

Terrorism and Revolution: The Struggle for National Democracy and Socialism in the Philippines

E. San Juan, Jr.



Members of the National People's Army of the Philippines
Photo by Froilan Gallardo

The "War on Terror" is undermining many years of human struggle for self-determination; human rights, civil liberties and democracy will be lost in the U.S. quest for peace and security. . . . The U.S. armed forces must leave the Philippines immediately. This presence and activity in the Philippines violates national sovereignty and territorial integrity, aggravates armed conflicts and gives rise to social and cultural degradation.

-- from the Final Declaration of the International
Ecumenical Conference on Terrorism in a
Globalized World, Sept. 21-26, 2002, Manila,
Philippines

A revolution is certainly the most authoritarian thing there is. . . . [It is] the act whereby one part of the population imposes its will upon the other part by means of rifles, bayonets and cannon -- authoritarian means if ever there were

any; and if the victorious party does not want to have fought in vain, it must maintain this rule by means of the terror which its arms inspire in the reactionaries.

-- Friedrich Engels, "On Authority" (1874)

From 1899 to 1903, in a period designated in some history texts as the Philippine "insurrection" or the "Filipino-American War," the United States military forces killed directly or indirectly 1,400,000 Filipinos and (up to 1916) Filipino Muslims (called Moros) in the campaign to destroy the first Philippine Republic and annex the islands as a "dependency." In one campaign, General Jacob Smith ordered his troops to "kill and burn," shoot everything over ten years old, "since it was no time to take prisoners, and [. . .] he was to make Samar a howling wilderness" (Schirmer 1971, 20). Howard Zinn notes that it took the U.S. seventy thousand troops -- four times as many as were landed in Cuba -- to crush the rebellion (1980, 306). Mark Twain succinctly characterized the end of the intervention: "Thirty thousand killed a million. It seems a pity that the historian let that get out; it is really a most embarrassing circumstance" (1992, 62). Gabriel Kolko described the "protracted conquest of the Philippines" as "an orgy of slaughter that evoked much congratulation and approval from the eminent journals and men of the era" (1976, 287; cited in San Juan 2000, 71).

In the bloody pacification drives against the Moros after the official close of the War, the United States government committed horrors of genocidal proportions. Two of the most unforgettable are the incident at Bud Dajo, Jolo, on March 9, 1906, where over 600 Moro men, women and children were massacred; and the other at Mt. Bagsak on June 13, 1913, where at least 2000 Moros were killed (other estimates put the figure at 3,000), with 340 Americans slain. The lawyer Moorfield Storey compared these atrocities to the lynching of black men: "the spirit which slaughters brown men in Jolo is the spirit which lynches black men in the South" (Storey 1906).

Recently, not far from the sites of those now ancient battles, in Basilan Island, a bandit gang of separatist Moros named the Abu Sayyaf became the object of an aggressive manhunt by a force of at least a thousand U.S. soldiers (of which 660 are Special Forces) and about 5,000 Filipino soldiers (Kristof 2002; Jalandoni 2002). The pretext or fig leaf for U.S. military intervention in the Philippines came in the form of "joint military exercise" to train local troops also engaged in fighting ongoing insurgencies, one led by the New People's Army (NPA; estimated to number at least 10,000 guerillas) and the other led by the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) (*San Francisco Chronicle* 2002). The 25,000 strong MILF, which has been engaged for 23 years in fighting for an independent Islamic state in the south, also operates in Basilan and carefully guards its territories against government attacks.

Composed of less than a hundred men, the Abu Sayyaf (which was holding hostage an American couple and a Filipino nurse) has been linked to Osama bin Laden and Al Qaeda on tenuous grounds. All the same, despite the Abu Sayyaf's existence as a local criminal problem and a product of a complex linkage of official corruption, military brutality, and ethnic impoverishment, the Philippines has been declared "the second front after Afghanistan" (International Peace Mission 2002). The Arroyo government has endorsed Bush's endless war on terrorism, with the Philippines soon to be declared by the

European community as a haven of terrorists, together with Pakistan, Indonesia and Malaysia.

The Indictment

With this background, I want to focus on the Colin Powell doctrine announced last August 9, 2002, designating the Communist Party of the Philippines/the New People's Army as a "Foreign Terrorist Organization"-- a double-headed monster, as it were. Powell does not separate the party and its military component. According to Powell: "The CPP, a Maoist group, was founded in 1969 with the aim of overthrowing the Philippine government through guerilla warfare. The CPP's military wing, the New People's Army, strongly opposes any US presence in the Philippines and has killed US citizens there. The group has also killed, injured, or kidnapped numerous Philippine citizens, including government officials." Now the term "terrorist activity" under the Immigration and Nationality Act, Section 212, refers to any activity which is unlawful under the laws of the place where it is committed, involving among others: the hijacking or sabotage of any conveyance; the seizing or detaining, and threatening to kill, injure, or continue to detain, another individual in order to compel a third person (including a governmental organization) to do or abstain from doing any act as an explicit or implicit condition for the release of the individual seized or detained; an assassination, the use of any biological agent, chemical agent, or nuclear weapon or device; and so on. What proof Powell has to substantiate his judgment, cannot be divulged -- such administrative records "contain intelligence information and are therefore classified." In fact, when Ramsey Clark argued before a court to have those records made public on behalf of similarly proscribed organizations, the court deferred to the wisdom of the executive branch and denied Clark's request. There is no way to publicly contest Powell's pronouncement.

Now, the U.S. government itself knows that no person or group connected with the CPP/NPA has engaged in any such activities labelled "terrorist" in the United States ever since the Philippines was annexed by force as a colonial territory in 1898. Jose Maria Sison, the NDFP Chief Political Consultant, commented the day after Powell's indictment: "Anyone who knows the principles and policies of the CPP is aware that it does not send its members or Red fighters of the NPA abroad to attack any US entity. The CPP has also repeatedly pointed out that Americans can enjoy the basic rights and freedoms of the foreign guest in the Philippines, unless they are deployed for combat operations against the revolutionary forces and people." (In connection with the exception, one may cite here the case of Col. Nick Rowe, a CIA agent in the Philippines, who was gunned down by suspected NPA agents -- more on this later.) Sison observes further that "the US is whipping up the line of preemptive first strike on the basis of mere suspicion at the level of the state relations with private organizations and individuals within or outside its jurisdiction and likewise at the level of state-to-state relations. . . . Under the guise of combating terrorism, the Bush administration is generating fascism in the US and the entire world. . . . The US is promoting wholesale state terrorism to suppress the growing social discontent and resurgent revolutionary resistance, amidst the rapidly worsening crisis of the US and world capitalist system" (2002).

