



ANG

Pahayagan ng Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas
Pinapatnubayan ng Marxismo-Leninismo-Maoismo

Bayan

English Edition
Special Issue
November 20, 2010
www.philippinerevolution.net

40 years of *Philippine Society and Revolution*

Interview with Comrade Jose Maria Sison (Amado Guerrero) by Ang Bayan

It has been 40 years since the Central Publishing House of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) first published *Philippine Society and Revolution (PSR)*. In the past 40 years, *PSR* has served as the CPP's principal reference and guide in laying down the basic principles of the two-stage revolution in the Philippines based on the analysis of concrete conditions of the semicolonial and semifeudal system. To commemorate the anniversary of *PSR* and reaffirm the principles

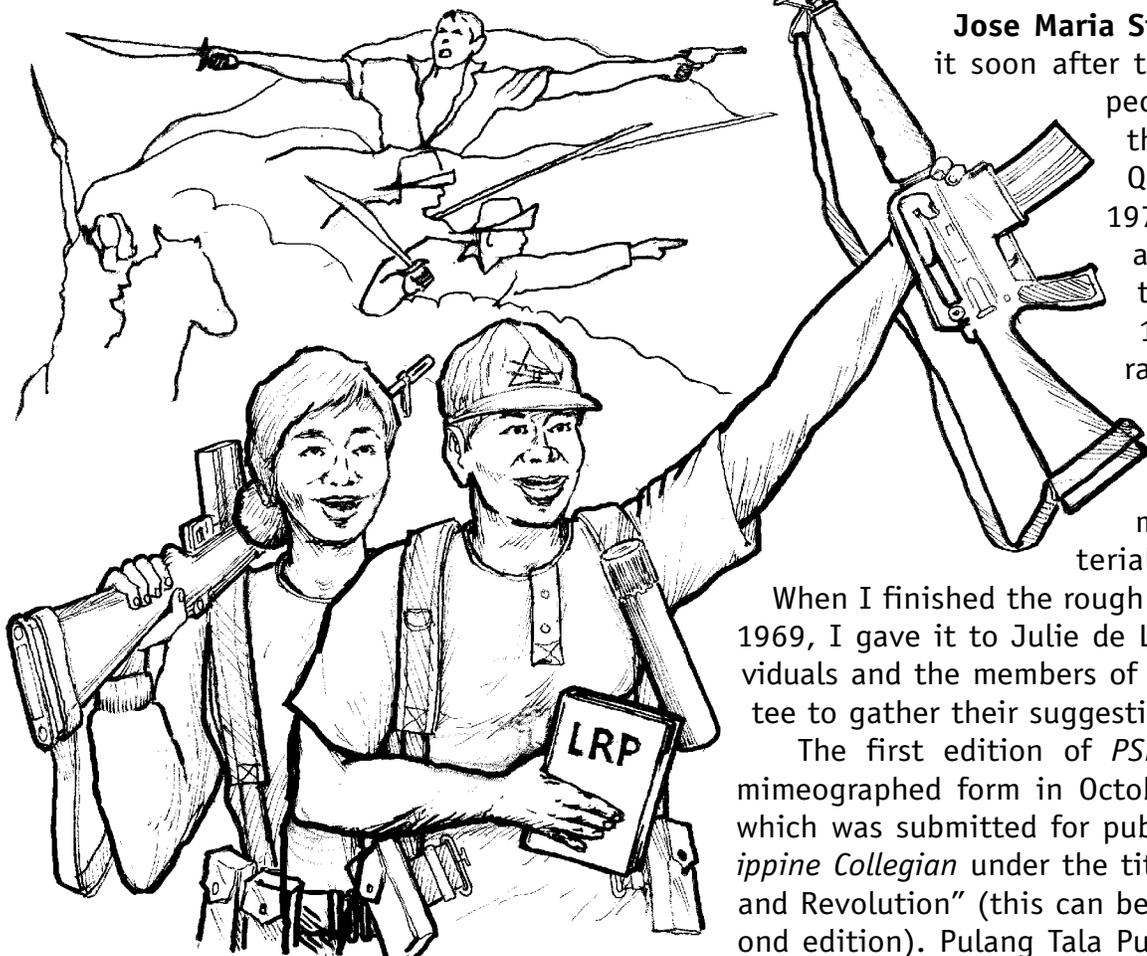
it laid down, *Ang Bayan* decided to interview Comrade Jose Ma. Sison who, as CPP founding chair Amado Guerrero was the principal author of *PSR*.

1 Can you relate to our readers certain historical facts about *PSR*? When did you start writing it? Who were involved in the research and writing? When was it first published and in what form? To your knowledge, how many times has the book been printed?

