

# The Tragedy of Mindanao Communism: when the filipino revolution devoured its children

Operasyon Kampanyang Ahos

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**In July 1985, while top leaders of the Communist Party of the Philippines' (CPP) Mindanao Commission (Mindacom) were in Manila attending a Central Committee plenum to decide the next phase of the revolution, a caretaker group that remained in Mindanao was startled to receive reports from territorial committees that military agents had successfully infiltrated certain levels of the Party, its armed group, the New People's Army (NPA), and its united front organization, the National Democratic Front (NDF). [1] Deeply concerned that this would have serious repercussions on the Party, the group did not wait for Mindacom leaders to return. Instead, it ordered a prompt investigation and hunt for the spies inside these organizations.**

The investigation was code-named Operasyon Kampanyang Ahos (Kahos), a metaphor inspired by the potency of garlic (*ahos* in Cebuano) in repelling evil spirits and *demonyos* (demons), which in Party parlance was how the military was commonly described. [2] Kahos began in the provinces of Misamis Oriental and Bukidnon but quickly spread throughout Mindanao. [3] In its frenzied effort to "contain" and eliminate the problem, the caretaker group sanctioned the use of torture ("hard tactics") to obtain confessions. It also approved the use of testimonies drawn from at least two tortured suspects as evidence against other suspects. [4] A third directive was the most fatal: political officers of basic party cells and of NPA platoons were given the power to act as judge, jury and executioner. Suspects were not given the right to appeal to a higher body, and those who "admitted" their "crimes" were promptly executed. [5]

What began then as a systematic investigation turned out to be a brutal affair. The directives did not only cause panic and hysteria; they promptly transformed Kahos into an out-of-control bloody Mindanao-wide investigation to ferret out and eliminate suspected and real spies. [6] Stories of cadres and activists who were ordered to go to the guerrilla zones "for consultation" and then did not return began to circulate within Mindanao. Unable to get a clear explanation from their leaders, many cadres who received these notices fled from their areas after hearing of such stories; others simply resigned their posts. The alleged formation of special "investigation teams" sent from the countryside to as far as Cebu and Manila to pursue and mete out the "appropriate punishment" to "traitors" and spies only aggravated fears inside. One cadre painfully recalled what happened in the NPA camps all over Mindanao where suspected spies were interrogated and eventually killed by their interrogators:

The arrested persons were herded into investigation camps, brutalized in a Kafkaesque manner by tormentors equally brutalized by their own brutality. Many of them perished by torture not by any formal act of a death sentence. But to be brought to those camps, stripped of their basic rights as human persons, and subjected to torture was already

tantamount to a death penalty. [7]

The killings shocked the returning Mindacom leaders who immediately issued an order to discontinue Kahos. This, however, came belatedly—three months after the killings had already taken their toll. The distrust had spread to even include Mindacom itself, making it doubly difficult to implement the order particularly in guerrilla zones where NPA units had become extremely suspicious and closed the zones against outsiders, including even the Party leadership. It took another six months before a task force organized purposely to end Kahos had stopped the killings. [8]

The formal discontinuance of Kahos, however, did not necessarily mean an admission that a serious mistake had been made. While conceding that “excesses” did happen, Mindacom also insisted that the “campaign” was a success and that it did weed out spies among the ranks. With most of its leaders retaining influence, supporters, or control of important positions inside the Party’s powerful Politburo, the report was officially accepted. However, as more stories of “mass executions” came to light, admitted even by media people sympathetic to the revolution in Luzon, and began to filter into the public sphere, the Party was forced to alter its position. [9]

In 1989, the Politburo issued a new explanation for Kahos: it called the killings a major mistake brought about by “ideological errors” that warped the investigation and allowed for paranoia to break out within the ranks and cause the unwarranted and uncontrolled killings. Mindacom reluctantly accepted this revisionist assessment, qualifying its acceptance however by asserting that while Kahos decimated the organization, it failed to destroy it completely. It then almost instantaneously announced that the movement was already on the road to recovery, fast reclaiming its presence in Mindanao. [10]

These Party actions—revising an official evaluation, then claiming a crisis was over—did not erase the devastating impact of Kahos. The killing cost the CPP dearly. While it did ferret out military spies, Kahos’s victims were mainly loyal cadres, guerrillas, and activists whose only transgression was to be critical of and disagree with Party policies. [11] Within a six-month period, 950 cadres, guerrillas, and activists were executed for being *demonyo* suspects. [12] The dislocation was massive—in nine months party membership declined from nine thousand to a mere three thousand due to resignation, surrender, or AWOL; the NPA was reduced from fifteen or sixteen companies to a mere two, supported by seventeen platoons; and the CPP lost over 50 percent of its mass base. [13] Reports of Kahos-like incidents in Southern Luzon, albeit on a minor scale, worsened matters for a CPP already placed on the political defensive after 1986. By the end of the decade, the CPP was experiencing the most serious crisis of its twenty-year history, with Kahos being the most painful of all its misfortunes.

Why did Kahos happen, and why most intensely in Mindanao? Existing explanations within and outside the CPP focus on two themes. One interpretation regards Kahos as the ultimate effect of an internal struggle over revolutionary strategy. Another view suggests that Kahos was the disastrous aftermath of an authoritarian paranoia that grows within Leninist parties in crisis. This essay posits a parallel explanation that looks at Kahos within the structural and historical frames that helped to shape it. It argues that Mindanao, as the Philippine’s last land frontier, was “closing” up fast demographically. But even as it was doing so, the social instabilities continued, in part caused by the war that broke out between the military and armed Muslim separatists, but also in part caused by a more intrusive Philippine national state that sought to integrate Mindanao closer into its “developmentalist goals.” I am suggesting that “closure” did not normalize Mindanao’s demography by calcifying emergent social ties. On the contrary, the closure exacerbated social instabilities and mutated social relations. It was this contextual flux within which the CPP grew. It would reap its benefits, but it would also fall victim to its outcomes.

In returning to the importance of context, I do not claim that this essay's argument fully explains the emergence of Kahos. There may be merit in looking at this disaster as a product of paranoia or as a fallout of failed strategies. However, I do maintain that context and history cannot be ignored as fundamental factors, and in the light of the prevailing explanations for Kahos, this essay hopes to reassert the importance of the larger frame. Kahos, however, remains to be fully explored. A full understanding of the killings warrants in-depth field research to collect and record especially interviews and conversations with the survivors, the victims' kin, the perpetrators, Party leaders, and other actors and actresses involved in it. It also requires conducting a more intensive comparative study of Mindanao and other regions in the Philippines where the CPP is/was active and where Kahos-type killings did and did not happen. Finally, a full contextualization of Kahos inevitably leads us to the "larger phenomenon" of Filipino communism itself—a topic which I am, at this stage, ill-prepared to deal with. This essay must then be seen as one of the many windows opened on the subject. As such, the essay is itself open to criticism and revision by those who decide to investigate much more fully the still uncharted territories of contemporary Filipino communism.

## **THE KAHOS DEBATE: THE VERSIONS AND THEIR AUTHORS**

The 1986 "tactical mistake" of ordering its forces to stay away from the confrontation between Marcos and Aquino was the catalyst that would bring forth longsuppressed but unsettled internal problems inside the CPP. The Party began to unravel, ultimately splintering in 1989 into two factions that disagreed over almost every significant topic: interpretations of the Party's history, the value of its fidelity to Maoism, questions about the united front, assessment of the Marcos and postMarcos periods (especially on how to deal with the popular Aquino), evaluation of the crisis socialism with the breakdown of Eastern Europe, and predictions for the future of the Philippine Left. [14] However, the most divisive issue that, in a way, precipitated the CPP's split was Kahos. [15]

The faction that fired the first salvo was the group identified with Jose Ma. Sison, founding chairman of the CPP who regained control of the party from a younger group of leaders known to be critical of Sison's obstinate devotion to Maoism. [16] In a 1991 document that "re-affirmed" the CPP's return to its Maoist roots, Sison made extensive use of Kahos as proof of his rivals "political opportunism." [17] Pointing to the killings as "a devastation [that] was unprecedented in the entire history of the Philippine revolution," Sison linked Kahos to what he called "the worst kind of dogmatism" inside Mindacom. He argued that Mindacom dogmatism was best illustrated by that group's adoption and imposition of the Sandinista model on Philippine conditions in hopes of creating a "revolutionary situation" that would usher in the final confrontation between dictatorship and revolution. This deviation from the Maoist strategy of people's war induced the "worst kind of disorientation" which in turn, prompted a series of other mistakes leading fatally to Kahos. But the worst thing, according to Sison, was that those responsible for the killings were absolved of their crimes and even managed to circumscribe a full-blown investigation into the tragedy due to their powerful positions in the Party. [18]

With the Party leadership under its firm control, the Sison faction saw its chance to push for a reinterpretation of Kahos among the ranks of disoriented party followers. (The arrest of his rivals during the years 1988-91 facilitated the seizure of power by the Sison faction.) It sanctioned the slogan "wrong line, temporary military success, and urban pasiklab, enemy counter-action, and finally Kahos" as the official explanation for the tragedy, even as it initiated a "re-orientation" of loyal Mindanao cadres. [19] Sison, in the meanwhile, ordered the expulsion of those linked to Kahos, calling them "renegades" and promoters of "gangsterism, grave abuse of authority, corruption of partisan units and men [and] criminal neglect" inside the Party. [20]