Immediately thereafter, a mainstream Filipino journalist, Amando Doronila, editorialized on the US State Department's intervention:

In broadening the scope of the definition of global terrorism, the Powell Doctrine brings together the US enemies during the Cold War (the communists) and those held responsible for the September 11 attacks (the

terrorists linked to al-Qaida networks and Osama bin Laden) in the all-embracing demonology of "global terrorists." In one fell swoop, the United States reintroduced the political vocabulary of the Cold War and incorporated it in the struggle against a new form of borderless terrorism. Never mind if there is no evidence linking the CPP-NPA to the al-Qaeda network or even the Abu Sayyaf. The linkage of the old and new foes in a new rubric where the United States, as the lone superpower of the post-Cold War era, is imposing a new hegemony aligning the security policies of its allies behind hers. . . . Along the same vein, the Powell doctrine is a restriction of Philippine foreign policy, as well as its domestic policy, given that, first, the doctrine would staunch the growth of the parliamentary tendency in the Philippine communist movement; and secondly, it hampers the flexibility of the Philippine government in resuming peace talks with even the externally based communist leadership (2002).

What followed Powell's intervention in Philippine affairs demonstrates the magical power of the word "terrorism" and its almost fatalistic seductiveness: the Dutch government followed suit and categorized the CPP/NPA, including Sison, as "terrorists." Sison has been living for 14 years in the Netherlands as a political refugee under the protection of the Refugee Convention and the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. On October 28, 2002, the European Council toed the line of the Powell doctrine without due process, without any democratic discussion, just as the Powell doctrine was hatched in secrecy with the collusion of the Arroyo administration in the Philippines.

Neocolonial Mimicry

The U.S. government and the European Council have thus criminalized and repressed the revolutionary movement in the Philippines. Opposed to thousands of individuals and organizations in the Philippines calling for the resumption of peace talks, the Powell doctrine effectively dismantled the ongoing negotiations between the National Democratic Front (which includes the CPP/NPA) and the Philippine government (GRP)

which have been going on since 1990 under the sponsorship of Holland, Belgium and Norway, with the endorsement of the European Parliament in its 1997 and 1999 resolutions. By campaigning in Europe for the blacklisting of the CPP/NPA and Sison as terrorists, the Arroyo government has in effect placed the other side under duress, and laid down as a precondition the surrender of the revolutionary forces. In effect the GRP has nullified the documents it has signed with the NDF: the Hague Joint Declaration, the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees, and in particular the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and the International Humanitarian Law.¹

It appears that the U.S. and European states, by classifying the CPP/NPA and Sison as terrorists, have rejected any logical or semantic criteria, as well as international norms, for distinguishing between terrorists who employ violence with criminal intent and organizations or individuals waging armed struggle for openly declared political goals, especially those involving national liberation, social reforms, and political democratization. Ignoring universally applied criteria and norms, the GRP has thereby demonized political organizations and individuals critical of its policies and program.

The CPP/NPA has a long tradition of fighting against U.S. imperialist domination of the Philippines, together with its allies, the bureaucrats, landlords and compradors. It denounces the exploitative and oppressive system of neocolonialism and oligarchic rule in the Philippines. Its political objectives, strategies and principles are openly broadcast and disseminated; its publications, manifestoes, and analyses are accessible to the whole world. There is nothing secret in what they are struggling for: all their actions are geared to arousing the Filipino masses to exercise their freedoms and think critically, understand the causes of their oppression, and carry out organized and reasonably planned actions to change the iniquitous, unjust system. Following Marxist-Leninist principles, the stigmatized CPP/NPA have never arbitrarily engaged in kidnapping civilians, robbery, indiscriminate bombings or firing on civilians, and other random acts, unlike the Philippine military whose record of torture and murder of political activists and innocent civilians has been condemned by Amnesty International and other international bodies.

It is generally agreed that the Arroyo government's subsequent demand that the CPP/NPA lay down their arms and accept a "final peace agreement" drafted by militarist advisers is a violation of the Hague Joint Declaration signed by both parties on September 1, 1992. The charge of "state terrorism" committed by the GRP, its atrocities and depredations, its gross violations of human rights on a wide scale, appears to preclude any quick return to the negotiating table. It signals a resumption of decades-long GRP policy (beginning with the Roxas administration in 1946) of an all-out war against its citizens, an unconscionable military solution to deep-rooted structural problems of society, and unconcealed contempt at the profound grievances and persistent suffering of millions of Filipinos.

International Consensus

Before reviewing some ideas on the revolutionary application of force in the Marxist tradition in which I want to reinscribe the CPP/NPA predicament, let me just call your attention to the fact that the United Nations passed a major resolution on the matter of international terrorism in December 1987. The UN condemned this phenomenon and called on all nations to act in order to prevent it. Except for Honduras, which abstained, 153 countries approved the resolution against the objections of two states: the U.S. and Israel. Why? Here is the passage that offended these two, as Chomsky (2001) underscores it: nothing in the present resolution could in any way prejudice the right to self-determination, freedom and independence, as derived from the Charter of the United Nations, of peoples forcibly deprived of that right . . . , particularly peoples under colonial and racist regimes and foreign occupation or other forms of colonial domination, nor . . . the right of these peoples to struggle to this end and to seek and receive support [in accordance with the Charter and other principles of international law]." Let me quote further from the Preamble and the conclusion of this historic UN document:

Terrorism originates from the statist system of structural violence and domination that denies the right of self-determination to peoples (e.g., in Namibia, Palestine, South Africa, the Western Sahara); that inflicts a gross and consistent pattern of violations of fundamental human rights upon its own citizens (e.g. in Chile, El Salvador, Guatemala, South Africa); or that perpetrates military aggression and overt or covert intervention directed

against the territorial integrity or political independence of other states (e.g, Afghanistan, Angola, Grenada, Lebanon, Libya, Mozambique, Nicaragua). . . .

