



Ka Popoy

Selected Writings

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BIOGRAPHY

Filemon '*Ka Popoy*' Lagman

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Filemon '*Ka Popoy*' Lagman (1953-2001)

Transcription/Markup for this site: 'Obrero' Supporters in China - www.proletarian.cn (2003)

Online Version: Partido Manggagawan Pilipino - <http://www.popoy.cjb.net/> (2001)

Incumbent Chairman, Bukluran ng Manggagawang Pilipino (BMP)

Advocate of the formation of Partido ng Manggagawa, a newly established labor party to participate in the coming elections

Arrested in 1996 at the height of protests against the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit

BMP Chairman since 1995

Arrested in 1994 and went aboveground after his release

Led the split in the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) in 1991 due to differences with CPP Chairman Joma Sison on the question of the strategy of guerilla war and the analysis of Philippine society as semi-feudal. Advocated the shift to concentrating on the workers movement, combining parliamentary and extra-parliamentary means of struggle, and a strategy of the workers uprising towards a socialist revolution

Secretary of the Manila-Rizal Party Committee during Martial Law until his suspension by the Executive Committee-Central Committee in 1978 due to differences in the tactics of participation (which he advocated) against the boycott of the Interim Batasang Pambansa elections.

Student activist since high school and member of the Samahan ng Demokratikong Kabataan (SDK) at UP. Finished only a year of journalism at UP Diliman and went underground after that

Born on 17 March 1953 and is survived by his three children

PSR: A Semi-feudal Alibi for Protracted War, 1994

Works of Lagman

**Metro Manila - Rizal Regional Committee
Communist Party of the Philippines
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Philippine society, according to Sison, is semicolonial and semifeudal. But the question arises: What precisely is the prevailing mode of production in Philippine society? Is it capitalist or feudal? Is it a combination of both? Or neither of the two? Meaning, the “semicolonial, semifeudal” characterization itself is the subject of our analysis of the prevailing mode of production in Philippine society.

There is no dispute, insofar as this “semicolonial and semifeudal” characterization is *but* a description, an expression of the *peculiar features* of the socio-economic evolution of Philippine society. It is an expedient formulation that highlights the immediate political tasks of the people’s struggle, the elimination of all feudal remnants and the struggle for national self-determination, all within the bourgeois bounds of the democratic revolution.

We can even describe our society as a *mongrel* economy – for it is a mixture of the worst features of two opposing modes of production. Or we can diagnose it as a *mongoloid* economy, afflicted by an abnormality in its fetal stage of development.

But whatever description we make, still, we must classify this “semicolonial, semifeudal” social specimen according to whatever social order it properly belongs, attach its correct scientific name, identify its mode of existence, its mode of production. Political expediency must not in any way become an excuse to obscure or

evade the necessity for a theoretically precise definition and understanding of the basic process of our social and economic evolution. Nor must this analysis become simply an alibi for a preconceived strategy of revolution.

Although claiming to be a faithful follower of Marxist political economy, Sison prefers however, to replace the precise and clear Marxist categorization of a mode of production by the vague and diffuse term “semicolonial and semifeudal” and hence surreptitiously evades and disguises the basic process in the economic development of the Philippines, keeping incognito its real mode of existence.

Lenin, more than once, described Russian society as semifeudal, and even barbaric, because of the widespread survivals of serfdom and the autocratic rule of Tsarism. But these peculiar features of Russian society did not prevent him from going deeper and penetrating into the very core of the question in an attempt to understand the basic process determining the socio-economic evolution of Russian society. And his essential conclusion was, the mode of production of Russian society was basically bourgeois and capitalist, *despite*, and *through* all, its medieval features and stages of transition.

But for Sison, he is fully contented, and very proud of himself, with his “semicolonial and semifeudal” *sketch* of Philippine society, emphasizing every line and feature in bold *strokes*, and for the past 25 years, has vehemently insisted that this is the only way Philippine society should be *drawn*.

He has given his semicolonial and semifeudal “analysis” of Philippine society a life of its own, its own theoretical rationalization. He makes the impression that he has concatenated it into a distinct mode of production, into an economic category, even raised it to the level of a “basic principle” of Marxism-Leninism that should be “reaffirmed” in the decade of the 1990’s up to the new century by every Filipino proletarian revolutionary.

Ask any comrade “faithful” to the Party line what the prevailing mode of production in the country is, and his ready reply will be: *“Philippine society is neither feudal nor capitalist but semicolonial and semifeudal.”* This is our prevailing understanding of the mode of production dominant in Philippine society. But is this the “official Party line”?

Let us review the “Party Bible” – Sison’s *Philippine Society and Revolution* – to ascertain what truly is his analysis of the prevailing mode of production.

Semifeudalism: A Mode of Expression Not a Mode of Production

In the *PSR*, Sison completely evades a categorical presentation of the question. However, by an integral analysis of all his “theoretical” assertions, one can get a clear picture of how Sison defines the mode of production in Philippine society.

Sison begins with the assertion that Philippine society is semicolonial and semifeudal. And *“this status is determined by US imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism.”*

These are three “determining” factors of what Sison calls the “status” of Philippine society. If by the word “status” Sison is referring to the “mode of production”, he does not clarify. But this word has no status in Marxist terminology unless qualified.

He then explains first why Philippine society is semicolonial and then proceeds to explain why it is semifeudal. In both explanation, he pinpoints US imperialism as the *principal determinant*.

In discussing Philippine mode of production, we will put aside the “semicolonial” characterization. No Marxist in his right mind will insist that this “semicolonial” status of the Philippines is a categorization of a mode of production. *The “semi-colonial” question is not a socio-economic category but a political-democratic question. It does not refer to relations of production or a mode of production but to a relationship between imperialism and political democracy.*

Thus if we delete or ignore this “semicolonial” aspect, what is left of Sison’s description of the mode of production dominant in Philippine society?

The prevailing mode of production in the Philippines is semifeudal! Hence, Metro Manila, the national industrial center, is semifeudal? The urban centers of the Philippines where more than 48% of the population reside is semifeudal?

Sison’s fanatics might protest: semifeudalism refers primarily to the countryside. If that is so, then how do they describe the economy in the cities – semicolonial? The countryside as semifeudal, the cities as semicolonial! Stupid.

But of course this is ridiculous. Even Sison cannot deny (though he obscures and evades it) that Metro Manila and the urban centers are basically capitalist in their mode of production. The point, however, is not to dichotomize Philippine society into “town and country” but to understand its socio-economic evolution, its basic process of development in its integral whole, in its internal relations, in its dialectical inner movement.

Here lies precisely, the inadequacy of the “semifeudal and semicolonial” explanation of the Philippine mode of production and the absurdity of evading the bourgeois, capitalist basic process undergoing and unfolding in Philippine society despite all the distortions, all the obstacles, all the complexities, all the abnormalities in its development due primarily to *non-economic* means and factors.

But we are running ahead of Sison. Let us see how Sison defines and explains Philippine society, its mode of production and its basic process vis-a-vis his “semifeudal” analysis.

According to Sison: *“The semifeudal character of Philippine society is principally determined by the impingement of US monopoly capitalism on the old feudal mode of production and the subordination of the latter to the former.”*

So from feudal, the Philippines becomes semifeudal through an imperialist “*impingement*”! And feudalism becomes a “*subordinate*” of monopoly capitalism, a “concubine” of Uncle Sam. “East” meets “West”, and their offspring is “semifeudalism” – a new mode of production in the era of monopoly capitalism, the product of the imperialist sperm being embedded in the feudal womb.

For Sison, the principal determinant of the “semifeudal” mode of production in Philippine society (if he considers it a “mode of production”) is US monopoly capitalism!

So, imperialism is a carrier of a new form of production relations called “semifeudalism”! (It appears that Sison is either ignorant or innocent of what determines a mode of production based on Marxist historical materialism and political economy, or he just doesn’t care.)

So what is this “impingement of US monopoly capitalism on the old feudal mode of production” and “the subordination of the latter to the former”?

How did he explain this “impingement” and “subordination” resulting in the “semifeudal character of Philippine society”?

According to Sison: “*The concrete result of the intertwining of foreign monopoly capitalism and domestic feudalism is the erosion and dissolution of a natural economy of self-sufficiency in favor of a commodity economy*”

From “*impingement*” to “*intertwining*”. Sison is really a “master of words”. No wonder, he is a consummate revolutionary phrase-monger! But then again, what is the “concrete result” of this “intertwining” of imperialism and feudalism? In his exact words: “*the erosion and dissolution of a natural economy of self-sufficiency in favor of a commodity economy.*”

But this is the destruction, the elimination, the abolition of feudalism (self-sufficient natural economy) and the establishment, the laying of the foundation, the dawning of capitalism (commodity

economy). So it is imperialism that is liquidating feudalism! So this imperialist “impingement” and its “intertwining” with feudalism erodes and dissolves feudal natural economy in favor of capitalist commodity economy.

Is this what Sison implies? Definitely not! This is not so, because, being dictated by foreign monopoly capitalism, *“this commodity economy is used to restrict the growth of national capitalism and force owner-cultivators and handicraftsmen into bankruptcy.”* And he adds that this commodity economy dictated by imperialism is *“used to keep large masses of people in feudal bondage and at the same time create a relative surplus of population, a huge reserve army of labor, that keeps the labor market cheap.”*

So this commodity economy is used – by imperialism – to (1) restrict the growth of national capitalism, (2) force owner-cultivators and handicraftsmen into bankruptcy, (3) keep large masses of people in feudal bondage, and (4) create a surplus population and a huge reserve labor army that keeps the labor market cheap.

After saying that through imperialist “impingement” and its “intertwining” with feudalism, natural economy, i.e., feudalism, is eroded and dissolved, and commodity economy, i.e., capitalism, is established – he is now saying, that on the contrary, this is not so! Sison should be dragged by the ears and told to review his political economy.

What is this rubbish about imperialism using *“commodity economy to restrict the growth of national capitalism?”* Commodity economy is the vehicle of capitalism and it cannot grow and develop other than through commodity economy. How then can commodity economy be used to restrict the growth of local capitalism when in fact, (1) it objectively destroys feudal natural economy which is the actual obstacle to capitalist development and, (2) it is the vehicle, the impetus for capitalist growth and the undermining of feudalism as a system. It is monopoly capitalism as imperialism, not commodity economy, that restricts or is being *“used”* to restrict the growth of local capitalism. Obviously, Sison is not only ignorant of the internal

laws of development of capitalism. He also does not understand imperialism and how it restricts local capitalism.

Sison's ignorance of capitalist laws is fully exposed by his second point – by the way he laments the fact that commodity economy is being used to *“force owner-cultivators and handicraftsmen into bankruptcy”!* What does Sison expect from capitalism, from commodity economy? Prosperity for the owner-cultivators? Prosperity for the handicraftsmen? Sison is an overt imperialist-hater but a covert capitalist-lover. Commodity economy – “dictated” or not by imperialism – will result and must result in the growing bankruptcy of the mass of owner-cultivators and handicraftsmen, and this bankruptcy is the surest *indication* of the dominance of commodity economy, and it just cannot be otherwise.

And Sison's fourth point – commodity economy being used to *“create a relative surplus of population, a huge reserve army of labor, that keeps the local labor market cheap”* confirms Sison's “innocence” of capitalist laws but he, nevertheless, stands “convicted” before the bar of Marxism-Leninism. Again, what should we expect from commodity economy, except Marx's forecast of *“the growth of the mass of misery, oppression, slavery, degradation, exploitation”* of the toiling people, the growth of a “huge army of reserve labor” used and maintained by the bourgeoisie “like a whip” against the proletariat.

Indeed, Sison is advocating a “new” theory that runs against the grain of the basic ideas of Marx, Engels and Lenin. And this is conclusively confirmed by his third point: imperialist dictated commodity economy *“is used to keep large masses of people in feudal bondage”!* The “master of rhetoric” is now engaged in paradox.

Commodity production for feudal bondage, using the vehicle of capitalism for the preservation of the old feudal mode – this is Sison's “semifeudal theory”. This is how Sison rendered more profound Mao's “semifeudal” description of China, and even Lenin's

description of Russia, for the latter preceded the former in the use of this term in describing their respective societies.

How does imperialism use “commodity production” to “*keep large masses of people in feudal bondage*”? Sison has no direct, categorical explanation. He just insinuates. In his immediately succeeding sentences, he says: “*In Philippine agriculture, the old feudal mode persists side by side with capitalist farming chiefly for the production of a few export crops needed by the United States and other capitalist countries. As a matter of fact, the old feudal mode of production still covers more extensive areas than capitalist farms.*”

But where is the connection? How is commodity economy, which has replaced feudal natural economy, used to preserve feudal bondage? If this seems to be a contradiction in doctrine, at least, it should be proven that this is contradiction in real life. But for Sison, to exist “side by side” is a profound connection! One’s living “side by side” with another is already a connection!

From his theories of “impingement” and “intertwining”, he now introduces his “side by side” theory which is less glamorous rhetorically. But he will promptly recover his technocratic elegance by the theory of “interactive and symbiotic relationship”.

At least, Sison has clarified what he refers to as “commodity economy” being dictated and used by US imperialism. But what he is actually referring to is only the actual production of particular commodities, i.e., export crops needed by the US and other capitalist countries. He is not really speaking of commodity economy as an *economic system* but only of the actual planting of bananas, of particular crops for export!

This “production of a few export crops” is actually the one being referred to by Sison as the factor restricting the growth of national capitalism. But because of his penchant for fancy formulations, plus the fact that he does not know what he is saying, he recklessly calls it “commodity economy” being used to “restrict” local capitalism, etc.

Sison will not and can not explain how “commodity economy” as a system of production “restricts” capitalism and “preserves” feudalism because he is simply describing how imperialism “restricts” capitalist farming to the production of a few export crops while existing “side by side” with the old feudal mode of production.

Just read his next sentences: *“Feudalism has been encouraged and retained by US imperialism to perpetuate the poverty of the broad masses of the people, subjugate the most numerous class which is the peasantry and manipulate local backwardness for the purpose of having cheap labor and cheap raw materials from the country. It is in this sense that domestic feudalism is the social base of US imperialism.”*

See, no more “commodity economy” being used to “restrict” local capitalism and “preserve” domestic feudalism. Instead, he just distracts us with his prattle and chatter and surprises us with another profound assertion: *“feudalism is the social base of US imperialism”!*

But before we tackle this “social base” theory, let us pause and reflect on all that had been said, what then is “semifeudalism” or where is “semifeudalism”?

Sison began his explanation of “semifeudalism” with his theories of impingement and intertwining which resulted in the *“erosion and dissolution of natural economy in favor of commodity production.”*

From here, one is tempted to interpret Sison’s “semifeudalism” as the growth of capitalism in agriculture from the old feudal mode, but an abnormal, artificial growth, not following the usual process, because

(1) it is the result of imperialist “impingement”, hence, a local capitalism dependent on and distorted by the domination of monopoly capital, and

(2) this intertwining of imperialism and feudalism will result in the preservation of feudal remnants, hence, the slower, agonizing growth

of local capitalism.

But when Sison suddenly unleashed his sensational assertion that this “commodity economy” that replaced “natural economy” is being used by imperialism to “restrict” local capitalism and “preserve” domestic feudalism – his “semifeudalism” decisively assumes a different meaning, or to be more precise, becomes meaningless.

This is proven by his subsequent statements whose crowning glory is his most “profound” theory of “feudalism as the social base of imperialism.” He had “sown dragon’s teeth but harvested fleas.”

Sison’s “semifeudalism” is a “negation of the negation” but not of the spiral type. First, feudal natural economy is negated by capitalist commodity economy as a result of Sison’s process of impingement and intertwining. But for Sison, what is negated is not feudalism but only its “natural economy” – only! – its soul but not its body. This is the first negation. Then, this commodity economy is further negated, again by this impingement and intertwining. In this second negation, “commodity economy” is disowned and castrated as an illegitimate product of the marriage of imperialism and feudalism, and what they consider as their very own is what Sison has nicknamed, with fondness, as “semifeudalism”.

Actually, the outcome of this marriage are twins. According to Sison: *“The interactive and symbiotic relationship between US imperialism and feudalism has made Philippine society semicolonial and semifeudal.”* Feudalism, therefore, is a co-determinant of imperialism not only in the “semifeudal” status of the Philippines but also in its “semicolonial” character! Feudalism has attained complete conjugal rights as a concubine of imperialism!

In the light of all these discussions, what then, is “semifeudalism”, what is the prevailing mode of production in the Philippines?

Sison has categorically stated that “feudalism has been encouraged and retained by US imperialism” and, in fact, has been promoted as “the social base of US imperialism”. Feudalism is

clearly a mode of production which, according to Sison in 1968, “still covers more extensive areas than capitalist farms.”

If feudalism is the prevailing mode of production in the Philippines, what then is “semifeudalism”? Based on all that Sison had said, “semifeudalism” is nothing but a *nickname*, a *pseudonym*, an *alias* of the old, moribund feudalism “encouraged and retained” by US imperialism. It does not have a life of its own outside the old feudal mode.

Sison is confused by his own creation, because the truth is, he is not really sure of what he is talking about. This is the reason why he evaded and even ignored in *PSR* a categorical explanation of what the mode of production prevailing in the country really is and his “semicolonial and semifeudal” description of the “status” of Philippine society is his manner of deliberately obscuring and confusing the question.

However, even Sison has begun to believe that “semifeudalism” has its own mode of existence distinct from feudalism. Under *PSR*’s section on feudalism, there is this subsection 4 entitled *The Extent of Feudal and Semifeudal Exploitation*. So he believes that there are distinct forms of semifeudal exploitation different from feudal forms of exploitation.

But what does he identify as a “semifeudal” form of exploitation? Letter b. (*Basic Forms of Exploitation in the Countryside*) of this subsection 4, is divided into two categories. The first is (1) *Land Rent, Usury and Other Feudal Evils*. And the second one is (2) *Wage Slavery on Farms*. The first obviously refers to “feudal forms of exploitation”. Is the second one, “*Wage Slavery on Farms*” the specific form of “semifeudal exploitation”?

Wage-slavery on farms is a capitalist form of exploitation— it is capitalism. But Sison insinuates that this is semi-feudalism. If this is what is referred to as “semifeudalism”, if this is the meaning of “semifeudalism” – then Philippine mode of production is basically capitalist because Sison described the “status” of Philippine society

as basically “semifeudal”. Everything that Sison has said will burst asunder if this is the meaning of “semi-feudalism”. But no, Sison does not categorically say that “wage slavery on farms” is the form of semifeudal exploitation in the countryside.* But neither is he able to identify a single form of semifeudal exploitation!

But this proves just how confused Sison is on his “semifeudalism”. Again, according to Sison, US imperialism “*enhanced semifeudalism in the countryside by further encouraging capitalist farming, corporate ownership of land and merchant usury.*” here, Sison speaks of enhancing capitalism in agriculture.

In his class analysis of the rich peasants, he says: “*It must be recognized as a general rule that the rich-peasant form of production is useful for a definite period. A premature policy of liquidating it should strictly be avoided.*” Now, what is this rich-peasant form of production that is “useful for a definite period”?

After describing the rich peasants as the “*rural bourgeoisie*” and the rich-peasant economy, i.e., “*hiring farm labor or letting part of their land to poor peasants*” (although they themselves work) – he declares that the rich peasants “*represent semi-feudalism in the barrios*” and his view of the rich peasants is that “*they can remain neutral in the agrarian revolution against the landlords.*” This is how confused Sison is with this mess of contradictory statements!

On the one hand, he says that the rich peasants are the rural bourgeoisie but on the other hand, he says “they can remain neutral in the agrarian revolution”. What is this?!? A rural bourgeoisie that is neutral in the antifeudal struggle! What kind of rural bourgeoisie is this! Yet he says “*the rich peasants can be of help to the anti-imperialist struggle of the peasants masses*”!! What is this?!? A rural bourgeoisie that is more anti-imperialist than antifeudal!!!

On the one hand, he says that the semifeudal system in the Philippines should be overthrown because this is the product of imperialist-feudal collusion. But on other hand, speaking of the rich peasant form of production which according to him is semifeudalism,

this “semifeudalism” is “useful for a definite period”, and “a premature policy of liquidating it should be strictly avoided”!!

This is what he gets for equating and confusing capitalism with semifeudalism, for equating and confusing capitalist agriculture with semifeudalism. The rich peasants as the rural bourgeoisie are the carrier, the harbinger of capitalism not of semifeudalism, not only at the barrio level but in the entire countryside. The rich peasantry as the rural bourgeoisie will not only remain neutral but are basically antifeudal. But they may remain neutral and even reactionary in the armed struggle of the proletarian forces as they are conservative and suspicious of revolutionary forms of struggle as dictated by their class position in society. The problem is, Sison also equates the antifeudal struggle with the armed struggle, and makes the latter the principal criterion. Hence, his view of the rich peasants as basically neutral in the antifeudal struggle plus his view that this peasant sector is the carrier of semifeudalism in the barrio, a semifeudalism that is useful and should not be liquidated for a definite period !!

Even on the question of capitalist development, Sison’s formulations are a confused mess of contradictions. On the one hand, he says: *“US imperialism exports its surplus capital to its colonies and semicolonies not to raise the economy of these to the level of capitalist development...”* On the other hand, he says after only a few sentences: *“...although US imperialism has introduced a certain degree of capitalist development...”* Which is which?

Sison will not accept these formulations as contradictory, but will insist that both are correct in the sense that imperialism introduces a certain degree of capitalist development but not to the level of real capitalist development. According to Sison: *“US monopoly capital has assimilated the seed of capitalism that is within the womb of domestic feudalism but at the same time it has prevented the full growth of this seed into a national capitalism.”*

What is this “capitalist seed within the womb of feudalism” that all-powerful imperialism has “assimilated” and whose full growth it will prevent with all the means that it can muster? Again, Sison does not

specify. But if we take Sison's word for it, the growth of local capitalism in the Philippines is hopeless since its "seed" – the basis of its development" has already been "assimilated" by the imperialist monster.

We will return to this most important "assimilation" theory of Sison plus his "social base" theory. For now, what is important is to understand the implications of all of Sison's "theoretical" formulations or obscurantism in defining his view on what really is the prevailing mode of production in the Philippines.

One thing though is very clear: Sison's "semifeudalism" is not a mode of production but a mode of description of what is basically to him is a feudal system of economy maintained and preserved through an interactive and symbiotic relationship with imperialism. Even his concept of "semicolonialism" is nothing but a pseudonym of what is virtually a colonial status of the Philippines, because, in Sison's view of imperialism, it is really an omnipotent superpower that puts everything under its will.

Feudalism as a Mode of Production

We have established – despite the maze of "semifeudal" obscurantism, eclecticism and sophistry – that in Sison's view, the Philippines is basically feudal in its mode of production. But, what is his understanding of feudalism as a mode of production and how it persists in the Philippines?

Here is how Sison explains feudalism: *"Feudalism is a mode of production in which the principal forces of production are the peasants and the land which they till and the relations of production are basically characterized by landlord oppression and exploitation of the peasantry. The most immediate manifestation of feudalism is the possession of vast areas of cultivable land by a few landlords who themselves do not till the land and who compel a big number of tenants to do the tilling. Feudal relations between the parasitic landlord class and the productive peasantry essentially involve the*

extortion of exorbitant land rent in cash or kind from the latter by the former.”

In his definition, Sison identifies the feudal forces of production (*peasants and the land*) and relations of production (*landlord oppression*). He pinpoints its immediate manifestation (*the possession of vast areas of land by a few landlords*) and its essential relations (*extortion of exorbitant land rent*).

This is how Sison understands feudalism. This is how he defines a mode of production. No wonder Sison concludes that Philippine society is basically feudal because in 1968 this is how the Philippine landscape appears to be – at “first glance”. You can “sketch” the countryside just by glancing at the greenery even from a moving train. But you cannot analyze society just by taking a superficial glance.

For Sison, if you see peasants tilling the land, idle landlords oppressing and exploiting them – this is feudalism! If you see vast areas of land owned by a few landlords who compel a big number of tenants to do the tilling – this is feudalism! If you see parasitic landlords extorting exorbitant rent from the peasants – this is feudalism!

Is Sison’s description of feudalism adequate for the purpose of correctly *distinguishing* it as a mode of production? Is Sison’s conception of a mode of production adequate to correctly analyze the prevailing mode of production in Philippine society?

Compare Sison’s definition of feudalism with Marx’s description of this particular mode of production: *“The direct producer... is to be found here in the possession of his means of production, the necessary material labor conditions required for the realization of his labor and the production of his means of subsistence. He conducts his agricultural activity and the rural home industries connected with it independently... Under such conditions the surplus-labor for the nominal owners of the land can only be extorted from them by other than economic pressure, whatever the form assumed may be...*

Thus conditions of personal dependence are requisite, a lack of personal freedom, no matter to what extent, and being tied to the soil as its accessory, bondage in the true sense of the word.”

This is also how Lenin described the economic system which prevailed in Russia in the epoch of serfdom. According to Lenin: *“Its prevalence obviously presumes the following necessary conditions: firstly, the predominance of natural economy. The feudal estate had to constitute a self-sufficing, self-contained entity, in very slight contact with the outside world... Secondly, such an economy required that the direct producer be allotted the means of production in general, and land in particular; and more over that he be tied to the land, since otherwise the landlord is not assured of hands... Thirdly, a condition for such a system of economy was the personal dependence of the peasant on the landlord... Hence “other than economic pressure,” as Marx says in describing this economic regime, “was necessary... Fourthly, and finally, a condition and a consequence of the system of economy described was the extremely low and stagnant condition of technique, for farming was in the hands of small peasants, crushed by poverty and degraded by personal dependence and by ignorance. “*

So both Marx and Lenin, in defining and distinguishing feudalism as a mode of production, spoke of (1) the direct producer in possession of means of production necessary for his subsistence; (2) the predominance of self-sufficient natural economy; (3) surplus-labor appropriated by the landlord class by non-economic means; (4) the peasantry tied to the soil as its accessory, their personal dependence to the landlord class, i.e., feudal bondage in its real sense.

These four identifying features of feudalism comprise its very character as a mode of production and are precisely the ones undermined and negated by the development of capitalism. Under capitalism:

(1) the direct producer is expropriated, deprived of the possession of his means of production. According to Lenin, the methods of

obtaining the surplus product under feudal and under capitalist economy are diametrically opposed: *“the former is based on the producer being provided with land, the latter on the producer being dispossessed of the land.”*

(2) self-sufficient natural economy is eroded, dissolved and replaced by commodity, cash, market economy; According to Lenin: *“The production of grain by the landlords for sale, which developed particularly in the latter period of the existence of serfdom, was already a harbinger of the collapse of the old regime.”*

(3) surplus-labor is appropriated through economic mechanisms, through the exchange of equivalents but resulting in surplus-value. According to Lenin, in elaborating Marx’s “other than economic pressure” description of feudal appropriation: *“If the landlord had not possessed direct power over the person of the peasant, he could not have compelled a man who had a plot of land and ran his own farm to work for him.”*

(4) the “peasantry” is liberated from the soil, transformed into a “free man”, becomes a proletariat. According to Lenin, *“the separation of the direct producer from the means of production, i.e., his expropriation”* signifies the transition from simple commodity production to capitalist production (and constitutes the necessary condition for this transition).

Now, how come Sison, in his definition of feudalism, mentions not even one of the four basic features of feudalism of which Marx and Lenin are one in describing – basic features which constitute the main foundations of feudalism as a system?

Why is Sison’s characterization of feudalism different with that of Marx and Lenin? Has moribund feudalism changed so much from the time of Marx and Lenin that it has survived the 20th century even though it has “lost” its original, historical nature? This is not a generational but an ideological gap, a deep chasm between the political economy of Maoism and that of Marxism-Leninism. But for

Sison, this is not simply an ideological gap, but a question of intellectual honesty.

Sison failed to mention any of the four basic features and foundations of feudalism as a mode of production because they no longer exist and have already been undermined in Philippine reality. Sison arbitrarily defines feudalism the way he wants it, minus its essential character as an independent, historical mode of production.

(1) Natural economy, the self-contained and the self-sufficient character of the feudal estate, has been eroded, dissolved and replaced by commodity economy. (2) An economy that required “the direct producer be allotted the means of production in general, and land in particular,” no longer prevails. (3) A system of economy that requires “the personal dependence of the peasant on the landlord” so the latter can appropriate the surplus product of the former through “non-economic means” no longer predominates. (4) Feudal bondage, in the true and original sense of the word – the peasant as being tied to the land, is not a reality in our countryside.

Commodity production, cash and market economy, has conquered the entire countryside, even the most remote villages. The overwhelming majority of the toiling people in the countryside have been dispossessed of the land and the means of production. The landlord is not obliged to provide land to the peasant to till. Feudal bondage, *in the true sense of the word* – the peasant as being tied to the soil – no longer exist. The peasant, if he wants, is free to leave the land that he tills and to venture to other means of livelihood. The overwhelming majority of the tillers have been transformed into “free agents”, into proletarians and semiproletarians in the open market of a commodity economy.

Even present-day “tenancy” is no longer “*feudal bondage in the true sense of the word*” . The peasant as being tied to the soil, his personal dependence on the landlord, his lack of personal freedom, the landlord’s direct power over the person of the peasant – no longer prevails. The peasant’s surplus product is no longer appropriated by means “other than economic pressure” but precisely

through economic pressure – his uprootment from the means of subsistence, his economic dependence on the landlord who controls the means of production. Personal dependence on the landlord on the basis of natural economy has been replaced by economic dependence on the landlord, “the renting of land because of dire need” on the basis of commodity production.

The main foundations of feudalism as a mode of production have been substantially undermined in the Philippines in its socio-economic evolution. Yet, Sison insists that feudalism as an economic system persists and predominate in Philippine society because he has reduced feudalism as a mode of production into “landlordism” and “tenancy”.

But this is not feudalism – as an independent, historical mode of production – but the survivals, the vestiges, the remnants of its forms, i.e., landlordism, tenancy, etc., under present-day society. And no matter how rampant, how prevalent, how pervasive are these feudal forms, they are nevertheless but the survivals of feudalism, not the feudal mode of production itself.

The mode of describing this persistence and pervasiveness of old feudal forms under present-day Philippine society which is essentially bourgeois and capitalistic in character, and in the context of present-day world capitalist system dominated by imperialism, is what should properly be called “semifeudalism”.

This is semifeudalism. Meaning, the basic economic process of a bourgeois, capitalist system has taken over and ousted the old feudal process, and is now the underlying economic law beneath all the vestiges, all the survivals, all the remnants of the old feudal mode. There would not be any dispute if Sison defined semifeudalism as such – a basically capitalist, bourgeois mode of production hampered and distorted by feudal survivals and imperialist impositions. But instead of bringing into the forefront and emphasizing more strongly this basic economic process, Sison attempts to insist that the old feudal mode persists, ignores the

bourgeois economic process in Philippine society, and even goes to the extent of promoting feudalism as the “social base of imperialism”.

Political economy, according to Engels is *“is the science of the laws governing the production and exchange of the material means of subsistence in human society.”* Now, if indeed, feudalism is the prevailing mode in Philippine society, Sison must prove that production and exchange in our economic system is basically feudal.

What is a feudal system of production and exchange? It is essentially and by nature a self-sufficient and self-contained natural economy, and it cannot be otherwise for feudalism has its own historical specificity.

Now, will Sison ever dare to assert and prove that even in 1968, the prevailing system of production and exchange of the means of subsistence of Philippine society was in the form of a self-sufficient and self-contained natural economy? Of course, he won't, for he admits the fact that this type of production and exchange has already been eroded and dissolved in favor of commodity economy.

Why insist, then, that Philippine society is feudal? Sison so insists because he has reduced feudalism to landlordism and tenancy which is prevalent in Philippine society.

But even assuming that Sison's definition of feudalism – reducing it to landlordism and tenancy – can stand on these two feudal limbs as a definition, still it cannot pass the simple test of a “concrete analysis of concrete conditions” of Philippine society. Reducing feudalism to landlordism and tenancy essentially means reducing feudal relations to a question of land rent, whatever its form.

Actually, he formulates it as such – *“feudal relations between the parasitic landlord class and the productive peasantry essentially involve the extortion of exorbitant land rent in cash or kind from the latter by the former.”* What is decisive for Sison, in a feudal set-up, is the existence of this feudal mode of appropriation of the surplus product – land rent.

Indeed, different modes of production have different modes of appropriation of the surplus social product. And “land rent” is a typical form of feudal appropriation, although it does not belong exclusively to feudalism. There is feudal “land rent” and capitalist “land rent”. But let us set aside for the moment this difference, and assume that the prevailing form of land rent in the Philippines is “feudal”. The question is: Was the prevailing, the predominant mode of appropriation of the surplus social product in Philippine society, even in 1968, in the form of “land rent”?

Sison won't dare assert that the principal mode of appropriation in Philippine society in 1968 was in the form of “land rent” for hard facts and statistics can easily prove that social wealth and the surplus social product in the Philippines, even then, was the output mainly of wage-labor and in the form of capitalist surplus-value.

If the predominant mode of production, exchange and appropriation in Philippine society is not feudal, what is left of Sison's “feudalism”? Will Sison, or his fanatics, stoop so low as to argue that Philippine society is feudal in the sense that the majority of our people are peasants oppressed and exploited by landlordism and tenancy?

Determining a mode of production is not a numerical question of how many peasants are tenants of the landlord class. This is the task of statistics not of political economy. According to Lenin: *“It is not with ‘production’ that political economy deals, but with the social relations of men in production, with the social system of production. Once these social relations have been ascertained and thoroughly analyzed, the place in production of every class, and, consequently, the share they get of the national consumption, are thereby defined.”*

The only fallback available to Sison is to retreat to his “semifeudal” obscurantism and eclecticism, deny that Philippine society is feudal, deny that he ever asserted, at least categorically, even in PSR that the dominant mode is feudal, and insist that what he had categorically stated is Philippine society is “semicolonial and semifeudal.”

Indeed, Sison has never categorically declared or formulated that Philippine mode of production is feudal, and in fact, he evaded and obscured such a categorical posing of the question. But it is clear as daylight, in the entire *PSR*, that his essential analysis of Philippine society is feudal although he preferred to characterize it as “semifeudal”.

But let us grant Sison his refuge. Let us return to where we started – to his “semifeudalism”.

If “semifeudalism” is not “feudalism”, what kind of social specie is it? There are only two choices left for Sison. One, classify it under the capitalist domain with widespread “feudal” enclaves. Or obscure it again by classifying it as “anonymous”, neither capitalist nor feudal but with a sprinkling of both, hence a distinct type of social system.

The first is anathema to Sison, and so we proceed to his “anonymous” social order, neither feudal nor capitalist but “semifeudal”. And we again repeat the basic question: Is there such a social system called semifeudal? Can “semifeudalism” independently stand as a distinct mode of production?

Lenin speaks of a “transitional system of economy”. It is a historical situation “*wherein capitalist economy can not emerge at once, and feudal economy can not disappear at once.*” The only possible system of economy is, accordingly, a transitional one, a system combining the features both of feudal and capitalist systems. These two systems are actually interwoven in the most varied and fantastic fashion. Sometimes the feudal forms pass into the capitalist forms and merge with the latter to such extent that it becomes almost impossible to distinguish one from the other.

According to Lenin: “*Life creates forms that unite in themselves with remarkable gradualness systems of economy whose basic features constitute opposites.*” It becomes impossible to say where “feudalism” ends and where “capitalism” begins. And he adds: “*It is quite natural that the combination of such dissimilar and even opposite systems of economy leads in practice to a whole number of*

most profound and complicated conflicts and contradictions, and that the pressure of these contradictions results in a number of farmers going bankrupt, etc. All these are phenomena characteristics of every transitional period.”

Having established the fact that it is possible that two opposing systems are “merged” in a historical situation of transition, what then is the task of political economy? The task is not to formulate reality in suspended animation but to capture the dynamism of this transition for it is precisely a period not of static anonymity but of an intense inner struggle for identity.

More specifically, the imperative is *to determine which of the two systems is eliminating the other under the influence of the whole course of economic evolution*. The task is not just to merely declare it a transitional period for it is something obvious and apparent, static and meaningless, but to understand its laws of development and its inevitable evolution. Marx, Engels and Lenin witnessed these transitional periods of history. But never with false pride did they simply announce that the world is in transition. They declared outright how it would transform.

Is Sison’s “semifeudalism” a transitional system of economy? The way it was presented and formulated by Sison, it is definitely not a transitional system but a “type” of economy determined by imperialism in symbiotic, interactive relationship with feudalism.

Lenin’s “transitional system of economy” is not something deliberate but objective, arising from historical conditions. Sison’s semifeudalism is deliberate, predetermined, schematic – an imperialist design in collusion with feudalism. This is Sison’s brand of historical materialism and political economy.

Again we quote Sison’s “social base” theory: *“As a matter of fact, the old feudal mode of production still covers more extensive areas than capitalist farms. Feudalism has been encouraged and retained by US imperialism to perpetuate the poverty of the broad masses of the people, subjugate the most numerous class which is the*

peasantry and manipulate local backwardness for the purpose of having cheap labor and cheap raw materials from the country. It is in this sense that domestic feudalism is the social base of US imperialism.”

There is nothing transitional in this. Sison is not saying that “capitalism cannot emerge at once” or that, “feudalism cannot disappear at once”. Nothing of this sort but the reverse. Feudalism is deliberately encouraged and retained, and capitalism deliberately aborted in its growth, its seed assimilated and prevented from growing.

Semifeudalism, for Sison, is nothing but a type of feudalism dictated and designed by imperialism – monopoly capitalism *impinging on, intertwining and existing side by side* with feudalism, in *interactive and symbiotic relationship* with feudalism as its *social base*. And this is all there is to it.

Feudalism is the instrument of imperialism to perpetuate the poverty of the broad masses of the people. Feudalism is the instrument of imperialism to subjugate the most numerous class which is the peasantry. Feudalism is the instrument of imperialism to manipulate local backwardness for the purpose of having cheap labor and cheap raw materials from the country. Hence, feudalism is the social base of imperialism.

And according to Sison, *“if landlord power were to be overthrown in the countryside, US imperialism will have nothing to stand on”*. He should have said: Imperialism is nothing without feudalism – this is the meaning of feudalism as the social base of imperialism!

This is Sison’s “semifeudalism”, a flimsy subterfuge of feudalism. Scratch the surface of this “semifeudalism” just a little bit and you will find hidden this hideous, moribund feudal mode.

Sison is like a Narodnik – those Russian *muzhik* lovers – but inverted inside out. He wants to obliterate capitalism by ignoring it.

He wants to reach socialism other than through capitalism and reach it by using the peasantry as its revolutionary vehicle.

Here is a Communist who does not want to talk about capitalism, who is not interested in capitalist developments, who will indict anything and everything for the people's miseries except the capitalist system as if it is not the very root, in the final analysis, of all the sufferings of all toiling people in present-day society.

He makes a lot of noise about the working class as the revolutionary leader of the Philippine revolution but is tongue-tied about capitalism – the social system that creates and tempers the proletariat and the material and spiritual conditions for the leading role of the proletariat in the revolution.

It's as if his entire schema for a "people's revolution" will collapse once he brings into the forefront and emphasizes more strongly the capitalist developments in society. In *PSR*, capitalist developments in the socio-economic evolution of Philippine society were completely ignored, evaded, obscured and distorted as if his "semicolonial and semifeudal" characterization will be undermined, annulled and negated once he acknowledge the basic bourgeois economic process underlying the peculiar features of Philippine society.

For Sison, these are not objective realities worth his attention. What is real for him is the imperialist *will* and *consciousness* to *encourage* and *retain* feudalism in the Philippines as its "social base". For Sison, this is how a mode of production is "*determined*" – not by the internal laws inherent to its development but by the imperial will and mandate of a foreign power standing over and above society.

We cannot even praise Sison for this "excessive" anti-imperialism for it does not even hit the *class essence* of imperialism – its capitalist nature. Sison's anti-imperialism is basically bourgeois-democratic patriotism and nationalism, driven by self-determinism and the desire for political democracy.

What are these capitalist developments, these objective bourgeois economic processes which Sison failed to analyze and interrelate in their totality but which are vital and decisive in defining the mode of production evolving and prevailing in Philippine society?

First, the growing social division of labor and the commodity production which it engenders and has become generalized in Philippine society even in 1968. Second, the growth of the urban population at the expense of the rural and its necessary connection with commodity production and the development of capitalism. Third, the ruin of the peasantry, its differentiation as a class, the increasing proletarianization of the working people, and their necessary connection with the growth of commodity economy. Fourth, the landlords' transition from feudal to capitalist economy as a result of commodity production and on the basis of the development and predominance of wage-slavery in the entire economy.

In discussing these basic economic laws in the development of capitalism, we will concentrate our critique on theoretical political economy since an empirical presentation and analysis will require an entire book given the welter of data and statistics now available. However, we will attach the most basic data and statistics, that by themselves can indict Sison's erroneous analysis of the socio-economic evolution of Philippine society.

But before we proceed with the discussion of these points, it should be asked: Why the prevalence of the "anticapitalist" analysis among Party comrades? There are many reasons, paramount of which is the low theoretical level of the Party, specially on the basic or "classic" theoretical propositions of Marx, Engels and Lenin. But there is one very irritating "standard" and "common sense" argument supporting this "anticapitalist" analysis of society that contains not an iota of Marxism, betraying a complete ignorance of Marxism.

The argument runs like this: *"The share of the industrial proletariat in the population is very small, while the great majority are peasants, so how can the prevailing mode of production in the Philippines be considered capitalist? How can this be capitalism when it is very*

slow in increasing the number of factory workers, its number very low in proportion to the entire population?"

In 1894, the factory workers in Russia were only about 1% of the entire population. Yet Lenin declared the *"indisputable domination and development of capitalism in all branches of national labor"* in Russia! But here in the Philippines, what Sison considers the Filipino industrial proletariat include, in 1968, about 15% of the total manpower in the country or 1.8-2 million out of a population of 37 million.

Even in England and Wales in 1861, according to Lenin (based on Marx's figures in *Capital*), there were only 1.6 million employed in the main branches of factory industry, a mere 8% of a population of 20 million. And there were 1.2 million servants – representing a dead loss of "national labor" – whose number was growing more rapidly than the number of factory workers! Yet this country was the most advanced capitalist country at that time!!

Lenin criticizes those who reduce the working class to factory workers. *"This is repeating (and even aggravating)"*, according to Lenin, *"the error of the Russian petty-bourgeois economists who make large-scale machine industry the very beginning of capitalism. Are not the millions of Russian handicraftsmen who work for merchants, with the latter's material and for ordinary wages, engaged in capitalist production? Do the regular farm laborers and day laborers in agriculture not receive wages from their employers, and do they not surrender surplus-value to them? Are not the workers in the building industry (which has rapidly developed in our country since the Reform) subjected to capitalist exploitation? And so on."*

In *PSR*, Sison classifies the farm workers (mainly in large sugar, coconut, fiber-growing, citrus, pineapple, banana and vegetable farms) as part of the proletariat although he makes a qualification: they are referred to as part of the proletariat only *"secondarily"* and the industrial proletariat as *"principally"*.

And since they are referred to only as part of the proletariat “*secondarily*”, he allots only *one short paragraph* to the farm workers in his class analysis and does not even bother to compute their numbers and add them to the total number of the working class in the Philippines in 1968. The farm workers deserve only one short paragraph in Sison’s class analysis. But the fact is, they are the fastest growing sector of the working people, and by the 1970’s up to the present, became the biggest sector of the working population! If this was not yet apparent in 1968, Sison should have foreseen this development through a theoretical understanding of political economy.

And to further “undermine” the Filipino working class, Sison classifies those people in towns and urban areas “*who cannot be accommodated as regular wage-earners in industrial enterprises nor as regular tenants in the countryside*” as part of the semiproletariat and does not even bother to explain theoretically, from the point of view of political economy, the existence of this “semiproletariat”. He just declares that this is normal in a “semicolonial and semifeudal society! Sison is obviously committing the error of petty-bourgeois economists who make machine industry the beginning of capitalism and this developed stage of capitalism the criterion of its development.

The point is, according to Lenin: “*Why judge the ‘mission of capitalism’ by the number of factory workers, when the ‘mission’ is fulfilled by the development of capitalism and the socialization of labor in general, by the development of a proletariat in general, in relation to which the factory workers play the role only of front-rankers, the vanguard. There is of course, no doubt that the revolutionary movement of the proletariat depends on the number of these workers, on their concentration, on the degree of their development, etc.; but all these does not give us the slightest right to equate the ‘unifying significance’ of capitalism with the number of factory workers. To do so would be to narrow down Marx’s idea impossibly.*”

What is this “mission of capitalism”, this “unifying significance” of capitalism to which the question of the “number of factory workers” should not be equated? Lenin is referring to the historic role of capitalism in the socialization of labor and concentration of the means of production, and according to him, *“these criteria have nothing in common with the ‘number of factory workers’.”*

According to Lenin: *“The socialization of labor by capitalist production does not at all consist in people working under one roof (that is only a small part of the process), but in the concentration of capital being accompanied by the specialization of social labor, by a decrease in the number of capitalists in each given branch of industry and an increase in the number of separate branches of industry – in many separate production processes being merged into one social production process.”*

Lenin made a concrete illustration of this socialization of labor: *“When in the days of handicraft weaving, for example, the small producers themselves spun the yarn and made it into cloth, we had a few branches of industry (spinning and weaving were merged). But when production becomes socialized by capitalism, the number of separate branches of industry increases: cotton spinning is done separately and so is weaving; this very division and the concentration of production give rise to new branches – machine building, coal mining, and so forth. In each branch of industry, which has now become more specialized, the number of capitalists steadily decreases. This means that the social tie between the producers becomes increasingly stronger, the producers become welded into a single whole.”*

According to Lenin, the socialization of labor by capitalism is manifested in the following processes: (1) The growth of commodity production destroys the scattered condition of small economic units characteristic of natural economy and draws together the small local markets into an enormous market. (2) Capitalism replaces the former scattered production by an unprecedented concentration both in agriculture and industry. (3) Capitalism eliminates the forms of

personal dependence that constituted an inalienable component of preceding systems of economy. (4) Capitalism necessarily creates mobility of the population, something not required by previous systems of social economy and impossible under them on a large scale. (5) Capitalism constantly reduces the proportion of its population engaged in agriculture and increases the number of large industrial centers. (6) Capitalist society increases the population's need for association, for organizations, and lend these organizations a character distinct from those of former times. (7) All the above-mentioned changes effected in the old economic system by capitalism inevitably lead to a change in the mentality of the population.

This socialization of labor and concentration of the means of production are the historic roles of capitalism, the hallmarks of capitalism. This is capitalism. The beginning of this economic process is the beginning of capitalism. From here, we start with our first point – the growing social division of labor and the commodity economy which it engenders and which has become generalized in Philippine society even in 1968.

Sison accepts the obvious reality that self-sufficient natural economy has long been eroded and dissolved in Philippine society and has been replaced by commodity economy. Commodity economy has gained complete sway and prevalence in our society and theoretical political economy teaches that it can only do so under a capitalist mode of production.

Sison speaks of the predominance of commodity economy but is silent on the growing social division of labor in Philippine society. Can one speak of a generalized commodity economy without a generalized social division of labor? Only people like Sison can gloss over the social division of labor, belittle its significance, and in fact, completely evade and ignore this question as if it does not exist or is irrelevant to the subject at hand. Yet he talks of a commodity economy replacing natural economy. Either he simply does not

understand what he is talking about, what this commodity economy means or he is deliberately deceiving his readers.

In *PSR*, he attributes the “*erosion and dissolution of natural economy in favor of commodity economy*” to the “*intertwining of foreign monopoly capitalism and domestic feudalism*”. See, he does not know what he is talking about!

This “intertwining” is a “new” theory for commodity economy, a “new” explanation for the emergence and predominance of commodity economy, explaining it not on the basis of the growth and deepening of the social division of labor.

But we have already revealed earlier that what Sison refers to *directly* as commodity economy is not the economic system of production *itself* but simply the actual planting of bananas, etc., i.e., export crops! And this is simply embarrassing !! This “intertwining” is nothing but the persistence of the old feudal mode “side by side” with the planting of bananas, etc.! This is how Sison “explains” commodity economy by his “intertwining” theory – the elaborate weaving of absurdities designed to bewilder his unknowing readers.

The basis of commodity economy, “*the very foundation of all commodity economy*”, according to Lenin, is the social division of labor and commodity economy cannot be explained other than through the social division of labor. There can be no generalized commodity production without a generalized social division of labor. And a generalized social division of labor can never materialize in a feudal mode of production and can only be accomplished in a capitalist system of economy for this is the distinct character and role of capitalism, its historic mission – the socialization of labor. This, actually, is self-explanatory, if we know our historical materialism.

Simple commodity production has long existed in society even during the last stages of primitive society – and its basis and corollary, ever since, is the simple division of labor. Simple commodity production which evolved into a generalized commodity production, into a commodity-producing system of economy

presupposes a generalized social division of labor, a socialization of labor whose absolute form is capitalist production.

This is how Lenin explained the social division of labor as the basis of commodity economy: *“Manufacturing industry separates from the raw materials industry, and each of these subdivides into small varieties and subvarieties which produce specific products as commodities, and exchange them for the products of all the others. Thus the development of commodity economy leads to an increase in the number of separate and independent branches of industry; the tendency of this development is to transform into a special branch of industry the making of a product – and not only the making of a product, but even the separate operations of preparing the product for consumption.”*

Is this not how Philippine society operates today, and even in 1968? An integrated commodity economy developing with the growth and deepening of the social division of labor. Can one imagine a commodity economy emerging and predominating not on the basis of such a mode of production characterized by a deepening social division of labor?