Jose Maria Sison (JMS): I wrote it soon after the launching of the people's war and on the eve of the First Quarter Storm of 1970. I started writing and finished it in the third quarter of 1969. Some comrades in the EC/CC like Charlie del Rosario and Monico Atienza brought me the reference materials that I needed.

When I finished the rough draft around August 1969, I gave it to Julie de Lima and other individuals and the members of the Central Committee to gather their suggestions and comments.

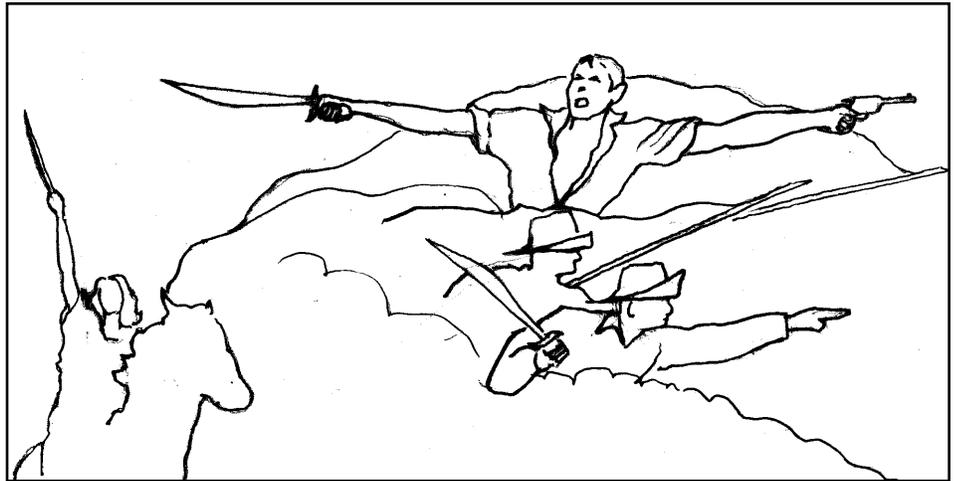
The first edition of *PSR* was published in mimeographed form in October 1969, a copy of which was submitted for publication in the *Philippine Collegian* under the title "Philippine Crisis and Revolution" (this can be considered the second edition). Pulang Tala Publications published



the third edition and Ta Kung Pao of Hongkong, the fourth edition in 1970. The fifth and sixth editions in English and Pilipino were mimeographed by the CPP Central Publishing House in 1971. In 1977, the Katiipunan ng Demokratikong Pilipino published the seventh edition in the US. This can be considered the fourth edition if the mimeographed editions are excluded.

Other editions were released after my capture in 1977. There were even German and Turkish translations and a comics edition.

2 *PSR is one of the most important Marxist-Leninist theoretical works of the revolutionary movement in the Philippines. What theoretical challenges faced its writing? What do you think are the key contributions of PSR to the theory of revolution in the Philippines? Has it made*



any contribution to theory that is relevant beyond the practice of the Philippine revolution?

JMS: The biggest theoretical challenge was the application of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought to Philippine history and circumstances. It necessitated the concrete analysis of concrete conditions. The key contributions of *PSR* are its characterization of Philippine society as semicolonial and semifeudal and the corresponding line of national and democratic revolution under the leadership of the working class.

In this regard, *PSR* specified the allied classes (workers, peasants, the petty bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie) and the class enemies (big compradors and landlords) in the new democratic revolution. It also laid down the principal task: national liberation and democratic revolution. It defined as well the stages of the Philippine revolution: people's new democracy and socialism.

3 *Before PSR, there were Struggle for National Democracy (SND) and the document "Recti-*

fy Errors, Rebuild the Party" (RERP) which were among the first major theoretical works of the national democratic movement in the Philippines. Can you recount the history of the development of the theory of Philippine revolution up to the publication of PSR in 1970?

JMS: The publication of *SND* and the RERP document was necessary and essential. *SND* paved the way for the exposition of the people's basic problems and the possible revolutionary solution in legal and persuasive language. It was in line with the tradition of the old democratic revolution of 1896 and the new democratic revolution under the leadership of the working class. It was based on the prevailing conditions and needs of the Filipino people, especially the toiling masses.

RERP was seminal in the analysis of the experience of the old merger party of the Communist and Socialist Parties. It exposed the errors and weaknesses which led to the failure of the revolution. It had therefore laid down what must be done in order to realize the ideological,



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Ang Bayan is published in Pilipino, Bisaya, Iloko, Hiligaynon, Waray and English editions.

It is available for *downloading* at the Philippine Revolution Web Central located at:

www.philippinerevolution.net.

