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Blood-Brothers: The Communist Party of the Philippines and the Partai Komunis Indonesia

Ramon Guillermo*

This paper discusses the significant role of the Indonesian Communist movement in the formation of Jose Maria Sison as a leading Filipino Marxist radical and its possible influence on the founding of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) in 1968. After a study fellowship in Indonesia in 1962, Sison published pioneering translations of Chairil Anwar's poetry and popularized matters pertaining to Indonesia during the Sukarno era through the journal *Progressive Review*. He also had a memorable and intellectually fruitful friendship with the Indonesian nationalist guerrilla and University of the Philippines graduate student Bakri Ilyas. A small but persistent controversy on the alleged plagiarization by Sison of Indonesian radical sources in the late 1960s and early 1970s will then be addressed through systematic textual analysis. The paper will propose some general theses on authorship, modularity, adaptation, and dissemination of texts and ideas in twentieth-century radical movements. Finally, the article will assess the impact of the 1965–66 massacre in Indonesia on the revolutionary ideas and practice of the CPP.

Keywords: Communist Party of the Philippines, Partai Komunis Indonesia, Jose Maria Sison, Dipa Nusantara Aidit, *Philippine Society and Revolution*, Maphilindo

“The thirty-five years history of the CPI is not a tranquil and peaceful one; it is a history which has gone through many turmoils and many dangers, many mistakes, and many sacrifices. But it is also a heroic history, a joyful history, a history with many lessons, a successful history.”

— D. N. Aidit (1955)

Any complete history of radicalism in Southeast Asia must include the episodic but vital interactions between generations of Philippine and Indonesian Communists. It is a well-known fact that Tan Malaka (1897–1949), former chairman of the Partai Komunis Indonesia (PKI, Communist Party of Indonesia, founded in 1920) and agent of the Eastern Bureau of the Comintern, spent some time in the 1920s in the Philippines, where he

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acquainted himself with Philippine history and society and reportedly developed warm friendships with political progressives such as Crisanto Evangelista (1888–1943), who founded the Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas (PKP, Communist Party of the Philippines) in 1930. Tan Malaka's autobiography *Dari Penjara ke Penjara* (From jail to jail) (1948) and chief theoretical work *Madilog: Materialisme, Dialektika dan Logika* (Materialism, dialectics, and logic) (1943) contain richly detailed sections dealing specifically with the Philippines (see Guillermo 2017). In the early 1960s, not long after Tan Malaka's death, Jose Maria Sison (1939–), a Filipino activist and student of literature, initiated a new phase in Indonesian-Philippine Communist interactions which continued until the destruction of the PKI in the massacre of 1965 and the foundation of the Maoist-oriented Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) in 1968. It was around this time also that Sison shared a deep and comradely friendship with Bakri Ilyas (?–2003), a highly decorated PKI-affiliated former army officer who was a student at the University of the Philippines. This study seeks to shed light on this second episode.

In 1961 Sison's graduate scholarship and teaching fellowship at the Department of English, University of the Philippines, were abruptly terminated because of his increasingly militant political involvement. Later that year, at the age of 22, Sison decided to take up a scholarship in Indonesian language and literature in Jakarta through the Jajasan Siswa Lokantara.¹⁾ At the time, Indonesia under President Sukarno was a veritable mecca for Southeast Asian radical and nationalist intellectuals and was also the home of the PKI, the third largest Communist party in the world (Sison 2004, 13).

However, things did not go as smoothly as expected: Sison experienced problems obtaining a passport since he had been blacklisted as a "subversive" by the National Intelligence Coordinating Agency. His uncle Sixto Brillantes, who was at the time the chairman of the Commission on Elections, had to personally request President Carlos Garcia to facilitate the issuance of his passport until it was eventually released late in 1961. In a portent of things to come, prior to his departure for Indonesia Sison was contacted by the pro-Soviet PKP. Jesus Lava, the Party's secretary-general, had apparently taken an interest in the young Sison's activities and early anti-imperialist writings and had sent his nephew Vicente Lava, Jr., to propose a meeting. However, it was only upon his return to the Philippines in late 1962 that Sison was finally able to meet with the Lavas (Sison 1989, 44; 2004, 13).

Six years later, he would found the breakaway Maoist CPP. Sison's stay in Indonesia was a formative period in his development as a Marxist:

1) No further information can be found on Jajasan Siswa Lokantara. It was probably discontinued after 1965.

In four months, I learned the Indonesian language well enough to be able to speak it fluently and translate the poems of the Indonesian national poet Chairil Anwar into English. I had time to read an enormous amount of Marxist-Leninist classics and current literature, which could then be easily and openly obtained in Indonesia. I also developed good relations with Indonesian comrades in the Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI) and in the mass movement. At the time the PKI was the biggest communist party outside the socialist countries. (Sison 1989, 15–16)

Upon his return to the Philippines in 1962, his new connection with Indonesia became an occasion for red-baiting:

... the most rabid anticommunist columnists in the *Philippine Herald* called me an agent of the Communist Party of Indonesia because I was the secretary general of the Philippine-Indonesian Friendship and Cultural Association.

After Sukarno came to Manila for the Maphilindo conference in 1963, the yellow tabloid started to call me an agent of Sukarno and even accused me of fronting for him as a buyer of a Forbes Park mansion for an alleged Filipino girl friend of his, the prominent socialite Amelia de la Rama, whom I did not know from Eve. The only time I was in the company of Sukarno and a pretty woman was when I sat between him and the movie actress Josephine Estrada at a brunch tendered for him in 1963 by then Speaker Jose Laurel at his Shaw Boulevard residence.

Coming back from a short trip in Indonesia in 1963, I was accosted at the Manila airport by intelligence agents who confiscated from me a luggage full of books. I was subsequently attacked in the media for attempting to bring communist books into the country. (Sison 2004, 44)

According to Sison, he traveled to Indonesia on three occasions:

Una ang pag-aaral ko ng Bahasa Indonesia at pagsubaybay sa kilusang masa mula Enero hangang Hunyo, 1962. Ikalawa noong 1963 para dalhin ko sa PKI ang liham ng PKP na kumumpirma sa praternal na relasyon ng PKP at PKI batay sa naunang pag-uusap ng mga kinatawan sa Manila (ang mga kinatawan ng PKI ay mga kagawad ng KS na kasama sa delegasyon ni Sukarno). Ikatlo noong 1964 nang inayos ko ang paglahok ng mga delegasyon ng KM sa international youth conference sa 1964 at delegasyon ng Pilipinas sa international conference against US military bases noong 1965. (Sison, email to the author, December 6, 2015)

The first time was when I went there to study Bahasa Indonesia and observe the mass movement from January to June 1962. The second time was in 1963 when I delivered the letter from the PKP to the PKI confirming fraternal relations between the two parties based on the initial discussion with the representatives in Manila (the representatives of the PKI were members of the Central Committee who came with Sukarno's delegation). The third time was in 1964 when I arranged the participation of the Kabataang Makabayan (Nationalist Youth) in the international youth conference of 1964 and the delegation of the Philippines to the international conference against US military bases in 1965.