The principles of the United Nations Charter -- if applied in all of their ramifications -- constitute an effective instrument for reshaping the actual policies of power and hegemony among sovereign states into those of mutual respect. Conversely, the real international terrorism is founded in the imposition of the will of the powerful states upon the weak by means of economic, political, cultural and military domination. We declare that the key to ending all forms of terrorism is the development of new relations among nations and peoples based on unflinching respect for the right to self-determination of peoples, and on a greater measure of economic, political and social equality on a world scale (1987).

Noam Chomsky reminds us that both the U.S. and Israel refused to accept those rights. When Nicaragua succeeded in having the US judged guilty by the World Court which ordered the US to end its international terrorist campaign and pay substantial reparations, the US State Department officially approved attacks on health clinics and agricultural cooperatives by the army of Contras that it organized and supported. For the U.S., the African National Congress was a terrorist organization, whereas South Africa was not a terrorist state like Cuba, Iraq, Iran, North Korea, and others. Aside from the literal meaning of terrorism as "the calculated use of violence or threat of violence to attain goals that are political, religious or ideological in nature" via intimidation, coercion or instilling fear, Chomsky notes a virtually universal propagandistic use of terrorism in its usage of referring "to terrorist acts committed by enemies against us or our allies. . . . Everyone 'condemns terrorism' in this sense of the term. Even the Nazis harshly condemned terrorism and carried out what they called 'counter-terrorism' against the terrorist partisans" (2001, 90). Such counter-terrorism includes the Greek and Indonesian massacres of communists and their suspected allies, as well as the genocidal war in East Timor and elsewhere.

In discussions over just and unjust war, a distinction is usually made between the war waged by the oppressed against the oppressor -- the "lawful struggle for justice," and for "liberation from colonialism and the threat of enslavement," as the Soviet philosopher F.N. Fedoseev has stated (1977, 73). However, the means or tactics used in this just war, and their relevance to the pursuit of the objectives, requires separate elucidation. E. J. Hobsbawm also urged that violence as a social phenomenon, like war, "exists only in the plural" and that "there are degrees of necessary or desirable violence within society" incomprehensible to liberals who believe that "all violence is worse than non-violence, other things being equal (which they are not)" (1973, 214).

Another construal of terrorism follows the model set up by the UK Prevention of Terrorism Act 1976, s.14. It defines terrorism as "the use of violence for political ends [including] any use of violence for the purpose of putting the public or any section of the public in fear." Roger Scruton observes that that definition confuses two ideas or purposes of violence, one to achieve political goals and the other to induce fear in the public for narrow interests or purposes. What seems primary is the application of random and arbitrary violence to create widespread fear and dismay. Scruton also cites Robespierre's famous defense of state terrorism: "They say that terrorism is the resort of despotic government. Is our government then like despotism? Yes, as the sword that flashes in the hand of the hero of liberty is like that with which the satellites of tyranny are armed. . . . The government of the Revolution is the despotism of liberty against tyranny" (Scruton 1982, 460).

If acts of terrorism are then justified by their results, we have a case of consequentialism, a species of utilitarianism. What are the consequences? The notion of "structural violence" -- the insidiously concealed inequalities within the seemingly peaceful institutions of the capitalist economic order -- is invoked in order to justify the response of violence on the part of those struggling for freedom against those who employ state-sanctioned violence to suppress the people. Here the crucial term is the meaning or nature of the violence as a means to an end. The issue of consequentialism leads us to the classic topic of inquiry, the relations of means to ends, around which the controversy over Marxist politics and ethics often gravitates.

From the Marxist Archive

Let us review what the Marxist tradition has to offer in its critique of terrorism. Both Marx and Engels rejected individualist terror in conceptualizing the process of revolutionary social transformation. They dismissed the early anarchist John Most as a half-educated charlatan and attacked Bakunin (see their Report of the Hague Congress of the International, July 1873). They condemned the terrorist actions of the Fenians (Engels himself believed that the bombs of the Irish dynamiters and the French anarchists were counterproductive), though in their attitude to the Russian Narodniki, they sympathized with them in their defense against the incredible atrocities and unheard-of despotism of the government agents. Studying the peculiarity of Russian conditions, Marx praised the assassins of Alexander II in 1881 as "sterling people," while Engels speculated in a letter to Vera Zasulich that Blanqui's conspiratorial fantasies might be appropriate for Russia at that time. Engels thought that "This way of struggle has been dictated to the Russian revolutionaries by dire necessity, by the action of their enemies. They are responsible to their people and to history for the means they apply," whereas for the anarchists who bombed London on January 24, 1885, for Engels, they harmed not only policemen and bourgeois but also workers, their wives and children -- such weapons were directed not against the real enemies but "against the public in general" (1978, 207). Engels always took into account the specifically differentiated historical conjuncture, the manifold economic and social forces surrounding the events, the "thickness" of circumstances. The rationale of any political act hinges on the nature of the ideological milieu rooted in determinate relations of production (Marx and Engels 1994). By 1894, Engels lamented that anarchist terrorism, "the time of the chosen people," had gone forever.

For his part, Lenin reaffirmed the need to calculate the value of force or violence in terms of 1) the time and place, and 2) the sentiments and attitudes of the masses. It was philistine to reject violence in the abstract. Both Lenin and Trotsky criticized the Socialist Revolutionaries for their indiscriminate use of terrorism even though the latter claimed that it coincided with the people's demands. Such "easy tactics" satisfied the intelligentsia and spread harmful illusions that the autocracy can easily be overthrown by assassinations. What is primary is patient and systematic organization, agitation and propaganda that constitute all-round political work among the masses. And what is above all fundamental is the grasp of the totality of social and political forces in a revolutionary situation with its dialectical mediations.

A few quotes from Lenin would convey the approach used by the Filipino revolutionary forces toward the use of violence as a means of self-defense and protection of popular democratic gains in certain liberated zones and elsewhere.