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Ang Bayan is published fortnightly by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines

political and organizational requirements to rebuild the revolutionary party of the proletariat, the people's army and the united front and to rekindle and advance the revolution towards victory.

4 What was the biggest contribution of PSR to the course of the Philippine revolution in the past 40 years? What role did it play in the different stages of development of the Philippine revolution?

JMS: PSR greatly strengthened the general line earlier laid down by the Party Constitution and the Program for a People's Democratic Revolution. Since the first year of the people's war up to the present, PSR has played a key role in shedding light about the history, the basic problems and the revolutionary solution of the Filipino people.

PSR has played such an important role in every stage of the revolution. PSR further enlightens with the help of recent writings based on the advances of the revolution and the worsening of the crisis of the rotten system. PSR has been an effective tool of the Party in raising the consciousness and fighting will of Party members and mass activists.

5 The fourth edition of PSR included "Specific Charac-

teristics of Our People's War" and "Our Urgent Tasks" which emphasized the theoretical importance of this document. What other theoretical works of the CPP do you think have equal weight and significance in terms of the development of the theory of revolution in the Philippines?

JMS: The fourth edition (if the three mimeographed editions are not counted) indeed emphasized the theoretical importance of the two supplementary documents, which in turn further enhanced PSR. The documents of similar importance and significance in the development of the theory of revolution in the Philippines are "On the Mode of Production in the Philippines" (1983), "Philippine Crisis and Revolution" (1986), "Stand for Socialism Against Modern Revisionism" (1992) and "Reaffirm Our Basic Principles and Rectify the Errors" (1992), the basic documents of the Second Great Rectification Movement, and basic documents against the

policy of neoliberal globalization and other offensives of imperialism.

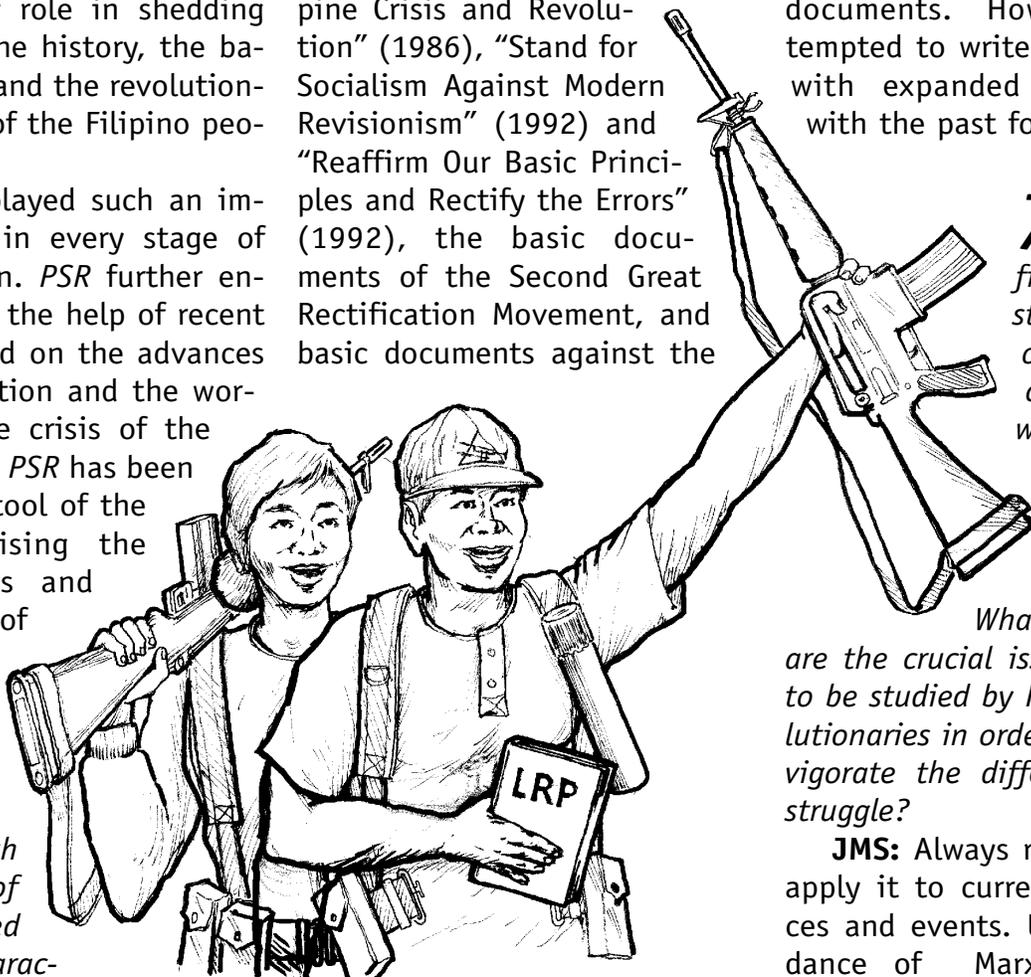
6 It has been over 40 years since PSR was first published. How would you compare Philippine society today to the conditions then? Do you think PSR remains an effective guide for the Philippine revolution? Do you see a need for a new edition, revision or supplement to PSR?