One important, and deep, intellectual friendship that Sison developed in the early 1960s was with a young Indonesian Communist who had encouraged him to go to Indonesia and

worked with him to found the Philippine-Indonesian Friendship and Cultural Association (Sison and De Lima 2003):

My most frequent intellectual sparring partner was, of course, my wife. We had for a close friend an Indonesian Communist, a graduate student, with whom we had frequent discussions and who lent us Marxist reading materials. (Sison 1989, 19)

It was this same person who helped him acquire difficult to obtain Marxist-Leninist materials:

We were able to get a few Marxist-Leninist books and pamphlets hidden by senior communists and also those provided by an Indonesian comrade. Eventually, we were able to arrange the flow of Marxist-Leninist literature from Indonesia, Hongkong, the US and England. (Sison 2004, 107)

In a recent interview, Sison identified his Indonesian friend as one Ilyas Bakri (or Bakri Ilyas in Indonesia):

Pangalan ng kasamang Indones na kaibigan namin ni Julie ay Ilyas Bakri. Kumuha ng Masters in Business Administration sa UP bilang iskolar ng gobyernong Indones. May ranggong kapitan sa hukbong Indones at galing sa isang pamilyang Komunista sa Sumatra. Alam kong myembro siya ng PKI at kaugnay ng Komite Sentral ng PKI. (Sison, email to the author, December 6, 2015)

The name of the Indonesian comrade who was a friend to me and Julie was Ilyas Bakri. He had taken up a master's in business administration in UP as a scholar of the Indonesian government. He had the rank of captain in the Indonesian army and came from a Communist family in Sumatra. I know that he was a member of the PKI and was connected to the Central Committee of the PKI.

Bakri Ilyas (see Fig. 1)²⁾ survived the 1965–66 massacre but spent the next 10 years of his life in jail. When the massacre occurred in 1965, he was already in Indonesia and in contact with his former comrades in the Indonesian army who were pro-Sukarno and pro-PKI (*ibid.*). He came under suspicion from the Suharto group, was arrested twice, and was jailed 10 years without trial during the Suharto period. Upon his release in 1976, his status as an “ex-Tapol” (former political prisoner) made it difficult for him to find employment. He led the organization Paguyuban Korban Orde Baru (Pakorba, Association of the Victims of the New Order) in fighting for justice and social rehabilitation for former prisoners and victims of the Suharto era (Bakri 1998). During the early 1990s, he resumed communications with Sison but was no longer able to travel. In 2003, Bakri was possibly the first and the only ex-Tapol who was buried with military rites at the

2) According to Sison, “Tuluy-tuloy ang ugnayan ng CPP at PKI dahil sa may kinatawan ang mga ito sa Beijing” (The communication between the CPP and the PKI continued [even after 1965] because they had representatives in Beijing) (Jalandoni 2013).



Fig. 1 Bakri Ilyas in *The Philippinensian* (1965)

Kalibata Heroes Cemetery. The probable reason for this is that his “illustrious military career overshadowed his status as a 1965 former political prisoner” (Adam 2005, 268). He had been decorated with three medals by the Republic of Indonesia for his exemplary military service: the Bintang Gerilya (Guerilla Star), Satyalancana PK I, and the Satyalancana PK II (*ibid.*). According to Asvi Warman Adam:

While in the Philippines, he befriended progressive Filipino [*sic*] students. These friendships formed the grounds for his detention without trial from 1966 to 1976. According to one source, he had been a member of the Indonesian Scholars Association which was affiliated to the PKI. (*ibid.*)

In his tribute to Bakri, Sison wrote:

There is not enough space here for me to state everything that I know about Bakri as an outstanding Indonesian patriot, revolutionary and internationalist. But I pledge to make sure that his writings within my access and his deeds within the range of my knowledge will go into historical record. (Sison and De Lima 2003)

Translations of Chairil Anwar and the *Philippine Progressive Review*

Indonesia also left a mark on Sison in the area of literature. Sison’s translations of three of Anwar’s poems may count as possibly some of the first translations into English of this famous Indonesian poet.³⁾ The translated poems were “Aku” (I), Orang Berdua”/“Dengan

3) Burton Raffels’ translations (Chairil Anwar 1970) came out in 1962, the very year Sison was in Indonesia.

Mirat” (Two people/With Mirat) and “Sia-sia” (Trifling/In vain). Sison’s own poetry from his first collection, *Brothers and Other Poems* (1961), reflects a spontaneous affinity with Anwar’s style. In his translations, one could say that he made Anwar’s poems his own:⁴⁾

Hindi ko alam kung may naunang nagsalin sa mga tula niya sa Ingles. Bago ko inaral at isinalin ang mga tula niya noong 1962, nalathala na ang *Brothers and Other Poems* noong pang 1961. Maaring sabihin na pareho kaming impluwensiyado ng mga Kanluranin at modernong manunulat na sina Rilke, Auden at Hemingway, laluna sa paggamit ng tuwirang wika, mga metapor at mga imahe.

I did not know if there were any previous translations of his poems into English. Before I studied and translated his poems in 1962, *Brothers and Other Poems* had already been published in 1961. It could be said that we were both influenced by Western and modern writers such as Rilke, Auden, and Hemingway, especially in the use of direct language, metaphor, and images.

Some parts of Sison’s translations may be remarked upon (Table 1). For example, below are the famous concluding lines of Anwar’s poem “Aku” (I):

Biar peluru menembus kulitku
 Aku tetap meradang menerjang
 Luka dan bisa kubawa berlari
 Berlari
 Hingga hilang pedih peri
 Dan aku akan lebih tidak peduli
 Aku mau hidup seribu tahun lagi

Sison translates this as:

Let a pellet break my skin
 I firmly rage and charge
 The wound I bear and the poison runs
 Runs
 Until enmeshed in its own smart and tangle
 And I will be more mindless
 I want to live a thousand years more

There are indeed quite a number of ways of rendering this in English, but “hingga hilang

4) Caroline Hau observes, “I was struck by how ‘freely’ Sison translated Chairil Anwar. If Sison were as fluent in Bahasa as he claims to have been (and there is no reason to doubt this claim), then it might also be possible to view Sison’s poems as simultaneously translations of Chairil and Sison’s ‘own’ poems in their own right—the intentional appropriation that blurs the boundaries between translator and translated and is capable of producing ‘literary’ effects (which we can see in Ezra Pound, except Pound didn’t even have Chinese) but that, in a certain sense, the term ‘plagiarism’ (in the way it is often used nowadays and by people with their own agenda) wants to disambiguate. By current definition, Shakespeare is the plagiarist par excellence” (Hau, email to the author, December 10, 2015).

