Rebel Peripheries

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~Dedicated to the anarchists and abolitionists in the Philippines that we've met along the way, including those who have moved on or fallen out of touch

When anarchism (or any other idea for that matter) is brought into new contexts, it necessarily enters into dialogue with the histories and traditions of that new context. When Mao Zedong Thought was all the rage during the dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos Sr., this new idea was re-contextualized in the context of the history of revolutionary nationalism of the Katipunan, Andres Bonifacio, and the resistance to the American colonial State. Anarchism in the Philippines necessarily indigenizes itself into the Philippine context, something I've written about in the past on various libertarian elements in the Philippines.[1] My purpose here isn't to restate what I've already written on previously but to expand the re-contextualization of the potentiality of anarchism in rebel peripheries to a distinctly anti-anarchist project: that of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP). As a Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad says "Seek knowledge even in China," China being the furthest and most remote place in the ancient Arab imagination, urging that we ought to seek knowledge even from the most remote—or in this case, the strangest—of places.

The CPP, its armed wing the New People's Army (NPA), and its front the National Democratic Front (NDF) have been waging Maoist armed struggle in the Philippines since 1969. In doing so, it has created a number of rebel peripheries in the countryside that exist outside the control of the Philippine State—in the anarchy of the peripheries. However, the longstanding second communist rebellion in the Philippines has to be placed in the historical context of anarchic and rebel peripheries in the archipelago. Once we move past and sublate the experiences of the Maoists for the revolutionary project of anarchism, we can then move on understanding the insurrectionary project of *mamundok*-in-place.

To build up to this thesis of *mamundok*-in-place, I first start with a discussion of the anarchy of the peripheries, a condition by which State power cannot cohere and territorialize in the internal peripheries of a country. I touch here on the question of why Marxist guerrillas, rather than anarchists, are often found in anarchic peripheries. These anarchic peripheries act as refugia for political projects. Then I move to the second section on desertion and marronage which sees peoples and rebels move to peripheries out of the politics of escape and how this can transform into the politics of rebellion, as with the case of the maroons. I also discuss the notions of dragons and hydras in terms of organizational form as developed by Russell Maroon Shoatz. In the third section, I situate concepts of the politics of escape and the politics of rebellion in the Philippines with concepts such as *remontar* and *mamundok*. It is in this tradition that I contextualize the New Peoples Army and the communist insurgency. I move on to the fourth section to return to Shoatz's dragon and hydra analogies to apply these to the Philippine experience. This is necessary to make an anarchist appraisal of the second communist insurgency which feeds onto a broader political project of appraising Maoism and its use of rebel peripheries. I extend this discussion of Maoism in the fifth section to critique the Marxist project using Shoatz's analysis. Through this, I develop a notion of "post-Maoism" that learns from the mistakes and defeats in the Marxist and Maoist projects. I return to rebel peripheries in the sixth section in order to problematize rebel peripheries in the context of the revolutionary and insurrectionary project. Rebel peripheries are ultimately projects that suffer from problems of isolation and marginalization. This isolation clashes with the revolutionary project of wanting the whole world. In the seventh section and building upon these problems in the previous section, I unpack rebel peripheries to make sense of what aspects of rebel peripheries are pertinent for anarchists and revolutionaries today. It is here that we can begin to see the contours for the development of autonomous projects in the Twenty-First Century that learns from the deficiencies of rebel peripheries while also affirming the politics of care forwarded by the Black radical tradition. It is here that *mamundok*-in-place begins to make sense. In the penultimate section, I return again to the Philippines and the rebel peripheries of the Maoists to

[1] Simoun Magsalin, "The Libertarian Elements in the Philippine Archipelago," *Anarchist Studies*, October 2020, anarchiststudies.noblogs.org/article-the-libertarian-elements-in-the-philippine-archipelago.

make sense of what is being subverted. The contours of *mamundok*-in-place are outlined in precisely what is not being subverted and what could be subverted in its place: organized abandonment and proletarianization. In the final section, I further sketch the contours of what *mamundok*-in-place could be, understanding that lines of desertion are found everywhere and that the insurrectionary project can find its reality when we see the whole world is our mountain.

The Anarchy of the Peripheries

The "anarchy of the peripheries" is what I term as the condition of internal peripheries within countries, especially within the former Third World, where State power cannot fully cohere and territorialize.[1] I term "anarchic peripheries" as the internal peripheries that exhibit this condition. These anarchic peripheries are usually situated in boondocks, mountainous formations, and other difficult terrain. The people who live there have historically defied civilizational imposition and all that entails—corvée, taxes, slavery, colonialism, proletarianization, and all. The anarchy of the peripheries also exist as *refugia* by which those in the colony or civilization could desert to in avoiding civilizational imposition. "Refugium" (plural: "refugia") here refers to places of refuge that is isolated from changes outside it.

The specific anarchy that exists in the periphery are conditioned by geography and political power. State power coheres where it can territorialize its power over a population. This territorialization is geographic in the sense that States need accessibility and a settled population. Thus, where it is easy to settle, we also find States. As such, States usually cohere and territorialize in or by geographic features like plains, rivers, and valleys where historical settled populations are found. Where the State can travel and deploy its agents, there we can also find the State. The Andes mountains in Columbia and Ecuador are a clear exception because much of the population density of these countries are in the mountains where much of the population lives due to the favorable climate. In this sense, the favorable climate adheres to the general rule of accessibility of settlement—the exception that proves the rule.

Outside the core areas where State power is cohered and territorialized is the anarchic peripheries. These areas are conditioned by the anarchy of the peripheries, by their remoteness to State power as boondocks. The geography of these areas are mountainous and heavily forested. The difficulty to traverse these areas also makes it difficult for States to project their power these peripheries. Hence, the result is that these peripheries tend to be anarchic in character. The anarchy of peripheries usually exist in the former Third World, especially in regions where State power only cohered in core geographic features like lowlands and rivers.

In this sense, the anarchy of the peripheries is a *condition*, not a political project. Indeed, many peoples in the peripheries of States throughout history have their own polities that some may describe as hierarchical or proto-statist. These peripheries are anarchic in relation to State-administered core areas. Whatever statist institutions are built here simply cannot be compared to the coherence of State power in the urban, suburban, and immediate environs.[2]

The anarchy of the peripheries are also the refugia where guerrilla movements, especially those claiming to be Marxist-Leninist, are able to establish bulwarks and strongholds. Where rebels take hold in anarchic peripheries, I term these as "rebel peripheries." Ironically, these Marxist-Leninist rebel peripheries are marked by a "heretical thesis" that suggests that Marxist guerrillas survive and thrive precisely because of the condition of the anarchy of the peripheries, and that it is the Marxist-Leninists—not the anarchists—who are able to fully take advantage of this condition of anarchy. Guerrilla Marxists owe their existence to anarchy, yet in places where State power is weakest, anarchists are not to be found. That is to say, in the anarchy of the peripheries where there are armed guerrillas with statist projects (i.e. to take State power), we do not find intentional projects for anarchy. This double irony is what characterizes the vast majority of left-wing guerrilla movements, with the Zapatistas (EZLN) and the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) being the clear exceptions. And even if we look at those exceptions, both the Zapatistas and the PKK started out as Marxist guerrilla movements, with both eventually developing libertarian programs at varying points in their life. With the Zapatistas, their libertarian turn was quite early, before their first insurrection, while the PKK only adopted libertarian elements after Abdullah Öcalan's own libertarian turn.

[1] This coinage was made possible with dialogue with Ruth Kinna.

[2] Thank you to Herbert Docena for calling attention to the need to discuss this.

Why anarchists are not found in the anarchic peripheries is likely because anarchist armed struggle is largely urban in character under non-revolutionary conditions or widespread across vast distances in conditions of revolution and civil war. Marxist guerrillas move to peripheries in order to build Statist projects that prefigure a future socialist State. The anarchy of the periphery allows them to build proto-States and shadow governments. The State is, as Gustav Landauer reminds us, a social relationship, a way of relating to one another that can only be smashed through enacting different social relations.[3] These Marxists bring the State with them and build new ones in the anarchic peripheries, while anarchists are not wont to do the same.

But despite this, there may still be potential for anarchy as a project within the context of the anarchy of peripheries, especially when it comes to desertion.

[3] Gustav Landauer, "Weak Statesmen, Weaker People!" (The Anarchist Library, February 2017), theanarchistlibrary.org/library/gustav-landauer-weak-statesmen-weaker-people.

Desertion and Marronage

The anarchy of the peripheries are the refugia of those deserting or rebelling against the State. These anarchic peripheries become rebel peripheries when they are politicized, as in open rebellion against the State. Desertion of civilization is *infrapolitical*. James C. Scott coined "infrapolitics" as invisible politics, much like infrared is invisible to the naked eye.[1] For Scott, desertion from the military is infrapolitical compared to open mutiny.

In Southeast Asia, the most famous anarchic periphery is Zomia, a large highland in mainland Southeast Asia that spans several countries from Myanmar to China to Thailand. Zomia and its people are outlined in an "anarchist history" in James C. Scott's book, *The Art of Not Being Governed*.[2] In this vast periphery, vast disparate peoples evaded State power for generations, thus also escaping and resisting corvée, taxes, and colonialism. In this case, archaeology uses "pericolonialism" to refer to what I call as the anarchy of the periphery. It literally abbreviates the "periphery of colonialism." Pericolonialism is the effect of colonialism on the peripheries of the colonial project, showing how pericolonial peoples are also affected by colonialism (though not directly colonized), and can even react or resist colonialism.

We may think of rebel peripheries as the political act of deserting and rebelling against the State to form *de facto* autonomous communities, the visibly political form of the infrapolitical desertion. Without this politics of rebellion, desertion remains as the politics of escape. Indeed, this is how I conceptualize the term to think of Zapatista Chiapas or other Marxist guerrilla strongholds, but a more classical historical example would be that maroon communities across the Americas.