Socialist revolution is always conceived as a series of actions by the masses for democratic change. Lenin always emphasized the imperative of mass mobilization, political education of the masses, and acting in concert with the masses in the process of

organizing the revolutionary workers' party -- the chief task that requires economizing one's forces by deliberate planning:

. . . the Socialist Revolutionaries, by including terrorism in their program and advocating it in its present-day form as a means of political struggle, are thereby doing the most serious harm to the movement, destroying the indissoluble ties between socialist work and the mass of the revolutionary class. . . ; that in practice the terrorism of the Socialist Revolutionaries is nothing else than *single combat*, a method that has been wholly condemned by the experience of history. . . . Among the masses of the Russian workers this advocacy simply sows harmful illusions, such as the idea that terrorism "compels people to think politically, even against their will," or that "more effectively than months of verbal propaganda it is capable of changing the views . . . of thousands of people. . . ." These harmful illusions can only bring about early disappointment and weaken the work of preparing the masses for the onslaught upon the autocracy (1978, 209-210).

Uncompromisingly, Lenin criticized the revolutionary adventurism of those who would resort to terrorism as a means of either political mobilization or winning battles against the bourgeoisie. Lenin pointedly asserted that "*without* the working people all bombs are powerless, patently powerless" in replacing the State power of the bourgeoisie: ". . . we know from the past and see in the present that *only* new forms of the mass movement or the awakening of new sections of the masses to independent struggle really rouses a spirit of struggle and courage *in all*. Single combat however, inasmuch as it remains *single combat* waged by the Balmashovs, has the immediate effect of simply creating a short-lived sensation, while indirectly it even leads to apathy and passive waiting for the next *bout*" (1987, 213).

What Lenin demands is a kind of mass heroism, not individual exhibitionism, no matter how self-sacrificing such individual heroes were. Lenin writes on the eve of the 1905 insurrection: "Now, however, when demonstrations develop into acts of open resistance to the government . . . the old terrorism ceases to be an exceptionally daring method of struggle. . . . Heroism has now come out into the open; the true heroes of our time are now the revolutionaries who lead the popular masses, which are rising against their oppressors. . . . The terrorism of the great French revolution . . . began on July 14, 1789, with the storming of the Bastille. Its great strength was the strength of the revolutionary movement of the people" (1987, 215). In formulating the tactical platform for the Unity Congress of the Social Democratic Party, Lenin continued to stress the need to always act in accordance with the interests of the people, not necessarily tailing behind the average conformist view but exercising responsible leadership, learning from the people but also teaching them. This is epitomized by this passage: "that fighting guerilla operations must be conducted under the control of the party and, furthermore, in such a way as to prevent the forces of the proletariat from being frittered away and to ensure that the state of the working class movement and the mood of the broad masses of the given locality are taken into account" (1978, 216).

Hobsbawm recounts how Lenin, in 1916, expressed reservations to the secretary of the Austrian social democrats who assassinated the Austrian prime minister as a gesture of protest against the war. Lenin wondered why he did not use his position to take the less dramatic step of circulating an anti-war appeal -- a boring but effective non-violent action, which was preferable to a romantic but ineffective one. Hobsbawm notes that this did not stop Lenin from recommending armed insurrection when necessary: "Rational

revolutionaries have always measured violence entirely by its purpose and likely achievement" (1973, 214).

Trotsky's Intervention

Trotsky applied a historical materialist optic to the spectacle of terrorism. He analyzed the peculiar Russian form of terrorism as a method intelligible in a time when the "bureaucratic hierarchy of absolutism" could only evoke its own mirror-image. He believed that the coercive technological apparatus of the Czarist state had lagged behind the economic condition of society; conversely, the intelligentsia "was spiritually revolutionized before the economic development of the country could give birth to revolutionary classes on which it could have counted for support" (1978, 217). Trotsky, it seems, ignored the proximity of the Socialist Revolutionaries to the peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie. Trotsky distinguished Marxists as "theoreticians of the mass struggle" from the anarchists, "ideologists of terror," who capitalized on personal heroism and the "hermetic secrecy" of conspiracy, thus psychologically and absolutely excluding "agitation and organization among the masses." For Trotsky, the terrorist could only see two forces in the political field: the government and his own organization. This field was a Manichean construct which vacated any revolutionary rationale for the class struggle: "Conceived in the absence of a revolutionary class, born as a consequence of lack of faith in the revolutionary masses, terrorism can best support its own existence only by exploiting the weakness and disorganized state of the masses by belittling their achievements and magnifying their defeats" (1978, 218-19).

Trotsky concentrated on the character of the social struggle whose "ways and means" are dependent on the analysis of the ruling social order. Such ways and means cannot simply be mechanical -- murder, explosions, etc. -- without any social or political resonance. While a minor strike can produce tremendous social consequences (such as strengthening trade unions, workers' confidence, etc.), the murder of a factory owner does not eliminate the private ownership of factories but only results in police action, in fact more brutal and shameless repression, and disillusionment and apathy of the workers. Everything depends on the concrete political circumstances: "The existence of the capitalist state does not depend on its ministers and cannot be destroyed with them. The classes which it serves can always find new people; the mechanism will remain whole and will continue to function." (Recall the assassination of McKinley who justified the violent annexation of the Philippines; the successors continued the policy of brutalizing their enemies.) Trotsky asked in light of the goal of radical social transformation: if one can achieve the revolutionary goal by shooting the enemy, what need is there for class organization, self-education, for a disciplined militant party, for meetings, mass agitation when it is easy to intimidate high officials with a few individuals throwing bombs here and there?

Like Marx and Engels, Trotsky also took into account individual sentiments and responses. There is a dialectic of individual or personal anger and desire for revenge and the movement of the masses whenever repression and government atrocities reach a certain level beyond tolerance. Trotsky invented a social imaginary which, embedded in Russian popular memory and populist tradition, dialectically reconciled individual motivation with organized collective rationality that approximated some realization of justice or fairness:

The reason why individual terrorism is, in our view, not permissible is precisely because it lowers the political consciousness of the masses,

causes them to acquiesce in their own lack of strength, and directs their gaze and hopes to a great avenger and liberator who may come one day to do their work for them. . . .