Table 1 Jose Maria Sison's Translations of Three Poems by Chairil Anwar

| Translations by Jose Maria Sison | Original Poems by Chairil Anwar |
|--|---|
| <p>I</p> <p>When comes my turn I wish none will weep Not even you</p> <p>There is no room for sobbing</p> <p>I am a wild beast Lost from the herd</p> <p>Let a pellet break my skin I firmly rage and charge</p> <p>The wound I bear and the poison runs Runs Until enmeshed in its own smart and tangle</p> <p>And I will be more mindless</p> <p>I want to live a thousand years more</p> | <p>Aku</p> <p>Kalau sampai waktuku 'Ku mau tak seorang 'kan merayu Tidak juga kau</p> <p>Tak perlu sedu-sedan itu</p> <p>Aku ini binatang jalang Dari kumpulannya terbuang</p> <p>Biar peluru menembus kulitku Aku tetap meradang menerjang</p> <p>Luka dan bisa kubawa berlari Berlari Hingga hilang pedih peri</p> <p>Dan aku akan lebih tidak peduli</p> <p>Aku mau hidup seribu tahun lagi (1943)</p> |
| <p>Two People/With Mirat</p> <p>This room is the ultimate web Where the limits of the night are lost</p> <p>I and she only reach For the black raft</p> <p>Will we drift ashore Or be engulfed By a spiteful vortex?</p> <p>Your violet eyes are stone-hard</p> <p>Are we still to embrace Or follow that shadow</p> | <p>Orang Berdua/Dengan Mirat</p> <p>Kamar ini jadi sarang penghabisan di malam yang hilang batas</p> <p>Aku dan dia hanya menjengkau rakit hitam</p> <p>'Kan terdamparkah atau terserah Pada putaran pitam?</p> <p>Matamu ungu membatu</p> <p>Masih berdekapankah kamu atau mengikut juga bayangan itu? (1946)</p> |
| <p>Trifling/In Vain</p> <p>The last time you came It was to bring a bouquet Of red rose and white jasmine: Your blood and pureness You scattered them at my feet With a look of assurance: For you.</p> <p>After that we were both perplexed We asked each other: What is this? Love? The two of us failed to comprehend.</p> <p>That whole day we were together We did not dare to come to each other.</p> <p>Ahh! My heart which refused to give The ruins their peace.</p> | <p>Sia-sia</p> <p>Penghabisan kali itu kau datang membawa karangan kembang Mawar merah dan melati putih darah dan suci Kau tebarkan depanku Serta pandang yang memastikan: Untukmu.</p> <p>Sudah itu kita sama termangu Saling bertanya: Apakah ini? Cinta? Keduanya tak mengerti.</p> <p>Sehari itu kita bersama. Tak Hampir-menghampiri</p> <p>Ah! Hatiku yang tak mau memberi Mampus kau dikoyak-koyak sepi. (1943)</p> |

pedih peri,” which Sison translates as “until enmeshed in its own smart and tangle,” could be more accurately translated as “until the pain vanishes” (or “until I turn numb”). The line immediately following, “dan aku akan lebih tidak peduli,” can likewise be more literally rendered as “and I will care even less.”

The following two lines from the popular poem “Sia-sia” (Trifling/In vain) are quite difficult to translate for anyone who attempts it because of Anwar’s polyvalent ambiguous style:

Ah! Hatiku yang tak mau memberi
Mampus kau dikoyak-koyak sepi.

Sison very freely translates this as:

Ahh! My heart which refused to give
The ruins their peace

However, “mampus” (damn!/die) apparently does not have any literal connection with “ruins.” An Indonesian scholar, Jafar Suryomenggolo, offers a possible translation as:

Ah! my heart that refuses to yield
Damn, you will be devastated by loneliness⁵⁾

Sison’s effort in translating Chairil’s poetry, especially in light of his selection of some of the latter’s more personal rather than political poems, might seem incidental to his politics. However, this work of translation cannot be limited to a mere expression of admiration by a young revolutionary Filipino poet for the work of one of the greatest Indonesian poets; it may also constitute a kind of gesture toward a larger commitment to a continuing dialogue with Indonesian comrades, a commitment that is also necessarily linguistic in nature. The *Progressive Review* (PR), the journal where these translations of Anwar were published, was edited by Sison himself along with Francisco Nemenzo, Jr., and Luis V. Teodoro, Jr. It was “A Bi-Monthly of Ideas and Opinions” with a significant circulation. The special issue (July–August 1963), which included these translations, was completely devoted to Indonesia. It had full-page pictures of Indonesian President Sukarno and Foreign Minister Soebandrio and contained several reprints of official

5) Jafar Suryomenggolo (email August 31, 2015): “I think for modern readers (like myself), the most difficult part is ‘memberi’. Because it refers to ‘love’, so it is not only about giving, but also surrendering oneself to it. In this part, I think the issue is not about to give/offer love (the narrator seems capable to offer love), but he is not ready/capable to surrender himself to love (or, doesn’t want to let himself experience love). Second, the phrase ‘mampus kau’ sounds so harsh for modern readers, like a curse. Thus, it doesn’t mean that he will really die (‘mampus’), but more like a warning. So, there is a causality between the 1st line and the 2nd line. The pattern more like: if X, so it will Y.”

government statements and speeches from Indonesia. The table of contents listed the following articles:

- Philippines and Indonesia: Editorial
- Rediscovery of Our Revolution: Soekarno
- Belgrade Speech on Non-Alignment: Soekarno
- Our Good Neighbourly Relations: Soebandrio
- Philippine-Indonesian Joint Communiqué
- Tokyo Joint Communiqué
- MAPILINDO Report
- Economic Declaration: Soekarno
- On Loans or Credit on the Basis of Production-Sharing
- Philippine-Indonesian Trade Agreement
- Chairil Anwar's Poems: Translations by Jose Ma. Sison
- Philippine-Indonesian Cultural Agreement

The editorial, presumably written by Sison himself and titled “The Philippines and Indonesia,” explains the motives for putting out an issue dedicated entirely to Indonesia and its relationship with the Philippines:

In the Philippines today, there is a rising and vibrant wave of interest in Indonesia—its people, its leadership, its policies and principles, its potential, its current problems, its efforts, its achievements and its future.

In response to this interest, we have decided to put out this special issue on Indonesia which includes the most basic and most comprehensive policy declarations by President Soekarno, such as the Political Manifesto, the Economic Declaration and the Belgrade Speech on the policy of non-alignment . . .

The study and appreciation of the Indonesian Revolution may lead not only to a better understanding of our domestic problems, by way of parallelism or by way of a wider and more realistic Asian perspective, but may also lead to an active and more effective Philippine-Indonesian cooperation that may still accelerate the retreat of imperialism from this part of the world. (Sison 1963b, 1–2)

The “Mapilindo Report” listed in the table of contents is the result of the conference of ministers held in Manila on June 7–11, 1963. The conference was attended by Tun Abdul Razak, deputy prime minister of the Federation of Malaya; Dr. Soebandrio, deputy first minister/minister for foreign affairs of the Republic of Indonesia; and Emmanuel Pelaez, vice president of the Philippines and concurrently secretary of foreign affairs. “Mapilindo” (or “Maphilindo”) stood for Malaya, Philippines, and Indonesia and was part of a dream of a postcolonial Pan-Malayan confederation in Southeast Asia having its origins at least

as far back as Jose Rizal (Salazar 1998a). Some Indonesian Communists, such as Tan Malaka, seriously pondered the question of pan-Malayan or pan-Indonesian unity (Tan Malaka 2008, 447–462; Guillermo 2017). However, Filipino Communists for their part apparently did not find such conceptions congenial to their understanding of Marxism. The first issue of PR (May–June 1963) included a commentary written by Sison on “Filipino-Indonesian Brotherly Relations” that contained one of the rare instances where this trope appeared for a fleeting moment:

The Filipino and Indonesian peoples are mutually realizing with profoundest sentiments that they are blood-brothers, close neighbours, proud sharers of an early pre-colonial culture and, that it is only natural that they pool their potential and embark on joint action and cooperation in the face of the old established forces of colonialism and neocolonialism that continue to threaten and hamper their security and development.