"Maroons" were those who escaped slavery (or their descendants) who built autonomous communities in the peripheries of colonial slavocracies. "Marronage" is their act of escaping slavery and building maroon communities autonomous from slavery and colonialism. This concept of marronage is something specific to the Black experience and the Black radical tradition. Marronage is the denial of the enslavement of Black people and its resulting fugitivity. The specific act of desertion in marronage is not merely that of deserting the colony, but of also escaping the diktats of commodification of the body through enslavement. Marronage is not merely desertion, but the "stealing oneself from bondage," an act of open rebellion just by daring to escape the plantation.[3] However, marronage and the politics of escape can often leave captivity for others in place.[4] This problem was well-recognized by maroons such as those in San Domingo (known today as Haiti), which did set up lines of desertion and escalated to the politics of rebellion through armed struggle against slavery.[5] During the Haitian revolution and after independence, the self-abolition of the enslaved resulted in the development of a class of free peasant maroons who lived largely free and autonomous from the machinations of the Haitian State. They formed maroon communities in the mountains of Haiti, where the plantation system (albeit without slavery) could not be reimposed by Haiti's new leaders.[6]

The Black revolutionary Russell Maroon Shoatz wrote a Black Marxist history of maroons and marronage in his seminal work "The Dragon and the Hydra."[7] In that work, Shoatz showed how various acts of marronage and maroon

[1] James C. Scott, *Two Cheers for Anarchism: Six Easy Pieces on Autonomy, Dignity, and Meaningful Work and Play*, Fourth printing, (Princeton Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2014), xx-xxi.

[2] James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*, Yale Agrarian Studies Series (New Haven London: Yale University Press, 2009).

[3] I thank Mooncake for this excellent phrasing and necessary correction. Kim from Dylan's class also raised this excellent point of correction.

[4] Thank you Hudda for this comment from my initial presentation at Dylan Rodríguez's class.

[5] C. L. R. James, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution*, 2. ed., rev (New York: Vintage Books, a Division of Random House, Inc, 1989).

[6] Johnhenry Gonzalez, *Maroon Nation: A History of Revolutionary Haiti*, Yale Agrarian Studies (New Haven (Conn.): Yale University Press, 2019).

[7] Russell Maroon Shoatz, "The Dragon and the Hydra: A Historical Study of Organizational Methods," *4strugglemag*, July 2010, theanarchistlibrary.org/library/russell-maroon-shoats-the-dragon-and-the-hydra.

communities not only escaped slavery, but resisted and attacked slavery from the peripheries. In San Domingo, as documented by CLR James, maroons attacked slavery by liberating people from bondage and instigating slave rebellions.[8] Shoatz contrasted two organizational forms: dragon and hydra, or "centralized and decentralized forces of change." Dragon-type organizations are large centralized apparatuses of resistance with a clear leader, while hydra-type organizations are several decentralized groups without overall leaders and largely operated under self-directed militancy.[9] As Shoatz suggests, rebel dragons can easily be slayed by much larger imperial dragons, either be literally destroyed or be co-opted to betray their rebel gains as in Haiti. However, rebel hydras are persistent and resilient. While some heads of the hydra can be encouraged by colonizers to be co-opted (in what he calls as "treaty maroons") or defeated, there are still many other hydra heads that resist co-optation or colonization. True enough, many of these maroon communities still survive today across the Americas, outlasting slavery and empires.

In this sense, we can think of rebel peripheries as a more general term to which marronage is specific to the Black experience. It is the evasion and desertion of the State where they become sites of not only *de facto* autonomy from States, but also sites from which States and their machinations can be assaulted from.

[8] James, *The Black Jacobins*.
[9] Shoatz, "The Dragon and the Hydra".

Remontar and *Mamundok*

The Philippines has a long history of pericolonialism and rebel peripheries. Desertion from the colony was termed as "*remontar*" in the Philippines. "*Remontar*" is Spanish for "re-mounted," as in "mountain," where "*remontar*" is an action of going up a slope, all calling to mind a return to the mountain.[1] In this sense, *remontar* is similar to marronage, albeit specific to the Philippine experience and with the notable absence of chattel slavery.

Indigenous peoples in the Philippines have long practiced *remontar* by leaving easily colonizable lowlands for uplands like in the Cordilleras and in the interior of islands like Mindoro, Panay, and Mindanao. This is the politics of escape.

Stephen Acabado's work on pericolonial archaeology of Ifugao sites argues that the ancestors of the Ifugao consciously chose to move to the interior highlands of the Cordilleras to escape colonialism.[2] The Ifugao also adopted wet-rice agriculture as a way of intensifying economic activity to support a large pericolonial population. One of the Ifugao people's achievements was the creation of a vast mountainous wet-rice terrace system—the Ifugao Rice Terraces—that was constructed without State power. The Ifugao also attacked the colonial system, not merely through raids that brought them into conflict with the colonial State, but also through economic warfare. The colonial State harshly enforced a tobacco monopoly in the country, but the Ifugao people subverted this monopoly by growing their own tobacco and selling it to lowlanders. In this way, we see how pericolonial people not only resisted colonization, but also subvert it economically. Notably, this subversion was coordinated without a polity we would recognize as an Ifugao State. Likely, their resistance to Spanish rule was largely self-directed, as the Ifugao did not have a stratified class society like in the colonial lowlands.

Some Indigenous groups in the Philippines are given the exonym "Remontado." Remontados were those who did *remontar*, who "fled from the bells" (of the town church) to live a life outside Spanish rule in the mountains, rejecting the colonial State and Christianization.[3] An American-era anthropologist noted that some "civilized" Filipinos like the Pangasinense had a tendency to flee to the mountains, to *remontar*, to escape the colony, given the proximity of Pangasinan to the mountains of Benguet. He also noted that the Guardia Civil periodically launched expeditions against the Remontados.[4] In the Commonwealth era of the American colonial period, Remontados in Rizal province were noted have been inclined to semi-nomadic life, but was forced to create permanent settlements to avoid their land from being grabbed by lowlander creoles.[5] One Remontado group, the Dumagat-Remontados, are found inland, despite their name implying some connection to the sea (root word "dagat"), suggesting a past of *remontar* where they left lowlands near the sea to go up to the mountains. (The Dumagat-Remontados are still threatened by the State today through the disastrous Kaliwa Dam plan. No to Kaliwa Dam!)

I suspect the vast majority of *remontar* in the Philippines will not have an explicit historical record as *remontar* in these cases are inherently *infrapolitical* and self-directed. Instead of small rebellions that leave their mark as footnote to history, why not simply just go up the mountain as the Remontados do to avoid those nasty *Kastila* colonizers? In this sense, *remontar* is infrapolitics and the politics of escape in the silent way people desert the lowland colonial zone for the freedom of the mountains. Contrary to Murray Bookchin who ruminated on the phrase "the city air makes

[1] I thank Kenneth Cardenas for bringing attention to this.

[2] Stephen B. Acabado, "The Archaeology of Pericolonialism: Responses of the 'Unconquered' to Spanish Conquest and Colonialism in Ifugao, Philippines," *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* 21, no. 1 (March 2017): 1–26, doi.org/10.1007/s10761-016-0342-9.

[3] Reynaldo Clemeña Ileto, *Pasyon and Revolution: Popular Movements in the Philippines, 1840–1910*, 3rd ed. (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1989), 185–86.

[4] Frederic Henry Sawyer, *The Inhabitants of the Philippines* (New York; London: Charles Scribner's Sons; Sampson Low, Marston and Company; Project Gutenburg, 1900), 29, 210, 296, 305, gutenberg.org/cache/epub/38081/pg38081-images.html.

[5] Generoso Maceda, "The Remontados of Rizal Province," *Philippine Journal of Science* 64, no. 3 (November 1937): 313–21, philjournalsci.dost.gov.ph/past-issues-1.

one free,"[6] it seems to be more the case in the Philippines that the mountain air makes one free. This irony is made stronger where according to one anthropological report published in 1937 (during the American colonial period), the Remontados of Rizal province were inclined towards democratic politics where they elect barrio presidents, vice presidents, councilors, secretaries, chief of police, and members of their police.[7] (Though perhaps Bookchin ought to be credited for recognizing that there is something liberating about mountain air that generates liberatory politics when he noted that the mountains of Greece provided fertile ground for early democratic politics or how the Green Mountains of Vermont informed democratic assemblies in his native Vermont.[8] Though, unfortunately, Bookchin never explored this insight in depth before he died.)

Elsewhere in the Philippines, various revolts against the Spanish colonial State built spaces of autonomy as more recognizable and intentional rebel peripheries, moving to the politics of rebellion. One notable event on the island of Bohol called the Dagohoy rebellion founded several barrios in the interior boondocks of the island to live autonomous of the colonial State for 85 years, conquered and co-opted only in 1829. With their base in the mountains of Inabangan and Talibon, Dagohoy and his followers lived full lives free from colonial burdens.[9] Their rebel periphery prefigured much of the Maoist strategy between "red areas" controlled by the Maoists and "white areas" still nominally under control by the State. During the rebellion, Inabangan and Talibon prefigured the red areas which acted as safe zones for subterfuge and occasional raids elsewhere on the island of Bohol, much like white areas today.

During the late Spanish period and the American colonial period, millenarian and apocalyptic movements went to the mountains where they could practice their faith and found utopian communities in peace, some of which were violently repressed by the Spanish colonial State like that of the Aritao Commune of Hermano Pule.[10] Many of these millenarian movements still exist today in the peripheries of the Philippines, their mountains functioning as their holy places and as refugia for indigenous religious practices.

During the Philippine Revolution, the mountains and boondocks offered safe havens for Katipunero guerrillas. Remontados gave support for Bonifacio's Katipunan.[11] The anarchic peripheries are then transformed into rebel peripheries. During the latter stages of the Philippine Revolution after the American invasion forces conquered Manila, the military government of the dictator Emilio Aguinaldo relocated to the mountains where General Antonio Luna planned a long-term guerrilla war using the mountains as their bulwark.[12] After the defeat of the nascent republic, Miguel Malvar continued a guerrilla war from the peripheries, striking at the American colonial State in his home province.[13] Later on, Macario Sakay proclaimed a rebel republic in Mt. San Cristobal and later Morong province (now Rizal province) where Remontados gave him support and refuge.