Whatever moral eunuchs and pharisees may say, the feeling of revenge has its right. The working class has greater moral probity because it does not look with dull indifference at what is happening in this, the best of all worlds [unlike the hypocritical bourgeoisie who moralize about the value of individual life while exploiting them or pushing them to war]. The proletariat's unsatisfied feeling of revenge should not be extinguished; on the contrary, it should be aroused again and again; it should be deepened and directed against genuine examples of every kind of wrong and human baseness. This is the task of the Social Democrat. If we rise against terrorist acts, it is only because individual revenge does not satisfy us. The account that we must settle with the capitalist status quo is too great to present to an official calling himself a minister. We must learn to see the monstrous evidence of the class structure in all crimes against the individual, in every attempt to maim or stifle a human being, body and soul, so that we may direct all our strength toward a collective struggle against this class structure. This, then, is the method by which the burning desire for revenge can achieve its greatest moral satisfaction (1978, 222-23).

In a pamphlet on *Marxism versus Neo-Anarchist Terrorism*, George Novack of the Socialist Workers Party reiterates the Marxist repudiation of terrorist adventurism as antithetical to the primacy of mass actions, the opposite of "reliance upon the independent and revolutionary organization and activity of the working masses which is the essence of Marxist politics" (1970, 12). He condemns terrorism as "petty bourgeois liberalism temporarily gone berserk," and urges genuine revolutionists "to learn how to release the creative energy and revolutionary potential of the masses" to carry out a revolutionary program of mobilizing tens of thousands against U.S. imperialism. Novack recapitulates the classic Marxist thesis against terrorism removed from the mass revolutionary process led by an organized, class-conscious political party.

Grassroots Justice

Within this framework, I would now like to examine a key incident that can articulate the Marxist principle of revolutionary mass action as the antithesis to the essentially anarchist/individualist version of terrorism condemned by the United Nations.

In regular press releases, the GRP states that it terminated peace negotiations for the reason that the New People's Army, a member of the NDF, killed a government official, a member of Congress, Col. Rodolfo Aguinaldo, one of the military officials of the Marcos dictatorship named by many political prisoners as the most notorious human-rights violators of that regime. Since 1975, he was listed by Amnesty International as one of the leading torturers -- he not only personally supervised the torture of well-known intellectuals and dissidents from all sectors, but also participated in the abduction and summary execution of suspected fighters in the NPA. Even within military circles, Aguinaldo was considered to be extraordinarily brutal: he would throw out suspects from helicopters, and sexually abused female captives.

The NPA guerillas of the Fortunato Camus Command rendered this verdict on June 13, 2001: "Sa kanyang mga krimen laban sa mamamayan at sa rebolusyon, marapat lamang na igawad kay Co. Rodolfo Aguinaldo ang parusang kamatayan." ("Owing to his crimes against the citizens and against the revolution, it is only just that we impose the punishment of death on Col. Rodolfo Aguinaldo." My translation.) In a press release in the NDF Website of June 14, 2001, NDF Chairperson Luis Jalandoni characterized the ambush-slaying of Col. Aguinaldo as "just punishment." He congratulated the NPA for successfully carrying out the demands for justice of the relatives and survivors of Aguinaldo's murderous tenure as a member of the corrupt Philippine Constabulary and the military intelligence agency. So far, not one of the numerous officials who committed unspeakable atrocities has been punished in court after the downfall of the Marcos regime. What is truly scandalous, if a humdrum fact, is that the government has been historically unable to punish or stop military violators of human rights and international humanitarian law. By failing to do so, it has rehabilitated and protected these criminal officials, even to the point of allowing them to run for office and use the Philippine Congress as a sanctuary to continue their activities as human rights violators, economic plunderers and coup-plotters. I quote Jalandoni:

Aguinaldo was a legitimate target for revolutionary justice. Despite his pretensions to being a civilian government official, he remained active in the military. He had extensive blood debts to the people of the Philippines and he manipulated the system to create an immunity for himself. His punishment comes at an opportune time since we are discussing the implementation of the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law [one of the documents signed by the NDF and GRP]. We extend our heartfelt congratulations to the Fortunato Camus Command of the New People's Army for successfully dealing with the armed and dangerous criminal Aguinaldo. And we assure the people of the Philippines that the implementation of justice and the establishment of mechanisms for the protection of the people's human rights are a priority for us in this peace negotiations.

It is clear that Jalandoni's explanation for the application of "revolutionary justice" rests on the following grounds: 1) Aguinaldo was an armed and dangerous criminal, 2) he was a military combatant still, despite his civilian position, and 3) he had "blood debts to the people." To my knowledge, this is the first time the NPA has executed a military official who was also an elected congressman -- others who have been similarly punished were either renegades or minor provincial officials of which there have been no public announcement like this one. There may seem to be an invocation of bourgeois moralism here when Jalandoni ascribes "blood debts to the people." But I think that is conceived within the humanitarian law of prohibiting torture of civilians. Of course the program of the Communist Party of the Philippines (of which the NPA is the military arm) envisions a transitional society where genuine national independence is achieved and where a more democratic order insures justice for ordinary citizens, including the elimination of barbaric abuses such as those committed by Aguinaldo. Moreover, the Marcos regime and its military instruments, like Aguinaldo, were considered agents of imperialism, betrayers of national sovereignty and even the liberal norms of justice; hence the standard of justice invokes a quasi-liberal Kantian ideal of respecting humans as ends in themselves without being blind to their class position. Nonetheless, this justice is not completely premised on that abstract norm, because it also assumes a precise historical situation. That situation involves the oppressed masses -- persons victimized by a neocolonial structure of which Aguinaldo's office was an important instrumentality.