The ferocity of Sison's attacks stunned his rivals. [21] For a time, most thought naively that the debate could be handled along comradely lines and also by deferring to Sison as Party

founder. [22] Some were at a loss to decide how to respond to this systematic, all-out attack on them, while others warned of a witchhunt and the threat of “a form of one-man rule” inside the Party. [23] As they recovered from initial attacks by the Sison faction, these variously splintered units and individuals began to coalesce into a “Democratic Opposition” inside and outside the CPP. [24] This consolidation also led to a much better response to the attacks from the Sison faction, among which were the cadres whom Sison accused of being responsible for Kahos. [25] Their initial response was to deny that the shift in strategy caused the tragedy. They would also insist that the “excesses” notwithstanding, Kahos was a success, and that the setbacks because of the killings were being systematically remedied. [26]

The “Rejectionists” also took the offensive arguing that the attention focused on the killings had obscured the significance of the Mindanao comeback. [27] Once Sison turned on the heat, however, there was no way his rivals could skirt Kahos. Most preferred to look at Kahos in relation to the debates over strategy. A former Mindacom leader named Ka Taquio agreed that Kahos was a product of an “ideological error” and that a “militarist tendency” inside the Mindacom organization led to “the narrow interpretation of class struggle as violent elimination of the enemies (and a) mechanical interpretation of the Maoist principle ‘political power grows out of the barrel of the gun.’” However, he strongly disagreed with Sison’s argument tying Kahos to a deviation from Maoism. He notes:

It is difficult to imagine whether the so-called ‘erroneous line of quick military victory’ and ‘wishful armed insurrection’ was one of the root causes of the Kahos debacle because in the first place, it still has to be proven whether such an erroneous line really took shape . . . [It] was more a lack of seeking truth from facts and actual processes and procedures in the Party that caused the Kahos campaign to snowball without the tight control of the Commission. ... [All this was due to] a limited familiarity with the Marxist tools for assessment and summing up. [28]

Paco Arguelles, the author cited in the introduction of this essay, responded to Sison along the same lines, stating emphatically that Kahos “was the decisive factor in the sharp decline of revolutionary strength on the island” and not an “erroneous line” promoted by Mindacom. He questioned Sison’s selective use of evidence, his failure to use “Marxist analysis” and a penchant for “reductionism” in explaining both Kahos and the general condition of the CPP. Arguelles turned Sison’s argument on its head by questioning the viability of Maoist strategy itself. He argued that “the limited and low level of capability of the theory of protracted people’s war in grasping, throwing light on, and guiding the revolutionary process of the country” was in fact the real culprit that made Kahos possible. [29]

Others, however, insisted that there was something inherently wrong inside the Party’s way of life. A “Standing Group” of the Visayas Commission (VISCOP) disputed Sison’s assertion that Kahos flowed out of Mindacom’s “adventurist” policies of “insurrectionism,” insisting that the killings were the byproduct of excessive paranoia and mistrust inside the Party. They called Kahos a “right error” reflective of a larger problem—that of a failure of strategy to adapt to changing conditions, a failure which allowed sentiments like paranoia to persist. [30]

Walden Bello, however, broadens his argument by claiming that Kahos was the dire outcome of Marxist-Leninist politics itself. He argues:

An instrumental view of people is a tendency that affects particularly activists in the Marxist-Leninist tradition, making them vulnerable during moments of paranoia at the height of the revolutionary struggle to expedient solutions involving the physical elimination of real or imagined enemies. In normal times, the combination of a tactical

view of people, ideological fervor, youth, and the gun already carries a threat potential. Touched off by social paranoia, it can easily become an uncontrollable force, as it did in Mindanao and Southern Tagalog. [31]

Bello, a long-time leader of the American anti-Marcos solidarity network, conducted interviews with survivors of Kahos and came to the conclusion also that “the absence of an institutionalized system of justice and scientific assessment. . . allowed paranoia to spread unchecked.”

The efforts of members in the emerging anti-Sison group to respond to the criticisms of “Reaffirm,” however, was blunted by one decisive factor: Kahos had weakened their positions in the CPP leadership and undermined their abilities to respond to the Sison group’s assaults. Some of their leading spokespersons were accused of being involved in one way or the other in the killings, while others had been displaced from their positions of power and influence due to imprisonment or to the varied organizational ruses employed by their rivals. In the end, therefore, it was the Sison group which gained the upper hand in the Kahos debates, and within Philippine Left circles today, their version has become the “official” story. [32]

### **(RE)SORTING THE NARRATIVES: THE MISSING CONTEXT**

Kahos may very well have been caused by all the reasons cited above. There is enough evidence of paranoia existing inside the CPP, as well as evidence to show that members who were caught up in Kahos challenged the Maoist paradigm, as Sison claimed. Kahos could also be the product of a multiple number of causes, some apparently traceable to the CPP’s nature as an underground organization, a conspiratorial organization disadvantaged by the deficient “ideological” training of its cadres and activists.

Yet, even within these contrasting positions, certain flaws in the Party are camouflaged and ignored. Most importantly, in their efforts to validate their own visions of the suitable CPP strategy, both sides actually ended up reifying Kahos. Sison and his opponents could be faulted for understating the nature of the tragedy by using it as a mere empirical source to confirm their respective strategic preferences while repudiating the others. Even the Visayas “Standing Group,” perhaps the nearest among the CPP cadres to recognize the tragedy of Kahos, unavoidably contextualized it within a discussion of how best to win power in the Philippines. Thus enclosing Kahos inside this conceptual frame, they—like others—depreciated the profound implications of the tragedy. [33]

Neither can arguments about “low ideological training” sufficiently explain the eruption of Kahos. Revolutionaries never attain the perfect ideological state where they and their followers can profess complete devotion to the cause. Multi-layered, complex individuals bring to the organization different levels of perceptions, various levels of commitment to the prevailing doctrine, and different propensities when it comes time to act on those doctrines. Moreover, time and again, communists always encounter “problems” from below, which may arise when “little traditions” resist directives from above, or conversely, when the more elite members of a revolutionary body lack adequate ideological sensitivity to popular sentiments and consciousness. [34]

Only Bello appeared to have taken Kahos seriously. But even he still ended up digressing towards using Kahos as a didactic example to score theoretical points by bringing in his critique of Leninist vanguardist politics in the Philippines via Kahos. His argument that, by being Leninist, the CPP all-but-naturally deteriorated into instrumentalist politics and thus made itself ready for Kahos betrays an ahistorical understanding of the nuanced development of the Party.

Looking back at the biggest crisis of the Party before the tragedy—that of the rift between Manila-Rizal Executive Committee (KT-MR) and the Central Committee in 1978—one is surprised to note



that the purge ordered by the latter never led to executions. As the documents of that period show, there were not only considerable democratic exchanges between the two party organizations, the Central Committee was surprisingly tolerant of the Manila regional committee for a while, giving it remarkable leeway to try to prove its point. The decision to purge only came at the last minute when, despite evidence to the contrary, the KT-MR had come to believe its own logic that an anti-Marcos coalition could win in an election stage-managed by the dictatorship. Bello may be correct in expressing his wariness towards Leninist instrumentalism, but he must reconcile his theoretical-psychological argument with that of a history showing a CPP acting less as a centralized organization and more like a set of “squabbling sects.” [35]

In short, both these sets of explanations—one which describes Kahos as a byproduct of errors in strategy (orthodox or otherwise), and the other, which describes Kahos as the fatal outcome of paranoia and Leninist instrumentalism—cannot fully account for the tragedy because they remove it from its historical moorings and ultimately shove it into a minor place of import. The debates thus regressed until they had become nothing more than an ideological version of “who is to blame” while transmuting Kahos into an incident caused by individuals or groups of individuals obsessed by an agenda. The essays in the Red Book and other writings, aside from their revelatory features, are notable for their incessant propensity to quibble over facts, the inclusion and/or exclusion of evidence, and mutual charges of selective data use, all to validate each other’s assumptions and ideological presuppositions. Somewhere along the way, Kahos disappeared amidst the brawl over the right evidence. In the din of the rhetoric, the tragedy’s meaning and import got lost.

It is not surprising therefore that none of the various antagonists ever considered explaining Kahos as the outcome of the structural features of Mindanao society itself and the manner in which CPP cadres adjusted their organizing to that society. Why, for example, did an organization as schooled in conspiracies as the CPP only respond with such widespread brutality in 1985, and only in Mindanao? Why not in the periods before 1985, and why not as massively as in other areas? Such questions, normally expected to be posed by Marxist analysis, do not appear in any of the internal Party tracts that tried to explain the tragedy. None took into consideration the “instabilities” of Mindanao society nor the more inherent features of the island as a land frontier.

Once removed from its historical context, Kahos was eventually explained away as a psychological malady. The contending factions oddly ended up sharing this conclusion as the litter of terms like “collective paranoia,” “over-suspiciousness,” “hysteria,” and “madness” found in all the writings suggests. If the historical terrain upon which Kahos rested had been reified, so would the social context upon which it stood. In the succeeding pages, I would like to elaborate on this context, without necessarily arguing a direct causality between this context and Kahos but instead suggesting that the structural-historical frame cannot be ignored if one wishes to arrive at a multi-causal explanation of Kahos.

## **REASSESSING COMMUNISTS AND FRONTIERS**

The CPP came to Mindanao at a crucial period in the island’s evolution as the Philippines’ last large island frontier. While the Party’s first attempts to set up guerrilla units and underground cells in Mindanao ended up in failure, it was initially saved by two political developments: the Muslim armed separatist movement and the radicalization of the Mindanao church. [36] The war waged by the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) drew over 60 percent of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) into the Muslim provinces, thereby creating a “breathing spell” which allowed communists to try again. [37] Party organizing was facilitated when Catholic clergy, nuns and laity began drifting towards a Filipino “theology of struggle” as they sought to protect their flock from an increasingly militarized society. This “religious sector” became the CPP’s biggest resource base as well the foundation upon which an island-wide network of legal and underground organizations was

created. [38]

In five years (1975-80), Mindanao communists had recovered to become the fastest growing regional organization of the Party. By 1980, conditions had remarkably changed, so much so that in its Eight Plenum, the Central Committee established Mindacom to supervise island-wide revolutionary activities.