Quite notably in the Second World War, guerrillas of all strips created uncountable liberated barrios across the nation, free from the landlords, the State, and the Japanese Empire. Some of these rebel peripheries persisted in the post-war period during the Huk rebellion (the first communist insurgency).

In this sense, the red areas of the Communist Party of the Philippines today is best situated within this long history of *remontar* and rebel peripheries in the archipelago, from the Spanish colonial period to today. A common euphemism for joining the communist armed struggle is *mamundok* or going to the mountain, again, an act of *remontar*, of deserting the State for the liberty of the periphery. While, of course, the *purpose* of these Maoist rebel peripheries is the protracted people's war (PPW), the *effect* is a spiritual successor to previous traditions of *remontar* in the country. Indeed, *mamundok* is a modernization, politicization, and continuation of *remontar*. In this sense, *mamundok* is the political form of the infrapolitical *remontar*.

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[6] E.g. Murray Bookchin, *The Limits of the City*, 2nd ed. (New York, Evanston, San Francisco, London: Harper & Row, 1974).

[7] Maceda, "The Remontados of Rizal Province," 315. Maceda here uses colonized language when he defines "police chief" and "members of police." Maceda is likely a colonized creole who used concepts in his colonized society to refer to self-managed Indigenous ways of keeping people safe. I doubt these Remontado "police" were carceral like that of the colony's police force, but rather just the people tasked and mandated to ensure the Remontado barrio's safety, especially from creole landgrabbers.

[8] Personal corresopondence with Brian Tokar.

[9] Gregorio F. Zaide, *Dagohoy: Champion of Filipino Freedom* (Manila: Enriquez, Aldaya & Co., 1941), 11–18.

[10] Ileto, *Pasyon and Revolution*, 29–73.

[11] Ileto, ibid., 185–86.

[12] This guerrilla strategy never took place as the dictator Aguinaldo conspired against and eventually ordered the murder of General Luna.

[13] Ileto, *Pasyon and Revolution*, 163.

Furthermore, some anecdotal evidence suggests that Indigenous peoples and peasant creoles already living on the periphery often join the NPA either as full guerrillas or as "part-timers."[14] This suggests that these people living on peripheries are conscious of preserving the autonomy of their peripheries and see the CPP-NPA as a means of preserving their autonomy. In this sense, the anarchy of the periphery and its peoples dovetails with the political-military strategy of the Party.

Indeed, when it comes to the anarchy of the peripheries, the CPP is quite explicit in their strategy of basing their armed struggle specifically in the mountains. They noted that the geography and populations of the internal peripheries are ideal for their armed struggle.

> The mountainous character of the country countervails its archipelagic character from the very start. A mountainous terrain with some population and with thick vegetation is an excellent condition for our people's war. […] The Sierra Madre sews up almost the entire length of Luzon on the eastern side of the Cagayan Valley to the Bicol region through Central Luzon. It links as many as nine provinces. […] A mountainous terrain, where more people inhabit the foothills, clearings, plateaus, and riversides or creeksides, is more favorable for the people's army.[15]

In these red areas, communist guerrillas set up their own autonomous governments and systems of representation for peasants and rural folk.[16] Where State power is weak and thus lacks the provision of medicine, education, and law, the New People's Army also acts as a mobile clinic, school, and court. Among the peripheral peasantry, they institute various reforms they call as "agrarian revolution" or increasing wages, lowering rents, and informal land redistribution (informal because they are obviously not recognized by the State). What is curious about these reforms is that they are rather mild and moderate, recalling to mind one Filipino Trotskyist's formulation of the New People's Army as being "social democrats with guns" as they enforce reforms that are essentially social-democratic in nature,[17] yet with the effectivity of Maoist praxis of "political power growing out of the barrel of a gun."

Also common in red areas is the practice of "revolutionary taxes": protection racketeering of rural business like haciendas, plantations, and mines. This isn't a moralistic judgment: revolutionary racketeering is good, actually! The Ukrainian, Spanish, and Uruguayan anarchists were not above a little racketeering for a cause. Illegalism is quite a valid tactic when the situation calls for it. The problem becomes when this protection racket becomes formalized in a way that revolutionary forces then permit a level of exploitation in exchange for protection money, which the NPA does at times. Sometimes the NPA does destroy mining equipment instead of collecting protection money, so at least they ought to be credited for that.

The essential politics behind *remontar* and *mamundok* are ultimately agreeable with anarchy and anarchism. However, that does not mean we agree with the Party that espouses it.

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[14] Personal correspondence, former CPP cadre.

[15] Simoun Riple (Jose Maria Sison), *Specific Characteristics of Our People's War* (Philippines: Communist Party of the Philippines, 2012), marxists.org/history/philippines/cpp/riple/1975/specific-characteristics.htm.

[16] Redfish, "Inside the New People's Army," Documentary, (Redfish, 2018); Nettie Wild, "A Rustling of Leaves: Inside the Philippine Revolution," Documentary, (Kalasikas Productions, Chanel 4, 1988); Iliya Makalipay, "Have You Heard of the Revolutionary Movement's Elections?" *Liberation*, March 2025, liberation.ndfp.info/main-stream/have-you-heard-of-the-revolutionary-movements-own-elections.

[17] Kas Ned na Red, personal correspondence.

Half-Dragon, Half-Hydra

The CPP still maintains democratic centralism in Party functions and political line, but they have a longstanding practice of decentralization when it comes to their protracted people's war. This policy is called "the policy of centralized leadership and decentralized operations."[1] This is partly due to geography: unlike in China, Thailand, Peru, Nepal, and India, the Philippines is an archipelago, not a contiguous land mass. This makes for a centralized contiguous military operation quite difficult and almost impossible by the NPA, hence the use of decentralized islands of guerrilla fronts across the country.

Returning to Shoatz's formulation, the CPP-NPA is a dragon politically, but a hydra militarily and socially. Its hydra aspect gives it multiple advantages in its persistence and resilience, but its dragon aspect leaves them prone to misleaderships. Hence the mass confusion among their mass base during their shameful alliance with the fascist regime of President Rodrigo Duterte.[2] Like the "treaty maroons" or the counterrevolutionary Haitian leadership, the CPP and NDF leadership can be co-opted and entreated to demobilize.

This is clearly a development from the first communist insurgency of the Huk Rebellion under the old communist party (PKP-1930). The Huks concentrated their forces in a contiguous land area in the plains of Central Luzon, but their highly concentrated dragon-type organization led to a combination of concentrated military offensive against them by the newly independent Philippine government (and their American overlords) and government incentives to give up armed struggle—the carrot and the stick. Eventually, the PKP-1930 was enticed to give up armed struggle, even to the point where they supported the dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos Sr., and quite a number of their mass base was co-opted by becoming settlers in the new frontier in Cotabato in Mindanao.

Yet the hydra aspect of the CPP-NPA-NDF and the broader tendency of National Democracy is not something to be discounted. Like a hydra with multiple autonomous heads, National Democracy in both its underground and above ground aspects have proven to be very able organizers. The Marcos dictatorship saw innumerable guerrilla fronts open across the archipelago alongside urban mobilizations. A centralized coordination of mobilization of this caliber and character is quite literally impossible and requires a high level of initiative and autonomy from the rank-and-file. Indeed, I have seen and met with youth who identify with National Democracy and I have seen that they are often self-directed in their militancy, sometimes even independent from the formal mass organizations, or even opposed to cadre leadership (this is in the case of the issue with sexual harassment).

But we cannot discount the dragon aspect of the CPP. Despite the high level of autonomy in the Party, intrigue and plots in the Central Committee prevented a Second Party Congress from convening directly after the fall of the dictatorship. Anonymous authors speak of "authoritarian tendencies" in the Party, and whole Party organs declared autonomy from the Central Committee, specifically putting the blame squarely on Armando Liwanag (the recently deceased Jose Maria "Joma" Sison).[3] Instead of a Second Party Congress, dissident factions of the Party fed up with the authoritarianism of Liwanag simply split from the CPP to form new groups in what is called the Reaffirmist–Rejectionist Schism. This schism, combined with disastrous mass torture and murder of hundreds, if not a few

[1] Riple, *Specific Characteristics of Our People's War*.

[2] Ang Bayan, "Alliance and Struggle Under the Duterte Regime," *Ang Bayan*, June 2016, 1–2, philippinerevolution.nu/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/20160607en.pdf; Ang Bayan, "Gain Strength in an All-Round Way in Engaging the Duterte Regime," *Ang Bayan*, July 2016, 1–2, bannedthought.net/Philippines/CPP/AngBayan/2016/20160707en.pdf; Joseph Scalice, "First as Tragedy, Second as Farce: Marcos, Duterte and the Communist Parties of the Philippines," *World Socialist Web Site*, September 2020, wsws.org/en/articles/2020/09/01/lect-s01.html.

[3] Ka Barry, "Resist Authoritarian Tendencies Within the Party! Let a Thousand Schools of Thought Contend! Comments on the Paper "Reaffirm Our Basic Principles and Rectify Errors" by Armando Liwanag," *Kasarinlan: Philippine Journal of Third World Studies* 8, no. 1 (1992): 158–65, journals.upd.edu.ph/index.php/kasarinlan/article/view/303; Party Organizations in the Visayas and Manila-Rizal Regional Commission KRMR, "Declaration of Autonomy," *Kasarinlan: Philippine Journal of Third World Studies* 9, no. 1 (1993), journals.upd.edu.ph/index.php/kasarinlan/article/view/1679.

thousand, committed communists during various purges destroyed the gains of the National Democratic revolution.[4] In this sense, the dragon aspect of the CPP resulted in a disastrous demobilization and fragmentation. To this day, the CPP has not recovered the heights of its mobilization reached since the ending of the dictatorship.

Today, the CPP and National Democracy remains an impressive force, to be sure. The autonomy of action in above ground National Democratic groups are still indicative of a living hydra, but its dragon aspect still has the ability to harm their own movement.