Unlike the liberal bourgeois view, revolutionary justice -- in Jalandoni's construal -- does not consider Aguinaldo as simply a pure subject of law, but a person embedded within concrete, determinate circumstances. Moral or ethical acts cannot be understood, in the Marxist perspective, as independent of such valorized historical circumstances. We cannot appeal to abstract notions of right in a Kingdom of Ends. What is key to this socialist insurgency is a concrete and historical aim, the destruction of the foundations of class oppression, neocolonial subordination, and unjust social institutions, and the realization of a national democratic order with the overthrow of the neocolonial comprador-landlord system. In this process of constructing a new society, we find -- to use Sartre's terminology -- "a concrete play of negations and affirmations." I quote Sartre's concept of dialectics written in the context of his response to Trotsky's *Their Morals and Ours*:

One forges the destructive instrument by making it destroy. But precisely by giving the mass, so that it may destroy, that discipline, that cohesion, that self-denial, that self-confidence and that understanding that makes of it the most formidable destructive instrument, one prepares it by this very fact for its positive role which is to become by itself the Kingdom of Ends; for the destructive instrument and the positive end are one and the same thing. Thus it is the means, at present, which makes concrete the end, which gives it, in some sense, body and individuality, or, if one prefers, it is within the means (the instrument) that one finds the end (preparation of the consciousness of the masses of the socialist society). (quoted in Lukes 1987, 128)

In this dialectical interpretation of means and ends, the concrete goal of a society is the elimination of class oppression and injustice as the whole (the future already contained in the present) acts on the part, on singular events, on the present situation. The whole or totality of history is an ideal but it does not necessarily dictate a necessary future -- the future depends on what we do at present to realize it. In another formulation suggested by James Hansen: "The revolutionary manifests the latent necessities of the past-present," and through a unity of theory and practice acts "in the present through what has been given in the past in order to explode the present for the future" (1977, 108).

Lest this strike one as a mystification, I think the idea is simple: as Marx said, communists only carry out to fulfillment what is already contained in what is happening, in other words, the actuality of the revolutionary process fuses theory and practice, consciousness and action, motive and deed. And though there might be ambiguity and contingency in envisaging that future, the goal is always concrete and infused with values since it is always dialectically linked to the rational choices we make in opting for revolutionary violence to counter counter-revolutionary resistance to change. The popular masses must be involved in these choices, as has been done whenever the NPA carries out a serious action as the punishment of well-known torturers. As Merleau Ponty wrote in *Humanism and Terror*: Marxism must aim at "extrapolating, specifying and redirecting the spontaneous *praxis* of the proletariat along its proper path" (1947, 127). This accords with Lenin's and Mao's injunction to always situate the political action within the "mass line," neither tailing behind nor leading too far ahead in solitary elitist fashion.

Neither Subjectivist nor Objectivist

I think that Jalandoni applies a broad Marxist standard that Lenin and Trotsky have outlined. It does not privilege a prefigured future of socialism or national democracy that

embodies ideal criteria of judgment analogous to the Kantian categorical imperative; rather, it assumes the moral sentiments and feelings of citizens living in a class society, oppressed workers and peasants whose thinking and attitudes are products of class society and necessarily incorporating the features of class society. After all, the revolution itself is a product of class society, though its project is to cancel or negate the foundations of that society -- to release potential forces of transformation that are being repressed.

The philosopher John Dewey agreed in part with Trotsky's consequentialism. Dewey held that "the end [not the intention or subjective will] in the sense of consequences provides the only basis for moral ideas and action, and therefore provides the only justification that can be found for the means employed" (1938, 52). This accords with the pragmatic rejection of deontological Kantian ethics. But Dewey distinguished between an end-in-view and actual objective consequences that will calculate and judge the nature of the instrumentalities employed (1969, 53). All means need to be carefully examined without preconceptions to determine whether the end -- the liberation of the masses from class oppression and exploitation -- would be promoted and attained. Nothing is prejudged; correction can be made in mid-stream. Means of whatever kind cannot be justified *a priori* by the end-in-view; they cannot be arbitrarily chosen nor validated by an abstract law of history, the law of social development or the Hegelian Reason. Every means would be weighed and judged on the basis of the consequences (in terms of mobilizing the masses for critical consciousness and collective action) they are likely to produce; the question is how objective the grounds are for judgement. I would agree with Dewey that the class struggle in the abstract alone does not specify the particular ways in which it is to be carried out, and that class struggle as the law of historical chance "makes all moral questions, that is, all questions of the end to be finally attained, meaningless (Lukes 1985, 122). That is the reason that organic intellectuals are needed.

Third World Perspective

In the sixties, the work of Frantz Fanon and Che Guevarra brought into the foreground the question of the use of violence in the world-wide struggle against Western imperialism in general, and US military aggression in particular. Eduardo Mondlane, president of the Frente de Liberacion Mozambique, expressed the consensus that violence cannot be made intelligible by itself but only in its embeddedness in the historical process. Violence in many parts of the world, including the U.S., is a way of life, Mondlane observed. Violence is used to control and exploit people, but the question before the people is "what kind of violence will enable us to be free. Violence does not solve the problems of the world, but it is often a necessary precondition for solutions to be possible" (1968, 38). Like Hobsbawm, Mondlane speculates on different kinds of violence, and its function as a "necessary precondition" since he considers its presence as a constituent element of a society divided into oppressed and oppressor to be an ingredient of a conflicted situation, where things are definitely not equal.

The thinking of Filipino revolutionaries reflects the same imperative of trying to grasp the total situation in the light of the direction of the complicated revolutionary process. From the point of view of Jose Maria Sison, the founding chairman of the Communist Party of the Philippines, and currently branded as a "terrorist" by the Powell doctrine, the use of revolutionary violence is legitimate from a historical perspective. In any exploitative society, the state is used by the dominant exploiting class to coerce other classes into submission. In the history of civilization, the dominant class always unleashes counterrevolutionary violence against the newly rising progressive class and the people. In the case of the Philippines, Sison writes, the reactionary neocolonial state

"would rather use counterrevolutionary violence than undertake basic reforms to meet the basic revolutionary demands of the people. A state that violently reacts to the revolutionary demands of the people is ripe for overthrow by armed revolution" (1993, 2). Again, this is traditional Marxist lesson.

In his role as witness in the McCarthy trials of the U.S. Communist Party in the fifties, the philosopher John Somerville rehearsed again and again the basic principle of the dialectics of a revolutionary situation, as Marx, Engels and Lenin conceived it: revolutionary violence acquired legitimacy when the existing bourgeois state was "unwilling or unable to carry out the will of the majority in vital matters," and where an armed revolution "had the support of the majority and represented the will of the majority" (2000, 26). Counter-revolutionary violence comes from the resistance of the minority (the ruling elite) "opposed to some radical change which represents the will of the majority, and that that resistance is what precipitates the violence" (2000, 58). Against counter-revolutionary violence, the NPA mounts self-defensive measures, such as the punishment of Aguinaldo, or the assassination of imperialist advisers to the reactionary state.