Yet it was not only the secessionist war nor a radicalizing religious that gave CPP cadres their new lease of life. The fluidity of Mindanao itself made it ripe for radical expansion. Everything associated with a frontier “filling up” was in evidence by the late 1960s and early 1970s: increased population density, decline of land to people ratio, and, in settler-dominated areas like southeastern Mindanao, the re-emergence of early stages of land concentration, tenancy, and class stratification. The frontier had not only lost its efficacy as a safety valve because it had reached the limits of its absorptive capacity, it also began to mimic land-related problems in more densely populated areas with highly-skewed land ownership and concentration. [39]

As demographic changes during the period signaled frontier closure, the other side of the coin, capitalist expansion to tap the island’s rich resources, also grew. Domestic and foreign corporations had launched a drive to invest in agriculture, notably pineapple and bananas, to expand existing industries like timber, and to make initial moves to open up more of the island’s mineral resources. [40] Not unlike the northern Brazilian frontier, demographic saturation and capitalist penetration eventuated into different kinds of tensions, the most serious of which occurred between indigenous and settler communities fighting against each other over land ownership, and against expanding corporate capital seeking freer access to land and mineral resources. [41] Those with the capacity to fight back, like the Muslims, did so, while others were marginalized. The Muslim resistance began as a land-related conflict but was soon transformed into a religious war which escalated once the Philippine military stepped in to suppress it. [42]

Tensions, however, were not increasing solely in the Muslim areas. Social friction over land ownership, access, and use also began to affect erstwhile “stable” provinces at just about the time the Muslim secessionist war broke out. In the northeast and southeastern portions of Mindanao, reports of land conflict had become regular news fare. [43] Clearly, with very few exceptions, the general consequence of these massive changes was the exclusion, impoverishment and marginalization of indigenous and settler communities in Mindanao. [44]

Martial law was the final qualitative twist to all these changes. *Pace* the arguments of scholars re-examining contemporary Mindanao politics, the intrusion of the national state in 1973 signaled stronger state involvement in Mindanao as compared to earlier periods. Unlike its predecessors, who gave Mindanao only cursory attention, the Marcos dictatorship exerted the strongest and most directed effort at asserting state power in Mindanao to date. [45] Muslim armed secessionism was the initial reason for this unparalleled state intrusion. Over 60 percent of the military was involved in containing a rebellion where undisguised brutality had become the norm. The military war effort—despite an impasse in 1977-78—also became the justification for the national state to maintain its overarching presence in the island, the first time since the US Army administered the Moro Province at the turn of the century. The bulk of the army would stay in Mindanao, although by the 1980s it had a different enemy—the CPP.

The dictatorship not only escalated its presence to contain the Muslim rebellion; it also sought to integrate Mindanao into its “developmentalist agenda.” State centralization activated old national agencies as well as creating new ones, and with ample external financing, the dictatorship undertook a massive infrastructure program designed to make Mindanao and its resources more accessible to capital.

One author notes that over twenty-seven billion pesos were poured into Mindanao during the 1970s; eleven major road projects were funded through sixty-eight million dollars external financing and 1.4 billion pesos local counterpart. [46] Specific regions also became prime targets; in southwestern Mindanao, for example, Australian economic assistance totaling \$A 50.4 million (with local counterpart of \$A 43.1 million) helped establish the Zamboanga del Sur Development Project which undertook the infrastructure development of the area. Its total budget, resources and personnel, observes one author, “exceeded that of the provincial government and the line agencies of the national government in the province.” [47] The impact of this massive developmentalist thrust may have benefited some, but it also exposed various communities to the vagaries of economic transformation. Infrastructure opened up inaccessible areas and hastened land re-classification, which, in turn, brought in more dominant economic actors like foreign and local investors, to the detriment of communities in the island. [48]

The 1970s, therefore, was a decade of unusual volatility, and the economic and social instabilities provided the CPP with various sources of potential partisans from within the ranks of these affected communities. It was under these intensely turbulent conditions that the CPP grew remarkably after its 1975 miscues. From the ranks of these marginalized groups, the CPP recruited its first generation of cadres. [49] The MNLF war also presented the Party with a potentially powerful ally who, if handled well, could be convinced to work together with the CPP in eroding the national state in Mindanao. [50] Under new leadership consisting of cadres from Manila as well as those “indigenous” to the place, Mindacom lost no time consolidating Party growth while shaping larger plans for the future. [51] It systematized the available party data base on the difference provinces of the island, introduced some measure of “professionalism” into cadre training, organizational procedures and routines, and established more systematic training for NPA guerrillas.

Mindacom also initiated contacts with potential non-communist “allies,” notably anti-Marcos groups like the MNLF, church and human rights groups, and politicians displaced by the declaration of martial law. The aim was to build a broad coalition that would spearhead the anti-dictatorship movement in Mindanao under the direction of the CPP. The administrative talents of Mindacom leaders, not to mention the enthusiasm with which they set themselves to task, immediately showed astounding results. In a year’s time, the Mindanao CPP had become the strongest of all the regional bodies of the Party, outdistancing Central Luzon and Manila. It had also replaced the MNLF as the strongest threat to the dictatorship.

There are no exact statistical data on the numerical rise of the Party and the NPA in Mindanao, as compared to other regions. Security considerations figured prominently in the blurring of positions, but the lack of very clear data was also due to the actual absence of any effort to distinguish the Party from its “people’s army” or its “mass activists.” One may be able to draw certain tentative inferences from available information in hand, however. A declassified aerogram from the US consulate in Cebu reported an upsurge in NPA activity in eastern and northern Mindanao in the 1980s as well as Party expansion in provinces hitherto the domain of the MNLF, like the Lanao provinces. In eastern Mindanao (consisting of the provinces of Davao del Norte, Davao Oriental, Agusan and Surigao), the report cited a 30-50 percent increase in the number of NPA personnel, reaching a high 950 guerrilla force with 288 weapons of various types. [52] Based on the figures supplied in Table 1, one can extrapolate that Mindanao communists in 1981 comprised 15.7 percent of the total CPP-NPA force. Assuming that this percentage remained consistent, and using the US embassy figures as a base, one can thus make the inference that Mindanao communists grew from 950 in 1981 to as many as 2,396 on the eve of Kahos. This also meant that those who were killed or resigned roughly comprised 40 percent of the entire Mindanao communist force.

Given the ambiguity of the figures, other indicators of Mindacom’s growing importance as the new and vital cog in the revolutionary wheel could be seen in the following areas: the promotion of its



leaders and the manner in which Mindacom as a “lower organ” related to the central leadership. In 1980, its top leaders were promoted to important party bodies. The Party center likewise gave Mindacom considerable latitude to experiment with strategy. This was partly in compliance with a policy laid down in the mid-1970s; but it was also partly the center’s admission of Mindacom’s extraordinary mobilizing capacities.

From here, Mindacom immediately initiated a series of “mass struggles” revolving around issues that ranged from campus reforms to anti-militarization. These were soon supplanted by larger “multi-sectoral” anti-dictatorship mobilizations, some of which involved as many as 150,000 people. [53] The 1983 assassination of Benigno Aquino, Jr., provoked more mobilization as new anti-Marcos groups materialized among the hitherto uninvolved middle class and worked in tandem with if not parallel to CPP-influenced organizations. By the middle of the decade, Mindacom was launching the first of its *welgang bayan*, popular strikes staged to choke key road arteries all over Mindanao, thereby disrupting industrial and commercial activities and keeping the military in constant disequilibrium. [54] These “advances” reinforced the confidence of Mindanao communists to a point where Mindacom cadres proposed to the Party leadership an alteration in the strategy. Using the *welga* as model (and inspiration), Mindacom began lobbying for a modified *ruse de guerre* which would emphasize what they called a “politico-military framework” (pol-mil).

Table 1. CPP/NPA Armed Strength

Year	Regulars	Firearms	Mindanao CPP/NPA (estimate)**
1969	250	300	—
1970	245	240	—
1971	500	700	—
1972	1,320	1,520	—
1973	1,900	1,515	—
1974	1,800	1,600	—
1975	1,800	1,620	—
1976	1,200	1,000	—
1977	2,300	1,700	—
1978	2,760	1,900	—
1979	4,908	1,960	—
1980	5,621	2,843	—
1981	6,013	2,546	950
1982	7,000	2,500	1,050
1983	8,900	4,620	1,335
1984	10,570	8,351	1,585
1985	15,978	10,125	2,396
1986	16,018	11,179	2,402
1987**	25,000	15,000	3,750***

Using the 1981 Central Committee declaration that the “last sub-stage of the strategic defensive” was soon to give way to a “strategic counter-offensive” (SCO) phase, Mindacom proposed that the Party replace Maoist strategy with “pol-mil.” Adopting the latter would require the CPP to do away with Maoism’s “constrictive dichotomy” of defining arenas of resistance, a stubborn partiality to countryside resistance over urban political and armed mobilization, and an image of the revolution as “advancing in waves” from the countryside to the cities with the decisive confrontation between state and revolution still decades ahead. The alternative polmil framework would exercise a fair amount of flexibility, combining “all forms of struggle,” with the final confrontation not to be decided by just the rural guerrilla army’s tempo of development. [55]

The apparent effectiveness of the strikes in paralyzing Mindanao from late 1983 throughout 1984 became the justification for Mindacom leaders to continue pushing for a new strategy, and in fact they experimented with pol-mil without apparent sanction from the center. The *welgang bayan* were broadened into mini-uprisings which combined strikes with the increased use of NPA “armed city partisans” in urban and town centers. [56] NPA guerrilla units were also reorganized into “larger mobile formations” and ordered to engage the military in set battles aside from the usual “war of the flea” types of confrontations. As NPA attacks, strikes, and urban assassinations increased in tempo and intensity all over Mindanao, so too did the confidence of Mindacom that it would soon enough pressure the Party to adopt the new strategy. And as long as the *welgang bayan* appeared to be working, leaders in the Party center—although expressing discomfort at the deviation—could not do anything.