[4] Walden Bello, "The Crisis of the Philippine Progressive Movement: A Preliminary Investigation," *Kasarinlan: Philippine Journal of Third World Studies* 8, no. 1 (1992): 166–77, journals.upd.edu.ph/index.php/kasarinlan/article/view/304; Alex de Jong, "Hunting Specters: Paranoid Purges in the Filipino Communist Guerrilla Movement," in *Genocide*, ed. Ügür Ümit Üngör (Amsterdam University Press, 2016), 113–30, doi.org/10.1515/9789048518654-006; Robert Francis B. Garcia, *To Suffer Thy Comrades: How the Revolution Decimated Its Own*, Revised edition (Mandaluyong City, Philippines: Anvil Publishing, 2018).

Post-Maoism and Dividing the Dragon

There's a certain tendency in the North American left to talk about the New People's Army as the "good Maoists" on par with the Zapatistas. This is in part by a very effective publicity campaign by the US-based *kasamas* (or what National Democrats are called in the United States). I would not go as far to say that I support the CPP-NPA-NDF. I agree that the creation of red zones of autonomy are good, but I still reject the theory of National Democracy, their carcerality,[1] their bloody record in internal purge massacres, their assassinations of leftists,[2] and their shameful opportunist support for the fascist Rodrigo Duterte out of some false promises.

With that said, what the CPP-NPA-NDF does in terms of building autonomy in red areas—rebel peripheries—isn't exactly wrong. The purpose of their construction in their intent is "National Democracy," the protracted people's war, the capture or creation of state power, and the formation of a Party-State apparatus. While this intention is disagreeable to anarchists, the praxis of building organs of autonomy isn't wrong, and in fact, is to be celebrated.

"Insurrectionary libertarian post-Maoism" was a half-serious inside joke in our milieu that referred to the idea that the Maoist insurrection in the Philippines was essentially something to celebrate, but that anarchists in the Philippines needed to build on the revolutionary tradition and transcend Maoism on libertarian terms due to the anarchist disagreements on States. While great for shitposting, the idea is not disagreeable, especially when it comes to the autonomous and self-directed aspects of the communist insurgency today. Indigenization of ideas is a natural yet integral part of revolutionary politics anywhere. In the Philippines, it will necessarily mean also recontextualizing and indigenizing anarchism within the history of desertion, *remontar* and *mamundok*, including that of the communist insurgency. Post-Maoism in the Philippines means learning from the experience of the National Democracy and situating our own anarchism within the context of the revolutionary and rebel history of the Philippines. We can reject many of the theories and practices of the CPP and National Democracy—Stalinism as an organizational form, the use of violent purges and assassinations to control the left, class collaborationism as with Duterte—but we can also affirm what they did right: deserting the State, attacking it, and creating spaces for autonomy in rebel peripheries.

Another aspect of taking insurrectionary libertarian post-Maoism seriously would be on critiquing its dragon aspect and fully committing to a hydra organizational form. Maoism has always had this tension between top-down centralization and bottom-up organizing, or a tension between the hybridization of its dragon and hydra aspects. In his essay, Shoatz's example of the failures of dragon-type of organizing was revolutionary Haiti where the dragon-type forces of Toussaint L'Ouverture and his successors would betray their mass base time and time again like reimposing the plantation system:

> Thus, we can clearly see how Haiti's dragon forces played a very ambivalent role in the rebel fight for independence: They started out as tenacious and brilliant fighters against all of the European imperial and colonial elements, and the traitors amongst the Mulatto's, who were all but bent on keeping the enslaved Africans underfoot. During the course of the revolutionary struggle, they all opportunistically switched to the French imperialist's side, and went on to attempt to drown the still revolutionary masses and their decentralized group in blood; hoping that way the French would allow them to serve as a new elite class of African policemen against a re-enslaved African worker's class.

[1] Simoun Magsalin, *Against Carceral Communism, For Abolition Communism!*, 1st ed. (USA: Hates Cafe, 2022), haters.noblogs.org/files/2022/04/Abolition-Communism.pdf.

[2] Pierre Rousset, "After Kintanar, the Killings Continue: The Post-1992 CPP Assassination Policy in the Philippines" (July 2003), internationalviewpoint.org/IMG/pdf/CPP-AssPol-03.07.04.pdf.

> Failing to suppress the rebels, the dragon forces rejoined the hydra elements and lent their weigh to totally defeating the French, only to once again turn against the revolutionary masses by establishing themselves as a dictatorial and exploitative African elite.[3]

Outside the Black radical tradition, we can see too many of such examples, even if we avoid the obvious example with Joseph Stalin, the supposed wrecker of Lenin's legacy, so let's start with Nikita Khrushchev. Maoists are famously anti-revisionist, meaning they uphold the contributions of Stalin. They are anti-revisionist because they opposed the perceived revisions by Khrushchev who succeeded Stalin as paramount leader. But Stalin was the one who concentrated so much dragon power into his position. Khrushchev simply took over the dragon's head and led the dragon. Stalin, and by extension, Stalinism, had allowed power to be structured in such a way that a "great betrayer" could simply take its place.

Thomas Sankara, another darling of the left, also tells us a lot of the dangers of the dragon. Unlike Toussaint L'Ouverture and his successors, we cannot perhaps fault Sankara for being a betrayer. His greatest "sin" is perhaps because he was assassinated and his project fallen apart—supposedly not a fault of his own—but this is crucial. Sankara's revolution in Burkina Faso was largely top-down and State-led. Without the dragon's head to protect the gains of his revolution, it simply fell apart. Had Sankara's revolution seriously made an effort of promoting the revolutionary self-activity of the Burkinabè working class and creating a true monster of a hydra, his assassination would not have led to such an easily-won counterrevolution.

But perhaps let us look at a Marxist who *did* create a true monster of a hydra: Mao Zedong himself. The Cultural Revolution in China, initiated by Mao himself, was truly an unprecedented and unsurpassed marvel of social movement mobilization: so many untold millions were mobilized that the world has never seen a scale of mass mobilization as in China ever before or ever since. Many of those mobilized could not have been commanded to by above and really did practice a level of self-directed militancy. Yet as Wu Yiching shows in his *The Cultural Revolution at the Margins*, the Party-State acted as a demobilizer, jailer, and executioner of many Chinese communists.[4] Yu Luoke wrote and organized against bloodline theory that tried to formalize the creation of a privileged caste, but he was executed for it. Conservative red guards would win over radical red guards because the conservative red guards were the scions of the bureaucrats in the Party-State. The working class alliance Sheng-wu-lien organized against a reemergence of a "red capitalist class," argued for a "People's Commune of China" and agitated for the fullest conclusion of the Cultural Revolution.[5] For these sins, they were ruthlessly repressed by Mao and the Party-State. Innumerable other Cultural Revolutionary forces were co-opted and then integrated into the Party-State, their political lines moderating until they could be safely assimilated. And so the Cultural Revolution was demobilized. Though he initiated the Cultural Revolution, Mao "is like the sorcerer who is no longer able to control the powers of the nether world whom he has called up by his spells"[6] and rushed to crush or co-opt the very powers he unleashed. The last hurrah of the Cultural Revolution, in 1989 after Mao's death and the rise of Deng Xiaoping, saw the communist youth who grew up in the Cultural Revolution march to protect their gains at Tiananmen Square and across China in the June 4th movement. We all know how that ended—a nominally "communist" government slaughtering workers and well-convinced communists,[7] their dragon no longer under their control. As Wu argued, the demobilization of the Cultural Revolution by the Party-State led to the post-socialist transition in China. "It is right to rebel," but only within the allowances of the Party-State. The dragon may have unleashed a hydra, but it re-leashed some of its heads and killed others until the dragon's head was taken over by yet another great betrayer in Deng Xiaoping and his "capitalist roader" successors. Long declared illegal by the heirs of Deng, the hydra of the Cultural Revolution is still alive, struggling against the Party-State and capitalism with Chinese characteristics, alive in the name of, in spite of, and not because of, Mao.

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[3] Shoatz, "The Dragon and the Hydra".

[4] Yiching Wu, *The Cultural Revolution at the Margins: Chinese Socialism in Crisis* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2014).

[5] Sheng-wu-lien and Yang Xiguang, *Whither China?* (Marxists Internet Archive, 1968), marxists.org/subject/china/documents/whither-china.htm.

[6] Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (Marxists Internet Archive, 2000), marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/index.htm.

[7] Mia Wong, "When Communists Crushed the International Workers' Movement," *Lausan*, June 2021, lausancollective.com/2021/communists-crushed-international-workers-movement; Wu, *The Cultural Revolution at the Margins*.

Dragons, then, are alluring and appealing. But even on communist terms, they are dangerous beasts that bring about "revisionism" and the victory of "capitalist roaders." Others, including Shoatz himself, suggest that a "revolutionary dragon" is still necessary to "consciously disarm and disperse the reactionary dragon," but that this revolutionary dragon must be kept in "a cage" where it "cannot escape" with the keys in the hands of the hydra, where the hydra brings out the revolutionary dragon only when it is needed and kept in its cage otherwise.[8] But what does keeping the dragon in the hydra's cage and leash even mean? Shoatz's concession that hydras cannot defeat dragons and need their own dragon to protect them offers little solutions other than vague analogies to prevent the revolutionary dragon from betraying and decimating our hydra. Ultimately, Maoism, and by extension much of Marxism, has no answer to how to prevent a great betrayer from taking over the dragon's head beyond some sophistry about the mass line, two-line struggle, and launching cultural revolutions or great rectifications.

Indeed, we've all been here before. Two-line struggle failed to remove "revisionists" and "capitalist-roaders" in the Maobadi movement in Nepal to the point where official Maobadis in government broke strikes and struck deals with multinationals.[9] Even in the Philippines, there was fierce two-line struggle in the CPP around fifteen years ago which some have framed as a "Sison–Tiamzon" conflict where Party rank-and-file, apparently self-directed, criticized the upper cadre for class collaboration with the Manny Villar candidacy for president (of which Bongbong Marcos was part of alongside National Democracy!).[10] Clearly these lower cadre failed in their two-line struggle and would probably have decried and protested the CPP fawning over Duterte six years later. No, not even two-line struggle in the Cultural Revolution succeeded. Dragons are just that dangerous and can only tolerate hydras at their pleasure.