Sison located the role of revolutionary violence as part of the Communist Party's strategy of "protracted people's war made possible by the chronic crisis of the semicolonial and semifeudal system" which allows the establishment of revolutionary organs of political power in the countryside. This is part of a two-stage struggle from national-democratic to a socialist one, given the actual class composition of the revolutionary forces -- a peasantry and petty bourgeois stratum led by the Filipino working class and its advanced elements in the party. In addition, Sison counterposes the strategy of people's war (derived and modified from Mao Zedong) to the U.S. imperialism's "low-intensity war" that combined frontal military campaigns with the terrorism of special operations teams, paramilitary forces, death squads, armed religious cults, renegades and splittists -- all of which we are familiar with in the Contras of Nicaragua, the death squads in El Salvador, Chile and other contested regions.

Sison's historicizing argument in the context of the world crisis of imperialism bears affinities with Georg Lukacs' conviction that the ultimate objective of socialist liberation is not an ideal abstracted and imposed on reality but is "a reality which has to be achieved," a goal immanent in the process of class struggle pursued by the class-conscious proletariat (1972, 3-4). Tactics can be grasped by class conscious activists while the measure of judging what tactics are required by the ultimate objective at moments of world crisis can be discerned by understanding and putting into practice "the world-historical mission of the proletariat's class struggle" (Lukes 1985, 115)

Deep Penetration and Its Aftermath

In 1996, Jalandoni made a public declaration asserting the "status of belligerency" in which the NDF and its members vowed to adhere to Geneva Conventions on the conduct of civil war. This obligates both parties in the war to "protect the civilian population and the combatants *hors de combat*. The combatants captured from either side must also be assured of their rights as prisoners of war and may become the subjects of negotiations for the exchange of prisoners of war" (Jalandoni 1996). This is the juncture where we might contextualize the killing of the American CIA agent Col. Nick Rowe on April 21, 1989.

I am not aware of the NPA or CPP acknowledging that they had a hand in this incident, but two persons -- Donato Continente and Juanito Itaas -- have been imprisoned now for several years, virtually charged with the deed without due process. Who is Col. Rowe? According to James Neilson's article in the *U.S. Veteran News and Report*, "A highly decorated Green Beret and Vietnam veteran who survived five years of captivity in a Viet Cong prison camp, Rowe was chief of the army division of the Joint U.S. Military Advisory Group (JUSMAG) since 1987 and was providing counter-insurgency training for the Philippine military. In this capacity, he worked closely with the CIA, and was involved in its nearly decade-old program to penetrate the NPA and its parent communist party in conjunction with Philippine's own intelligence organizations." Before he was killed by unknown assailants, according to the cited article, Col. Rowe had already warned the U.S. State Department that he was targeted to be hit by the enemy; however, the Defense Intelligence Agency did not do anything because they did not want Rowe, the control officer and trainer of agents, to withdraw any of the agents they had infiltrated into the NPA, who was relaying information about "possible growing Cuban involvement with the NPA." Neilson writes: "Six months before Rowe's murder, the CIA had learned that Cuban advisors appeared to be assisting the NPA in the South-Central Luzon province, one of the two provinces where the NPA was focusing on ferreting out CIA agents within its ranks." It appears that Col. Rowe died as a combatant in the war against what the U.S. called "terrorists," whether it was the NPA or some other group.

Two years ago, the NDF had taken two prisoners of war, a police chief inspector and a Philippine Army intelligence officer, who were under the custody of the New People Army for a period of time (see NDF Press Statement of 17 May 2000). The NDF was trying to negotiate with the Estrada administration for their release, but in the attempt of the government to rescue them, one was killed, and the other was later released. Why Col. Rowe was killed or executed, and not captured -- assuming the NPA was involved -- has not yet been clarified. Given the state of belligerency existing between the government allied with the U.S. and the revolutionary forces, Col. Rowe would properly be considered a casualty of war, not a victim of terrorism.

After the Powell declaration, there was some speculation that Sison might be kidnapped and brought to the United States for trial in the slaying of Col. Rowe, just like those captured Taliban soldiers and Al Qaeda followers now interred in the Guantanamo Bay prison. Or he might be summarily executed by agents of the U.S. and the GRP. We need to mention here that both Sison and Jalandoni have denounced Powell's stigmatization. Sison made the following response, part of which reads:

US imperialism is the biggest terrorist force that has ever afflicted the Filipino people. And yet it has all the malice and temerity to misrepresent as terrorist every revolutionary force that arouses, organizes and mobilizes the Filipino people in a resolute struggle for national liberation and democracy against US imperialism, domestic feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism. . . . Anyone who knows the principles and policies of the CPP is aware that it does not send its members or Red fighters of the NPA abroad to attack any US entity. The CPP has also repeatedly pointed out that Americans can enjoy the basic rights and freedoms of the foreign guest in the Philippines, unless they are deployed for combat operations against the revolutionary forces and people. (2002)

In this connection, it is obvious that Rowe was not a tourist or guest on a business errand in the Philippines.

Jalandoni for his part refuted Powell's declaration by stating that both the CPP and NPA, as member organizations of the NDFP, are guided by their own codes of discipline, that they uphold human rights and humanitarian law in conformity with the NDFP National Council Declaration of Undertaking to Apply the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and Protocol I of 1977. He poses the contradiction sharply:

Since their respective founding days in 1968 and 1969, the CPP and NPA have been dedicated to uphold, defend and advance the national and democratic rights and interests of the people. In this connection, as a matter of revolutionary principle and practice, they are necessarily against terrorism. It is of decisive importance that they maintain and develop the participation and support of the people in the revolution and that they use their limited weapons judiciously and precisely against the enemies of the people. In stark contrast to the CPP, NPA and other revolutionary forces, the GRP and all its armed forces like the AFP, PNP, CAFGU, deputized private armies and death squads commit gross human rights violations on a wide scale against the people, especially the workers and peasants. The records of Amnesty International and other human rights organizations show such rampant human rights violations under the auspices of state terrorism, overshadowing the claims of the GRP against the CPP and NPA (2002).