The excitement also suggested a more fundamental evolution within Mindacom. The series of “autonomous actions” that its cadres initiated not only signified inventive improvisation; more importantly, it evinced the power of a regional body to pursue its own goals independent of its superior’s original intentions. In the 1980s, therefore, the surprising expansion of Mindanao communism had two notably contradictory features. On the one hand, a rapid escalation of the revolution occurred both organizationally and in terms of political influence. [57] On the other hand, a growing tension between Mindacom and its superiors developed as the former continued to proceed with its own plans. [58] These fairly common, and perhaps predictable, tensions between the “small tradition” (Mindanao communism) and the super-ordinate and “bigger” counterpart produced a recurring sideshow to accompany the overall drama of a CPP coping with rapid changes after 1983. The calling of a plenum in early 1985 was regarded as an effort to ease the tension while preparing the Party for what was thought of as the final confrontation with the dictatorship by the end of the decade. Kahos changed all this; an aggravating factor was to be the CPP’s fatal mistake of boycotting the 1986 elections. [59]

## **THE BREAKDOWN OF MINDANAO COMMUNISM**

If demographic changes, active national state intervention, a “neighboring” secessionist war, and an imaginative corps of cadres catapulted Mindanao communism to political prominence (and notoriety), the very same factors would become its bane. For out of these processes emerged conditions which, while allowing Mindanao communists to expand swiftly, also made that growth unsteady and quite brittle.

The resurrection of social and class stratification in settler communities, for example, had as one of its effects the creation of rural underclasses, particularly new tenants and landless peasants. These new groups would be the main sources of mass activist and NPA guerrilla recruits as well as sympathizers of the revolution.

Yet, the appearance of these underclasses also indicate that as settler communities sink their roots into new settings, so also do social relations also become rooted and begin to define how people and groups relate to each other. Simply put, class relations may be unjust, but they also function as a stabilizing agent for communities, especially in settler areas. In Mindanao, this “normalization” of frontier life was derailed at its early stage and thus was not able to set itself upon more enduring foundations.

Table 2. Estimates of Net Migration Exchange for Provinces of Mindanao and Sulu, 1960-1970 and 1970-1975

Provinces	1960-70	1970-75
Agusan	+60,291	-18,201
Bukidnon	+106,100	+33,808
Cotabato	+127,533	-89,163
Davao	+191,080	+91,586
Lanao del Norte	-21,899	-28,802
Misamis Occidental	-13,178	-5,705
Misamis Oriental	-6,814	+765
Sulu	-16,098	-76,407
Surigao	-188	+22,310
Zamboanga del Norte	+9,739	+11,597
Zamboanga del Sur	+2,009	-40,341

Source: Michael Costello, “Social Change in Mindanao: A Review of the Research of the Decade,” *Kinaadman: A Journal of the Southern Philippines* 6 (1984): 5.

Demographic and migratory patterns were disrupted by the massive population shifts *within Mindanao itself*, these were caused in part by the Muslim secessionist war, but also aggravated by the initial impact of the dictatorship’s developmentalist agenda. “Christian” and “Muslim” provinces that adjoined each other experienced constant population changes as the conflict forced people to flee to ethnically congenial areas. [60] In fact, between 1970 and 1975, despite an aggregate population growth due to increased migration, the distribution of migrants was fairly uneven, with the more turbulent areas experiencing out-migration and more stable ones suddenly facing a deluge of new “home-seekers.” Table 2 above gives us a sense of the demographic commotion going on during the period.

From the figures one can trace the frequent shifting of people who had very little time to establish themselves at a place of their choice. Social ties, including class relations, had no time to root themselves as people moved from one place to the other. The war with the MNLF in particular created “internal refugees” from out of the affected provinces. Instead, new instabilities began to materialize, partly as a result of renewed competition over land and resources between newcomers and those who preceded them. The tensions would disrupt not only nascent social ties but also social rhythms and routines necessary to steady a community’s life.

It is especially worthy to note that in the provinces where the most extensive Kahos killings were said to have been committed—northern Davao, Surigao, Zamboanga del Sur and the Misamis-Bukidnon boundary—population pressure had increased significantly, not so much due to an influx of incoming settlers from northern and central Philippines, but to an incursion of Mindanao residents

who had settled on the island but, menaced by war and also seeking better land opportunities, chose to migrate to new provinces. Social ties therefore remained unstable in these areas; the rapid capitalist transformation of the Mindanao countryside would merely exacerbate these instabilities, as settler communities felt the impact of the intrusion of corporate agriculture into their lives. [61]

The changes were not exclusive to the settled countryside. Increased state and capital penetration likewise animated placid urban and town centers, turning them, almost overnight, into “growth points” for economic expansion. [62] These areas began to attract migrants although they were structurally unprepared to absorb them. One immediate effect was an urban version of rural tensions; as one sociologist notes, the “rapid rates of urban growth [became] a two-edged sword [with the] probability that the supply of in-migrating to the cities may exceed the number of viable opportunities found there.” [63]

The inability of the urban areas to absorb immigration and the unpreparedness of local officials to anticipate the transformation of their cities into “growth points” resulted in the enlargement of their “slum communities” and uncontrolled urban expansion. In turn social problems arising from constricted urban space, intense competition over available employment, and the emergence of underground economies began to intensify, leading to an increase in criminality, constant violence, brutal and brutalized lives, and the prevalent notion that authority and order were either inadequate or non-existent. [64]

What I am suggesting therefore is that the social ties and group identifications necessary to bind communities and individuals together and to stabilize social life in Mindanao were unable to thrive in such an environment. Instead mutable relations continued to predominate in a lot of urban and rural communities and the “normalization of frontier life” never completely transpired even as late as the 1980s. While one may argue that language- or religion-based loyalties did compensate for the frailty of other social and class ties, scholars who advance this argument ignore the fact that these two general buttresses of fidelity were themselves weakened by internal “sub-rifts.”

Tensions between Muslims and Christians, for example, were quite pervasive, but so too were rivalries within these two major ethnic and religious categories. Among Christian settlers, endemic divisions based on provinces or regions of origin, as well as language/dialect differences, created constant friction; among Muslims, “age-old tribal differences” among the major groups and between Muslim “elites” and their followings also persisted. These smaller rifts were hidden from outside observers because of the inordinate attention given the generalized religious basis of the conflict as a way of explaining Mindanao’s violent landscape. A closer examination within each group, however, will reveal a more nuanced picture that belies the capacity of religion and ethnicity to function as social adhesives. [65]

The Mindanao war, however, did not only displace people, unsettle demographic patterns, and exacerbate rural and urban problems. It also gave an already turbulent frontier society a more violent edge by preserving a continuous state of war which by the 1980s had advanced into the erstwhile peaceful provinces by virtue of the expansion of the CPP. It has been argued that the centralization attempts of the Marcos dictatorship were facilitated by the massive militarization of Philippine society.

Tables 3-5 show that it was Mindanao which bore much of the brunt of state violence compared with other areas. In three important categories of human rights violations, the human cost of state coercion in Mindanao soared rapidly upwards by the 1980s, coincidentally the same period when the CPP underwent its most dramatic growth. Yet, there was more happening here than a magnified exercise of State coercion. The war also created an opportunity for the violence to be spread horizontally. With the MNLF amply supplied by Libya, and the Philippine army benefiting from

increased American assistance after Vietnam, the secessionist war gave rise to a proliferation of arms easily obtainable from both sides.

By the late 1970s, the government ban on weapons had become an impotent policy in Mindanao as cheap arms proliferated everywhere, with military men peddling these weapons of war themselves and even selling them to their new nemesis, the NPA. [66] With “democratized” access to arms, it became easier for people to justify arming themselves as a way of coping with the uncertainties of the times. With arms, one could defend oneself against rivals or seek to eliminate them before they became a threat. Various “armed groups” became conspicuous all over Mindanao, especially in areas where army and guerrilla fighters were involved in intense conflict with one another.

Having weapons facilitated the creation of Mafia-type associations and alliances operating outside of both state and the revolutionary networks which offered services and “protection” to an insecure population, while playing both the military and NPA against each other. [67] The splits within the Muslim armed movement, and active military support for “civilian” anti-communist groups (organized either as militias or “private armies” of politicians), escalated this process. In the 1980s, Mindanao had become a complex landscape where different armed groups competed for space, resources, and attention with communist revolutionaries, army units, and armed secessionists.

Violence was thus gaining acceptance as a “normal way of life” in this frontier zone. Immersed in this condition, the CPP had no problems attracting a steady supply of recruits, supporters, and sympathizers. This beneficial situation, however, was double-edged. It also meant that the types of solidarities and fidelity that the Party hoped to ingrain and strengthen in its mass base would be ultimately as fragile as the other social ties and identifications found in unstable frontiers.

