my cell." Ibid, pp. 88-89.

135. These leaders honed their organizing skills in their respective regional work. Their ability to move around was also much better than that of Sison, Dante, et. al., being less prominent than the original leaders. Indeed, the movement had now acquired its well-known faceless countenance.
136. Castro, "The Zig-Zag Route..," pp. 28-30.
137. See Makibaka: Join Us in the Struggle (A Documentation of five Years of Resistance to Martial Law) (London[?]: Friends of the Philippines, 1978).
138. The anti-Marcos elites also saw the CPP as a counterbalance against Marcos, a toot to pressure the dictator to grant certain political concessions as well as to impress on him and the U.S. that they could easily switch sides to the left in the event of Marcos initiating further restrictions.
39. At that time, the regional committee was carefully nurturing its ties with the anti-Marcos elites by coalescing in a ticket to challenge the Imelda Marcos-led Kilusang Bagong Lipunan (KBL, New Society Movement) Manila ticket for the interim Batasang Pambansa (Nation2l Legislature). As a long-term goal, the regional committee was aiming for an urban uprising that would lead to the ouster of Marcos in favor of a more liberal government; at the short-term, it was hoping to create a stable united front with the anti-Marcos elite and even the hated social democrats.
140. See Malay, "Dialectics..."
141. *Interface*, p. 103.
142. SeeRigobertoTiglao,"Critique on Studies of Transnational Corporations," *Diliman Review* January-March 1979):55-62, 91-96; "Non-Progress in the Periphery," *Diliman Review* (April-June 1979):38-45; and *The Philippine Coconut Industry: Looking Into Coconuts* (Davao City: ARC Publications, 1981).
143. See, for example, Roland G. Simbutan, "Yaong Pagsasamba sa mga Teoretistang Toreng-Garing," *Diliman Review* (April-June 1979):46-47.
144. See, for example, "Statement on the 12th Anniversary of the Communist Party of the Philippines," *Ang Bayan* (December 26, 1980).
145. This problem extended well into the Aquino period. See Benjamin Pimentel, Jr., "The Secret of Barrio San Juan," *National Midweek* (January 20, 1988):17-18.
146. As quoted in Malay, "Some Random Reflections..... p. 5 2.
147. Asked why the CPP supported Pol Pot and continues to append Mao Tse-Tung thought in its insignia, Armando Malay suggests that it may have been the continuing influence of a pro-Chinese faction within the CPP leadership that "remains convinced of the correctness of the Chinese line (whether defined by Mao and the Gang of Four or the Teng Hsiao Peng leadership) and which conceivably asserts its historical legitimacy' from time to time." "On Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tse Tung Thought: Interview with Armando Malay, Jr.," *Diliman Review*, 35:4 (1987). For the National Democratic Front's statement of support to the Pol Pot regime, see Journal of Contemporary Asia, 3:9 (1979):381, as cited by Malay, "Some Random Reflections..... p. 90.
148. This line of argument is still followed by the CPP today. See The Filipino People Will Triumph: Conversations with Revolutionaries (Manila [?]: Central Publishing House, 1988).
149. *Interface*, p. 92.

150. See Ricardo Ferrer's debates with the dependistas in "Wage Hike for Increased Consumption: A Reaction to Rigoberto Tiglao's 'Non-Progress in the Periphery," *Diliman Review* (April-June 1979), pp. 53-56 and his more comprehensive "On the Mode of Production in the Philippines: Some Old-Fashioned Questions on Marxism," *Marxism in the Philippines, op.cit*., pp. 187-240. See also Temario C. Rivera, "On the Contradictions of Rural Development," (September-October 1982):49-54.

151. *Interface*, pp. 161-176. In *PSR* Sison attacked Che Guevarra, together with Regis Debray, as counterrevolutionaries. But in *Interface*, he calls the dead leader of the Cuban revolution a "brilliant and selfless revolutionary." He also admits the rift the CPP caused when it supported Pol Pot and criticized the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia, quickly adding that efforts are now being made to mend fences with Vietnam.

152. The demands of the resistance against Marcos, particularly as politics became more polarized, also allowed the CPP to set aside or postpone dealing fully with these problems. In some instances, certain measures were created (like the formation of a mode of production study group at the University of the Philippines in late 1970), but the "demands of the struggle" would limit their effectiveness.