And according to Lenin: *“It goes without saying that the above-mentioned separation of the manufacturing from the raw materials industry, of manufacture from agriculture, transform agriculture itself to an industry, into a commodity-producing branch of economy. The process of specialization that separates from each other the diverse varieties of the manufacture of products, creating an ever-growing number of branches of industry, also manifests itself in agriculture, creating specialized agricultural districts (and systems of farming) and giving rise to exchange not only between the products of agriculture and industry but also between the various products of agriculture.”*

Philippine agriculture, even in 1968, started to become, and today has totally become, a commodity-producing branch of the economy, a distinct industry, a highly commercialized, commodity-producing industry integrated with the total economy. The peasant produces

not for himself but for the market and has become totally dependent on the market. The industrial centers provide the means of production and the means of consumption of the agricultural sector while the latter provides the raw materials needed by industry and the agricultural consumable products needed by the towns and urban areas.

The rice farmers produce primarily and almost exclusively for the market, and even buy the grain their family consumes from the market. In Central Luzon and other densely-populated and highly-commercialized provinces, even the firewood that the peasants need must be procured from the market. Even the vegetables farmers grow have become so very specialized that their other vegetable requirements needed for subsistence they must now be bought from the market.

Before the advent of commodity economy, the saying "*Every man for himself, and God for all*" was justified. But under the regime of commodity economy, "*every man for himself*" is quite inapplicable. According to Lenin: "*Here each works for all and all for each (and no room is left for God – either as a supermundane fantasy or a mundane 'golden calf').*"

How can Sison close his eyes and ignore this social division of labor that explains the emergence and dominance of commodity economy, and in its place, invent his "intertwining" theory to explain the dissolution of natural economy in favor of commodity economy?

Because, like an ostrich, he prefers to bury his head in his "semicolonial and semifeudal" sand rather than face the social facts that point to the inevitable capitalist development and transformation of Philippine society on the basis of this social division of labor and its corollary, commodity production. His "semifeudal" fetish has completely alienated him from social reality.

The development of the social division of labor and the supremacy of commodity economy in the entire society inevitably leads to our

second point – the growth of the urban, industrial population at the expense of the rural, agricultural population.

The past three decades saw the continuous separation of an ever-growing part of the population from agriculture. This is a law governing all developing commodity economies, and more so, capitalist economies in which, according to Lenin, *“the industrial (i.e., non-agricultural) population grows faster than the agricultural and diverts an ever-growing part of the population from agriculture to manufacturing industry.”* Today, more than 40% of the entire population reside in the urban areas, and this does not include those in what the government classifies as “economic zones”.

If in 1968, this phenomenon was not yet apparent, Sison should have anticipated this development on the basis of theoretical political economy, specifically, the law of motion of commodity economy.

What is the economic explanation and implication of this migration from the countryside to the cities? Can Sison’s feudalism as a mode of production explain such a phenomenon? Under a feudal set-up, this could never occur, not only because of feudal bondage, i.e., the tiller tied to the land, but because there is no compelling economic, material condition for an ever-increasing part of the agricultural population to migrate to the towns and cities in a situation of undeveloped commodity production.

Only the growing impoverishment of the peasantry and their separation from the means of production due to the growth of commodity economy would create the compelling economic, material conditions for their movement from the countryside to the cities. And this could only mean the break-up of feudal natural economy as a mode of production and the emergence of a capitalist commodity economy gaining complete sway and universal prevalence though hampered and aggravated by feudal vestiges and imperialist dictations.

This is how Marx explained this phenomenon: *“It is in the nature of capitalist production to continually reduce the agricultural population*

as compared with the non-agricultural, because in industry (in the strict sense) the increase of constant capital at the expense of variable capital goes hand in hand with an absolute increase in variable capital despite its relative decrease; on the other hand, in agriculture the variable capital required for the exploitation of a certain plot of land decreases absolutely; it can thus only increase to the extent that new land is taken into cultivation, but this again requires as a prerequisite a still greater growth of the non-agricultural population.”

The ever-growing increase in the commercial and industrial population at the expense of the agricultural population is inconceivable under a feudal mode of production, and conceivable only under a capitalist economic system. According to Lenin: *“the formation of industrial centers, their numerical growth, and the attraction of the population by them cannot but exert a most profound influence on the whole rural system, and cannot but give rise to a growth of commercial and capitalist agriculture.”* And just like a Narodnik, Sison overlooks this development as a mere trifle – this diversion of the population from agriculture to industry, and the influence exerted by this fact on agriculture.

The most decisive and most “devastating” impact in agriculture of this growth, the deepening of the social division of labor, of this prevalence of commodity economy, and the formation and numerical growth of industrial and commercial centers is the ruin of the small producers in the countryside – the peasantry. We now proceed to our third point: the differentiation of the peasantry as a class and the growing proletarianization of the working people in the countryside.

In Sison’s class analysis, he differentiates the peasantry into rich, middle and poor peasants, and even includes them in the basic categories of rural bourgeoisie, rural petty bourgeoisie and semi-proletariat, respectively. But he does not explain the socio-economic phenomenon of the differentiation of the peasantry, its inherent connection with the socio-economic evolution of society, and its

significance and direction of development in the transition and transformation of the mode of production.

He completely obscures and evades a socio-economic explanation of this phenomenon either because he simply does not understand theoretical political economy or is afraid where this socio-economic analysis will lead to on the basis of theoretical political economy and its implication on his “semifeudal” fetish and preconceived notion.

The socio-economic situation in which the Filipino peasantry find themselves is that of commodity economy and Sison is aware of this reality. Put simply, the Filipino peasant is completely subordinated to the market, on which he is dependent as regards both his personal consumption and his farming.

Inherent in every commodity economy are all those contradictions that are now manifesting in the socio-economic relations among the peasantry: competition, the struggle for economic independence, the purchase and renting of land, the concentration of production in the hands of a minority, the forcing of the majority into the ranks of the proletariat, their exploitation by a minority through the medium of merchant’s capital and the hiring of farm laborers, the technical progress of farming. (Refer to attached data.)

According to Lenin: *“There is not a single economic phenomenon among the peasantry that does not bear this contradictory form, one specifically peculiar to the capitalist system, i.e., that does not express a struggle and antagonism of interests, that does not imply advantage for some and disadvantage for others. It is the case with the renting of land, the purchase of land, and with ‘industries’ in their diametrically opposite types; it is also the case with the technical progress of farming.”*

What is the relevance of all these contradictions with the subject at hand – the differentiation of the peasantry? According to Lenin: *“The sum-total of all the economic contradictions among the peasantry constitutes what we call the differentiation of the peasantry. The*

peasants themselves very aptly and strikingly characterize this process with the term 'depeasantising'. This process signifies the utter dissolution of the old, patriarchal peasantry and the creation of new types of rural inhabitants."

Who are these *new types* of rural inhabitants?

They are the rural bourgeoisie, the rural petty bourgeoisie, the proletarians and semiproletarians whom we commonly call the rich peasants, the middle peasants, the poor peasants and the farm workers.

They are social forces no longer belonging to the old feudal mode and epoch but existing and operating under a new mode of production. But a new mode of production that has not completely freed itself from the vestiges of the old feudal *forms* and, instead, has been entrapped in a world imperialist system hampering, distorting and weighing down its growth.

The problem with Sison is that he copied Mao's equating the rich peasants with the "rural bourgeoisie", etc., but he did not understand its socio-economic basis and implications. He did not deal with this question as the historical disintegration of the peasantry as a class but as "simple differentiation", not its split and break-up as a class as both a basis and a consequence of a developing new mode of production but simply as the emergence of "property inequality" but still under the old mode of feudal production.

According to Lenin: *"Undoubtedly, the emergence of property inequality is the starting point of the whole process, but the process is not at all confined to property 'differentiation'. The old peasantry is not only 'differentiating', it is being completely dissolved, it is ceasing to exist, it is being ousted by absolutely new types of rural inhabitants – types that are the basis of a society in which commodity economy and capitalist production prevail. These types are the rural bourgeoisie (chiefly petty bourgeoisie) and the rural proletariat – a class of commodity producers in agriculture and a class of agricultural wage-workers."*

This differentiation and disintegration of the peasantry is an important factor in the process of the formation of agricultural capitalism and this can be affirmed even by a purely theoretical analysis of this process as Marx did, according to Lenin, in Vol. III of *Capital*, chapter 47 (*“Genesis of Capitalist Ground Rent”*).

According to Lenin: *“The differentiation of the peasantry, which develops the latter’s extreme groups at the expense of the middle ‘peasantry,’ creates two new types of rural inhabitants. The feature common to both types is the commodity, money character of their economy. The first new type is the rural bourgeoisie or the well-to-do peasantry. These include the independent farmers who carry on commercial agriculture in all its varied forms..., then comes the owners of commercial and industrial establishments, the proprietors of commercial enterprises, etc. ... The other new type is the rural proletariat, the class of allotment-holding wage-workers. This covers the poor peasants, including those that are completely landless; but the most typical representative of the Russian rural proletariat is the allotment-holding farm laborer, day laborer, unskilled laborer, building worker or other allotment-holding worker.”*

The path of capitalist development in Philippine agriculture, indeed, is the old, beaten road described by Lenin in 1897. The polar differentiation of the Filipino peasantry is proceeding as described by Lenin but with a peculiar difference. The rural bourgeoisie cannot seem to take-off from the simple reproduction of capital or are stuck at its quantitative development. Many of them cannot decisively leap into the actual accumulation of capital, with not a few going bankrupt.

This is due not only to the vestiges of feudalism in the countryside but also to monopoly capitalism which stunts the growth of national capitalism in the Philippines. But the failure of the rural bourgeoisie to decisively accumulate capital in a continuing way does not mean that they are still within the bounds of a feudal mode or a pre-capitalist stage of development just as it is ridiculous to conclude that the Philippines is still pre-capitalist or non-capitalist, basically

feudal in mode, because it cannot reach the more advanced stage of capitalism — its national industrialization.

When Lenin declared Russian society as basically capitalist in 1897, Russian capitalism was still at the stage of capitalist manufacture and its factory system, its large-scale machine industry was still at its rudimentary stage. Philippine capitalism of 1968 was much more developed than Russian capitalism of 1897.

The important point is, from among the rich peasants, a class of capitalist farmers has been created, since the renting or buying of land for commercial purposes plays a significant part of the rich-peasant economy. The size of a rich peasant's farm and the technology that it requires, in the majority of cases, need a labor force outside of his household. Thus, a necessary condition for the existence of the rich peasant, is the emergence of farm laborers and part-time workers from the poor peasants. According to Lenin, *"the spare cash obtained by these peasants in the shape of net income is either directed towards commercial operations and usury, which are so excessively developed in our rural districts, or under favorable conditions, is invested in the purchase of land, farm improvements, etc."* Is this not how the Filipino rural bourgeoisie operate?

In 1968, according to Sison, the rich peasants comprise only 5% of the rural population, a very small minority of the peasantry. But according to Lenin, *"but as to their weight in the sum-total of peasant farming, in the total quantity of the means of production belonging to the peasantry, in the total amount of produce raised by the peasantry, the peasant bourgeoisie are undoubtedly predominant."* Speaking only in terms of the internal system of economic relationships among the peasantry, the rural bourgeoisie are "the masters of contemporary countryside." (See attached data)

Regarding the poor peasants, this is how Lenin described their condition: *"Insignificant farming on a patch of land, with the farm in a state of ruin (particularly evidenced by the leasing out of land), inability to exist without the sale of labor power (= 'industries' of the indigent peasants), an extremely low standard of living (probably*

lower than that of the worker without an allotment) – such are the distinguishing feature of this type.” We should add, as in our case in the Philippines. (See attached data)

The most significant point is why Lenin advanced the theoretical proposition that this considerable proportion of the peasantry, the majority of the peasantry, already properly belongs to the rural proletariat. According to Lenin: *“It should be added that our literature frequently contains too stereotyped an understanding of the theoretical proposition that capitalism requires the free, landless worker. This proposition is quite correct as indicating the main trend, but capitalism penetrates into agriculture particularly slowly and in extremely varied forms. The allotment of land to the rural worker is very often to the interests of the rural employers themselves, and that is why the allotment holding rural worker is a type to be found in all capitalist countries. This type assumes different forms in different countries... Each of these bears traces of an specific agrarian system, of a specific history of agrarian relations – but this does not prevent the economist from classifying them all as one type of agricultural proletarian.”*

And Lenin continued: *“Whether the land is his full property (as a small-holding peasant) or whether he is only allowed to use it by the landlord... makes no difference at all. In assigning the indigent peasants to the rural proletariat, we are saying nothing new... the mass of the ‘peasantry’ have already taken a quite definite place in the general system of capitalist production, namely, as agricultural and industrial wage-workers.”*

The middle peasants are what Lenin calls the “intermediary link” between the new types of “peasantry,” between the new types of “rural inhabitants” – the rural bourgeoisie and the rural proletariat. They are the ones being left behind by the advance of commodity production, *“they are distinguished”*, according to Lenin, *“by the least development of commodity production”*. They are economically incapable of taking advantage of the new form of production – wage

labor – while at the same time, they do everything economically possible to avert their falling completely into wage-labor.

According to Lenin: *“In its social relation this group fluctuates between the top group, towards which it gravitates but which only a small minority of lucky ones succeed in entering, and the bottom group, into which it is pushed by the whole course of social evolution. We have seen that the peasant bourgeoisie oust not only the bottom group, but also the middle group, of the peasantry. Thus a process specifically characteristic of capitalist economy takes place, the middle members are swept away and the extremes are reinforced –the process of ‘de-peasantising’”.* (See attached data)

It is actually the middle peasants who are being pushed into the ranks of the rural proletariat not the poor peasants because they are already basically part of the proletariat by virtue of their status as poor “peasants”. In Lenin’s analysis, it was actually the peasants in medium circumstances, i.e., the middle peasants, who are leaving the areas of emigration and mainly the extreme groups who are remaining at home.

A study of the class origin of our factory workers should be made to verify whether it is true in the Philippines. But among the “semiproletarian” elements in the urban slum areas, it is observable that many came from the poor “peasants” or farm workers.

If capitalist commodity economy on the basis of generalized social division of labor intensifies the differentiation of the peasantry, what are the factors that retard this process? One factor is the independent development of merchant’s and usurer’s capital. Another is the persistence of the survivals of feudalism.

The independent development of merchant and usurer capital means that it is not being transformed into industrial capital, meaning, this capital is being used only for trade and usury and not used as capital invested in production, whether agricultural or industrial. But it is a fact that in the countryside capital is invested by the rich peasants in farm production. They put their money in the

improvement of their farm, into purchase and renting of land, in the acquisition of modern implements and farm inputs, the hiring of workers, etc. But it is also true, that there are many factors in the economic situation of the country, and particularly of agriculture, that deter them from doing so.

However, if indeed, merchant and usurer capital is not being transformed into industrial capital, into capital for production, (and we refer to all aspects of the national economy) the differentiation of the peasantry will not occur in real life. The formation of a rural bourgeoisie and a rural proletariat will not prosper, and according to Lenin, *“the whole of the peasantry would represent a fairly even type of poverty-stricken cultivators, among whom only usurers would stand out, and then only to the extent of money owned and not to the extent and organization of agricultural production.”*

With regard to the vestiges of feudalism, this is a fundamental factor retarding not only the differentiation of the peasantry but also the development of capitalism in the Philippines.

Feudal remnants are still quite prevalent and pervasive in the Philippine countryside. But this is only one side of the picture. The other side is the continuous inroad of capitalism in Philippine agriculture in varied forms and scale, despite the survivals of feudalism.

From here, we proceed to our fourth point: the landlords' transition from feudal to capitalist economy as a result of commodity production and the predominance of wage-slavery in the entire economy.

Under commodity economy, landlord economy can not but evolve and adapt to changing economic laws for it to become economically viable. First of all, the growth of commodity economy conflicts with the feudal mode of landlord economy since the latter is based on unchanging technique, on inseparable ties between the landlord and the peasant.

With the intensified development of agri-business (agricultural chemicals, fertilizers, farm machineries, new varieties of crops, etc.) and with the peasant “free” to look for more viable sources of income, the landlord class can no longer rely exclusively or even primarily on “non-economic” means of appropriating the surplus labor of the peasantry.

According to Lenin, *“this system is totally impracticable in its complete form, and every advance in the development of commodity economy and commercial agriculture undermines the conditions of its practicability.”*

If we are to correctly understand the persistence of landlord economy, whatever its form, we have to analyze it through the economic background on which it operates. And if we are to assume that capitalism is the dominant mode of production in Philippine society, we must learn to understand the power of capital, not only its capacity to penetrate every cell of the social organism and subordinate all existing forms of socio-economic relations but also its capacity to absorb ancient forms and give them capitalist content, and thus conjure up dead spirits in the service of capitalism.

Landlord monopoly of the land persists in Philippine society. But land tenure does not by itself define a mode of production. However, since landlord monopoly of the land is an immediate manifestation of the old feudal mode, it is correct to state that its persistence is a survival of old feudal forms of property relations.

The more basic question, however, is how the landlord class appropriates the surplus product of the peasant as the owner of the means of production. Landlord appropriation can be classified into two basic forms: through land rent and through wage-labor.

It is indisputable that the former is on the decline while the latter continues to grow in scope. Today, tenants rank only third among the rural population in terms of numbers. The biggest are the landless rural poor who subsist by selling labor-power. Second are the owner-cultivators.

Even in the grain sector, the bastion of feudal tenancy, and according to Lenin, “the last and the slowest to be drawn into commodity circulation” – big landlord ownership has been effectively undermined, throughout the years, by land reform measures of the reactionary government. (See attached data)

If land rent is the immediate manifestation of feudal agriculture, the employment of hired labor is the principal manifestation of agricultural capitalism. Today, the “chief occupation” of the biggest sector of our agricultural population is that of wage-labor for rich peasants and landlords. And because of the technological improvements in our agricultural economy, even tenanted lands now require a considerable degree of hired labor.

We still have to establish reliable data on how many landlords are now employing hired labor on a regular basis and what sectors of the agricultural economy are run mainly along capitalist lines. But one thing is certain: the millions and millions of agricultural laborers in the countryside will definitely starve to death if they can not find employment even on a daily basis. But the fact that they are still subsisting proves that landlords, rich peasant and merchant capital are buying-up their labor power in various ways.

However, despite the widespread emergence and development of wage-labor in agriculture, despite the growth of the social division of labor, the supremacy of capitalist commodity economy and the sharp differentiation of the peasantry – still, tenancy persists on a wide scale in the countryside.

What is the nature of this landlord-tenant relation, whatever its form, under generalized capitalist commodity production? Under a feudal mode, this landlord-tenant relation is forged and maintained by “non-economic pressure”. Under present-day Philippine society, it is determined primarily by economic factors.

Generally, peasants enter into such a relation or retain such a relation not because of feudal bondage but because of “dire economic need” as Lenin puts it. If a peasant can find a more

feasible source of income than being a tenant, there is no social force that can prevent him from doing so or compel him to remain a tenant against his will.

Likewise, a landlord is not obliged to retain such a relation with his tenant. He abrogates or preserves such a relationship for purely economic consideration. No law can actually bind a landlord to retain a tenant if he believes he can extract more value from his land by other means.

Filipino landlords are no longer like their ancestors of classic feudal times. This is now, literally, a new generation of landlords, schooled in bourgeois ways. Commodity economy has broken their feudal habits and they are now extremely bourgeoisified by their luxurious lives in the cities. In fact, aside from extracting land rent, almost all big landlords have other businesses which are generally capitalist in form. They are now astute businessmen who make decisions with a view to maximizing profit or what they perceive as good “business sense”.

Hence, if they decide to retain tenancy relations, it is not out of any sense of feudal tradition but of purely economic, bourgeois calculation. According to one progressive writer: *“What therefore appears to be feudal relations of production is actually a profit-maximizing response of landlords drawn into a distinctive type of backward capitalism that is subordinated to imperialism.”*

However, this does not mean that landlordism and tenancy are not vestiges of feudalism. They are survivals of feudalism expropriated by capital to further intensify the exploitation of the working people. According to Lenin: *“The relics of medieval, semifeudal institutions... are such an oppressive yoke upon the proletariat and the people... And he further declared: “Undoubtedly, they must definitely be abolished – and the quicker and more radically, the better – in order, by ridding bourgeois society of its inherited semifeudal fetters, to untie the hands of the working class, to facilitate the struggle against the bourgeoisie.”*

In studying the development of capitalism, the greatest importance should be attached to the extent to which wage-labor is employed by a given society. For capitalism is that stage of development of commodity production in which labor-power itself has become a commodity. All those macro-micro twaddle of assorted armchair political economists of the Left cannot obscure the fact that this is the touchstone of capitalist development. For a Party engaged in revolution, what is needed is not a textbook analysis of society for the consumption of intellectuals engaged in incessant academic debates but to bring into the forefront and emphasize more strongly the material and spiritual conditions for the class struggle of the proletariat.

From the ranks of the country's toiling people producing the materials values of society, arise the multitude of sellers of labor-power, their number increasing on a daily basis. They now constitute more than one half of the total manpower of Philippine society, they are the biggest working sector in both town and country, and their wage-labor accounts for the biggest portion of the total material values produced in society. They include the farm workers – the plantation workers in large-scale agricultural production, the landless day-laborers moving from one farm to another selling their labor-power, and the land-renting or land-amortizing poor peasants who now rely mainly or significantly on the sale of their labor-power. In the urban areas, they include not only the factory workers but those we simply classify as “semiproletarians” – the day-laborers of the cities, those that have no regular jobs but in the main subsist by selling their labor-power in various forms to owners of the means of production and subsistence, the growing number of sub-contracting “work force” of capital engaged in home industries. (See attached data)

It is important to note the significance of Lenin's conclusion regarding the relative surplus-population or the huge reserve army of unemployed which Sison ascribes to the deliberate design of “imperialist-feudal intertwining” rather than to the objective laws of development of capitalism.

Lenin's opponents tried to ignore capitalist growth in Russia by pointing out the negligible number of "factory workers" in relation to the multitude of unemployed both in town and country.

According to Lenin: *"By means of paltry phrases and curious calculations as to the number of 'factory workers', they have transformed one of the basic conditions for the development of capitalism into proof that capitalism is impossible, is an error, is devoid of foundation, etc. Actually, however, Russian capitalism could never have developed to its present level, could not have survived a single year, had the expropriation of the small producers not created an army of many millions of wage workers ready at the first call to satisfy the maximum demand of the employers in agriculture, lumbering, building, commerce and in the manufacturing, mining, and transport industries, etc."*

Is this not what Sison did – he used as proof of the non-capitalist character of Philippine society the existence of a relative "surplus-population" and huge "army of unemployed" to bolster his claim that its mode of existence is basically feudal under the auspices of imperialism?

What is this "maximum demand" referred to by Lenin? According to him: *"We say the maximum demand, because capitalism can only develop spasmodically, and consequently, the number of producers who need to sell their labor-power must always exceed capitalism's average demand for workers. We have now estimated the total number of the various categories of wage workers*, but in doing so do not wish to say that capitalism is in a position to give regular employment to them all. There is not, nor can there be, such regularity of employment in capitalist society, whichever category of wage-worker we take."*

Because he was fixated in the specific forms of wage labor, Sison failed to identify the real class nature and the actual position in the social system of production of the multitude of working people he simply classified as "semiproletarians", including the huge army of unemployed, devoid of its historical and class meaning.

According to Lenin: *“As for the forms of wage-labor, they are extremely diverse in a capitalist society still everywhere enmeshed in survivals and institutions of the precapitalist regime. It is a profound error to ignore this diversity of forms, and that is the error of those who, like Mr. V.V., argue that capitalism has ‘fenced-off a corner for itself with some one to one-half million workers and never emerges from it’”*.

Is this not how Sison arbitrarily and artificially “fenced-off” the less than two million Filipino industrial proletariat into a few small, urban corners of the country surrounded by a feudal countryside and are “supposedly in no way connected with the remaining spheres of wage-labor”?

For Lenin, it was sufficient to mention two basic features of developing capitalism to characterize the very close connection of this “fenced off” small corner of the industrial proletariat with the remaining spheres of wage labor.

First, this system is based on money economy. The “power of money” manifests itself in full force in both industry and agriculture, in both town and country. But this money economy reaches its full development, completely eliminates the remnants of feudalism, becomes concentrated in a few giant banks, and is directly connected with large-scale social production only in the sphere of large-scale machine industry.

Second, this economy is based on the sale and purchase of labor-power. Among the small producers both in agriculture and industry, those who do not hire themselves out, or themselves hire others, are the exception. But again, these relationships reach full development and become completely separated from previous forms of economy only in large-scale machine industries.

“Hence”, says Lenin, “the ‘corner’ which seems so small to some Narodnik actually embodies the quintessence of modern social relationships, and the population in this ‘corner’, i.e., the proletariat,

is, in the literal sense of the word, the vanguard of the whole mass of toilers and exploited."

"Therefore," according to Lenin, "only by examining the whole of the present economic system from the angle of the relationship that have grown up in this 'corner' can one become clear about the main relations between the various groups of persons taking part in production, and consequently, trace the system's main trend of development. On the other hand, whoever turns his back on this 'corner' and examines economic phenomena from the angle of petty patriarchal production, is turned by the march of history into either an innocent dreamer or an ideologist of the petty bourgeoisie and the agrarians." This is the correct meaning and application of Marxist political economy in analyzing present-day Philippine society.

Lenin seems very familiar with people like Sison, for in this statement, he seems to be referring exactly to Sison's approach in analyzing Philippine society. Sison never examined "the whole of the present economic system" of the country "from the angle" of the relationships that have grown up in our small "proletarian urban corners" but actually "turned his back" on this "corner" and examined economic phenomena from the angle of the feudal mode of production which he reduced to landlordism and tenancy and from the angle of the imperialist domination of the country. Instead of studying Philippine society from "the cities to the countryside", he began with the "countryside" and just "encircled the cities".

We have discussed how Sison analyzed Philippine society from his "feudal" mode of thinking. Let us now proceed to Sison's conception of imperialism. Never should we underestimate imperialism and the system it represents as the main and real enemy of the Filipino proletariat and the broad masses of our people, as the basic cause of their miseries and sufferings in society. But neither should we attribute to it powers that contradict established practices of the historical materialist method and theoretical political economy.

It is not imperialism that precisely determines the Philippine mode of production, however it is indeed imperialism that determines its

mode of development – or to be exact, its underdevelopment, its semicolonial and semifeudal underdevelopment, its semicolonial and semifeudal peculiar features.

The preconditions for capitalist development in Philippine society have long been established in its socio-economic evolution even during the latter stages of Spanish colonialism. If this was not the case, how come there was a Philippine revolution in 1896 which was bourgeois democratic in nature? It was a defeated, uncompleted revolution due primarily to US imperialism.

Nevertheless, the country cannot but continue to evolve because the new productive forces and the relations of productions are already embedded in society. Political revolutions do not by themselves create new social relations. It is the growth of these new social relations embodied in the character of its productive forces conflicting with the old mode of production that gives rise to revolutions.

The basic bourgeois, capitalist economic process has emerged and has gained ascendancy in almost a century of socio-economic evolution since the unfinished revolution of 1896. But capitalism in the Philippines remains extremely undeveloped, backward, deformed, stagnant, etc. We do not have any illusions that if it develops, advances and gets rid of its deformities and stagnancy, the sufferings of the proletariat and the toiling masses will be solved.

But it is precisely because of its backwardness, underdevelopment, deformities, stagnancy, incompleteness, that these sufferings are aggravated and prolonged, and the real nature of capitalism muddled and deflected, obscured and concealed from the proletariat and from the semiproletarian and petty bourgeois elements of society who entertain illusions of prosperity other than through socialism.

Imperialist domination not only in the country but in the entire world economy, and the persistence of feudal survivals not only in the economic but in the political life of society are the causes of this

underdevelopment. It is in this sense – and only in this sense – that the “semicolonial and semifeudal” status of the Philippines should be understood. Imperialist domination in the country and the persistence of feudal survivals in society are the impediments to social and bourgeois progress and the development of the class struggle in the Philippines towards socialism.

After bringing into the forefront and emphasizing more strongly the bourgeois, capitalist basic economic process in the socio-economic evolution of Philippine society, does it mean that the necessity for a people’s democratic revolution is henceforth undermined, bypassed and sublimated, and a socialist revolution proposed as the immediate historical task? Nothing of this sort. Lenin analyzed Russian society as basically capitalist in its mode of production. But did he push into the forefront and emphasize more strongly that the immediate political task is a socialist revolution? Never. It was Lenin, based on his analysis of Russian society and application of the fundamental theories of Marxism, who insisted that the immediate task of the proletariat is the completion of the bourgeois revolution, and who first formulated a democratic revolution of a new type, a democratic revolution with the proletariat assuming the leading role.

What then is the significance of a correct analysis of Philippine society? It is not only a question of consistency in theory but a question of correct tactics. We will come to this when we discuss the “war revolution” strategy of Sison. Suffice it to say, up to this point, that this dogmatic and absolute fixation on his “semicolonial and semifeudal” analysis is but an alibi of Sison to justify his protracted war strategy of revolution.

PPDR: Class Line vs. Mass Line, 1994

Works of Lagman

**Metro Manila Rizal Regional Committee
Communist Party of the Philippines
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The Program for a People's Democratic Revolution drafted by Sison in 1968 is the best proof of his abandonment or ignorance of the most basic principles of Marxism-Leninism – the class struggle and scientific socialism.

In the Party program, he substituted the Maoist “mass line” for the Marxist-Leninist “class line”. He completely obscured and glossed over the struggle for socialism in his obsession for national democracy. Sison's failure to grasp the Marxist-Leninist class struggle and his fanatical adherence to Maoism which distorts this theory explain his vulgarized concept of revolution.

The essential defect of PPDR is its basic character which makes it totally unacceptable as a class program of the Party of the class-conscious Filipino proletariat. It does not even pretend to be a class program but proclaims itself to be a “people's program.”

It is a Party Program without the struggle for socialism and without a separate section on workers' demands in the period of the democratic revolution. It characterized Philippine society as “semicolonial and semifeudal” without bringing into the foreground and emphasizing more strongly its bourgeois, capitalist basic process. It failed to present the real meaning and substance of proletarian class leadership in the democratic revolution. It elaborated a vulgarized, totally non-Marxist, non-Leninist concept of

a people's revolution that departs fundamentally from the theory of class struggle. And lastly, it presented a peasant not a proletarian stand on the agrarian question and a patriotic not a proletarian stand on the colonial question.

A Party Program Without The Class Struggle For Socialism And a Section On Working-Class Demands

What is a Party program?

It must principally be a statement and a formulation of the most basic views of the party of the proletariat, which serves as a fundamental premise of all the remaining parts of the program — its political and practical tasks, including its minimum program.

What should be the essence of the program of a proletarian revolutionary party?

It can not have any other essence but to organize the class struggle of the proletariat and to lead this struggle, the ultimate aim of which is the conquest of political power by the proletariat and the establishment of a socialist society. This class struggle of the proletariat, this emancipation of the workers must be the act of the working class itself.

Hence, the need for an independent class party of the proletariat, the need for an independent class program of the proletariat. It should become "the bone of our bone, the flesh of our flesh", in the continuing revolution from the democratic to the socialist stage of the working class movement.

In the introductory part, in what should be its theoretical section, what statement or formulation of the most basic views of the Party of the class-conscious proletariat did Sison's PPDR make?

Nothing! No indictment of capitalism. No proclamation of the proletariat as the only revolutionary class. No statement of the class struggle of the proletariat, its struggle for class emancipation. And

worst, it forgot to draft the socialist maximum program as a basis of its minimum democratic program. And to add insult to injury, it even forgot to draft a separate section of working class demands in its democratic program!

The entire introductory section of PPDR (I. The Basic Condition of the Philippines Today) is but a statement, or an exposition, of Sison's "national democratic" views (though, he calls it, "of a new type"!). The Party program, to say the least, is filled with "superfluous verbosity". It talks of everything but says nothing about what it should be saying in a program of the proletariat: the basic class views and platform of the proletariat in the continuing revolution from the democratic to the socialist stage.

By its very title , this is not a Party program for the Philippine revolution, but only for its first stage, the democratic stage. It even had the "maximum-minimum" format for a program but both only for the people's democratic revolution.

But somewhere in his national democratic program Sison says: "The immediate general programme of the Filipino people and the CPP is a people's democratic revolution and the long-term maximum programme is socialism."

It is crystal-clear! Sison admits: This PPDR is not a class program alone of the proletariat and its revolutionary class party, but the multiclass (or supraclass) program of the Filipino people. In fact, even the program for socialism is not a class program of the Filipino proletariat, but the program of the Filipino people, which means, including the petty bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie!

This is Sison's Maoist understanding of the Marxist-Leninist concept of the proletariat providing representation of the broad masses of the people, of the proletariat's class leadership of the revolution — mer-ging the proletariat's class struggle with the struggle of the entire people!

True, the character of the democratic revolution is, that it is a struggle of the “whole people”. Meaning, there is a “singleness of will” precisely in so far as this revolution meets the needs and requirements of the entire Filipino people. But “beyond the bounds of democratism” there can be no question of the proletariat and the peasant bourgeoisie or the whole people having a single will for socialism. Class struggle among them is inevitable.

In fact, even during the struggle for democracy, despite of the “singleness of will” in this people’s revolution, class differences, class conflicts and class treacheries will persist and arise among the people. Hence, the necessity for an independent class party of the proletariat and an independent class program. Hence, the temporariness and instability of this “singleness of will” and the tactics of “striking a joint blow” against imperialism and feudalism with the petty bourgeoisie and national bourgeoisie, and the duty of keeping a strict watch “over our ally, as over an enemy.”

And Sison even hastened to add: “It is dishonest, demagogic and utopian to insist that socialism is the immediate goal under conditions that the people are still dominated and exploited by US imperialism and domestic feudalism.”

But who is insisting? The point is not socialism as the immediate aim but Lenin’s warning that “we should never for a moment lose sight of our ultimate aim in the struggle to complete the democratic revolution”. And Sison not only “lost sight” of socialism, but completely forgot about it in drafting the Party program. Perhaps this is due to his eagerness and excitement to begin the people’s democratic revolution. If this is a simple case of forgetfulness, of over-excitement, this can easily be forgiven by the Filipino proletariat. The problem is, it isn’t.

What is the significance of “not losing sight” of our socialist aim? Is it not just a formal “declaration” of what we intend to achieve in the “future,” after the completion of the democratic revolution?

Indeed, in his petty understanding, this is just formalism. So it is enough for him to simply state that “our long-range program is socialism”, period. It is enough for him to just declare that ours is a democratic people’s revolution with a socialist “perspective”, and by perspective, he means the “future”. Anyway, we are still in the first stage of this “two-stage” revolution. We’ll have enough of “socialism” when we “cross the bridge” of national democracy!

But this is the Party program of the proletariat! How can it talk about the “people’s revolution” without talking first of the “workers’ revolution”? How can it talk of the proletariat joining and leading this “people’s revolution” without explaining first its connection, its relevance, its necessity to a “workers’ revolution”?

But how we intend to proceed to the socialist revolution, to the real and ultimate aim of the proletariat, Sison has nothing to say in his PPDR. For Sison, socialism is literally just a question of perspective, a question of “time and space”, a “second step” after the “first step”. Not a question of the real dimension of the democratic revolution in relation to the socialist aim of the proletariat, of the real starting point and framework of the proletariat in actively participating and taking the leading role in the democratic movement.

How does Sison intend to arouse the working class, not only to join the people’s revolution but to play a leading role, when he does not even talk about the workers’ own revolution — the socialist revolution — and all he talks about is the people’s revolution! And can the working class really understand this democratic revolution, grasp its real meaning for the working class, define its tasks without understanding it from the perspective, i.e., from the viewpoint of socialism?

Here lies the fundamental error of Sison’s presentation of the necessity for a “people’s democratic revolution”. He presented it from a national democratic viewpoint not from the socialist viewpoint, from the class struggle of the revolutionary proletariat.

The Filipino proletariat stands for a national democratic revolution, which is bourgeois in character whether it is of the old or new “type”, not precisely because the proletariat is pro-“peasant” (as a class) and pro-“people” (beyond class), not because the proletariat is a “democrat” and a “patriot” (in the bourgeois democratic sense).

We are for a national democratic revolution — and this we should teach to the Filipino working class with all clarity — because it clears the way for the free development of the class struggle of the proletariat which is directed towards the attainment of its ultimate aim. We are for an agrarian revolution, for the complete abolition of all feudal remnants because it clears the way for the free development of the class struggle in the countryside. We are for a national revolution, for self-determination because only through political democracy can we attain the free and full development of the proletariat as a class.

The national democratic revolution should be properly understood by the Party from the properly understood interest of the proletariat and social progress, and nothing more.

The essential problem with Sison’s PPDR is that what it understands and presents is a democratic revolution “with” a socialist perspective — meaning, a socialist “future”. Not a democratic revolution “from” a socialist perspective — meaning, a socialist starting point, a socialist framework, a socialist viewpoint. In short, from the class position of the revolutionary proletariat.

The basic defect of PPDR, which makes it unacceptable as Party program is the entire character of the program itself. It is a “people’s program” for a national democratic revolution, not a class program of the revolutionary proletariat in the historical era of the transition from the democratic to the socialist revolution. And Sison openly admits that it is such a program — a “people’s program”. In fact, for Sison, even the long-range maximum program for socialism is a “people’s” program! A joint popular program of the Filipino people and the CPP!

This program does not have the “class stamp” of the proletariat, it is not presented from the class point of view, from the class struggle of the proletariat. The Party program of the proletariat was presented and formulated from the national and democratic interest of the broad masses of the Filipino people. He should have written it for the National Democratic Front but not for the Communist Party of the Philippines. Very democratic, very patriotic for Sison, but very unproletarian!

PPDR: Class Line vs. Mass Line - Characterizing Philippine Society Without Its Bourgeois, Capitalist Features

What should be a cardinal point in a Party program? It should be a statement, from a consistent proletarian class viewpoint, of the basic character of the economic development of society.

To paraphrase Lenin, this should bring into the foreground and emphasize more strongly the process of economic development that is engendering the material and spiritual conditions for the socialist working-class movement, and the class struggle of the proletariat which the Party sets itself the aim of organizing.

Now, what “characterization” of the economic development of Philippine society did Sison formulate in the Party program? What “process of economic development” did he “bring into the foreground and emphasize more strongly”? What is this “process of economic development” that “engenders” the material and spiritual conditions for the class struggle of the proletariat?

This “process of economic development” is none other than capitalism. Did Sison make any “characterization” of this process in Philippine society in our Party program? No, nothing of this sort. What he characterized in the first two paragraphs of the Party program was the “semicolonial and semifeudal” basic condition — or more precisely, particular features — of the Philippines, and nothing more.

This is what he “brought into the foreground” and “emphasized more strongly” — the colonial and the agrarian questions of the Party program — not the “material and spiritual conditions” for the class struggle of the proletariat.

No small wonder, Sison forgot the socialist maximum program of the Party! No small wonder, Sison forgot even a “workers section” in the minimum program of the Party!

Imagine, a working-class program without a separate section for the workers demands in the democratic revolution. Obviously, his concern is not the “worker’s class struggle” but the peasant’s agrarian struggle and the people’s national struggle! He speaks not for the proletariat, but for the peasantry, for the Filipino people.

In fact, in the first two paragraphs of the program that characterized the present conditions of the Philippines — its semicolonial and semifeudal character — Sison did not even give particular distinction to the plight, to the impoverishment, to the struggle of the Filipino working class.

According to Sison: “These vested interests mercilessly exploit the broad masses of the people”, referring to US imperialism, the comprador bourgeoisie, the landlords and the bureaucrat capitalists. And his second paragraph: “It is US imperialism and domestic feudalism that are the main problems afflicting the whole nation and from which the masses of the people aspire to be liberated.”

The Party program, the program of the working-class party, talks about the “ruthless exploitation” of the masses of the people. But not a word about the “ruthless exploitation” of the masses of workers. It talks about the “impoverishment” of the entire country. But not a word about the “impoverishment” — the growth of “the mass of misery, oppression, slavery, degradation, exploitation” — of the working class.

Perhaps, since the workers are part of the masses of people, and they reside in the country, there is no need to make a distinction. And

in the first place, PPDR is a program not of the working class alone or even principally, but of the entire Filipino people, and mainly, of the peasantry, for this is primarily a peasant revolution.

The Party program, the program of the working-class party, writes about “US imperialism and domestic feudalism are the main problems afflicting the whole nation”. But not a word in this “proletarian program” about wage-slavery, about the “affliction”, the impoverishment of the masses of wage workers under the yoke of capital, as if capitalism is not a basic problem of the working class.

Perhaps, Sison is wary that once he indicts capitalism, it might arouse the class consciousness of the workers against capitalism and divert their attention from the “real” main problems, from the “real” main enemies. And instead of demanding a “people’s democratic revolution, the working class might demand a socialist revolution!

Where in the world can you find a Communist who, in his program, is afraid of “indicting” capitalism and wage-slavery, afraid of arousing the socialist class consciousness and socialist class struggle of the proletariat because it might divert them from the people’s revolution!!!

Where in the world can you find a Communist, who is afraid of teaching the working class its ultimate socialist aim aware of the fact that this can only be accomplished by way of a democratic revolution!!!

Where in the world can you find a Communist who is afraid of teaching the working class the evils of capitalism while at the same time clarifying that this is a “necessary” evil, that capitalism is a “halfway-house” to socialism, that capitalism creates the material and spiritual conditions for socialism!!!

Must the proletariat be so utterly unselfish, so self-sacrificing that even in what should be its class program, its Party must give first place to the interest of the nation, to the interest of the peasants, and

obscure its own class interest, its own class struggle and submerge it in the people's struggle, in the peasants' struggle?

But is this wrong? Is not our society "semicolonial and semifeudal"? Is not our revolution a national and a democratic revolution at the present stage and not a socialist revolution? What's wrong with giving emphasis to the national and agrarian questions rather than to the class struggle of the proletariat? Is this not a people's revolution, so it follows, that the interest of the people is paramount, and the interest of the proletariat is secondary or is "merged" with the interest and the struggle of the people?

Just because we are still engaged in a democratic revolution, we can forget for the time being the class struggle of the proletariat and their struggle for socialism as if they are of no consequence in the theoretical and practical questions of the "peoples revolution"? How can the proletariat preserve its independent class line and assert its class leadership in the democratic revolution if it artificially relegates the class struggle and the socialist aim to some distant future because this, anyway, is a two-stage revolution?

From the standpoint of the basic ideas of Marxism, only one thing stands higher than the interest of the proletariat — and it is none other than the interests of social development, the interests of social progress. Scientific socialism represents the interests not only of the working class, but all social progress.

The working class must actively participate and strive to take the leading role in the democratic revolution in the interest of its socialist struggle and in the interest of social progress as a whole. And not primarily because the proletariat stands for the interests of the peasantry as a class or stands for the interests of the people regardless of its class composition.

The proletariat stands for the struggle of the peasants and the struggle of the whole people insofar as it corresponds to the interest of its socialist class struggle and to social progress as a whole. Support for the democratic demands of the peasantry that serve

social progress and the class struggle certainly does not mean support of the petty bourgeoisie just as support for liberal demands does not mean support of the national bourgeoisie.

This is basic, a most fundamental question for a Marxist-Leninist who knows his theory of class struggle. Now, how can the Filipino working class correctly understand this “people’s democratic revolution” when, instead of presenting it from the strict class view of the proletariat, from its socialist perspective, it is presented exclusively from the national and democratic interest of the people? Is the working class suppose to participate and take a leading role in such a revolution, and put aside its own class struggle, because it understands the democratic and national interest of the people?

Must we be reminded that the daily oppression and exploitation of the proletariat by the bourgeoisie under capitalism in the Philippines and throughout the world is being committed under the slogan of “freedom” and “democracy” which are bourgeois slogans. The class conscious Filipino proletariat will be a vanguard fighter for freedom and democracy, not primarily because of a deep sense of patriotism and democratism (of which they have plenty) but mainly because only through political liberty can its class and its class struggle develop to the full and advance more freely towards socialism.

It is for this reason that the analysis and characterization of the economic developments in Philippine society — in a Party program —should “bring to the foreground” and “emphasize more strongly” the material and spiritual conditions for the development of the class struggle of the Filipino proletariat.

Our program should begin with an understanding and definition of capitalism in the Philippines — and if Sison subscribes to Marxist political economy, he must accept capitalism as the basic process in the socio-economic evolution of Philippine society unless he still ridiculously believes that it is feudalism. He must scientifically define it as capitalism while describing its specific features as “semicolonial and semifeudal”.

Beneath the “semicolonial and semifeudal” peculiarity of Philippine society is the basic process of capitalism. The process of development of capitalism in the Philippines has semicolonial and semifeudal features just like the development of capitalism in Russia was characterized by autocratic rule and the widespread survivals of serfdom.

In its program, the revolutionary party of the proletariat is expected to formulate in the most unambiguous manner its indictment of Philippine capitalism and the world capitalist system. To dispense with this question by simply describing Philippine society as “semicolonial and semifeudal” and obscuring its capitalist basic process of socio-economic evolution is to evade a cardinal question in a working class program.

The suspicious thing with Sison, he obscures and evades this question, this “capitalism”, this wage-slavery, like the plague. Even if he believes that his “semicolonial and semifeudal” characterization of Philippine society, in itself, defines the prevailing mode of production — if nevertheless, he still has the proletarian interest and not just the proletarian label in his heart — he should have “brought into the foreground” and “emphasized more strongly” the capitalist factors engendering the development of the Filipino working class both in the cities and the countryside and outlined the fundamental tendency of capitalism—the splitting of the people into a bourgeoisie and a proletariat in the cities and the countryside, the growth of the “mass of misery, oppression, slavery, depredation, exploitation” in the cities and countryside creating the material and spiritual conditions for the class struggle of the proletariat for socialism.

Sison conceded only one paragraph in the program pertinent to this question, and it was not to highlight economic developments positive to the development of the working class. It was just a part of his standard operating procedure of enumerating the situation of every class composing the “people”. Although, he presented it in a very negative light, to say the least, it is extremely enlightening with regards to Sison’s understanding of Marxism.

According to Sison: “The Filipino working class has significantly grown in number and experience since the latter period of Spanish colonial rule. But its further growth was stunted because of the limitations on local industrialization and emphasis on raw material production, and lately, on mere assembly plants, new plantations and businesses in the grip of foreign monopoly capitalism. The Filipino working class has suffered lack of opportunity and the remittance of superprofits from the Philippines by foreign monopolies and loan payments to imperialist banks.”

See how Sison avoids the issue of “capitalism”. The working class has “suffered” because of everything except “capitalism”!

See how this Communist talks like a national democrat in analyzing why the working class is impoverished! Imagine a Communist declaring — in a Party program —that the working class is “suffering” because of the “lack of opportunities”, the “remittance of superprofits” and “loan payments”, and not because of wage-slavery, not because of the oppression of labor by capital! The elimination of these aggravating problems of the working class which are problems of the whole people will not in least solve the essential problem of impoverishment due to wage-slavery, due to capitalism, an essential problem not only of the working class but all the working people.

But Sison’s fanatics will protest: imperialism is capitalism, the worst kind of capitalism, so if you indict imperialism you indict capitalism! Wrong. Even our bourgeois nationalist senators and congressmen can indict to high heavens “US imperialism” but on the basis of national oppression not class exploitation. They indict US imperialism to advance the struggle for self-determination not for the struggle for social emancipation. Recto, Diokno, Tanada, etc., condemn “imperialism” not as monopoly capitalism, or moribund capitalism, not as the rule of the international bourgeoisie and finance capital, but as “neocolonialism”, as oppressor of nations.

A proletarian party program, even in a “semicolonial and semifeudal” society should have pinpointed and highlighted the meaning of the domination of commodity production in the

countryside and the destruction of feudal natural economy, the developments in the social division of labor and the transformation of agriculture itself into an industry, into a commodity-producing branch of economy, the continuing growth of the industrial population at the expense of the agricultural, the ousting of small-scale production by large-scale production, the continuing differentiation and disintegration of the peasantry as a feudal class, the ruin of the small producers, the increasing number of farmworkers, the growth of a huge reserve army of labor, the influx of monopoly capital, etc., — and interpreted the meaning, in terms of theory and practical tasks, of all these economic developments for the class struggle of the proletariat which the Party set itself the aim of organizing!

From reading the Party program and Party literature, one will get the impression that the Party — the party of the proletariat — is not particularly and keenly interested in any form of capitalist developments in Philippine society. And in fact, its basic attitude is to downgrade all these developments insisting that Philippine society is basically feudal in its mode of production and semifeudal in its characterization because of imperialism impinging on the old feudal mode.

It is as if, for Sison, the basis for a national democratic revolution will be undermined once we affirm the basic bourgeois nature of Philippine society beneath its semicolonial and semifeudal features, once we affirm that capitalism is the basic process in our country's social and economic evolution, and, in world reality, it cannot actually be otherwise. Need we remind Sison that it is basic in Marxist thought (maybe not in Mao Ze Dong Thought) that the process of the development of capitalism — the ousting of small-scale production, the concentration of property, etc., — will proceed and will continue, despite all the resistance of feudalism and the interference of imperialism, and through all these feudal remnants and imperialist interventions as what is happening — gradually, not in a revolutionary way — in Philippine society.

What is the programmatic significance of this insistence on the correct characterization of the economic developments in the country from the point of view of the proletariat?

It is of utmost importance because it “determines” our ultimate aim, it provides a concrete, historical basis in our country for a socialist maximum program and a clear framework for the development of the class struggle of the proletariat from the democratic to the socialist stage of struggle which is our paramount concern side by side with social progress. The Party of the proletariat cannot proceed to the democratic revolution and aspire to lead it in the real meaning of class leadership and advance it to its completion without going through this process.

A Distorted Understanding Of Proletarian Leadership In The Democratic Revolution

In the Party program, it is stated that this national democratic revolution is of a new type due to its proletarian class leadership. Is this not enough to satisfy this “obsession”, this “fidelity”, this “orthodoxy” to proletarian class struggle?

What class leadership are they talking about? What is clear is the leadership of the CPP headed by Sison. But whether this leadership is proletarian is a different question.