More importantly, the constant state of war, accompanied by widespread availability of coercive resources and blended with the shifting demographics, exacerbated the general state of flux, giving the CPP very little time to consolidate and stabilize its influence over the areas it “controlled.” A condition existed wherein the speed of people’s attachment to the revolution was equaled by the speed of their subsequent abandonment. This partly explains, for example, why the same “slum” community that was in the early 1980s the stronghold of communist urban guerrillas in Davao, became, after 1986, the stronghold of the anti-communist vigilante group Alsa Masa (People Rise). [68] This brings us to the final issue of Mindanao communism itself. The contextual determination of the remarkable growth of the CPP in Mindanao contradicts the argument that internal “structural” problems determined the expansion and shrinking of the Party. One should note that the Party was already growing at an amazing rate prior to and even despite the “professionalization” of its leadership, and that beneath the revolutionary surge was a delicate foundation that would break down with Kahos.

Table 3. Disappearances likely due to Military Arrests or Executions



<b>Year</b>	<b>Manila</b>	<b>Luzon</b>	<b>Visayas</b>	<b>Mindanao</b>	<b>Total</b>
1977	2	11	1	3	17
1978	1	3	4	2	10
1979	2	12	-	34	48
1980	2	17	-	-	19
1981	-	8	-	45	53
1982	-	16	2	24	42
1983	2	13	15	115	145
1984	7	34	24	93	158
1985	11	28	43	129	211
Total	27	142	89	445	703

Table 4. Extra-judicial Killings Attributed to the Military

<b>Year</b>	<b>Manila</b>	<b>Luzon</b>	<b>Visayas</b>	<b>Mindanao</b>	<b>Total</b>
1977	-	24	21	6	51
1978	1	25	44	16	86
1979	-	56	38	102	196
1980	-	45	36	137	218
1981	-	65	28	228	321
1982	-	46	28	136	210
1983	1	62	41	265	369
1984	2	114	61	361	538
1985	8	53	74	260	395
Total	12	490	371	1,511	2,384

Table 5. Number of Arrests by the Military

Year	Manila	Luzon	Visayas	Mindanao	Total
1977	414	345	214	378	1,351
1978	320	202	193	905	1,620
1979	265	183	111	1,402	1,961
1980	170	125	141	526	962
1981	52	304	255	766	1,377
1982	226	795	76	814	1,911
1983	185	152	108	1,643	2,088
1984	599	375	403	2,725	4,102
1985	737	132	227	3,729	4,825
Total	2,968	2,613	1,728	12,888	19,197

Source: Leonard Davis, *The Philippines: People, Poverty and Politics* (New York: St. Martins Press, 1987), p. 149 (for Tables 3 and 4) and p. 156 (for Table 5)

The pre-1980 expansion of the CPP leading to the eventual formation of Mindacom is not simply attributable to a refined and experienced corps of cadres. Mindanao communist leaders were running the Mindanao section of the CPP like an informal *barkada*, seeing no reason to professionalize the organization. It was only upon the transfer of Manila cadres led by Edgar Jopson, Benjamin De Vera and Magtanggol Roque that the Mindanao leadership began to take the form of a wellorganized machine. [69] Thus, the source of the CPP's growth between 1975 and 1980 came not from its cadres' organizing skills but from the social context of Mindanao itself. The CPP's lack of experience was more than made up by a readily available mass of "warm bodies" stirred up by the turbulence of the land frontier. The tragic human and social consequences of Mindanao's transformation and militarization ultimately profited the CPP when it came time to recruit new members—it was an opportunity the CPP could ill-afford to pass up as the recruits, so to speak, were there for the picking. [70]

It was in the dynamic between organizational opportunity and inadequate capacities, however, that institutional weaknesses within the Party would come to light. Foremost among these was the decline in the "quality" of people joining the revolution. In the pre-Mindacom period, the slow pace of Party development may have had disadvantages, but it also had merits. At that time, the process of recruitment and training of cadres into the Party and the NPA could be carefully handled, offsetting the pervasive inexperience and inefficiency among cadre ranks. Stringent security requirements and the slow process of "political education" assured that a reliable core of cadres was being developed, "reliable" in the sense that these new members were familiar with and dedicated to the CPP's cause.

In the Mindacom era, this almost conservative approach to revolutionary growth was replaced by more relaxed recruitment and organizational criteria in response to the deluge of recruits. As Party membership grew, Mindacom leaders applauded the vigor and valor they were witnessing. However, reports from the field increasingly alarmed the leadership, especially when they saw pervasive "ideological problems" within the organization. The Party was turning out exceptionally good protest organizers and guerrilla fighters, but all this was being counteracted by inadequate ideological training, a generally low level of political education, and a simplistic and crude approach to solving problems. A 1980 Mindanao evaluation report admitted that despite the escalation of the revolution, organizational and ideological problems had worsened. The cadre Taquio noted that Mindanao communism's "party-building" phase was notably weak. The absence of a "systematic educational

campaign” was paralleled by cadres’ “limited familiarity with Marxist tools for assessment and summing up.” [71]

In the 1980s, these “weaknesses” had worsened as Mindacom began to notice more evidence of “militarist tendencies” in the organization. Often observed was the increasing propensity of the NPA to resort to coercion when attempting to settle land disputes and to dispense with the judicial “people’s hearing” before condemning and executing “bad elements” in rural communities. In the towns, executions of “class enemies” and “fascist troops” quickened, opening up occasions for indiscriminate killing. [72] Mindacom had also become aware of the changing credentials of some of the fresh revolutionary recruits; it was increasingly alarmed at the number of activists and guerrillas “with a lumpen background” who were joining the party and who had positioned themselves in the vanguard of its mass mobilizations and military campaigns. [73] The inclusion of these “Robin Hood-types” further burdened a Mindacom facing “difficulty in combining ideological consolidation with other activities.” Mindacom tried to put a stop to this alarming development by instituting counter-measures like stepped-up educational training and “ideological consolidation” to complement increased political mobilization. It also issued an order to study other “models” of revolution deemed more appropriate to Mindanao.

In the whirl of the rapidly changing political climate after 1983, however, these counter-measures were never fully implemented; problems of communication between urban and rural areas, as well as between Mindacom and its subordinate units, worsened the predicament. The momentum hastened by the strikes excited and preoccupied Mindacom, which became increasingly absorbed by the upsurge of mass mobilization and an apparent retreat by the state. Growing fascination with the mini-uprisings and hopes that these uprising might act as launching pads for a possible general insurrection prompted calls for consolidation and unity among members. The dictatorship was dying, the revolution was “advancing,” and those who called for a slowdown were regarded as conservative, even reactionary. [74] Then Kahos erupted and changed everything.

## CONCLUSION

The two remaining questions to ask are these: why was Kahos not replicated in other areas where the CPP had a presence and to what extent was it unique to the Philippine experience?

Given the limitations of this essay already stated in the introduction, here I can only venture some tentative explanations. There were indeed similar cases reported between 1988-91 in Southern Tagalog and Central Luzon, two regions located just outside of Manila. [75] Apart from the killings, however, there were also significant differences between the situations in these regions compared to Mindanao. These were smaller in scale and were immediately checked by a CPP leadership that had learned a painful lesson from Kahos. The structural features in these areas were also different from Mindanao. These two regions had been settled regions, experiencing no social breakdown of the same breadth and intensity as Mindanao’s in the postwar period.

Southern Tagalog and Central Luzon were no longer the frontiers that they had been when the CPP re-established its presence in those regions and labored to build on some of its pre-existing social ties while introducing a revolutionary/class element to them. Moreover, the war between dictatorship and revolution may also have been intense in these areas, but it could not compare with the breadth and severity of the violence in Mindanao. [76]

Kahos also distinguishes Philippine communism and the CPP from other Southeast Asian communist parties. [77] First, executions do not normally happen while communists are still fighting for power; they tend occur after the seizure of power. [78] Kahos happened when mechanisms for internal repression that “normally” become central once a party is in power were not even set up yet.

Moreover, while most communist parties tend not to admit bloody episodes in their histories, the CPP not only involved itself in this ruthless enterprise, but also discussed it openly. [79]The CPP was still far from the point of needing a Cheka for internal policing. Instead, it relied on and used extensively its own army, whose assumed function at that point in time was to do battle with the state in a much more intense and regular manner. The metamorphosis of the NPA into an internal policing force merely abetted the breakdown leading to the killings.

Mindanao communism thus appeared powerful only on the outside. Internally, its foundations were brittle. Thus, its attempts to position itself among the challenging forces and pressures of divisive national politics were bound to lead to disaster; Mindacom was primed for a situation like Kahos to happen. With no stable underpinnings, it was only a matter of time before the organization would crack. As Kahos spread, Mindacom began to lose its political stature; there was little to distinguish its deadly bands of cadres from the rest of the “armed groups” that roamed Mindanao. The CPP’s post-1986 general crisis would only exacerbate this particular condition.

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## **P.S.**

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Popular Support for the Revolutionary Movement CPP-NPA: Experiences in a Hacienda in Negros

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## Footnotes

[1] Mindanao is the second largest island in the Philippine archipelago, located south of Manila.

[2] "Pangkalahatang Pagbabalik-Aral sa mga Mahalagang Pangyayari at Pasya (1980 hanggang 1991)," *Rebolusyon: Theoretical Organ of the Communist Party of the Philippines*, January 1993 (Special edition), as translated and reprinted in *Debate: Philippine Left Review* 7 (August 1993): 53. Peasants and guerrillas refer to the military as *demonyo* (devil) or *asuwang* (vampire). The genealogy of the use of these terms dates as far back as World War II, when Japanese troops were alternately called "*Hapon*" or "*demonyo*." In the era of the NPA, cadres popularized the same phrases not only to bring back memories of a dark period, but also to underscore that the Philippine military and the Japanese, both interlopers in peasants' lives, are no different from each other.

[3] These two provinces, according to Arguelles, accounted for 70 percent of the fatalities. Paco Arguelles, "KAHOS: A Soul Searching," *Human Rights Forum* 4,1 (1994): 112.