153. Gareth Porter, "The Politics of Counterinsurgency in the Philippines: Military and Political Options," Philippine Studies Occasional Papers No. 9., Center for Philippine Studies, University of Hawaii (1987), pp. 4-5.

154. Marty Villalobos, "For a Politico-Military Framework," photocopy (February 23, 1987), pp. 24-26.

155. Carolyn Arguellas, "The Antongalon Incident: Are the Rebels Really Killing their Comrades," *Veritas Newsmagazine*, September 30, 1986, pp. 15-16; and "The Coming Storm in Mindanao: Interview with Victor Aguilar, NDF-Mindanao Vice-Chairman," interview by Virgilio Crisostomo, National Midweek June 10, 1 987): 5-6.

156. The conservatives wanted the "Marcos Resign" call as JAJA's slogan, while the radicals demanded that it ought to be "Oust the US-Marcos Dictatorship!" Of course, the middle ground tried to search for ways to maintain this tenuous unity but failed. See A. R. Magno, "Chaos in Search of a Paradigm," *Diliman Review* (November-December 1984):7-10.

157. Porter, "The Politics of counterinsurgency..... p. 34. See also *Veritas Newsmagazine* (September 30, l984):30.

158. *Interface*, p. 103.

159. *Veritas Newsmagazine, op. cit*. Magno coined this term.

160. Agapito Aquino, TV actor-turned-overnight-political-leader-by-kinship, attempted to replicate JAJA by negotiating with all the various organized tendencies of the opposition to once more come to an agreement. Horacio V. Paredes, "KOMPIL: Will it Slap Divided Opposition into Shape?" *Mr. and Ms. Magazine* (December 9, 1983):28-29.

161. The council of leaders elected by KOMPIL participants reflected the hodge podge composition of the congress. Among those chosen were Dumacao Alonto (an ex-MNLF commander and Lanao warlord), nationalists Jose Diokno and Lorenzo Tanada, human rights lawyer Renato Saguisag, ex-NDF head Horacio Morales, justices Cecilia Munoz-Palma and Claudio Techankee, businessman Enrique Zobel, and politicians Teofisto Guingona, Eva Estrada-Kalaw, Salvador Laurel, Aquilino Pimentel, Francisco Rodrigo, and Jovito Salonga. Sison was voted alternate member together with Conrado Balweg, Salvador P. Lopez, Justice Jose B.L. Reyes, and Cardinal Sin. See Belinda Olivarez-Cunanan, "Strange Bedfellows Make It to KOMPIL," *Mr. and Mrs. Magazine,* January 13, 1984):10-12.

162. *Interface*, p. 103.

163.The General Program of Action of the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan, as reprinted in *Diliman Review* (July-October 1985):52-57.

164. Aida Manansala "Polarization in Philippine Politics: Interviews with Leandro Alejandro, BAYAN Secretary General; Emanuel Soriano, Bandila Executive Vice-President; and Karina David, UP KAAKBAY Chapter Head," *Diliman Review* (January-February 1986):3-1l. All three were involved in the heated pre-congress negotiations. See also Gareth Porter, "The Philippine Communist Movement after Marcos," photocopy (1987[?]), pp. 36-37.

165. "When BAYAN is being organized in May 1985, with the full participation and support of the progressive forces, these pro-US elements wanted to have a disproportionately large share of the organs of leadership and take control over BAYAN. Failing to grab BAYAN, they bolted out and formed BANDILA, a very small group. But they were also able to mislead and carry away two small influential human rights groups of lawyers, FLAG and MABINI. KAAKBAY, a small group of petty bourgeois radicals, could have been easily integrated into BAYAN but chose to set as a precondition for joining BAYAN the satisfaction of the demands of those who were already determined to form BANDILA and stay away from BAYAN. The August Twenty-One Movement (ATOM), headed by Butz Aquino, split, with the majority joining BAYAN. Not all the arguments went against BAYAN even among the wel lto-do. This is not to say though that the Progressives and other forces outside of the pro-US elements were faultless." *Ibid*., p. 105.

166. "There were misunderstandings involving notions of unified command and federation which were violative of independence and initiative of component organizations in an alliance; confused categories of national democrats, liberal democrats and social democrats; disproportionate allocation of seats in the leading organs of BAYAN and poor communication between caucuses and the mass of delegates and between national and regional delegates." Ibid.