How did the program explain this proletarian leadership? What is Sison’s concept of proletarian leadership in the democratic revolution?

According to Sison: “A proletarian revolutionary leadership, guided by Marxism-Leninism, is what makes the people’s democratic revolution a new type of national democratic revolution.” How — Sison has no concrete explanation. He just repeats and repeats this assertion without explaining how or why.

Again, Sison: “Indeed, people’s democracy is a new type of democracy because of its proletarian instead of bourgeois

leadership.” Where lies the difference between proletarian and bourgeois leadership of the democratic revolution, Sison has no clear and categorical explanation.

The only difference that Sison was able to insinuate is on the question of “resoluteness”, because according to Sison, bourgeois liberal leadership is “inadequate”. “The national bourgeoisie and the urban petty bourgeoisie”, according to Sison, “have long become inadequate at leading the Philippine revolution in the era of imperialism as demonstrated as early as the start of the armed conquest of the Philippines by US imperialism when its bourgeois-liberal leadership capitulated.”

“Adequacy” or “inadequacy” of leadership can spell victory or defeat but it does not, by itself, explain the difference between the old and new type of people’s revolution. Imagine a party program announcing the launching of a new type of revolution but cannot explain clearly why precisely its a new type except the fact that its now under the firm leadership of the proletariat as opposed to the “inadequate” leadership of the bourgeoisie.

This is a new-type of democratic revolution because, with the leading role of the proletariat in the people’s revolution, it will be a continuing revolution towards the transition to socialism. It will and it must smash all the remnants of feudal and colonial rule to facilitate the free development of the class struggle.

Its difference from the old type is not in its content but in its form and direction, in the role the proletariat must take in the interest of its socialist revolution. Sison cannot explain this essential difference because he forgot his socialism, his starting point is not socialism and social progress but merely the injustice of feudal and foreign rule just like a true-blooded democrat and patriot.

In the first place, the Party program should not only declare that it will be the proletariat that will lead this people’s revolution. It should announce with unequivocal clarity that the proletariat alone is a truly revolutionary class and all the rest are conditional in their

revolutionariness. In Sison's Party program, instead of extolling this absolute revolutionariness of the proletariat, it filled the Party program with excessive "indulgence to the revolutionariness" of the other classes that composed the "broad masses of the Filipino people".

This statement is not a formalistic declaration of fidelity to a most fundamental Marxist-Leninist tenet. This is of utmost theoretical and practical significance in our concept of a proletarian-led people's revolution and its transition to a socialist revolution.

Integral with the concept that "the proletariat alone is a truly revolutionary class" is the basic Marxist principle that "the emancipation of the workers must be the act of the working class itself." Failure to understand these two Marxist concepts in their integral whole, and in their theoretical and practical significance, will definitely result in a distorted conception of revolution. We cannot talk of proletarian class leadership of the democratic revolution and call this revolution a "new type" without an integral understanding of these Marxist-Leninist concepts.

Sison not only failed to understand these Marxist-Leninist concepts but completely ignored them and adhered instead to his Maoist brand of "Marxism-Leninism", to his metaphysical, petty bourgeois romanticist "mass line", hence, the completely distorted concept of revolution as expounded in the Party program.

What is meant by the leading role of the proletariat?

First. This is a completely scientific concept that has a material, economic basis in society that should have been explained concisely in the Party program instead of just being asserted demagogically. The problem is how can Sison explain the economic basis of the leading role of the proletariat and its strength in the process of history which is immeasurably greater than its share in the total population, when he refuses to confront "capitalism" in the Philippines.

What sense is there in explaining the revolutionary role of the proletariat, if here in the Philippines, the exploitation of the working class is explained in the Party program not by the bourgeois organization of social economy, not by wage slavery, but by the “lack of economic opportunities,” etc.

How can one accept Marxist economic theory and its corollary — the revolutionary role of the proletariat — if Communists like Sison try to find ways to communism other than through the medium of capitalism and the proletariat it creates, a proletariat which they refuse to single out from the rest of the people as the only revolutionary class in present-day society.

Second. Leadership implies representation, and the industrial proletariat is the natural representative of the entire working and exploited population.

Natural because the exploitation of the working people in the Philippines is everywhere capitalist in nature, if we leave out of account the moribund remnants of feudal economy. The exploitation of the mass of producers and farm hands is on a small scale, scattered and undeveloped, while the exploitation of the factory proletariat is on a large-scale, socialized and concentrated.

And in order for the proletariat to fulfill its function of representative in an organized, sustained struggle, all that is needed is to make it understand its position, the political and economic structure of the present system that oppresses it, and the necessity and inevitability of class antagonisms under this system.

But, again, how can the Filipino proletariat fulfill its function when Sison, in writing the Party program, evades and obscures the exposition of capitalism and instead typecasts the economic characterization of Philippine society to his “semicolonial and semifeudal” paradigm.

Third. The leading role of the proletariat presupposes a correct relationship with other classes in society, what attitude it takes

towards other elements of society in the struggle for democracy. The attitude of the working class, as vanguard fighter for democracy, towards other social classes is precisely determined in the Communist Manifesto. The class-conscious proletariat supports the progressive social classes against the reactionary classes.

But this support does not presuppose, nor does it call for any compromise with non-socialist programs and principles — it is support given to an ally against a particular enemy. The proletariat render this support in order to expedite the fall of the common enemy, but expect nothing for himself from these temporary allies, and concede nothing to them. The emancipation of the workers will be the act of the working class itself.

While pointing out the solidarity with other progressive elements, we must always single out the workers from the rest as the only truly revolutionary class, point out that these alliances are temporary and conditional, and emphasize the independent class identity of the proletariat who tomorrow may find themselves in opposition to their allies of today.

This “vanguardism”, this stressing of the conditional revolutionariness of the other democratic classes, will not weaken but strengthen the other fighters for democracy.

In fact, according to Lenin, “the merging of the democratic activities of the working class with the democratic aspirations of other classes and groups would weaken the democratic movement, would weaken the political struggle, would make it less determined, less consistent, more likely to compromise. On the other hand, if the working class stands out as the vanguard fighter for democratic institutions, this will strengthen the democratic movement, will strengthen the struggle for political liberty, because the working class will spur on all the other democratic and political opposition elements, will push the liberals toward the political radicals, will push the radicals toward an irrevocable rupture with the whole of the political and social structure of present society.”

On this third point, Sison has committed a most grievous sin. In his PPDR, the democratic struggle of the proletariat was completely “merged” with the democratic struggle of the whole people, its independent class character completely obliterated, the “revolutionariness of the peasantry excessively extolled while failing to single out the proletariat as the only truly revolutionary class and the only consistent fighter for democracy.

Fourth. This leading role of the proletariat in the democratic revolution must be assumed by the working class themselves and not only by their vanguard. It is the task of the Party vanguard to make sure that working class will rise to this role as the leading class.

Here is what Lenin said on this point: “Accordingly, it is on the working class that the Social-Democrats concentrate all their attention and all their activities. When its advanced representatives have mastered the ideas of scientific socialism, the idea of the historic role of the Russian worker, when these ideas become widespread, and when stable organizations are formed among the workers to transform the workers’ present sporadic economic war into conscious class struggle — then the Russian WORKER, rising at the head of all the democratic elements, will overthrow absolutism and lead the RUSSIAN PROLETARIAT (side by side with the proletariat of ALL COUNTRIES) along the straight road of open political struggle to the VICTORIOUS COMMUNIST REVOLUTION.”

How can the Filipino working class assume their historic role, when its vanguard, the CPP, instead of “concentrating” its attention and activities upon them, opted to “concentrate” its attention and activities on the peasantry as the main force of the revolution, opted to concentrate its forces in the countryside building its peasant base areas, calling upon urban forces to continuously shift to the countryside, and branding those who stress urban work as “reformists” and “insurrectionists”.

How can the Filipino working class assume their historic role, when its vanguard, the CPP, instead of teaching them socialism and

the class struggle instill on them the bourgeois spirit of “national democracy” and insist that their working class movement is “national democratic in orientation” and not socialist, and those that teach them otherwise are deviationists from the Party line!

For Sison, and this is categorically clear in PPDR, and also by virtue of his sins of theoretical omission — proletarian class leadership is reduced and equated to the party leadership of the supposed proletarian vanguard, the CPP. For Sison, it is the party assuming the role of the class, and that’s all there is to it. This is Sison’s Stalinist and Maoist reductionism in all its vulgarity on the question of class leadership

According to Sison: “In the political field, the CPP advances the revolutionary leadership of the working class, fights to overthrow the reactionary bourgeois regime and all reactionary classes supporting it and in its stead, establishes a people’s democratic state system, a coalition or united front government of the working class, peasantry, the urban petty bourgeoisie and national bourgeoisie.” It is very clear, it is the CPP that shall establish the new state system not the coalition of political forces of the successful revolution! Here, its not only the Party acting for the class but for the entire “people”.

In the economic, educational, cultural and military fields, its all the same: it is the Party acting for the class and also for the whole people, not only in leadership but in the actual conduct of revolution and reconstruction. Not a word in the program regarding the role of the class itself. In all aspects, it is the Party representing the class and the people and this representation is absolutized as class leadership as if the Party has been given the blanket authority to represent the class and the Filipino people.

In the countryside, since it is the Party that is organizing the peasantry, hence, its the “worker-peasant” alliance whose concrete expression is the people’s army. This “basic alliance” is therefore firmly established with the firm leadership of the Party over the peasantry. The “peasant army” is proletarian-led because it is Party-led. All these are proletarian-led just because of the leadership of the

Party, despite the fact that the overwhelming majority of the Party members are peasants, are not truly socialist-educated and socialist-oriented, and most of all, the Party program does not contain the independent class line of the proletariat. This concept of proletarian class leadership through the party vanguard will be revealed in all its real content when we analyze Sison's concept of a "democratic people's revolution."

A Vulgarized, Totally Non-Marxist, Non-Leninist Concept Of a People's Democratic Revolution

We have discussed above how Sison obscured in the Party program the class struggle of the proletariat in his people's democratic revolution, submerging it in the purely national democratic struggle of the whole people.

After detaching the independent class struggle of the Filipino working class from the democratic revolution, he proceeded to present a totally distorted concept of revolution alien to the basic tenets of Marxism-Leninism. Here is Sison's concept of revolution as expounded in the Party program:

"There is only one road which the working class under the leadership of the CPP must take. It is the road of armed revolution to smash the armed counterrevolution that preserves foreign and feudal oppression in the Philippines. In waging armed revolution, the working class must rely mainly on the mass support of its closest ally, the peasantry. The peasantry is the main force of the people's democratic revolution. Without the peasantry's struggle for land, no genuine and formidable People's Army can be built and no revolutionary base area can be established. The peasant struggle for land is the main democratic content of the present stage of the Philippine revolution."

He then proceeds to an exposition of his war strategy:

"From the countryside, the people's democratic forces encircle the cities. It is in the countryside that the enemy forces are first lured in

and defeated before the capture of the cities from the hands of the exploiting classes. It is from the countryside that the weakest links of the reactionary state are to be found and these can be surrounded by the people's democratic forces tactically before strategically defeating them. It is in the countryside that the People's Army can accumulate strength among the peasants by combining agrarian revolution, armed struggle and the building of revolutionary base areas. The Party and the People's Army must turn the backward villages into advanced military, political, economic and cultural bastions of the people's democratic revolution."

Next, is his "third magic weapon", the united front:

"A true national united front exists only if it is founded on the alliance of the working class and the peasantry and such alliance has been strongly welded by armed struggle, by the creation of a People's Army mainly among the peasants by the working-class party. A true united front is one for carrying armed struggle. The urban petty bourgeoisie can participate in this united front. The national bourgeoisie can also lend direct and indirect support although it always carries its dual character, the contradicting progressive and reactionary aspects. In a national united front of workers, peasants, urban petty bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie, the revolutionary proletarian party can fully guarantee its leadership, independence and initiative only by having the People's Army firmly at its command."

(Criticism on the "war revolution" of Sison up to this point will be concentrated or limited to its programmatic context and will be dealt with more thoroughly on the particular section on Protracted People's War.)

From these statements, the following major conclusions can be drawn that define Sison's concept of revolution:

1. Absolute reliance on armed struggle which have been transformed into a war strategy, transforming the "people's revolution" into "people's war".

2. Absolute reliance on the peasantry as the main force of the democratic revolution, as the “vehicle ” of the revolutionary movement.

3. Absolute fixation on a “strategy of seizure” in the democratic revolution by absolutizing “war revolution”.

4. Absolute fixation of the path of development (from the countryside to the cities) based on its war strategy.

5. Absolute reliance on armed struggle even on the question of united front and Party leadership.

Approaching it first from the theoretical aspect, the most basic question that should be asked of Sison’s concept of revolution is: Are these “absolutes” consistent with the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism or are they purely Maoist dogma completely alien to the ideas of Marx, Engels and Lenin.

What is Sison’s theoretical explanation for his “absolutes”? No theoretical explanation whatsoever in the program. Perhaps, for Sison, its truth is self-evident and self-explanatory, a case of simple common sense, and no need to drag Marx or Lenin to confirm their absolute correctness.

Why armed struggle as the only road? Because “only armed revolution can smash armed counterrevolution”. Why rely on the peasantry? Because, the “peasantry is the main force of the revolution,” their “demand for land is the main democratic content of the revolution.” Why from the countryside to the cities? Because “its in the countryside that you can find the weakest link of the reactionary state.”

The logic is quite clean and simple, isn’t it? For his “strategy of seizure” and “united front for armed struggle”, he did not even offer a word of explanation because its logic follows from all the given assumptions.

Sison has achieved the level of perfect ingenuity, unreached by the likes of Marx, Engels and Lenin, but armed of course by the acme of proletarian ideology — Mao Ze Dong Thought — that he is now capable of blueprinting a revolution in the form of a definite war plan — the invincible strategy of protracted people's war. The key to Sison's concept is his idea of armed struggle reduced and transformed into war revolution.

It is universally accepted that armed struggle is a means of struggle, a firm of struggle, a question of tactics. What is the principle that makes it acceptable as a means of struggle of the revolutionary proletariat?

It lies in the theory of class struggle, in the antagonistic nature of the struggle between the oppressor and the oppressed, between the exploiter and the exploited.

“Force”, in the words of Marx, “is the midwife of every old society pregnant with a new one”, and for Engels, “is the instrument with the aid of which the social movement forces its way through and shatters the dead, fossilized political forms.”

As for Lenin, “in the final analysis, great historic issues are decided only by force.” But Lenin hastened to add: “Social-Democracy has not advanced the slogan of insurrection on the spur of the moment. It has always fought, and continues fight, against revolutionary phrase-mongering, and it will always demand a sober estimation of forces and an analysis of the given situation.”

It is very clear, that for Lenin, armed struggle is a means of struggle that demands a sober estimation of forces and an analysis of the given situation. He said: “The working class would, of course prefer to take power peacefully, ... but to renounce the revolutionary seizure of power would be madness on the part of the proletariat, both from the theoretical and practical-political point of view; it would mean nothing but a disgraceful retreat in the face of the bourgeoisie and all other propertied classes. It is very probable—even most probable—that the bourgeoisie will not make peaceful concessions

to the proletariat and at the decisive moment will resort to violence for the defense of its privileges. In that case, no other way will be left to the proletariat for the achievement of its aim but that of revolution. This is the reason the program of 'working-class socialism' speaks of the winning of political power in general without defining the method, for the choice of method depends on a future which we cannot precisely determine."

In drafting the Party program, Lenin said: "...we believe that the program of a working-class party is no place for indications of the means of activity ...The program should leave the questions of means open, allowing the choice of means to the militant organizations and to Party congresses that determine the tactics of the party. Questions of tactics, however, can hardly be introduced into the program (with the exceptions of the most important questions, of principle, such as our attitude to other fighters against the autocracy. Questions of tactics will be discussed by the Party newspaper as they arise and will eventually be decided at Party congresses."

Indeed, according to Lenin, to attempt to draw a hard and fast line between program and tactics can only result in scholasticism and pedantry. However, it should be made clear that program defines the general and basic relations between the working class and other classes while tactics define particular and temporary relations.

Sison obviously does not subscribe to Lenin, yet he calls himself a Leninist!

For Lenin, the program should "leave the question of means of struggle open", the program "is no place for indications of the means of activity", that "questions of tactics can hardly be introduced into the program" and all these because the "choice of method depends on a future we cannot precisely determine". For Sison, armed struggle is not just a means of activity or a question of tactics or a choice of method. It is the revolution itself!

For Leninists, armed struggle is a question of tactics. But for Sison, it is a question of “strategy”, a line question, a matter of principle that is not open to alteration in the entire historical period. For Sison, revolutionary violence determines the difference between revolutionism and reformism. Form is substance, the medium is the message.

Here lies the difference between Lenin’s and Sison’s understanding of the revolutionary process wherein, for Lenin, “the choice of method depends on a future we cannot precisely determine”, while for Sison, “there is only one road, and it is the path of armed struggle”.

For Lenin, revolution is an objective, historical process, the movement of class forces in the dynamic process of social change. It is a situation wherein the ruling classes can no longer rule in the old way while the oppressed classes no longer want to live in the old way, not as a historical view but a political fact.

As a social revolution, it is a historical situation wherein the forces of production of society are ruined by the existing moribund relations and struggle to liberate themselves from these old relations. As a political revolution, it is a concrete situation wherein the struggle for political power among the contending class forces come to a head to resolve the internal crisis of society with the overthrow of the oppressive state relations or the subjugation of the forces that seek its overthrow.

In short, it is a dynamic, creative process following closely the continuing alignment and antagonism of class forces in society, its concrete and exact forms and means of struggle forged and “manufactured ” by the masses themselves in the process of their revolutionary awakening, and not only by their conscious, vanguard elements in their plenary meetings.

But for Sison, revolution is a subjective, conspiratorial, deliberate process, created by the conscious, advance elements of society which have declared society as moribund, in a state of constant,

chronic crisis. The revolutionary situation is always excellent. The only thing needed is to build the subjective forces of revolution.

For Sison, it is the armed struggle that makes a revolution, it is the revolution. But for Lenin, it is the revolution that leads to armed struggle, the class struggle developing to its sharpest form.

How come in drafting his party program, Lenin, with all his dialectical genius, his treasury of knowledge, his mastery of theory, his tactical brilliance, his materialist foresight, cannot decide beforehand his “choice of methods”, his “means of struggle”, saying simply that it depends on a future which he cannot precisely determine!

But here comes Sison with his program, with all his superfluous verbosity, unfolding his “blueprint” for a people’s democratic revolution, announcing with absolute certainty that there can only be one road — the road of armed struggle, one hope — the revolutionary peasantry and a peasant army , one line of advance — from the countryside to the cities — and he calls this the invincible strategy of protracted people’s war, the “body and soul” of his people’s democratic revolution.

Shame on Lenin’s admonitions against predetermined tactics, shame on Lenin’s reliance on the dynamics of the class struggle! We only have to dissect Sison’s logic to see how his “genius” operates.

He begins with his thesis that “armed counterrevolution can only be smashed by armed revolution”. How do we launch an armed revolution? By building a people’s army. How do we build a people’s army? By organizing the peasantry. Why the peasantry? Because the countryside is the weakest link of the enemy. How do we win over the peasantry? By upholding the peasant demand for land as the main content of the revolution. How do we advance this armed struggle? From the countryside to the cities in a protracted war.

The logic is very neat. Everything falls into place, the revolutionary design is complete and perfect.

But there is one dangling question. Why a protracted war? Why start immediately the armed struggle? Why not build first the mass forces for this armed revolution and let the conditions mature for this is the internal law of revolution, its process of development?

If such will be the case, this will no longer be a protracted war, but the tactics of insurrection, the tactics of armed uprising.

back to the first question. Why protracted war? Why not use Lenin's materialist approach to revolution, relying mainly on the development of the objective conditions, of the class struggle?

Again, Sison did not answer this in the Party program. He just makes his assertions and he expects everybody to just take his word for it.

Why protracted war?

Because Philippine society is "semicolonial and semifeudal"? This determines the class nature of the revolution, its national democratic character. But not the means of revolution, its "protracted war" form of development.

Because of the armed counterrevolution? This determines the armed nature of the revolution. But, again, not the definite form of this violent revolution which could take the form of armed uprisings or a "protracted war".

There can be only one explanation for this grotesque type of revolution: Based on the concrete conditions of the Philippines, we cannot proceed with the revolution, engage in revolution, gradually build revolutionary strength except by immediately launching armed struggle. And if such is the case, this armed struggle cannot but take the form of protracted war.

But the fundamental point is: Did such conditions exist in the Philippines in 1968 so that we cannot proceed with the revolution except through armed struggle?

Meaning, can we not advance the workers' movement except through armed struggle? Can we not advance the student movement except through armed struggle? Can we not advance a nationalist movement of the national bourgeoisie except through armed struggle? Can we not advance broad democratic movements and united front work except through armed struggle? But most of all, can we not advance the peasant movement except through armed struggle?

For Sison, armed struggle pertains principally to the peasant movement. In PSR, he declared: "There is no solution to the peasant problem but to wage armed struggle, conduct agrarian revolution and build revolutionary base areas."

This statement may be historically correct, but is definitely theoretically unsound. Even Lenin did not make such an absolute formulation on the peasant question of the Russian revolution although the survivals of serfdom were more prevalent in Russia even after its formal abolition by Tsarism and considering that it is a more brutal form of feudal oppression than what persisted in the Philippines in 1968.

We may and we must "incite" the peasantry to rebellion in our practical calls, using historical experience and social injustice as our material for agitation. This is principled. But theoretical demagoguery and trickery is unacceptable in a Marxist-Leninist Party.

It has been proven in the experience of many countries under imperialist domination or intervention that the reactionary bourgeois state can make decisive political decisions regarding land reform and resolving their peasant problem, at least, to the level that the armed option in agrarian struggle becomes unviable.

Moreover, even assuming that in a given situation, armed struggle is the only viable option for the peasantry due to the extreme reactionariness and conservatism of the ruling class on the question of land reform, it does not automatically follow that this must take the form of a protracted war. It may take the form of spontaneous and

sporadic peasant armed uprisings which in fact is its more universal form in world history and even here in the Philippines.

Under what conditions then, can we correctly say, that the revolution can not proceed and advance, at the outset, except through the path of immediate armed struggle which inevitably must take the form of protracted war?

This can occur if the prevailing political conditions in a country is a total military situation, when class struggle objectively is transformed into a generalized armed conflict as in colonial occupations or wars of aggression, and in extreme cases, fascist rule.

But even conditions of open terrorist rule like the Marcos fascist dictatorship do not necessarily mean a protracted war-type of revolution though the positive factors for the armed struggle is extremely intensified by such conditions. Tsarist absolutism, a political system more ruthless and barbaric than Marcos fascism, was not reason enough for Lenin to design his revolution in the mold of a protracted war struggle.

Conditions in Lenin's Russia in 1900 were perfect for "protracted war", much better for "protracted war" than Sison's Philippines in 1968.

The overwhelming majority of Russia were peasants engaged in sporadic, spontaneous armed uprisings. The remnants of the old serf-owning system were still extremely numerous in Russia's countryside. Corvee and bondage, the peasants' inequality as a social-estate and as citizens, their subjection to the privileged landowners who still have the right to flog them, and their degrading living conditions which virtually turn the peasants into barbarians — all this, according to Lenin, is not the exception but the rule in Russian countryside. This is all a direct survival of the serf-owning system, the classic form of feudalism. These relics of serfdom are more prevalent in Lenin's capitalist Russia than in Sison's "semifeudal" Philippines. In fact, Lenin even had Tsarism — the bulwark of reaction in Europe — while Sison only had Marcos

fascism. The Philippines is a small archipelagic country while Russia is a huge solid mass bigger and more mountainous than China.

What prevented Lenin from opting for a protracted war “strategy”, for calling at the very outset for armed struggle in the Party’s program instead of “concentrating all the Party’s energy on organization and the regular delivery of literature” almost exclusively among the Russian working class?

The answer is simple, and it is not because Russia is capitalist as Sison’s fanatics have been trained to answer. It is because Lenin did not share Sison’s grotesque notion of revolution.

Lenin insisted in organizing and directing the revolution through a party vanguard against the tailists and economists who worship spontaneity. Not in the sense of undermining, disregarding, distorting the objective laws of development of revolution and the dynamics of the class struggle but by grasping its internal motion, never imposing his will and wishes based on preconceived plans and venerated dogmas, never hesitating to discard old ideas that no longer fit to fast changing conditions.

Lenin’s brilliance and success he owes to his strict and incisive materialist approach to revolution, integrating creatively his profound grasp of Marxist theory and the dynamics of the revolutionary struggle. To Lenin, the revolution is a “living organism” in a state of constant development corresponding to the development of the internal contradictions in society, and not as something mechanically concatenated, not as something artificially advancing along a preconceived, predesigned, prefabricated strategic line and therefore permitting all sorts of arbitrary impositions by some vanguard spiritual force.

Sison’s protracted war-type of revolution is the exact opposite of Lenin’s approach to revolution. His ideological stock-in-trade is pure voluntarism and reductionism. To a protracted war-type of revolutionist, the advance of the revolution is determined by the armed struggle, its power source is the armed struggle. An armed

struggle launched by the vanguard and its army, advancing independent of socio-economic developments for it is something given and constant (“chronic crisis theory”), advancing on the basis of the laws of war (“strategy and tactics of protracted war”) and not the laws of class struggle, and as the center of gravity, all revolutionary work must conform to and serve its needs.

Hence, the stress in peasant work, the fixed line of advance from countryside to the cities, first in the hinterlands, next to the foothills and then down to plains, advancing wave upon wave on the basis of the requirements and limitations of guerilla warfare and not on the dynamism of class warfare, the advance of the struggle dictated by the tempo of the war comforted by the belief that, anyway, this is a people’s war, this is for our “people”.

The problem with this type of revolution is not only its un-Marxist approach to revolution. It also taught us to become un-Marxist. We accepted the given premises laid down by Sison as “absolute truths”, primarily his “armed counterrevolution” thesis, as if there’s something profound in such a formulation.

From here, we easily swallowed “hook, line and sinker” his concept of armed revolution, the principality of the armed struggle, his distinction of revolutionism and reformism, etc. And then we embraced “lock, stock and barrel” his invincible strategy of “protracted people’s war”.

Actually, to the question of “Why start the war immediately?”, Sison had an answer in his “Specific Characteristics of Our People’s War.” According to Sison: “the more time we have for developing our armed strength from practically nothing the better for us in the future.” This is the convoluted logic of Sison’s grotesque concept of revolution in its most vulgar form.

The CPP’S Agrarian Policy: From Whose Class Viewpoint?

What is an agrarian program of a Communist Party?

It is a definition of the guiding principles of the policy of the party of the class conscious proletariat on the agrarian question, i.e., policy in relation to agriculture and the various classes, sections and groups of the rural population.

Big landowners, agricultural wage-workers, and peasants — these are the three main components of our rural population. But since ours is a “peasant” country, the Party’s agrarian program is chiefly a proletarian program defining our attitude towards the peasant question, a proletarian program in a peasant revolution that is directed against the survivals of feudalism, against all that is feudal in our agrarian system.

According to Sison, our people’s democratic revolution, in the main, is a “peasant revolution” , a “peasant war”. Although the “leading force” is the proletariat, the “main force” of this revolution is the “peasantry”. Peasant demand for land is the “main democratic content” of our people’s revolution.

This is how important, how crucial the peasant question is to our revolution. Many revolutions met their “Waterloo” on this question. Hence, the need for an agrarian Party program that is consistent in principle and politically expedient. Here lies the biggest challenge to the Party of the revolutionary proletariat, drafting a proletarian program that is “consistent” with the fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism and at the same time “expedient” in developing the countryside as a bulwark of the revolution.

Contrary to what Sison would like us to believe, as he obviously believed, the “peasant question” is a most difficult and most complicated question. It has no simple formulations and simple solutions that address an agrarian situation warped in a three dimensional development of history — its feudal, capitalist and socialist elements interwoven in a complex web of relations.

But first, on questions of principles, mainly on the attitude of the proletariat toward the peasantry, which again will push into the

forefront the class viewpoint of the Party in drafting its agrarian program, the class position of the Party on the peasant question.

It should be made clear at the outset that not because we are presenting a “peasant program” we will formulate it from the class position of the peasantry instead of from the class viewpoint of the proletariat.

PPDR made categorical theoretical formulations on its attitude towards the peasantry. It considers the peasantry as the “closest ally” of the proletariat, as “the main force of the people’s democratic revolution.” According to Sison, “the peasant’s struggle for land is the main content of the people’s democratic revolution.” In launching the armed revolution, the working class, according to Sison, “should principally rely on the mass support of its closest ally, the peasantry.” But in building the revolutionary antifeudal united front, the working class “must rely mainly on the poor peasants and farm workers, then win over and unite with the middle peasants and neutralize the rich peasants.” As formulated in PPDR, the relationship of the working class with the farm workers is one of alliance (“In its close alliance with the poor peasants and farm workers...”).

Let us analyze the meaning of all these formulations in their “consistency in principle”, i.e., in relation to Marxism-Leninism.

What is the Marxist-Leninist attitude, in terms of theory with regards to the peasantry?

In present-day society, the peasantry no longer constitutes an integral class. The differentiation within the peasantry is relentlessly sharpened, its ruin as a class of small-scale producers is intensified as a result of the continuing inroads of capitalism in agriculture, specifically, the dominance of commodity production, and the continuing decay of the old feudal mode.

In the struggle against the survivals of feudalism, in “instances and relationships where this system still prevails, and insofar as it still prevails, its enemy is the peasantry as a whole.” In the struggle

against feudalism and the state that serves in preserving its remnants, the peasantry still stands as a class, a class not of capitalist but of feudal society.

According to Lenin, “inasmuch” as this class antagonism between the “peasantry” and the landlords, so characteristic of feudal society, still survives in our countryside, “insomuch” a working class party must undoubtedly be on the side of the “peasantry”, support its struggle and urge it on to fight against all remnants of feudalism.”

But he adds that, “inasmuch” as feudalism is being eliminated by ‘present day’ (bourgeois) society, “insomuch” the peasantry ceases to be a class and becomes divided into the rural proletariat and the rural bourgeoisie (big, middle, petty, and very small). “Inasmuch” as feudal relationships still exist, “insomuch” the peasantry still continues to be a class, a class of feudal society rather than of bourgeois society.

to Lenin: “This ‘inasmuch—insomuch’ exists in real life in the form of an extremely complex web of serf-owning and bourgeois relationships in the Russian countryside today. To use Marx terminology, labor rent, in kind, money rent and capitalist rent are all most fantastically interlinked in our country.”

This is the reason why Lenin sometimes put the word “peasantry” in quotation marks in order to emphasize the existence of an absolutely indubitable contradiction with regards to the status of the peasantry as a class. This, according to Lenin, is not a contradiction in a doctrine but a contradiction in life itself.

Hence, the inevitability of a complex solution of the agrarian question, and the task is not to look for a “simple solution to such tangled problems. It is our duty to fight against all remnants of feudal relations — that is beyond doubt — but since these are intricately interwoven with bourgeois relations, “we are obliged to penetrate into the very core, undeterred by the complexity of the task.”

Sison, obviously, did not heed Lenin's advice. He simplified the Party's "agrarian problem" with a simple solution — "Land to the Landless!" But before we tackle Sison's fighting slogan, we must first clarify the Marxist-Leninist guiding principles on how the proletariat should support "peasant" demands, on how the Party defines the nature of the proletariat's "peasant" demands.

The class-conscious Party of the proletariat should make "two highly circumscribed conditions" in the inclusion of the "peasant" demands in its program. According to Lenin: "We make the legitimacy of "peasant demands" in a Social-Democratic program dependent, firstly, on the condition that they lead to the eradication of remnants of the serf-owning system, and secondly, that they facilitate the free development of the class struggle in the countryside."

Why these "two highly circumscribed conditions"? Because, for Lenin, the "fundamental criterion" of what we can and must demand (in the minimum program) for the wage-workers and for the peasants is "absolutely different".

According to Lenin: "For the workers, we demand such reforms as would 'safeguard them from physical and moral degeneration and raise their fighting capacity'; for the peasants, however, we seek only such changes as would help 'to eradicate the remnants of the old serf-owning system and facilitate the free development of the class struggle in the countryside'. Hence, it follows that our demands in favor of the peasants are far more restricted, that their terms are much more moderate and presented in a smaller framework."

Why this class difference, why this "class bias"? Here is Lenin's explanation: "With regard to the wage-workers, we undertake to defend their interests as a class in present-day society. We do this because we consider their class movement as the only truly revolutionary movement... and strive to organize this particular movement, to direct it, and bring the light of socialist consciousness into it."

How about the peasantry, do we defend them as a class? According to Lenin, no, “we do not by any means undertake to defend its interest as a class of small landowners and farmers in present-day society. Nothing of the kind.”

“The emancipation of the workers must be the act of the working class itself — and for this reason, Lenin insists that, “Social-Democracy represents — directly and wholly — the interest of the proletariat alone, and seeks indissoluble organic unity with its class movement alone.” For Lenin, “all the other classes of present-day society stand for the preservation of the foundations of the existing economic system, and that is why Social-Democracy can undertake to defend the interests of those classes only under certain circumstances and on concrete and strictly defined conditions.”

This is how Lenin views the peasantry and other class forces from his unswerving proletarian standpoint. He fully subscribes to the entire spirit of Marx teachings. The Communist Manifesto declares outright that “of all the classes that stand face to face with the bourgeoisie... the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class... The small manufacturer... the artisan, the peasant... are not revolutionary, but conservative. Nay more, they are reactionary... If by chance they are revolutionary, they are so only in view of their impending transfer into the proletariat... they desert their own standpoint to place themselves at that of the proletariat.”

Lenin insisted that in a party program, we must point in positive form to the conservatism of the petty bourgeoisie, referring to the peasantry. And only in conditional form should we point to its revolutionary spirit. Only such a formulation will coincide in full with the entire spirit of Marx teachings.

Sison and his cabal of fanatics must not be allowed again to swindle Filipino communists with their stock-in-trade theoretical trickery that Marx’ declaration in the Communist Manifesto and Lenin’s teachings do not apply to the Philippines because we are “semifeudal”.

Lenin's Russia is more "semifeudal" and he described Russia as such — "semifeudal"! Mao was not the originator of such term. In fact Lenin's Russian countryside of 1902 was more backward than Sison's semifeudal countryside of 1968. Russia was ruled by Tsardom and what survived and predominated in its countryside are the relics of the worst kind of feudalism — serfdom! But more important than this "comparative" argument is the fact that Marx' and Lenin' analysis of the peasantry as a differentiated and disintegrating class conforms to the concrete realities of Philippine countryside.

The demand for the eradication of feudal remnants is common to all democratic elements. Where lies our fundamental difference with all the rest? It is by demanding that the "free development of the class struggle be ensured", the second of Lenin's two preconditions for a correct presentation of the peasant demands in the proletarian program. This is of utmost importance both for the principled presentation of the agrarian question in general, and for an appraisal of individual agrarian demands in particular.

This condition is the fundamental and focal point in the theory of Marxism on the agrarian question.

For Lenin, "To acknowledge this condition means recognizing that, despite all its confusion and complexity, despite all the diversity of its forms, the evolution of agriculture is also capitalist evolution, that (like the evolution of industry) it also engenders the proletariat's class struggle against the bourgeoisie, that precisely this struggle must be our prime and fundamental concern, the touchstone for both questions of principle and political tasks, as well as methods of propaganda, agitation and organization."

And Lenin further emphasized: "To acknowledge this condition means undertaking to abide unswervingly by the class viewpoint also in the very painful question of the participation of the small peasants in the Social-Democratic movement, means sacrificing nothing of the proletariat's standpoint in favor of the interests of the petty bourgeoisie, but, on the contrary, demanding that the small peasant, who is being oppressed and ruined by all modern capitalism, should

desert his own class standpoint and place himself at the standpoint of the proletariat.”

And just to show how far Sison had abandoned the class line, let us quote furthermore from Lenin on this question: “By setting this condition, we are providing a guiding principle that will enable any Social-Democrat, even if he finds himself in some out-of-the-way village, even if he is faced with the most tangled web of agrarian relationships, which bring general democratic tasks into the foreground, to apply and stress his proletarian standpoint when he is tackling those tasks — just as we remain Social-Democrats when we tackle general-democratic, political problems.”

It’s as if Lenin had in mind people like Sison, who in their eagerness for the people’s revolution, in their over-indulgence to the “revolutionariness” of the peasantry, forgot their proletarian standpoint, forgot socialism, forgot Marxism, and transformed themselves into “national democrats of the new-type”, meaning Communists who transformed themselves into national democrats.

Lenin even affixed the following point as a footnote: “The more ‘indulgence’ we show, in the practical part of our program, towards the small producer (e.g., to the peasant) , the ‘more strictly’ must we treat these unreliable and double-faced social elements in the theoretical part of the program, without sacrificing one iota of our standpoint...” With this kind of class attitude to the “peasantry”, no wonder a petty bourgeois revolutionist like Sison would prefer a Mao than a Lenin in worshipping the “revolutionariness” of the peasantry in “armed struggle” to appropriate the landholding of the landlord for themselves as small producers.

Does it mean, because of these Leninist convictions with regards to the peasant question, a Communist should not provide the strongest support for the antifeudal struggle of the peasantry? On the contrary, he can and he must.

Without betraying our convictions in the slightest, but, rather, because of those convictions, Lenin insists that “the working-class

party should inscribe on its banner support for the peasantry (not by any means as a class of small proprietors or small farmers), insofar as the peasantry is capable of revolutionary struggle against the survivals of serfdom in general and against the autocracy in particular... If support for the liberal demands of the big bourgeoisie does not mean support of the big bourgeoisie, then support for the democratic demands of the petty bourgeoisie does not mean support of the petty bourgeoisie; on the contrary, it is precisely this development which political liberty will make possible in Russia that will, with particular force, lead to the destruction of small economy under the blows of capital."

Lenin identified two basic forms of the class struggle intertwined in the Russian countryside: 1) the struggle of the peasantry against the privileged landed proprietors and against the remnants of serfdom; 2) the struggle of the emergent rural proletariat against the rural bourgeoisie.

And he declared categorically: "For Social Democrats the second struggle, of course, is of greater importance; but they must also indispensably support the first struggle to the extent that it does not contradict the interests of social development."

This is how unswerving and consistent Lenin is on his class line. First, he considers the struggle of the farm workers more important than the antifeudal struggle of the peasantry though it should be supportive of the latter. Second, support for the antifeudal struggle of the peasantry should advance not contradict social progress. Meaning, as he always insists, support for the antifeudal struggle is not because the proletariat is supportive of the peasantry as a class, but, rather, because this peasant antifeudal struggle conforms to the interest of social progress and the class struggle of the proletariat. By social progress in agrarian struggle, Lenin is primarily referring to the development of the productive forces, to the economic basis of the proletarian agrarian program.

Lenin never underestimated or doubted the existence of revolutionary elements among the peasantry, their

“revolutionariness” in the antifeudal and antitsarist struggle. But he did not in the least exaggerate the strength of the peasantry, he did not forget the political backwardness and ignorance of the peasants. He did not in the least forget the endless means which the government has at its disposal for the political deception and demoralization of the peasantry.

From all these there follows only one thing, according to Lenin: “It would be senseless to make the peasantry the vehicle of the revolutionary movement, that a party would be insane to condition the revolutionary character of its movement upon the revolutionary mood of the peasantry. There can be no thought of proposing anything of the sort to the Russian Social-Democrats. We say only that a working-class party cannot, without violating the basic tenets of Marxism and without committing a tremendous political mistake, overlook the revolutionary elements that exist among the peasantry and not afford those elements support...”

And Lenin was not in the least worried that the revolution will fail if he does not make the peasantry the vehicle of the revolution, if he does not exalt with full indulgence the revolutionariness of the peasantry, if he does not absolutely rely on their revolutionary capacity, for if the peasantry “prove themselves incapable, the Social-Democrats will have lost nothing as far as their good name or their movement is concerned, since it will not be their fault if the peasantry does not respond (may not have the strength to respond) to their revolutionary appeal. The working-class movement is going its own way and will continue to do so, despite all the betrayals of the big bourgeoisie or the petty bourgeoisie.”

In the light of all these guiding principles of Marxism-Leninism, and most specially the last point cited from Lenin, how should we now evaluate Sison’s platform on the peasant question? How should we now understand in terms of consistency in principle and political expediency Sison’s formulation that the “peasantry is the main force of the people’s democratic revolution”, the “peasant struggle for land is the main content of the people’s democratic revolution”, and his

preaching, his advocacy (and not only “support”) of the “Land to the Landless” peasant slogan in our program?

The peasantry as the main force? What “peasantry” is Sison talking about? The peasantry no longer stands as an integral class, it is differentiated into poor, middle and rich peasants, each developing its own class tendencies. A “main force”, therefore, that is not an integral whole. What kind of “strategy” is this! A divided main force, each section having its own distinct tendencies.

Maybe, Sison is referring to the peasantry standing as a class in the antifeudal struggle. Still, its duality, this objective weakness, remains as described in Lenin’s “inasmuch-insomuch” scenario. This “split character” of the peasantry is a simultaneous situation, an “indubitable contradiction” that is not imaginary but exists in real life.

Maybe, Sison is referring not to the entire peasantry but to a particular section of it. But he should be reminded that in strict Marxist usage, the word peasantry pertains principally to the middle peasant. Among the three strata of the peasantry, by its objective position, it is the genuine carrier of peasant class interest.

But its “conditional revolutionariness” is very conditional! Its basic interest is its stability as a middle peasant. But on the one hand, it aspires to become a rich peasant, while on the other hand, it resists the stronger pull of bankruptcy and falling into the ranks of the poor peasants. Actually, when Lenin talks of the peasantry as the closest ally of the working class in the democratic revolution, he is referring to the rural petty bourgeoisie, which are principally the middle peasants. But Lenin will never consider the middle peasants, meaning the rural petty bourgeoisie as the “main force” of the democratic revolution in the sense, in the “absolute revolutionary” sense given by Sison.

Definitely Sison is not referring to the rich peasant which he himself identified as a force that should be neutralized. (Note, Sison never mentioned a policy of expose and oppose against the rich

peasants inasmuch as they exploit the farm workers and poor peasants).

If Sison is referring to the poor peasants, alone, as the “main force”, then it is ridiculous. First, the working class — meaning the factory and farm workers — are much bigger than the poor peasants in terms of share in the population and definitely are a much better fighting force of the people’s democratic revolution. Secondly, they can no longer be considered strictly as part of the peasantry which is basically petty bourgeois in character. They are semi-proletarians in character than petty bourgeois and are fast falling into the ranks of the working class as part-time wage earners.

If Sison is referring to the poor peasants plus the middle peasants, this is a big force but still not comparable to the real strength of the combined force of the factory and farm workers. But this combination of poor and middle peasants will still leave us with a heterogenous main force, a big section of which is not that reliable. Why not consider the combined force of the factory and farm workers instead as the leading and at the same time the main force of the democratic revolution and lend the people’s revolution a distinctly proletarian “character”?

If Sison is referring to the poor peasants plus the farm workers, then this is trickery. Why attach the farm workers to the peasantry when they have more in common with the working class? To reinforce his “peasant revolution”, to justify his “peasant main force”? Is Sison planning to revert the farm workers, those proletarianized elements of the countryside, back into the fold of the peasantry, into the rural petty bourgeoisie?

We can actually cast aside all these “speculative” interpretation of Sison’s “main force” of the revolution in his PPDR (In PSR, Sison clarified that when he speaks of the “peasantry as the main force”, he refers primarily to the poor peasants plus the small and middle peasants). The fundamental point, however, is this:

Is it consistent in principle for Sison to “make the peasantry the vehicle of the revolutionary movement” since he considers it as the main force of the revolution.? Lenin has a word for this — “senseless”.

Is it politically expedient for Sison to “condition the revolutionary character of its movement upon the revolutionary mood of the peasantry”, since for Sison, this revolution absolutely relies on the revolutionariness of the peasantry, this revolution is a peasant revolution and its victory hinges on the success of his peasant army and peasant war? Lenin has a word for this — “insane”.

How about Sison’s formulation that the “main content of the people’s democratic revolution is the peasant struggle for land”? Again, what is the meaning of this very “profound” formulation typically Maoist in its simplicity?

It is theoretically correct to state that the antifeudal struggle is the main element or main content of the democratic aspect of the people’s revolution. But to reduce it further, reduce the antifeudal movement into a “struggle for land” and then exaggerate this “struggle ” out of proportion as the main content, not only of the democratic aspect, but of the entire people’s revolution, is nothing but revolutionary sensationalism.

Such a formulation implies that between the anti-imperialist and the anti-feudal aspects of the people’s revolution, between the struggle against imperialist oppression and the struggle against feudal exploitation the latter is more important and more decisive as the “main content of the revolution”. To be more precise, what is most important and decisive in the entire people democratic revolution is the peasants’ struggle for land since he is not even referring to the entire antifeudal struggle as the “main content” of the revolution. As a testimony to what kind of a Marxist theoretician Sison is, it should be emphasized that he presented this “main content” formulation in a programmatic, orientational and theoretical way and not as tactical proposition expressing a particular, temporary and concrete situation in the entire historical process of

the democratic revolution. Again, Sison has theorized and absolutized his view (or what he plagiarized from Mao) that the “pivot” of the people’s revolution — and not only of the agrarian revolution — for the entire historical stage of the democratic revolution is the peasants’ “struggle for land” for this is the meaning of the “main content” proposition.

But Sison’s logic is this: The main content of the antifeudal struggle is the struggle for land. Since we agree that the antifeudal movement is the main element of the democratic aspect of the people’s revolution, therefore, the struggle for land is the main democratic content of the people’s revolution. Wrong. Theoretically, the struggle for land is not the main content of the antifeudal struggle. The struggle to overthrow the landlord class — economically and politically — is its main content although the struggle to overthrow the landlord class expresses itself generally in the struggle for land.

What is the class nature of this “struggle for land” whose practical expression in PPDR is the slogan “Land to the Landless!”? What is the economic and political basis of this slogan which was formulated and presented by Sison as a programmatic position and a declaration of principle in the democratic revolution and not merely as a tactical proposition? How does Sison justify the consistency of this slogan to the basic theoretical principles of Marxism-Leninism? To all this fundamental questions of utmost programmatic and tactical importance, Sison has no answer in his PPDR, and even in all his subsequent writings, and failing in this, he cannot but be accused of revolutionary demagoguery.

This is how Sison formulated in PPDR his simple resolution of the agrarian question and we quote in full the section entitled The Land Problem: “The main content of the people’s democratic revolution is the struggle for land among the peasants. The people’s democratic revolution must satisfy the basic demand of the peasants and farm workers for land. The agrarian revolution is the necessary requirement for the vigorous conduct of the armed struggle and the

creation and consolidation of revolutionary base areas. Land shall be distributed free to the landless. Usury and all other feudal evils shall be wiped out. Plantations and estates already efficiently operated on a mechanized basis shall be converted into state farms where the agricultural workers shall establish proletarian power and provide themselves with better working and living conditions. In the whole countryside, mutual aid teams and mutual labor exchange systems shall be created as the initial step toward higher forms of agricultural cooperation. Through agricultural cooperation, production shall be raised and well planned, the sale of produce shall be assured at the best price possible and welfare services guaranteed. The higher purchasing power of the peasantry shall enable the ceaseless expansion of industrial production. The basis of the national economy shall be agriculture because it fulfils the food and raw materials requirement of expanding industrialization and mainly the peasantry absorbs the products of industrialization.”

Sison titled this section as The Land Problem but the range of his elaboration extended to his vision of the new agrarian system. But, anyway, what did he say about the land problem?

Three points. First, “the people’s democratic revolution must satisfy the basic demand of the poor peasants and farm workers for land.” Second, “land shall be distributed free to the landless.” And third, “plantations and estates already efficiently operated on a mechanized basis shall be converted into state farms...” This is all he said about the “main content” of our revolution, the “pivot” of the democratic revolution.

What do we get from this?

First. According to Sison, land is not only a basic demand of the poor peasants but a basic demand also of the farm workers. Must Sison be reminded that the poor peasants are the semiproletarians (Lenin even goes to the extent of considering them as rural proletarians) and the farm workers are the proletarians in the countryside. Is this what Sison means of the peasant struggle for land — the demand for land of the landless semiproletarians and

proletarians in the countryside. Since they are the only ones mentioned as demanding land and the revolution must meet this demand, the party of the class conscious proletariat — the party that is fighting for the abolition of private property — in its agrarian program, in its declaration of principles, deliberately intends and commits itself to transform the proletariat and semiproletariat in the countryside — the propertyless masses of the countryside — into middle peasants, into petty bourgeois small-property owners, into petty bourgeois small-commodity producers!

So, this is Sison's agrarian revolution — reverting the rural propertyless masses into property owners. The party of the class conscious proletariat is concentrating its forces and attention in the countryside, abandoning the industrial proletariat in the cities, enduring extreme sacrifices in a bloody protracted war to advance a “struggle for land” as the “main content” of the revolution that seeks to revert the propertyless semiproletarian and proletarian masses in the countryside into petty bourgeois property owners and commodity producers! So, this is Sison's idea of social progress, of developing the productive forces in the countryside and developing the class struggle of the proletariat in the democratic revolution — the bourgeoisification of the countryside.

Sison specifically cited the farm workers as demanding land but did not mention the middle peasants and the rich peasants. Are they not also basically demanding land or more land for their small-scale agricultural economy so as to become more viable, productive and competitive in a commodity economy? Are they not economically affected to a considerable degree by landlordism, by the land monopoly of the landlord class? Are they not also after the vast landholdings of the landlords in the countryside? Are they not the real beneficiaries, in the economic sense, of a bourgeois agrarian revolution in the countryside? But since they are not the “landless” masses in the countryside, and since they are not mentioned as “demanding land”, they shall not benefit from Sison's “Land to the Landless” slogan, they shall not receive free land from Sison because they are not landless and are not demanding land. But the

problem is, they are the real peasants and farmers in the countryside, and in the economic sense, they are the real class forces that are after the landlords' vast landholdings for their individualist class interests.