[4] This directive was based on an earlier experience in 1982, when the CPP's Southern Tagalog committee's proposal to use "the testimonies of at least two persons [as] sufficient to confirm that one is a suspected military infiltrator" was approved by the Central Committee. Arguelles, "KAHOS," p. 110.

[5] According to Arguelles this was based on a compromise reached by leaders who favored the use of torture and outright execution, and others who argued for "the dignity of the human person, irrespective of class and political differences, no matter how sharp." Mindacom rejected the use of torture as policy but "allowed exemptions in cases where proof of betrayal was solid and strong." As Arguelles noted, "Such a compromise was fatally flawed." Arguelles, "KAHOS," p. 113.

[6] According to George Madlos, chief of the CPP's northeastern Mindanao regional committee and alternate member of the party's central committee...presided over affairs at a time (*AHOS* was implemented). He seems to have lost control of a number of units under his command and his own capture suggested the existence of an informer within the ranks of the Mindanao Military Commission. The panic spread. See Peter Sales, "The Once and Future Insurgency in Northeastern Mindanao," *Mindanao: Land of Unfulfilled Promise*. Mark Turner, R. J. May, and Lulu Respall Turner, eds. (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1992), p. 215. Madlos was released in 1992 and promptly returned to the *maquis*. *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, July 22, 1992, p. 7.

[7] Arguelles, "Kahos," p. 112.

[8] Although the killings did continue well into 1988 and became a nationwide phenomenon by 1989. Arguelles, "Kahos," p. 107. See also Gregg Jones, *Red Revolution: Inside the Philippine Guerrilla Movement* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1989), pp. 266-67.

[9] Right-wing propaganda that portrayed the CPP as the "New Khmer Rouge" stoked the frenzy. See Russ H. Munro, "The New Khmer Rouge," *Commentary* 80 (December 1985): 19-38; see also Romy Chan, "Mass Graves of NPA Death Squads found in Davao," *Manila Bulletin*, February



20,1987, pp. 1 and 9.

[10] "NPA shows Continuing Vigor in Mindanao," *Ang Bayan*, April 1989, pp. 3-4. "Ang Pagbawing Davao," *Ang Bayan*, June 1990, pp. 11-16.

[11] It was obvious that the military was engaged in an intensive effort to penetrate the CPP, and I recognize that Kahos and similar efforts were partly successful in repulsing this attack. One military unit that was exposed was a so-called "Davao Counter-Revolutionary Group," whose leader, a certain Sonny Aragon, was assassinated by NPA armed city partisans. Interview with a Mindanao cadre, December 1985. I am grateful to Jose Eliseo Rocamora for reminding me of the military's culpability in all this. Personal communication, June 11, 1995. The costs, however, for the success of cleansing the movement of spies were catastrophic and tragic.

[12] Jones, *Red Revolution*, p. 268.

[13] *Ang Bayan*, March 1989, p. 6. See also Carolyn Arguillas, "The Antongalon Incident: Are the Rebels Really Killing their Comrades?" *Veritas Newsmagazine*, September 30, 1986, p. 15.

[14] The public was given an initial preview of these internal debates in *Praktika*, described as a "Theoretical Journal of the Party National Urban Center." See, for example, "Against the Snap Election Boycott," *Pratika* 1, 1 (May 14, 1986); and Marty Villalobos, "Where the Party Faltered," *Pratika* 1:2 (August 1986). Internal CPP differences and debates have also been analyzed by "outsiders." Some of these writings include: Armando S. Malay, "The 'Legal' vs. the 'Illegal': Problem in CPP-ML Strategy and Tactics," *Asian Studies* 20 (April-August 1982); Armando S. Malay, "Random Reflections on Marxism and Maoism in the Philippines," in *Marxism in the Philippines* (Quezon City: Third World Studies Center, 1984), pp. 45-98; Armando Malay, "On Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tse Tung Thought: An Overview," *Diliman Review* 35, 4 (1987); Gareth Porter, "Philippine Communism after Marcos," *Problems of Communism* 36, 5 (1987): 14-35; Gareth Porter, "The Politics of Counter-Insurgency in the Philippines: Military and Political Options," *Philippine Studies Occasional Paper* 9 (Hawaii: Center for Philippine Studies, 1987); and several of the essays in the collection *Marxism in the Philippines: Second Series* (Quezon City: Third World Studies Center, 1988).

[15] The split spilled over the so-called "legal Left." The *Kilusang Mayo Uno* [May First Movement, or KMU] broke up into two groups, one supporting Sison, the other the declaration of autonomy by the Manila-Rizal leadership. The KMU's peasant counterpart, the *Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas* [Peasant's Movement of the Philippines, KMP] expelled its more famous leader, Jaime Tadeo, after he professed support for "reforms" inside the KMP. Tian Chua and Rex Varona, "Fault-lines open in (Philippine) Labour Movement" *Asian Labour Update* 13 (October 1993): 1-5; and Jaime "Ka Jimmy" Tadeo, "A Triumph of Democratic Process," September 7, 1993, statement, mss.

[16] Dario Agnote, "Communist Party disbands the NPA General Command," *Philippine Newsday*, November 28, 1991, pp. 1-2; "CPP Chairman Sison confirms Party Split," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, December 10, 1992; "Sison steps up attack on Former Followers," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, December 11, 1992; and "ABB and Manila-Rizal Committee ordered Dissolved," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, January 1, 1993; *Manila Chronicle*, December 27, 1992; *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, March 2, 1992; and "Sison for Communist Rift: Letter to the Editor by various CPP Cadres," *Manila Chronicle*, December 30, 1993. p. 7.

[17] Patnubay Liwanag (Jose Ma. Sison), "Reaffirm our Basic Principles and Rectify Errors,"

December 26, 1991, as reprinted in *Kasarinlan: A Philippine Quarterly of Third World Studies* 8, 1 (1992): 83-133.

[18] "Under conditions of ultra-democracy, those elements responsible for the incomparably far biggest error and disaster in Mindanao were able to ride on the campaign against the boycott error of 1986. They obscured or kept silence on the error and disaster and some of them had the gumption to claim that had it not been for the boycott error of 1986, the people would have been able to seize political power and share it with other forces." Liwanag, "Reaffirm," *Kasarinlan*, p. 127.

[19] "Memorandum to all Central Committee Members, 10<sup>th</sup> Plenum of the Central Committee," Study, Debate, Discussion, Summing-up: Profound Re-Examination and Revitalization on the Crisis of Socialism, Strategy of Action and Internal Democracy (Manila: n.p., January 1993), p. 335. This clumsily-titled compendium, popularly referred to as the Red Book, contains arguments from the two contending factions. It was published by a group of "concerned cadres" hoping to guide their confused comrades through the ideological mess. The intensity of the arguments by both sides, not to mention their organizational consequences, reflected not only a Party in flux, but also a Party that was apparently quite vibrant in its internal politics— at least for a time. The conflicting narratives found in Red Book showed a CPP that was not a mere replica of the Chinese model. The maze of stories and interpretations suggests a Party that had more affinities with the more boisterous and "divided" groups like the Nicaraguans and ultimately Lenin's Bolsheviks pre-1924, than it had with the more staid Chinese or Vietnamese parties with whom the CPP is normally identified with. More importantly, the exchanges allow us a glimpse into the internal mechanisms of an hitherto inaccessible organization. It was as if the CPP, frustrated by its inability to resolve the crisis within its ranks except through purges and expulsions, decided to bare its soul to the public. Thus, I will cite liberally from this remarkable collection.

[20] Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS), December 20, 1993, pp. 50-51. On the Mindanao "re-orientation," see "Lessons from Mass Work in the Mindanao Countryside," *Ang Bayan*, April 1990, pp. 6-13.

[21] These cadres were principally responsible for the growth of the CPP after the first generation of leaders were either killed or detained (Sison included). Their first political officer was Sison. They proved to be able students, rescuing the CPP from initial fix, and—through pragmatism and resourcefulness—overseeing the growth of the Party, which developed to become the most important opposition to the Marcos dictatorship up until 1986 and the Sison *coup*. These cadres, however, do not form a cohesive group, but are loosely organized around their rejection of Sison's 1991 document of reaffirmation. As such they are referred to as "Rejectionists" (as against those who supported Sison, the "Re-affirmists"). See Antonio Lopez, "Running a Revolution," *Asiaweek*, March 9, 1994, pp. 28-41.

[22] As one former CPP leader put it, "We practically learned our Marxism at his feet." (Siya yong leader namin. Iyong paradigm namin, siya.) "Interview with Ricardo Reyes," *Manila Chronicle*, January 19, 1993. See also, "Reply to Sison's Charges—December 11, 1992 (by Ricardo Reyes, Romulo Kintanar and Benjamin de Vera)," *Conjuncture* 6:2 (December 1992-January 1993), p. 2; and, "Letter of Concerned Comrades in Mindanao to the CC/EC-CC," *Red Book*, p. 151.

[23] Note the pain and anger over Sison's attacks in Nathan Quimpo, "Barrio Utrecht: Coup D'Etat in the NDF," *Sunday Chronicle*, November 21, 1993, p. 4; and Joel Rocamora, "The Crisis of the National Democratic Movement and the Transformation of the Philippine Left," *Debate* 6 (March 1993). Rocamora demanded that the Kahos investigation "must not be manipulated to

served (sic) the requirements of Liwanag in the current ideological struggle.” He also cited noted Sison’s selectiveness on whom to attack in Mindacom; see p. 37. A Ka Barry charged that Sison was leading an “anti-MindaCom campaign (which was) unfair, vindictive and divisive,” and demanded that Sison himself be investigated for his role as one of those who decided on the Southern Tagalog purges in 1988, information the CPP chairman had conveniently omitted in his attacks. Ka Barry, “Resist Authoritarian Tendencies within the Party! Let a Thousand Schools of Thought Contend!” *Kasarinlan* 8,1 (1992): 141.