That both Indonesia and the Philippines should, at this moment, choose to strengthen their brotherly relations in various fields and break the considerable number of barriers that Western colonialism has built between them can easily be explained by the fact that both are determinedly opposed to the proposed Federation of Malaysia, cooked up by the British and supported by the U.S., and that both need to cooperate and consolidate their efforts in the face of formidable adversity. (Sison 1963a, 12–13)

The same issue of PR included an article by Salipada R. Pendatun titled “Betrayal in Southeast Asia”; an essay by Dr. Juan M. Arreglado on “Our Relationship with Indonesia”; and a piece by Abdul Rahim bin Karim, a Malaysian student leader, titled “Kalimantan Utara Revolt: War Against Imperialism.” Iljas (or Ilyas) Bakri, Sison’s Indonesian friend, was listed as a contributing editor in the third issue of the journal. This issue had an article by the prominent Filipino intellectual who would later on become president of the University of the Philippines, Salvador P. Lopez, titled “Malaysia and Maphilindo.” Sison and other Filipino progressives asserted their solidarity with Indonesia by taking a stand against the formation of Malaysia as an imperialist ploy (Sison 1989, 27–28). Probably the final article on Indonesia in the pages of this journal was in the ninth issue, when it was under the sole editorship of Nemenzo. The article was written by the journalist Eric Norden and titled “The Rightist Coup in Indonesia.” And after that, silence.

Philippine Society and Revolution: Indonesian Influence or Plain Plagiarism?

Alex Magno, a political scientist who formerly taught at the University of the Philippines, wrote the following in his regular column for the broadsheet *Philippine Star* on September 11, 2007:

In the early sixties, [Sison] plagiarized the work of an Indonesian Maoist who, in turn, simplistically applied Mao's elementary analysis of Chinese society to explain Indonesian society. By simply changing names and places, he put out *Philippine Society and Revolution* under the penname "Amado Guerrero" (Beloved Warrior). (Magno 2007b)

Magno was very briefly associated with the Philippine Left during the early part of his career, before his political position took a decisive turn to the right. He eventually served as an adviser to the former controversial Philippine President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, who was jailed for plunder. One can unpack the assertions Magno made in the quote above as follows:

- 1) In the early 1960s Sison plagiarized the work of an (unnamed) Indonesian Maoist;
- 2) This Indonesian Maoist had "simplistically" applied Mao's "elementary analysis" of Chinese society to explain Indonesian society;
- 3) Sison then simply changed the "names and places" in the Indonesian work and called the book *Philippine Society and Revolution* (PSR).

Which Indonesian Maoist was Magno referring to? If it was Dipa Nusantara Aidit, as Ken Fuller (2011, 75) surmises, then which work of Aidit did Sison allegedly plagiarize? There is no mention here of Sison's Indonesian friend Bakri Ilyas, who did not apparently leave any writings to plagiarize. If it was another Indonesian Maoist and not Aidit, then what is his name and which work of his is being referred to? If Sison did indeed plagiarize a specific work by a particular "Indonesian Maoist," is it true that he actually just changed the names and places? Magno makes no effort to prove this assertion. Furthermore, in what way has Magno demonstrated that the "Indonesian Maoist" in question had just "simplistically" applied Mao's "elementary analysis" from China to Indonesia? It must be noted that the enormous condescension of posterity that Magno allows himself by throwing about words like "simplistic" and "elementary" to describe the ideas and motivations of historical actors just cannot work in any serious approach to intellectual history.

In another column, published a mere four months later in December 2007, Magno writes:

The biggest communist party aligned with China was the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI). In the early sixties, the Indonesian president Sukarno, who was friendly with the PKI, was overthrown by a military coup led by Suharto. Tens of thousands of cadres of the PKI were massacred in the aftermath, permanently eradicating that communist party as a political force in Indonesian society. . . . One leading Indonesian communist fled to the Philippines and established contact with Sison's group. Sison's "analysis" of Philippine society is largely lifted from the PKI's version of revolutionary conditions in Indonesian society. (Magno 2007a)

In the September 2007 column, Magno asserted that Sison had “plagiarized” an “Indonesian Maoist” in the early 1960s. However, in the second version above, he surmised that a “leading Indonesian communist” who had fled from the 1965 massacre was able to establish contact with Sison’s group. This alleged meeting explains why Sison’s “analysis” was “largely lifted” from that of the PKI. Could Magno have been referring to Bakri? However, according to Sison, Bakri was already in Indonesia by 1965, just before the massacre.

The unthinking repetition of Magno’s unsubstantiated allegations by writers like Fuller seems to reinforce their veracity without actually proving anything.

One approach to this unresolved problem might be to consider a possible scenario. What if the writer Magno was referring to was Aidit (1923–65), secretary-general of the PKI, and the work being alluded to was Aidit’s *Masyarakat Indonesia dan Revolusi Indonesia* (MIRI, Indonesian Society and Indonesian Revolution) (1957)? Indeed, many years before Magno, Joel Rocamora noted that the early CPP framework was frequently criticized for being “largely copied from Chinese models and from adaptations made by the Indonesian communist party” (1994, 20), and further added in a footnote that, “Some analysts have noted similarities in the framework of analysis used by Amado Guerrero in *Philippine Society and Revolution* and that used by the PKI leader, Dipa Nusantara Aidit in *Indonesian Society and Revolution*.” (Rocamora, who is actually capable of undertaking this investigation himself, does not cite any of these “analysts” he mentions.) Assuming that such were the case, a comparison might be undertaken between Aidit’s work and the similarly titled *Philippine Society and Revolution* (1971), which was said to have been penned primarily by Sison but which was released under the pseudonym Amado Guerrero (De Villa 2002, 2–6). Aidit, who was 16 years Sison’s senior, was executed in 1965 during the US-supported anti-Communist bloodbath. (A pioneering comparative analysis of both works to which this essay owes a debt can be seen in Gealogo [2005].)

Both works were meant to serve as “textbooks” (*buku peladjaran*) or “primers” for mass activists. As the original 1957 introduction to the MIRI states:

Buku peladjaran ini disusun oleh Kawan D.N. Aidit dimaksudkan sebagai buku peladjaran untuk Sekolah2 Partai dipusat dan di-provinsi2. . . Kita menerbitkan tulisan ini dengan kejakinan bahwa tulisan ini akan besar sekali artinja, bukan hanya bagi kader2 revolusioner, tetapi bahkan bagi perkembangan gerakan revolusioner itu sendiri. (Aidit 1962, 3)

This textbook, which was put together by Comrade D.N. Aidit, is meant as a textbook for Party Schools in the center and the provinces. . . We published this book with the conviction that this work will be of great value, not only for revolutionary cadres but also for the growth of the revolutionary movement itself.

The “author’s introduction” in PSR states a similar purpose:

Philippine Society and Revolution can be used as a primer and can be studied in three consecutive or separate days by those interested in knowing the truth about the Philippines and in fighting for the genuine national and democratic interests of the entire Filipino people. The author offers this book as a starting point for every patriot in the land to make further class analysis and social investigation as the basis for concrete and sustained revolutionary action. (Guerrero 1979, xvii)

MIRI was translated into English and Russian in 1958 (Aidit 1958a; 1958b) and into German in 1959 (Aidit 1959a). Its final Indonesian edition was a seventh printing in 1965 (Aidit 1965). PSR was published simultaneously in English and Filipino in 1971 (Guerrero 1971a; 1971b) and translated into German in 1973 (Guerrero 1973). Its fifth edition was printed in 2006 (Sison 2006). A comparison of the table of contents of both works reveals a relatively close correspondence (Table 2). The topic of chapter 2 of MIRI (“The Indonesian Revolution”) overlaps with the latter part of the first historical chapter of PSR (“The Reestablishment of the CPP”) and contains the corresponding topics of both chapters 2 (“Basic Problems of the Philippine Revolution”) and 3 (“The People’s Democratic Revolution”) of PSR. Justus van der Kroef commented that PSR was similar “in organization, terminology and substance . . . [to] the analysis of Indonesian society and revolution written by the late chairman of the Indonesian Communist Party, Dipa Nusantara Aidit” (Van der Kroef 1973; Weekley 2001, 21). However, with respect to the actual content of both works, some rather striking differences come to the fore.