Second. Sison began discussing all sorts of things in the section regarding the land problem but forgot to clarify where he will get the land that he will distribute "free" to all the landless and the principles that shall guide the redistribution of land. He clarified this in his Revolutionary Guide To Land Reform. But as it is, Sison's program, with all its superfluous verbosity, declaring that the "struggle for land" is the main content of the people's revolution but failing to clarify the "target of this struggle" in its section regarding the land problem, cannot pass as a party program.

But since Sison said that even "plantations and estates already efficiently operated on a mechanized basis shall be converted into state farms", it is implied that all vast landholdings will be confiscated (even this confiscatory policy is not mentioned which is a most crucial question in any agrarian program). The question is: What types of confiscated lands will be redistributed free to the landless and what types will be exempted from this redistribution? Since Sison mentioned only one type — those already "efficiently operated on a mechanized basis" — that shall be "converted into state farms", again it is implied that all the rest will be redistributed, even those that are "mechanized" but are not "efficiently operated" or those that are "efficiently operated" along capitalist lines but are not "mechanized", for what is the sense of affixing this qualification. If this "efficiently operated on a mechanized basis" qualification is merely "superfluous verbosity", then Sison must admit that he does not even know how to write a program.

We cannot but take at face value what Sison wrote in our program for in reality it is nothing but phrase-mongering and pedantry. So if we take Sison seriously, his agrarian program aims to redistribute and subdivide into small parcels all vast holdings in the countryside including those big farms operating along capitalist lines and even

those that are “mechanized” but are not “efficiently operated”. This is consistent to his idea of transforming even those landless farm-workers, the rural proletariat, into middle peasants, into petty bourgeois small property owners because their basic problem is the “demand for land”. This is the meaning of the slogan “Land to the Landless” — all those that do not have land and wish to till the land will be provided with land! If this is not petty bourgeois revolutionism, anarchism and utopianism, what shall we call this mess that Sison intend to do via a bloody protracted war?

Third. Sison’s “Land to the Landless” slogan falls into the category of a “General Redistribution” policy or what Lenin calls as a “divisionist” line. In principle, a proletarian party does not reject the admissibility of such an agrarian policy which in form, seems to deviate from the demands of social progress and class struggle because it promotes small-scale production rather than large-scale production and private ownership rather than public ownership of the land. But for a proletarian party to support, and not only support but preach such a policy, and moreover, to include it in its proletarian party program — its consistency in theory and expediency in practice must be clearly justified, and its economic and political basis expounded. On this account, Sison miserably failed, he provided not a grain of thought, not an ounce of wisdom on why he opted for a “General Redistribution” policy rather than, for example, a “Nationalization of the Land” for the agrarian revolution in our country. He presented it in our program as something given and apparent, indisputable and indubitable, something self-explanatory and self-evident in its absolute correctness for all times in a democratic revolution. Proof of such an attitude: after 25 years, he does not even bother to review the correctness in theory or expediency in practice of such an agrarian policy in the light of more than two decades of peasant work and the current developments in the countryside. Like his protracted war strategy, his semifeudal theory, and all his other absolutes, Sison’s agrarian program is for all seasons.

What is the theoretical, economic and political basis of this “Land to the Landless” slogan of Sison, of this “General Redistribution” land policy, of this “divisionist” line in solving the agrarian question in the Philippines? To answer this question, we must first clarify the character, the class nature of the agrarian revolution in the Philippines of which, Sison again failed to clarify categorically and theoretically in PPDR and even in all his subsequent writings.

All are agreed that the peasants’ struggle for land is an antifeudal struggle, a struggle to eradicate the feudal survivals in our agricultural system. What is the character of this struggle? Undoubtedly and obviously, this is a bourgeois-democratic struggle, a bourgeois agrarian revolution. Meaning, its aim is to accelerate bourgeois development in our agricultural system by eradicating the survivals of feudalism in the countryside. Sison cannot argue that he is taking a “non-capitalist path” in the agricultural development of the country because his “divisionist” agrarian line promotes an out-and-out private ownership of the land and an extreme program of small-scale commodity production in the countryside. Again Sison tries to evade and obscure the capitalist path of development by keeping mum on the character of his agrarian program, hiding it behind his non-capitalist, non-socialist “national-democratic” slogans. Sison’s “Land to the Landless” slogan and Lenin’s “Nationalization of the Land” slogan are both bourgeois slogans which cannot go beyond the bounds of bourgeois progress and will establish nothing more than a bourgeois agricultural system in the countryside.

Ever since they founded their party, the Russian Social-Democrats, according to Lenin have maintained the following three propositions: “First. The agrarian revolution will necessarily be a part of the democratic revolution in Russia. The content of this revolution will be the liberation of the countryside from the relations of semifeudal bondage. Second. In its social and economic aspect, the impending agrarian revolution will be a bourgeois-democratic revolution; it will not weaken but stimulate the development of capitalism and capitalist class contradictions. Third. The Social-Democrats have every reason to support this revolution most

resolutely, setting themselves immediate task, but not tying their hands by assuming commitments, and by no means refusing to support even a 'general redistribution'."

According to Lenin, "the agrarian question is the basis of the bourgeois revolution in Russia and determines the specific national character of this revolution. The essence of this question is the struggle of the peasantry to abolish landlordism and the survivals of serfdom in the agricultural system of Russia, and consequently, also in her social and political institutions." For Lenin, "the pivot of the struggle is the feudal latifundia which are the most conspicuous embodiment and the strongest mainstay of the survivals of serfdom in Russia."

Ten and a half million peasant households in European Russia own 75 million dessiatins of land. Thirty thousand landlords each own over 500 dessiatins — altogether 70 million dessiatins. For the information of Sison's "semifeudal" fanatics, this is Lenin's capitalist Russia. This is "the main background of the arena on which the peasants' struggle for land" was developing in Russia at that time. This is the main reason "for the predominance of feudal landlords in the agricultural system in Russia and, consequently, in the Russian state generally, and in the whole of Russian life."

Lest Sison's "semifeudal" fanatics will again question this reference to Lenin's Russia on the agrarian question, let us quote Lenin's definition of landlordism: "The owners of the latifundia are feudal landlords in the economic sense of the term: the basis of the landownership was created by the history of serfdom, by the history of landgrabbing by the nobility through the centuries. The basis of their present methods of farming is the labour-service system, i.e., a direct survival of the corvee, cultivation of the land with the implements of the peasants and the virtual enslavement of the small tillers, in an endless variety of ways: winter hiring, annual leases, half-share metage, leases based on labor rent, bondage for debt, bondage for cut-off lands, for the use of forests, meadows, water, and so on and so forth, ad infinitum."

Now, which is more feudal — Lenin's Russia or Sison's Philippines?

According to Lenin: "Capitalist development in Russia has made such strides during the last half-century that the preservation of serfdom in agriculture has become absolutely impossible, and its abolition has assumed the forms of a violent crisis, of a nationwide revolution. But the abolition of serfdom in a bourgeois country is possible in two ways."

What are these "two ways" which Lenin is so emphatic about in his agrarian writings? The development of commodity production and capitalism will certainly and inevitably put an end to the survivals of serfdom. In this respect, Lenin asserted that "Russia has only one path before her, that of bourgeois development." But there may be two forms of this bourgeois development.

According to Lenin: "The survivals of serfdom may fall either as a result of the transformation of landlord economy or as a result of the abolition of the landlord latifundia, i.e., either by reform or revolution. Bourgeois development may proceed by having big landlord economies at the head, which will gradually become more and more bourgeois and gradually substitute bourgeois for feudal methods of exploitation. It may also proceed by having small peasant economies at the head, which in a revolutionary way, will remove the 'excrescence' of the feudal latifundia from the social organism and then freely develop them along the path of capitalist economy."

These two paths of objectively possible bourgeois development Lenin calls the "Prussian path" and the "American path", respectively. In the first case, "feudal landlord economy slowly evolves into bourgeois, Junker landlord economy, which condemns the peasants to decades of most harrowing expropriation and bondage, while at the same time a small minority of "big peasants" arises. In the second case, "there is no landlord economy, or else it is broken up by revolution, which confiscates and splits up the feudal estates. In that case the peasant predominates, becomes the sole agent of agriculture, and evolves into a capitalist farmer."

Lenin emphasized: “In the first case the main content of the evolution is transformation of feudal bondage into servitude and capitalist exploitation on the land of the feudal landlords — Junkers. In the second case the main background is transformation of the patriarchal peasant into a bourgeois farmer.” These “two paths” of bourgeois development in agriculture are two types of bourgeois agrarian evolution. Lenin calls the first as “bourgeois evolution of the landlord type” and the second as “bourgeois evolution of the peasant type” — a “peasant agrarian revolution”

What is the significance of this distinction? This is of cardinal importance for arriving at correct views on our revolution and for advancing a correct proletarian agrarian program. According to Lenin: “Only by clearly understanding the difference between these two types and the bourgeois character of both, can we correctly explain the agrarian question in the Russian revolution and grasp the class significance of the various agrarian programs put forward by the different parties. The pivot of the struggle, we repeat, is the feudal latifundia. The capitalist evolution of these is beyond dispute, but it is possible in two forms: either they will be abolished, eliminated in a revolutionary manner by peasant farmers, or they will be gradually transformed into Junker estates...”

With regards to tactics, how did Lenin view the first type, the “bourgeois evolution of the landlord type?”

Lenin took as an example the Stolypin program, which was supported by the Right landlords and the Octobrists and was avowedly a landlord’s program. According to Lenin: “...can it be said that it is reactionary in the economic sense, i.e., that it precludes, or seeks to preclude, the development of capitalism, to prevent a bourgeois agrarian revolution? Not at all. On the contrary, the famous agrarian legislation introduced by Stolypin under Article 87 is permeated through and through with the purely bourgeois spirit. There can be no doubt that it follows the line of capitalist evolution, facilitates and pushes forward that evolution, hastens the expropriation of the peasantry, the break-up of the village commune,

and the creation of a peasant bourgeoisie. Without a doubt, that legislation is progressive in the scientific-economic sense.”

Here, Lenin displays his consistency and integrity as a Marxist theoretician, objectively appraising in the scientific-economic sense the agrarian program of the ultra-reactionary Stolypin and never allowing his proletarian and revolutionary class bias to muddle the issue with demagoguery as phrase-mongers like Sison instinctively do.

But just because this Stolypin program is not reactionary in the economic sense, that this legislation is progressive in the scientific-economic sense, does it mean the class-conscious proletariat should support such a program?

According to Lenin: “It does not. Only vulgar Marxism can reason in that way, a Marxism whose seeds Plekhanov and the Mensheviks are so persistently sowing when they sing, shout, plead, and proclaim: we must support the bourgeoisie in its struggle against the old order of things. No. To facilitate the development of the productive forces (the highest criterion of social progress) we must support not bourgeois evolution of the landlord type, but bourgeois evolution of the peasant type.”

Bourgeois evolution of the landlord type, according to Lenin, “implies the utmost preservation of bondage and serfdom (remodelled on bourgeois lines), the least rapid development of the productive forces, and the retarded development of capitalism; it implies infinitely greater misery and suffering, exploitation and oppression for the broad mass of the peasantry and, consequently, also for the proletariat.” On the other hand, bourgeois revolution of the peasant type, according to Lenin, “implies the most rapid development of the productive forces and the best possible (under commodity production) conditions of existence for the mass of the peasantry. The tactics of Social-Democracy in the Russian bourgeois revolution are determined not by the task of supporting the liberal bourgeoisie, as the opportunist think, but by the task of supporting the fighting peasantry.”

When Lenin began to sharply draw the distinctions between the types of agrarian evolution, he was already pursuing the revision of the 1903 agrarian program of the RSDLP of which he was one of the authors. “In 1903,” according to Lenin, “when the Second Congress of our Party adopted the first agrarian program of the RSDLP, we did not yet have such an experience as would enable us to judge the character, breadth, and depth of the peasant movement. The peasant risings in South Russia in the spring of 1902 remained sporadic outbursts. One can therefore understand the restraint shown by the Social Democrats in drafting the agrarian program...”

The 1903 program attempted to define concretely the nature and terms of the radical revision of Russian agrarian relations about which the Emancipation of Labor group spoke only in a general way in its draft of an agrarian program in 1885. According to Lenin: “That attempt — in the main item of the program, dealing with the cut-off lands— was based upon a tentative distinction between lands which serve for exploitation by means of serfdom and bondage (lands ‘cut off’ in 1861) and lands which are exploited in a capitalist manner. Such tentative distinction was quite fallacious, because in practice, the peasant mass movement could not be directed against particular categories of landlord estates, but only against landlordism in general.”

The 1903 program raised a question which has not yet been raised in the 1885 program — the question of the conflict of interests between the peasants and the landlords at the moment of the revision of agrarian relations. According to Lenin: “...the solution given to this question in the program of 1903 is not correct, for, instead of contraposing the consistently peasant to the consistently Junker method of carrying out the bourgeois revolution, the program artificially sets up something intermediate.”

The absence of an open mass movement of the peasantry at that time made it impossible to solve this question on the basis of precise data. According to Lenin: “No one could say in advance with certainty to what extent disintegration among the peasantry had

progressed as a result of the partial transition of the landlords from the labor service to wage labor. No one could estimate how large was the stratum of agricultural laborers which had arisen after the Reform of 1861 and to what extent their interests had become separated from those of the ruined peasant masses.”

The erroneous 1903 program was the result of the over-estimation of the degree of capitalist development in Russian agriculture. The survivals of serfdom appeared then to the Social-Democrats, including Lenin, to be a minor detail, whereas capitalist agriculture on the peasant allotments and on the landlords' estates seemed to be quite mature and well-established.

According to Lenin: “But the survivals of serfdom in the countryside have proved to be much stronger than we thought: they have given rise to a nationwide peasant movement and they have made that movement the touchstone of the bourgeois revolution as a whole. Hegemony in the bourgeois liberation movement, which revolutionary Social Democracy always assigned to the proletariat, had to be defined more precisely as leadership which rallied the peasantry behind it. But leading to what? To the bourgeois revolution in its most consistent form. We rectified the mistake by substituting for the partial aim of combating the survivals of the old agrarian system, the aim of combating the old agrarian system as a whole. Instead of purging landlord economy, we set the aim of abolishing it.”

Theoretically, the 1903 program should have been developed, according to Lenin, “by clarifying the economic basis of our program, the facts upon which the demand for a radical revision, as distinct from a non-radical, reformist revision can and should be based, and finally by concretely defining the nature of this revision from the standpoint of the proletariat (which differs essentially from the general radical standpoint).”

Practically, it should have been developed by taking into account the experience of the peasant movement. According to Lenin: “Without the experience of a mass — indeed, more than that, of a nationwide peasant movement, the program of the Social-

Democratic Labor Party could not become concrete; for it would have been too difficult, if not impossible, on the basis of theoretical reasoning alone, to define the degree to which capitalist disintegration had taken place among our peasantry, and to what extent the latter was capable of bringing about a revolutionary-democratic change.”

Here, Lenin teaches us the materialist style of work which is alien to Sison. First, to admit what is erroneous in one’s work. Second, to amend one’s position on the basis of facts. Third, to adapt to changing conditions. Fourth, to appreciate the lessons of experience.

After only three years, Lenin vigorously initiated the revision of the 1903 agrarian program of which he was a principal author, admitting its erroneous content, meticulously compiling and studying voluminous data with the aim of clarifying the economic basis of his agrarian position, and above all, giving paramount importance to the concrete experience in peasant struggle.

How about Sison? All his basic propositions he considers as Gospel truth, and after 25 years, he wants them all “reaffirmed”. After 25 years, no clarification of the theoretical basis of his agrarian program, no evaluation of new economic facts on which it should stand, no appraisal of the peasant movement that should validate his agrarian tactics and slogans. After 25 years, his agrarian program stands as is, as if the Philippine countryside stood still for the past two and a half decades. Perhaps, the economic evolution in the Philippines can be held in abeyance for Sison’s agrarian revolution whose dynamics depend on protracted war, and not on a nationwide, genuine peasant mass movement.

The correction of Lenin’s 1903 agrarian program, made under the impact of the imposing course of events, did not make many of the Social-Democrats to think out, to its logical conclusion, their new evaluation of the degree of capitalist development in Russian agriculture.

Lenin clarified: “If the demand for the confiscation of all the landlord estates proved to be historically correct — and that undoubtedly was the case — it meant that the wide development of capitalism calls for new agrarian relationships, that the beginning of capitalism in landlord economy can and must be sacrificed to the wide and free development of capitalism on the basis of renovated small farming. To accept the demand for the confiscation of the landlord estates means admitting the possibility and the necessity of the renovation of small farming under capitalism.”

Is support for small-scale farming instead of large-scale farming admissible in principle? Does it correspond to the requirements of social progress and the class struggle of the proletariat? Is it not a gamble to support small farming under capitalism? Is it not a demagogic “trap for the peasants”?

In the polemics regarding the “restitution of the cut-off lands”, the central clause of the 1903 agrarian program, Lenin already clarified this question of “admissibility in principle”. According to Lenin: “Generally speaking, it is reactionary to support small property because such support is directed against large-scale capitalist economy and, consequently, retards social development, and obscures and glosses over the class struggle. In this case, however, we want to support small property not against capitalism but against serf-ownership; in this case, by supporting the small peasantry, we give a powerful impulse to the development of the class struggle. Indeed, on the one hand, we are thus making a last attempt to fan the embers of the peasant class (social estate) enmity for the feudal-minded landlords. On the other hand, we are clearing the way for the development of the bourgeois class antagonism in the countryside, because that antagonism is at present masked by what is supposedly the common and equal oppression of all the peasants by the remnants of the serf-owning system.”

Why is Lenin talking of “a last attempt to fan the embers of the peasant class enmity for the feudal-minded landlords”? Because, even at that time, Lenin was already aware of the Junker-type

agrarian evolution that was in progress in the Russian countryside. Lenin warned: "if a 'constitutional regime' `a la Shipov lasts in Russia for ten or fifteen years, these survivals will disappear; they will cause the population untold suffering, but nevertheless they will disappear, die out of themselves. Anything like a powerful democratic peasant movement will then become impossible, and it will no longer be possible to advocate any sort of agrarian program "with a view of abolishing the survivals of the serf-owning system."

Lenin was very much aware that the economic evolution in Russia cannot wait for the peasant revolution, that it cannot standstill while the peasantry musters its strength for a peasant-type bourgeois revolution because the inroads of capitalism is steadily progressing and the bourgeoisie is pursuing its own type of agrarian reform. But for Sison, the agrarian revolution can take its time, keep pace with the protracted war, because anyway, "imperialism will not liquidate feudalism", imperialism will not liquidate its social base. As long there is imperialism in the Philippines, there will be feudalism. Hence, we can take our own sweet time in protracted or even in perpetual struggle.

As soon as the character, breadth and depth of the peasant movement in Russia began to unfold, Lenin immediately saw the possibility of a peasant-type bourgeois revolution in the countryside gaining dominance over a Junker-type evolution and insisted that "the renovation of small farming is possible even under capitalism if the historic aim is to fight the pre-capitalist order. That is the way small farming was renovated in America, where the slave plantations were broken up in a revolutionary manner and the conditions were created for the most rapid and free development of capitalism. In the Russian revolution the struggle for land is nothing else than a struggle for the renovated path of capitalist development. The consistent slogan of such a renovation is — nationalization of the land."

From the limited "restitution of the cut-off lands", Lenin shifted to the slogan of "nationalization of the land" on the basis of the thesis

that the feudal latifundia is the pivot of the peasants' struggle for land, a thesis validated in the concrete experience of a nationwide peasant mass movement. The RSDLP was united in admitting that the bourgeois revolution in the sphere of agrarian relations must be regarded as a peasant agrarian revolution. But differences arose over the question whether Social-Democrats should support division of the landlords' estates among the peasants as private property, or municipalization of the landlords' estates, or nationalization of all the land.

Lenin fought vigorously in the Congress for the adoption of the Bolsheviks "nationalization" slogan. But the Menshevik "municipalization" slogan prevailed. We will not deal here with Lenin's polemics against "municipalization". We will instead expound the theoretical, economic and political basis of Lenin's "nationalization" slogan and his polemics against the "divisionist" slogan which is very relevant to an understanding of Sison's agrarian program and his "Land to the Landless" slogan.

What is nationalization of the land? Nationalization of the land under capitalist relations, according to Lenin, "is neither more nor less than the transfer of rent to the state." Hence, the theoretical concept of nationalization is inseparably bound up with the theory of capitalist ground rent.

What is rent in capitalist society? According to Lenin: "It is not income from the land in general. It is that part of surplus value which remains after average profit on capital is deducted." Hence, rent presupposes wage-labor in agriculture, the transformation of the cultivator into capitalist farmer, into an entrepreneur. Nationalization (in its pure form) assumes that the state receives rent from the agricultural entrepreneur who pays wages to wage workers and receives average profit on his capital — average for all enterprises, agricultural and non-agricultural.

Marxism distinguishes two forms of rent: differential and absolute rent. Differential rent springs, according to Lenin, "from the limited nature of land, its occupation by capitalist economies, quite

irrespective of whether private ownership of land exists, or what the form of landownership is.” Absolute rent arises from the private ownership of land. “That rent,” according to Lenin, “contains an element of monopoly, an element of monopoly price.” Differential rent arises from competition, absolute rent arises from monopoly.

There are differences between individual farms which can be summed up as differences between better and worst soils. The price of production of the agricultural product (capital expended on production, plus average profit on capital) is determined by the conditions of production not on the average soil, but on the worst soil. The difference between the individual price and the highest price of production is differential rent.

According to Lenin, “differential rent inevitably arises in capitalist agriculture even if the private ownership of the land is completely abolished. Under the private ownership of the land, this rent is appropriated by the landowner, for competition between capitals compels the tenant farmer to be satisfied with the average profit on capital.” If through nationalization private ownership of the land is abolished, that rent will go to the state. According to Lenin, differential rent “cannot be abolished as long as the capitalist mode of production exists.”

Private ownership of land hinders free competition, hinders the levelling of profit, the formation of average profit in agriculture and non-agricultural enterprises. By hindering the free levelling of profits in agricultural enterprises on a par with non-agricultural enterprises, the private ownership of land makes it possible to sell the agricultural product not at the highest price of production, but at the still higher individual value of the product (for the price of production is determined by the average profit on capital, while absolute rent prevents the formation of this “average” by monopolistically fixing the individual value at a level higher than the average).

Thus, according to Lenin, “differential rent is inevitably an inherent feature of every form of capitalist agriculture. Absolute rent is not; it arises only under the private ownership of land, only under the

historically created backwardness of agriculture, a backwardness that becomes fixed by monopoly.”

The question of nationalization of the land in capitalist society falls into two essentially distinct parts: the question of differential rent, and that of absolute rent. According to Lenin: “Nationalization changes the owner of the former, and undermines the very existence of the latter. Hence, on the one hand, nationalization is a partial reform within the limits of capitalism (a change of owners of a part of surplus value), and on the other hand, it abolishes the monopoly which hinders the development of capitalism as a whole.”

Lenin vigorously opposed “agrarian bimetalism”, mechanically combining private and public land-ownership, criticizing it as a theoretical absurdity, an impossibility from the purely economic point of view. For Lenin, there are two alternatives:

Either private ownership is really needed at a given stage of development, really corresponds to the fundamental interests of the capitalist farmer class — in which case it is inevitable everywhere as the basis of bourgeois society which has taken shape according to a given type.

Or private ownership is not essential for the given stage of capitalist development, does not follow inevitably from the interests of the farmer class, and even contradicts those interests — in which case the preservation of that obsolete form of ownership is impossible.

According to Lenin: “The Narodnik thinks that repudiation of private landownership is repudiation of capitalism. That is wrong. The repudiation of private landownership expresses the demands for the purest capitalist development.”

Marx criticized not only big landownership, but also small landownership. He admits that the free ownership of land by the small peasant is a necessary concomitant of small production in agriculture under certain historical conditions. But the recognition of

this historical necessity does not relieve the Marxist of the duty of making an all-round appraisal of small landownership. And according to Lenin: “Real freedom of such landownership is inconceivable without the free purchase and sale of land. Private ownership of land implies the necessity of spending capital on purchasing land.”

If redistribution is contraposed to nationalization, i.e., private against public landownership, what will be the meaning of the “free ownership of land by the small peasant” under the “Land to the Landless” slogan? According to Lenin, “real freedom of such landownership is inconceivable without the free purchase and sale of a land. Private ownership of land implies the necessity of spending capital on purchasing land.” On this point, Marx said: “The expenditure of capital in the price of the land withdraws this capital from cultivation... One of the specific evils of small-scale agriculture, where it is combined with free landownership, arises from the cultivator’s investing capital in the purchase of the land... The expenditure of money-capital for the purchase of land, then, is not an investment of agricultural capital. It is a decrease pro tanto in the capital which small peasants can employ in their own sphere of production. It reduces pro tanto the size of the their means of production and thereby narrows the economic basis of reproduction.”

This is the Marxist criticism of private land-ownership. This form of ownership, according to Lenin, “is a hindrance to the free investment of capital in the land. Either complete freedom for this investment — in which case: abolition of private landownership, i.e., nationalization of the land; or the preservation of private landownership — in which case: penetration of capital by roundabout ways...”

The abolition of private landownership, according to Lenin, “is the maximum that can be done in bourgeois society for the removal of all obstacles to the free investment of capital in agriculture and to the free flow of capital from one branch of production to another. The free, wide, and rapid development of capitalism, complete freedom for the class struggle, the disappearance of all superfluous intermediaries who make agriculture something like the ‘sweated’

industries — that is what nationalization of the land implies under the capitalist system of production.”

Under what conditions of the development of capitalism in agriculture can nationalization be brought about?

In Lenin’s time, most Marxists were of the opinion that nationalization is feasible only at a high stage of development of capitalism, when it will have fully prepared the conditions for the public ownership of the land. To bring about nationalization, it was assumed that large-scale capitalist farming must first be established.

Lenin pointed out the incorrectness of this view. Theoretically, it cannot be substantiated. It cannot be supported by direct references to Marx. The facts of experience speaks against it. According to Lenin, nationalization is the “ideally” pure development of capitalism in agriculture. Nationalization is not only an effect of, but also a condition for the rapid development of capitalism, a measure of bourgeois progress.

According to Lenin: “To associate nationalization with the epoch of highly developed capitalism means repudiating it as a measure of bourgeois progress; and such a repudiation directly contradicts economic theory.”

Lenin based his assertion directly on Marx. After pointing out that the landowner is an absolutely superfluous figure in capitalist production, that the purpose of the latter is “fully answered” if the land belongs to the state, Marx said: “That is why in theory the radical bourgeoisie arrives at the repudiation of private landed property... In practice however, since the attack on one form of property, private property in relations to the conditions of labor, would be very dangerous for the other form. Moreover, the bourgeoisie has territorialized himself.”

According to Lenin, Marx does not mention the undeveloped stage of capitalism in agriculture as an obstacle to the achievement of nationalization. What he mentions are two obstacles which speak

much more strongly in favor of the idea of achieving nationalization in the epoch of bourgeois revolution.

Lenin interpreted Marx' "two obstacles" to nationalization. First obstacle: the radical bourgeoisie lacks the courage to attack private landed property owing to the danger of a socialist attack on all private property. Second obstacle: By the bourgeoisie having "territorialized himself", what Marx has in mind is that the bourgeois mode of production has already entrenched itself in private landed property.

According to Lenin: "When the bourgeoisie, as a class, has already become bound up with landed property on a broad, predominating scale, has already 'territorialized itself', 'settled on the land', fully subordinated landed property to itself, then a genuine social movement of the bourgeoisie in favor of nationalization is impossible. It is impossible for the simple reason that no class ever goes against itself."

These two obstacles are removable only, according to Lenin, "in the epoch of rising and not of declining capitalism, in the epoch of the bourgeois revolution, and not on the eve of the socialist revolution. The view that nationalization is feasible only at a high stage of development of capitalism cannot be called Marxist... The 'radical bourgeoisie' cannot be courageous in the epoch of strongly developed capitalism... In the epoch of bourgeois revolution, however, the objective conditions compel the 'radical bourgeoisie' to be courageous; for, in solving historical problems of the given period, the bourgeoisie, as a class cannot yet fear the proletarian revolution. In the epoch of bourgeois revolution the bourgeoisie has not yet territorialized itself: landownership is still too much steeped in feudalism in such an epoch. The phenomenon of the mass of the bourgeois farmers fighting against the principal forms of landownership and therefore arriving at the practical achievement of the complete bourgeois 'liberation of the land, i.e., nationalization, becomes possible."

If nationalization is regarded as a measure most likely to be achieved in the epoch of bourgeois revolution, does it mean that nationalization will probably be a transition to division of the land as private property?

Lenin admits that nationalization may turn out to be a mere transition to division. The farmers who have adapted themselves, who have renovated the whole system of landownership, may demand that the new agrarian system be consolidated, i.e., that the holdings they have rented from the state be converted into their property. The circumstances under which the new farmers' demand for division of the land cannot be predicted with accuracy. But capitalist developments after the bourgeois revolution will inevitably give rise to such circumstances.

In the light of this possible development, the fundamental question is: how will this affect the proletarian agrarian program, what will be the attitude of the workers' party towards the possible demand of the new farmers for the division of the land?

To this question, Lenin gave a very definite reply: "The proletariat can and must support the militant bourgeoisie when the latter wages a really revolutionary struggle against feudalism. But it is not for the proletariat to support the bourgeoisie when the latter is becoming quiescent. If it is certain that a victorious bourgeois revolution in Russia is impossible without the nationalization of the land, then it is still more certain that a subsequent turn towards the division of the land is impossible without a certain amount of 'restoration', without the peasantry (or, rather, from the point of view of the presumed relations: farmers) turning towards counterrevolution. The proletariat will uphold the revolutionary traditions against all such strivings and will not assist them."

In the event of the new farmer class turning towards division of the land, Lenin insisted that it would be a great mistake to think that "nationalization would be a transient phenomenon of no serious significance. In any case, it would have tremendous material and moral significance."

Material significance, in that nothing is capable of so thoroughly sweeping away the survivals of medievalism in Russia, of so thoroughly renovating the rural districts, of so rapidly promoting agricultural progress, as nationalization. Lenin stressed: “Any other solution to the agrarian question in the revolution would create less favorable starting points for further economic development.”

The moral significance of nationalization in the revolutionary epoch is that the proletariat helps to strike a blow at “one form of private property.” Lenin stressed: “The proletariat stands for the most consistent and most determined bourgeois revolution and the most favorable conditions for capitalist development, thereby most effectively counteracting all half-heartedness, flabbiness, spinelessness and passivity — qualities which the bourgeoisie cannot help displaying.”

A most thorough sweeping away of all the survivals of feudalism, a most consistent and most determined agrarian revolution of the peasant-type — this is the meaning of the slogan for the nationalization of all the land. Hence, the nationalization slogan, the agrarian struggle, is inseparably connected with the political revolution.

This peasant agrarian revolution, this nationalization of the land involves the confiscation of the landlord estates, i.e., the taking of the land without compensation. According to Lenin: “The peasantry cannot carry out an agrarian revolution without abolishing the old regime, the standing army and the bureaucracy, because all these are the most reliable mainstays of landlordism, bound to it by thousand of ties.” For the peasantry to take all the land, all political power has to be taken as well. Hence, the inseparable connection of Lenin’s slogan for the “nationalization of the land” with the slogan for a “republic”. The former is impossible apart from the latter. Unless the peasants go the whole way in politics, it is of no use thinking seriously of confiscating the landlords’ land.

According to Lenin: “The Party explains that the best method of taking possession of the land in bourgeois society is by abolishing

private ownership of land, nationalizing the land, and transferring to the state, and that such a measure can neither be carried out nor bear real fruit without complete democratization not only of local institutions, but of the whole structure of the state, including the establishment of a republic, the abolition of the standing army, election of officials by the people, etc.”

The nationalization of the land, the victory of the peasant revolution can only come about with the conquest of power of the peasantry, and this conquest of power of the peasantry can only come about under the leadership of the proletariat. Why is it that a peasant revolution in a bourgeois country is possible only and can only be victorious under the leadership of the proletariat? According to Lenin: “... since commodity production does not unite or centralize the peasants, but disintegrates and disunites them, a peasant revolution in a bourgeois country is possible only under the leadership of the proletariat...”

Hence, Lenin defines the victory of the peasant revolution, the victory of the bourgeois democratic revolution in Russia as the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry. According to Lenin: “The Bolsheviks from the outset defined the general and the basic class conditions for the victory of this revolution as the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry.” This is what is meant by Lenin by the decisive victory of the democratic revolution.

In his draft agrarian program of 1906, Lenin presented the slogan for the nationalization of the land in this manner: “If, however, the decisive victory of the present revolution in Russia brings about the complete sovereignty of the people, i.e., establishes a republic and a full democratic system, the Party will seek the abolition of private ownership of land and transfer all the land to the whole people as common property.” (In a footnote, Lenin presented a variant formulation: “... the Party will support the striving of the revolutionary peasantry to abolish private ownership of land and seek the transfer of all the land to the state.”)

Hence, Lenin's "nationalization" slogan is an agrarian policy in the event of a decisive victory of the revolution, in the revolution resulting in the establishment of a revolutionary-democratic of the proletariat and the peasantry. Lenin considered two possible outcomes of the bourgeois revolution and he considered the "nationalization" slogan as possible only in the event of the "favorable outcome of the revolution", of the peasant conquering power with the proletariat in the democratic revolution. The other possible outcome is bourgeois agricultural development of the Junker type.

Lenin admitted the possibility of an unfavorable outcome of the revolution due to a "fundamental economic difficulty" in advancing the peasant struggle, declaring that "the real 'difficulty' lies in securing the victory of the peasant agrarian revolution in a country which, at least since 1861, has been developing along Junker-bourgeois lines."

He insisted that Marxism must reckon with the two possibilities in the capitalist evolution of agriculture in Russia and clearly show the people the conditions and significance of each possibility, and that Marxism must resolutely combat the view that a radical agrarian revolution is possible in Russia without a radical political revolution. And above all, Lenin insisted that Marxism cannot link the destiny of socialism in Russia with the outcome of the bourgeois democratic revolution.

According to Lenin: "Social-Democracy, the party of the proletariat, does not in any way link the destiny of socialism with either of the two possible outcomes of the bourgeois revolution. Either outcome implies the development of capitalism and the oppression of the proletariat, whether under a landlord monarchy with private ownership of land, or under a farmers republic, even with the nationalization of the land. Therefore, only an absolutely independent and purely proletarian party is able to defend the cause of socialism 'whatever the situation of democratic agrarian reforms' may be, as the concluding part of my agrarian program declares..."

We quote the concluding part of Lenin's draft agrarian program if only to show the meaning of Leninist consistency in principle in a proletarian program: "Furthermore, the object of the RSDLP in all circumstances, and whatever the situation of democratic reform, is steadily to strive for the independent class organization of the rural proletariat; to explain that its interests are irreconcilably opposed to those of the peasant bourgeoisie; to warn against being tempted by small-scale ownership, which cannot, so long as commodity production exists, abolish poverty among the masses; and lastly to urge the necessity for a complete socialist revolution as the only means of abolishing all poverty and exploitation."

But the bourgeois nature of both possible outcomes of the agrarian revolution by no means implies that Social-Democrats can be indifferent to the struggle for one or the other outcome.

According to Lenin: "It is undoubtedly in the interests of the working class to give the most vigorous support to the peasant revolution. More than that: it must play the leading part in that revolution. In fighting for a favorable outcome of the revolution we must spread among the masses a very clear understanding of what keeping to the landlord path of agrarian revolution means, what incalculable hardships (arising not out of capitalism, but from the inadequate development of capitalism) it has in store for all the toiling masses. On the other hand, we must also explain the petty-bourgeois nature of the peasant revolution, and the fallacy of placing any 'socialist' hopes in it."

And since Lenin did not link the destiny of socialism with either of the possible outcomes of the bourgeois revolution, his program cannot be identical for both a favorable and "unfavorable case". According to Lenin: "When Plekhanov said that we do not need drafts specially providing for both the one and the other case (that is, drafts built upon 'ifs') he said it simply without thinking; for it is precisely from his standpoint, from the standpoint of the probability of the worst outcome, or of the necessity of reckoning with it, that it is particularly necessary to divide the program into two parts, as I did. It

needs to be said that on the present path of landlord-bourgeois development the workers' party stands for such and such measures, while at the same time it helps the peasantry with all its might to abolish landlordism entirely and thus create the possibility for broader and freer conditions of development."

Plekhanov ridiculed Lenin for his "optimism" in assuming the victory of the peasant agrarian revolution though it was Lenin who was insisting on the two possible outcomes of the bourgeois revolution, on the necessity of preparing for these two possibilities, on the error of linking the destiny of the socialist revolution with the outcome of the bourgeois revolution, etc.

But how about Sison? He is not only an optimist. He looks at things as preordained. He talks only of one path — a peasant agrarian revolution. There is only one possibility: the victory of armed agrarian revolution. And the destiny of the entire Philippine revolution — the socialist and the democratic — depends entirely and exclusively on this agrarian revolution which he oversimplified into a struggle for land and equated with protracted war.

If we lose in this protracted war which is essentially a peasant war, then everything is lost, including the socialist revolution, because it depends entirely on the victory of the people's democratic revolution, on the completion of the bourgeois revolution that has only one meaning: the seizure, the conquest of power of the proletariat in the democratic revolution.

But for Sison, this is idle talk, these are bad words. Defeat is impossible because the revolution — this peasant revolution, this people's revolution — is invincible! He calls it invincible because he is unmindful of the fact that the peasant revolution is a petty bourgeois revolution, that the people's revolution is a bourgeois revolution or because his mind is filled with the absolute revolutionariness of the peasantry and the masses of the people regardless of their class tendencies, regardless of their non-proletarian character.

Sison talks of the proletariat seizing power in the democratic revolution, and according to him, together with the peasantry and the people, which are both under the absolute hegemony of the Party.

The party of the proletariat will seize power in the democratic revolution, yet his maximum agrarian program, the hallmark of his agrarian program is aimed at promoting the private ownership of the land. And not only private ownership of the land but small landownership of the middle peasant type, small-scale commodity production. Furthermore, not only small private landownership and small-scale commodity production, but the conversion of the propertyless proletarian and semiproletarian masses in the countryside into petty bourgeois small property owners and small-scale commodity producers. This agrarian program is a complete rupture with Marxist economic theory and an error of historical perspective.

Lenin said: "Everything in good season. Social-Democracy cannot undertake never to support division of the land. In a different historical situation, at a different stage of the agrarian evolution, this division may prove unavoidable. But division of the land is an entirely wrong expression of the aims of the bourgeois democratic revolution in Russia in 1907."

Under what historical situation, and stage of agrarian evolution, can a workers' party undertake to support division of the land in its proletarian agrarian program?

First. Not in a historical situation when the "pivot" of the struggle is the break-up of the vast holdings of the landlord class" and the period of "rising" capitalism in agriculture with all the survivals of feudalism still prevalent. If Sison believes that semifeudal Philippines is more backward than capitalist Russia, his "divisionist" agrarian line is theoretically and economically untenable in such a historical situation and stage of agrarian evolution.

Second. Division of the land might be progressive if it consolidates modern farming, modern agricultural methods and scraps the old. It

might be progressive if the real conditions of life of the small cultivator, of the small farmer in the village, confront him with economic problems that require the consolidation of the new agriculture, which has already taken shape, by means of dividing the land as private property.

But if the economic problem is not of “consolidating the new agriculture” but of “clearing the ground for the creation of a new agriculture” (out of the existing elements), Lenin insists that this new agriculture be built on “free”, i.e., nationalized, land. For the workers’ party to preach the division of the land under this condition “is glaring historical tactlessness and reveals the inability to take stock of the concrete historical situation.”

The “divisionists”, according to Lenin “are skipping the historical task of the present revolution; they assume that the objectives of the peasant mass struggle have already been achieved, whereas the struggle has only just begun. Instead of stimulating the process of renovation, instead of explaining to the peasantry the conditions for consistent renovation, they are already designing a dressing-gown for the appeased, renovated farmer.”

Sison obviously does not know the correct economic theory and correct historical context of a “divisionist” agrarian program because, while preaching the private ownership of the land, in all his analysis and assertions never did he assume that the objectives of the peasant mass struggle against feudalism have already been achieved, and until now, he believes that the Filipino peasantry is a feudal class and not a renovated farmer.

If a new system of agriculture must first develop sufficiently to have the division of the land adapted to it, the question is: what will be the character of this agricultural development? It will probably develop as a Junker-type, a landlord-bourgeois type of agrarian evolution. Under this condition, Lenin’s “fundamental economic difficulty” of advancing a powerful peasant revolution will come to the fore, and there is no certainty that a “Land to the Landless” slogan can really incite the mass of the peasantry to a nationwide revolt. As

the mass of proletarian and semiproletarian elements in the countryside increases, the revolutionary appeal of such a slogan decreases and its theoretical and economic soundness put in question.

According to Lenin: "... by what criterion are we to determine whether the new system of agriculture has already developed sufficiently to have the division of the land adapted to it, and not to have the division of the land that will perpetuate the old obstacles to the new farming? There can be but one criterion, that of practice. No statistics in the world can assess whether the elements of a peasant bourgeoisie in a given country have 'hardened' sufficiently to enable the system of landownership to be adapted to the system of farming. This can be assessed by the mass of the farmers themselves."

What is meant by Lenin by the peasant bourgeoisie sufficiently "hardened"? Lenin is referring to the fanaticism of the private property owner which, in due time, "will assert itself as a demand of the newly-hatched free farmer for the assured possession of his farm". According to Lenin: "The small farmer, at all times and throughout the world becomes so attached to his farm (if it really his farm and not a piece of the landlord estate let out on labor service, as is frequently the case in Russia) that his 'fanatical' defence of private ownership of the land is inevitable at a certain historical period and for a certain space of time."

It was not statistics that proved that the Russian peasantry have not sufficiently "hardened" in defence of private landownership, but the peasant mass movement itself. At that time, all the peasant parties came forward in the Russian revolution with a program of land nationalization. According to Lenin: "... in the present epoch the mass of the Russian peasants are not displaying the fanaticism of private property owners (a fanaticism which is fostered by all the ruling classes, by all the liberal-bourgeois politicians), but are putting forward a widespread and firmly held demand for the nationalization of the land..."

Lenin gave paramount importance to concrete practice for the dynamics of peasant mass struggle itself will resolve the complex nature of agrarian relations and prove the correctness or incorrectness of agrarian programs. Speaking of practice, it should now be asked: After 25 years of concentrating our forces and attention in the countryside, how do we appraise and describe the level of development of the peasant mass movement in the Philippines? How do we explain the fact that despite our stress and effort on peasant work, there is still no trend towards a genuine spontaneous mass movement of the peasantry, not a single experience of a peasant mass uprising or even a peasant mass upsurge for the past several decades? Is there really a genuine peasant agrarian revolution in the Philippines that is mustering its strength nationwide or what we have is a declining protracted war supported by a dwindling organized peasant base? Is peasant support for Sison's protracted war to be interpreted as the peasant mass movement, as the peasant revolution, as the peasant agrarian revolution? Has the "Land to the Landless" slogan really inspired and incited the peasantry towards a real mass, historic struggle for such a demand?

Criticism against the "divisionist" line of Sison's agrarian program does not necessarily mean that we are now advocating a "nationalization" slogan. We will push for a "nationalization of the land" if Philippine economic conditions today correspond to what Lenin defined as historical conditions for this form of agrarian policy, namely: (1) Philippine agriculture is still in the period of developing capitalism; (2) the pivot of the agrarian struggle is the break-up of feudal landholdings; and (3) if the democratic revolution in the Philippines brings about a worker-peasant coalition government.

But one thing is definite: If Philippine agriculture is what Sison describes as feudal and semifeudal, and if the peasant struggle culminates in a revolutionary seizure of power in a national democratic revolution, then the policy of "General Redistribution" is a totally wrong agrarian policy. The correct slogan under this condition is the "Nationalization of the Land" on the basis of Marxist economic

theory and the confluence of economic and political conditions for a victorious agrarian revolution of the peasant-type.

this paper, what we are presenting is not an alternative agrarian platform but a critique on the theoretical, economic, political and tactical basis of Sison's agrarian program, particularly its "divisionist" line which Sison did not bother to clarify for the past 25 years. This is actually a critique against Sison's petty bourgeois demagoguery and cretinism. It has never been the concern of Sison to clarify the theoretical, economic, political and tactical basis of his agrarian program because his "agrarian revolution" is nothing but revolutionary demagoguery and cretinism.

He talks of "agrarian revolution" not because he seriously wants to solve the peasant question in the Philippines from the standpoint of the proletariat and of social progress (or even from the real standpoint of the peasantry). He talks of "agrarian revolution" because he simply wants to mobilize the mass of the peasantry for his protracted war in the countryside and his "strategy of seizure."

He will preach, like the rabble-rousing politician that he is, the most demagogic, the most populist agrarian slogan devoid of any principles and coherence merely to induce and incite the peasantry to support his protracted war. Sison's "agrarian revolution" is a grand and brutal deception of the Filipino peasantry and a complete betrayal of the principled revolutionary standpoint of the proletariat on the peasant question. His "agrarian" program and his "agrarian" revolution arose not from a clear, scientific analysis and understanding of agrarian political economy from the theoretical framework of Marxism-Leninism. It arose from his preconceived, prefabricated and predetermined strategy of people's war, from his desire and obsession for a Chinese type protracted war.

Sison vulgarized not only the Philippine revolution but the agrarian revolution and the peasant mass movement as well, all in the interest of his protracted war. He completely subsumed the agrarian revolution to his protracted war, substituted the armed struggle for

the peasant mass movement, and subordinated the dynamics of the mass struggle to the strategy and tactics of military struggle.

Sison's struggle for a minimum agrarian program (rent reduction) and maximum agrarian program (land confiscation) is premised not on the actual development of the mass struggle of the peasantry and the proletariat, on the real dynamics of the peasant mass movement as a historic class movement, but on the strategy and tactics of protracted war.

He arbitrarily and stupidly imposes a limit to the peasant struggle — restricting it to rent reduction — not because this is the maximum development that the peasant mass struggle is capable of achieving in an entire historic situation. In the first place, who is Sison, to predetermine the limits of, and impose his will on the peasant mass struggle which is supposed to be a historic struggle against the old, feudal order?

This arbitrary and stupid imposition of a limit to the peasant struggle, to the agrarian revolution, restricting it to rent reduction for a long period time — this suspension has now taken 25 years — is based not on the anticipated growth of the strength of the peasant movement to go farther, to push to a greater distance, to a more advance point, but on the limits of the armed struggle, on strength of the people's army, on the stage of development of the protracted war.

He imposes such a limit because this is only what the people's army is capable of defending and not because this is only what the peasant movement is capable of achieving. Sison will only push for the maximum demand of the peasantry, for land confiscation, as soon as the people's army attains the strength to defend such a gain in the higher stages of the war.

This is virtually saying to the peasantry: hold in abeyance your revolutionary energy, your economic necessity, your class struggle and to wait for your people's army to accumulate more strength, wait for the reactionary army to weaken in military capability through

protracted war, and meanwhile, rest content for a long period of time in “rent reduction”. Imagine, telling the peasantry to sacrifice to the utmost for a long period of time, endure the loss of their loved ones, endure the atrocities of the enemy — specially during the most difficult stage of the war, the strategic defensive — all these for “rent reduction”!! For the past two and a half decades, the party of the proletariat and the mass of the peasantry have sacrificed so much in a most ruthless war, and yet we have not really achieved so much even in “rent reduction” and we dare call this “rent reduction through armed struggle” our agrarian revolution, a 25-year “peasant revolution” for “rent reduction”.

Indeed, for Sison, the peasantry is a most revolutionary class for it to withstand a most ruthless war — not merely because of this measly “rent reduction” minimum demand — but because the peasantry is staunchly antifeudal and anti-imperialist whatever this means to the uneducated mass of small property owners and commodity producers of the countryside. If the peasantry is enduring this protracted war because they are conscious of their class interests as peasants, of their demand for “rent reduction”, indeed, they appear to be more revolutionary than the industrial proletariat — the supposed vanguard of the struggle for freedom and democracy — for the working class will not sacrifice this much for a struggle for a measly “wage increase”, a struggle to better the terms of their enslavement, the price of wage-slavery. Perhaps, this explains why Sison is offering to the rural proletariat and semiproletariat, not the vision of socialism but a parcel of land, not the struggle for a propertyless society for the propertyless masses but to revert themselves into small property owners because in small commodity production without imperialist and feudal oppression life will be a perfect bliss for the masses of tillers. For Sison, the struggle for land is not only the “main content of the people’s democratic revolution”. This struggle for land — this struggle for the private ownership of land for small commodity production — revolutionizes the consciousness of the propertyless masses of the people, inspires them to become small property owners against feudal and imperialist oppression.

Even the struggle for “national democracy” will not awaken the full magnitude of the revolutionariness of the working class, of the mass of the working class, for it offers to them the “abolition of feudal and foreign oppression” but not the abolition of wage-slavery. The working class, the mass of the working class and not only its party, will readily assume the vanguard role in the struggle for national freedom and democracy, if they correctly understand this historic struggle from the class point of view, from the point of view of the struggle for socialism, from the point of view of the abolition of wage-slavery, the abolition of private property, the abolition of classes in society through the class struggle of the proletariat.

But for Sison, in the supposed proletarian program of the supposed working class revolutionary party, what he offers to the Filipino proletariat is nothing more than national democracy — the overthrow of foreign and feudal rule. To the industrial working class, he offers them “national industrialization”. To the agricultural working class, he offers them a “parcel of land” which they can call their very own, a promise to revert them from miserable propertyless masses into aspiring property owners in a generalized system of small commodity production. This is Sison’s program for a people’s democratic revolution of the working class party — a program of revolution for bourgeois rule.