Neither can purges be a necessary nor sufficient solution for preventing the capture of the dragon's head. The Soviets, Chinese, and Vietnamese purged and purged and purged, but all three saw the restoration of capitalism in the end. The purges in the CPP were even more meaningless as the only result was self-inflicted decimation and demobilization. As we have seen, opportunists and capitalist-roaders survive purges all the time, often able to find refuge in the Party hierarchy.

However, do not mistake this as an argument for doing nothing at all.[11] I agree with Bookchin's critique of the failure of the CNT in the Spanish revolution to establish their political power.[12] The CNT were given a choice to consolidate their political power, but dogmatically refused to do so out of some naïve belief that it was anti-anarchist. Would not have excluding the statist forces and safeguarding the self-directed militancy of the proletariat been a revolutionary anarchist act? This could have been the unleashing of the hydra and the protection of the hydra from both the Republican and fascist dragons, but after all, hindsight is twenty-twenty.

Post-Maoism will mean learning from the dragon and *dividing it*, thus transcending the Maoist experience. This post-Maoism will necessarily bring into the front the valiant self-directed militancy as in the Cultural Revolution. Post-Maoism will mean necessarily sublating the lessons that are effectively useful for new generations.

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[8] Russell Maroon Shoatz and Steve Bloom, "Dragon and Hydra Revisited — A Dialogue" (Old and New Project, 2014), oldandnewproject.net/Essays/Maroon_D%20and%20H%20Revisited.html.

[9] Red Marriott, "Notes on Nepal: The Long March of Maoism" (Libcom.org, 2006-04/2013-08), theanarchistlibrary.org/library/red-marriott-notes-on-nepal.

[10] See Bulatlatan, "*Bulatlatan* Archive," Archive, *Marxists Internet Archive*, 2024, marxists.org/history/philippines/bulatlatan/index.htm.

[11] Thank you to Brian Tokar for the discussion that led to the addition of this segment.

[12] Murray Bookchin, *The Next Revolution: Popular Assemblies and the Promise of Direct Democracy* (London: Verso London, 2015), ch 8.

Rebel Peripheries Today

What is the theoretical and praxeological value of rebel peripheries today? What would it take to think of rebel peripheries as more than a means to an end? As Ursula K. Le Guin once wrote in *The Lathe of Heaven*: "The end justifies the means. But what if there never is an end? All we have is means."[1] Contrary to the overly enthusiastic online leftists, the Philippines is not at the precipice of communist revolution today. State control is arguably stronger today than it was under the Marcos dictatorship due to highly effective soft power—which has proven to be stronger than mere coercion. Unlike in the Marcos dictatorship which sought to undermine networks of political patronage and political dynasties in favor of strongman (dragon) rule, the current State under the son of the dictator, Bongbong Marcos, co-opts the networks of political patronage and political dynasties. Even the State can be a hydra today. This means a sober reading shows that the ends of communist State power or even National Democracy is not near in sight. "All we have are means"; what we have right now are the rebel peripheries.

Anarchists, of course, refuse to make a virtue out of necessity, in this case the rebel peripheries. In a classic example, Czarist Russia necessitated a militarized underground and highly centralized party. Though these material conditions under the Czar were not a universal reality, necessity was made into a virtue and militarized centralism was deemed a virtue for communist parties after the Bolshevization of the Comintern. Even anarchists have done non-anarchist things out of necessity like joining the Republican government and even setting up concentration camps during the Spanish Revolution. Today anarchists reject the virtue of these necessities. Though anarchists are not always right: in a bit unfortunate example today, some anarchists make a virtue out of necessity in joining the Ukrainian military apparatus. It can certainly be framed as a necessity, but it is neither anarchist nor a virtue.

In the same way, rebel peripheries can sometimes be seen as making a virtue out of necessity. As I have argued here, it is indeed virtuous to desert and attack the State. But we cannot be satisfied with rebel peripheries; *we want the whole world*. As James Connolly says: "For our demands most moderate are, / We only want the earth."[2] Rebel peripheries should be seen as making the best use of necessity, but not converting it to a virtue in-of-itself. The CPP and National Democracy is self-aware of this problem. The ongoing Third Rectification movement within National Democracy attests to the idea that they cannot and should not be satisfied with doing underground mass work and being "roving rebel bands";[3] they want the "strategic stalemate in the people's war" and State power.

But why has the CPP failed to move past the rebel peripheries? I suspect that the NPA is unable to move past the peripheries is precisely because of the freeholding class interest of peasants in the peripheries. By freeholding, peasants want to maintain their petty property and independence rather than wanting to overthrow capitalism. Peasants in the periphery want to be independent, and the NPA allows them to keep their independence from the State and from the big agribusinesses. There is no need for the peripheral peasants to move past this petty independence.

Since antiquity, States have historically been constructed on the backs of the peasantry. Elites like landed nobility build State power over compelling peasants into compliance—corvée, taxes, conscription, etc. What is unique about the Maoist project since Mao Zedong himself was that the peasants are centered as the agential motors of the new State, as partners in State-building and modernization. In previous eras the agential motors were landed nobility or the later bourgeoisie which saw peasants as subordinates. But again, peasants do not want to build States—they want to escape it and live free as freeholders. There is no "self-abolition of the peasantry" like there is with the proletariat. Peasants do not have an innate class interest for abolishing themselves. If they partake in State-building, it is because

[1] Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Lathe of Heaven* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971), 82, archive.org/details/latheofheaven0000ursu.

[2] James Connolly, "James Connolly: We Only Want the Earth" (Marxists Internet Archive, 1907), marxists.org/archive/connolly/1907/xx/wewnerth.htm. Thank you Green Tea for this suggestion.

[3] Jose Maria Sison, "On 'Foreign Monsters' and the People's War That Persists," *Kites Journal*, October 2022, kites-journal.org/2022/10/27/on-foreign-monsters-and-the-peoples-war-that-persists; Jose Maria Sison, "Great Achievements of the CPP in 50 Years of Waging Revolution" (National Democratic Front of the Philippines, August 2018), ndfp.org/great-achievements-of-the-cpp-in-50-years-of-waging-revolution.

they are compelled to by authorities, or it allows them to continue to live independently such as through land reform that creates a class of a free peasantry.

Why the peasantry in China was a suitable base for revolution was because the communist bulwark in Yan'an is actually quite large, compared to the NPA rebel peripheries in the Philippines. With this considerable territory (and the relative independence the communists enjoyed due to the political instability of the Warlord Era), the Chinese communists were able to build a State apparatus and a regular army. With this State, the Chinese communists instituted land reform to win over the peasantry to their side in the Chinese civil war until the victory of the communists in the post-War period. In the Philippines, there is no such region where the shadow government of the CPP-NPA-NDF could operate openly and prepare to build a regular army. Nor do they undertake more ambitious land reform projects. So all they have are rebel peripheries.

If pericolonialism is the effects of and responses to colonialism from the periphery, we can also think of a "peristatism," or the effects of and responses to the State from the peripheries, especially rebel peripheries. Just as the Ifugao were pressured to change their social, political, and economic life in response to colonialism on their borders, rebel peripheries likewise face a similar pressure to defend their autonomy. To think of it another way, we can think of the Soviet Union as sort of being in the periphery of world capitalism and imperialism (this is not totally correct, but bear with me here). In the Soviet Union, this resulted in developing support in the imperial-capitalist core to defend the Soviet periphery. Communist parties in the imperial core organized to defend the Soviet Union in the periphery and their own social conditions become secondary. The defense of the "socialist motherland" came first. In the same way, National Democracy's rebel peripheries become the center of gravity of militancy in the Philippines today. As BISIG once noted,

> …an organization with a major underground or armed component will eventually make this component its center of gravity. As a result, the logic of the organization's actions will always follow the needs of the underground component. The above ground expression will only become an auxiliary to the first logic of the underground component.[4]

This is indeed the orientation of National Democracy today. Militarism and militarization makes the armed force the center of gravity. Some anarchists try to solve this through subordinating the armed actions to political struggles rather than other way around. This was the case with the armed struggle of the FAU in Uruguay.[5] But for National Democracy, and many of the armed struggle groups across the world, "political power grows out the barrel of a gun" rather from self-directed militancy.

In another aspect, the romanticization of *mamundok* is also problematic. As Paul Mattick Sr. says quite eloquently:

> Instead of finding their orientation in the actual social conditions and their possibilities, the new leftists base their concerns mainly on a set of ideologies that have no relevance to the requirements of social change in capitalist nations. They find their inspiration not in the developmental processes of their own society but in the heroes of popular revolution in faraway countries, thereby revealing that their enthusiasm is not as yet a real concern for decisive social change.[6]

As Mattick described about how leftists in the core countries are waylayed by romanticism of the third-world guerrilla, perhaps we can also say the same about those Filipino leftists living under the full dominion of the State and their relationship to the guerrillas in the distant peripheries of the same country. The conditions of social and revolutionary change are very different in the internal cores and peripheries of the same country. The focus of gravity is the protracted people's war and the defense of the rebel peripheries instead of thinking hard about the questions of class struggle in the cities.

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[4] BISIG, "What Is BISIG ?" *Bukluran Sa Ikauunlad Ng Sosyalistang Isip at Gawa (BISIG)*, August 2007, filipinosocialism.wordpress.com/what-is-bisig.

[5] Personal correspondence with militants from the FAU.

[6] Paul Sr. Mattick, "Introduction to Anti-Bolshevik Communism" (2003), marxists.org/archive/mattick-paul/1978/introduction.htm.

Indeed, peristatism encourages the center of gravity to be at the rebel peripheries, the red areas. The most militant Filipinos are encouraged to *mamundok*, to go up the mountain, and desert the state. This leaves the cities impoverished of militants. Those who remain chant "peace talks, *ituloy*!" (continue the peace talks!). Yes, but what if we want class war? Just as the Moscow-aligned communist parties called for no war with the USSR, National Democracy calls for peace with the CPP-NPA-NDF. To be clear, this isn't an indictment of the peace process. Realistically, the peace process can be used to push reforms in alignment with the National Democratic agenda and defend the autonomy of rebel peripheries. It is just that the push for the peace process saw the old communist party—the PKP-1930—become best buddies with the dictator Marcos Sr. and then sometime later, Duterte's presidential campaign for a peace process resulted in disastrous opportunism from National Democracy in exchange for false promises of peace talks.