One major difference is the account of the peopling of the Philippine and Indonesian archipelagos in the historical section from both works. Sison used Otley Beyer’s “Wave Migration Theory,” which at the time was the dominant narrative of the peopling of the Philippines (Fig. 2).⁶ The more speculative aspects of this theory have since been widely criticized by writers such as W.H. Scott (1992, 8–11), and it is therefore no longer accepted by the scientific community. Sison avers that the other alternative available account at the time by Felipe Landa Jocano was even less credible than Beyer’s. The more widely accepted account that has gained a broad scientific consensus is the theory connected with Austronesian migration (Salazar 1998b). Aidit, for his part, had already employed a version of the theory of Austronesian migration to describe the peopling of Indonesia in his earlier work (Fig. 3). The fact that he writes of the Mon-Khmer (in Cambodia) as the original Austronesians points to his ultimate source. The term “Austronesian” was proposed as a replacement for the earlier concept “Malayo-Polynesian” by P. Schmidt (1906), who also proposed a deeper kinship between Mon-

6) Filomeno Aguilar (2005) offers a comprehensive history of such theories of migration in waves.

Table 2 Comparison of the Table of Contents of *Philippine Society and Revolution* (PSR) and *Masjarakat Indonesia dan Revolusi Indonesia* (MIRI)

| PSR | MIRI | Translation of MIRI |
|--|---|--|
| Author's Introduction | Introduksi Introduksi pada Tjetakan ke-V | |
| Chapter 1: Review of Philippine History | Bab I Indonesia dan Masjarakatnja | Chapter 1: Indonesia and Its Society |
| I.A.) The Philippines and the People | I.A.) Kedudukan geografis Indonesia I.B.) Bangsa Indonesia | Indonesia's Geographical Position The Indonesian Nation |
| I.B.) The People upon the Coming of the Spanish Colonialists | I.C.) Masjarakat feodal | Feudal Society |
| I.C.) Spanish Colonialism and Feudalism I.D.) The Philippine Revolution of 1896 | I.D.) Masjarakat kolonial | Colonial Society |
| I.E.) The Filipino-American War I.F.) The Colonial Rule of US Imperialism I.G.) The People's Struggle against Japanese Imperialism I.H.) The Present Puppet Republic of the Philippines | | |
| | I.E.) Masjarakat Indonesia sekarang adalah setengah-djadjahan dan setengah-feodal | Indonesian Society Today Is Semifeudal and Semicolonial |
| | Bab II Revolusi Indonesia | Chapter 2: The Indonesian Revolution |
| I.J.) The Reestablishment of the Communist Party of the Philippines | II.A.) Gerakan revolusioner di Indonesia dalam abad ke-20 | The Revolutionary Movement in Indonesia in the Twentieth Century |
| Chapter 2: Basic Problems of the Philippine Revolution | II.B.) Soal2 pokok revolusi Indonesia | Basic Problems of the Indonesian Revolution |
| II.A.) A Semicolonial and Semi-feudal Society II.B.) US Imperialism II.C.) Feudalism II.D.) Bureaucrat Capitalism | II.A.) Tentang Sasaran2 pokok atau musuh2 pokok revolusi Indonesia pada tingkat sekarang dinjatakan dalam program PKI adalah imperialisme dan feodalisme. | In the program of the PKI, the main targets or enemies of the Indonesian Revolution at the present stage are declared to be imperialism and feudalism. |
| Chapter 3: The People's Democratic Revolution | | |
| III.D.) Basic Tasks of the People's Democratic Revolution | II.B.) Tentang Tugas2 Revolusi Indonesia | On the Tasks of the Indonesian Revolution |
| III.B.) Classes in Philippine Society III.C.) Class Basis of Strategy and Tactics | II.C.) Tentang Tenaga2 Penggerak atau Kekuatan2 Pendorong Revolusi Indonesia | On the Motive Forces or the Force Pushing forward the Indonesian Revolution |
| III.A.) Basic Character of the Philippine Revolution | II.C.) Tentang Watak Revolusi Indonesia | On the Character of the Indonesian Revolution |
| III.E.) Perspective of the Philippine Revolution | II.D.) Tentang Perspektif Revolusi Indonesia | On the Perspective of the Indonesian Revolution |

| | | | Main Filipino "Racial Stock" | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|---|------------------------------|--|--|
| Aetas / Negritos | First Indonesian Wave | Second Indonesian Wave | First Malay Wave | Second Malay Wave | Third Malay Wave |
| 25,000 to 30,000 years ago | 5,000 to 6,000 years ago | 1500 BC from Indochina and South China | 300-200BC | 1 st – 13 th century AD | Latter half of the 14 th century and 15 th century |
| Pleistocene era | Stone age culture | Late Neolithic or bronze-copper culture | Indian cultural influences | Ancestors of the Tagalogs, Ilocanos, Pampangos, Visayans and Bicolanos Writing systems and historical records | Arab influence and Islam |

Fig. 2 Beyer's Wave Migration Theory in *Philippine Society and Revolution*

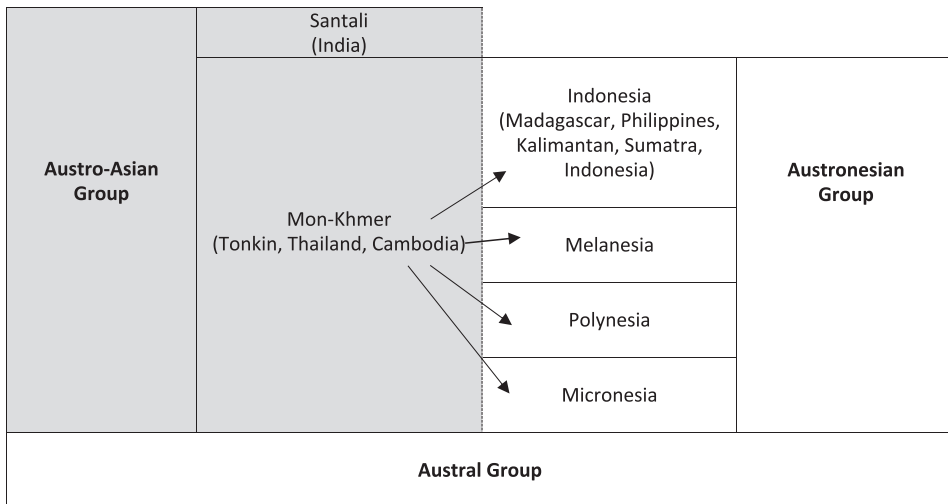


Fig. 3 The Origins of the Indonesians in *Masyarakat Indonesia dan Revolusi Indonesia* (MIRI)

Khmer and Austronesian languages. This latter proposition is not widely accepted today (Fig. 4). In a preface to the fifth edition of PSR, Sison wrote, "References to Philippine pre-history based on the 1969 level of knowledge and hypothesizing are properly explained in footnotes in the early pages of the book. They do not detract from the main strands of Philippine history, as presented in the book" (2006, i). However, the clarificatory footnotes Sison mentions seem to have been inadvertently left out in the printed