PPW: A New-Type Revolution of the Wrong Type, 1994

Works of Lagman

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In the critique of *PPDR*, we have shown, that due to his betrayal of the proletarian class line, Sison's "people's revolution" is not a "new type" revolution. It is ultra-revolutionary in form but bourgeois-reformist in content.

He abandons the independent class line of the proletariat and the socialist class movement in the struggle to complete the democratic revolution. All Sison does is pay lip service to proletarian leadership and to its socialist aim. However, in his program and policies, what he pursues is a petty bourgeois, purely national-democratic, ultra-revolutionist line.

Sison's "people's revolution" can only be understood as "new type" in the sense that it's a "Marxist-Leninist" revolution of the wrong type. A Maoist type of vulgarized revolution. The way our national democratic revolution was reduced and transformed, absolutized and dogmatized into a protracted war type of revolution proves that it is a wrong type of revolution of the worst kind. It signifies a complete rupture with Marxist-Leninist theory and practice all along the line. "War revolution" is a poor imitation of Sison's Chinese paradigm. Engels once admonished: "*Do not play with insurrection*". He should have added: "*More so, with war.*"

Universality of PPW: Sison's Chinese Universe

Sison presents PPW to our revolutionary forces as a “universal truth”. The question is: from what universe did he abstract this “universal truth”?

What is a universal truth? For a theoretical proposition to be considered universal, its inner logic must be of general application, and is validated in universal practice.

From what part of the planet earth has this PPW been validated as a universal truth in the revolutionary struggle of the oppressed masses?

Sison must be reminded that what he wants to be upheld as universal is not “people’s war” *in general*, but the “protracted war” type of “people’s war”, the principles and strategy of protracted war as developed by Mao Ze Dong.

Again, we should beware of Sison’s rhetorical shuffle once cornered in theoretical debate. If Sison is just talking of “people’s war” and not of “protracted war”, he is phrase-mongering. All revolutions are people’s war, it’s but another name for revolution. As Engels said: “*All revolution, whatever form it may take, is a form of violence.*” And Lenin said: “*Revolution is war*”. Both are referring to the violent character of revolution, to the necessity of revolutionary violence. But what specific form or combination of forms this revolutionary violence will take is a different question and is beyond the generic category of the term “people’s war”.

Mao’s protracted war is a people’s war, but a specific type of people’s war. What distinguishes it from other forms of people’s war? On two counts: *Mao’s concept of the three strategic stages of protracted war and his strategic line of encircling the cities from the countryside.*

These two basic features of protracted war characterize and define it as a distinct type of people’s war or revolutionary war. These two basic features make a people’s war a protracted war. This is Sison’s people’s war, a protracted people’s war and this is what he

wants to be reaffirmed as a universal truth as it has been upheld as an absolute truth in our twenty-five years of revolutionary struggle.

Protracted war was proven correct in semicolonial and semifeudal China with outstanding success. But does it mean it is universal, an absolute truth for all semicolonial and semifeudal societies?

Does it mean it is correct and applicable in “semicolonial and semifeudal” Philippines? If a country is semicolonial and semifeudal, does it automatically follow that its people’s war must take the form of protracted war? Is the semicolonial and semifeudal question the decisive determinant in the strategy of protracted war?

Let us first review Mao’s revolution, the internal logic of his protracted war theory, and why it was proven successful in China.

After the establishment of the Chinese Communist Party in 1921, the national democratic revolution in China passed through four periods. The first covers the “First Revolutionary Civil War”(1924-27) also known as the Northern Expedition. The second covers the “Second Revolutionary Civil War”(1927-37) also known as the “Agrarian Revolutionary War” or the period of reaction. The third covers the period of the “War of Resistance Against Japan” (1937-45). And the last and final stage, the “Third Revolutionary Civil War”(1945-49) which resulted in the victory of the people’s democratic revolution in China led by the CCP.

The first two periods both ended in defeat. Mao took over the leadership of the CCP in the latter stage of the second period (January 1935 Tsunyi Conference) during the Long March, and from thereon, the Chinese revolution took the path of protracted war.

In 1921, the year it was founded, the CCP was minuscule, with less than a hundred members. It grew very slowly in its first years. At the time of the Second Congress (1922) there were only 123 members, and 432 by the Third Congress (1923). It reached a thousand members by the time of the Fourth Congress in 1925. The CCP was deeply entrenched in the cities, among the workers, but

was marginal in the countryside. From 1925, it expanded rapidly to about 30,000 members by 1926. By 1927, it reached a high of 58,000. The CCP's united front tactics with the Guomintang was crucial in this upsurge.

As early as 1922, there were already talks with Sun Yat-sen for the possibility of an alliance between the Guomintang and the CCP, between China and the Soviet Union. By 1923, the Guomintang approved a proclamation affirming a united front struggle with the CCP against the Northern warlords and against the unequal treaties imposed by the imperialist countries on China.

A delegate from the Communist International-Maring, a Dutchman who was very familiar with the Far East and attended the founding congress of the CCP-played an important personal role in forging this united front with Sun Yat-sen. By August 1923, Sun sent a mission to Moscow led by Chiang Kai-shek. In return, a Soviet mission led by Michael Borodin arrived in Canton in September.

Borodin participated actively in the movement to reorganize the Guomintang, serving as its political adviser. A provisional executive committee of the Guomintang was formed in October which included a CCP member. A Congress for reorganizing the Guomintang was planned for January 1924. During this time, the gap between Sun Yat-sen and the imperialist countries continued to widen. Sun declared publicly that he had lost all faith in the Western powers and no longer trusted anyone but the USSR.

The national congress of the Guomintang of January 1924 in Canton deepened the content of Sun Yat-sen's "Three People's Principles". The principle of nationalism was equated with anti-imperialist struggle; the principle of democracy underscored the power of the people; and the principle of the well-being of the people meant socialism. These three principles were extended into three new policies: cooperation with the Soviet Union, alliance with the Chinese Communists, and support of the worker and peasant movements.

The Guomintang apparatus was reorganized and some key positions were given to CCP members, particularly in the organization and propaganda departments. Most of the effort was concentrated on the army. A military academy was founded in Whampoa in May 1924. Head of the academy was Chiang Kai-shek (who was integrated by Stalin into the Comintern!), adviser was Soviet general Vasily Blucher (better known as Galen), and its political commissar was Chou En-lai. The army itself was reorganized and given political commissars.

This united front created extremely favorable conditions for the advance of the Chinese revolution and the rapid growth of the CCP. By 1925, broad popular movements suddenly exploded, participated in by millions of people across China. All preparations were already underway for the Northern Expedition against the warlords and the struggle to unify China under a central government when Sun Yat-sen died of cancer in March 1925. His sudden death triggered intense struggle within the Guomintang, between its left and right wings which ultimately led to the collapse of the united front and the defeat of the revolution.

In an attempt to stop the splintering of the Guomintang after Sun's death, the left wing, with the support of the CCP, convened the Second Congress of the Guomintang in January 1926. The left consolidated its positions: out of 36 members of the Central Committee, 13 were from the left and 7 from the center.

But the victory of the left wing in the Second Congress was shortlived. Chiang Kai-shek, organized a probing attack in March 1926 against the Soviet advisers and the CCP. By May, the Communists were ousted from the leadership of the departments of organization and propaganda, and measures were taken in Canton to restrict the activity of the unions. Chiang officially took control of the government army by June 1926.

The CCP, preferred to bide its time and not provoke a confrontation. It hoped that the Northern Expedition, which was now imminent, would allow it to reestablish its influence. But the

Expedition, though it was successful militarily in defeating most of the Northern warlords, became instead an opportunity for Chiang to consolidate his position with the support of these warlords plus their colonial patrons. By 1927, the right wing of the Guomintang decided on a total realignment of political forces in China, entered into agreements with the imperialist powers while breaking up relations with the revolutionaries who had now become a threat. Since the North has been weakened due to the Northern Expedition and many of its armies have defected to the South, this became increasingly possible.

Chiang set up headquarters in Nanchang, the capital of Jiangxi while the official Nationalist government moved to Wuhan. The Wuhan-based government was dominated by the left wing of the Guomintang, especially by Xu Quian, Sun Yat-sen's widow. Borodin and the Soviet advisers exerted quite an influence and the Communists were very active, as were the mass organizations they influenced: the peasant associations, the student organizations, and specially the General Pan-Chinese Union, which had three million members.

The struggle between Wuhan and Nanchang reached a crucial stage in the struggle for Shanghai. This was China's largest city, the center of the workers' movement after 1919 and the base of Chinese financial groups and their imperialist cohorts. Twice, in November 1926 and February 1927, the Shanghai Communists with the workers' unions attempted armed uprisings in the city but failed. On their third attempt, on March 18, 1927, the General Union of Shanghai, led by the CCP, unleashed an insurrection involving 800,000 workers. In four days the union militias succeeded in defeating and routing the northern troops of the warlords and took control of the city. Chiang Kai-shek's troops did not arrive until March 23, when the fighting was over. The victory of the General Union of Shanghai precipitated the open crisis within the Guomintang.

Chiang Kai-shek did not immediately make his decisive move. Political authority was held by a provisional popular government

which included Communists. But Chiang's army occupied the city. Though it refused to dissolve the armed militias of the unions, the CCP however, left them and the whole working class politically unprepared for Chiang's offensive. In this volatile condition, the CCP continued to pursue the conciliatory and capitulationist line established by the Comintern. They agreed not to threaten the status of the imperialist concessions. They also agreed to confine union activities to economic action. They continued to treat Chiang Kai-shek like a trustworthy revolutionary leader.

Early morning of April 12, Chiang Kai-shek made his decisive move. The buildings of the union militias were attacked and the people inside were massacred. Chou En-lai just managed to escape but other Communist leaders were killed. Unarmed, the worker's movement was virtually defenseless. The unions were banned and the Communists were defeated. The repression of the unions, other mass organizations and the Communists spread to all the provinces controlled by Chiang Kai-shek's army. In the areas held by the Northern warlords, anti-Communist repression intensified for they no longer feared reprisals from the Nationalist army now firmly controlled by Chiang Kai-shek.

Up to this point, the official Nationalist government based in Wuhan continued to hold the two provinces of Hubei and Hunan and to rely on the coalition between the left-wing Guomintang and the CCP. The peasant associations there remained strong and active (with 9 millions members). On May 1, 1927, the labor unions held their Fourth National Workers Congress, attended by 300 delegates (representing 3 million unionized workers).

Because of the April 12 attack, Chiang Kai-shek was expelled by the Wuhan government from the Guomintang. But on April 18, he established a rival "national government" in Nanking claiming to be the legitimate heir of Sun Yat-sen's Guomintang. However, because of the class character of the Wuhan leadership plus the indecisiveness of the CCP and its conciliatory line to both the right

and left wings of the Guomintang, the Wuhan government finally succumbed to Chiang Kai-shek's unrelenting pressure.

By July 15, Wang Jing-wei, the nominal head of Wuhan, officially announced the expulsion of the Communists from the Guomintang and made peace with Nanking. The Communists went underground and the Soviet advisers were expelled.

In a special meeting on August 7, 1927, the Central Committee of the CCP abandoned its policy of a united front with the Guomintang. Chen Du-xiu, who had been secretary-general since the party's founding, was discharged and replaced by Qu Qiu-bai who had lived in Moscow for some time and an avid follower of the Stalin.

Chen Du-xiu was held responsible for all the opportunist errors and failures of the party. But it was very clear that all major policies and tactics pursued by the CCP from 1924-27 emanated from Moscow and transmitted by the representatives of the Comintern in China. Even Mao, in his writings, failed to cite Stalin and the Comintern for these Right errors and heaped all the blame upon Chen Du-xiu. Even the swing to "Left" errors by the adventurist elements who succeed Chen Du-xiu was not traced to Stalin and the Comintern. A series of unsuccessful armed uprisings during the second half of 1927 followed the opportunist errors in the period of the united front.

On August 1, 1927, Zhou En-lai led an uprising in Nanchang, capital of Kiangsi Province, with the support of He Long, Ye Ting and Zhu De, leaders of the local Nationalist armies. More than 30,000 troops took part in the uprising. They were successful for a few days but by August 5, they were forced to evacuate Nanchang because of the pressure from Chiang Kai-shek's army. They suffered a major defeat while withdrawing from Nanchang towards Kwantung Province. Some of the insurgents joined Peng Pai's rural Red base in east Guandong. Peng Pai pioneered the building of rural guerilla Red bases long before Mao started his in the Ching Kang Mountains. Zhu De, a former warlord turned Communist, and another group of insurgents remained in Hunan for a time before rejoining Mao's

troops the following year. The anniversary of this insurrection is celebrated as the beginning of the People's Liberation Army.

The Autumn Harvest Uprising led by Mao was launched in September 1927 on the Hunan-Kiangsi border. He was put in charge of the uprising because a year before it was in this area that Mao carried out his famous investigation of the peasant movement. The first attempt to mobilize the peasants there around a revolutionary army led by the CCP was a failure. The revolutionary troops were routed and retreated to the mountains inland. Some of them retreated to the Chingkang Mountains with Mao.

At the end of 1927, the CCP prepared for a third insurrection. Canton was chosen because of the strong Communist mass base among the workers, the internal rift among the region's Guomintang authorities, and the support anticipated from the neighboring rural Red base of Peng Pai. Qu Qiu-bai, was encouraged in his plans by the Comintern. The Comintern delegates in China pushed for this insurrection and this in turn, was related to the struggle between Stalin and Trotsky which was reaching a critical point at that time with the Chinese revolution as one of the major disputes. On December 11, the Communists occupied the city and proclaimed a revolutionary government. Property was confiscated and nationalized. All debts were cancelled. But Chiang Kai-shek's generals, whose troops were five times larger than those of the revolutionaries, reacted immediately. The insurgents could not defend themselves and a wave of brutal repression swept through the city. With the crushing of the Canton uprising, the first period of the Chinese revolution came to an abrupt end. The retreat to the Chingkang Mountains signalled the beginning of the second period.

What is the decisive significance of this detailed narration and clarification of the first period of the Chinese national democratic revolution immediately after the founding of the CCP? It belies the universality and absoluteness of the protracted war strategy even in China and stresses the historical context and particular conditions from which it arose in the development of the Chinese revolution.

At that time, China was already semicolonial and semifeudal. There as no unified reactionary rule, various warlords across China were engaged in incessant wars, imperialist powers contended for spheres of influence. The broad masses of the Chinese people were in revolt. In short all the factors for protracted war were present. But Mao never insisted that they should have pursued the line of protracted war even as early as the first period of the revolution.

Mao, in all his writings, never condemned this first period and the tactics pursued as “Left” adventurism, or in the words of Sison, as “urban insurrectionism”. He even hailed the three armed uprisings in the latter period of 1927 as glorious revolutionary struggles of the Chinese working class. What Mao condemned as erroneous were the Right opportunist errors principally in the united front and criticized the failure to give proper emphasis and correct policies on the peasant question. Never did Mao insist or insinuate, in retrospect, that the CCP should have pursued, at the very outset, the strategy of protracted war upon the establishment of the Chinese party in 1921. Mao affirmed the basic correctness of pursuing a united front policy during this period determined by the peculiar objective and subjective conditions prevailing in China from 1921-27. He never thought of imposing the strategy of protracted war under these conditions although China, even at that time, was semicolonial and semifeudal, and autonomous warlord regimes predominated-the very objective conditions for his strategy of revolution.

According to Mao: *“The revolutionary war of 1924-27 was waged, basically speaking, in conditions in which the international proletariat and the Chinese proletariat and their parties exercised political influence on the Chinese national bourgeoisie and its parties and entered into political cooperation with them. However this revolutionary war failed at the critical juncture, first of all because the big bourgeoisie turned traitor, and at the same time because the opportunists within the revolutionary ranks voluntarily surrendered the leadership of the revolution.”*

This is a most precise assessment and never did Mao say in all his assessment of this period that this revolutionary war failed because it did not pursue the strategy of protracted war and was guilty of urban insurrectionism or it did not transform itself at the critical juncture into a protracted people's war. In another article, Mao said: *"Because the proletariat failed to exercise firm leadership in the revolution of 1926-27 which started from Kwangtung and spread towards the Yangtse River, leadership was seized by the comprador and landlord classes and the revolution was replaced by counter-revolution. The bourgeois-democratic revolution thus met with a temporary defeat."*

The basic point here is not merely to cite a particular period in the history of the Chinese revolution to simply belie protracted war as an absolute imperative in a semicolonial and semifeudal society. The more essential point is to insist that neither tactics nor strategy are universal formulas or unchanging absolutes based on general categories of socio-economic conditions. They are but forms of struggle concretely determined by the confluence and totality of factors in the historical development of a revolutionary struggle.

It should be stressed that Mao began to evolve the rudiments of a protracted war strategy only after the defeat of the first revolutionary civil war, after the collapse of the united front, the crushing of the armed uprisings in the cities, and after the forced retreat to the Chingking Mountains due to the bloody and brutal anti-communist offensive of Chiang Kai-shek and his open declaration of civil war against the revolutionary forces.

Mao began to evolve the separate elements of protracted war not simply because in his analysis China is semicolonial and semifeudal but because these are correct military principles determined and dictated by the overall conditions and confluence of factors then prevailing in China after the crushing defeat in the first period of the Chinese revolution and the beginning of the second period which was a period of reaction. But it was really during the last years of the second period at the time that Japan began its war of aggression

against China that Mao was able to systematize his protracted war theory into an integral strategy of revolutionary struggle. And it was only then that he was able to conceptualize such a strategy not because it was only at that time that he became “aware” of the correctness of such a strategy but because it was only then, during the impending war of aggression of Japan, that the conditions for such a strategy in China arose and become dominant. In the second period, Mao was more concerned on how the armed revolutionary forces can survive and develop in rural Red bases through an agrarian war towards a nationwide revolutionary high tide, while in the third period, it was already a question of how the armed revolutionary forces can succeed from the strategic defensive to the strategic offensive, from the countryside to the cities through a strategy of protracted people’s war.

In Mao’s basic writings during the early part of the second period (*“Why Is It That Red Political Power Can Exist In China,” “The Struggle In The Chingkang Mountains”* and *“A Single Spark Can Start A Prairie Fire”*) what he was developing and evolving was how to correctly conduct a peasant revolutionary war and build rural Red bases while waiting for or creating a “nationwide revolutionary high tide”. In fact, in all these writings, never did he use the term “protracted war” and he was not, in theory and practice, advocating at this time a strategy of protracted war. Hence, in two historical periods of the Chinese revolution , Mao never advocated protracted war as the “strategy” for the Chinese revolution in the conditions prevailing in China in those times.

Only by 1936-38, during the end of the second period and the beginning of the third period, during the transition and strategic repositioning from the second to the third period highlighted by the Long March, did Mao push forward the complete and comprehensive line of protracted war into an integral strategy as presented in his four basic military writings (*“Problems Of Strategy in China’s Revolutionary War,” “Problems Of Strategy In The Guerilla War Against Japan”, “On Protracted War,”* and *“Problems Of War And Strategy”*).

Let us trace and study how Mao's conception of "protracted war" evolved from 1928 to 1938. In 1928, speaking of the reasons for the emergence and survival of red political power in China, Mao said: *"The long-term survival inside a country of one or more special areas under Red political power encircled by a White regime is a phenomenon that has never occurred anywhere else in the world. There are special reasons for this unusual phenomenon. It can exist and develop only under certain conditions."*

By "Red political power" encircled by a White regime, Mao was principally referring not to guerilla zones or guerilla bases like we have here in Philippines, but a "Chingkang-type" armed independent regime. And for Mao, as he wrote it in 1928, the long-term survival of this "Red political power" is an "unusual phenomenon" that has never occurred anywhere else in the world and "can exist and develop only under certain conditions." Mao cited five conditions which he calls "special reasons for this unusual phenomenon."

First: *"it cannot occur in any imperialist country or in any colony under direct imperialist rule, but can only occur in China which is economically backward, and which is semicolonial and under indirect imperialist rule."*

So Mao, at this time, believed that Red political power can only emerge and exist in a backward semicolony and not in a colonial country directly ruled by imperialism. How did Mao explain the significance of this "semicolonial" status to the emergence and survival of "Red political power"? Unlike Sison who automatically concluded that just because a country is backward (semifeudal) and semicolonial protracted war is correct, Mao on his part attempted to elaborate the concrete connection and meaning of this "semicolonial status" of China to his view of the "long term survival" of Red political power surrounded by a White regime.

Mao explains why this Red political power, this unusual phenomenon can only occur in semicolonial China: *"this unusual phenomenon can only occur in conjunction with another unusual phenomenon, namely war within the White regime. It is a feature of*

semicolonial China that, since the first year of the Republic (1912), the various cliques of old and new warlords have waged incessant wars against one another, supported by imperialism abroad and by the comprador and landlord classes at home. Such phenomenon is to be found in none of the imperialist countries nor for that matter in any colony under direct imperialist rule, but only in a country like China which is under indirect imperialist rule.”

Therefore for Mao, in elaborating the significance of the semicolonial character of China, he asserted that this unusual phenomenon of Red political power can only occur in conjunction with another unusual phenomenon which is war within the White regime that is encircling the armed independent regime of Red political power.

At this point, Mao was interconnecting three points: the backward and semicolonial character of China, the unusual phenomenon of war within the White regime, and the unusual phenomenon of long-term survival of Red political power. How did Mao explain the interconnection or the logical sequence of this three points into an integral whole?

Referring to the second unusual phenomenon-war within the White regime-Mao said: *“Two things account for its occurrence, namely, a localized agricultural economy (not a unified capitalist economy) and the imperialist policy of marking off spheres of influence in order to divide and exploit. The prolonged splits and wars within the White regime provide a condition for the emergence and persistence of one or more small Red areas under the leadership of the Communist Party amidst the encirclement of the White regime. The independent regime carved out on the borders of Hunan and Kiangsi Provinces is one of many such small areas.”*

This is how Mao interconnected the three points. The White regime cannot unite and instead, will be enmeshed in prolonged internal splits and wars because the economy is localized and not unified and because several imperialist countries ruling indirectly in China and competing with each other are pursuing a policy of

grabbing spheres of influence in collusion with local warlords and are pitting one warlord clique against another to divide and exploit China. Mao was speaking not of an ordinary semicolonial country ruled indirectly by a single imperialist country but a complex and unique semicolonial country ruled indirectly by several imperialist countries with their own spheres of influence across China and with their own warlord cliques maintaining autonomous regimes through independent warlord armies.

The essential interconnection is that there is no unified reactionary rule in China as a result of this multi-imperialist semicolonial rule competing for spheres of influence and autonomous warlord regimes engaged in prolonged wars and splits encouraged by imperialism. This is the essential connection and significance of the “semicolonial” character of China relevant to the emergence of Red political power.

In concluding his explanation of the first “special reason” for the long-term survival of Red political power, Mao said: *“In difficult or critical times some comrades often have doubts about the survival of Red political power and become pessimistic. The reason is that they have not found the correct explanation for its emergence and survival. If only we realize that splits and wars will never cease within the White regime in China, we shall have no doubts about the emergence, survival and daily growth of Red political power.”*

In this statement, it is very clear that the “semicolonial” question as a “special reason” for the emergence and survival of Red political power is essentially interlinked, or to use Sison’s fancy term, intertwined, and cannot be separated with the question of the incessant wars within the White regime or the fundamental question of unified or divided reactionary rule.

In Mao’s *A Single Spark Can Start A Prairie Fire* written on January 1930, the presentation is more direct to the point: *“China is a semicolonial country for which many imperialist powers are contending. If one clearly understands this, one will understand first why the unusual phenomenon of prolonged and tangled warfare*

within the ruling classes is only to be found in China, why this warfare is steadily growing fiercer and spreading, and why there has never been a unified regime.”

Mao's second special reason was *“the regions where China's Red political power has first emerged and is able to last for a long time have not been those unaffected by the democratic revolution, such as Szechuan, Kweichow, Yunnan and the northern provinces, but regions such as the provinces of Hunan, Kwangtung, Hupeh and Kiangsi, where the masses of workers, peasants and soldiers rose in great numbers in the course of the bourgeois-democratic revolution of 1926-27.”*

Again, Mao was referring to the concrete context for the emergence and survival of Red political power. For him, the living political experience and tempering of the masses in revolutionary struggle, a people that have gone through the revolution of 1924-27 is a vital factor. The armed independent regime and armed struggle in the provinces of Hunan, Kwantung, Hupeh and Kiangsi was a direct and immediate continuation of the revolutionary struggles of the first period of the Chinese revolution.

The Red army that was built in the Red areas during the second revolutionary war, according to Mao, was a *“split-off from the National Revolutionary Army which underwent democratic political training and came under the influence of the masses of workers and peasants.”* It was the same army that fought in the three great uprisings in the latter half of 1927 and a part of which retreated and converged at the Chingkang Mountains.

It should be noted with great emphasis, that like Vietnam, China had a history of uninterrupted wars, and its revolutionary war was a direct and immediate continuation of the preceding wars that has put the country in constant turmoil. China, since the Opium War of the 1840's was virtually in a permanent state of war.

Mao's third point is quite revealing. According to Mao: *“whether it is possible for the people's political power in small areas to last*

depends on whether the nationwide revolutionary situation continues to develop. If it does, then the small Red areas will undoubtedly last for a long time, and will, moreover, inevitably become one of the many forces for winning nationwide political power. If the nationwide revolutionary situation does not continue to develop but stagnates for a fairly long time, then it will be impossible for the small Red areas to last long.”

Here, Mao hinged the long-term survival of the Red areas and the growth of its armed struggle on the development of the “nationwide revolutionary situation”. If nationwide revolutionary situation “stagnates for a fairly long time” then the long-term survival of the small Red areas was impossible. Mao was categorical in asserting the decisive significance of a “nation-wide revolutionary situation” in determining the prospect of the growth or decline of the Red areas.

The prospect of survival and advance is not determined solely by social conditions remaining as it is, meaning, semicolonial and semifeudal or by correct subjective steps like military strategy and tactics, but by a continuous development of a “nation-wide revolutionary situation”. When Mao wrote his article, his evaluation was that *“the revolutionary situation is continuing to develop with the continuous splits and wars within the ranks of the comprador and landlord classes and of the international bourgeoisie. Therefore, the small Red areas will undoubtedly last for a long time, and will continue to expand and gradually approach the goal of seizing political power throughout the country.”*

Mao’s fourth point was *“the existence of a regular Red army of adequate strength is a necessary condition for the existence of Red political power.”* According to Mao: *“even when the masses of workers and peasants are active, it is definitely impossible to create an independent regime, let alone an independent regime which is durable and grows daily, unless we have regular forces of adequate strength.”*

What is this regular Red army that Mao is referring to? The Red Army in the Red areas were organized into divisions and regiments

down to the squad level. Mao's Fourth Army of Workers and Peasants numbered about 40,000 men concentrated in the Chingkang Mountains in 1928 when Mao's troops were reinforced by those of Zhu De, Lin Biao and Chen Yi.

The Chingkang military base, at the border of Hunan and Kiangsi, was an isolated region of hills covered with forests. The territory (250 kilometers in circumference) was almost unpopulated. It included only five villages, where 2,500 people lived in almost total isolation and where social relations were still based on the clan system. At the end of 1928, this Red base was further strengthened by the defection of a large Nationalist unit whose leader, Peng De-huai, would later become one of the principal leaders of the Red army.

In 1930, there were about fifteen small Red areas scattered in South and Central China. In that same year, the Tenth Army was organized by Fang Zhi-min in Northeast Kiangsi. In the Henan-Hubei-Anhui border, Chang Kou-tao formed the Fourth Group of Armies. But all these Red areas resembled those of the Chingkang mountain. By the time the Red Army began the Long March in October 1934, it numbered around 300,000 troops.

According to Mao, *"if we have local Red Guards only but no regular Red Army, then we cannot cope with the regular White forces, but only with the landlord's levies."* Indeed, how can the Red area cope with the regular pattern of encirclement and suppression campaigns of the White forces if it has only local guerrillas and local militias like we have in our guerilla fronts? In our case, we cannot even cope with the landlord's levies or the struggle for rent reduction after 25 years of protracted war!

Just imagine the magnitude of the battles in the Red areas. In the first encirclement campaign in late 1930, the White forces employed about 100,000 men against the 40,000 of the Red Army concentrated in a single county in Kiangsi. In the second campaign which lasted only one month before it was smashed, the enemy troops numbered 200,000 against the 30,000 of the Red Army. One month after the second campaign, the third campaign began with the

enemy numbering about 300,000 against the Red Army's 30,000. No figures are available regarding the fourth campaign. But this was logically larger in magnitude for it attacked almost all Red areas. The fifth campaign began at the end of 1933 which resulted in the Long March and the strategic retreat and shift of 12,500 kilometers for the Red Army from Southern Kiangsi to a new base area in Northern Shensi. It began the Long March with 300,000 men. By the time it reached Shensi, it was reduced to a few tens of thousands.

Mao's fifth point is the necessity for a strong Communist Party organization whose policy is correct. In seven years, after the CCP was founded in 1921, it grew from less than a hundred to almost 60,000 members. Before the Long March of 1934, even before Mao took over the leadership of the Party, it reached a high of 300,000 members!

Let us sum up Mao's five "special reasons" or "certain conditions" for the emergence and long-term survival of Red political power. First, no unified reactionary regime in semicolonial China for which many imperialist powers are contending bringing about continuous splits and wars within the ranks of the ruling classes and of the international bourgeoisie. Second, the regions where China's Red political power had first emerged and was able to last for a long time were those that passed through the direct experience of the 1926-27 democratic revolution. Third, a developing nationwide revolutionary high tide characterized by continuous splits and wars among reactionary forces without which the long term survival of Red areas is impossible. Fourth, the existence of a regular Red Army of adequate strength is a necessary condition for the existence of Red political power. Fifth, a strong Communist Party organization with a correct policy is also required.

Any revolutionary element without the deadweight of dogma cramping his brain can easily understand that Mao's concept of the emergence and long-term survival of rural Red political power depends on very concrete and peculiar conditions then prevailing in China. His concept of building rural Red areas is not simply the

product of a general analysis of the semicolonial and semifeudal character of Chinese society but the product of a particular analysis of its peculiar features which he calls “special reasons” or “certain conditions” for the emergence and long-term survival of Red political power in the countryside.

Mao’s general analysis of the semicolonial and semifeudal character of Chinese society determined the national democratic or bourgeois nature of the Chinese revolution and the necessity to complete this revolution before proceeding to the socialist revolution. Nothing astounding about this because even in Russia, a capitalist country, Lenin saw the necessity to first complete this bourgeois revolution before proceeding to his socialist revolution because of the existence of Tsarism and the widespread survivals of serfdom.

Mao’s particular analysis of the peculiar features of semicolonial and semifeudal China at given historical junctures determined the tactics (or what we usually call strategy) in conducting revolutionary struggle. In the first period, the revolutionary war was conducted through a united front with the Guomintang against the warlords and the imperialist powers. In the second period, under conditions brought about by the defeat in the first period, it was conducted through an agrarian revolutionary war, building rural Red areas and building a rural-based Red army in anticipation of a revolutionary high tide which will culminate in urban armed insurrections and the Red army advancing from the countryside. In both periods, the “strategy” or what should properly be called tactics was not protracted people’s war and Mao supported the Party line as correct.

Even in the early part of the second period of the Chinese revolution, during the period of the agrarian revolutionary war and period of reaction, Mao’s line was not yet a strategy of protracted war. He opposed the “Left” adventurist line of Li Li-san not because it deviated from the strategy of protracted war since even Mao’s strategy was not protracted war at that time. In January 1930, Mao wrote *A Single Spark Can Start a Prairie Fire* criticizing certain pessimistic views then existing in the Party. In this article, he

criticized those comrades who “though they believe that a revolutionary high tide is inevitable, they do not believe it to be imminent.” The point of dispute was how to correctly appraise the prevailing situation in China at that time and how to settle the attendant question of what action to take. Mao took the position that the revolutionary high tide is imminent and not only inevitable and proposed a corresponding course of action that opposed the ideas of “guerrillism” which was dominant in the Central Committee led by Li Li-san.

Here is how Mao formulated his criticism: *“They seem to think that, since the revolutionary high tide is still remote, it will be labor lost to attempt to establish political power by hard work. Instead, they want to extend our political influence through the easier method of roving guerilla actions, and, once the masses throughout the country have been won over, or more or less won over, they want to launch a nationwide armed insurrection which, with the participation of the Red Army, would become a great nationwide revolution. Their theory that we must first win over the masses on a countrywide scale and in all regions and then establish political power does not accord with the actual state of the Chinese revolution. This theory derives mainly from the failure to understand clearly that China is a semicolonial country for which many imperialist powers are contending.”*

In opposing “the policy which merely calls for roving guerilla actions” which according to Mao cannot accomplish the task of accelerating the imminent revolutionary high tide, he proposed *“the policy of establishing base areas; of systematically setting up political power; of deepening the agrarian revolution; of expanding the people’s armed forces by a comprehensive process of building up first the township Red Guards, then the district Red Guards, then the county Red Guards, then the local Red Army troops, all the way up to the regular Red Army troops; of spreading political power by advancing in a series of waves, etc. etc. Only thus is it possible to build the confidence of the revolutionary masses throughout the country, as the Soviet Union has built it throughout the world. Only thus is it possible to create tremendous difficulties for the reactionary*

classes, shake their foundations and hasten their internal disintegration. Only thus is it possible to create a Red Army which will become the chief weapon for the great revolution of the future. In short, only thus is it possible to hasten the revolutionary high tide.”

The policies proposed by Mao are elements of protracted war as we understand them in our own revolutionary practice. But by themselves, do they constitute the strategy of protracted war? Was Mao, by enumerating these policies, actually proposing a strategy of protracted war in seizing political power without calling it protracted war? If we abstract Mao's proposals from his analysis of the political situation at that time, we might really get the impression that Mao is already proposing a strategy of protracted war. But this was how Mao appraised the political situation in China or the balance of forces at that time: *“Although the subjective forces of the revolution in China are now weak, so also are all organizations (organs of political power, armed forces, political parties, etc.) of the reactionary ruling classes, resting as they do on the backward and fragile social and economic structure of China. This helps to explain why revolution cannot break out at once in the countries of Western Europe where, although the subjective forces of revolution are now perhaps somewhat stronger than in China, the forces of the reactionary ruling class are many times stronger. In China the revolution will undoubtedly move towards a high tide more rapidly, for although the subjective forces of the revolution at present are weak, the forces of the counter-revolution are relatively weak too.”*

Will this appraisal lead to a protracted war strategy of revolution? Compare this to Mao's appraisal of the balance in December 1936 when he wrote *Problems of Strategy In China's Revolutionary War*. Here, Mao elaborated his strategy and tactics ensuing from four basic characteristics of China's revolutionary war at that period. The second characteristic was that the enemy was big and powerful and the third characteristic was that the Red Army was small and weak. According to Mao, *“from this sharp contrast have arisen the strategy and tactics of the Red Army...it follows from the second and third characteristics that it is impossible for the Chinese Red Army to grow*

very rapidly or defeat its enemy quickly; in other words, the war will be protracted and may even be lost if mishandled.”

How did Mao appraise the enemy in December 1936? Mao said: *“How do matters stand with the Guomintang, the enemy of the Red Army? It is a party that has seized political power and has more or less stabilized its power. It has gained the support of the world’s principal imperialist states. It has remodelled its army which has thus become different from any other army in Chinese history and on the whole similar to the armies of modern states; this army is much better supplied with weapons and material than the Red Army and is larger than any army in Chinese history, or for that matter than the standing army of any other country. There is a world of difference between the Guomintang army and the Red Army. The Guomintang controls the key positions or lifelines in the politics, economy, communications and culture of China; its political power is nationwide.”*

How did Mao appraise the Red Army in December 1936? *“Our political power exists in scattered and isolated mountainous or remote regions and receives no outside help whatsoever. Economic and cultural conditions in the revolutionary base areas are backward compared to those in the Guomintang areas. The revolutionary base areas embrace only rural districts and small towns. These areas were extremely small in the beginning and have not grown much larger since. Moreover, they are fluid and not stationary, and the Red Army has no really consolidated bases. ..The Red Army is numerically small, its arms are poor, and it has great difficulty in obtaining supplies such as food, bedding and clothing.”* Not to mention the fact, that after the Long March, according to Mao, *“the revolutionary bases were lost, the Red Army was reduced from 300,000 to a few tens of thousands, the membership of the CCP fell from 300,000 to a few tens of thousands, and the Party organizations in the Guomintang areas were almost all destroyed.”*

With the sharp contrast of Mao’s appraisal of the political situation or balance of forces in January 1930 with that of December 1936,

how can we speak of Mao advocating protracted war in the former? The truth is, during the second period of the Chinese revolution, Mao's "strategy" was not protracted war and it was very apparent in his writings at that time.

According to Mao: "The subjective forces of the revolution have indeed been greatly weakened since the defeat of the revolution of 1927. The remaining forces are very small and those comrades who judge by appearances alone naturally feel pessimistic. But if we judge by essentials, it is quite another story. Here we can apply the old Chinese saying, 'A single spark can start a prairie fire' In other words, our forces, although very small at present, will grow very rapidly. In the conditions prevailing in China, their growth is not only possible but indeed inevitable, as the May 30th Movement and the Great Revolution which followed have fully proved."

What is this May 30th Movement and Great Revolution? Mao is referring to the May 30, 1925 massacre of unarmed Chinese demonstrators by English police of the international concession at Shanghai killing 10 and seriously wounding 50. They were protesting the killing of a Chinese worker on May 15 by a Japanese foreman in a Japanese cotton mill that was on strike. This incident triggered a nationwide upsurge of protest bringing together diverse forces. It was the impetus that led to the 1926-27 revolution. The "Great Revolution" Mao is referring to is the revolution of 1926-27.

Now, by using the May 30th Movement and the Revolution of 1926-27 as his reference point in proving not only the inevitability but the imminence of a revolutionary high tide, Mao is speaking not of a protracted war type of revolution but a revolution similar to that of 1927 which was insurrectionary in character. Mao, in Sison's standard, is guilty of urban insurrectionism! This "single spark" concept of Mao is not protracted war but an insurrectional "strategy" that gives premium to an objective revolutionary situation, to a revolutionary high tide not to the balance of military forces, not to the stage by stage development of the military struggle from the

strategic defensive to the strategic stalemate and finally towards the strategic offensive from the countryside to the cities.

Listen to how Mao asserted his point: *“We need only look at the strikes by the workers, the uprisings by the peasants, the mutinies of the soldiers and the strikes of the students which are developing in many places to see that it cannot be long before a ‘spark’ kindles a ‘prairie fire’.* The fire of “insurrectionism” is raging in Mao’s appraisal of the situation!

What was the official ‘strategy’ of the CCP at that time as approved by the Sixth Congress of 1928 in Moscow? It was still basically the launching of armed uprisings led by the working class in the cities and the peasantry as its main reserve. Did Mao oppose such a “strategy”?

Mao did not oppose but supported the “strategy” of the Sixth Congress. According to Mao: *“The political line and the organizational line laid down by the Party’s Sixth National Congress are correct, i.e., the revolution at the present stage is democratic and not socialist, and the present task of the Party [here the words ‘in the big cities’ should have been added: Mao] is to win over the masses and not to stage immediate insurrections. Nevertheless, the revolution will develop swiftly, and we should take a positive attitude in our propaganda and preparations for insurrections.”* Mao never proposed a protracted war strategy as opposed to the “insurrectional” line of the Sixth Congress.

What Mao tried to stress in his polemics with the Central Committee of Li Li-san was this: *“Building a proletarian foundation for the Party and setting up Party branches in industrial enterprises in key districts are important organizational tasks for the Party at present; but at the same time the major prerequisites for helping the struggle in the cities and hastening the rise of the revolutionary tide are specifically the development of the struggle in the countryside, the establishment of Red political power in small areas, and the creation and expansion of the Red Army. Therefore it would be wrong to abandon the struggle in the cities, but in our opinion it*

would also be wrong for any of our Party members to fear the growth of peasant strength lest it should outstrip the workers' strength and harm the revolution. For the revolution in semicolonial China, the peasant struggle must always fail if it does not have the leadership of the workers, but the revolution is never harmed if the peasant struggle outstrip the forces of the workers."

The main line of criticism of Mao against the Central Committee at that time was on the question of "dispersal" or "concentration" of the Red Army. Mao quoted the letter of his Front Committee to the Central Committee: *"To preserve the Red Army and arouse the masses, the Central Committee asks us to divide our forces into very small units and disperse them over the countryside... This is an unrealistic view. In the winter of 1927-28, we did plan to disperse our forces, with each company or battalion operating on its own and adopting guerilla tactics in order to arouse the masses while trying not to present a target for the enemy; we have tried this out many time, but have failed every time."*

The letter cited the reasons why the Red Army failed every time it tried to disperse its forces. But Mao was dissatisfied with the reasons cited because they were negatively presented and far from adequate. According to Mao: *"The positive reason for concentrating our forces is that only concentration will enable us to wipe out comparatively large enemy units and occupy towns. Only after we have wiped out comparatively large enemy units and occupied towns can we arouse the masses on a broad scale and set up political power extending over a number of adjoining counties. Only thus can we make a widespread impact (what we call 'extending our political influence'), and contribute effectively to speeding the day of the revolutionary high tide."*

This debate on the question of "dispersal" and "concentration" of the Red Army was not a question of insurrectionism or protracted war between the Central Committee of Li Li-san and the Front Committee of Mao Ze Dong. But for Sison, this kind of debate on the

mode of operation of the People's Army became a question of insurrectionism or protracted war in his Reaffirm.

The funny thing is, he identified the question of "concentration" with insurrectionism, and "dispersal" with protracted war! In China's case, it was Li Li-san, the famous "Left" adventurer who aspired for a "quick victory" who was the advocate of dispersal and guerrillaism—small and roving guerilla units to arouse the masses on a widescale. While it was Mao, the founder of the theory of protracted war, who insisted on the basic principle of "concentration" and building of a regular Red Army as a condition for the long-term survival of Red areas and for the advance of the armed struggle.

It was in his article *Problems of Strategy In China's Revolutionary War* written on December 1936 that Mao systematically criticized the "Left" errors of the second period in direct relation to his protracted war theory at a time when this theory had completely evolved in Mao's thinking and the third revolutionary war had commenced—the War Of Resistance Against Japan.

According to Mao: *"In the period of the Li Li-san line in 1930, Comrade Li Li-san failed to understand the protracted nature of China's civil war and for that reason did not perceive the law that in the course of this war there is repetition over a long period of "encirclement and suppression" campaigns and of their defeat (by that time there had already been three in the Hunan-Kiangsi border area and two in Fukien). Hence, in an attempt to achieve rapid victory for the revolution, he ordered the Red Army, which was then still in its infancy, to attack Wuhan, and also ordered a nationwide armed uprising. Thus he committed the error of "Left" opportunism."* Mao criticized the "Left" opportunists of 1931-34 (Wang Ming and the "28 Bolsheviks") also on the same grounds. According to Mao, they also *"did not believe in the law of the repetition of "encirclement and suppression" campaigns."*

This law of the constant repetition over a prolonged period of "encirclement" campaigns and counter-campaigns against it was the main pattern of the civil war. He said: *"In the ten years since our*

guerilla war began, every independent Red guerilla unit, every Red army unit or every revolutionary base area has been regularly subjected by the enemy to 'encirclement and suppression'.” When will the pattern of repeated “encirclement and suppression” campaigns come to an end? According to Mao: *“In my opinion, if the civil war is prolonged, this repetition will cease when a fundamental change takes place in the balance of forces. It will cease when the Red Army has become stronger than the enemy.”*

By this time, Mao had already evolved protracted war as an integral “strategy” of revolution relying principally on the internal dynamics of this “campaign” and “counter-campaign” struggle, the success of the revolution depending mainly on the development and change in the overall balance of forces between the enemy armed forces and the people’s armed forces. Mao was no longer relying on the development and imminence of a “*revolutionary high tide*” that shall determine the longterm survival of the Red areas, no longer hoping for “*a single spark that can start a prairie fire.*”

This shift in Mao’s thinking was brought about by changes in the political situation from the time he wrote *Single Spark* to the time when he wrote *Problems of Strategy* after the bitter experiences of “Left” errors from 1930-34. When he wrote *Single Spark* in January 1930, Li Li-san was afflicted with pessimism and Mao tried to convince him that the “*revolutionary high tide*” is not only inevitable but imminent. He obviously overcame this affliction because by June 1930, his appraisal was that the “*high tide*” was not only imminent but had arrived. The resurgence of the working class movement in the cities, the widespread expansion of the Red areas in Central China, the unrelenting conflicts between Chiang Kai-shek and Wang Jing-wei and between Chiang and the warlords, all led Li and the Central Committee to believe that the time had come to launch a general offensive.

On the basis of this appraisal, Li Li-san drew up an adventurist plan for organizing immediate armed insurrections in the key cities throughout the country. The object of the 1930 offensive was to take

the three large cities of Central China: Changsha, Wuhan and Nanchang. The Third Group of Armies under Peng De-huai was to attack Changsha. The attack on Nanchang was assigned to the Red Army in Shiangsi under Mao and Zhu De. The attack on Wuhan was to be launched by the armies of He Long in western Hubei and Hunan.

Changsha was occupied when Peng De-huai's troops entered it on July 27. Ten days later they were dislodged and had to retire to the region of Liuyang. Ferocious repression followed which destroyed the party organization in Changsha. After the retreat from Changsha, Mao and Zhu, who disapproved of the general plan of the offensive, decided not to pursue the attack on Nanchang. They headed for Liuyang to reinforce the Third Army. The combined troops formed the First Front Army, of which Zhu became the commander in chief and Mao the political commissar. In the other cities, the uprisings, doomed from the start, were suppressed, and the terror that ensued destroyed the party and its legal organizations.

Li Li-san's adventurous policy was totally defeated and he was removed from the leadership at the Third Plenary Meeting of the Sixth Central Committee in September 1930. Qu Qiu-bai, the Comintern representative, and Zhou En-lai, who had recently returned from Moscow, presented a report recognizing that the CCP leadership had overestimated *"the unequal development of the revolutionary movement in different regions, and that if a revolutionary situation was developing in China, it did not objectively exist in July 1930."*

The Li Li-san line lasted only four months. But another "Left" adventurist line succeeded in dominating the central leadership. It was represented by the so-called 28 "Bolsheviks" led by Wang Ming and Po Ku, newly arrived from the Chinese Revolutionary University of Moscow with their professor Pavel Mif. It was mainly to criticize the military mistakes of the Wang Ming line that Mao wrote the article *"Problems of Strategy"*. This line was dominant in the CCP from the Fourth Plenary Meeting of the Sixth Central Committee in January

1931 to the meeting of the Political Bureau at Tsunyi in January 1935. This was what Mao called the “Left” opportunism of 1931-34 *“which resulted in serious losses in the Agrarian Revolutionary War so that, instead of our defeating the enemy’s fifth campaign of ‘encirclement and suppression’, we lost our base areas and the Red Army was weakened.”*

How did Mao characterize the military error of the Wang Ming line? According to Mao, as early as May 1928, *“basic principles of guerilla warfare, simple in nature and suited to the conditions of the time, had already been evolved.”* This was called the sixteen-character formula: *“The enemy advances, we retreat; the enemy camps, we harass; the enemy tires, we attack; the enemy retreats, we pursue.”* (It must be clarified, that these operational principles, by themselves, do not constitute the strategy of protracted war but of guerilla warfare. Secondly, these are not Mao’s original ideas but were drawn from the writings of the ancient Chinese military philosopher Sun Tzu.) At the time of the first counter-campaign against “encirclement and suppression” (late 1930) in the Kiangsi base area, these operational principles were developed a step further to include the principle of *“luring the enemy in deep”*. By the time the enemy’s third campaign was defeated (middle of 1931), according to Mao, *“a complete set of operational principles for the Red Army has taken shape.”* Though they basically remained the same as in the sixteen-character formula, they transcended their originally simple nature.

But beginning from January 1932, according to Mao, *“the ‘Left’ opportunists attacked these correct principles, finally abrogated the whole set and instituted a complete set of contrary ‘new principles’ or ‘regular principles’”*. From then on, the old principles were no longer to be considered as regular but were to be rejected as “guerrillism.” The opposition to the old principles which were branded as “guerrillism” reigned for three whole years. According to Mao, *“its first stage was military adventurism, in the second it turned into military conservatism and, finally, in the third stage it became flightism.”*

How did Mao describe this military adventurism? According to Mao: *“The view that the Red Army should under no circumstances adopt defensive methods was directly related to this ‘Left’ opportunism, which denied the repetition of ‘encirclement and suppression’ campaigns...”* He also criticized *“those comrades in Kiangsi who called for a Red Army attack on Nanchang, were against the work of linking up the base areas and the tactics of luring the enemy in deep, regarded the seizure of the capital and other key cities of a province as the starting point for victory in that province, and held that ‘the fight against the fifth encirclement and suppression campaign represents the decisive battle between the road of revolution and the road of colonialism’. This ‘Left’ opportunism was the source of the wrong line adopted in the struggles against the fourth ‘encirclement and suppression’ campaign in the Hupeh-Honan-Anhwei border area and in those against the fifth in the Central Area in Kiangsi; and it rendered the Red Army helpless before these fierce enemy campaigns and brought enormous losses to the Chinese revolution.”*

However, Mao did not substantiate his conclusion that it was this “Left” opportunism of Wang Ming that caused enormous losses to the Chinese revolution. Mao was not able to cite in his writings (or his publishers to provide footnotes) of instances of urban armed insurrections during the 1932-34 period that caused great losses to the Red Army or the CCP. Even in history books of the Chinese revolution, no such accounts could be found.