The peristatism of the rebel peripheries have another effect in an unexpected way. In the past two decades, we have seen an uncountable number of urban insurrections across the world: the Arab Spring, Occupy, the squares movement, Yellow Vests, the George Floyd uprisings, and many others. Yet the Philippines has not seen an urban insurrection of a similar caliber precisely because the most militant elements leave the city for *mamundok*. Indeed, when urban insurrections did happen in the Philippines, as in the 1986 People Power Revolution (also called EDSA Uno), and again in 2001 EDSA Dos and the failed EDSA Tres, rebel peripheries played a very small part. (To their credit, while their rebel peripheries played a small part, National Democracy in the urban centers did participate in EDSA Uno and Dos.) The CPP-NPA-NDF essentially allowed the liberal oligarchic opposition to take lead in EDSA Uno, leaving the left out in the cold as the oligarchy and the political dynasties was reinstated, leaving the working classes without leadership.

Peristatism also lives in isolation, and isolation often coincides with poverty. It is not necessarily that peristatism causes poverty, but that they coincide together. Indeed, the anarchy of the peripheries is anarchic precisely because these peripheries lack integration with the State and the world-capitalist system, leading to underdevelopment. It is not a coincidence that impoverished peripheries become rebel peripheries. It is said that in Bicol, "where the road ends, insurgency begins."[7] The Soviet Union and other so-called socialist states were isolated, and while we cannot discount impressive gains in human development, we cannot discount their separation from the vast interconnectedness of Western capitalism. Or perhaps that it is that they were never really well-connected to Western capitalism to begin with that they were able to wage revolution. In any case, rebel peripheries today are beset with economic isolation, even if there are some with impressive human development. Revolutionary projects like the Zapatistas and Rojavans alike may have impressive models of politics and social work, but remain economically isolated and underdeveloped. Maoist rebel peripheries in the Philippines are likewise quite impoverished. While we can sometimes hear of red areas controlled by the NPA that have impressive development due to rich protection rackets, these are more the exceptions that prove the rule.

So what? Are rebel peripheries and desertion useful or not? And if rebel peripheries cannot be discounted, what then ought their role be today? And what place do rebel peripheries and desertion have in the social revolution today? We start with some basic facts:

1. Rebel peripheries are still sites of autonomy and bases by which to assault the State.
2. Hydra-type organizational forms are more resilient to State power than dragon-types.
3. Rebel peripheries push the center of gravity of a movement towards themselves.
4. Islands of rebel peripheries are not enough if we want the whole world.
5. Rebel peripheries are mired in the peristatist problem of isolation, a rare revolutionary island in a counterrevolutionary sea.

As an oft-repeated line in *Oppenheimer* (2023) says, "theory will take you only so far."[8] The fact of the matter is that revolutionaries have never solved the problem of revolutionary isolation. Even if the CPP-NPA-NDF wins

[7] Thank you to Carolus Plebejus who alerted me to this.

[8] Christopher Nolan, "Oppenheimer" (Syncopy, Atlas Entertainment, 2023).

State power tomorrow, they would just have an isolation problem the size of a nation-state, akin to Cuba, Venezuela, or Bolivia. *State power fundamentally cannot solve the problem of revolutionary isolation*. There are, of course, proposals to solve the problem of revolutionary isolation, a notable creative solution I think is Peter Kropotkin's *The Conquest of Bread* (which dealt with the revolutionary isolation of a region the size of Paris and its environs that feeds itself and also reduces working hours),[9] but none that have ever been proven to work.

Of course, there are some anarchists who don't have a problem with the problem of isolation in peristatism and rebel peripheries. *Desert*, for example, revels in the freedom new rebel peripheries offers them in a time of climate crisis.[10] But again, *we want the whole world*.

[9] Petr Alekseevich Kropotkin, *The Conquest of Bread*, 1907, theanarchistlibrary.org/library/petr-kropotkin-the-conquest-of-bread.
[10] Anonymous, *Desert* (Stac an Armin St. Kilda: Little Black Cart, 2011), theanarchistlibrary.org/library/anonymous-desert.

Unpacking Rebel Peripheries

The fact of the matter is that marronage and *remontar* as modes of struggle as the enslaved or colonized did it was shaped by the limitations of the technologies of power at the time. The colonial and slavocratic States of previous eras could only exercise State power in certain "developed" areas where plantations and taxable economic activity could take place, and therefore where powers of policing and slavery can operate. With desertion, people could simply leave these zones of development and civilization for where the mountain air makes one free. In corners of the world today where rebel peripheries persist, as in the Philippines, India, Mexico, and Algeria, the State is not sophisticated enough to exert complete police powers over its claimed territory. In such places, rebel peripheries remain quite viable modes of struggle.

But beyond literally deserting the State and start rebel peripheries in the mountains, can we rethink desertion for the Twenty-First Century? Or rather, if we unpack the concept of rebel peripheries to deserting the State and capital, building community autonomy, and organizing like a hydra, what would that look like? And what would it look like if we specifically want the whole world?

I am reminded that Peter Kropotkin, in several media, explained his opposition to a tendency to start isolated communal experiments, something similar to the desertion and community autonomy with rebel peripheries.[1] He asked a leading question: "What would become of the European revolutionary movement if most women and men of strong individuality—most of those ready to rebel—went to settle in distant lands, trying to make colonies there?" The answer was simple enough: it would cause a drain in militancy; not to mention the creation of settler relations elsewhere. In the first communist rebellion, the very same people who took up arms against the Japanese and then the post-independence State became willing settlers in Cotabato, tying them to State-making in the region. In the current communist rebellion, the highest stage of class struggle is to *mamundok*—leaving the city for the guerrilla war. The first case is counterrevolutionary, and the second is revolutionary, but they have a similar effect: divesting the State-administered "white areas" of militancy.

Kropotkin's solution to this is quite straightforward actually: instead of divesting revolutionary energies to communal experiments in the peripheries, just set these up precisely near the urban: "Well, the best spot for it is near London or near Paris!," he says. Perhaps this is the revenge of Murray Bookchin: that there really is something about the city air that makes one free, that there is something qualitatively unique about the urban that allows for specific forms of collective action and class struggle that overcomes the isolation of the periphery.

But is it possible for urban struggles to desert the State and capital? After all, the very same urban force that concentrates populations also allows for the concentration of State powers of administration and policing. Sure, even in the urban there were areas where State power cannot coalesce and govern. One thinks of the Kowloon Walled City in Hong Kong or Free Derry in Ireland. These "urban peripheries" (and even a rebel periphery with Free Derry) can certainly prove that the urban can be sites of desertion and autonomy, but even the very fact of their statelessness only reaffirms the power of the State in the core governed areas. *In hoc, ego regam*—in this I will rule, to hell with over there!

But then again, urban peripheries usually emerges in specific or extreme circumstances. The Kowloon Walled City carved out its autonomy in the context of an inter-State jurisdictional dispute; Free Derry carved out its autonomy under conditions of civil war. Unlike rebel peripheries in the mountains which can defend their autonomy almost indefinitely by virtue of the anarchy of the peripheries and the distance from State power, urban peripheries can be reconquered by the State sooner or later. Then again, the State cannot suffer challenges to power so close to its center of power.

[1] Petr Alekseevich Kropotkin, *Small Communal Experiments and Why They Fail*, 1901, theanarchistlibrary.org/library/petr-kropotkin-small-communal-experiments-and-why-they-fail.

Perhaps instead of thinking of building community autonomy in terms of desertion, we ought think of it in terms of *organized abandonment*. Historically speaking, the State usurped the various functions of society in order to engender dependence from society onto the State.[2] States historically used their terrorism to destroy the organizations and mutual aid associations of the working class.[3] The State then legitimizes the functions it usurps and delegitimizes functions that it does not license. In the contemporary Philippines, this was most clear when the most able and learned health workers and leaders could not simply self-organize a sane pandemic response to COVID-19 simply because the State chose to legitimize a highly militarized mode of pandemic management under its own power. However, there are some populations where the State chooses *not* to provide various societal functions to, in essence abandoning them.

Again, the Black radical tradition and Black anarchic radicalism is central here, precisely because their radical tradition is one formed by the very premise of exclusion and organized abandonment by the State. As William C. Anderson and Zoé Samudzi summarizes as the "anarchism of Blackness,"

> While bound to the laws of the land, Black America can be understood as an extra-state entity because of Black exclusion from the liberal social contract. Due to this extra-state location, Blackness is, in so many ways, anarchistic. African-Americans, as an ethno-social identity comprised of descendants from enslaved Africans, have innovated new cultures and social organizations much like anarchism would require us to do outside of state structures.[4]

And true enough, it is through challenging this organized abandonment by the State that Black communities form something akin to a "marronage-in-place."[5] Like the anarchic peripheries of the State, populations abandoned by the State largely live without the societal functions the State provides. Marronage-in-place replies to organized abandonment with desertion-in-place, through the creation of communities of care in defiance of abandonment. This is indeed what the Quilombo in West Oakland California did for a number of years with a social space.[6]

But organized abandonment by the State is different from desertion from the State in one crucial way: policing. Populations like Black America get none or few of the State services but all of its police and carceral violence. In previous modes of struggle, we have seen the Black Panther Party take over neighborhoods abandoned by the State and provide social functions of care. The Black Panthers were most dangerous not when they were shooting cops, but when they were providing social functions of care that the State refused to provide, hence why the State worked industriously to provoke armed confrontations with the Black Panthers over just doing the societal functions it usurped to begin with. In this sense, communities of care in defiance of abandonment was more dangerous than armed struggle.

As it happens, the Black Panthers declined precisely because it doubled down on its dragon-type organizing and even turning into internal authoritarianism and violence.[7] Rather than facing a great betrayer, the internal authoritarianism simply drove people away and demobilized their movement. Shoatz's rumination on marronage, dragons, and hydras—and indeed many other Black anarchic radicals—are precisely placed within the context of the failure of the Black Panthers' organizational form.