Finally, I want to mention that Jalandoni has also condemned the Abu Sayyaf in a statement released last May 26, 2000. Jalandoni traced the genealogy of the Abu Sayyaf as a creation of the GRP military to split the Moro National Liberation Front in 1991. From 1995 the group "has turned into a Frankenstein's monster, engaging in hostage-taking for ransom and attacking civilian communities. . . . Both the MILF (Moro Islamic Liberation Front) and the NDFFP have condemned the hostage-taking by the Abu Sayyaf and its other acts endangering the lives of civilians." In sum, such terrorism that victimizes ordinary civilians, unable to distinguish between the oppressor and the oppressed, is anathema to Marxist revolutionaries fighting imperialism and all forms of exploitation.²

Notes

¹ Groups in the Philippines like the Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption, BAYAN, and others have criticized the Arroyo government for arbitrarily labelling individuals and groups opposed to her policies as "terrorists" without due process or any serious public investigation. Such arbitrary lumping of the NDF, the CPP/NPA (together with the political adviser Jose Maria Sison) with the Abu Sayyaf and Osama bin Laden, or with criminals in the government police and military, reflects a mindless aping of the US and the European states in their unilateral proclamations. It used to be that the stigmatizing brand of "communists" was applied to people sowing fear to intimidate civilians to extract ransom or frighten law-enforcers. Who has benefitted from this but criminals engaged in drug trafficking, kidnapping, money laundering, extortion, not to mention the torturers and human-rights violators who are still employed in government and the military. The terror unleashed by powerful drug and crime syndicates joined by the official state terror inflicted by the military and police can only drive home the lesson that

the masses of people have to defend themselves with their own army, such as the New People's Army or the Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

² For a recent statement of the position of the Communist Party of the Philippines on the current situation, see "Peace does not come from the silencing of guns" (February 2, 2005) <<http://home.wanadoo.nl/ndf/statements/2005/statement0010.html>>.

References

Chomsky, Noam. 2001. *9/11*. New York: Seven Stories Press.

Dewey, John. 1969. "Means and Ends." In *Their Morals and Ours: Marxist versus Liberal Views on Morality*. New York: Merit Publishers.

Doronila, Amando. 2002. "Implications of the Powell Doctrine." *Philippine Journal Inquirer* (August 13).

Fedoseev, P.N. 1977. "The Conception of Just and Unjust War." In *Marxism, Revolution, and Peace*. Ed. Howard Parsons and John Somerville. Amsterdam, Netherlands: B.R. Gruner.

Hansen, James. 1977. "Subjectivism, Terrorism and Political Activism." In *Marxism, Revolution, and Peace*. Amsterdam, Netherlands: B.R. Gruner.

Hobsbawm, E. J. 1973. *Revolutionaries*. New York: New American Library.

International Peace Mission to Basilan, Philippines. 2002. *Basilan: The Next Afghanistan?* (March 23-27): 1-23.

Jalandoni, Luis. 1996. "NDF Asserts Status of Belligerency and Announces its Declaration of Undertaking to Apply the Geneva Conventions and Protocol I." Statement released August 5, 1996, by the NDF International Office in Utrecht, Holland.

----- . 2000. "On the Hostage-Taking by the Abu Sayyaf Group and on the Mindanao War in the Philippines." Statement released May 26, 2000, by the NDF International Office in Utrecht, Holland.

----- . 2002 "Press Statement: U.S.-R.P Military Exercises in Mindanao A Tripwire to a New Vietnam?" Distributed by NFDIP International Office, Utrecht, Holland.

----- . 2002. "Why the CPP and NPA Are Not Terrorist Organizations." Press Release, September 2002. National Democratic Front of the Philippines Negotiating Panel: <<http://www.defendsison.be/archive/pages/02/0209/020916-03.html020916-03.html>>.

Kolko, Gabriel. 1976. *Main Currents in Modern American History*. New York: Pantheon.

San Juan, Jr.

Kristof, Nicholas D. 2002. "Sleeping with the Terrorists." *The New York Times*, February 12: A23.

Lukacs, Georg. 1972. *Political Writings: 1919-1929*. London: New Left Books.

Lukes, Steven. 1987. *Marxism and Morality*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Marx, Karl and Friedrich Engels. 1994. "The Material Basis of Morality." In *Ethics*. Ed. Peter Singer. New York: Oxford University Press.

Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. 1947. *Humanisme et terreur*. Paris, France: Gallimard.

San Francisco Chronicle. 2002. "Editorial." Jan. 18.

Mondlane, Eduardo. 1968. "Violence: Not whether, but how much." In *Dialogue on Violence*. Ed. Robert Theobald. Indianapolis, Ind.: The Bobbs-Merrill Company.

Novack, George. 1970. *Marxism versus Neo-Anarchist Terrorism*. New York: Pathfinder Press.

San Juan, E. 2000. *After Postcolonialism: Remapping Philippines-United States Confrontations*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

Schirmer, D.B. 1971. "Mylai Was Not the First Time." *The New Republic*, April 24: 18-21.

Scruton, Roger. 1982. *A Dictionary of Political Thought*. New York: Hill & Wang.

Sison, Jose Maria. 2002. "Press Statement: Comment on US Designation of CPP and NPA as Foreign Terrorist Organizations." August 10, distributed by the NDFP office in Utrecht, Holland.

----. 1993. *On the Question of Revolutionary Violence*. Speech for the lectures on Crisis and Revoltion sponsored by the League of Filipino Students. Quezon City, Philippines. Typescript, 12 pages.

Somerville, John. 2000. *The Communist Trials and the American Tradition*. New York: International Publishers.

Storey, Moorfield. 1906. *The Moro Massacre*. Boston: Anti-Imperialist League.

Twain, Mark. 1992. "Thirty thousand killed a million." *Atlantic Monthly*, April, 52-56.

United Nations. 1987. *The Geneva Declaration on Terrorism*. UN General Assembly Doc. A/42/307, 29 May 1987, Annex: <<http://i-p-o.org/GDT.HTM>>.

Zinn, Howard. 1980. *A People's History of the United States*. New York: Harper Colophon.

San Juan, Jr.