JMS: The continuing semicolonial and semifeudal conditions are further worsening and deepening. Thus, PSR remains an effective guide for the Philippine national and democratic revolution. The Party continues to issue new editions of PSR and supplement it with new related documents. However, I am tempted to write a new edition with expanded text dealing with the past four decades.

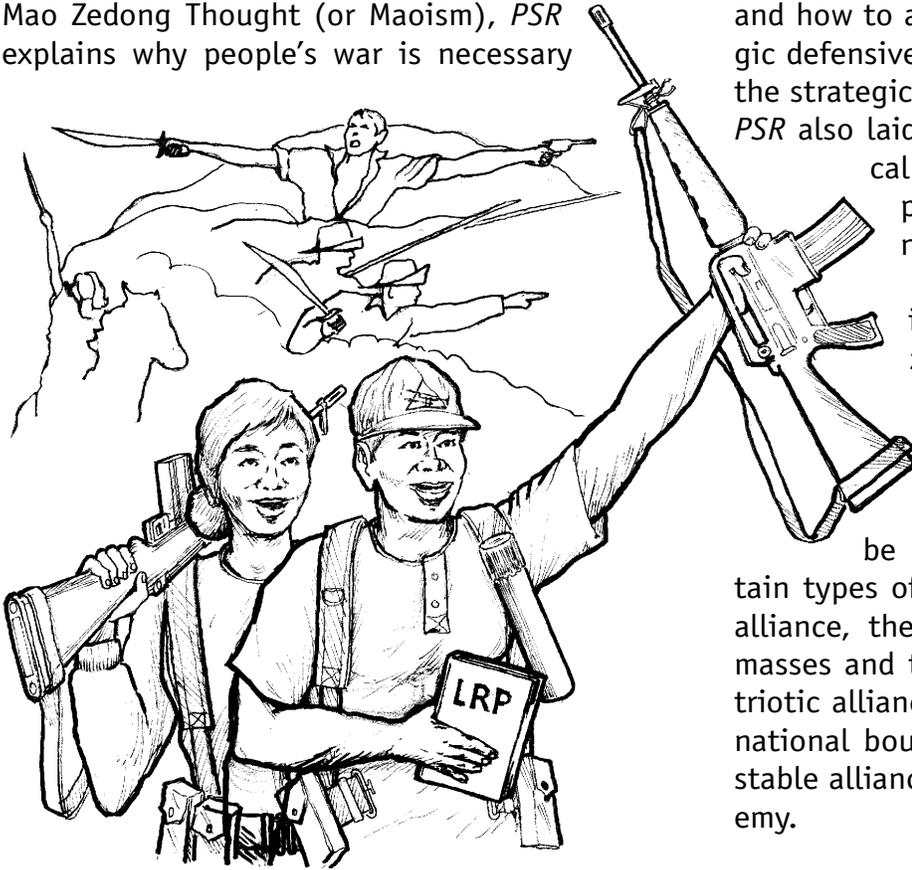
7 How can PSR further benefit the current stage of the revolution, especially in line with the CPP's call to achieve the strategic stalemate in five years?

What do you think are the crucial issues that have to be studied by Philippine revolutionaries in order to further invigorate the different fields of struggle?

JMS: Always review PSR and apply it to current circumstances and events. Under the guidance of Marxism-Leninism-



Mao Zedong Thought (or Maoism), *PSR* explains why people's war is necessary



and how to advance it in stages: from the strategic defensive to the strategic stalemate and from the strategic stalemate to the strategic offensive. *PSR* also laid down the need to fulfill the political requirements in order to advance the people's war from one stage to the next.

The Party must be strengthened ideologically, politically and organizationally. The people's army must be strengthened through armed struggle, agrarian revolution and the building of the mass base and organs of political power. There must be a united front policy involving certain types of alliances: the basic worker-peasant alliance, the progressive alliance of the toiling masses and the urban petty bourgeoisie, the patriotic alliance of the progressive classes and the national bourgeoisie and the temporary and unstable alliance with reactionaries fighting the enemy.

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