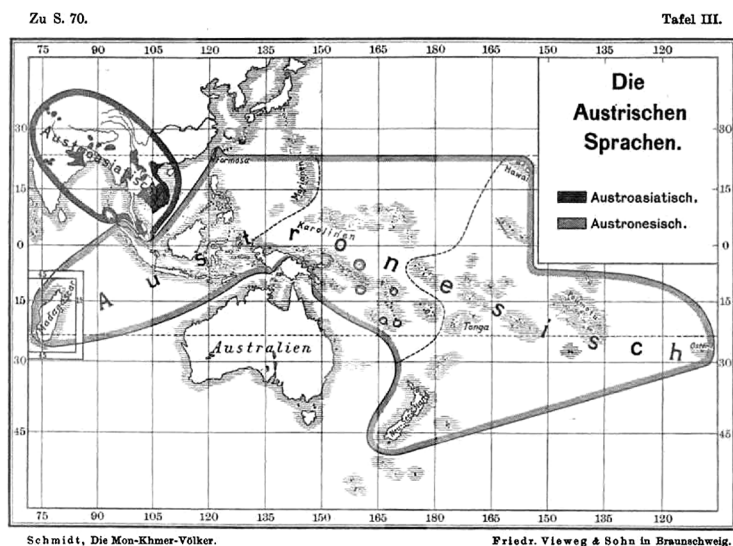


Fig. 4 P. Schmidt's Theory on the Kinship between the Mon-Khmer Language and Austronesian Languages
Source: Schmidt (1906, 79)

version of the latest edition.⁷⁾ The account in PSR emphasizes the notion of the main “racial stock” of the Philippine population as being “Malay,” while the discussion in MIRI looks deeper for the ultimate origin of the Austronesians (among them, Malays, Indonesians, and Filipinos) in mainland Southeast Asia among the Mon-Khmer. The two accounts nevertheless share a sense of the “common origin” and “shared history” between Filipinos and Indonesians. (For a contemporary perspective from the field of genetics, see Delfin [2015].) Further differences in the historical accounts of PSR and MIRI are observed by Francis Gealogo (2005), who remarks that compared to PSR, MIRI

7) Jose Maria Sison (email to the author, December 6, 2015): “One can make fun of Beyer’s wave theory by countering it with a trickles or percolation theory or justifying the wave theory with the stars being far apart from each other but cohering from a distance as a constellation. Certainly, there were no waves like large fleets of boats migrating to the Philippines. At any rate, what is more satisfying about Beyer’s theory than Jocano’s theory is that the former gives us a sense of the Austronesian migrations from 5000 B.C. down to 1500 B.C. (covering the two so-called Indonesian waves) and the coming from the south of Malays with an iron age culture (first wave of Malays from circa 200–300 B.C.) and the differentiation of major ethnolinguistic communities (from first to 13th century AD, so-called second wave of Malays) and the subsequent foundation of Islam (third wave of Malays or more accurately trickles of Arab traders and religious traders laying the Islamic foundation among the Malays of Sulu). . . . In 1973 or 1974, we had a new mimeographed copy of PSR with footnotes and updates for a possible new edition which did not come out. One of the footnotes was a caveat on both the Jocano and Beyer theories. And in prison, I drafted an article to update Philippine prehistory in PSR on the basis of the articles of Robert Fox and the like. This article is still entombed in a box, which I left in the Philippines.”

“has a more manifest orientation in terms of applying Marxist historical materialist notions of social development.”

Another major difference between the two works is that the central category of “bureaucrat capitalism” in PSR (Sison 2006, 112–125) is conspicuously missing in MIRI. This is despite the fact that the corresponding Indonesian term “*kabir*” (*kapitalis birokrat*) was in fact quite current during the Sukarno era. An explanation might be found in the totally different attitudes the PKI and the CPP had toward the state and its leaders at the time of their writing. While the MIRI was written under the conditions of a strong degree of cooperation between the PKI and Sukarno, PSR was written in a spirit of uncompromising opposition to the Philippine State. Sison explains:

Wala o mahina ang kategoryang bureaucrat capitalism kay Aidit dahil sa sobrang kapit sa NASAKOM at kay Sukarno at pabulong-bulong lang ang PKI at Aidit tungkol sa bureaucrat capitalism o corruption ng mga “social democrats” o “socialists” at iba pa na binigyan ni Sukarno ng mga economic portfolios sa gabinete niya. Ilan din sa mga PKI cadres nasa lower and also lucrative posts. But they turned over to the PKI what they earned beyond their modest family needs. (Sison, email to the author, December 6, 2015)

There was none or almost no category of bureaucrat capitalism in Aidit because he clung too much to NASAKOM and to Sukarno and the PKI and Aidit only whispered about bureaucrat capitalism or corruption among the “social democrats” or “socialists” and others whom Sukarno had given economic portfolios in his Cabinet. A few PKI cadres were also in lower but also lucrative posts. But they turned over to the PKI what they earned beyond their modest family needs.

What, then, of the alleged similarities between MIRI and PSR? If Magno’s charge that Sison had simply changed “names and places” is taken at a literal level, then there are ways of empirically verifying or refuting this by using methods such as “n-gram” analysis. An n-gram is a sequence of *n* contiguous elements, which for the present purposes are understood as consisting of words in a particular text. A test for the similarity between two texts could be conducted quite easily by using n-gram analysis. A further simplifying assumption is that Sison used the English translation of Aidit’s work rather than the original one in Bahasa Indonesia. Common sequences of lexical items can be automatically sought out in both MIRI and PSR. In this particular case, detecting word sequences that appear just once in both texts and consist of a minimum of four words could serve as a good basis for identifying areas of possible similarity in the texts. The reason for looking for a common sequence of four or more words is that, by rule of thumb, the likelihood of finding common sequences of three words and below in both texts is much greater and therefore much less likely to indicate unique textual features. On the other hand, making the minimum sequence length too long might make certain interesting features undetectable. Moreover, by limiting the number of occurrences to one in both

texts, the likelihood is reduced (but obviously not eliminated) that the repeating sequence is a commonly repeating phrase or fixed expression. A high frequency of occurrence of these sequences in two texts would point to the possibility of plagiarism. One can observe initially that many of the sequences occurring in MIRI and PSR are fixed phrases in the English language as a whole or within the genre of late twentieth-century Marxist-Leninist revolutionary texts. Some examples from PSR and MIRI of high-frequency shared n-grams are the following: “the broad masses of people” (MIRI: 3; PSR: 28); “under the leadership of” (MIRI: 8; PSR: 6); “exploitation of the people” (MIRI: 1; PSR: 6); “the vast majority of” (MIRI: 3; PSR: 4); “of the world proletarian revolution” (MIRI: 1; PSR: 5). These fixed phrases are obviously of too general usage in the Marxist-Leninist literature to be indicative of any deeper textual connection beyond ideological affinity. The n-gram sequences occurring once each in MIRI and PSR with four or more lexemes add up to a total of around 272. There is a single n-gram with a length of 10 shared by both texts (“the rich peasants, the middle peasants and the poor peasants”). The next longest n-grams have a length of eight each (“the political economic and cultural development of [the Philippines/Indonesia]”; “the present stage of the [Philippine/Indonesian] revolution is”). The great majority of single-occurrence shared n-grams each have four elements and number 172.

Most of these 4-gram sequences, when queried, do not actually reveal areas of textual similarity (for example, “a class that is,” “a proletarian socialist revolution,” “and most reliable ally,” “basis of the colonial,” “joint dictatorship of the,” “the compradors and the,” “system of rent payment,” “the proletariat is capable of,” “the revolutionary struggle against,” “[the Philippines/Indonesia] is an archipelago”]) which could support allegations or give rise to suspicions of plagiarism or lifting. What can instead be observed is the use of a kind of common “revolutionary *lingua franca*” (Hau, email to the author, December 10, 2015).