167. Manansala, "Polarization in Philippine Politics..."

168. *Interface*, p. 105.

169. *Ibid.*

170. Accordingly, "had the pro-US elements in control of BANDILA gotten a large share of leadership seats in BAYAN in MAY 1985 and stayed on, they would have split BAYAN just the same and possibly carried away more BAYAN components in November 1985 after Mrs. Aquino, accompanied by her brother Jose Cojuangco and her brother-in-law Agapito Aquino, secretly met and pledged to former US undersecretary of state Richard Holbrooke, US ambassador Stephen Bosworth and Manila CIA station chief Norbert Garrett that she would keep out of her presidential campaign organization and her prospective cabinet suspected communists and communist sympathizers so-called and she would move away from her 1984 position calling for the dismantling of the US military bases." *Ibid.,* pp. 105-106.

171. Abinales, "The Left and Other Forces," pp. 26-49.

172. "Memorandum on the Snap Elections," Executive Committee of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines, December 23, 1985 as translated by A.R. Magno, "CPP: Rethinking the Revolutionary *Process," Diliman Review,* 34:4 (1986):17.

173. For example, while the NPA's Northern Luzon Command stuck to the policy, its counterparts in Southern Luzon and Negros either decided to allow their units to support the Aquino ticket or refused to intervene in the campaigns.

174. Other coalitions experienced similar splits, the most serious of which was that of the women's group GABRIEIA where the boycotters virtually forced out those who opted

to support, albeit critically, Mrs. Aquino. Epifanio San Juan, "New Dangers, New Opportunities," *National Midweek* (March 4, 1987):19, 44.

175. "BAYAN Annual Report as presented by Leandro Alejandro, Secretary-General," in Documents of the Second National Congress of the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan, University of the Philippines Only 19, 1986), pp. 12-18.

176. A.R. Magno, "CPP: Rethinking the Revolutionary Process," p. 18.

177. Eduardo Tadem, "The February Uprising and its Historical Setting," and Renato Velasco, "The Anatomy of the People Power Revolt," in *Diliman Review,* 34:2 (1986):18-12, 13-17, respectively; see also Alegria de Gracia Conception "Lessons from the February Uprising," *The New Progressive Review, 2:4:3-7.*

178. Ed de la Torre vividly summed up this left faux pax with dejected comment: "God, we missed out again." See Tadem, "The February Uprising..."

179. *Ibid., P.* 120.

180. Even movie producers, sensing a fast buck in the released rebels, offered to pay for the rights to film their life stories. Dante and Corpuz accepted these film propositions while there is no proof that Sison was offered one.

181. Chapman, *Inside the Philippine Revolution,* P. 69.

182. These people were not merely limited to his leftist constituency. Sison was even invited to Singapore by the rightwing think tank group Institute of Southeast Asian Studies to share his views on the Aquino period. See Jose Ma. Sison, "Current Questions Concerning the Communist Party of the Philippines," in *The Aquino Alternative*, ed. M. Rajaretnam (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1986), pp. 54-65.

183. Juanito Arcellana, "Revolutionary Trends, Reactionary Foibles," *National Midweek* January 28, 1987):14. *Bartolinas* are cells specifically designed for physical isolation.

184. See Benjamin Pimentel, Jr., "The Outlass of Negros," *National Midweek J*uly 27, 1988):5-9 and (August 24, 1988):7-12.

185. The general secretary himself Joven Peleador (pseud., "Young Fighter") led the resignations. I knew about this information from Peleador himself.

186. Arguellas, "The Antongalon Incident..... p. 15. The party painfully realized that some of those ordered to be executed were cadres who were not military agents but who were merely expressing their criticisms about party policies.

187. Ibid.

188. Porter, "The Philippine Communist Movement..... pp. 58-59. Some of these views were printed in *Praktika: Theoretical Journal of the Party National Urban Center, 1:1* (14 May 1986). There were also a number of computer printouts of critical views liberally shared by CPP cadres, such as Kasamang Bo Arguelles, "Kailan Tama ang Mali?" (1986[?]); Marty Villalobos, "Where the Party Faltered" (March 5,1986); Marry Villalobos, "On the Insurrectional Strategy" (March 30, 1986); Marty Villalobos, "For a Politico-Military Framework," *op. cit.;* and Pepe Manalo, "Political Strategy and Political Negotiations," reprinted in Kas*arinlan,* 2:4 (2nd Quarter, 1987).