[24] “Declaration of Autonomy by the Manila-Rizal Regional Committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines,” and “NDF-US Vision Statement,” July 10, 1993, as reprinted in *Kasarinlan* 9, 1, (1993): 37-43, and 114-122 respectively; “Uphold Marxist-Leninist Principles, Advance the National Democratic Revolution: Declaration of Autonomy by Party Organizations in the Visayas and the Western Mindanao Regional White Area Cadres Conference,” *Debate* 9 (November 1993): 60-72; “Sorsogon Communist Unit joins Revisionist Group,” FBIS, September 1, 1993, p. 31; “Out of Crisis, Renewal: A Joint Statement of the Democratic Opposition within the Communist Party of the Philippines,” mss. December 26, 1993; and “Open Letter of Ricardo Reyes, Convenor, Suriang Sosyalista,” May 15, 1993.

[25] The first members to acknowledge that the rupture was real were not those from the original Mindacom, but from the more cohesive Manila-Rizal committee. It declared its “autonomy” from the Sison-controlled Politburo, proclaiming that the Sison faction had become despots. See “Tumindig sa Tama at Totoo, Pawalang Bisa ang Bogus na Plenum,” October 10, 1992, *Red Book*, p. 85. The history of the Manila-Rizal committee [KT-MR is acronym for “Komiteng Tagapagpaganap, Manila-Rizal” or Executive Committee, Manila-Rizal] is quite interesting. In 1978, the same lower body defied a Central Committee memorandum to break its alliance with anti-Marcos politicians during the elections for the new “parliament.” The difference was resolved by organizational *fiat* instead of allowing for a full-blown ideological debate [the KT-MR was disbanded, and its leaders either resigned or were sent to the countryside for “re-education”]. The issues surrounding the 1978 debate have now resurfaced, with the same KT-MR chairman [who reclaimed his position in 1988 after his full rehabilitation] demanding a reassessment of that brief period of *kaluwagan*. See Armando Malay, “The Dialectics of *Kaluwagan*: Echoes of a 1978 Debate,” *Marxism in the Philippines: Second Series*, pp. 1-25. See also the following documents: KT-MR, “Ang Ating Taktikal na Islogan para sa Kasalukuyang Yugto ng Rebolusyon,” mss, August 1975; KT-KS [Executive Committee, Central Committee], “Paglalagom ng Karanasan ng Partido sa Maynila-Rizal Kaugnay sa Huwad na Halalang IBP,” mss., December 1973.

[26] The National Democratic Front newspaper acknowledged that by 1984 “the NPA was admitting defeats on the battlefield.” *Liberation*, April-May 1987, pp. 14-15, as quoted by Peter Sales. See Peter Sales, “The Once and Future Insurgency in Northeastern Mindanao,” in Turner et al., ed., *Mindanao*, p. 215.

[27] As *Ang Bayan*, then under Rejectionist control argued: “Party discipline has . . . improved. The arrogance and liberalism of some comrades are being corrected. The excesses that had been committed in meting out punishment have been analyzed and rectified. We have accepted responsibility for specific weaknesses and errors. We have learned to be more strict and more selective in recruiting members into the Party. We have been able to restore the atmosphere of trust and faith among cadres.” See “Persevere in the Struggle and We Will Surely Win: CPP Mindanao Commission Statement,” *Ang Bayan* 2,1 (April 1989), p. 8.

[28] Comrade Taquio, “Comments on the Current Polemics within the Party,” *Red Book*, p. 159.

[29] Paco Arguelles, "*Pagbabalik-Aral: Aprioprism Reaffirmed*," *Debate* (August 1993): 27. Arguelles continued: "The theory of stages of the war is decisively anchored on the balance of armed strength between revolution and counter-revolution. It is clear that this kind of framework is more useful in explaining the development of the war rather than the whole course of the revolution. . . . [Only] a politico-military framework covering the urban-rural combination, basing itself on solid accumulation of strength but prepared to seize opportunities as they emerge, can free the revolutionary movement from the fetters of dogmatism and conservatism which have dominated the old mode of struggle." Arguelles, "*PagbabalikAral*," p. 32.

[30] The VISCOM cadres said, "ang esensyal na kamalian sa *Ahos* ay walang malaking pagkakaiba sa makakanang kamalian ng 'paranoia' at kawalan ng tiwala sa kasama't masa, tulad ng naganap sa Luzon noon 1988." [Ahos' essential mistake is no different from the rightist error of paranoia and the lack of trust and confidence on comrades and the masses that happened in Luzon in 1988]. "Magpunyagi sa Wastong Paglalagom sa Magkaisang-Panig ng 'Reaffirm,' Oktubre 25,1992." *Red Book*, pp. 32-35.

[31] Walden Bello. "The Crisis of the Philippine Progressive Movement: A Preliminary Investigation" *Kasarinlan* 8,1 (1992): 151.

[32] Rocamora also opined that Kahos undermined the ability of the anti-Sison camp to push for "reforms" inside the CPP as well as for "changes in [revolutionary] strategy that might have changed the history of the movement if implemented." He elaborated: "They [the anti-Sison group] were relatively successful in pushing these ideas at the 1980 CC [Central Committee] plenum and subsequent PB [politburo] meetings, but at the pivotal 1985 CC plenum, they or more their ideas were marginalized." Personal communication, June 11,1995.

[33] Arguelles is drawn to the psychological position of Bello and the Visayas cadres, calling Kahos a "cancer" which began in 1982 and spread throughout the Party in 1988-89, "growing steadily and, during certain periods, rapidly destroying the normal and health cells of the movement." Arguelles, "*Kahos: A Soul-Searching*," p. 1.

[34] See, for example, James C. Scott, "Protest and Profanation: Agrarian Revolt and the Little Tradition," *Theory and Society* 4, 2 (1977); see also his larger opus, *The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976).

[35] Francisco Nemenzo. "Rectification Process and the Philippine Communist Movement," in Lee Joo Jock and Vani S., eds., *Armed Communist Movements in Southeast Asia* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1984).

[36] Kit Collier, "The Theoretical Problems of Insurgency in Mindanao: Why Theory? Why Mindanao," in Turner et al., ed., *Mindanao*, pp. 197-212.

[37] On the Muslim rebellion see T. J. S. George, *Revolt in Mindanao: The Rise of Islam in Philippine Politics* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1980); Aijaz Ahmad, "The War Against the Muslims," *Southeast Asia Chronicle* 82 (February 1982): 15-22; and W. K. Che Man, *Muslim Separatism: The Mows of Southern Philippines and the Malays of Southern Thailand* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1990).

[38] Robert Youngblood, *Marcos against the Church: Economic Development and Political Repression in the Philippines* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), pp. 96-99, 124-25. See also Warren Kinne, *The Splintered Staff: Structural Deadlock in the Mindanao Church* (Quezon City.

New Day Publishers, 1990).

[39] Wilhelm Flieger, "Internal Migration in the Philippines during the 1960s," *Philippine Quarterly of Culture and Society* 5 (1977): 202-04; Albert L. Danielson, "The Effect of Interregional Migration on the Philippine Population," *Philippine Economy Bulletin* 5, 2 (November/December 1966); Peter Krinks, "Old Wine in a New Bottle: Land Settlement and Agrarian Problems in the Philippines," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 5 (1974): 6-8; Paul D. Simkins and Frederick L. Wernstedt, *Philippine Migration and the Settlement of the Digos-Padada Valley, Davao Province* (New Haven: Yale University Southeast Asian Studies Monograph Series, no. 16, 1971), pp. 104-106.

[40] Eduardo Tadem, *Mindanao Report: A Preliminary Study on (sic) the Economic Origins of Social Unrest* (Davao City: AFRIM Resource Center, 1990), pp. 22-23; Rad Silva, *Two Hills of the Same Land: Truth Behind the Mindanao Problem* (Mindanao: Mindanao-Sulu Studies and Research Group, 1979), pp. 55-63.

[41] Krinks, "Old Wine," p. 8.

[42] George, *Revolt in Mindanao*, pp. 143-61, 178-93; Ahmad, "War against the Muslims," pp. 15-22.

[43] "New Land Disputes in Davao," *Manila Times*, October 8, 1970; "Davao Tribal Leaders ask Lopez's for Help (in Land Dispute)," *Manila Times*, July 28, 1970; "1,000 Settlers vow to fight Ejectment; Bloodshed Eyed," *Daily Mirror*, December 30, 1971.

[44] E. Tadem, Susan Magno and Johnny Reyes, *Showcases of Underdevelopment: Fishes, Forests and Fruits* (Davao City: Alternate Resource Center, 1984); and "Outline: Historical Development of Mindanao (sic) Economy," *Mindanao Focus* 18, pp. 30-43.

[45] Turner ahistoricizes when he argues that in Mindanao, "the state is weak but the society is fragmented and shallow rooted." Turner et al., ed., *Mindanao*, p. 1. One of my readers suggested that this may too one-dimensional an approach, noting Anthony Giddens's distinction between *scope* and *intensity* of state presence and sanctions. While I agree with this theoretical reminder (when set in comparative historical settings), the Marcos dictatorship's intrusion into Mindanao in 1973 was unprecedented in scope and intensity as compared to earlier state efforts at controlling the frontier.

[46] Eduardo Tadem, "The Political Economy of Mindanao: An Overview," in Turner et al., ed., *Mindanao*, p. 13. The dictatorship reconstituted Mindanao special agencies like the Mindanao Development Authority by increasing its powers to control and distribute development resources. See Marife B. Clamor, "SPDA: Meeting the Challenges in the South," *Salam* 3:2 (April-September 1976).