He gave as an example the loss of freedom of action in the fourth counter-campaign in the Hupeh-Honan-Anhwei border area *“where the Red Army acted on the theory that the Guomindang army was merely an auxiliary force”*. But again, no substantial account regarding the losses suffered by the Red Army during this fourth counter-campaign which can directly be traced to this “Left” error. In historical accounts of the Chinese revolution, the fourth enemy campaign was aimed at all the Red areas and first to be attacked was Hupeh-Honan-Anhwei border area. Because it was more accessible to the attacking Guomintang armies, this region had to be

abandoned by the Red Army. In this border area, it was the Fourth Group of the Armies of the Front that confronted the Guomintang forces. And this unit of the Red Army was commanded by Chang Gou-tao, the infamous Right opportunist who in 1938 capitulated to the Guomintang.

Mao also gave as an example the fifth enemy campaign against the Central Area in Kiangsi. But in the very same article, he attributed the heavy losses in Central Base Area to Right opportunism. According to Mao: *“The most striking example of the loss of a base area was that of the Central Base Area in Kiangsi during the fifth counter-campaign against ‘encirclement and suppression’. The mistake here arose from a Rightist viewpoint. The leaders feared the enemy as if he were a tiger, set up defenses everywhere, fought defensive actions at every step and did not dare advance to the enemy’s rear and attack him there, which would have been to our advantage, or boldly to lure the enemy troops in deep so as to concentrate our forces and annihilate them. As a result, the whole base area was lost and the Red Army had to undertake the Long March of over 12,000 kilometers.”*

Upon reading this, one wonders why Mao blamed “Left” adventurism as the “source of the wrong line” that “brought enormous losses to the Chinese revolution.” This is how Mao explained the link: *“This kind of mistake (Right opportunism) was usually preceded by a ‘Left’ error of underestimating the enemy. The military adventurism of attacking the key cities of 1932 was the root cause of the line of passive defense subsequently adopted in coping with the enemy’s fifth ‘encirclement and suppression’ campaign.”* Now we know where Sison got his strange logic!

How come the Red Army was forced to undertake the Long March of more than 12,000 kilometers? This is a most basic question which Mao failed to provide in his writings with a satisfactory answer. A footnote of *“Problems of Strategy”* clarified: *“In October 1934 the First, Third and Fifth Army Groups of the Chinese Workers’ and Peasants’ Red Army (that is the First Front Army of the Red Army,*

also known as the Central Red Army) set out from Changting and Ninghua in Western Fukien and from Juichin, Yutu and other places in southern Kiangsi and started a major strategic shift.” This was the beginning of the Long March. This First Front Army numbered around 120,000-130,000 troops. Aside from the First Front Army, the Red Army also had the Second Front Army of He Long and Fourth Front Army of Chang Gou-tao, and a host of other independent Army Groups. Before the Long March began, the Red Army numbered around 300,000.

With a Red Army this big, how come it was forced to undertake a strategic retreat and strategic shift of the magnitude of the Long March? According to Mao, the Red Army had to undertake the Long March of over 12,000 kilometers in October 1934 because the Central Base Area in Kiangsi was lost. Why did they lose the Central Base Area? Because they failed to smash Chiang Kai-shek's fifth "encirclement and suppression" campaign. Why did it fail to smash this particular campaign unlike the first four campaigns? Because, according to Mao, the counter campaign began with military adventurism, then turned to military conservatism, and finally, it became flightism.

Granting that this was the real causes for the failure to smash the enemy's fifth campaign until the beginning of the Long March in October 1934, which in the words of Mao was conceived as a "headlong flight" not as a strategic retreat, the fact was, by the end of 1934, at the party conference in Liping on the Hunan-Guizho border, Mao began to seize the initiative within the central leadership of the CCP. This Liping Conference was actually the turning point. It was in this conference that Mao was able to change not only the geographical direction of the march but also the "headlong flight" and "straight-line" tactic. By January, when they reached Tsunyi, Mao and all his close associates formally took over the leadership of the CCP. Wang Ming's faction was completely ousted with Zhou En-lai the only member of the old Politburo in the new Maoist leadership. (Wang Ming was retained by the Stalinist Comintern as one of its vice-presidents.)

Mao took over the leadership of the CCP barely three months after the Long March with the Red Army still adequately strong despite the losses in the initial months. The big question is: Why is it that, instead of opting to recover the lost base areas in southern China, he decided to continue with the strategic retreat and the Long March from Tsunyi to Yennan in northern China? To this, Mao had no clear answer in his writings. From January to October 1935, Mao continued the Red Army's strategic retreat (the Long March) which he called the continuation of its strategic defensive while Chiang Kai-shek was in strategic pursuit which was a continuation of his strategic offensive. It was actually during these 10 months of this one year Long March that the Red Army lost the bulk of its forces.

Mao opted to continue with the Long March towards northern China rather than maneuver and attempt to recover the Red areas. This was because: First, he was aware that the situation in these parts of southern China was already untenable if not irreversible and Chiang Kai-shek's strategic offensive in these areas had reached a stage that it can no longer be smashed and defeated. Second, since the situation in southern China is already lost, the only option was to make a strategic shift to northern China where Chiang Kai-shek was relatively weak and will be weakened by his strategic pursuit of the Long March, and reposition the Red Army for the war of resistance against Japan (the northern part of China were the areas threatened by Japan).

By the end of the Long March, 90% of the party membership, of the armed forces and of the base areas were lost. The second period of the Chinese revolution ended in defeat although Mao preferred to call it "*a temporary and partial defeat*". To sum-up, Mao began the second period of the Chinese revolution still adhering to the "insurrectionist" line of the Sixth Party Congress of 1928. But at the latter part of this second period, he shifted to a protracted war strategy in advancing China's revolutionary civil war.

We now return to our main point-the universality and absoluteness of protracted war in a semicolonial and semifeudal country. What

caused the defeat of China's second revolutionary civil war is beside the point and highly debatable as Mao's account and the available materials regarding the fifth "encirclement and suppression" campaign are quite inadequate. The essential point is this: There is no positive revolutionary practice that proves that an agrarian civil war can succeed along the path of protracted war even in China for the second revolutionary war ended in defeat!

But the Maoists will argue: The Chinese national democratic revolution or Mao's protracted people's war succeeded in the fourth period which was a revolutionary civil war!

The basic point, however, is this: Could it have succeeded without the victorious national war of liberation, the heroic war of resistance against Japan?

The fourth period of the Chinese revolution or the third revolutionary civil war began with Mao already in command of more than 1 million revolutionary troops against Chiang's 4 million. The Guomintang began its offensive in the middle of 1946. By late 1947, the Red Army which had grown into 2 million troops launched its counter-offensive. By 1948, Chiang Kai-shek began his strategic retreat and by October 1, 1949, Mao announced the establishment of the People's Republic of China.

This civil war in the fourth period took only three years to achieve total victory! Is this the historical proof that an agrarian war can succeed through a protracted war strategy, a revolutionary civil war that took only three years to achieve complete victory? A revolutionary civil war that started with a million revolutionary troops and tens of millions of revolutionary masses in liberated areas?

The real and essential historical practice of protracted people's war was the War of Resistance Against Japan in the third period of the Chinese revolution (1937-45). It must be stressed that this was a national war and not a civil war. The total victory achieved by the three years of civil war in the fourth period (1945-49) cannot be

detached and cannot be understood apart from the victorious eight years of national war in the third period.

The historical validity of protracted war based on the Chinese experience is essentially a question of national war. If we are to consider the Vietnamese experience as a validation of a protracted war strategy, it is also essentially a national war of liberation. These two revolutions are the only historical experiences in protracted war strategy and both succeed on the basis of successful national wars of liberation.

Revolutionary movements, proletarian led or influenced, in several countries throughout the world have assumed political power through democratic revolutions and they succeeded by various means peculiar to their national conditions. In all these people's revolutions, only China succeeded by means of a strategy of protracted war. Even Vietnam refuses to call its revolution a protracted war strategy and prefer to call it a political-military strategy.

So many Maoist revolutionary movements in Third World countries have attempted to duplicate the Chinese experience. Not a single one have so far succeeded for the past 44 years since the Chinese victory. Most have suffered terrible defeats. Only three major Maoist parties are persevering in protracted war: the Shining Path in Peru, the Khmer Rouge in Kampuchea, and our very own the New People's Army. And all are engaged, not only in a vulgarized type of Marxist-Leninist revolution, but a vulgarized type of Maoist protracted war and all are in the decline after decades of bloody warfare. Their ideological leaders are all like Mao's "frog in the well". To them, the universe is no bigger than the mouth of the well, and that universe is their Chinese paradigm of protracted war.

A Vulgarized Type of Protracted War

Let us now study Mao's protracted war theory and see if Sison, the Great Pretender, is really faithful to the principles of the Great Helmsman. Let us see how Sison understood Mao's protracted war theory and how he applied it to the Philippine revolution.

Mao's protracted war is a three-act drama. It consists of three successive strategic stages with the war advancing from the countryside to the cities. The first stage is the strategic defensive. The second stage is the strategic stalemate. The third stage is the strategic offensive (strategic counter-offensive, to be more exact, according to Mao).

These three stages are essentially a question of balance of forces. The revolutionary forces will move from inferiority to parity and then to superiority and the enemy will move from superiority to parity and then to inferiority. The revolutionary forces will move from the defensive to the stalemate and then to the counter-offensive. The enemy will move from the offensive to the stalemate (in a national war, to the safeguarding of his gains) and then to retreat. Such will be the course of the war and its inevitable trend.

According to Mao: *"By strategic defensive we mean our strategic situation and policy when the enemy is on the offensive and we are on the defensive; by strategic offensive we mean our strategic situation and policy when the enemy is on the defensive and we are on the offensive."* This applies to the war situation as a whole as well as to its parts.

The basic question is how will this strategic changes in relative strength and position be achieved? Meaning how to advance the war as whole as well as in its parts in a protracted way from the defensive to the stalemate and finally to the offensive. Here, Mao is quite clear and categorical in his basic operational principles.

The only thing that Sison copied from Mao is to assert that our people's war will be a protracted war encircling the cities from the countryside passing through three strategic stages. In how to conduct this protracted war, specially in the strategic defensive so as to advance to the higher strategic stages, i.e., achieve strategic changes in the balance of forces-Sison completely deviated from Mao's protracted war theory, completely negating and vulgarizing this war strategy. For Sison, protracted war is just a war of prolonged duration warped in a time dimension. It is essentially a war of attrition

and not a war of annihilation which is the principal nature of Mao's protracted war.

Before proceeding to the basic operational principles of Mao in conducting protracted war, let us first study how Mao characterized this protracted war specially in the period of the strategic defensive.

According to Mao, enemy "encirclement and suppression" and the Red Army's counter-campaign against it is *the main pattern of China's civil war*. He said: "*For ten years this pattern of warfare has not changed, and unless the civil war gives place to a national war, the pattern will remain the same till the day the enemy becomes the weaker contestant and the Red Army the stronger.*"

When will this pattern of repeated "encirclement and suppression" campaigns come to an end? Mao is very clear in this regard: first, "*when a fundamental change takes place in the balance of forces*", i.e. the Red Army has passed through the stage of the strategic defensive, or second, "*the civil war gives place to a national war*". In a national war, it will be "*a war of jigsaw pattern*" which according to Mao, "*is a marvelous spectacle in the annals of war, a heroic undertaking of the Chinese nation, a magnificent and earth-shaking feat.*" This jigsaw pattern manifests itself : Interior and exterior line operations, possession and non-possession of a rear area, encirclement and counter-encirclement, big areas and small areas for both the enemy and the Red Army.

Since our protracted war is a civil war, the main pattern, theoretically, will be the repeated "campaign and counter-campaign" cycle or spiral which Mao considered a "law" of a protracted civil war in his *Problems of Strategy*. In elaborating Mao's basic operational principles in such a protracted war, we will use as reference this article although it should be stressed that these were not validated in a consummated revolutionary practice and were superseded by the principles developed by Mao during the more successful national war against Japan. In fact, the chapters on the strategic offensive, political work and other problems were left undone and only five chapters of this *Problems of Strategy* were completed.

It should be noted that there were major differences in Mao's ideas of the warfare in the three strategic stages of a national war compared to a civil war, particularly, on guerrilla warfare and on the strategic stalemate, and these ideas were the ones consummated and validated in revolutionary practice and proven brilliantly correct in a national war.

Our main thrust here is how Mao envisioned the development of protracted war strategy in a civil war through this repeated pattern of campaign and counter-campaign in the period of the strategic defensive until a fundamental change in the balance of forces is achieved and the war advances to a higher strategic stage. In short, the operational principles of Mao in defeating the enemy in the strategic defensive so as to advance to the strategic offensive. In *Problems of Strategy*, Mao does not talk of a strategic stalemate.

In the enemy's campaign and the Red Army's counter-campaign, the two forms of fighting-offensive and defensive-are both employed, and here, according to Mao, *"there is no difference from any other war, ancient or modern, in China or elsewhere."* The special characteristic of China's civil war, however, is *"the repeated alternation of the two forms over a long period of time."* By repeated alternation over a long period, Mao meant the repetition of this pattern of warfare and these forms of fighting, and this is what constitutes "protracted war" and not the simple prolongation of the war.

According to Mao: *"In each campaign, the alternation in the forms of fighting consists of the first stage in which the enemy employs the offensive against our defensive and we meet his offensive with our defensive, and of the second stage in which the enemy employs the defensive against our offensive and we meet his defensive with our offensive."*

As for the content of a campaign or a battle, it does not consist of mere repetition but is different each time. As a rule, with each campaign and counter-campaign, the scale becomes larger, the

situation more complicated and the fighting more intense. But this does not mean that there are no ups and downs.

The basic question here is how to conduct the defensive when the enemy is on the offensive (the first stage of the campaign and counter-campaign) and how to conduct the offensive when the enemy is already in the defensive (the second stage of the campaign and counter-campaign) both in the period of the strategic defensive in the war situation as a whole. This question resolves itself into how to advance the protracted war through this repeated pattern of campaign and counter-campaign, the enemy getting weaker and the people's army getting stronger; from a position of superiority the enemy becomes inferior, and from a position of inferiority, the people's army becomes superior through the repeated pattern of campaign and counter-campaign until the war situation as a whole reaches a strategic change in the relations of strength.

This question of how to conduct the defensive and the offensive in the period of the strategic defensive characterized by the repeated pattern of campaign and counter-campaign is what Mao tried to resolve in his *Problems of Strategy* with the main objective of how to put an end to this pattern and reach a higher strategic stage of warfare. This is where Sison deviated completely from Mao's theory of protracted war and developed his contraband theory of "protracted guerrillaism" smuggling it as Maoist protracted war and using the Maoist stamp to pass it off as genuine.

First on the question of defence. In *Problems of Strategy*, regarding this question, Mao tackled the problems of (1) active and passive defence; (2) preparations for combatting "encirclement and suppression campaigns"; and (3) strategic retreat. According to Mao: *"The defensive continues until an 'encirclement and suppression' campaign is broken, whereupon the offensive begins, these being but two stages of the same thing; and one such enemy campaign is closely followed by another. Of the two stages, the defensive is more complicated and the more important. It involves numerous problems of how to break the "encirclement and suppression". The basic*

principle here is to stand for active defense and oppose passive defense.”

What is active defense in protracted war and why is it the only correct form of defense? What is passive defense and why should we absolutely reject it?

Active defense is inseparable to the concept of strategic retreat, which in Kiangsi was called *“luring the enemy in deep”* and in Szechuan *“contracting the front.”* According to Mao, no previous theorist or practitioner of war has ever denied that this is the policy a weak army fighting a strong army must adopt in the initial stage of a war. The object of strategic retreat is to conserve military strength and prepare for the counter-offensive. Retreat is necessary because not to retreat a step before the onset of a strong enemy inevitably means to jeopardize the preservation of one’s own forces.

But what makes a strategic retreat a form of active and not passive defense? A strategic retreat, according to Mao, *“is a planned strategic step by an inferior force for the purpose of conserving strength and biding its time to defeat the enemy, when it finds itself confronted with a superior force whose offensive it is unable to smash quickly.”* What distinguishes it from a “headlong flight” and “passive defense” is that, first, it is a well-planned withdrawal with all the elements of a trap, hence, it is essentially a policy of *“luring the enemy in deep.”* Second, it is a policy of withdrawing in order to attack, in order to defeat the enemy’s offensive. According to Mao: *“Strategic retreat is aimed solely at switching over to the counter offensive and is merely the first stage of the strategic defensive. The decisive link in the entire strategy is whether victory can be won in the stage of the counter-offensive which follows.”*

Therefore, the aim of the Red Army in a particular defensive campaign is to defeat this offensive. To defeat this offensive, the Red Army relies on the situation created during the retreat. It takes many elements to make up such a situation. But the presence of this situation does not mean the enemy’s offensive is defeated. It only

provides the condition for victory of the Red Army and defeat for the reactionary army, but do not constitute the reality of victory or defeat.

To bring about victory or defeat in a defensive campaign, according to Mao, *“a decisive battle between the two armies is necessary”*. He added that: *“Only a decisive battle can settle the question as to which army is the victor and which the vanquished. This is the sole task in the stage of the strategic counter-offensive. The counter-offensive is a long process, the most fascinating, the most dynamic and also the final stage of a defensive campaign. What is called active defense refers chiefly to this strategic counter-offensive, which is in the nature of a decisive engagement.”*

In all the preceding discussion, Mao is using the term “strategic” to refer to the “campaign situation as a whole” and sometimes to the “war situation as a whole,” to the nationwide protracted war. Let us sum-up the discussion up to this point in their logical sequence.

First: Mao characterized the repeated alternation of “campaign and counter-campaign” in a long period of time as the main pattern of China’s civil war in the period of the strategic defensive. This essentially constitutes protracted war.

Second: This main pattern is also the repeated alternation of the two forms of warfare—the defensive and the offensive. In every enemy campaign, the Red Army in its counter-campaign, meets the enemy’s offensive with its defensive in the first stage of the counter-campaign, and in the second stage, meets the enemy’s defensive with its offensive.

The counter-campaign is essentially a defensive campaign because, in the war situation as a whole, the enemy is still in the strategic offensive and the Red Army is still in the strategic defensive, and this pattern of “campaign and counter-campaign” occurs only in the strategic defensive.

Third: In pursuing the policy of the strategic defensive in every enemy campaign, the Red Army employs active defense and rejects

passive defense. This strategic defensive, in its first stage, employs the policy of strategic retreat to conserve its strength and bide its time for its counter-offensive in the second stage. The aim of strategic retreat, essentially, is to switch over to the counter-offensive when the favorable situation for it is achieved through the strategic retreat.

Fourth: The sole aim of the strategic defensive in every counter-campaign is to defeat the strategic offensive of the enemy's "encirclement and suppression" campaign. This necessitates a "decisive battle" in the second stage of the counter-campaign, in the period of the counter-offensive. This counter-offensive is in the nature of a "decisive engagement" in the sense of decisively smashing and defeating the enemy campaign and ending this particular campaign. Active defence refers chiefly to this counter-offensive-the smashing of the enemy offensive in each repeated "encirclement and suppression" campaigns. This is the meaning of the Red Army taking the strategic defensive against the enemy's strategic offensive in the repeated alternation of "campaign and counter-campaign"-an active defense warfare in the form of a counter-offensive in a defensive campaign!

This is what constitutes Mao's protracted war theory. A small and weak Red Army against a big and strong White Army gradually advancing from inferiority to superiority in prolonged warfare characterized by the repeated alternation of "campaign and counter-campaign" and accumulating strength through a policy of a strategic defensive against the enemy's strategic offensive-a policy of active defense warfare chiefly in the form of a counter-offensive in a strategically defensive counter-campaign. This is the essential meaning of the strategic defensive, not only as a stage of development of the protracted war reflecting a given balance of forces but as a definite military strategy in advancing this protracted war and shifting the relation of strength to our favor.

Mao's basic idea is for the Red Army to grow in strength while weakening the enemy in the repeated alternation of "campaign and

counter-campaign” by accumulating victories in counter-offensives in defensive counter-campaigns and the enemy accumulating decisive defeats in his offensive campaigns all through a policy of active defense and never by a policy of passive defense until it reaches a point that a shift in the strategic balance is achieved and this pattern of “campaign and counter-campaign” comes to an end.

The most fundamental question here is how to conduct this active defense form of warfare, this strategy of the strategic defensive and this is of utmost importance in criticizing Sison’s vulgarization of protracted war. Mao’s “sixteen character” formula plus the principle of “luring the enemy in deep” constitutes the basic operational principles in combating “encirclement and suppression. According to Mao, it covers the two stages of the strategic defensive and the strategic offensive, and within the defensive, it covers the two stages of the strategic retreat and the strategic counter-offensive. What came later was only a development of this formula.

In Mao’s *Problems of Strategy*, he developed the Red Army’s basic operational principles by tackling the basic questions involved in the counter-offensive, chiefly the questions of (1) starting the counter-offensive; (2) the concentration of troops; (3) mobile warfare; (4) war of quick decision; and (5) war of annihilation. Mao’s ideas on these questions are of fundamental importance because they basically answer and clarify how the protracted war will advance through the strategic defensive towards the strategic offensive and these questions expose Sison’s ignorance and distortion of Mao’s protracted war theory, and confirm the impossibility of our people’s war advancing from the strategic defensive towards the strategic offensive guided by Sison’s vulgarized ideas on military strategy.

We will not deal much with the first point because although it is of utmost importance to the question of winning the counter-offensive, it has no direct relevance on the subject at hand, i.e., comparing Mao’s protracted war with Sison’s protracted guerrillaism. This first point of point of Mao deals directly with the problem of the “initial battle” or

prelude, how to select this first battle which has “a tremendous effect upon the entire situation, all the way to the final engagement.”

We proceed directly to Mao’s second point, the question of “concentration of troops” which is of decisive importance in conducting the strategic defensive, in the question of gaining the initiative in defensive warfare and developing active defense.

The strategic defensive is defensive warfare and according to Mao, it is easy to fall into a passive position because of its defensive character, which gives it far less scope for the full exercise of initiative than does offensive warfare. However, Mao stresses that *“defensive warfare, which is passive in form can be active in content, and can be switched from the stage in which it is passive in form to the stage in which it is active in form and content.”*

Mao added: *“In appearance a fully planned strategic retreat is made under compulsion, but in reality it is effected in order to conserve our strength and bide our time to defeat the enemy, to lure him in deep and prepare our counter-offensive.”* Here at this stage, defensive warfare is passive in form but active in content. In the stage of the counter-offensive, defensive warfare is active both in form and content. According to Mao: *“Not only is a strategic counter-offensive active in content, but in form, too, it discards the passive posture in the period of retreat. In relation to the enemy, our counter-offensive represents our effort to make him relinquish the initiative and put him in a passive position.”*

Hence, if the enemy attacks or is in the offensive, and we just retreat and engage in evasion or flight to avoid the enemy’s blows and do not have any definite plan to defeat the offensive by a counter-offensive and rest content in frustrating the enemy by just exhausting him by punching the air, this defensive warfare is not only passive in form but also in content. If we do not plan and launch a counter-offensive to precisely smash and defeat the enemy campaign, if we do not consciously maneuver and engage in battle to put the enemy in the defensive and actually take the offensive and achieve a victorious decisive engagement in a counter-campaign, we

cannot reach the stage wherein our defensive warfare is both active in form and content. In relation to the enemy, the counter-offensive in defensive warfare represents the effort of the Red Army to make the enemy relinquish the initiative and put him in a passive position.

What are the necessary conditions for the strategic defensive or for defensive warfare to become active defense in both form and content and thus advance the protracted war? According to Mao: *“Concentration of troops, mobile warfare, war of quick decision and war of annihilation are all necessary conditions for the full achievement of this aim. And of these, concentration of troops is the first and most essential.”*

Before we proceed to the discussion of the purpose and logic of this “concentration of troops” which according to Mao is the *“first and most essential”* in defensive warfare and *“victory in the strategic defensive depends basically on this measure,”* it should be made clear that this *“concentration of troops”* is not a question of tactics but a question of strategy and is decisive in attaining the initiative in warfare, in both defense and offense, and which, in military struggle, can spell the difference between victory and defeat.

According to Mao: *“The concentration of troops seems easy but is quite hard in practice. Everybody knows that the best way is to use a large force to defeat a small one, and yet many people fail to do so and on the contrary often divide their forces up. The reason is that such military leaders have no head for strategy and are confused by complicated circumstances; hence, they are at the mercy of these circumstances, lose their initiative and have recourse to passive response.”*

Our failure to achieve this “concentration of troops” after 25 years of “protracted war” proves that Sison has no “head for strategy” and this is not simply because he is no military leader, and does not read well and understand his idol’s military writings. The basic reason is because Sison is just a plain and simple demagogue, a pseudo-intellectual and pseudo-theoretician, and above all, a rabid phrase-monger and war-monger of the Guzman and Pol Pot-type.

In the beginning, he actually tried to imitate Mao's protracted war by attempting to build a Chingkang-type of "armed independent regime" or "central base area in Northern Luzon" during those "Isabela days" and immediately formed "three Red companies" in the area geared for "regular mobile warfare". He even tried to smuggle a shipload of armaments from abroad enough to arm thousands of revolutionary fighters and he actually created an artificial condition just to produce the necessary number of revolutionaries that will carry those arms.

But when the enemy began its massive "encirclement and suppression" campaign and the people's army failed to smash this campaign, Sison got confused and overwhelmed, and decided to deviate fundamentally from Mao's basic principles in protracted war. Confused by the complicated circumstances, particularly the archipelagic character of the country, he shifted to a strategy of protracted guerrillaism, which after 25 years, he wants to be "reaffirmed" by the Party as a basic, absolute and universal Maoist truth.

We will return later to this most important quote from Mao regarding the difficulty of the "concentration of troops" for people who have no "head for strategy" and are confused by "complicated circumstances". But first, we must clarify Mao's purpose for the "concentration of troops" as a basic operational principle in protracted war and its direct relation or crucial role to mobile warfare, war of quick decision and war of annihilation which are all necessary conditions for advancing the strategic defensive.

According to Mao, this concentration is necessary for reversing the situation between the enemy and ourselves. First, reverse the situation with regard to advance and retreat. Second, reverse the situation with regard to attack and defense. Third, reverse the situation with regard to interior and exterior lines. This is how crucial the "concentration of troops" is to the entire strategy and tactics of protracted war. Hence, according to Mao: *"The winning of victory in*

the strategic defensive depends basically on this measure-concentration of troops.”

On the first purpose, Mao said: *“Previously it was the enemy who was advancing and we who are retreating; now we seek a situation in which we advance and he retreats. When we concentrate our troops and win a battle, then in that battle we gain the above purpose and this influences the whole campaign.”* Without concentration, we cannot truly advance and force the enemy to retreat.

On the second purpose, Mao said: *“In defensive warfare the retreat to the prescribed terminal point belongs basically to the passive or “defence” stage. The counter-offensive belongs to the active, or “attack” stage... it is precisely for the purpose of the counter-offensive that troops are concentrated.”* Without concentration, we cannot effectively attack and force the enemy into a defensive position in a counter-campaign.

On the third purpose, Mao said: *“We can put the enemy who is in a strong position strategically into a weak position in campaigns and battles. At the same time we can change our own strategically weak position into a strong position in campaigns and battles. This is what we call exterior-line operations within interior-line operations...”* Again, without concentration, we cannot reverse the strategic advantage of the enemy operating on exterior lines and the disadvantage of the Red Army operating on strategically interior lines.

The principle of concentration is opposed to military equalitarianism. In China, this equalitarianism occurred under the slogan of *“attacking on all fronts”* or *“striking with two fists”*. According to Mao: *“The Chinese Red Army, which entered the arena of civil war as a small and weak force, has since repeatedly defeated its powerful antagonist and won victories that have astonished the world, and it has done so by relying largely on the employment of concentrated strength. Any one of its great victories can prove this point... Whether in counter-offensives or offensives, we should*

always concentrate a big force to strike at one part of the enemy forces. We suffered every time we did not concentrate our troops... Our strategy is "pit one against ten" and our tactics are "pit ten against one"-this is one of our fundamental principles for gaining mastery over the enemy."

Military equalitarianism reached its extreme point in the fifth counter-campaign in 1934. It was thought that the Red Army could beat the enemy by *"dividing the forces into six routes"* and *"resisting on all fronts"*, but instead they were beaten and the reason was fear of losing territory. According to Mao: *"Naturally one can scarcely avoid loss of territory when concentrating the main forces in one direction while leaving only containing forces in others. But this loss is temporary and partial and is compensated by victory in the place where the assault is made. After such a victory is won, territory lost in the area of the containing forces can be recovered. The enemy's first, second, third and fourth campaigns of "encirclement and suppression" all entailed the loss of territory-particularly the third campaign, in which the Kiangsi base area of the Red Army was almost completely lost-but in the end we not only recovered but extended our territory."*

Debunking the idea that it is impossible to operate with concentrated forces against blockhouse warfare and all the Red Army can do is to divide up its forces for defence and for short swift thrusts, Mao said: *"The enemy's tactics of pushing forward 3, 5, 8, or 10 li at a time and building blockhouses at each halt were entirely the result of the Red Army's practice of fighting defensive actions at every successive point. The situation would certainly have been different if our army had abandoned the tactics of point-by-point defence on interior lines and, when possible and necessary, had turned and driven into the enemy's interior lines. The principle of concentration of troops is precisely the means for defeating the enemy's blockhouse warfare."*

Obviously, Sison did not review Mao's *Problems of Strategy* when he wrote *Reaffirm*. He said that the AFP's "gradual constriction"

strategy is basically “blockhouse warfare”. But this rabid Maoist prescribed the dispersal of the NPA units into small formations against this “blockhouse warfare” while in Mao’s protracted war , *the concentration of forces is precisely the means for defeating the enemy’s blockhouse warfare!* What he wants us to “reaffirm” is not Mao’s strategy and tactics in protracted war but Li Li-san’s and Wang Ming’s line of military equalitarianism and guerrillaism.

Concentration of forces does not mean the abandonment of guerrilla warfare. According to Mao: *“Considering the revolutionary war as a whole, the operations of the people’s guerrillas and those of the main forces of the Red Army complement its other like a man’s right arm and left arm, and if we have only the main forces of the Red Army without the people’s guerrillas, we would be like a warrior with only one arm. In concrete terms, and specially with regard to military operations, when we talk of the people in the base area as a factor, we mean that we have an armed people. This is the main reason why the enemy is afraid to approach our base area.”*

Concentration of forces does not also mean that all the forces of the Red Army should be concentrated. Red Army detachment should also be employed for operations in secondary directions. The kind of concentration Mao is advocating *“is based on the principle of guaranteeing absolute or relative superiority in the battlefield. To cope with a strong enemy or to fight on a battlefield of vital importance, we must have an absolutely superior force... To cope with a weaker enemy or to fight in a battlefield of no great importance, a relatively superior force is sufficient.”*

Concentration of forces does not also mean that numerical superiority is always required in every occasion. In certain circumstances, the Red Army may go into battle with a relatively or absolutely inferior force. In this condition, a surprise attack on a segment of the enemy flank is of vital importance. According to Mao: *“In our surprise attack on this segment of the enemy flank, the principle of using a superior force against an inferior force, of using the many to defeat the few, still applies.”*

After establishing the principle of concentration of forces as the most essential in the winning of victory in the strategic defensive, we must now proceed on how such a Red Army applying the principle of concentration conducts its warfare, particularly in the strategic defensive. This basically concerns the principles of mobile warfare, war of quick decision and war of annihilation, and all these basic principles should be welded into an integral whole as the mode of warfare in a protracted people's war specially in the strategic defensive so as to advance into the strategic offensive.

Mao, in his military writings, used "mobile warfare" and "regular warfare" interchangeably. It is "mobile" warfare in contrast to "positional" warfare and it is "regular" warfare in contrast to "guerrilla" warfare. Hence, the term "regular mobile warfare".

In his *Problems of Strategy*, Mao stressed the primacy of mobile warfare over positional warfare. But he did not bother to formulate its primacy over guerrilla warfare in the strategic defensive nor contrast it with guerrilla warfare unlike in subsequent military writings. It is because in summing-up the second revolutionary civil war, the debate was more on mobile warfare versus positional warfare. The question of the primacy of mobile warfare over guerrilla warfare was never posed as a matter of dispute. In fact, mobile warfare, at that time, was criticized by the "Left" adventurists as "guerrillism" while Mao called the advocates of positional warfare "*exponents of the strategy of 'regular warfare'.*" The terms used should be understood in this context. Mao took a more positive and indulgent view on "guerrillism" to emphasize his opposition to the tendency towards positional warfare (point-by-point defence during the fifth counter-campaign) and his advocacy of mobile warfare.

Mao's indulgent view and positive use of the term "guerrillism" in his *Problems of Strategy* should not be misconstrued as advocacy of such a tendency. As early as 1930 in his *Single Spark* article, Mao vehemently opposed the "guerrillism" of Li Li-san's line that gave primacy to "roving guerrilla actions". In Li Li-san's view, to preserve the Red Army and arouse the masses, it should divide its forces into

very small units, disperse them over the countryside and engage in the easier method of roving guerrilla actions.

According to Mao, *“In the winter of 1927-28, we did plan to disperse our forces over the countryside, with each company or battalion operating on its own and adopting guerrilla tactics in order to arouse the masses while trying not to present a target for the enemy; we have tried this out many times, but have failed every time.”* This dispersal is precisely what Sison is advocating but in a more extreme form (companies and battalions to be dispersed into squads and platoons) in his Reaffirm. This is for also the very same reason as that of Li Li-san’s-to arouse the masses while trying not to present a target for the enemy-which Mao had already criticized as early as 1930!

For Mao, when faced by a strong enemy offensive or campaign, the correct policy and principle is to concentrate to be able to defend and counter-attack effectively and successfully. For Sison, his principle and policy is to divide and disperse into small units and merely frustrate the enemy by letting them “punch air”.

When Mao speaks of the Red Army, he always refers to the concentrated regular troops. When he talks of the Red Guards, he refers to the local guerrillas and militias in the locality dispersed and operating independently in wide areas. For Mao, *“the principle for the Red Army is concentration, and that for the Red Guards dispersion.”* No wonder Sison advocates dispersal and knows nothing but dispersal and vehemently resists concentration because, after 25 years, we have failed to build a regular army conducting regular mobile warfare. What we were able to build in two and a half decades of ruthless war are small “roving guerrilla units” engaged solely in “roving guerrilla actions” inside and outside extremely fluid “guerrilla zones and bases.” Even our companies and battalion which Sison wants dispersed are basically guerrilla in character and operations.

Since Mao’s Red Army was a regular army from the very beginning, its mode of operation was regular mobile warfare, and

Mao opposed any tendency to transform it mainly into guerrilla warfare or positional warfare.

Why mobile warfare and not positional warfare? According to Mao, *“one of the outstanding characteristics of the Red Army’s operations, which follows from the fact that the enemy is powerful while the Red Army is deficient in technical equipment, is the absence of fixed battle line... The Red Army’s battle lines are determined by the direction in which it is operating. As its operational direction often shifts, its battle lines are fluid... In a revolutionary civil war, there cannot be fixed battle lines... Fluidity of battle lines leads to fluidity in the size of our base areas... This fluidity of territory is entirely the result of the fluidity of the war.”* This absence of fixed battle lines, this fluidity of the war, determines the mobile character of the Red Army’s basically regular warfare.

This mobile nature of the Red Army’s regular warfare lends it a guerrilla character. According to Mao: *“... we should not repudiate guerrillaism in general terms but should honestly admit the guerrilla character of the Red Army. It is no use being ashamed of this. On the contrary, this guerrilla character is precisely our distinguishing feature, our strong point, and our means of defeating the enemy. We should be prepared to discard it, but we cannot do so today. In the future this guerrilla character will definitely become something to be ashamed of and to be discarded, but today it is invaluable and we must stick to it.”*

What is this guerrilla character of the Red Army that does not negate the regular character of the Red Army and its operations, a “guerrillaism” that is its “distinguishing feature” yet does not reduce the Red Army into a guerrilla army? The guerrilla character of the Red Army is its mobility determined by the fluidity of the war. According to Mao: *“Fight when you can win, move away when you can’t win’-this is the popular way of describing our mobile warfare today... All our ‘moving’ is for the purpose of ‘fighting’, and all our strategy and tactics are built on ‘fighting’.*” This “fighting” nature of the Red Army constitutes its “regular” character as an army. Mao

then cited four situations when it is inadvisable for the Red Army to fight and he said: *“In any one of these situations, we are prepared to move away. Such moving away is both permissible and necessary. For our recognition of the necessity of moving away is based on our recognition of the necessity of fighting. Herein lies the fundamental characteristic of the Red Army’s mobile warfare.”*

In the ten years’ civil war, the guerrilla character of the Red Army and the fluidity of the war underwent great changes. The period from the days of the Ching Kang Mountains to the first counter-campaign in Kiangsi was the first stage in which the guerrilla character and fluidity were very pronounced, the Red Army being in its infancy and the base areas still being guerrilla zones. In the second stage, comprising the period from the first to the third counter-campaign, both the guerrilla character and fluidity were considerably reduced, the First Front Army of the Red Army was formed and base areas with a population of several millions established. In the third stage, which comprised the period from the end of the third to the fifth counter-campaign, the guerrilla character and the fluidity were further reduced, and a central government and a revolutionary military commission had already been set up. The fourth stage was the Long March. The mistaken rejection of guerrilla warfare and fluidity had led to guerrilla warfare and fluidity on a great scale. The period after the Long March was the fifth stage.

It took only ten years for the Red Army to develop and undergo such changes in its guerrilla character and mobile warfare, and considering that the central leadership of the CCP was then dominated by people like Li Li-san, Wang Ming, Chang Kou-tao, etc. In the Philippines, with Sison and his fanatics in command all the time, we have already consumed 25 years of protracted war, and still not a single, little sign of our guerrilla warfare developing into regular mobile warfare, and in fact, we are being pushed back to the early substage of dispersed roving guerrilla units and operations.

Guerrillism, according to Mao, has two aspects. One is irregularity, that is decentralization, lack of uniformity, absence of

strict discipline, and simple methods of work. These features stemmed from the Red Army's infancy, and some of them were just what was needed at the time. As the Red Army reaches a higher stage, according to Mao, *"we must gradually and consciously eliminate them so as to make the Red Army more centralized, more unified, more disciplined and more thorough in its work-in short, more regular in character. In the directing of operations we should also gradually and consciously reduce such guerrilla characteristics as are no longer required at a higher stage. Refusal to make progress in this respect and obstinate adherence to the old stage are impermissible and harmful, and are detrimental to large-scale operations."* In the Philippines, our People's Army is a 25 year-old infant, we are still in the period of infancy in building our People's Army because of Sison's infatuation with "guerrillism", his refusal to advance from this "guerrillism" and obstinate adherence to this "guerrillism".

The other aspect of guerrillism, according to Mao, *"consists of the principle of mobile warfare, the guerrilla character of both strategic and tactical operations which is still necessary at present, the inevitable fluidity of our base areas, flexibility in planning the development of the base areas, and the rejection of the premature regularization in building the Red Army. In this connection, it is equally impermissible, disadvantageous and harmful to our present operations to deny the facts of history, to oppose what is useful, and rashly leave the present stage in order to rush blindly towards a "new stage", which as yet is beyond reach and has no real significance."* Here, the "guerrillism" that Mao is referring is not guerrilla warfare as a distinct form of warfare from mobile warfare, or "roving guerrilla actions" as we are familiar with in the Philippines. Mao is speaking of "mobile warfare", taking what is useful in "guerrillism"-its extreme mobility and fighting without fixed battle lines-while maintaining the Red Army's regular character. Mao's rejection of the "premature regularization" of the Red Army has nothing in common with Sison's rejection of "premature regularization" in his Reaffirm. What is referred to as "premature regularization" in Mao's *Problems of Strategy* is "positional warfare" as opposed to "mobile warfare". What

he is criticizing are those *“exponents of the strategy of ‘regular warfare’”* which dominated the fifth counter-campaign, i.e., the exponents of the *“point-by-point defence of the base areas”* which is a form of positional warfare. What Mao is referring to as rushing blindly *“towards a ‘new stage’, which as yet is beyond reach and has no real significance”* is positional warfare.

We now proceed to Mao’s principle of “campaigns and battles of quick decision” of which the principles of concentration of troops and the primacy of regular mobile warfare are crucial and basic requisites. According to Mao: *“A strategically protracted war, and campaigns or battles of quick decision are two aspects of the same thing, two principles which should receive equal and simultaneous emphasis in civil wars and which are also applicable in anti-imperialist wars.”*

Here, Mao had synthesized two contradictory aspects into one integral whole—the elements of a long drawn-out war and the series of short-term battles, the elements of gradual strategic advance and quick tactical victories into his protracted war theory. It is a war of quick decision—referring to campaigns and battles—within a war of prolonged duration—referring to the war situation as a whole—to the strategic balance of forces.

According to Mao: *“Because the reactionary forces are very strong, revolutionary forces grow only gradually, and this fact determines the protracted tactinature of our war. Here impatience is harmful and advocacy of “quick decision” is incorrect.”* Although this is only one aspect of Mao’s protracted war theory, this is the most important and is the starting point of all his operational principles. But not everything in protracted war is protracted. The campaigns and battles that constitute this protracted war are resolved through quick decision. In this campaigns and battles are found the vibrancy, the dynamism, the swiftness of this protracted war. According to Mao: *“The reverse is true of campaigns and battles—here the principle is not protractedness but quick decision. Quick decision is sought in*

campaigns and battles, and this is true at all times and in all countries.”

In his *On Protracted War* (May 1938), Mao made a more dialectical formulation of this synthesis: “...*fighting campaigns and battles is one of ‘quick decision offensive warfare on exterior lines’*. *It is the opposite of our strategic principle of ‘protracted defensive warfare on interior lines’*, and yet it is the indispensable principle for carrying out this strategy. *If we should use ‘protracted defensive warfare on interior lines’ as the principle for campaigns and battles too, as we did at the beginning of the War of Resistance, it would be totally unsuited to the circumstances in which the enemy is strong and we are weak; in that case we could never achieve our strategic objective of a protracted war and we would be defeated by the enemy... This principle of ‘quick -decision offensive warfare on exterior lines’ can and must be applied in guerrilla as well as in regular warfare. It is applicable not only to any one stage of the war but to its entire course.”*

Here, Mao’s protracted war theory is crystal-clear. Firstly, protracted war is not a simple realization of the fact that the war is protracted but a clear-cut strategy of warfare just as the strategic defensive is not a simple characterization of a historical stage in the development of the war but is a definite and complete form of strategy in launching protracted war. It is both a situation and a policy. Secondly, the strategic defensive defines the protractedness of the war, and at the same time, as a definite strategy in protracted war, is the means to eliminate the conditions for such protractedness. Thirdly, the strategic defensive as a definite strategy in protracted war is one of “quick decision offensive warfare on exterior lines” within the framework of the strategic principle of “protracted defensive warfare on interior lines” and the former is the indispensable principle for carrying out the latter. Fourthly, without “quick decision offensive warfare on exterior lines” within a strategy of “protracted defensive warfare on interior lines” we cannot actively, in a military sense, adopt to and advance under a condition in which the enemy is strong and we are weak, and could never achieve our

strategic objective of a protracted war, of transforming ourselves into a big and strong People's Army while annihilating and weakening the enemy, and we would ultimately be defeated by the very protractedness of the war.

A quick decision cannot be achieved simply by wanting it, and Mao required many specific conditions for it. The main requirements are: adequate preparations, seizing the opportune moment, concentration of superior forces, encircling and outflanking tactics, favorable terrain, and striking at the enemy when he is on the move, or when he is stationary but has not yet consolidated his positions. Unless these conditions are satisfied, according to Mao, it is impossible to achieve quick decision in a campaign or battle.

Among these requirements, the concentration of forces is the most important and the most basic. In advocating the operational principle of "quick decision offensive warfare on exterior lines" in the Anti-Japanese War of Resistance, Mao said: *"That is why we have always advocated the organization of the forces of the entire country into a number of large field armies, each counterposed to one of the enemy's field armies but having two, three or four times its strength, and so keeping the enemy engaged in extensive theaters of war in accordance with the principle outlined above."*

In our own experience, the principle of quick decision is exclusively applied in our tactical offensives which are basically "roving guerrilla actions" in the form of small-scale ambushes and raids. In Mao's theory, the principle of quick decision is applied not only in specific battles but also in campaigns. According to Mao: *"The smashing of an enemy "encirclement and suppression" is a major campaign, but the principle of quick decision and not that of protractedness still applies. For the manpower, financial resources and military strength of a base area do not allow protractedness."*

Mao cited the experiences of the Red Army in its five counter-campaigns to illustrate the application of this principle of quick decision. According to Mao: *"The smashing of the first enemy 'enemy encirclement and suppression' campaign in Kiangsi Province took*

only one week from the first battle to the last; the second was smashed in barely a fortnight; the third dragged on for three months before it was smashed; the fourth took three weeks; and the fifth taxed our endurance for a whole year. When we were compelled to break through the enemy's encirclement after the failure to smash his fifth campaign, we showed an unjustifiable haste." In all these campaigns and counter-campaigns, it should be noted that the central leadership of the CCP was in the hands of assorted "Left" and Right opportunists, yet the Red Army was able to smash in quick decision the four enemy campaigns. In our protracted war, in the main, we are not actually "smashing" enemy campaigns but merely "frustrating" the enemy by letting him "punch the air".

Despite the failure of the fifth counter-campaign, Mao insisted on the principle of shortening the duration of a campaign by every possible means, and according to him: *"Campaign and battle plans should call for our maximum effort in concentration of troops, mobile warfare, and so on, so as to ensure the destruction of the enemy's effective strength on the interior lines (that is, in the base area) and the quick defeat of his 'encirclement and suppression' campaign, but where it is evident that the campaign cannot be terminated on our interior lines, we should employ the main Red Army force to break through the enemy's encirclement and switch to our exterior lines (that is, the enemy's interior lines) in order to defeat him there. Now that the enemy has developed his blockhouse warfare to a high degree, this will be our usual method of operation."* Here Mao is already developing the principle of "quick decision offensive warfare on exterior lines" within "protracted defensive warfare on interior lines" which he unleashed against the Japanese aggressors during the War of Resistance.

A regular Red Army operating by concentrating its forces, engaging in regular mobile operation as its main form of warfare, and accumulating strength by campaigns and battles of quick decision—this is Mao's protracted war theory. All these basic operational principles are aimed and designed to preserve one's forces and destroy the enemy in protracted war.

According to Mao: *“The principle of preserving oneself and destroying the enemy is the basis of all military principles.”* We are not in protracted war just to preserve ourselves in perpetual struggle. We preserve ourselves through active defense by destroying the enemy and we preserve ourselves for the single purpose of destroying the enemy through offensive warfare and putting an end to this ruthless war.

The fundamental point is in what form do we destroy and defeat the enemy in a protracted war? To this, Mao has a very clear and categorical answer, by waging a war of annihilation.

According to Mao: *“For the Red Army which gets almost all its supplies from the enemy, war of annihilation is the basic policy. Only by annihilating the enemy’s effective strength can we smash his ‘encirclement and suppression’ campaigns and expand our revolutionary base areas... A battle in which the enemy is routed is not basically decisive in a contest with a foe of great strength. A battle of annihilation, on the other hand, produces a great and immediate impact on any enemy. Injuring all of a man’s ten fingers is not as effective as chopping off one, and routing ten enemy divisions is not as effective as annihilating one of them.”* In our 25 years of protracted war, we have not annihilated a single enemy company as an integral unit of an enemy battalion much more an enemy infantry battalion as an integral unit of an AFP brigade or division. We have slain, for the past 25 years, thousands of enemy troops through guerrilla warfare, through a war of attrition, but we “exterminated” them only as individuals, as squads, and in very rare occasions, as platoons, and they were easily replenished by their mother units.

According to Mao: *“Our policy for dealing with the enemy’s first, second, third and fourth ‘encirclement and suppression’ campaigns was war of annihilation. The forces annihilated in each campaign constituted only part of his total strength, and yet all these ‘encirclement and suppression’ campaigns were smashed. In our fifth counter-campaign, however, the opposite policy was pursued, which in fact helped the enemy to attain his aims.”*

In the first counter-campaign, the Red Army successfully hit two of the enemy's brigades and his divisional headquarters, annihilating the entire force of 9,000 men and capturing the divisional commander himself, without letting a single man or horse escape. This one victory scared another two enemy divisions into headlong flight. The Red Army then pursued one of the divisions and wiped out one half of it. Fearing defeat, all the enemy forces retreated in disorder.

In the second counter-campaign, the Red Army, in fifteen days marched seven hundred li, fought five battles, captured more than 20,000 rifles and roundly smashed the enemy's campaign. There was an interval of only one month between the end of the second enemy campaign and the beginning of the third. The Red Army (then about 30,000 strong), with neither rest nor replenishment, had just made a detour of one thousand li in the western part of the southern Kiangsi base area.

In the third campaign, the enemy pressed hard from several directions. After doing the necessary defensive maneuvers, it unleashed its counter-offensive. It launched three successive battles against three separate divisions and won all three battles and captured over 10,000 rifles. At this point, all the main enemy forces maneuvered and converged to seek battle. The Red Army slipped through in the high mountains. By the time the enemy discovered this fact and tried to pursue, the Red Army had already had a fortnight's rest while the enemy forces were hungry, exhausted and demoralized, and so decided to retreat. Taking advantage of their retreat, the Red Army pursued and wiped out one entire division and a brigade of another division. In the fourth counter-campaign, the Red Army in the first battle, annihilated two divisions at one stroke, and as the enemy tried to send reinforcements, the Red Army again annihilated another division. In these two battles, the Red Army captured more than 10,000 rifles, and in the main, smashed the enemy campaign.