189. See interview with Dante, *Manila Chronicle* (April 3, 1987); and "Panayam kay Dante Hinggil sa Estratehiya at Taktika," *Diliman Review,* 35:3 (1987):21.

190. See Edicio de la Torre and Horacio Morales, "Two Essays on Popular Democracy," Institute for Popular Democracy (1986), pp. 1-23.

191. While others regarded the Aquino government as "Marcosismo without Marcos," and therefore ought to be openly opposed, others argued that its composition allowed for some tactical unity with it, especially against the militarist factions who were trying to take control of the Aquino coalition.

192. Porter, "The Philippine Communist Movement..... pp. 49-54.

193. *Ibid.,* p. 38. PnB's foray into electoral politics, however, was dismal. It fielded candidates to the May 1987 senatorial and congressional elections. Only two of its candidates were elected. Most PnB leaders officially blamed the loss on the government's military and propaganda attacks on the party as well as electoral frauds committed against it. But they also admitted that PnB's inexperience as well as the left's instinctive antipathy to electoral politics were equally important causes for its poor performance. See Fidel Agcaoili, "Interview with PnB Secretary General Fidel Agcaoili," interview by Benjamin Pimentel, Jr., *National Midweek* (September 23,1987):4 1.

194. Sison gave a series of lectures at the University of the Philippines in April 1986 entitled "Philippine Crisis and Revolution." It was one of his most dull lecture series ever, merely repeating pre-martial law categories, analyses, and views. There was one issue, however, that Sison was strongly categorical about: he regarded the series of aborted coup d'etat as no major crises of the new government but as means of consolidating "a US-Aquino ruling clique." See "Interview with Sison," *National Midweek* January 21, 1987):9.

195. In *Interface,* he repeats these counter-critiques.

196. *Ibid,* pp. 95-96.

197. *Ibid.,* pp. 109-1 1 0.

198. "I would say that in the end both the revolutionary forces and the anti-Marcos counterrevolutionary forces converged against the Marcos dictatorship in the same way that, internationally, during the Second World War, the revolutionary forces and the anti-fascist big bourgeoisie converged against the fascist." *Ibid,* p. 108.

199. *Ibid*

200. See Sison, "Crisis and Revolution..... p. 35.

201. *Interface, p.* 1 16

202. Sison further retorted: "During the Vietnam War, did you ever hear of the Vietnam Worker's Party or the South Vietnam National Liberation Front dividing itself over the question of participating or not in the electoral forces staged by the Saigon puppet regime?" *Ibid., p.* 115.

203. See, for example, Carol Victoria, "A Reply to the Resolution," *Praktika, 1:2:35-51.*

204. *Ibid.,* p. 118.

205. *Ibid*

206. *National Midweek* January 21, 1987):6-7.

207. *Interface,* P. 122.

208. See Timmy Bartolome, "Behind and Beyond the "Yes Victory," *Diliman Review,* 35:1 (1987):16-20.

209. Villalobos, for example, attacked the strategy of protracted people's war as already ineffective, but defers from arguing against Sison's contemporary defense of the strategy. See Marty Villalobos, "On the Insurrectional Strategy."

210. Porter cites the following reasons behind this concurrence in the heirarchy:
"First, the party's assessment of the Aquino government grew markedly more negative during the December-January (1986) period. The CPP had already viewed Aquino as having moved to the right as early as the end of summer...Secondly, the plebiscite on the draft constitution ... imposed a deadline on the CPP to adopt a clear position on Aquino ... Finally, the CPP leaders were also worried that extending the ceasefire and negotiations would weaken both the will and the capability of the revolutionary movement to carry out the strategy of "people's war."(1 987[?]) *op. cit, pp.* 5 I-53.

211. *Ang Bayan* (February 1987).

212. See "Ang Ating Programa sa Pakikibakang Masa Mula Agosto Hangang Disyembre 1987," Executive Committee, Central Committee of the CPP (August 1987) as cited by Magno, "The Filipino Left at the crossroads p.88. See also Pilar Victoria, "A View of the Current Situation and Revolutionary Task," *Ang Bayan* (April 1987):8-15.