The crucial difference in the sophistication of police carceral power and the experience of the Black Panther Party and successors like the Black Liberation Army informs what is perhaps the most significant project for Black autonomy today: Cooperation Jackson. Cooperation Jackson is a network of worker cooperatives and community

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[2] Steve Millett, "Neither State Nor Market: An Anarchist Perspective on Social Welfare," in *Twenty-First Century Anarchism: Unorthodox Ideas for a New Millennium*, ed. Jon Purkis and James Bowen (London: Cassell, 1997), 24–40, theanarchistlibrary.org/library/steve-millett-neither-state-nor-market.

[3] Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2000).

[4] William C. Anderson and Zoé Samudzi, "The Anarchism of Blackness," *ROAR Magazine*, no. 5: Not This Time! (2017), roarmag.org/magazine/black-liberation-anti-fascism.

[5] I thank Kenneth Cardenas for this formulation. Mooncake was also invaluable with some discussion into how this marronage-in-place would look like.

[6] Ben Mabie and Joohyun Kim, "Strategy After Ferguson," *Viewpoint Magazine*, February 2016, viewpointmag.com/2016/02/01/strategy-after-ferguson. Thank you Mooncake for alerting me to this.

[7] Charles Edwin Jones, ed., *The Black Panther Party Reconsidered* (Baltimore: Black Classic Press, 2005), 408.

institutions in Jackson, Mississippi that aims to build economic democracy and community power in communities that have historically been abandoned by the State.

In building community autonomy in the urban, Cooperation Jackson essentially satisfies Kropotkin's concern against militancy drainage. In working with communities and populations abandoned by the State, they also operate in conditions similar to desertion and living in peripheries, albeit with all the amplitude the urban provides. That armed struggle is not central to their project, they are not a priority target for repression. And with committing to economic democracy, they commit to a hydra-type organization over a dragon-type (as they are a network of cooperatives and institutions), thereby avoiding the problems and issues faced with heads of the dragon, whether that be betrayal or incompetence.

In essence, what I am suggesting is that organizing for autonomous communities of care among abandoned populations could constitute a way to think about building autonomous projects in the Twenty-First Century. This is the beginning of a "*mamundok*-in-place," something similar to the Black Panther Party, albeit instead of a Maoist dragon-type of organization, it would need to be a post-Maoist hydra-type of organization to effectively resist co-option, assassination, or isolation and pursue self-directed militancy.

This is not without issues. Autonomous projects in the city are still subject to policing and law. They would still be pressured by the logic of value and the need to make and rely on money. This has its own risks where cooperatives become sites of workers becoming their own harsh bosses. Furthermore, there is still a need to defend against the State and its law. However, the contours of this "*mamundok*-in-place" still need to be mapped. Part of this mapping requires an understanding of organized abandonment and its relation to armed struggle.

What is Being Subverted?

It is an oft-repeated line within National Democracy that armed struggle has its roots in organized abandonment by the State. The way it is framed is that the failure of reform and legal struggle alongside organized abandonment—poverty, landlessness, imperialism—feeds into people joining the armed struggle in the periphery.

Under different conditions in Black America, the failure of Black reform and legal struggle led to the creation of the Black Panthers Party, the demise of which led to the armed struggle of the Black Liberation Army. In the same way, the CPP argues that armed struggle becomes the primary choice.

Armed struggle, however, is not an inevitability from organized abandonment. Armed struggle is a deliberate choice through organizational agency won through initiative and organizing. The CPP consciously decided upon armed struggle based on emulating the Chinese model of armed struggle combined with historically-specific repression under the Marcos dictatorship. After the demise of the dictatorship, the Second Great Rectification reaffirmed the dogma of armed struggle despite the changing material conditions. However, it is clear that we are no longer under conditions of dictatorship. Even the CPP acknowledges that armed struggle is not the only way to pursue National Democracy. Yet armed struggle is still valorized as the highest form of class struggle.

The question then becomes: Is armed struggle the correct reaction to organized abandonment? Does it address organized abandonment in a necessary and sufficient way?

Paradoxically, armed struggle with the NPA reinforces organized abandonment. The presence of a people's army makes a State less willing to enforce its rule of law and associated State welfare in a periphery. This is not necessarily a bad thing, as this abandonment is then coupled with a level of autonomy of an area from the State, which in turn reinforces its status as a rebel periphery. Indeed, this is best exemplified by the Zapatistas who have a more contagious and well-known political system. (Compared to the Zapatistas, and even others like the Maobadi of Nepal, the CPP-NPA-NDF are highly secretive of their underground government and there is not much scholarship is done on it.) But even with the Zapatistas, we see how the Mexican State simply abandons the whole of Zapatista Chiapas, and other rebel peripheries in Mexico like Cherán, and reinforcing the isolation these rebel peripheries experience.

But then again, in Mexico and the Philippines, armed struggle forces a localized crisis of dual power within a periphery—where the local state apparatus competes with the authority of the revolutionary movement. Unlike the so-called dual power projects in urban environments put forward by anarchists and libertarian socialists, the situation in rebel peripheries are closer to true dual power situations in that State power really does have to compete with revolutionary power. Legitimacy really is in competition in the rebel peripheries.

But we cannot speak of generalities. The conditions in Chiapas are different from the conditions in Cotabato. Armed struggle might be necessary and sufficient in Chiapas, but is it so in Cotabato?

Unlike the Zapatistas, the Philippine State and the CPP-NPA-NDF seem to be two sides of a single yet bipolar stable system—two sides of the same coin, so to speak. The underground government is the Philippine government's shadow, just as the NPA is the shadow of the Armed Forces of the Philippines. Over more than fifty years of armed struggle, this system has cohered. The cities and the near-rural belongs to the Philippine government. But the forests, the mountains, the peripheries, and the many abandoned belong to the great underground. As Landauer reminds us, "the State is a social relationship."[1] This bipolar system is only made possible because the social relations of the State are brought to the peripheries where Maoist insurgents cohered their own shadow State power. Indeed, the stability of this bipolar system is still unified by the regime of proletarianization, work, alienation, and hierarchy.

I often return to Gilles Dauvé's "When Insurrection Dies." To quote at length:

[1] Landauer, "Weak Statesmen, Weaker People!".

> Power does not come any more from the barrel of a gun than it comes from a ballot box. No revolution is peaceful, but its "military" dimension is never central. The question is not whether the proles finally decide to break into the armouries, but whether they unleash what they are: commodified beings who no longer can and no longer want to exist as commodities, and whose revolt explodes capitalist logic. Barricades and machine guns flow from this "weapon". The greater the change in social life, the less guns will be needed, and the less casualties there will be. A communist revolution will never resemble a slaughter: not from any nonviolent principle, but because revolution subverts more (soldiers included) than it actually destroys.
>
> To imagine a proletarian front facing off a bourgeois front is to conceive the proletariat in bourgeois terms, on the model of a political revolution or a war (seizing someone's power, occupying their territory). In so doing, one reintroduces everything that the insurrectionary movement had overwhelmed: hierarchy, a respect for specialists, for knowledge that Knows, and for techniques to solve problems — in short for everything that plays down the role of the common man.[2]

Here, Dauvé challenges to think of armed struggle as something necessary and sufficient. Revolution, in this sense, is not necessarily the taking up of arms (though it can and often does), but rather *subversion*. The political power of the proletarianized do not come from the barrels of guns or in ballot boxes, but in subverting their class condition of proletarianization—the self-abolition of the proletariat. For the CPP, to be "proletarianized" is to accept the Party program and join the armed struggle. But proletarianization is the very imposition of abandonment, alienation, and the proletarian condition to our bodies by capitalist society. Bourgeois class power is constituted for class rule, while proletarian class power is constituted for the abolition of all classes. Those who talk of proletarian class power without any perspective on self-abolition have a corpse in their mouth.

In this sense, perhaps carving out rebel peripheries can and will have a role in subverting proletarianization as spaces of autonomy. The lines of desertion towards rebel peripheries could potentially act as a revolutionary underground railroad by which the proletarianized can escape to where the mountain air makes one free.

But armed struggle is itself insufficient. "The force of an insurrection is social, not military,"[3] as *At Daggers Drawn* reminds us. Communist parties that are launching people's wars certainly claim and believe they are fighting for the whole world, but the fight for proletarian class power is not in the peripheries, it is in the belly of the beast where proletarianization is most cohered. The National Democratic revolution, for all intents and purposes, is not the unleashing of workers from their commodification and proletarianization. Indeed, the NPA even works with "enlightened landlords"[4] and I have heard at least one account of the NPA breaking a peasants' strike. The stabilized system dividing the Philippines between the State and the underground government has eclipsed the possibility of the subversion of social relations. As such, the NPA seem content to carry out social democracy out of the barrels of guns.

In this sense, what really matters more in terms of organized abandonment is not the armed struggle, but *the subversion of organized abandonment through the autonomous communities of care*, the undoing of the conditions imposed by the civilizational order. Armed struggle may still become necessary, but its necessity is rooted in support of subversion and the revolutionizing of social relations, not to merely enforce the creation of rebel peripheries. In a sense, the NPA at least recognizes the necessity of the communities of care—as previously mentioned, they also provide healthcare and pedagogy to the far-flung peripheries. But they crucially fall short of revolutionizing social relations out of a fear of "left-opportunism," thus leaving land rent, proletarianization, and wage relations largely intact.

What this suggests is that *mamundok*-in-place is something that deserts the current order towards refugia and attacks it from the position of subversion. The contours of *mamundok*-in-place becomes clearer when we see *what is not being subverted* in the Philippines today, in terms of the regime of proletarianization, gender, work, alienation, abandonment, and hierarchy.

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[2] Gilles Dauvé, "When Insurrections Die," *Endnotes* 1, no. 1 (October 2008): 51–52.

[3] Anonymous, *At Daggers Drawn with the Existent, Its Defenders and Its False Critics* (The Anarchist Library, 2012), 12.

[4] Amado Guerrero (Jose Maria Sison), "Our Urgent Tasks" (2008), marxists.org/history/philippines/cpp/guerrero/1975/urgent-tasks.htm.