The Red Army could not have annihilated these enemy forces and smashed its four campaigns, if it did not apply the concentration of superior forces and engage in mobile warfare in the form of encircling or outflanking tactics. Mao said: *“War of annihilation entails the concentration of forces and the adoption of encircling our outflanking tactics. We cannot have the former without the latter.”*

In *Protracted War*, Mao discussed the relationship between war of annihilation and war of attrition. The anti-Japanese war is at once a war of attrition and a war of annihilation because the enemy is still exploiting his strength and retains strategic superiority and strategic initiative. According to Mao: *“... unless we fight campaigns and battles of annihilation we cannot effectively and speedily reduce his strength and break his superiority and initiative... Hence campaigns of annihilation are the means of attaining the objective of strategic attrition. It is chiefly by using the method of attrition through annihilation that China can wage protracted war.”*

Mao then proceeded to a general differentiation of the three basic forms of warfare and their role on this question of annihilation and attrition: *“Generally speaking, mobile warfare performs the task of annihilation, positional warfare performs the tasks of attrition, and guerrilla warfare performs both simultaneously; the three forms are thus distinguished from one another. In this sense war of annihilation is different from war of attrition. Campaigns of attrition are supplementary but necessary in protracted war.”*

Speaking theoretically, and in terms of China's needs, Mao said: *“In order to achieve the strategic objective of greatly depleting the enemy's forces, China in her defensive stage should not only exploit the function of annihilation, which is fulfilled primarily by mobile warfare and partially by guerrilla warfare, but also exploit the function of attrition, which is fulfilled primarily by positional warfare (which itself is supplementary) and partially by guerrilla warfare.”*

To sum-up all that were discussed above: A regular People's Army operating by concentrating its forces, engaging in regular mobile warfare as its main form of warfare, accumulating strength by

campaigns and battles of quick decision, and preserving itself and destroying the enemy by a war of annihilation in a strategic defensive characterized by campaigns and counter-campaigns-this is Mao's protracted war theory in a revolutionary civil war. All these basic principles can only be applied if we have armed independent regimes or relatively stable revolutionary base areas.

The simple, basic question is: Does our protracted war for the past 25 years, have anything in common with China's protracted war?

If we cannot build stable base areas, if we cannot build a regular army, if we cannot engage in regular mobile warfare, if we cannot accumulate enough strength through campaigns and battles of quick decision to build a regular army and engage in regular mobile warfare, if we cannot preserve ourselves and destroy the enemy through war of annihilation-and what we can only do, for the past 25 years, is to spread out our forces in extremely fluid guerrilla zones and bases, build only small and scattered roving guerrilla units of squads and platoons, engage only in widespread but sporadic guerrilla warfare in the form of roving guerrilla actions, and merely harass and frustrate the enemy by a war of attrition without affecting the strategic balance of forces-why call our people's war a strategy of protracted war, pretending to use Mao's strategy and tactics of protracted war when in truth, the only thing that we are using is the authority of Mao's name and using it in vain.

Starting out with a small and weak People's Army against a big and strong reactionary army, does not by itself make our war a protracted one in a scientific and military sense. This is only a statement of the duration of the war, a description of its situation, a characterization of the strategic balance. Mao's protracted war is not a simple situational description but a definite war strategy. The essence of Mao's protracted war is not in its protractedness in terms of duration but in its strategic and tactical content that deliberately protracts the war by using the strategic defensive as a strategy of warfare and takes advantage of this protracted defensive warfare by using quick decision offensive warfare. Mao's theory of protracted

war cannot be detached from its strategy and tactics, cannot be separated from its basic operational principles. To do so is to vulgarize it in theory and practice.

In theory and practice, our's is not a strategy of protracted war but a strategy of prolonged and perpetual guerrilla warfare which had already consumed 25 years. And Sison wants this vulgarized strategy "reaffirmed" as Mao's basic principle and "reaffirmed" up to the year 2000 and beyond. Our "protracted war" will be a prolonged and perpetual guerrilla warfare because Sison is afflicted with a terminal disease of guerrillaism and has absolutely no idea or is mired in wishful thinking on how this protracted guerrilla warfare can develop to a higher stage and change the strategic balance.

We only have to read Sison's *Specific Characteristics Of Our People's War* of 1976 and his Reaffirm of 1992 to see that Sison's version of protracted war completely deviates from Mao's strategy of protracted war, and worst, he does not really have a clear idea, after 25 years, of how to go about with this people's war. Except for *Specific*, Sison had no other major military writing regarding our armed struggle. This is also the case with the agrarian question. Except for *Guide for Revolutionary Land Reform (1974?)*, which we assume was written by Sison, he has written no other major article that deals exclusively on the peasant question. Yet, he has always insisted that armed struggle is the main form and the agrarian struggle the main content of our revolution. In fact, even *Specific* cannot really be categorized as a military writing and cannot be compared with Mao's military writings. Out of 36 pages, only 12 pages dealt with "military" questions, and here we insist that it should be treated in quotation marks.

In three short sections of "*Specific*" (*Protracted War In The Countryside, Fighting In A Small Mountainous Archipelago, and From Small And Weak To Big And Strong*) Sison tried to develop his "military" ideas.

In the first section, how did he explain why it is possible to wage a protracted war in the Philippines? This is what Sison said: "*In our*

country, it is possible to wage a protracted people's war because we have a relatively wide backward countryside where the bulk of the population is. There are many parts which are relatively far from the enemy's center and main lines of communication and where the people live basically on their diversified agricultural produce. This situation is completely different from that obtaining in a capitalist country." So for Sison, if a country has "a relatively wide backward countryside where the bulk of the population is," protracted war is possible. Simple. This is all he had to say in the first section entitled *Protracted War In the Countryside* on why protracted war is possible in the Philippines in an article hailed as our guide in waging protracted people's war.

How does Sison compare this "backward countryside" to China where this protracted war theory originated? According to Sison: *"This backward countryside of our small country is not as large as that of China but is certainly large in comparison to our cities. This is the basic setting for our people's war. The bulk of our population is here."* With regards to the "bulk of our population," Sison should explain the implication to our protracted war of the growing number of our urban population. In 1990, our urban population has grown to 48% of the total population and it is still growing.

The fact that our countryside does not have the vastness of China's countryside is irrelevant to Sison. What is important is that this countryside is certainly larger in comparison to our cities as if comparing the territorial size of the countryside with the cities has any military sense in protracted war. What is of military value is the size of the countryside in relation to the requirements of mobile and guerrilla warfare, and not whether it is "large in comparison to our cities."

Mao once said: *"Given a big country, guerrilla warfare is possible... it can be victorious only in modern times and only in big countries..."* And he also said, referring to the vastness of China's territory: *"This is an important, even primary condition, as far as the possibility of waging guerrilla warfare is concerned..."*

However, Mao's editors, followers of Lin Biao and the Gang of Four, corrected Mao (it is presumed, as approved by Mao)-by affixing a footnote-in their attempt to universalize Mao's protracted war: *"Ever since the end of World War II... in the new historical circumstances... the conditions under which the people of various countries conduct guerrilla warfare today need not be quite the same as those which were necessary in the days of the guerrilla warfare waged by the Chinese people against Japan. In other words, guerrilla war can be victoriously waged in a country which is not large in territory, as for instance, in Cuba, Algeria, Laos and southern Vietnam."*

If by "guerrilla warfare" they mean armed struggle, this is not a world phenomenon peculiar to historical conditions after World War II. If by "guerrilla warfare" they mean Mao's protracted war, they are wrong. The leaders of countries they cited as concrete examples will readily deny that their revolutions were of the "protracted war type."

The "new historical circumstances"-the world era of the total collapse of imperialism and total victory of socialism-was also proven wrong by concrete historical developments.

They also did this footnoting to Mao's statement that Red political power *"cannot occur in any imperialist country or in any colony under direct imperialist rule, but can only occur in China..."* According to these editors: *"...it has become possible for the peoples of all, or at least some, of the colonial countries in the East to maintain big and small revolutionary areas and revolutionary regimes over a long period of time, and to carry on long-term revolutionary wars in which to surround the cities from the countryside, and then gradually advance to take the cities and win nationwide victory."*

In fact, Lin Biao rendered Mao more profound by applying protracted war strategy on a world scale-declaring that the "countryside of the world," referring to countries like the Philippines, should encircle the "cities of the world" referring to the imperialist countries. Sison is an assiduous follower of these footnotes, and of

Lin Biao and the Gang of Four-the conspirators of the Cultural Revolution in China, and applied these to the Philippine revolution.

How did Sison explain why it is necessary to wage protracted war in the Philippines?

This is what Sison said: *“In the Philippines, it is as necessary as it is possible to wage a protracted people’s war. It is only through a long period of time that we can develop our forces step by step by defeating the enemy forces piece by piece. We are in no position to put our small and weak forces into strategically decisive engagements with militarily superior enemy forces. In the first place, we have just started from scratch. Neither could we have postponed the start of our people’s war. The more time we have for developing our armed strength from practically nothing the better for us in the future. It is our firm policy to fight only those battles that we are capable of winning. Otherwise, we circle around at an enemy that we cannot defeat and look for the opportunity to strike at an enemy force that we can defeat.”*

Actually, he did not explain why it is “necessary”, but why it is “possible”. As Sison implies, it is necessary to wage protracted war - because we have no other choice-without bothering to explore and explain the other “choices”. Waging people’s war is already assumed and whoever questions this is playing a “fool’s game” (Sison: *“To have a few seats in a reactionary parliament and to have no army in our country is to play a fools game”*).

The only thing left that must be explained is why it must be protracted. And the answer is also simple and logical. We are starting from scratch, we are small and weak against a militarily superior enemy force. Only through a long period of time can we develop our forces step by step by defeating the enemy forces step by step.

Why start immediately our people’s war? To this Sison answer ‘s *“the more time we have for developing our armed strength from practically nothing the better for us in the future.”* What convoluted

logic! Its just like asking, “why marry early?” And Sison will answer, “the more time you have for developing your marriage from practically nothing the better for you in the future”.

How did Sison envision the development of this protracted war? According to Sison: *“In carrying out protracted people’s war, we apply the strategic line of encircling the cities from the countryside. We steadfastly develop guerrilla bases and zones at various strategic points in the country. In a subsequent stage, these areas shall be linked by regular mobile forces which shall be in a position to defend larger and more stable revolutionary bases in the countryside. From such stable revolutionary bases, we shall be able ultimately to seize the cities and advance to nationwide victory.”* This one paragraph was all Sison said on how he envisions the development of our protracted war, at least in the first section.

So Sison is also speaking of regular mobile forces and stable base areas *“in a subsequent stage”*, after *“we steadfastly develop guerrilla bases and zones at various strategic points in the country”*. What is the role of these “regular mobile forces”? According to Sison, it shall “link” the guerrilla bases and zones at various strategic points of the country” and defend larger and more stable base areas in the countryside, and *“from such stable revolutionary bases, we shall be able ultimately to seize and advance to nationwide victory.”*

After talking of “linking” and “defending”, he suddenly shifts to “seizing” and “advancing” to nationwide victory without mentioning the “offensive fighting” and “annihilating” role of the regular mobile forces? For Sison, essential role of mobile warfare is something to be assumed! How this guerrilla bases and zone will develop, what will be the factors for their development, how to build this regular mobile forces, how they will conduct their warfare in the strategic defensive, how to build stable base areas, what are the factors necessary for the development of stable base areas, what are the conditions for the emergence and long-term survival of these bases areas, etc. etc., all these Sison ignored in his first section which was supposed to be a general discussion of protracted war.

So Sison finished this section-*Protracted War In The Countryside*-without introducing the basic theory and principles of Mao's protracted war and how it should be understood, applied or related to the Philippine situation. Sison was more concerned with impressing his readers with his smooth literary style than presenting a systematic exposition of the basic theory and strategy of protracted war.

We now proceed to Sison' second section-*Fighting In A Small Mountainous Archipelago*-which was supposed to be an attempt to particularize Mao's theory of protracted war in the concrete conditions of the Philippines and highlight the specific characteristics of our people's war. But since in the preceding section, he did not introduce the "universal" theory of Mao's protracted war, what will he try to particularize? Let us see how Sison ignored and obscured this problem in his second section.

What are the specific characteristics of our people's war that ensue from the specific characteristics of the Philippines? Sison began with the description of our country as a small mountainous archipelago with the eleven largest islands composing 94% of the total land area and 94% of the total population. So the Philippines is small, mountainous and archipelagic. So this is what is specific to the Philippines: its terrain!

The fact that the Philippines is a small country as compared to China is actually insignificant to Sison's strategy and tactics. What is important to Sison is that "*the backward countryside of our small country ... is certainly large in comparison to our cities*" and he even said that "*the countryside is so vast that enemy armed forces cannot but be spread thinly or cannot but abandon vast areas when concentrated at certain points.*"

Hence, the Philippines as a small country has no real bearing to waging our protracted war, and in Sison's discussion of the second section where he mentioned this characteristic, he almost completely ignored its strategic or tactical relevance to our armed struggle, while for Mao, the vastness of China is a major factor.

Sison focused mainly on the archipelagic and mountainous character of our country. The Philippines as a mountainous country is actually not specific to the Philippines if we compare our country to China or Vietnam. So the only specific or peculiar characteristic of the Philippines, comparatively speaking, is the archipelagic character of the country.

According to Sison: *“There are three outstanding characteristics of the Philippines in being an archipelago. First, our countryside is shredded into so many islands. Second, our two biggest islands, Luzon and Mindanao, are separated by such a clutter of islands as the Visayas. Third, our small country is separated by seas from other countries. From such characteristics arise problems that are very peculiar to our people’s war.”*

What are these “very peculiar” problems ensuing from our being an archipelago? Sison explains: *“On the one hand, it is true that our countryside is wide in relation to the cities. On the other hand, it is also true that we have to fight within narrow fronts because the entire country is small and its countryside is shredded. The war between us and the enemy easily assumes the characteristics of being intensive, ruthless and exceedingly fluid.”*

This is Sison’s first “peculiar” problem—an intensive, ruthless and exceedingly fluid war because we have to fight within narrow fronts. The war becoming “intensive, ruthless and exceedingly fluid” is not something specific or peculiar to our people’s war. These are fundamental characteristics of a protracted war whether it is waged within narrow or broad fronts. These characteristics ensue from the fact that this is a protracted war between a weak revolutionary armed force and a strong reactionary armed force.

“We have to fight within narrow fronts”, according to Sison, *“because the entire country is small and its countryside is shredded”.* Sison had just stated, a few pages before, that *“the countryside is so vast that the enemy armed forces cannot but spread thinly or cannot but abandon vast areas when concentrated at certain points”* But now he is saying that we have to fight in narrow fronts because *“the*

entire country is small and its countryside is shredded.” What do we believe? By the way he discussed his second section, the real problem is not this “shredded countryside”, the real problem is Sison’s shredded thinking.

According to Sison: ” *While we have the widest possible space for the development of regular mobile forces in Luzon and Mindanao, these two islands are separated by hundreds of kilometers and by far smaller islands where the space immediately appears to be suitable only for guerrilla forces throughout the course of the people’s war. The optimum condition for the emergence of regular mobile forces in the major Visayan islands will be provided by the prior development of regular mobile forces in Luzon and Mindanao.*”

So Sison accepts that the territorial area of Luzon and Mindanao provide the “widest possible space” for the development of regular mobile forces. If so, why does he insist that we are “fighting in narrow fronts” because the country is small and the countryside is shredded? Of course, since ours is a protracted war, we have to “fight within narrow fronts” in the beginning and extend it step by step through the strategic defensive. So again, what is Sison’s peculiar problem?

Actually, when speaking of a *shredded countryside*, what should be referred to are the Visayas and this *shredded countryside* separates the countryside of Luzon and Mindanao. So what is the “peculiar” problem in waging protracted war in a situation wherein the big islands of Luzon and Mindanao where “*we have the widest possible space for the development of regular mobile forces*” are separated by the “shredded” Visayan countryside where “*the space immediately appears to be suitable only for guerrilla warfare*”? In short, what is the implication of this fact, of this “shredded” Visayan countryside in waging guerrilla warfare and developing regular mobile warfare in Luzon and Mindanao?

Sison is like a boy twisting his hands and contorting his body but cannot seem to confess what the problem is. Up to this point, Sison had not identified the problems very peculiar to our protracted war

ensuing from the archipelagic character of the country. He made the impression that he is on the “threshold” but can not seem to penetrate, and finally decided to withdraw from the effort.

In his immediately succeeding paragraph, Sison said: *“Waging a people’s war in an archipelagic country like ours is definitely an exceedingly difficult and complex problem for us.”* Indeed, and our 25 years of protracted war testify to this fact. But again, what is this exceedingly difficult and complex problem? This is Sison’s answer: *“At this stage that we are still trying to develop guerrilla warfare on a nationwide scale, the central leadership has had to shift from one organizational arrangement to another so as to give ample attention to the regional Party and army organizations. This is only one manifestation of the problem. Armed propaganda teams and initial guerrilla units scattered in far-flung areas are susceptible to being crushed by the enemy. This is another manifestation of the problem.”*

So these are the “peculiar” problems of our protracted war ensuing from the archipelagic character of the country. First, “the central leadership has had to shift from one organizational arrangement to another”! So this is the “peculiar” problem, the “specific” characteristic of our protracted war-how Sison and what was left of the central leadership at that time will exercise leadership, what “organizational arrangement” they will institute! He is not even talking of shifting from one guerrilla base to another but shifting from one organizational arrangement to another! What a big “peculiar” problem for our military “strategist” arising from the archipelagic character of the country! It seemed, by 1986, upon release from prison he was able to finally solve this “peculiar” problem of our protracted war-he shifted from Manila to Utrecht, and for Sison this is the best “organizational arrangement” for leading our people’s war.

For Sison’s second manifestation of the problem-the susceptibility of our APTs and initial guerrilla units in far-flung areas being crushed by the enemy-well, this confirms what kind of a military leader Sison is. Imagine the Chairman, the architect of our protracted war, worrying that our small scattered units in far-flung areas might be

crushed by the enemy because our's is an archipelagic country! How thoughtful of Sison to worry! But is this war-monger really decided in waging war? Every unit, small or large, is always in danger of being crushed by the enemy because of subjective mistakes and casualties are inevitable in war. So what is Sison's problem? Was he really thinking when he attributed this "susceptibility" to the archipelagic character of the country and is this the peculiar problem of our protracted war arising from this archipelagic character?

Obviously, these are not acceptable "peculiar" problems of our protracted war arising from the fact that our country is an archipelago. So again, what is the peculiar or specific characteristic of our people's war, according to Sison?

Sison continues: *"There is no doubt that fighting in an archipelagic country like our's is initially a big disadvantage for us."* So Sison believes that this is an initial disadvantage. But, concretely, in what form? It is a disadvantage because, according to Sison: *"Since the central leadership has to position itself in some remote area in Luzon, there is no alternative now and even for a long time to come but to adopt and carry out the policy of centralized leadership and decentralized operations. We must distribute and develop throughout the country cadres who are of sufficiently high quality to find their own bearing and maintain initiative not only within periods as short as one or two months, period of regular reporting, but also within periods as long as two or more years..."*

This is what Sison means by *fighting in an archipelagic country like our's is initially a big disadvantage for us?* Again, a question of how to exercise leadership. Sison is really so self-centered that all he thinks is how he can exercise his leadership as if its the single biggest problem of the revolution, of the war. The archipelagic character of the country has no bearing on the question of centralized leadership and decentralized operations. Even in China, this was a basic principle in protracted war. Distributing and developing cadres throughout the country who can find their own bearing and work by themselves for long periods of time is not

something peculiar to an archipelagic country. In fact, this is a Maoist principle.

In his subsequent paragraph, Sison said: *“The development of the central base area somewhere in Luzon will decisively favor and be favored by the development of many smaller bases in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. Thus, we have paid attention to the deployment of cadres for nationwide guerrilla warfare. In a small country like the Philippines or more precisely in an island like Luzon, it would have been foolhardy for the central leadership to ensconce itself in one limited area, concentrate all the limited Party personnel and all efforts there and consequently invite the enemy to concentrate his own forces there. It would have been foolhardy to underestimate the enemy’s ability to rapidly move and concentrate his forces in an island where communications are most developed.”*

Here, Sison is saying something regarding the specific strategy he has in mind but he presents it in a deliberately obscure way by not referring to the archipelagic character of the country as the determinant. In fact, he is referring more directly to the “smallness” of the country, or particularly Luzon.

Base building in different parts of the country, one of them being developed as the central base, is not something new or peculiar to an archipelagic Philippines as this was also attempted and done in China favoring the development of the central base, and the establishment of the central base favoring the development of the other base areas. According to Sison, this is the reason why *“we have paid attention to the deployment of cadres for nationwide guerrilla warfare.”* By the way he carefully formulated this statement, again nothing specific or peculiar arising from the archipelagic character of the country for this was also done in China. But Sison connected this deployment of cadres for nationwide guerrilla warfare with his refusal to “concentrate” in one limited area calling it “foolhardy” in a small country or in an island like Luzon.

Here, Sison seems to be only insinuating, the specific strategy of advancing protracted war in the Philippines. What is very clear is his

opposition to concentrate in only one area (which the CCP even before Mao never did) but this point he did not connect with the archipelagic character of the Philippines but more on its size.

While opposing the concentration of all forces in one limited area, Sison still held the idea of building a central revolutionary base after strengthening the seven regional Party and army organizations, specially those of Northwest, Northeast and Central Luzon. Meaning, even in an archipelagic country, Sison believes that a central revolutionary base can be established along with many smaller bases in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. How and when this can be built he did not clarify except by saying “after strengthening” the rural regional organizations that have already been established throughout the country at that time.

So after all these discussions, what did Sison specify as “*the problems that are very peculiar to our people’s war*” arising from the archipelagic character of the Philippines?

Nothing, virtually nothing. He did not say that because of this archipelagic character, the building of stable revolutionary base areas of the Chinggang-type is impossible or will take a very long time. He did not say that the repeated alternation of “campaign and counter-campaign” will not be the main pattern of the Philippines’ civil war. He did not say that the principle of the concentration of troops for regular mobile warfare, quick decision offensive warfare and war of annihilation is impossible in the Philippines or will take a very long time to develop.

So, what did he say that is of any military substance? Nothing. All he said was because the Philippines is archipelagic, we will have to “fight within narrow fronts”; this war will be “intensive, ruthless and exceedingly fluid”; in Luzon and Mindanao we have the “widest possible space” for regular mobile forces while in the Visayas “the space immediately appears to be suitable only for guerrilla warfare”; the central leadership will have to “shift from one organizational arrangement to another”; the APTs and initial guerrilla units scattered in far-flung areas are “susceptible to being crushed by the enemy”;

there is no alternative but to adopt “centralized leadership and decentralized operations”; we must distribute and develop cadres throughout the country who can “find their own bearing”; the development of the central revolutionary base in Luzon will “decisively favor and be favored” by the development of many smaller bases in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao; it will be “foolhardy to concentrate all our forces in one limited area”; and finally, “after strengthening the existing regional organizations”, we can more confidently look forward to and take the steps towards building the central revolutionary base.

After saying that “*there is nodoubt that fighting in an archipelagic country like our’s is initially a big disadvantage for us*”, Sison went on to say that, “*in the long run, the fact that our country is archipelagic will turn out to be a great advantage for us and a great disadvantage for the enemy.*” Here, Sison is trying hard to sound like Mao. But the question is how sure is Sison of the correctness of his “dialectics”. After 25 years of protracted war, what is true is actually the reverse!

How did Sison explain that in the long run, this will become a great advantage for us and a great disadvantage for the enemy?

According to Sison: “*The enemy shall be forced to divide his attention and forces not only to the countryside but also to so many islands. Our great advantage will show when we shall have succeeded in developing guerrilla warfare on a nationwide scale and when at least we shall have been on the threshold of waging regular mobile warfare in Luzon or in both Luzon and Mindanao.*”

This is plain and simple sophistry. What has the Philippines being an archipelago got to do with “*the enemy being forced to divide his attention and forces not only to the countryside but also to many islands*”?

Even if the Philippines is not an archipelago, “*when we have succeeded in developing guerrilla warfare on a nationwide scale,*” and if the enemy, and this is a big IF, decides on a stupid strategy of trying to contain and pursue our guerrilla forces nationwide, then he

will be dispersing his armed forces. This strategy of dispersal is not determined by the geographical character of the country but by how the general staff and field commanders of the enemy appraise the situation and devise their strategy to best combat our revolutionary war strategy from their point of view.

Even if the enemy decides to disperse its forces, still, the country as an archipelago does not become a great disadvantage for the enemy nor a great advantage for us. The bodies of water surrounding our islands are not so much an obstacle for the enemy since they have naval, air and other transport facilities. While on our part, it will remain a great disadvantage because of our logistical inferiority in case we need to concentrate and maneuver for regular mobile warfare and strategic shifting of forces.

According to Sison, *“our great advantage will show when we shall have succeeded in developing guerrilla warfare on a nationwide scale and when at least we shall have been on the threshold of waging regular mobile warfare in Luzon or in both Luzon and Mindanao.”* Nothing is farther from the truth.

If our strategy was to engage first in widespread nationwide guerrilla warfare before embarking on a concentration of forces for regular mobile warfare, the archipelagic character of the country is more of an advantage than a disadvantage during this initial period of the war and this was proven by our concrete experiences in the first decade of protracted war. Deploying back and forth enemy forces through naval and air transport is much too costly just to pursue “roving guerrilla units” and strike back at “roving guerrilla action” scattered in different islands nationwide.

Archipelago or not, the enemy can not really do anything up to a certain point against roving guerrilla units scattered on a nationwide scale. This will only become a ruthless war of attrition with no decisive engagements. The real struggle will begin as soon as we reach a certain point in our guerrilla warfare when we shall have been *on the threshold of regular mobile warfare*. By the 1980’s we began to knock at this “threshold” in our advanced and more stable

areas. Here, the archipelagic character will gradually become a negative or complicating factor in concentrating and coordinating our forces for regular mobile warfare as they are widely dispersed nationwide and in different islands.

The above quote from Sison is actually the most significant. When he said that our great advantage will show "*when we shall have succeeded in developing guerrilla warfare on a nationwide scale and when at least we shall have been on the threshold of waging regular mobile warfare,*" he actually and suddenly unfolded his strategic idea of how to conduct our protracted war although crude and incomplete, though not presented and formulated in a categorical or straightforward manner. His idea is to "first develop guerrilla warfare on a nationwide scale" and when we have succeeded in these undertaking, only then should we begin waging regular mobile warfare.

This is a fundamental departure from Mao's basic principles of the concentration of forces for regular mobile warfare, quick decision offensive warfare on exterior lines and war of annihilation as the main forms of warfare at the very outset of the strategic defensive and the principal means of advancing in the strategic defensive. To Mao, guerrilla warfare is only secondary and supplementary to regular mobile warfare (although in other writings, he calls this mobile warfare as a higher level of guerrilla warfare).

The problem with Sison is he did not even bother to explain why, in the Philippines, these basic principles of Mao are not applicable and what is applicable is his own strategic idea of widespread and nationwide guerrilla warfare as the principal and exclusive form of warfare at a given period or stage of our strategic defensive. In fact, he did not even bother to explain Mao's basic theory and principles of protracted war and try to relate his own ideas to the Chinese experience given the fact that all of us were made to believe that we are following Mao's basic ideas in protracted war.

It very clear that Sison is deviating from Mao's basic theory. For Sison, guerrilla warfare is not only principal in the initial stages of the

war but is the exclusive form of warfare, and its development on a nationwide scale is the condition for the development of regular mobile warfare. The basic question here is this: Is there anything in Mao's theory that says that guerrilla warfare (clearly counterposed to mobile warfare) can become not only the principal but the exclusive form of warfare at a given period of the strategic defensive (except of course if you do not have yet an armed force to "regularize")?

What happened to Mao's ideas of the emergence and long-term survival of armed independent regimes and its crucial role in the development of the Red Army? What happened to Mao's ideas of the repeated alternation of enemy campaign and counter-campaign of the People's Army as the main pattern of the strategic defensive and advancing from the strategic defensive to the strategic offensive by the process of victorious counter-campaigns? What happened to Mao's ideas of the concentration of troops as the main operational principle of the Red Army, to the waging of regular mobile warfare as the main form of warfare specially in the strategic defensive, the waging of quick decision offensive warfare on exterior lines within protracted defensive warfare on interior lines as the main method of advancing from the strategic defensive to the strategic offensive, and the waging of war annihilation mainly through regular mobile warfare as the best way of preserving oneself and destroying the enemy and war of attrition as supplementary?

All this will have to wait until we have developed extensively our guerrilla warfare on a nationwide scale! Meaning, Mao's protracted war will have to wait until Sison's version is consummated? What then is left of Mao's theory in Sison's protracted war? Sison's version of protracted guerrillaism is Li Li-san's line in his low period of deep pessimism!

It would not matter much if this "deviation" from Mao's basic operational principles lasted only for a brief, transitory period. But it has now taken us 25 years pursuing Sison's version of protracted war! And he wants us to "reaffirm" this further up to the year 2000 and beyond. Why are we saying that he wants us to "reaffirm" this

protracted guerrilla war into perpetuity? Because, just as in his “*Specific*” of 1976, Sison, in his “*Reaffirm*” of 1992, still has no clear, complete and integral strategic conception of how to conduct and advance our protracted war aside from waging nationwide guerrilla warfare. He does not even have the vaguest idea of how and when to conduct regular mobile warfare in an archipelagic Philippines, and the farthest he got on this question in his *Specific* is reach the “threshold of waging regular mobile warfare”. In his *Reaffirm*, his main concern is to push back the armed struggle to the early forms of our guerrilla warfare, to the level of the 1970’s, and “reaffirm” his *Specific* as the bible of the protracted war in the Philippines.

From the archipelagic character, Sison shifted to the “mountainous” character of the Philippines, pursuing further his “terrain” theory of protracted war. According to Sison: “*The mountainous character of the country countervails its archipelagic character from the very start... If on the one hand the archipelagic character of the country has a narrowing effect on our fighting front, its mountainous character has both a broadening and deepening effect.*” Again, vintage Sison, with his penchant for fancy formulations.

Can the mountainous character of the country really “countervail” its archipelagic character? But since, according to Sison, the archipelagic character is a great advantage for us in the long run, the necessity for “countervailing” it is only in the initial stages of the war when it is still a big disadvantage for us. The question is, how is this archipelagic character “countervailed” in the initial period of the war? What should be “countervailed”? According to Sison, what should be “countervailed” is the “narrowing effect on our fighting fronts” by this archipelagic character. How is it “countervailed”? By the “broadening and deepening effect” of the mountainous character of the country.

Can we get any military “sense” in these “narrowing,” “broadening” and “deepening” terminologies of Sison? Again, this is nothing but rhetorical sophistry devoid of any military sense. Sison is hiding behind fancy non-military terms to conceal his ignorance of military

theory. How can a mountain “broaden” and “deepen” the “narrowing” effect of an island? Terrain provides physical limitations and advantages for warring armies. How to adopt to these limitations and take advantage of opportunities provided by terrain is a question of strategy and tactics. We will achieve nothing by indulging in fancy formulations. The point is to concretize in military strategy and tactics the effect of terrain in varying circumstances.

The more basic question is how do we concretely make use of this mountainous character in the conduct of our war. According to Sison: *“The fact that we have given the highest priority to creating guerrilla bases and zones in mountainous areas has helped us in a big way to preserve our guerrilla forces in the face of so many small and big campaigns of ‘encirclement and suppression’ launch against us. Without the use of the Sierra Madre, our small forces in Cagayan Valley with only three companies as main force could not have preserved themselves against 7,000 enemy troops. Without the use of the mountainous areas of Sorsogon, our small initial forces there could not have expanded to their peak of one platoon-size main force and eight squads and could have been more easily reduced upon the coming of 1,000 enemy troops.”*

Is this what Sison means, in terms of strategy and tactics, of the “broadening” and “deepening” effect of the mountainous character of the country-make use of it to “preserve” our forces but not in destroying the enemy? Because he talks only of preserving ourselves, thanks to the “mountains”, but says nothing of destroying the enemy.

In citing the many small and big campaigns’ launched against us, Sison only speaks of how we “preserved our forces” by giving priority to the mountainous areas but does not say anything of how to use this mountainous areas to destroy the enemy and smash its many small and big campaigns. One will get the impression that the use of the mountainous character of the country is only as a sanctuary for our guerrilla forces, as a cover to hide from the enemy so as to

preserve our forces and not as terrain extremely favorable for fighting and annihilating the enemy.

Sison wrapped-up this second section without discussing the basic principles of Mao's protracted war and how they are applied or modified in the particular conditions of the Philippines so as to show the specific characteristics of our people's war. And up to the third section-*From Small and Weak To Big and Strong*-Sison failed in this task of theoretically clarifying our protracted war in the light of Mao's basic principles.

From its title, one will expect from Sison an exposition on how he envisions the development and advance of our protracted war from the strategic defensive to the strategic stalemate and finally to the strategic offensive, how the New People's Army will grow "from small and weak to big and strong" and how the "big and strong" AFP will be weakened, annihilated and finally defeated.

Again, this section could have been an opportunity for Sison to clarify Mao's basic principles. Here, Sison begins to talk of enemy "campaigns of encirclement," "concentration of forces," "regular mobile warfare," "battles of quick decision", "policy of annihilation," etc. but again, without saying anything.

Sison began with the existing balance of forces at that time. According to Sison: *"We must recognize the existing balance of forces between us and the enemy. This is the first requirement in waging either an entire war or a campaign or a single battle. As matters now stand, we are small and weak while the enemy is big and strong. There is no doubt that he is extremely superior to us militarily in such specific terms as number of troops, formations, equipment, technique, training, foreign assistance and supplies in general. It will take a protracted period of time for us to change this balance of forces in our favor. Thus protractedness is a basic characteristic of our people's war."*

Sison is talking only of duration, of the protracted duration of the war as a basic characteristic of our people's war and not of the

protracted strategy of Mao's people's war. Let us cross our fingers as to where this emphasis of Sison on the protracted duration of the war will lead in his strategy and tactics, whether he will rely more on the attritive not on the annihilative character of this protracted war in changing the balance of forces.

Sison then proceeded to giving a detailed description of the balance of forces and a narration of how we started from scratch. Then he goes to describe the enemy campaigns of encirclement and how the NPA "confronts" these campaigns.

According to Sison: "It remains a gross disadvantage and weakness for the NPA to have so few rifles and small concentrable forces to face an enemy who launches campaigns of "encirclement an suppression" by deploying so many units no smaller than a half-company for outpost work and oversized platoons, rallying to a full regular company or even a full battalion, for seeking encounters with us within an area of encirclement. Under such circumstances, it is quite difficult for us to maintain the initiative and carry out the policy of annihilation in battles. The opportunity to wipe out an enemy squad or platoon does not often present itself. The enemy even goes so far as to force the evacuation of the entire population by perpetuating massacres, looting, bombardment and arson. Deprived of mass support within a given area, our small guerrilla forces have to shift elsewhere in the main."

Sison talks of enemy campaigns of "encirclement and suppression". He laments the "gross disadvantage and weakness" of the NPA, its lack of rifles and small concentrable force to face an enemy column of one company or a full battalion. Under such circumstance, he admits that "it is quite difficult for us to maintain the initiative and carry out the policy of annihilation in battles." Sison, therefore, admits that the NPA because of its "gross disadvantage and weakness" in the face of an enemy campaign, is pushed into a passive defense. In fact, our small guerrilla forces, if deprived of mass support, is forced to "shift elsewhere in the main."

Given the “gross disadvantage and weakness” of our guerrilla forces, what does Sison prescribe?

Sison fails to pinpoint what the main pattern of the war will be. Will it be like the Chinese experience of “campaign and counter-campaign” or will it take a different course? In Mao’s theory, this was his starting point in defining the strategic defensive and formulated his strategy and tactics on the basis of the recognition of this pattern or what he calls a law of protracted war (in a civil war). All his principles of concentration of troops, regular mobile warfare, quick-decision offensive warfare on exterior lines, war of annihilation, etc. ensued from the recognition of this main pattern in China’s civil war. Sison completely ignored this basic question and starting point in formulating his strategy and tactics and in discussing the strategic defensive.

Instead of clarifying correct strategy and tactics or the basic principles of Mao if he believes they are applicable, or modifying them if they are not applicable, Sison prescribed “patch-up” solutions and hazy formulations. Read Sison’s first prescription: *“At the moment, the only way to amplify our armed strength and fighting effectiveness is to give full play to the popular support that we enjoy.”* What he means by this is combine the bolos, spears, crossbows, traps and other indigenous weapons of the masses with homemade explosives and the few rifles of the guerrilla units. Of course, we must mobilize the people for the war. This is basic.

But does this solve the question of strategy and tactics, or of military theory. The problem is what our military theory and principle, our strategy and tactics in developing the fighting capacity of the NPA in confronting, smashing and defeating the “encirclement and suppression” campaigns of the enemy are. Mobilizing the people for the war is a basic precondition since this is a people’s war, but it does not answer the basic question of what kind of fighting force must we build and what are its operational principles.

Sison followed this up with some words of caution: *“Especially because of our smallness and weakness, there are two opposite*

dangers that we have to avoid and counteract. One is trying to cover an area that is actually wider than we can sufficiently cover. This usually involves overdispersing our guerrilla squads. The other is concentrating on so small an area that at one whiff of the enemy we do not know how to shift.” Again, Sison is evading the question.

Of course, what he is saying are important practical tips summed-up from our practice. But why does he continuously avoid giving a clear exposition of what is required in terms of strategy and tactics to preserve our forces and destroy the enemy in “campaigns and counter-campaigns” or whatever is the main pattern in our civil war?

Sison actually tried to tackle this question though in a very hazy manner: *“Guerrilla forces in relation to regular mobile forces operate according to the principle of dispersal. But since all that we have are small guerrilla forces, with absolutely no regular mobile forces yet to serve as main force on any occasion, then we have to have some relative concentration and some relative dispersal according to the scale of our guerrilla warfare. We have to have main guerrilla units as well as secondary guerrilla units, guerrilla bases as well as guerrilla zones.”*

Sison’s first point is: since we do not have any regular mobile forces yet, we have to make do with what we have. Again, he is not clarifying a military theory or principle, defining strategy and tactics but simply improvising and solving practical problems of the moment. He does not clarify on a theoretical plane the role of regular mobile forces and regular mobile warfare in advancing our protracted war and how it can be developed. He simply accepts the fact that we still do not have such forces and we are still not ready for such warfare. With this kind of “strategist”, should we still wonder why, after 25 years, we still have to reach the level of regular mobile warfare? Instead of clarifying the principle of concentration and dispersal, he just content himself in simply and safely saying that we have *“to have some relative concentration and some relative dispersal according to the scale of our guerrilla war.”*

He follows this up with these statements: *“Our action takes the form of either concentration, shifting or dispersion. We concentrate to attack the enemy, mainly in the form of ambushes and raids on small enemy units that we can wipe out. We disperse to conduct propaganda and organizational work or to ‘disappear’ before the enemy. We shift to circle or retreat to gain time and seek favorable circumstance for attack. Our guerrilla warfare is characterized by flexibility or timely shifting from one mode of action to another and by fluidity or frequent shifting of ground. We must grasp and give full play to this characteristic to maintain the initiative against the enemy.”*

When do we concentrate, shift or disperse? According to Sison, *“we concentrate to attack the enemy”*. Correct. But according also to Mao, when attacked by the enemy, we also concentrate so we can effectively defend ourselves and effectively counter-attack. In fact, we also use the principle of dispersal when we begin to counter-attack. This principle applies not only to regular units but to guerrilla units. The essential theoretical question is how to pursue active defence and avoid passive defence, how to relate this to the principles of concentration, shifting and dispersal and how to develop the fighting capacity of the peoples’ army not just to engage in idle talk that we need to be “flexible,” we need to “shift”, we need to maintain “initiative”, etc. etc. This is impressing people with rhetoric not with strategy and tactics.

Before wrapping up his “pointers”, Sison reaffirmed the justness of our war and the correctness of our ideological and political line and here lies *“our superiority over the enemy”*. Indeed, this is the foundation for victory. But this alone is not enough. After settling the justness of our cause and the correctness of our line, what is decisive is how to conduct our war. It is utterly useless to keep on repeating that the NPA is *“bound to grow into a big and strong force as it perseveres in its correct ideological and political line”* instead of systematically clarifying our strategy and tactics in protracted war.

According to Sison: “... *the NPA is confident of winning victory because wherever it is and goes it proves to be politically superior to the enemy because it has a flexible strategy and tactics based on concrete conditions that it comprehends.*” What is this rhetoric of “political superiority” based on “flexible” strategy and tactics? How can Sison talk of “flexibility” in strategy and tactics in our revolutionary war when he has yet to lay down our strategy and tactics in winning this “protracted war”, which until now, after 25 years, he has failed to accomplish?

Sison then went on to the question of the strategic defensive. According to Sison: “*As matters now stand on a nationwide scale or even on the scale of every region, the NPA has no alternative but to be on the strategic defensive in opposition to the strategic offensive of an overweening enemy. But the content of our strategic defensive is the series of tactical offensives that we are capable of undertaking and winning. By winning battles of quick decision, we are bound to accumulate the strength to win bigger battles and campaigns to be able to move up to a higher stage of the war. To graduate from guerrilla warfare to regular warfare as the main form of our warfare, we have to exert a great deal of effort over a long period of time. We are still very much at the rudimentary and early substage of the strategic defensive.*”

This one short paragraph is all that Sison can muster with regard to the most crucial and essential question in the Maoist theory of protracted war, a question that determines its protracted character and strategy. He deals with truisms learned by rote but fails miserably in explaining their meaning in the concrete context of our civil war.

He declares that we are on the strategic defensive against the strategic offensive of the enemy but understands it only as a situational characterization of the existing balance, as the given situation between us and the enemy not as a definite policy or a definite strategy in confronting and defeating the strategic offensive of the enemy. Hence, he does not clarify the entire dimension of this

strategy on the basis of Mao's basic principles and its application or applicability to the specific character of our revolutionary war. He does not talk of the main pattern of this strategic defensive and how the NPA will conduct this strategic defensive on the basis of this pattern or law of development of the protracted war.

He talks about the "tactical offensives" as the content of our strategic defensive but does not clarify the nature, aim, requisites, context, features, progress and dimension of this "tactical offensives" which Mao calls the "counter-campaign" to the enemy's "encirclement campaign" or "quick-decision offensive warfare on exterior lines within protracted defensive warfare on interior lines". He just asserts that "the content of our strategic defensive is the series of tactical offensives that we are capable of undertaking and winning", period.

This is not a statement of strategy and tactics but just a statement of fact. The strategic concept behind the question of engaging in offensive warfare within defensive warfare or what Mao calls "active defence" is not a question of what "we are capable of undertaking and winning". It is a question of developing the optimum capability of the People's Army to undertake effective and successful offensive warfare within the defensive to preserve itself and destroy the enemy and thus advance the strategic defensive. What we are "capable of undertaking" at a given time is a tactical question, a question of selecting the battle that we are "capable of winning".

He talks of "winning battles of quick decision" to be able to "accumulate the strength to win bigger battles and campaigns" and thus "move to a higher stage of the war". He talks of graduating from "guerrilla warfare to regular mobile warfare as the main form of our warfare" but for this we "have to exert a great deal of effort over a long period of time." It seems that Sison is just impressing comrades that he knows these military "terms"- "battles of quick decisions", "regular mobile warfare", etc., but he does not even bother to give to it any military "sense".

He does not clarify the strategic role of this “battles of quick decisions” and “regular mobile warfare”, and their connections to the question of winning counter-campaigns, concentration of troops and war of annihilation, and most important of all, how we can develop to be able to make these principles operational in our protracted war, if we believe in their validity.

Just to amplify this point, what does Sison prescribe for us to be able “to graduate from guerrilla warfare to regular mobile warfare as the main form of our warfare”. On this most important question-developing regular mobile warfare as the main form of warfare-what did Sison say? He just said: “we have to exert a great deal of effort over a long period of time”! It just like asking: “*How can we advance the revolution?*” And Sison answers: Well, simple: “*we have to exert a great deal of effort over a long period of time*”.

No wonder, we have been exerting a great deal of effort for 25 years now in guerrilla warfare and we still have to see the dawning of our regular mobile warfare!! Imagine, 25 years is consumed, and according to Sison we need several years more, just to develop the supplementary or secondary form of warfare-guerrilla warfare-and not yet the main form-regular mobile warfare. By the time we “graduate” from guerrilla warfare, how many years again must it take for this regular mobile warfare to advance the strategic defensive to the strategic stalemate and finally to the strategic offensive.

Obviously, it will take much more time because we are still in the preparatory or introductory stage of this three-act drama, we still have to develop the main form of warfare, we still have to start the real war. It is now a confirmed fact that what Sison understands in Mao’s people’s war is its protractedness in terms of duration not the actual strategy of protracted war.

We should now remind ourselves of what Sison said on why we could not have postponed the start of our people’s war: “*The more time we have for developing our armed strength from practically nothing the better for us in the future*”!!! Indeed, Sison’s people’s war

is a vulgarized version of Mao's protracted war with a convoluted logic.

So, how does Sison envision our growth from "small and weak to big and strong"? According to Sison: "*We may state that in the long process of its growing from small and weak to big and strong, our people's army we will have to undergo certain stages and substages.*" How profound! In our growth, we have to pass through not only through stages but through substages.

What are these stages? According to Sison: "*It is now undergoing the first stage, the strategic defensive. Consequently, it shall undergo the second stage, the strategic stalemate, when our strength shall be more or less on an equal footing with the enemy's and our tug-of-war with the enemy over strategic towns, cities and larger areas shall become conspicuous. Finally, it shall undergo the third stage, the strategic offensive, when the enemy shall have been profoundly weakened and completely isolated and shall have been forced to go on the strategic defensive, a complete reversal of his position at the stage of the strategic defensive.*"

Did Sison say anything that can enlighten us how we will grow from "small and weak to big and strong" by just repeating Mao's three strategic stages? The basic question that Sison failed to answer and he simply obscured with literary sophistry and demagoguery is how to conduct the strategic defensive of the people's army against the strategic offensive of the enemy and in the process accumulate strength through a protracted war strategy until we reach a strategic shift in the balance of forces.

Mao has very clear, systematic and integral strategy and tactics on how to conduct this strategic defensive in a civil war and in a national war. He laid down the most basic principles in a most integral way in conducting this strategy of protracted war specially in the strategic defensive: building armed independent regimes and revolutionary base areas in strategic points and guerrilla zones and bases in wide areas; preserving oneself and destroying the enemy in victorious counter-campaigns against the repeated encirclement campaigns of

the enemy; concentrating one's troops in active defense and in offensive warfare; engaging in regular mobile warfare as the main form and guerrilla warfare and positional warfare as supplementary forms; engaging in quick-decision offensive warfare on exterior lines within the framework of protracted defensive warfare on interior lines; engaging in war of annihilation as the main form of destroying the enemy with war of attrition as secondary.

This is how Mao saw the development of the strategic defensive and entire protracted war against Japan: “... *if we take the War of Resistance as a whole, we can attain the aim of our strategic defensive and finally defeat Japanese imperialism only through the cumulative effect of many offensive campaigns and battles in both regular and guerrilla warfare, namely through the cumulative effect of many victories in offensive actions. Only through the cumulative effect of many campaigns and battles of quick decision, namely, the cumulative effect of many victories achieved through quick decision in offensive campaigns and battles, can we attain our goal of strategic protractedness, which means gaining time to increase our capacity to resist while hastening or awaiting changes in the international situation and the internal collapse of the enemy, in order to be able to launch a strategic counter-offensive and drive the Japanese invaders out of China. We must concentrate superior forces and fight exterior line operations in every campaign or battle whether in the stage of strategic defensive or in that of strategic counter-offensive, in order to encircle and destroy the enemy forces, encircling part if not all of them, destroying part if not all of the forces we have encircled, and inflicting heavy casualties on the encircled forces if we cannot capture them in large numbers. Only through the cumulative effect of many such battles of annihilation can we change the relative position as between the enemy and ourselves, thoroughly smash his strategic encirclement-that is, his scheme of exterior -line operations-and finally, in coordination with international forces and the revolutionary struggles of the Japanese people, surround the Japanese imperialists and deal them the coup de grace. These results are to be achieved mainly through regular warfare, with guerrilla warfare making a secondary contribution.*

What is common to both, however, is the accumulation of many minor victories to make a major victory. Herein lies the great strategic role of guerrilla warfare in the War of Resistance.”

Why does Sison fail to write like Mao in discussing protracted people's war? Because Mao knows what he is saying and Sison does not. More importantly, Mao is a great military and revolutionary leader with a head for strategy while Sison is a plain war-monger and phrase-monger with a head for sophistry. Actually, Sison knows Mao's theory by rote and he tried to dogmatically apply it in Isabela during the early years of our people's war. But he got burned in his early baptism of fire. And because he does not have the grit and the wit of a military strategist and tactician and only the flair and fancy of a petty bourgeois pseudo-theoretician, he was confused by the complicated and peculiar circumstances of our war and began to grope and improvise pointing to the archipelagic character of the country as an excuse. What is despicable with Sison is he does not even have the intellectual honesty to admit his complete rupture with Mao's protracted war, and instead continued to use Mao's mantle to give credence to his contraband type of vulgarized protracted war.

A Vulgarized Type Of Revolution

Sison did not only vulgarized Mao's protracted war strategy. He also vulgarized a Marxist-Leninist revolution. This is his original and greater sin. His worst sin is deceiving the revolutionary forces in our country with his contraband concepts of war and revolution. He cost the proletariat and masses untold sacrifices and hardships not commensurate to the gains achieved pursuing his vulgarized line of war and revolution. He laid to waste historical opportunities for great advances or even decisive victory, and in the process petrified the proletarian vanguard party into the worst kind of dogmatism and rigidity.

The most difficult task at hand is how to restore the real essence and spirit of Marxism-Leninism; revive the revolutionary movement guided by its fundamental principles and historical lessons creatively applied in the concrete conditions of our country, rebuild the

proletarian vanguard party in fierce struggle with its dogmatic and empiricist past and fanatical elements that continue to wrought havoc in the revolutionary ranks; and to do all these simultaneously as dictated by the real dynamics of the struggle outside and inside the revolutionary movement.