213. See Magno, "The Filipino Left at the Crossroads.....p.88.

214. See, for example, Carlos Humberto (pseud.), "The Reformism of Popular Democracy and BISIG" (photocopy January 1988[?]); and the reply of de la Torre, "Questions Related to Popular Democracy" (photocopy, February 17,1988). Some of the attacks were clearly malicious and hit on the people rather than on their ideas. See spiteful comments of a certain Rafael Sumulong, a KM member, on Dante, *National Midweek* (September 9,1987) and a rebuttal by a Tonyhill Carlos VI, "In Defense of Dante," in *National Midweek* (December 2,1987). Dante coolly replied to his critic-comrades: "Gagawin ko ang obligasyon ko bilang responsableng kasama sa Left. Subalit may mga pagkakataon na pinagkakamalan ako, lalo't kung nag-iinsist ako na there are things that should be done at the riht time, at hindi ko pagdadala ng ilang mga posisyon at slogans na sa tingin ko'y dapat malamang pinag-aaralan muna - kung hindi man tahasang binabangga ang mga ito. Tinatawag na nila [akol kung minsang keso de bola (pula sa labas, dilaw sa loob). Well, matanda na akong rebolusyonaryo. Subalit lagi din naman akong bukas upang matuto sa iba. [I will fulfill my obligation as a responsible member of the left. But there are times when they mistook me, specially when I insist that there are things that should be done at the right time and when I do not carry some positions and slogans which in my view should first be studied, if not totally impugned. Sometimes, they already call me *queso de bola* (ball of cheeze, red outside, yellow inside). Well, I am already an old revolutionary. But I am also always open to learn from others.]" *Diliman Review, 35:3:23.*

215. *Interface,* p. 135.

216. Sison's hosts were mostly organizations of leftists or left-sympathizers. But on one occasion, he was even interviewed on November 1986 by the "soft-core" (Sison's words) magazines, *Playboy Japan and* Emma stating that he agreed "to be interviewed... because I was assured that Cory Aquino was the subject of a story complementary to the story about me." He proceeds to say that "Cory Aquino, of course, could not be interviewed in Japan, one on one, because she was a state guest. Still we appeared at the same time in Playboy, but of course, we were not in any compromising position together." Jose Ma. Sison, "Against the Grain: Interview with Sison," interview by Jose F. Lacaba, National Midweek (April 22, 1987):9.

217. Sison, "Crisis and Revolution..... pp. 3-4.

218. Among those allegedly cited were BAYAN, PnB, the labor group KMU, the Katipunan ng mga Magbubukid sa Pilipinas (KMP, Assembly of Filipino Farmers), the League of Filipino Students (LFS), and the Alliance of Concerned Teachers (ACT). While it is an open secret that these groups are NDF-influenced, their leaders had been always careful not to openly associate themselves with the NDF to maintain their legal status and, albeit in a very forlorn way, protect themselves from military reprisals. See, for example, the interview with the late Rolando Olalia, former PNB chairman in *Filipino Times* (September 12-18, 1986) as cited by Porter, "The Philippine Communist Movement..... p. 38.

219. Among those which were supposed to be discussed in this plenum was the draft of the new party constitution and plans for the CPP's second congress (the first being in 1968).

220. See Rodolfo Desuasido, "The War in Northern Luzon," *National Midweek* (August 19, 1987):15-88 and (August 26,1987):13-14.