Magno’s wholesale charge that names and places were simply changed can be refuted empirically and just cannot be sustained. The only relatively close textual correspondence in MIRI and PSR to have been discovered so far using this automated search procedure is a passage containing the very unique n-gram sequence “thieves, robbers, gangsters, beggars.” This appears in the sections in both MIRI and PSR on the question of the “lumpen proletariat” (Aidit 1962, 53–54; Sison 2006, 150) (see Table 3). Such a series of four words in exactly this particular sequence obviously points to more than random coincidence. Looking at this sequence closely, it can be observed that five sentences in PSR, some of which are non-contiguous, closely correspond to three directly contiguous sentences in MIRI. It seems to be the case that the very short discussion on lumpen proletarians in MIRI was used as a kind of flexible schema upon which an

Table 3 Comparison of the Section on the “Lumpen Proletariat” in *Philippine Society and Revolution* (PSR) and *Masyarakat Indonesia dan Revolusi Indonesia* (MIRI)

| PSR | MIRI | Translation of MIRI |
|--|---|---|
| Lumpen proletariat | Kaum gelandangan | Lumpen proletariat |
| It is composed of thieves, robbers, gangsters, beggars, pimps and prostitutes , fakirs, vagrants, and all other elements who resort to antisocial acts to make a living . (139 words) The lumpen proletarians are an extremely unstable lot. They are easily bought off by the enemy and are given to senseless destruction. But some of them can be remolded. (27 words) When they join the revolution , they become the source of roving rebel and anarchist ideology . | Menjadi pentjuri-pentjuri, perampok2, gangster2, penge-mis2, pelatjur2 dan semua tjara hidup jang tidak normal . Golongan ini gojang wataknja dan sebagian dari mereka bisa dibeli oleh kaum reaksioner, sedangkan sebagian lagi bisa memasuki revolusi. Dalam keadaan memasuki barisan revolusi mereka bisa menjadi sumber ideologi dan barisan pengatjau jang berkeliaran dan dari anarkisme didalam barisan revolusi. | becoming thieves, robbers, gangsters, beggars, prostitutes and all other such abnormal ways of living or working . This group is wavering in character and some of them can be bought up by the reactionaries, while others can be bought into the revolution. In the case that they enter the revolution they can become the ideological source of roaming destructive elements and anarchism within the ranks of the revolution. |

expanded Philippine variation could be constructed. In this regard, according to Sison (email to the author, December 4, 2015), another great influence was Mao’s “Analysis of the Classes in Chinese Society” (1965). Naturally, it was Marx and Engels who had established the original template on the “lumpen proletariat” in the *Communist Manifesto*:

Das Lumpenproletariat, diese passive Verfaulung der untersten Schichten der alten Gesellschaft, wird durch eine proletarische Revolution stellenweise in die Bewegung hineingeschleudert, seiner ganzen Lebenslage nach wird es bereitwilliger sein, sich zu reaktionären Umtrieben erkaufen zu lassen. (Stammen and Classen 2009, 76)

The lumpen proletariat, this passive rotting of the lowest strata of the old society, will be partly thrown into the movement by the proletarian revolution, but it is more disposed, given its conditions of life, to let itself be bought by the reactionary intrigues.

This kind of modular appropriation and adaptation might give rise to further reflections on the modes of transmission and circulation of texts in revolutionary mass movements. From the outset, given the modularity of twentieth-century revolutionary ideas and the anonymity (or “impersonality”) of the vast majority of revolutionary treatises and texts, it is doubtful whether the academic standards and concepts of intellectual property, citation, and attribution are even directly applicable to these.⁸⁾ The clandestine nature of

8) The scholar Tom Talledo (communication to the author, October 30, 2017) writes: “If the obsession is with textual authenticity or originality—what will happen to collectively shared conditions and the collectively shared dialectical analysis of those in the battlefield? The issue of textual plagiarism reflects concerns about bourgeois claims of private ownership over texts or objects of representation. *Eh*, the rebo qua rebo has no marketability (and is even a source of fear!). And the dominant mode of transmission of revolutionary knowledge in the mountains and rural areas is oral/gestural.”

revolutionary work no doubt also plays a role. Such a study on the different styles and conventions of citation and non-citation practices in Marxist-Leninist and Maoist revolutionary texts could even be carried out empirically. Some of these features are no doubt reflected in Sison's rather impersonal political prose style (Abinales 2001, 66–67). Because of these predictable qualities, Sison anticipates the shortcomings of a mere surface analysis of textual features:

Kung paghambingin mo ang PSR, MIRI at sinulat ni Mao tungkol sa *Classes in Chinese Society* at bagong demokratikong rebolusyon, madali kang makakita ng paimbabaw na pagkakapareho ng dahil sa parehas na Marxista-Leninista teorya ang ginagamit sa pagsusuri sa kasaysayan, sirkunstansya at rebolusyonaryong hinaharap ng mga malakonyal at malapyudal na lipunan ng Tsina, Indonesia at Pilipinas. Pero sa mas malalim na pag-aaral ng mga akda may malalaking pagkakaiba... Binasa at inalar ko sa Ingles at Bahasa Indonesia ang mga akda ni Aidit pero lampas kay Aidit na nakita ko ang nangyari sa Indonesia noong 1965 at binasa at inalar ko rin ang pagpupuna sa sarili ng PKI Politburo ng 1966 na nagpapakita ng mga kamalian ni Aidit sa ideolohiya, pulitika at organisasyon. Ibig sabihin hindi basta kopya lamang ng MIRI ang PSR. . . . Mali si Rocamora sa pagsasabi na sumunod lang ang CPP kay Aidit or PKI kaysa kay Mao o CPC sa pagsusuri ng lipunang Pilipino at pagtatakda ng rebolusyon. (Sison, email to the author, December 6, 2015)

If one compares PSR, MIRI, and the writings of Mao about the classes in Chinese society and the new democratic revolution, one would immediately observe surface similarities because they all used Marxist-Leninist theory in analyzing the history, circumstances and revolutionary future of the semicolonial and semifeudal societies of China, Indonesia, and the Philippines. But a deeper study of these works will reveal big differences. . . . I read and studied in English and Bahasa Indonesia the writings of Aidit; but beyond Aidit, I saw the events in Indonesia in 1965 and read and studied the self-criticism of the PKI Politburo in 1966 which showed Aidit's errors in ideology, politics, and organization. This means that PSR is not just a copy of MIRI. . . . Rocamora is mistaken in saying that the CPP only followed Aidit of the PKI instead of Mao or the CPC in the analysis of Philippines society and in establishing the revolution.

Moreover, according to Caroline Hau:

The same insight holds when one looks at Sison's writings on literature, where one can note several passages where he "speaks" Mao without quotation marks. Mao, for that matter, often "spoke" without quotation marks, either. In East Asian literature, there is a tradition of using phrases and ideas from classical poetry and other texts without quotation marks, which in fact was the mark of erudition among literati who could be counted on to be able to identify the source of a particular phrase or line—one cannot, for example, make sense of "The Tale of Genji" without knowing the poetry and other classic texts embedded in its own prose. Originality, in other words, required drinking from the old fountain of language and ideas, rather than repudiating that fountain in favor of a new well. (Hau, email to the author, December 10, 2015)

Conclusion

What does it mean to raise questions of plagiarism with respect to a text like *Philippine Society and Revolution*? It is quite clear that the most common and necessarily political agenda behind such accusations would be to destroy the credibility of the authors of such texts by shaming and discrediting them intellectually. However, when one considers the specific conjunctures wherein such allegations have arisen, one could also frame such accusations more specifically within contexts of theoretical struggles within the Party. The insinuation of plagiarism can thus serve as a convenient device to undermine the legitimacy and validity of the theoretical positions proposed in PSR. Notions of “copying” and “mechanical application” seem to prove conclusively the crude, simplistic, and shallow nature of the theories in question.