Mamundok-in-Place

To the guerrilla, the boondocks and mountains represent lines of desertion, refugia from fugitivity, and open rebellion. For the anarchist, the whole world is our mountain. To *mamundok*-in-place is to see mountains of possibility and its lines of desertion in our everyday social relations. Climbing those mountains means to bring autonomy and subversion in all facets of our lives. The virtual rebel peripheries we build is in the anarchy of the everyday. Ultimately, it is not a question of urban versus rural rebel peripheries, but the whole world. We cannot be satisfied with peripheries! We are tired of living in the margins and the peripheries of this world! We want the whole world!

Once upon a time, the facets of life we now see as world systems began as seeds of possibility. Money and commodities existed for thousands of years yet only generalized to conquer the whole world within only the last few hundred years. Likewise, it is similar for States. Indeed, even for States, there are still places within the world where State power has not yet cohered or territorialized completely. Some of these are indeed in the anarchy of the peripheries, but even in the urban heart of States, State power is not totalizing and there are refugia.[1] Within these refugia are seeds of possibility for another world.

After all, anarchists have historically not made use of the anarchy of the peripheries. Rather, anarchists more often nurture seeds of possibility in place. In the revolutions in Ukraine, Spain, Germany, Russia, in the anarchist armed struggle in Uruguay, the insurrectionary attacks in the contemporary Mediterranean, and as part of the united front in Rojava, anarchists have not taken advantage of the anarchy of the peripheries.[2] There are many reasons as to why this is so, but it will suffice for our purposes to point out that anarchists are more fond of the "anarchy-in-place" rather than the "over-there" of the anarchy of the peripheries. Anarchy is, after all, what we make of it.

These refugia, liberatory seeds, and anarchy-in-place are not merely the machismo of revolution and insurrection. To *mamundok*-in-place also means to nurture the social relations of care. Indeed, friendship and freedom come hand-in-hand. As the Comité Invisible says,

> "Friend" and "free" in English, and "Freund" and "frei" in German come from the same Indo-European root, which conveys the idea of a shared power that grows. Being free and having ties was one and the same thing. I am free *because I have ties,* because I am linked to a reality greater than me. (Emphasis in the original.)[3]

Our friends, our comrades, our communities of care are also refugia. This too is anarchy. Without care, without accountability and community, there is no insurrection.[4] There may be no refugia we may desert to without it. These are the social relationships we do differently that undoes the State, as Landauer understood it.[5] Our mountains of refuge are also our relations of care and the communities we build now with each other. It is from the seeds of these liberatory social relations that we generalize to the whole world.

Indeed, this is one of the key crises in National Democracy. They are in crisis over persisting issues over sexual exploitation. None in the eight components for rectification was about addressing the issue of rape.[6] Indeed, the Central Committee of the CPP instead decried "petty bourgeois gender radicalism" on the same page! This has only

[1] Kenneth Cardenas, "Two Premises: For Political Imagination, and for Varieties of Possibility," Academic, *Kenneth Cardenas*, November 2023, kennethcardenas.com/2023/11/14/two-premises.

[2] See my essay "The Anarchy of the Peripheries" in *Muntjac* Issue 2: Insurgency & Counter-Insurgency.

[3] Invisible Committee, *To Our Friends*, trans. Robert Hurley (Ill Will Editions, 2014), 66, illwill.com/print/the-invisible-committee-to-our-friends.

[4] Anonymous, *Why She Doesn't Give A Fuck About Your Insurrection* (The Anarchist Library, 2009).

[5] Landauer, "Weak Statesmen, Weaker People!".

[6] Ang Bayan, "Fulfill the Tasks of the Rectification Movement and Advance the Revolution!" *Ang Bayan*, December 2024, 13, philippinerevolution.nu/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/20241226en_special.pdf.

deepened the crisis of sexual exploitation within National Democracy. Instead, to *mamundok*-in-place is to make care a revolutionary act, to undo the social relationships of the State, hierarchy, and patriarchy.

Thus, the contours of *mamundok*-in-place become clearer when we connect it to the insurrectionary project of the self-abolition of the proletariat, which itself is connected to desertion of the world of work, cisheteropatriarchy, and hierarchy. This proletarian self-abolition then feeds into the subversion of organized abandonment and towards the refugia of care. The mountains we climb, the refugia we find, the seeds we nurture are the liberatory social relations of care we build. And it is only through the subversion of the hierarchical and domineering social relations and our nurturing of rival seedlings that that project can come about.

This *mamundok*-in-place is the sober analysis of our own material conditions and learning the means by which social change can occur *where we are now*, and create that anarchy-in-place within our own context. In doing so, we may reject the *a priori* notion of armed struggle at the peripheries as an end-in-of-itself. Of course, this does not discount linking up with rebel peripheries in the future, once such conditions presents itself.

When we talk of building autonomous projects for the Twenty-First Century, this cannot be separated from the insurrectionary break or its necessity, or the care that makes it necessary. Again, what is crucially different with abandonment from desertion is the locality of policing and State power. *Mamundok*-in-place would also mean abolitionist steps towards the delimitation of the carceral functions of the State and replacing these with our own communities of care. When the revolutionary moment comes where an insurrectionary break can be acted upon, the moment can only be made actionable by what we build before it together.

At Daggers Drawn makes a key insight, noting that one can talk of building as many community assemblies, cooperatives, and other autonomous organizations as they like, but without the insurrectionary break, "breaking social normality by force,"[7] these projects will remain marginal. To *mamundok*-in-place will also need cognizance of this contradiction, that the virtual rebel peripheries we build, the refugia we nurture, *remain as peripheries* in tension with our desire of the whole world. Though as peripheries, they are as seeds of an insurrectionary moment, waiting to generalize to the whole world when the current order can no longer suffice for the means of living.

The contours of the insurrectionary moment are always shrouded in the possibility of the future and even of the present. But what is clarified is the historical record. This *mamundok*-in-place requires dividing the dragon and unleashing the hydra. It is the communities of care in the face of organized abandonment. It is through self-directed militancy, and not the waiting for leaders, that this anarchy-in-place can come about.

Because of their position in the stability of the bipolar system, the conditions for the CPP to take advantage of the insurrectionary break has passed. That moment was EDSA Uno, the People Power Revolution. There, key moments for the insurrectionary break were ignored by all factions of the left. The workers looked to leadership and found only the misleadership of the left. This all the while the military rebels, the caciques, and the oligarchs mobilized towards their restoration.

A future insurrectionary break would perhaps be a moment where social relations of domination become untenable for reproducing our daily life. The social force of an insurrection has always been social, not military, and subversion will matter more than arms. Such a social force may perhaps look like the Cultural Revolution, albeit done right and directed against the world of domination. There was true self-directed militancy in the Cultural Revolution which saw the unleashing of the hydra of the people in all of its force. However, some of the various heads of the hydra opted to bite each other. Some heads were groomed by the Party-State against more revolutionary heads. The directions of the militancy was made obscure by many heads looking to misleaderships for direction. Those who were self-directed were ultimately betrayed by their Party-State. Insurrectionary libertarian post-Maoism would mean fulfilling the anarchic conclusions put forward by the Cultural Revolution.

But the point here is not the rejection of leadership outright, but the rejection of would-be leaders in search of followers. Dangerous are those who seek leadership for followers, for they are those who will lead astray. Such is the nature of hierarchy and dragons. Rather, the leadership of proletarians-in-abolition is collectively held through the hydra of self-directed militancy grounded in communities of care.

It is said that in the country of the blind, the one-eyed man is king. But the country of the blind is a place where sight is not needed to live and prosper. The country of the blind has no need for the one-eyed man because they can

[7] Anonymous, *At Daggers Drawn with the Existent, Its Defenders and Its False Critics*, 7–8.

see in ways he is alien to.[8] We are all living in that country of the blind, and there are one-eyed men all over who would say their sight privileges them to lead. This sight, whether theoretical-programmatic clarity or a self-declared vanguard, does not privilege anyone to lead. Sight is rather a responsibility, a way wherein we can build militancy over membership, a methodology of empowering. The point is not to lead the blind, but the add of the perspective of sight to their repertoire.

This is not to say that organization in the present moment is worthless—far from it; it will have its place. The organizations we build in defiance of abandonment can also be refugia, as virtual rebel peripheries. *Mamundok*-in-place necessarily builds towards the insurrectionary moment, towards the self-abolition of the proletariat, utilizing the refugia, nurturing the liberatory seeds, building the communities of care, developing lines of desertion, dividing the dragon, building the power of hydras, self-directed militancy and all. These things matter for what comes ahead.

There are refugia even in our daily life and the social relations we inhabit. From these refugia, we can win the whole world. To *mamundok*-in-place is to recognize the whole world is our mountain.

[8] I thank Adrienne Cacatian alerting me of this reversal taken from the H. G. Wells short story "The Country of the Blind" (1904).

Author's Note

This essay has been the product of a year of thinking, writing, and re-writing. Throughout this essay, I am deeply indebted to the Black radical tradition, particularly to Black anarchism and the Black anarchic radicals. I bring Black study in dialogue with the revolutionary traditions in the Philippines. I am also indebted to the many readers and commentators who read this manuscript and provided comments over the past year. I have noted in many places where I am indebted to specific comments.

But most of all, I am indebted to my comrades and friends. No piece of political theory is developed in isolation, and indeed, all writing is autobiographical, especially political theory. My comrade Butingtaon half-ironically identified with "insurrectionary libertarian post-Maoism." Another, Warden Unit, offhandedly mentioned that what the NPA were doing in building autonomy is what we also want, but we just reject their ends of a State. Many in our affinity group stresses the centrality of care and consent. The beginnings of this zine was first conceptualized in dialogue with comrades at Partido Sosyalista. Whatever the deficiencies of the Comité Invisible, they wrote powerfully in *To Our Friends*, "I am free *because I have ties,* because I am linked to a reality greater than me." Such are the contours of *mamundok*-in-place.

Pag-ibig at Galit, Love and Rage!
~Someone with the spurious *nom de guerre* "Simoun Magsalin"

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