What is a Marxist-Leninist revolution? What are its fundamental principles? In what form and scale did Sison deviate from this type of revolution and from its fundamental principles?

Revolution, in essence, is class warfare, and armed warfare is only an extension and expression in form of this class warfare. Only in this sense can we say that revolution is war and war can become a revolution. This is our basic thesis which we believe fully corresponds to Marx's and Lenin's ideas of proletarian-led revolution and we cannot allow any demagoguery on this most fundamental point. For revolutionary demagoguery and phrase-mongering grew insanely when separate elements in Marx's and Lenin's doctrine of class struggle and revolution were dogmatized and absolutized.

What then is a Marxist-Leninist revolution? It is a revolution guided by the principles of Communism and by Communist revolutionary elements. We call it a Marxist-Leninist revolution because it is primarily the basic ideas of Marx and Lenin that constitute the main body of what we call Communism.

What then is Communism? Communism, according to Engels, "is the doctrine of the conditions for the emancipation of the proletariat." A Communist revolution, therefore, is a revolution guided by the Communist doctrine that lays the conditions for the emancipation of the proletariat, and ultimately, of human society transforming class or civil society into socialized society.

Engels enumerated in "catechistical form" the main principles embodied in this doctrine in his Principles of Communism. Marx with Engels further developed these principles in a "programmatic way" in the Communist Manifesto. The Communist Manifesto is the basic guide for a Communist revolution which all Communist

revolutionaries must take to heart. Lenin further developed and enriched the Communist doctrine of Marx and Engels in the era of imperialism and guided the first victorious Communist revolution—the Bolshevik revolution of 1917.

This is how Lenin appreciated the Communist Manifesto: *“With the clarity and brilliance of genius, this work outlines a new world-conception, consistent materialism, which also embraces the realm of social life; dialectics, as the most profound doctrine of development; the theory of the class struggle and of the world-historic revolutionary role of the proletariat—the creator of a new, communist society.”*

What are the most fundamental principles of Communism? Lenin summed-up the Communist doctrine into “three component parts”: first, philosophical materialism whose cornerstone is the doctrine of dialectical and historical materialism; second, political economy whose cornerstone is the doctrine of surplus-value; and third, scientific socialism whose cornerstone is the doctrine of class struggle.

According to Lenin: *“... the genius of Marx consists precisely in his having furnished answers to question already raised by the foremost minds of mankind. His doctrine emerged as the direct and immediate continuation of the teachings of the greatest representatives of philosophy, political economy and socialism.”* And Lenin adds: *“The Marxist doctrine is omnipotent because it is true. It is comprehensive and harmonious, and provides men with an integral world outlook irreconcilable with any form of superstition, reaction, or defence of bourgeois oppression. It is the legitimate successor to the best that man produced in the nineteenth century, as represented by German philosophy, English political economy and French socialism.”*

This comprehensive Marxist doctrine crystallizes itself into an integral theory of revolution the essence of which is the doctrine of class struggle, the most original contribution of Marx to social science, the concentrated form of Marx’ philosophical, political and economic doctrine and whose cornerstone is the dictatorship of the

proletariat. And Lenin is the best pupil of Marx on this theory of revolution and the best teacher of the international proletariat in class struggle in the era of imperialism, integrating comprehensively and creatively all the fundamentals of the Communist doctrine in his revolutionary practice and polemics against all sorts of revisionists and opportunists.

What is this doctrine of the class struggle, how does it crystallize the fundamentals of Marxist-Leninist doctrine and constitute itself as the Marxist-Leninist theory of revolution?

“The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle”, declared the Communist Manifesto (with the exception of primitive community, Engels added subsequently). Marx and Engels wrote: *“Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guildmaster and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes.... The modern bourgeois society that has sprouted from the ruins of feudal society has not done away with class antagonisms. It has but established new classes, new conditions of oppression, new forms of struggle in place of the old ones. Our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeoisie, possesses, however this distinctive feature: it has simplified the class antagonisms. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other: Bourgeoisie and Proletariat.”*

What is the significance of his discovery of the law of class struggle, one of the *“many important discoveries through which Marx has inscribed his name in the annals of science.”*

This new conception of history *“is of supreme significance”,* according to Engels, for *“it showed that all previous history moved in class antagonisms and class struggles, that there have always existed ruling and ruled, exploiting and exploited classes, and that the great majority of mankind has always been condemned to*

arduous labor and little enjoyment. Why is this? Simply because in all earlier stages of development of mankind production was so little developed that the historical development could proceed only in this antagonistic form, that historical progress as a whole was assigned to the activity of a small privileged minority, while the great mass remained condemned to producing by their labor their own meager means of subsistence and also the increasingly rich means of the privileged. But the same investigation of history provides a natural and reasonable explanation of the previous class rule, otherwise only explicable from the wickedness of man, also leads to the realization that, in consequence of the so tremendously increased productive forces of the present time, even the last pretext has vanished for a division of mankind into rulers and ruled, exploiters and exploited, at least in the most advanced countries; that the ruling bourgeoisie has fulfilled its historic mission, that it is no longer capable of the leadership of society and has even become a hindrance to the development of production...; that historical leadership has passed to the proletariat, a class which, owing to its whole position in society, can only free itself by abolishing altogether all class rule, all servitude and all exploitation; and that the social productive forces, which have outgrown the control of the bourgeoisie, are only waiting for the associated proletariat to take possession of them in order to bring about a state of things in which every member of society will be enabled to participate not only in production but also in the distribution and administration of social wealth and which so increases the social productive forces and their yield by planned operation of the whole of production that the satisfaction of all reasonable needs will be assured to everyone in an ever increasing measure.”

In explaining the “supreme significance” of the theory of class struggle, Engels integrated all the fundamentals of the Marxist doctrine—philosophical materialism, political economy and scientific socialism. And Marx’s economic doctrine, particularly the discovery of the “*theory of surplus value*”, which according to Lenin is “*the principal content of Marxism*”, provided the theory of class struggle a most profound scientific and historic basis as required by

philosophical materialism while at the same time using the theory of class struggle as a basic scientific approach in economic analysis. Marx deduced, according to Lenin, *“the inevitability of the transformation of capitalist society wholly and exclusively from the economic law of development of contemporary society.”*

Lenin called *“the class struggle the mainspring of events”*. According to Lenin: *“By examining the totality of opposing tendencies, by reducing them to precisely definable conditions of life and production of the various classes of society, by discarding subjectivism and arbitrariness in the choice of a particular “dominant” idea or its interpretation, and by revealing that, without exception, all ideas and all the various tendencies stem from the condition of the material forces of production, Marxism indicated the way to an all-embracing and comprehensive study of the rise, development and decline of socio-economic system.”* This is the materialist conception of history whose cornerstone is the theory of class struggle. Since *“the class struggle is the mainspring of events”*, it is incumbent for a consistent materialist to take a consistent class viewpoint in approaching social phenomena. This is how Lenin applies the theory of class struggle.

Integral and most essential to the doctrine of class struggle is the world-historic revolutionary role of the proletariat. Lenin quoted a passage in the Communist Manifesto which according to him will show us what Marx demanded of social science as regards an objective analysis of the position of each class in modern society, with reference to an analysis of each class' conditions of development: *“Of all the classes that stand face to face with the bourgeoisie today, the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class. The other classes decay and finally disappear in the face of modern Industry; the proletariat is its special and essential product. The lower middle class, the small manufacturer, the shopkeeper, the artisan, the peasant, all these fight against the bourgeoisie, to save from extinction their existence as fractions of the middle class. They are therefore not revolutionary but conservative. Nay more, they are reactionary, for they try to roll back the wheel of history. If by chance*

they are revolutionary, they are so only in view of their impending transfer into the proletariat; they thus defend not their present, but their future interests, they desert their own standpoint in place themselves at that of the proletariat.”

The above-quoted passage, according to Lenin, *“is an illustration of what a complex network of social relations and transitional stages from one class to another, from the past to the future, was analyzed by Marx so as to determine the resultant historical development.”* It should be noted that when Marx and Engels wrote the Communist Manifesto in 1848, even the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Germany has yet to be completed. In Europe, bourgeois social revolutions of different types were still ongoing and in many countries still had to erupt, and yet Marx and Engels found it correct to declare that *“the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class.”*

Does this declaration preclude any positive relations with other class forces by the proletariat? Nothing of this sort. In fact, in the 1850's, right after writing the Communist Manifesto, Marx and Engels formulated the thesis concerning the three major forces of the revolution in Europe in the 19th and 20th century and its three main stages.

“The gist of this thesis”, according to Lenin, “is the first stage of revolution is the restriction of absolutism, which satisfies the bourgeoisie; the second is the attainment of the republic, which satisfies the “people” - the peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie at large; the third is the socialist revolution, which alone can satisfy the proletariat.”

“In a number of historical works”, according to Lenin, “Marx gave brilliant and profound examples of materialist historiography, of an analysis of the position of each class, and sometimes of various groups and strata within a class, showing plainly why and how ‘every class struggle is a political struggle’.”

A product of this analysis of the complex network of social relations and a corollary of the thesis that *“the proletariat alone is a*

really revolutionary class” is the declaration that “the emancipation of the workers will be the act of the working class itself”. This is the meaning of the proletariat taking as its starting point its own independent class line and interest in its relations with all other social forces, promoting and safeguarding it at all times. This is the most fundamental point in the determination of the tactics of the class proletariat for anyone adhering to the theory of the class struggle.

Summing-up the discussion above, the theory of the class struggle is the materialist class analysis in the interpretation of social phenomenon and the proletarian class standpoint in changing social phenomenon. We now proceed to the question of the tactics of the class struggle of the proletariat and here, we will exclusively deal with Marx’s views on tactics as summed-up by Lenin so we can theoretically appreciate the fundamental logic of proletarian tactics in their original and essential form. According to Lenin, Marx justly considered that without this aspect-the tactics of the class struggle of the proletariat-*“materialism is incomplete, one-sided, and lifeless.”* The fundamental task of proletarian tactics was defined by Marx, according to Lenin, in strict conformity with all the postulates of his historical-dialectical materialist viewpoint.

First, the historical materialist basis of the correct tactics of the proletariat. This means, according to Lenin, *“only an objective consideration of the sum total of the relations between absolutely all the classes in a given society, and consequently a consideration of the objective stage of development reached by that society and of the relations between it and other societies, can serve as the basis for the correct tactics of an advanced class.”*

Second, the dialectical materialist analysis in defining correct tactics. This means, according to Lenin, *“all classes and all countries are regarded, not statically but dynamically, i.e., not in a state of immobility, but in motion... Motion in its turn, regarded from the standpoint, not only of the past, but also of the future, and that not in the vulgar sense it is understood by the ‘evolutionists’, who see only slow changes, but dialectically.”*

Here, Lenin is quite emphatic with Marx's dialectical view on tactics: *"At each stage of development, at each moment, proletarian tactics must take account of this objectively inevitable dialectics of human history, on the one hand, utilizing the periods of political stagnation or of sluggish, so-called 'peaceful' development in order to develop the class-consciousness, strength and militancy of the advance class, and on the other hand, directing all the work of this utilization towards the 'ultimate aim' of that class' advance, towards creating in it the ability to find practical solutions for the great tasks in the great days, in which 'twenty years are embodied'."*

Lenin pointed out two of Marx's arguments which are of special importance in this connection: one of this is contained in *The Poverty of Philosophy* and concerns the economic struggle and economic organizations of the proletariat; the other is contained in the *Communist Manifesto* and concerns the political tasks of the proletariat.

The former concerns the program and tactics of the economic struggle and of the trade-union movement for all the lengthy period in which the proletariat will prepare its forces for the "coming battle". Lenin cited numerous references by Marx and Engels to the British labor movement, which he said, *"the tactics of the economic struggle, in connection with the general course (and outcome) of the working class movement, are considered here from a remarkably broad, comprehensive, dialectical and genuinely revolutionary standpoint."*

In the latter, Lenin cited a passage in the *Communist Manifesto* which advanced a fundamental Marxist principle on the tactics of the political struggle: *"Communists fight for the attainment of the immediate aims, for the enforcement of the momentary interests of the working class; but in the movement of the present, they also represent and take care of the future of that movement."*

The proletariat has immediate and ultimate aims. The ultimate aim is the conquest of power for socialism. Its immediate aim can be classified into two: its day-to-day economic struggle and organizing

itself as a class on the basis of this struggle, and its immediate political task, the struggle for democracy and the attainment of political liberty which will greatly facilitate its political and organizational development as a class. In the fight for the “immediate aims of the proletariat”, what is “represented and taken care of” is not only “the enforcement of the momentary interests” of the working class but the “future of its movement”, the class struggle for socialism. This is the conscious and consistent application of the theory of class struggle, this is the tactics of the proletariat in the historical period prior to the actual conquest of power for the attainment of its socialist aim.

This is the class basis of the tactics, cited in the *Communist Manifesto* when, *“In France, the Communists ally themselves with the Social-Democrats against the conservative and radical bourgeoisie, reserving, however, the right to take up a critical position in regard to phrases and illusions traditionally handed down from the great Revolution. In Switzerland, they support the Radicals, without losing sight of the fact that this party consists of antagonistic elements, partly of Democratic Socialists, in the French sense, partly of radical bourgeois. In Poland they support the party that insist on an agrarian revolution as the prime condition for national emancipation, that party which fomented the insurrection of Cracow in 1846. In Germany, the fight with the bourgeoisie whenever it acts in a revolutionary way, against the absolute monarchy, the feudal squirearchy, and the petty bourgeoisie.”*

In pursuing these tactics, Marx and Engels, however, emphasized: *“But they never cease , for a single instant, to instil into the working class the clearest possible recognition of the hostile antagonism between bourgeoisie and proletariat, in order that”*, citing as an example the German workers, *“may straightaway use, as so many weapons against the bourgeoisie, the social and political conditions that the bourgeoisie must necessarily introduce along with its supremacy, and in order that, after the fall of the reactionary classes in Germany, the fight against the bourgeoisie itself may immediately begin.”*

In the *Communist Manifesto*, it was categorically stated that “*Communists everywhere support every revolutionary movement against all existing social and political order of things*”; but, “*..in all these movements they bring to the forefront, as the leading question in each, the property question, no matter what its degree of development at the time.*” This was the reason why, in ending the *Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels declared: “*The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions. Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communistic revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win.*” We “*disdain to conceal our views and aim*” because only by a relentless and tireless exposition of these views and aims can we truly organize the proletariat into a class, can we truly make them class conscious of their ultimate and immediate aims, and urge them to assume the leading role, in the spirit of the class struggle, in the fight to overthrow all reactionary social orders. This is the very logic of Communist tactics.

What then are Communist tactics? They are exclusively tactics for the advancement of the immediate and ultimate objective of the class struggle of the proletariat for they are tactics aimed at advancing a Communist revolution that will lay down the conditions for the emancipation of the proletariat, and in the process, human society.

Sison’s “protracted war” revolution, both in content and form, in theory and practice, is a complete rupture from this Marxist-Leninist theory and tactics of revolution.

It completely vulgarizes all the fundamental ideas of Marx and Lenin, and yet he has the temerity to call upon the Party to “reaffirm” the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism and oppose all those that “deviate” from these principles. But the truth is, what he wants “reaffirmed” are his own theoretical concoctions which are completely alien to the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism, and

though very close in affinity with Stalinism-Maoism, are basically Sison's very own, vulgarized version.

First and foremost, in Sison's "protracted war" revolution, the overwhelming bulk of the Party forces and its main attention and main activity is concentrated with the peasantry and in the countryside, and not with the working class in both urban and rural areas.

The ongoing democratic revolution in the Philippines, undoubtedly, is a bourgeois-democratic revolution and not a simple bourgeois revolution. Meaning it is a peasant agrarian revolution, but in the sense that it's not the industrial bourgeoisie that will achieve complete victory in this revolution but the peasantry if this revolution will triumph in a sweeping way. However, even if this revolution is a peasant revolution, it does not follow that the revolutionary party of the proletariat must shift and concentrate overwhelmingly its forces, attention and activity in organizing the peasantry, directly shoulder the whole burden of "inciting the peasantry to revolt", tie its hands and commit itself to this peasant "revolt", to the detriment of the task of organizing and politicizing the working class both in urban and rural areas.

We are the revolutionary class party of the proletariat and not of the peasantry or of any other class. Why are our main forces in the hinterlands not in the industrial centers and agricultural farms where the working class in their millions are enslaved by wage-labor and waiting to be "incited" for class struggle, waiting to be educated to socialism? Are the peasantry incapable of organizing themselves for their agrarian revolution that it must require the party of the proletariat to abandon the working class to concentrate in organizing this "alien" class?

Are the conditions in the countryside not enough to "incite" the peasantry to organize themselves in struggle, bring about their own peasant class organizations, and by themselves advance their agrarian revolution as was the case in many historic peasants movements in so many countries, and even in China? Is not the best

way to “incite” the peasantry to organize, struggle and revolt is for the party of the proletariat to unleash a most vigorous working-class movement in both urban and rural areas and inspire the peasant masses to follow suit and link up with this proletarian movement? Is the working class in the Philippines so insignificant that its revolutionary party must look for an alien class to which it will concentrate its attention and activities?

The truth is: we concentrate our forces in the countryside not because the peasantry is incapable of organizing themselves (because if they are incapable, what kind of agrarian revolution is this?), but because the party of the proletariat had decided to make the countryside the main arena for its military struggle, for its military strategy which also has become the very essence of its revolutionary struggle, the very essence of its revolutionary “strategy”.

Just to emphasize this basic distortion, let us cite what Lenin said in relation to this point: Criticizing Plekhanov’s formulation in the draft of the agrarian program which says *“International Social-Democracy stands at the head of the emancipation movement of the working and exploited masses. It organizes its fighting forces...”*, Lenin said: *“Not at all. It stands at the head of the working class alone, of the working-class movement alone, and if other elements joins this class these are only elements and not classes. And they come over completely and absolutely only when they ‘desert their own standpoint’. ‘It organizes their fighting forces...’* Wrong again. Nowhere does Social-Democracy organize the ‘fighting forces’ of the small producers. It organizes the fighting forces of the working class alone. The formulation chosen in the draft is all the less appropriate the less it applies to Russia, the more restricted the exposition is to ‘developed’ bourgeois society.”

In another article, Lenin said: *“The emancipation of the workers must be the act of the working class itself”, and for this reason Social-Democracy represents-directly and wholly-the interests of the proletariat alone, and seeks indissoluble organic unity with its class movement alone.*” This is how Lenin applied with remarkable

consistency and integrity the Marxist theory of the class struggle and its proletarian class stand . And the Bolshevik Revolution won with Lenin's party forces heavily concentrated among the working class but wielding decisive leadership and widespread influence among the peasant masses and soldiers by the correctness of their slogans, by the strength of the independent Russian working-class movement, and by the experience of the broad masses with bourgeois and petty bourgeois parties and leaders.

In another instance, Lenin said: *“We spoke of Social-Democracy’s ‘revolutionary appeal’ to the peasants. Does this not mean diffusion, is it not harmful to the essential concentration of forces for work among the industrial proletariat? Not in the least; the necessity for such a concentration is recognized by all Russian Social Democrats; ...there are absolutely no grounds at all to fear that the Social-Democrats will split their forces... No one will dispute the necessity to speak in the program of rural, as well as industrial, workers, although in the present situation there is not a single Russian Social-Democrat who would think of calling upon the comrades to go the village. The working-class movement, however, even apart from our efforts, will inevitably lead to the spread of democratic ideas in the countryside.”*

This was the “orthodox”, if we may say so, Marxist-Leninist class stand on class organizing. This was the reason why in the Communist Manifesto, it was the word “support” that was consistently used in determining the position of the Communists in relation to the various opposition parties existing at that time, in determining the correct policy in relation to other revolutionary-democratic class movements.

It was on the basis of this Marxist-Leninist tradition that even in China, an overwhelmingly peasant country with a very small and “weak” proletariat, in the first period of the Chinese revolution, the CCP concentrated almost all its efforts in organizing the working class. The CCP failed because of Right opportunist errors in the united front and because they ignored the peasant movement which

were already spontaneously breaking out in proportions unparalleled in the world-and this occurred despite not having proletarian cadres “concentrated” in the countryside to “organize” and “incite” them to revolt. They decided to give greater stress to peasant work not by “choice” but by “force” because they were driven to the countryside by the defeat of the revolution and by the bloody reprisals in the cities, and they already have ready-made revolutionary armed forces of division sizes that must seek suitable areas for retreat after the defeat of the 1927 uprisings. Even in the second period, the stress of the CCP was still in urban industrial areas while maintaining and expanding Red areas in the countryside.

We are not advocating that we follow to the letter what Lenin prescribes. It is not wrong in principle for the proletarian vanguard to send contingents of cadres to the countryside to do work among the peasants, and if we are forced by circumstances to withdraw from the cities and concentrate in the countryside, this is not a matter of principle but a question of exigency.

What we are advocating is to restore the essence, the “orthodoxy” of a class party, its class organizing, its class struggle. We are the class party of the proletariat. We are not a peasant party and we must exert the greatest effort to hasten the class consciousness and class organizing of the Filipino working class in both urban and rural areas. For the working class, and not only its proletarian vanguard, to truly and effectively assume the leadership in this democratic revolution, for it to win over to its side its most reliable ally in this revolution-the peasantry-we must develop the broadest and strongest working-class movement in the Philippines. A working class movement which is class conscious in its politically correct slogans and tactics, and proving in both mass struggle and in class struggle that it is the working class that is the genuine vanguard in the struggle for democracy and freedom.

We see nothing wrong with the working-class movement being outstripped by the peasant movement in a democratic revolution since this revolution is “their” revolution in the sense that it is a

bourgeois-democratic revolution. In fact, this is a most positive development if this is the result of the internal dynamics of the peasant class movement, of the real class and mass struggle in the countryside. What is wrong is the working-class movement being outstripped by the peasant movement because its party vanguard “abandoned” its own class in favor of an “alien” class, opted to concentrate its forces in the hinterlands rather than in the factories and farms where millions and millions of workers are enslaved and are waiting to be organized by their supposed vanguard and are actually organizing themselves without waiting for their class vanguard. What is wrong is the working-class movement being outstripped by the peasant movement in terms of breadth or magnitude without this working-class movement being able to assume the real vanguard role in actual struggle in the general-democratic revolutionary movement of the people and just because the “vanguard” deserted its “class” in favor of an “alien” class.

It should be stressed that although the Philippines remains an agrarian country, it is now the working class that is outstripping the peasantry in terms of numbers because of the evolutionary capitalist developments in the countryside and the decay of the old feudal system. It should also be stressed that the urban and rural population in the country are now evenly distributed, and the trend in the coming years is the urban population “outstripping” the rural population.

But what’s wrong with concentrating the forces, attention and activity of the Party in the countryside, among the peasantry, if by such concentration, by such “strategy”, the “Party of the working class” can attain victory in the democratic revolution? Cast away “principles”, cast away “orthodoxy”, the important thing is victory! The most important thing in a revolution is the “seizure of power” and we must “seize power” for the proletariat by whatever means possible, and “to hell with principles”!

And indeed, Sison’s “protracted war” revolution is a “strategy of seizure”, and in this strategy there are no parameters, either of

principles or ethics. This is Sison's greatest vulgarization of the Marxist-Leninist theory of revolution. Sison is not a follower of Marx or Mao but of Machiavelli. This "strategy of seizure" of Sison is the most fundamental theoretical question that must be settled in this ideological debate.

Sison is a staunch advocate of the "two-stage revolution" of Stalin and Mao. Let us see if this "two-stage revolution", specially in Sison's understanding and practice, corresponds to Marx's and Lenin's thesis of "continuing revolution" from the democratic to the socialist.

In this "two-stage revolution", the first stage is the democratic revolution preparing the grounds for the socialist revolution which is the second stage. In Sison's strategy and tactics, the "seizure of power" in the democratic stage is the most crucial question in this "two-stage revolution". It is the main objective of the democratic revolution, and this is the exclusive aim of his strategy of protracted war revolution.

What does Sison mean by the "seizure of power" in the democratic revolution? It means the overthrow of the comprador-landlord class and the building of a democratic coalition government, a people's democratic dictatorship. This people's democratic dictatorship, theoretically is what is referred to in classic Marxist terms as the "revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry" as coined by Lenin. Its popular expression in Lenin's time was the slogan for a "provisional revolutionary government" that shall replace the tsarist autocracy and build a democratic republic in Russia which was the urgent political task of the minimum program of the Bolsheviks in their democratic revolution.

What is the class nature of this provisional government or democratic dictatorship?

Undoubtedly, this is a form of bourgeois rule despite the presence of the proletariat, or even, if by the outcome of the "sweep" of the revolution, the proletariat is able to "dominate" this provisional government or democratic dictatorship.

The theoretical debate between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks on this question was whether it was correct in principle for the proletariat to actively participate in this bourgeois revolution and in the bourgeois government that shall be its outcome, and for the proletariat to seize power with the peasantry in this bourgeois revolution even to the extent of the bourgeoisie “recoiling” from its own revolution.

The Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks were one in affirming that it is correct for the proletariat to actively participate in this bourgeois revolution. But contrary to the position of Lenin and the Bolsheviks, the Mensheviks, particularly Plekhanov, Martov and Martynov, believed that it was wrong in principle for the proletariat to participate in the provisional government, to seize power with the peasantry because the “bourgeoisie might recoil”, it was tantamount to “sanctioning bourgeois rule”, etc., and the task of the proletariat was to exert “pressure from below” against this government and not to exert “pressure from above” by participating in this government. And the Mensheviks charged Lenin with advocating a “tactic of seizure” in the democratic revolution which was impermissible in principle and they quoted Engels in this regard.

Lenin’s idea of a provisional revolutionary government or revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry is undoubtedly non-proletarian in class character but a form of bourgeois rule. He calls it the “last form of bourgeois domination and the best form for the class struggle of the proletariat.” In fact, Lenin was charged by the Mensheviks, particularly by the infamous Martynov, of “sanctioning the bourgeois order” by advocating the participation of the proletariat in such a government. And what did Lenin said with regard to this charge? Did he deny that such a government, such a dictatorship, is bourgeois? No! Instead of denying it class nature, Lenin clarified the correct class view, the correct materialist view on this question.

According to Lenin, “Social-Democrats do not hold back from struggle for political freedom on the grounds that it is bourgeois

political freedom. Social-Democrats regard this 'sanctioning' of the bourgeois order from the historical point of view... They have never been afraid of saying, and never will be, that they sanction the republican-democratic bourgeois order in preference to an autocratic serf-owning bourgeois order. But they 'sanction' the bourgeois republic only because it is the last form of class rule, because it offers a most convenient arena for the struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie; they sanction it not for its prisons and police, its private property and prostitution, but for the scope and freedom it allows to combat these charming institutions."

Lenin admitted the dangers of such a participation. Would Lenin be talking of such dangers if the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship is not bourgeois in class character? According to Lenin: "Far be it from us to contend that our participation in the revolutionary provisional government entails no dangers for Social-Democracy. There is not, nor can there be, any form of struggle that does not involve dangers. If there is no revolutionary class instinct, if there is no integral world outlook on a scientific level, if (with due apologies to our friends in the new Iskra) there are no brains in the head, then it is dangerous even to take part in strikes-it may lead to Economism; to engage in parliamentary struggle-it may end in parliamentary cretinism, to support the Zemstvo liberal democrats-it may lead to a 'plan for a Zemstvo campaign.'"

For Lenin, these dangers are nothing. The important thing was the political freedom that this bourgeois revolution can provide and the social progress that it will engender for the development of the proletariat and its class struggle for socialism. This political freedom and social progress are the reasons why it was correct and necessary for the proletariat to actively participate, and not only participate, but assume the leading role in the bourgeois revolution. For this political freedom and social progress are basic and requisite conditions for the emancipation of the proletariat, this political freedom facilitates and clears the ground for the class struggle of the proletariat, for their development as a class for the socialist struggle and for their eventual class rule.

Communists participate and assume leadership in the democratic revolution not because we are patriots and democrats in the bourgeois-democratic sense-patriots simply advocating the sovereignty of the nation and bourgeois democrats simply advocating the sovereignty of the people in an era of world imperialism and class society. We participate and assume leadership not because we care for the rural petty bourgeoisie as a class of small-property owners, not because we care for the urban petty bourgeoisie with all their pernicious hypocrisy, not because we care for the national bourgeoisie because they suffer oppression from imperialists though they ruthlessly exploit the working class, not because we care for the “people” regardless of class-no, not for these reasons. We participate and strive to assume the leading role in the bourgeois-democratic revolution because the proletariat needs political democracy, because the proletariat needs social progress , even bourgeois progress, for it to develop as a class and create the conditions for socialist struggle.

The fundamental question is: Are these the reasons why we participate and strive to assume the leadership in the national-democratic revolution in the Philippines? Sison is not even a true patriot and a true democrat even in the bourgeoisie-democratic sense but a vulgar Communist, an ugly Communist of the Pol Pot type.

The real reason of Sison for the Party assuming leadership in the democratic revolution and for formulating such a strategy of war revolution is to seize power for the “proletariat” in behalf of the people, in behalf of the peasantry!! Sison’s strategy is a “strategy of seizure” of power for the “proletariat” (read: for the Party) in the national democratic revolution! He had confounded the democratic and the socialist revolution into one, he had short-circuited his own two-stage revolution. But what’s wrong with such an objective if it can be achieved?

Firstly, this precisely is what’s wrong. It cannot be achieved, a revolution cannot succeed by deception. Such a revolution is

politically doomed. Engels points to the danger of failure on the part of the leaders of the proletariat to understand the non-proletarian character of the revolution and he said: "The worst thing that can befall a leader of an extreme party is to be compelled to take over a government in an epoch when the movement is not yet ripe for the domination of the class which he represents, and for the realization of the measures which that domination requires." The leader of the extreme party, Engels further added, will have to "advance the interests of an alien class, and feed his own class with phrases and promises, and with the assurances that the interests of that alien class are its own interests. Whoever finds himself in this false position is irrevocably lost."

This is the same passage from Engels quoted by Martynov against Lenin in accusing the Bolshevik leader of advocating a "tactic of seizure" in the democratic revolution. Lenin, of course disputed and demolished this accusation, insisting the "non-proletarian character of the democratic dictatorship", pointing out that it is "a form of bourgeois domination but its last form and the best form for the class struggle of the proletariat" and differentiating it with the proletarian dictatorship. To Lenin, it was really the Mensheviks who are confounding the democratic revolution with socialist revolution failing to understand that the democratic dictatorship is not yet the socialist dictatorship, that it is not yet the proletariat conquering power for a socialist revolution but the proletariat with the peasantry overthrowing the tsarist autocracy in the democratic revolution.

According to Lenin: "Martynov fails to understand this, and confounds the provisional revolutionary government in the period of the overthrow of the autocracy with the requisite domination of the proletariat in the period of the overthrow of the bourgeoisie; he confounds the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry with the socialist dictatorship of the working class."

Engels' warning is not applicable to Lenin's tactics in the democratic revolution for the Bolsheviks have no intention of establishing a dictatorship of the proletariat through a democratic

revolution and Lenin's concept of a democratic dictatorship is really a form of bourgeois rule and have no intention of "dominating" the peasantry in their "joint democratic dictatorship". In the first place, they were not even directly organizing among the peasantry and are allowed the Socialist-Revolutionaries, Trudoviks, etc., to do the task.

But with Sison's "strategy of seizure", Engels' warning hits the bullseye. He undoubtedly is conspiring to "seize power" for the "proletariat" in the democratic revolution, is bent on establishing a "dictatorship of the proletariat" through a democratic revolution.

What is the class character of Sison's "people's democratic dictatorship"? Is this a form of bourgeois rule? Nowhere in Sison's writings does he theoretically clarify the class nature of this dictatorship or government. This is a clear testimony of his abandonment of the theory of class struggle. But how can it be a form of bourgeois rule for Sison when the party in power upon the victory of this revolution will be the "party" of the proletariat, when the army that will seize power will be the army directly under the command of the "party" of the proletariat, when the representatives of the peasantry will certainly, in the overwhelming majority of cases, will be cadres of the "party" of the proletariat, when all the decrees of this government will be determined by the "party" of the proletariat. Undoubtedly, this will be a government for the "class" domination of the of the proletariat which in fact will be the dictatorship of the "party" of the proletariat.

According to Sison: "The most important political factor for the transition from people's democracy to socialism is the proletarian class leadership based on the worker-peasant alliance. The proletariat through its most advanced detachment, the Communist Party of the Philippines, is responsible for creating the conditions for socialism or for transforming the people's democratic dictatorship into the proletarian dictatorship. As in the struggle for the seizure of power, the working class relies mainly on the great masses of the poor and lower-middle peasants and farm workers in the consolidation of the proletarian dictatorship and the socialist

transformation of the economic base.” In another article, Sison declared: “Through its vanguard detachment, the Communist Party of the Philippines, the proletariat sees to it that the national-democratic revolution is carried out and completed; that the socialist revolution immediately ensues upon the victory of the national democratic revolution; and that for a whole historical epoch socialism creates the foundation for communism.”

First. Since Sison said that the socialist revolution will “immediately ensue upon the victory of the national democratic revolution”, this so-called “democratic dictatorship” will immediately be “transformed” into a socialist dictatorship of the proletariat upon the victory of the people’s democratic revolution. Since the word “transformed” is used, this will only be a matter of policy. And since this so-called “democratic dictatorship” is firmly and absolutely controlled by the Party by its very composition, a smooth transformation and implementation of the Party policy will occur within this so-called “coalition government”. Its term of office will not actually expire because it did not really transpire.

Second. Sison’s “*proletarian class leadership based on the worker-peasant alliance*” is actually the proletarian dictatorship. It could not be interpreted as leadership pertaining to “content” because the class content of proletarian leadership cannot be based on the “worker-peasant alliance” but exclusively on the interest of the working class. It could only be interpreted as pertaining to “form”, meaning the class leadership in governmental functions, i.e., the dictatorship of the proletariat. Therefore, in the “*transition from people’s democracy to socialism*” what really is already in place is the “*dictatorship of the proletariat.*”

Third. According to Sison, “the proletariat through the CPP is responsible for creating the conditions for socialism or for transforming the people’s democratic dictatorship into the dictatorship of the proletariat.” So it is not the democratic revolution, the bourgeois revolution, and not even the proletariat, but the CPP who will create the conditions for socialism and “transform” a non-

existent “people’s democratic dictatorship”. What extreme voluntarism, what extreme reductionism! And we should add, what an omnipotent dictatorship! Imagine, a Communist Party “creating the conditions for socialism”. To our knowledge, it is capitalism that creates the conditions for socialism. And since Sison is not planning to create capitalism, what does he plan to create as a condition for socialism?!

Fourth: According to Sison, “As in the seizure of power, the working class relies mainly on the great masses of poor and middle peasants and farm workers in the consolidation of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the socialist transformation of the economic base.” This is Sison’s coup de grace, the most extreme insult against the proletariat.

“As in the seizure of power,” and this was accomplished during the democratic revolution, the working class “relies mainly” on other class forces, but not on itself, in consolidating its very “own” class dictatorship and building its very “own” social system, as this is the case. This is not a “slip of the pen” but this is really what is contained in Sison’s brain. Here, it is already very clear that the “seizure of power” for the proletariat has already been accomplished, not in the socialist stage, but in the democratic stage of the revolution. For Sison is not even bothering to differentiate the “seizure of power” by and for the people in the democratic revolution and the “conquest of power” by and for the proletariat in the socialist revolution. Meaning in Sison’s view, they are basically the same, they are one and the same thing, and woe to those who were deceived! Since he is now talking only of the “consolidation the dictatorship of the proletariat,” it means this dictatorship had already been established and what is left is to consolidate it. When was it established? In the “seizure of power” during the democratic revolution!

In the “seizure of power”, which was accomplished in the democratic revolution, the working class relied mainly on other class forces and not on itself. And again, in “consolidating this power”, the working class will again rely mainly on other class forces and not on

itself! In the democratic revolution, it was the vanguard not the class that will see to it that it is carried out and completed. In creating the conditions for socialism and transforming the democratic dictatorship into a proletarian dictatorship, it is again the vanguard not the class that will do the task. What is this class doing all this time, in these historical upheavals and events-this proletariat who according to Marx is "the only really revolutionary class", whose "emancipation depends wholly and entirely on itself"? In Sison's scheme of things, the working class "relies mainly" on other class forces both in the democratic and the socialist stages of the revolution and on its "vanguard party", and everything is delivered to him in a golden platter.

Summing-up our first point, it is crystal-clear that Sison had confounded the democratic and the socialist stages of the revolution, that Sison is bent on a "conquest of power" for the proletariat using the name of the people, and the peasantry, in the democratic revolution, and all this slogans about a "democratic" dictatorship is grand deception. And a revolution based on deception is doomed to fail.

Second, while Sison's "strategy of seizure" artificially "broadens" the objective of the democratic revolution, it narrows the options and possibilities, specially on tactics, for the accomplishment of the real aims of this revolution. Since the conquest of power by the proletariat through the peasantry has become the aim of the democratic revolution, it can only come about by relying absolutely on the peasantry, by relying on the peasantry as the main vehicle of the revolution, by concentrating all the efforts in the countryside-hence, all efforts for the armed struggle, the agrarian revolution, the base building, etc.

In Sison's strategy, the success of the democratic revolution depends absolutely on the peasantry, on the success of the war in the countryside. If it fails, if the peasantry does not respond, then the revolution is doomed. The struggle for political democracy and liberty for the proletariat is doomed because the party has abandoned the

proletariat in the cities and has concentrated its attention to the peasantry in the countryside. Without the peasantry and the peasant war the proletariat is nothing! This sounds familiar-the remarkable parallelism with Sison's thesis that without feudalism, imperialism is nothing? Aiming for the immediate "conquest of power" for the proletariat in the democratic revolution does not "broaden" this revolution but "narrows" the options and possibilities for the proletariat in accomplishing, for itself, the real aims of this revolution.

In Sison's "strategy of seizure", revolution is transformed into war and war into revolution, and war and revolution reduced to one form-protracted war. This is Sison's vulgarization of the Marxist-Leninist tactics of the class struggle of the proletariat. The revolutionary forces in the Philippines is being forced to fight on a "narrow front" not because of the archipelagic character of our country, but because of the one-track nature of our tactics or what Sison calls "strategy".

According to Lenin: "Revolution is war. Of all the wars known in history, it is the only lawful, rightful, just and truly great war. This war is not waged in the selfish interests of a handful of rulers and exploiters, like any and all other wars, but in the interest of the masses of the people against the tyrants, in the interests of the toiling and exploited millions and millions against despotism and violence." Since revolution is war, indeed, a revolutionary army is needed. According to Lenin: "The revolutionary army is needed for military struggle and for military leadership of the masses against the remnants of the military forces of the autocracy. The revolutionary army is needed because great historical issues can be resolved only by force, and in modern struggle, the organization of force means military forces."

These statements of Lenin resolve the question of war and violence in terms of principles. But when to transform revolution into war, when to transform political struggle into military struggle, when does war become "a continuation of politics by other means", is a different question. One thing, though, is definite. War is not

something arbitrarily waged on the basis of some fundamental analysis on the historical irreconcilability of opposing forces. There are certain preconditions for waging war and for a war to succeed.

According to Lenin: "Social-Democracy never stooped to playing at military conspiracies; it never gave prominence to military questions until the actual conditions for civil war had arisen."

But according to Sison: "To have a few seats in a reactionary parliament and to have no army in our country is to play a fool's game. Anytime that the enemy chooses to change the rules of the game, say the constitution, he would be able to do so at the people's expense." This is the argument not of a level-headed Marxist revolutionary but the warlord mentality of a warmonger. Would Sison ever dare accuse Lenin of "playing a fool's game" in Russia for having no army and for having only a few seats in the reactionary Duma? Lenin did not have to face the problem of an enemy choosing to "change the rules of the game, say the constitution", for Lenin was waging a revolution in a country without a constitution.

The conditions in Russia when the RSDLP was established was a hundred times worse than in the Philippines in 1968. Yet, Lenin, played a "fool's game" for several years, never calling for a revolutionary war until the conditions for such a war arose. While Sison, because he does not want to "play a fool's game" immediately waged his protracted war even before the revolution has broken out! Does it mean that Sison is more conscious and profound than Lenin in grasping the antagonistic character of the class struggle, the violent character of the reactionary state, of the reality of an armed counter-revolution? But Lenin won in two decades, and Sison, after two and a half decades, is still at the early substages of his protracted war that is currently on the decline and suffering unprecedented setbacks.

For Lenin, there is such a thing as the timeliness and the untimeliness in waging war, while for Sison, the conditions for protracted war is something timeless as long as a country is semicolonial and semifeudal, and the sooner you start the war, the

better. For Sison, war is not an art but a task to be performed no matter when and no matter how.

Let us quote a long passage from Lenin so we can understand the Marxist principle on tactics:

“By leading the class struggle of the proletariat, developing organization and discipline among the workers, helping them to fight for their immediate economic needs and to win position after position from capital, by politically educating the workers and systematically and unswervingly attacking the autocracy and making life a torment for every tsarist bashibazouk who makes the proletariat feel the heavy paw of the police government—such an organization would at one and the same time be a workers’ organization adapted to our conditions, and a powerful revolutionary party directed against the autocracy. To discuss in advance what methods this organization will resort to in order to deliver a smashing blow at the autocracy, whether for example, it will prefer insurrection, a mass political strike, or some other form of attack, to discuss these things in advance and to decide this question now would be empty doctrinairism. It would be akin to generals calling a council of war before they had mustered their troops, mobilized them, and undertaken a campaign against the enemy. When the army of the proletariat fights unswervingly and under the leadership of a strong Social-Democratic organization for its economic and political emancipation, that army will itself indicate the method and means of action to the generals. Then and only then, will it be possible to decide the question of striking the final blow at the autocracy; for the solution of the problem depends on the state of the working-class movement, on its breadth, on the methods of struggle developed by the movement, on the qualities of the revolutionary organization leading the movement, on the attitude of other social elements to the proletariat and to the autocracy, on the conditions governing home and foreign politics—in a word, it depends on a thousand and one things which cannot be guessed, and which is useless to guess in advance.”

For Lenin, it will be the masses that “will indicate the method and means of action” to the vanguard and for the vanguard to decide this “in advance” is doctrinairism. But for Sison, for the vanguard to wait for the masses to indicate how and when to “strike the final blow” is tailism.

Our ever-correct and ever- victorious General Jose Ma. Sison did not have to guess “a thousand and one things” for him to decide, not only “in advance”, but at the very outset, in 1968, that the method and only method in “delivering a smashing blow” at the enemy is through and only through protracted war. And our General had decided on this strategy, not only before we had “mustered our troops, mobilize them, and undertaken a campaign” but even before he had built a platoon! For our General, deciding the form of the “final blow” against the enemy does not depend on “a thousand and one things” but only on one thing: the fact that our’s is a semicolonial and semifeudal country. Hence, ours is a protracted war revolution, and the sooner we start this war, the better! For Sison, there is no such thing as the timeliness of starting the revolutionary war for protracted war is timeless.

Force is the midwife of social change. This is a question of principle. But when and how to use force is a question of tactics. Lenin said: “To arm the people with a sense of burning necessity to arm is the constant, common duty of the Social-Democrats always and everywhere... Wherever there are oppressed classes struggling against exploitation, the doctrine of the socialists, from the very start, and in the first place, arms them with the sense of the burning necessity to arm...” But when to issue the call to arms is a quite a different matter. According to Lenin: “What is the force that holds in check this burning necessity to mete out summary justice to the bourgeoisie and its servitors who ill-use the people? It is the force of organization and discipline, the force of consciousness, the consciousness that individual acts of assassination are absurd, that the hour for the serious revolutionary struggle of the people has not yet struck, that the political situation is not ripe for it.” But for Sison, “to arm the people with a sense of the burning necessity to arm”

without actually engaging in armed struggle” is to “play a fool’s game”.

For Sison, protracted war is no longer a question of tactics in its Marxist sense nor is it a mere military strategy. He has elevated protracted war to the level of a basic principle, to something so sacred that to question it is blasphemy. And worse, he has transformed this war into the revolution instead of transforming our revolution into war.

To equate war with revolution, to treat war as the revolution is to negate the theory of the class struggle and vulgarize a Marxist-Leninist revolution. The basic law of revolution is the class struggle, it develops, advances, intensifies and triumphs on the basis of the development of the class struggle. War - if it is not the development and transformation of the revolution to its highest form, the continuation of political struggle by other means - depends not on the class struggle but on the military balance of forces, on the relation of armed strength. And it advances not on the basis of the changing tide of the political situation of class warfare but on the military balance of forces, on the strategy and tactics of armed warfare. We started a war in 1969 without a revolution. By 1986, because of this war strategy, we missed a revolution. And now, after two and half decades, what Sison wants us to reaffirm is this same, old vulgarized war and vulgarized revolution.

Workers Manifesto for the New Millennium, 1999

by the Partido ng Manggagawang Pilipino (PMP), an underground political party of the Filipino working class established January 30, 1999

(This document was written by Filemon “Ka Popoy” Lagman when he was then secretary-general of the Partido ng Manggagawang Pilipino [PMP], an underground revolutionary political party of the Filipino working class established January 30, 1999. It was published as a paid advertisement in the Philippine Daily Inquirer on January 30, 2000.)

A specter is haunting labor—the specter of Globalization.

Wage-workers in industrial and developing countries, skilled and unskilled laborers, manual and mental workers, urban and rural proletarians—all are ravaged by this global scourge with lost jobs and low pay, wage freeze and wage cuts, downsized and diminished benefits, factory closures and run-away shops, contractualization and casualization of labor, strike-breaking and union-busting.

As the sun rises on year 2000, labor cannot but ask: What does the future hold for the working class in the new millennium?

The prophets of Globalization talk of “free markets” and “free trade”. But how about freeing labor from wage-slavery?

Progress, they say, will ultimately trickle down. The point, however, is when? In every decade since the 1950’s, the working people produced more wealth than the total output of mankind since the dawn of civilization some 12,000 years ago. But the gap between the rich and the poor is wider and deeper than ever in history. Even in

America, the richest of all nations, only one percent of its wealth is shared by 80 percent of its population.

Despite all the advances in social production, billions today still have no food on their tables, clothes on their backs and roofs over their heads. If this is the meaning of capitalist progress and civilization, how does it differ from a cannibal who has learned to use knife and fork? The last 100 years of capitalism has been a century of over-abundance for the owners of capital and utter deprivation for those who live only by the sale of their labor.

Using the yardstick of history, four centuries of capitalism is short compared to earlier social systems. But as soon as it emerged, its every progress has sparked epic class struggles. The last hundred years of capitalism eminently has been a history of wars and revolutions, of liberation struggles of oppressed nations against imperialist countries, and of class battles between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie.

Anti-capitalist revolutions broke out even as the rule of capital has yet to conquer the entire globe. At its peak, socialist states covered a quarter of the world's area and a third of the human population.

The collapse of socialism in the last decades of the 20th century has emboldened the bourgeois elements of society to vilify it as a utopian dream. But what they pass off as the vindication of capitalism is merely their class bias showing. That communism inspired hundreds of millions to life and death struggle and Marxist revolutions were victorious in scores of countries is incontrovertible proof of their firm roots in material conditions and social realities.

The period of the two world wars ushered in the first wave of socialist revolutions. With hindsight and foresight, it was only a dress rehearsal for the real revolution that can now begin with the advent of the third world war—the global offensive of capital versus labor. The revolutionary proletariat will arise, like the phoenix from the ashes, stronger and wiser.

Globalization has inaugurated not a post-industrial society but the unadorned class rule of the international bourgeoisie and the insatiable pursuit of profit by monopoly capital. Class antagonisms have not been attenuated but on the contrary are heightened.

Proletarianization of the population proceeds as never before. Unarguably, the working class is the absolute majority in the world. The so-called services are being industrialized, that is put under the regime of mechanized production and social labor. The modern office is little different from the automated factory. In both, low pay, long hours and insecure jobs are the norm. Professions are transformed from independent livelihood into wage-labor. Mental workers are joining manual laborers in organizing unions to protect their interests as wage-slaves.

Globalization has unleashed not so much the creative power of capital as its destructive forces. The genie of finance capital has been liberated by the liberalization of trade and investment and has left a path of destruction in its wake. Intensified global competition is the anarchy of production multiplied and the crisis of overproduction internationalized.

Capitalism in the age of Globalization is hopelessly bound up in its innate contradictions brought to their peak. And the proletariat is inevitably impelled to revolt by the vicious attacks against their living standards and social rights.

Globalization by its very nature transforms the economic turmoil in one nation into a world crisis. It obliges the workers struggle in one country to become an international fight.

The world is witnessing the rebellion of the advanced forces of production against outmoded capitalist relations, the contradiction between the socialized forms of production and bourgeois private property exploding into crisis and revolution.

It is Marxism rather than capitalism that is passé. Marx was a visionary who saw far ahead of his time. What he described applies

more to the Globalization of our era than the capitalism of his age. And what he foretold will only now truly come to be.

No doubt revolutionary movements which predict the fall of capitalism will be likened to religious sects which prophesize the end of the world. Let these conceited bourgeois pundits beware the lesson of history. The lords of capital will be no different from the slaveholders and landlords of yore who thought they would rule forever until the rising of the former working classes brought their delusions crashing upon their heads.

Let the capitalists celebrate the coming millennium with pomp and pretense for it will be their last. The bourgeois *reich* will not last a thousand years. *Pax capitalista* will not even survive the new century.

The first decade of the new millennium will be the eve of the socialist revolution in the era of Globalization.

The Battle in Seattle is the sign of the times. It comes on the heels of historic general strikes in France and South Korea, and in other advanced and backward countries. They are a portent of the brewing storm of working class revolution that will sweep imperialist Globalization to its grave.

The new millennium will see the titanic last battle between the forces of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. The day of judgment is at hand and the armageddon of capitalism is near.

The workers have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win. Workers of the world, unite!

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