221. See *The Filipino People Will Triumph: Conversations with Revolutionary Leaders* (Manila[?]: Central Publishing House, 1988)
222. *Manila Chronicle (November,* 13, 1988):4. Capegsan, however, is not entirely truthful. just before his resignation, charges were being prepared against him inside the politburo for "financial opportunism."
223. "I have tried to be a serious inquirer rather than the journalist out to beat a deadline or out to trap my subject into making absurd or indiscreet answers." *Interface,* Introduction.
224. *Ibid*
225. For example, Werning reports Sison's contentions that pertain to the February uprising, the aborted coups of 1986-87, and the debates inside the CPP, etc. There is no clarification or even critical follow-up of the respondent's arguments.
226. Chapman, *Inside the Philippine Revolution,* p. 69.
227. For example, Werning asks Sison's views on North Korea. Sison gave an answer straight from a communique that could have been written by the editorial staff of the *Beijing Review,* in 1966. The interrogator let his answers pass without even demanding from the respondent what lie really meant by them.
228. Thus the not-so-humble statement: "It was [there] where, on my own initiative and through self-study, I grew rapidly on the scientific kernel of bourgeois empiricism and rationalism and the democratic kernel of liberal political philosophy; cast off all sorts of medieval and bourgeois metaphysics; ripped away the veil of liberalism from the face of modern imperialism and the local exploiting classes; and finally arrived at the most comprehensive, consistent and thoroughgoing philosophy — Marxism-Leninism and the program of a new democratic revolution." *Interface,* p. 17.
229. *Ibid.,*p. 99.
230. In *Interface,* Sison even claims that he wrote the revised draft of the NDF's Ten-Point Program.
231. *Ibid* pp., 76-77. Underscoring supplied.
232. Contrast Sison's fondness for self-admiration to Rodolfo Salas's (his successor until the latter's arrest in 1986) humble description of his life in Benjamin Pimentel, Jr., "Portrait of Rodolfo Salas," *National Midweek(November* 12, 1986).
233. Frances Fitzgerald, *Fire in the Lake.- The Vietnamese and the Americans in Vietnam (NewYork:* Random House, 1973), pp. 301-304.
234. Buscayno,"Panayam kay Dante..... p. 23.
235. Discussions within the party emphasize identification with the cell, the group, the tribal group, the "sector." "Tayo" (us) and "kayo" (you in the plural) are used more than "ako" (me) and "kami" (us) to stress collective identity.
236. Ronald W. Clark, a not-so-sympathetic biographer of Lenin, notes that the Bolshevik leader "strongly disapproved of anything that smacked of what later became known as the personality cult." Once, when his comrades informed him of the publication of his works, Clark quotes Lenin as having said: "Why? Entirely unnecessary. Everything possible was written 30 years ago. It is not worthwhile." Ronald W. Clark, *Lenin (NY-.* Harper Row Publication, 1988), P. 373.
237. Trotsky was perhaps the most intelligent of all radicals in the communist movement. Hoxha was also a scholar, a Sorbonne graduate while Malaka was also known for his intellectual astuteness.
238. Ibid. P. 80.
239. "Naka-istambay palagi sa Liberal Arts lobby" ("He always hangs out at the Liberal Arts lobby"), as Juliet describes her husband during his student days. De Lima Sison, "Interview..."
240. Chapman, *Inside the Philippine Revolution,* p. 69.

241. Epifanio San Juan, Jr., "Jose Maria Sison: Poet of Resistance and People's War," in *Jose Ma. Siton: Filipino Revolutionary Fighter* (U.S.: Alliance for Philippine National Democracy, n.d.).
242. *Interface,* P. 14. We can also recall his boast that the amount of information he gathered while in prison was sufficient for him to finish a number of dissertations.
243. Simbulan, "Yaong Pagsamba..."
244. Dorothy Friesen, *Critical Choices: A Journey with the Filipino People* (Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdamns Publishing Co., 1988), P. 195. Underscoring supplied.
245. Luis Teodoro, "The Ceasefire: Gains and Losses," *National Midweek J*anuary 28, 1987):20.
246. *Ibid.* In a lot of television talk shows, the NDF representatives were not sharing their political views but were also answering questions asked by viewers on their religious beliefs, their everyday activities in the mountains or in the underground, their love interests, and other personal matters. The human side of the revolutionaries seems to interest most viewers and even the television hosts more.
247. Edicio de la Torre, *Touching Ground,* pp. 2-3.
248. *Ibid,* p. 2.
249. See Kris Montanez, *Kabanbanuagan: Mga Kuwento ng Sonang Geril*ya (Pilipinas: Artista at Manunulat ng Sambayanan [ARMAS], 1987).
250. In the novel, *Kabanbanuagan,* for example, the main characters are depicted as strong-willed peasants and students who, upon experiencing an atrocity from either the military or the landlord, immediately, and without any second thoughts, join the guerrillas, deserting whatever personal or familial responsibilities they have. While this is not unlikely, given the terrible experiences with militarization in the countryside, they also tend to conceal the inner struggles of people joining the movement or the inner frailty that exists side-by-side with conviction which Ed de la Torre contemplates about.
251. In fairness to Werning, he did state that he also wanted Sison to share some of his personal experiences, but to no avail.
252. Ninotchka Rosca, "Two Views on Guerilla Warfare: Rafael Ileto and Rodolfo Salas," *National Midweek July* 1, 1987):6.
253. Chapman, *Inside the Philippine Revolution*, p. 70.
254. See the CPP's position on Pol Pot. "Interview with Armando Malay," *op. cit.* I also recall *Ang Bayan* erroneously describing the Iranian revolution as a proletarian-led upheaval and warning that the Nicaraguan revolution would not succeed because of the absence of a vanguard party.
255. This, therefore, accounts for Sison's views on "international trends" which are appropriately placed in the last chapter of the book.
256. Sison, "Crisis and Revolution..... pp. 3-4.
257. Interviewed CPP cadres complain that while the "objective conditions" are ripe for CPP expansion, the "subjective forces," i.e., the party's legal and underground organizations, are not as ready as before to take full advantage of this.
258. According to him, he has three book projects: *1) Interface,* 2) an updated version of his 1986 lectures under the title *Philippine Crisis and Revolution,* and 3) another publication of his works. Sison, "Crisis and Revolution..."
259. Sison, a real revolutionary in-the-flesh, can thus be "paraded" around academic, political, and even religious circuits by sponsors like Werning to enhance their own respective positions within these networks.
260. There is, of course, the problem of security, especially with the assassination of leaders in the above-ground left groups. But Sison, assuming his revolutionary fervor, could easily have opted to go underground (as has been the case of PnB