[47] Brian Lockwood, "The Zamboanga del Sur Development Project, 1975-83," in Turner et al., ed., *Mindanao*, pp. 78-79

[48] Eugenio A. Demegillo, "Mindanao: Development and Marginalization," *The Philippines in the Third World Papers* 20 (August 1979): 9-19. A case example of infrastructure, capitalist intrusion, and peasant marginalization is comprehensively examined by Randolph S. David, et al., *Transnational Corporations and the Philippine Banana Export Industry* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Third World Studies Center, 1908).



[49] Jones, *Red Revolution*, pp. 140-141.

[50] "Ang Mamamayang Moro at and MNLF-BMA: Ang Kanilang mga Suliranin at Pakikibaka," CPP Social Investigation Report on the Muslims, mss, 1980 (?), 27 pp

[51] Mindacom then was composed of Edgar Jopson (Manila, Jesuit-trained, former head of a reformist social-democratic student association, became radicalized on the eve of martial law), Magtanggol Roque (University of the Philippines graduate, active in the Manila and united front underground before being assigned to Mindanao), Benjamin de Vera, and Romulo Kintanar (another Mindanao "native"). On the biography of Jopson, see Benjamin Pimentel, Jr., *Edjop: The Unusual Journey of Edgar Jopson* (Quezon City: Ken Incorporated, 1989).

[52] "Airgram to SecState, WashDC, from AMCONSUL Cebu, Subject: Eastern Mindanao and an Ominous Future, April 13, 1982," pp. 5-7, 9. It also noted that in 1981, the Philippine military had "shifted forces from Western Mindanao and the Sulu archipelago [areas where Muslim secessionists were active] to Eastern Mindanao to offset the increased activity of the [NPA] which had begun in early 1981." "Airgram," p. 1.

[53] Collier, "The Theoretical Problems of Insurgency," p. 208.

[54] And more wary. The army soon deployed twenty battalions in the non-MNLF territories as a way of acknowledging the newfound import of MINCOM. Pimentel, *Edjop: The Unusual Journey*, p. 265.

[55] In the words of one cadre, the new framework "opened the way for the development of higher forms in the cities, such as the *welgang bayan* . . . coordinated workers' strikes, or a combination of both, up to the preparations for a possible uprising, including local uprisings in the countryside. *All forms of struggle can be creatively combined wherever they can take place, whether countryside, city, town, etc.*" Roberto Sibunga, "Rejoinder to the Theorizing of Armando Liwanag and the CPP Executive Committee on the Mindanao Experience (1983-84)" *Debate* 8 (November 1993): 49.

[56] The "armed city partisans" were essentially urban guerrillas who were to be subordinated to the "urban mass movement." Their responsibilities included selective assassination and collection of arms and other paraphernalia for the larger NPA rural force's use. Jones, *Red Revolution*, p. 137.

[57] See "Ang Ating Walong Taong Pakikibaka sa Mindanaw, 1971-1979," mss [draft written by Mindacom leaders]. Despite the official rhetoric, the divergent impulses were clear in this document.

[58] "Interview with Ricardo Reyes," *Manila Chronicle*, January 19, 1993, p. 5.

[59] See "Politico-Military Struggles in the Main Urban Center," *Debate* 6 (March 1991): 65-71.

[60] Notes a sociologist: "Large scale migrations occurred after widespread violent clashes broke out between Muslim and Christian groups. [From 1970-75], Muslims appear to have outmigrated heavily from the Christian-dominated provinces of South Cotabato, Davao del Sur and Bukidnon. About half of the Christians living in Muslim-dominated Lanao del Sur departed (also) to other residencies." Michael Costello, "The Demography of Mindanao," in Turner et al., ed. *Mindanao*, p. 54.

[61] Collier eloquently remarked that capitalist transformation was so intense over so short a time that "land and labour [became] alienable commodities rather than socially embedded, [and] traditional institutions [were] destroyed or ... [had] never been established." See Collier, "The Theoretical Problems of Insurgency," p. 205.

[62] National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), *Regional Development Projects; Mindanao* (Manila: NEDA, 1974). The identified "strategic leading growth points" included the "cities" of Davao, General Santos, Jolo, Cotabato, Iligan, Cagayan de Oro and Zamboanga. Davao City was supposed to become the regional economic capital of southern Mindanao; Cagayan de Oro for the northeast; and Jolo for the West.

[63] Costello, "The Demography," p. 54.

[64] In the case of Davao, for example, see the following: Robert A. Hackenberg, "The Poverty Explosion: Population Growth and Income Decline in Davao City, 1972," (Boulder, CO: Institute of Behavioral Science, University of Colorado, no. 152); Robert A. Hackenberg, "Fallout from the Poverty Explosion: Economic and Demographic Trends in Davao City, 1972- 1974," (Davao City: Davao Action Information Center, no. 2). On Mindanao underground economies, see Jonathan R. Asunto et al., "The Makings in (sic) the Underground Economy: A Study," *Mindanao Focus* 26 (1990): 5-26.

[65] None of the Mindanao scholars has taken this issue into consideration. I base my observation on experience as a Mindanao "native" and on observations gathered during my field research in 1991 and 1993.

[66] See the fascinating account of purchasing arrangements set up by Muslim secessionists, NPA guerrillas, and soldiers of the Armed Forces of the Philippines in Mindanao that date as far back as the 1970s in Cynthia de Leon, "Communist Rebels Reveal Arms Sales," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, February 27, 1992.

[67] R. J. May, "The Wild West in the South: A Recent Political History of Mindanao," in Turner et al., ed., *Mindanao*, pp. 131-133. See also Ronald Edgerton, "Social Disintegration on a Contemporary Philippine Frontier: The Case of Bukidnon, Mindanao," *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 13 (1983): 151-75.

[68] Sheila Coronel, "Davao Diary: Vigilantes hold the City in Thrall," *Manila Chronicle*, April 5, 1987; and, Yazmin Arquiza, "'Alsa Masa' Anti-Communists Growing," *Agence France Press*, February 15, 1987. See also Ronald J. May, "Vigilantes in the Philippines: From Fanatical Cults to Citizens' Organizations," *Philippine Studies Occasional Paper* 12 (Manoa: Center for Philippine Studies, University of Hawaii at Manoa).

[69] Pimentel's informants noted that the leadership did not appreciate the need to write reports, conduct regular evaluations of the progress of both legal and underground networks, formulate future plans, and even develop their writing skills! Pimentel, *Edjop*, p. 251.

[70] See Jones's description of an urban poor family whose hatred of the military was matched by its economic deprivation, making its members instant recruits of the revolution. Jones, *Red Revolution*, pp. 140-41.

[71] Taquio cites a 1990 Mindanao report which listed: " problems as to how to systematize and make functional the [political officer's] system, to improve [Party] building and to raise the level

of [Marxist-Leninist] military theory [sic] among [its] cadres and forces. [The Mindanao party] also had problems in developing other forms of mass struggles, especially in the areas where there were imperialist extractive industries and comprador plantations. [It] also had problems since 1973 with the liquidation of so-called *demonios* [sic] because there was [sic] no safeguards and regular processes." *Red Book*, p. 154.

[72] "Davao City White Area Preliminary Summing-up: April 1986," in *Red Book*, pp. 171-73

[73] See, for example, the anxieties of the Davao "White Area Committee" which noted that these types of people were now becoming a substantial force inside the organization. *Red Book*, pp. 171-73.

[74] "1984 Mindanao Commission Summing-up," *Red Book*, p. 157

[75] In 1982 the anti-infiltration campaign waged in Southern Tagalog led to over one hundred killed and about two hundred arrested and tortured. Like Kahos, the full story of the 1982 executions has not been told, though there are indications that this may come out soon. One problem, as Arguelles admits, is that this precedent "was never fully assessed and summed up, both by the regional leadership or by the central leadership of the party which was certainly well-informed about the campaign." Arguelles, "Kahos," p. 109.

[76] One former Mindacom cadre noted that Mindanao was always on a "war situation" while in other areas the confrontation ebbed and flowed.

[77] Scholars who have studied the Indonesian, Vietnamese, and Malayan communist movements could not recall episodes analogous to the Mindanao tragedy when asked by the author. Even the Khmer Rouge, the most likely to resemble MINCOM, appeared not to have undertaken extensive bloody purges like Kahos before they seized power. See Ben Kiernan, *How Pol Pot Came to Power: A History of Communism in Kampuchea, 1930-1975* (London: Verso, 1985), pp. 308-93. The nearest comparable case, ironically but perhaps not unexpectedly, is the CPP's model—the Chinese communist party. As one China scholar noted: "Chinese communists numbering as many as ten thousand and including 'many excellent, independent-minded people' were accused of being 'Trotskyites' or 'Nationalist agents' and 'eliminated by drowning, burying alive, or death in squalid prisons.'" Perry Link, *Evening Chats in Beijing* (New York: Norton, 1991), p. 145. See also Dai Qing, *Wang Shiwei and 'Wild Lilies': Rectification and Purges in the Chinese Communist Party, 1942-1944* (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1994), and Frederic Wakeman, Jr., *Policing Shanghai, 1927-1937* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), pp. 158-59.

[78] As Bello puts it: "...whereas in other revolutionary movements, similar purges on such a scale took place after the seizure of power, in the Philippines it occurred *before the seizure of power, something which is rare in revolutionary history*." Bello, "The Crisis," p. 147.

[79] Again the uncanny dissimilarities are clear here: Stalin, Mao, and the Khmer Rouge never really admitted to their deadly enterprises. It was outsiders, academics, the conservative and radical opponents of these regimes, and exiles who exposed these tragedies to the world.