For their part, right-wing pundits in the Philippines have long wanted to plagiarize and copy what they have variously called the “Indonesian Solution,” “Indonesian Model,” “Jakarta Solution,” and “Final Solution” as a supposed solution or “end-game” they wish to see applied to the Philippines. Such thinking became rampant during President Gloria Macapagal Arroyos’s term, which saw almost daily extrajudicial killings of activists and NGO workers (Alston 2008). A columnist, Antonio C. Abaya (2006), crowed about how the Indonesians “simply exterminated [the Communists] like so many cockroaches.” In another column titled “Defeating the Communists,” he rhapsodized about the mass murder of Indonesian Communists:

In Suharto’s Indonesia, communists and suspected communists were summarily executed by the thousands during the military’s counter-coup after the Parti Komunis Indonesia [*sic*] tried to seize power in 1965 (by machinegunning to death the entire high command, save one general, of the Indonesian armed forces). Estimates of communists and suspected communists summarily executed by the military range from 300,000 to three million. Freed of the corrosive presence of communist insurgency, propaganda and agitation, the countries of East Asia—South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand and Suharto’s Indonesia—were able to devote all their energies and resources to economic development, thus benefiting the broad masses of their populations . . . (Abaya 2007)

If the Philippine right wing has often bemoaned the lack of an Indonesian-style massacre in the Philippines, Filipino Communists seem to have learned from the Indonesian Communists in both a positive and negative manner. As Sison put it, “Inevitably, the revolutionary movements of pre-1965 Indonesia, Vietnam and China had a strong impact on Filipino revolutionaries because these stood for armed revolution to achieve national liberation and democracy; and were in the neighbourhood of the Philippines” (1989, 29). One possible example of a positive lesson is how Aidit opened up the question of waging

guerrilla war in an archipelagic country in his work *The History of the Communist Party of Indonesia*:

One of the basic mistakes of the Party in studying from the Chinese revolution at that time was the Party only tried to find out the similarities between the Chinese revolution and the Indonesian revolution.

According to experiences in China, for an underdeveloped country such as Indonesia, guerrilla warfare, the creation of liberated guerrilla areas and the organisation of a people's army in these areas is one of the correct forms of struggle to achieve complete national independence. But in Indonesia, this form of struggle did not have the broad possibilities available in China. This is because of the peculiar conditions of this country.

The most advantageous conditions for guerrilla warfare are extensive regions, mountainous areas and forest lands both wide in extent and far from towns and highways. The conditions in Indonesia met only some of these requirements.

Further, we know from the experiences of the Chinese Communists that it was only after they had reached the Northeast area, which borders on the Soviet Union, that they had a rear on which they could rely. With the Soviet Union as their rear, Chiang Kai-Shek could no longer encircle the Chinese revolutionary forces. Moreover, after being able to prevent the possibility of enemy encirclement, the Chinese Communists were in a position to launch planned attacks on the Chiang Kai-Shek troops.

The Indonesian revolution did not possess such conditions. Indonesia is a country composed of islands. An Indonesian people's liberation army cannot rely upon a friendly neighbouring country as its rear because it does not have one.

In putting forward the above facts, does it mean that guerrilla warfare cannot be operated in Indonesia? Not at all. But what should be done to make guerrilla warfare methods more effective under the prevailing conditions in Indonesia was to combine the method of guerrilla warfare with the revolutionary action of the workers in the towns occupied by the enemy, with economic and political strikes of a general character. (Aidit 1955, 25–26)

The CPP's groundbreaking document on the "Specific Characteristics of Our People's War" (Guerrero 1979, 179–215) is, in several key areas, much more detailed and developed and proposes several quite distinct theses from the particular conclusions drawn in Aidit's book. However, the initial general observations of the CPP's document are very similar to Aidit's. According to it:

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 . . .

Waging a people's war in an archipelagic country like ours is definitely an exceedingly difficult and complex problem for us . . .

The principle of self-reliance needs to be emphasized among all revolutionary forces on a nationwide scale. This is because our small country is cut off by seas from neighbouring countries,

particularly those friendly to our revolutionary cause. The Vietnamese, Cambodian and Laotian peoples are more fortunate than us in one sense because they share land borders with China, which serves as their powerful rear. Self-reliance can never be overemphasized among us. (*ibid.*, 185–188)

The 1965 massacre in Indonesia and the subsequent annihilation of the powerful PKI as a political force in Indonesian society undoubtedly had a major impact on the theory and practice of revolution in the Philippines. It was probably the lesson of the almost total vulnerability of the PKI in the face of massive state violence that motivated the CPP to stress the necessity of an armed component. Gealogo (2005) was probably correct when he wrote:

The Philippine appreciation of the “lessons” of the Indonesian experience of 1965, and the Indonesian Left’s openness to parliamentary struggle prior to the debacle, somehow cemented the idea of the inevitability of armed revolution as the only solution to the contradictions facing Philippine society.

One can also surmise that Asia’s most persistent revolutionary movement was able to be just that because of a strong emphasis on self-preservation and on the slow building up of strength which characterized its concept of a protracted people’s war (perhaps like Anwar’s poetic persona, it wanted to live a thousand years more). Too little is yet known about the multigenerational interactions between the Indonesian and Philippine radical movements, and much more research needs to be done in order to obtain a fuller and more complete picture. Nevertheless, the indisputably significant early influence the PKI had on the Philippine Communist movement makes the silence of PSR on the Indonesian massacre all the more unsettling. It would therefore be fitting to end with Sison’s answer to how he and his comrades felt about this annihilatory event and the fundamental impact the self-criticism of the PKI (1968) had on them:

Nalungkot at nagalit ako at ibang kasamang Pilipino sa malawakang masaker noong 1965 at sinuri namin kung bakit nangyari ito. Ang PKI Politburo mismo ang gumawa ng komprehensibo at malalimang pagpupuna sa sarili. Ito pa ang masasabing may mas malaking impluwensiya sa CPP kaysa sa anumang sinulat ni Aidit. . . . Ang pagpupuna sa sarili ng PKI Politburo ay umaayon sa mga aral mula kay Mao. Kinukumpirmahan lamang nito ang linya ni Mao na kung walang sariling hukbong bayan ang Partido at ng bayan, wala silang anuman. Kung gayon, matatag na binuo ng CPP ang NPA sa loob lamang ng tatlong buwang kasunod ng pagtatayo ng Partido. (Sison, email to the author, December 6, 2015)

I and other Filipino comrades were saddened and angered by the widespread massacre in 1965, and we looked into the causes behind it. The PKI Politburo itself had written a comprehensive and deep self-criticism. This had the greatest influence on the CPP, more than any work by Aidit. . . . The PKI’s self-criticism agreed with the teachings of Mao. It confirmed Mao’s line that if the

Party and the people had no people's army, they had nothing. This being the case, the CPP consolidated the formation of the NPA only three months after the founding of the Party.

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