secretary-general Alan Jazmines) as he did before. Or the party's urban network could protect him in the same way as Horacio Morales and others have managed to keep themselves protected.

261. Sison, "Against the Grain..."

262. Ed dela Torre, "Questions Related to Popular Democracy." See also Seth. Mydans, "With Aquino Popular, The Philippine Rebels Tread Tricky Political Waters," *The New York Times* January 15,1989):14.

263. See his Message to the First National Congress of Panulat para sa Kaunlaran ng Sambayanan (PAKSA), December 18-19, 197 1, as cited in Lumbera, *A History and Anthologv,* P. 29.

264. The exception, as per *Interface's* list of Sison's works, was a speech on "Land Reform in National Democracy," which he specifically cited as having delivered in Tagalog to the KM's Central Luzon regional conference in October *31, 1965: Interface,* p. 2.

265. de la Torre, *Touching Ground,* p. 2.

266. If Dante were to write his story at the same time as Sison, his biography/ autobiography would contain the "independent mindedness" (a term becoming vogue within the broad left after 1986) and honesty that would definitely pose as a challenge to Sison.

267. See, for example, *Bakun: Story of Three Part ,yrs,* ed. Ed Maranan (Quezon City: MARTYR, 1986).

268. See Malay, "Random Reflections..."

269. For example, CPP cadres who were assigned to open guerrila zones in the Cordilleras after the failure of the first NPA expansion teams had to work within the power relations indigenous to the tribal communities in the area. See Castro, "The Zig-Zag Route..." More recently, the CPP had grudgingly recognized the enduring vitality of electoral politics. See also Marty Villalobos, "Where the Party Faltered"; "On the Insurrectional Strategy"; and "For a Politico-Military Framework."

270. In one symposium on the February uprising at UP in March 1986, for example, Edicio dela Torre complained that the Left missed out in the February uprising because it lacked "revolutionary erotica," being so immersed in knitted-brow "scientific analysis." In an earlier statement, de 12 Torre aptly sums up this dilemma: "I remember struggling ... over the contradictions between the need to deal with in direct, descriptive, and analytic terms (scientifically, a Marxist would say), and the indirect, evocative language of what we usually call theology." de la *Torre, Pintig sa Malamig na Bakal* Introduction.

271. Werning's question is: "Filipino culture has so consistently ingrained into the people the sense of striving for consensus and harmony. How do you cope with this cultural dimension?" Sison gave this very bizarre reply: "The principle of the united front has to be realized and developed. All patriotic and progressive forces – be they classes, sectors, parties, groups and individuals – must be united to achieve national liberation and democracy against US imperialism and the reactionary classes... In the united front, the basic rights and legitimate interests of all patriotic and progressive classes must be blended and harmonized. At the same time, these various forces must enjoy independence and initiative. Through democratic consultations and consensus, agreements can be made to promote common interests and fight the common enemy. Differences and disagreements can be laid aside either because these can be resolved only in due time or can never be resolved." *Interface,* pp. 154-155.

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